

READER

Best of Chicago



FREE AND FREAKY SINCE 1971 | MARCH 18, 2021

IN THIS ISSUE



FOOD & DRINK

04 Sula | Feature *Dhuan BBQ*
Company smokes meat *Desi-style*.

NEWS & POLITICS

06 Joravsky | Politics *The old*
Democratic bosses have been
taking a beating.

08 Isaacs | Culture *A year after*
the shutdown, *Lyric and CSO* are
bringing the music back.

52 Comic *A question, one year into*
the pandemic: *Did you do your*
part?

BEST OF CHICAGO

13 Wellen | Staff Note *On holding*
on to hope and remembering all
that this great city has to offer

14 City Life *Lori Lightfoot just keeps*
fucking up, the highs and lows of
CTA-less living, finding peace with
virtual therapy, and more

18 Sports and Recreation *The*
freaking Bears, bowling and rolling
no more, and women's pro sports
deserve our flowers and our dollars

20 Buy Local *Streetwear for your*
face with *Jugernaut's "Chicago*
Everywhere" mask, the much-
needed affection of *Neji* the record
store dog, and the warm relief of
the *Gethsemane Garden Center*

24 Food and Drink *Radical*
hospitality, *Devon Market* butter
runs, no more date nights at
Guthrie's, and more

30 Cannabis *Delayed appreciation*
for all things weed, *Illinois* as a
pot trailblazer, and in praise of
delicious 2 mg edibles



30 Arts and Culture *The return of*
drive-ins, the joy of singing "Loser"
at virtual karaoke, the thrill of a

Quimby's Customized Quarantine,
and more

44 Music & Nightlife *DCG*
Brothers brought summer joy to
a locked-down season with the
"Mhmm" video, indoor music was
pushed into the parks, Chicago
music writers carried zine culture
into the *Substack* era, and more

FILM

54 Movies of Note *Days of the*
Bagnold Summer is a bittersweet
bildungsroman that hits all the
right notes, *F.T.A.* is a galvanizing
documentary about *Jane Fonda's*
anti-war revue, and in horror-
comedy *Slaxx*, late-stage capitalism
is the true villain.



MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

56 Records of Note *A pandemic*
can't stop the music, and this week
the Reader reviews current releases
by *Valerie June*, *Tree*, *Nick Cave*
& *Warren Ellis*, *Kuzu*, *Autarkh*, and
more.

60 Chicagoans of Note *Alejandro*
Ayala, aka King Hippo, DJ and
producer

62 Early Warnings *Rescheduled*
concerts and other updated listings

62 Gossip Wolf *Deeper stream*
from the *Cultural Center* for the
anniversary of *Auto-Pain*, *YouTube*
channel the *Fireside Tapes*
uploads late-90s sets from the
storied venue, and *Bodymilk Tapes*
cofounder *Hedra Rowan* drops an
album of vocal experiments.



OPINION

63 National Politics *It's time*
to meet *Joe Biden's* bosses—
corporations and the investor class.

66 Savage Love *Dan Savage* offers
advice to a man who can't give his
friend another phone job.

CLASSIFIEDS

69 Jobs
69 Apartments & Spaces
69 Marketplace



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
PRODUCTION MANAGER KIRK WILLIAMSON
GRAPHIC DESIGNER AMBER HUFF
MUSIC EDITOR PHILIP MONTORO
THEATER AND DANCE EDITOR KERRY REID
CULTURE EDITOR BRIANNA WELLEN
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

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL JOHN DUNLEVY
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR JANAYA GREENE
EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATE TARYN ALLEN

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, LISA SOLOMON
CLASSIFIED SALES MANAGER WILL ROGERS

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 ®

THIS WEEK'S COVER

WE HAVE A tradition here at the *Reader* of tasking one of the city's most talented illustrators, Jason Wyatt Frederick, with creating a *Where's Waldo*-esque tableau every year for Pitchfork, filled with a who's who of Chicago personalities and small visual puzzles spelling out the music fest's lineup. When it seemed clear that we would go at least one if not more years without a Pitchfork Fest, we knew we couldn't go that long without a Frederick cover. So when the Best of Chicago issue came around, we knew what we had to do.

The theme of this year's Best of Chicago is losses and gains, allowing us to eulogize what is no more while still recognizing that there were some good things in 2020 after all. Stages and bowling alleys may be

collecting cobwebs, but farmers' markets and drive-ins are thriving. When indoor dining shut down, ghost kitchens and Instagram accounts kept us on the pulse of culinary innovations. Sure, the parks and beaches were closed for a while, but that allowed nature to *heal*—and we got enough interaction with wildlife being around our pets 24-7. And who needs to leave home when you have "WAP" on repeat? Frederick captured the last year in a nutshell, and as much as I love the way it looks, I hope we can go back to our old tradition next year and celebrate gathering together again. —BRIANNA WELLEN

For more of Frederick's work, go to cargocollective.com/jwfrederick.



SHOP LOCAL,
DRINK LOCAL
KOVAL

Whiskey, gin and specialty spirits crafted with **unique grains**, signature **heart cut** techniques, and only the very **best quality** distillate. Made in the heart of Chicago's Malt Row since 2008.

ORGANIC | HEART CUT | KOSHER



KOVALDISTILLERY.COM    @ KOVALDISTILLERY



Above: "Mumphis" ribs; right: Tandoori honey wings © SHEAL PATEL

FOOD FEATURE

Dhwaan BBQ Company smokes meat Desi-style

A weekly Pilsen pop-up is moving toward permanence.

By **MIKE SULA**

Over the span of four years, Sheal Patel converted his entire family of lifelong vegetarians into meat eaters.

The now-34-year-old founder of the new Pilsen-based pop-up Dhwaan BBQ Company thinks he was first seduced by meat in grade school by the pepperoni on the cafeteria pizza at Kingsley Elementary in Naperville.

His mother—the cook in the family—originally hailed from the overwhelmingly vegetarian state of Gujarat in western India, and wasn't thrilled by his new diet, but his parents didn't discourage him either.

"My mom said, 'That's fine if you like meat,'" he says. "'That's against our religion, but I'm not gonna bar you from eating it. But if you want to eat it you're gonna have to learn how to cook it yourself.'"

It was a present in fifth grade that solidified his destiny as a hardcore carnivore. "One of the best gifts I ever got as a child was a grill in the backyard," he says. "That was my pathway to really discover meat, because my mom still wasn't thrilled with raw meat in her own kitchen."

On Fridays she typically cooked non-Indian vegetarian dinners—say, bean burritos or pasta. "That slowly became meat day," he says. "I would give my mom my list of things I wanted from the supermarket, and Friday I would experiment in the kitchen for dinner."

Patel became a student of global barbecue, from tabletop Korean, to Hong Kong-style siu mei, to the kebabs of the Indian subcontinent,

FOOD & DRINK

but particularly to all the regional American styles of low-and-slow smoked meats. It wasn't long before he was raiding his mother's spice cabinet and applying garam masala and yogurt marinades to ribs, brisket, and chicken.

As an adult Patel went into finance, but always harbored a different ambition. "My creative outlet in life is completely food related," he says. "I travel globally to find the best food. I love cooking and experimenting in the kitchen. Whenever anyone asked, 'What's your dream job?' It's always owning a restaurant."

One Saturday in January he made a move, launching Dhuaan BBQ Company on Instagram (@dhuaanbbq), what he intended to be an exploratory pop-up offering racks of "Mumphis" ribs, rubbed in a tandoori spice blend, and glazed with a sweeter version of a tandoori marinade. Subsequent weekends he smoked tikka masala rubbed wings with butter chicken sauce, or "Tandoori Texas" rubbed chicken,

smoked, pulled, and served by the pound with a Maggi-cumin barbecue sauce.

While there's usually at least one low-and-slow smoked item on each Monday's menu, Patel offers a few other Indian or Indian-ish street food mash-ups each week like beef or lamb frankie rolls, the Mumbai street food roti-egg wrap staple; or masala egg sliders, spicy garlic butter scrambles with cilantro, onion, and Amul cheese on pao bread, soft rolls baked by the Hoffman Estates outlet of the south Indian bakery chain Hot Breads.

The runaway best seller has been his Philly Masala, a gooey cheesesteak seasoned in the style of the famous seekh kebab from south Mumbai's legendary Bademiya.

Patel says he's gotten a bit of pushback in his DMs for describing Dhuaan, which is Hindi for "smoke," as "Indian barbecue," since the term frequently refers to pork- (and beef-) free-enterprises in areas with large Muslim

concentrations. But he's unmoved. "In America, barbecue is different everywhere," he says. "To pair Indian spices with pork is just obvious to me."

It hasn't put a dent in a business that exploded out of the gate. Right now he's maxed out at 50-70 orders each Saturday, and is trying to determine his next move, whether it's a food truck, a ghost kitchen, or a brick-and-mortar. "We never saw this taking off the way it did."

And he hasn't flouted every dietary restriction. On the first Saturday of Lent, except for the cheesesteaks, he offered a mostly vegetarian menu that included a spicy Chicago-Mumbai mash-up, a pepper and egg sandwich for "the large Indian-Christian community who's looking for something Indian-flavored and different to eat during Lent." 🍴

🐦 @MikeSula



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

FREE SINCE 1971

FREE

IS NOT
FREE

chicagoreader.com/donate

We Couldn't Be Free Without You—
Support Community Journalism



But it's good times for Congressman Chuy and the officials who owe their seats to him.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OFFICE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

POLITICS

Tough times for the machine

The old Democratic bosses have been taking a beating.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

In honor of this special issue dedicated to what's lost and gained over the last year, allow me to say a few words about Chicago's legendary Democratic machine.

Talk about a rough year. Man, it's been getting a shellacking from all corners—and you can't even blame the pandemic.

Two of its greatest icons have been ousted or are just hanging on—we'll get to you, Michael Madigan and Alderman Ed Burke.

Moreover, it's getting pummeled by Hollywood.

In the last year there have been two highly praised movies lambasting the wretched behavior of Chicago's political bosses.

That would be Aaron Sorkin's *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, which definitely falls into the category of fiction, since Sorkin more or less made things up as he went along his merry way.

And there's Shaka King's *Judas and the Black Messiah*, about the assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark by a consortium

of agents from the Chicago Police, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, and the FBI.

Great movie. But, at the risk of sounding like a local version of Donald Trump—what, you couldn't find a Chicago actor to play Fred Hampton?

Back to the struggles of machine politicians . . .

Madigan, Burke, Alderwoman Carrie Austin, the late state senator Martin Sandoval, the Acevedos of the near southwest side—all have been bounced from office or caught in scandals.

I thought Madigan would last forever. But, no, the federal investigation into what he knew and when he knew it about Commonwealth Edison putting his cronies on the payroll eventually caught up with him.

Earlier this year, he couldn't get reelected house speaker. So he decided to step down from the seat he'd held since 1972.

I felt kind of bad to see him struggle at the end. I know, he's an old machine boss. But

Madigan had the guts to stand up to former Governor Rauner's assault against unions when other Democratic chieftains (like a certain Mayor Rahm) covered under the table.

Boy, it was a rough ending. Madigan maneuvered to have local Democratic committeemen select Edward Guerra Kodatt to replace him as state rep.

Kodatt served for all of three days before stepping down due to unrevealed "alleged questionable conduct."

Democratic committeemen then selected Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar, a protégé of 23rd Ward alderwoman Silvana Tabares—who's the answer to the following trivia question . . .

Who's the only alderperson in the history of Chicago to be a student in a class taught by my old partner in crime, Mick "the professor" Dumke?

Yes, years ago, Mick taught a journalism class at Columbia College, and a very young Tabares was one of his scholars. I don't know if that makes her a good alderwoman, but I'm sure she's a heckuva speller.

As long as I'm losing you in a flurry of names, let's go crazy and turn that flurry into a snowstorm . . .

Nothing symbolizes the end of the machine as the comings and goings of Democratic officeholders on the southwest side.

Almost all of the officials who owed their positions to Burke have been replaced by those who owe their seats to Congressman Jesús "Chuy" García, the machine defeater.

In 1998, García was a state senator when he was ousted by Tony Muñoz, part of the Hispanic Democratic Organization.

HDO was as machine as you can get. It was created by Mayor Richard M. Daley primarily to make sure that only puppets of Daley got elected from Hispanic wards.

Actually, HDO also sent goons to campaign on behalf of Rahm Emanuel when he ran for Congress on the north side. As you can see, you didn't have to be Hispanic to get backed by HDO—just a Daley puppet.

Muñoz is still a state senator. But García has long since recovered from that loss.

In 2010, he was elected to the Cook County Board of Commissioners. In 2015, he forced Mayor Rahm into a runoff. And in 2018, he was elected to Congress after Luis Gutiérrez stepped down.

And now almost all of the offices on the southwest side are filled by people who owe their starts to Congressman García. Get ready for the deep dive . . .

García's old county board seat is filled by Alma Anaya, who defeated Angeles Sandoval, Martin Sandoval's daughter, in the 2018 primary.

That same year, Aarón Ortíz, another García ally, defeated state representative Dan Burke, Ed Burke's baby brother.

Last year Ortíz doubled down by beating Ed Burke himself in the race for 14th Ward Democratic committeeman.

So you might call him the Burke beater.

Meanwhile, Democratic committeemen selected Celina Villanueva to replace the aforementioned Tabares when she was named to replace Michael R. Zalewski (aka, the father) when he stepped down as alderman.

Coincidentally, Tabares got her start in politics in 2012 when she was elected to replace Michael J. Zalewski (aka, the son) when he was redistricted to another house seat.

So you might call her the Zalewski replacer.

Wait, I'm not done.

Last year committeemen selected Villanueva to replace Martin Sandoval—father of Angeles—after he stepped down as state senator, having got caught up in a bribery scandal.

After that Edgar Gonzalez Jr.—a Harvard grad—was named to fill Villanueva's legislative vacancy.

Hold on. Let me catch my breath. That was exhausting.

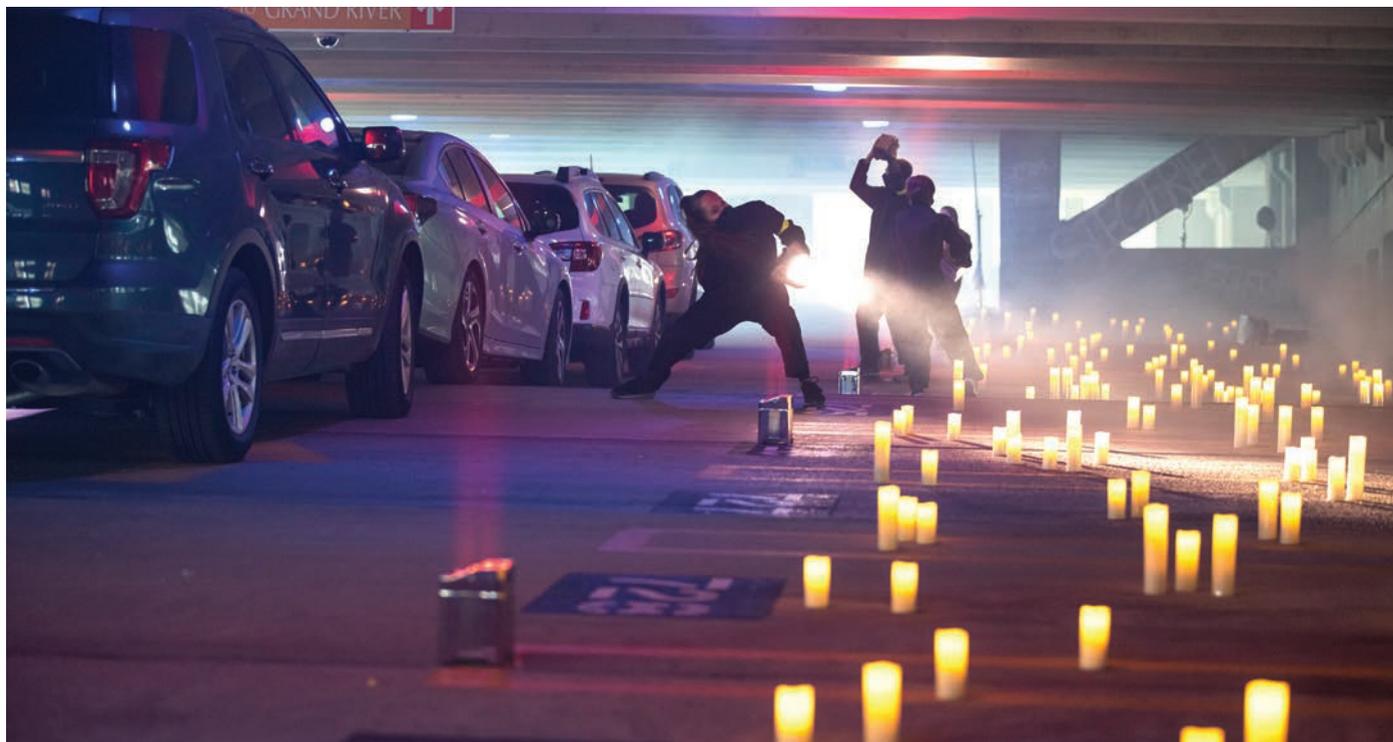
By the way, Gonzalez wrote for the *Harvard Crimson*, his college newspaper. And, like Tabares, he clearly had enough sense not to go into journalism.

Last we saw of Alderman Burke he was criticizing Mayor Lightfoot for the very machine tactic of spending \$281.5 million in federal COVID relief on police. If Burke keeps talking like a "reformer," maybe García will let him stay on as alderman.

As you can see, the machine's been trounced. But is it dead?

Well, that old transactional you-scratch-my-back-I'll-scratch-yours mentality is clearly still very much alive in Chicago politics. My guess is it will flourish for years to come. **✎**

@bennyshow



Twilight: Gods ■ MITTY CARTER/MICHIGAN OPERA THEATRE

CULTURE

Lyric and CSO face the music

A year after the shutdown, they're bringing it back.

By DEANNA ISAACS

It was Friday, the 13th of March, 2020, when Lyric Opera general director Anthony Freud had to cancel the company's decade-in-the-making, mega-bucks project—a three-week run of Richard Wagner's four-opera opus, the Ring Cycle.

The perfect date for what Freud calls “about as nightmarish a scenario as is possible to contemplate” for an opera company: pulling the plug on this internationally promoted project three-quarters of the way into rehearsal. He remembers thinking, “Well, it's not going to get worse than having to cancel the Ring.”

“Of course, I was wrong about that,” Freud says.

Well, yes: according to a nifty (if sobering) interactive dashboard run by Americans for the Arts, 99 percent of nonprofit arts organizations have had to cancel events, at a total estimated loss to them so far of \$15 billion and nearly a million jobs.

Friday the 13th was also the last day that the full Lyric staff worked in the opera house.

Freud says he couldn't have imagined that a year later he'd still be working from home, having weathered the cancellation of the entire next season.

But it was clear, immediately, that the cost would be steep. For fiscal year 2020, which ended June 30, and included the cancellation of Lyric's annual musical theater production (*42nd Street*), he was staring down a “worst-case scenario” operating deficit of \$27.5 million.

That would have been the loss if every ticket had to be refunded, and all budgeted expenses, including “the full cost of all our collective bargaining agreements,” were paid, he says.

The actual deficit turned out to be \$13 million. Freud says this was thanks to production sponsors, “all of whom agreed to allow us to repurpose their sponsorships”; audience members who donated their tickets back to Lyric; and cost cutting that included staff cuts and furloughs, and agreements with the various unions for pay reductions.

Freud says Lyric was one of only six performing arts organizations in the U.S. (CSO and the Met were among the others) ineligible for PPP because their employee count exceeded the maximum of 500. (He notes that what the six have in common is ownership of their own buildings.) They may yet qualify for a federal Shuttered Venue Operators Grant; they're waiting for the SBA to finalize the details of eligibility.

Meanwhile, in just three months, the curtain comes down on fiscal 2021—a full year in which the opera house was shuttered. Freud declines to comment on how painful that'll be financially, but says they're regarding it as a “reimagined” season in which they've learned “a huge amount,” and have been busy developing virtual programming, available free on the Lyric's YouTube and Facebook channels. Coming up on video this spring: Lyric's always terrific Ryan Opera Center showcase, a concert celebrating the tenure of former music director Andrew Davis, and a cabaret featuring

Broadway classics. What you won't see there is Met-in-HD-style video of past Lyric opera productions. “The only video we have is a single fixed-camera archive recording, which we do not have the right to use publicly,” Freud says.

One much-anticipated feature of last fall's cancelled opening was new seating. It would finally correct the problem that had main floor audiences craning their necks to see around the (inevitably giant) noggin of whoever was sitting in front of them. The new seats are in, all 3,276 of them. And, “we can't be 100 percent certain,” Freud says, but (Ta-da!) he expects to have derrieres in those seats as soon as September, when “the plan is to open our season with a new production of Verdi's *Macbeth*.”

Other operas set for the upcoming season are Barrie Kosky's production of *The Magic Flute*; Lyric's first main stage Spanish opera, Daniel Catán's *Florencia en el Amazonas*; and Terence Blanchard's *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*.

Exactly when? That's still up in the air: the season announcement, usually made in January, has been pushed to May. “Our thinking is that hopefully by then things will be a little clearer,” Freud says.

Lyric is about to present a live-performance opera, however—just not in the opera house. In programming reminiscent of the kind of thing Chicago Opera Theater's former general director, Andreas Mitisek, has been doing for years (and still does at his base, Long Beach Opera), Lyric will present *Twilight: Gods*, a “radical reimagining” of *Götterdämmerung*, the last work of the Ring cycle, in the Millennium Park garage, April 28, 30, and May 2.

Dreamed up and directed by Naperville native Yuval Sharon (and co-commissioned by Michigan Opera Theatre, where Sharon is artistic director), it'll be staged as a 70-minute “drive thru,” and will feature, in addition to Wagner's music, poetic narration by Chicago's avery r. young. At \$125 per car, with a total 300-car limit, and with soprano Christine Gorerke likely as Brünnhilde, it'll be a hot ticket. The plan is to stream it for the rest of us who, at least, won't have exhaust fumes as a potential issue. Freud says it's an example of “how COVID has forced us to think of new creative opportunities.”

NEWS & POLITICS

continued from 8

There's another example of opportunity seized over at the website of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Like Lyric, the symphony took a hit in fiscal 2020, though a considerably smaller one. Facing a potential loss of as much as \$9 million, president Jeff Alexander says they reduced staff (all part-time employees were furloughed) and compensation (including salary cuts worked out with the musicians union), and managed to whittle the actual operating deficit down to \$4 million.

The CSO is also holding off on a 2021/2022 season announcement. Given continuing questions about things like social distancing on stage and limits on audience capacity, they probably won't announce until June. But Alexander says he expects a season of live performances in Orchestra Hall that will open in September with three weeks of concerts conducted by Maestro Muti.

"We're not anticipating that restrictions will necessarily be fully lifted in the September to November period," Alexander says, "so we're working on programs [for that period]

that will use a smaller orchestra. Instead of 90 or 100 musicians onstage, there might be 50."

In the meantime, CSO has been honing an aurally vibrant online presence. It started shortly after the shutdown last spring, Alexander says, "with members of the orchestra making videos from home that we put up on our social media," several of which attracted millions of views. "Then, when it became clear that we wouldn't be presenting any concerts for awhile, we created CSOtv [accessible on the CSO website], filming chamber music concerts and streaming them behind a paywall." Alexander says, "People are watching from 23 countries around the world and all 50 states." The website also features free videos (including, for example, a PBS broadcast of Georg Solti conducting Beethoven's Seventh).

Also, pack your picnic basket: as announced by Ravinia Festival this week (and barring another Friday the 13th kind of episode), the CSO will have a six-week season there this summer. 

 @Deannalsaacs



**Specializing In The Universe of
Income Generating Strategies**

**Better Prepare & Protect
Your Finances Webinar**

April 6, 2021 6:00 PM CT | <https://bit.ly/3tiOmT3>

Victor F. Green Sr.
Investment Advisor Representative

GoodmanGreen.com
312-586-7373

Investment Advisory Services offered through Sound Income Strategies, LLC, an SEC Registered Investment Advisory Firm. Goodman Green Wealth Management and Sound Income Strategies, LLC are not associated entities.

POETRY CORNER

2159 N. Keeler

By Veronica Avila

Tonight we don't shrink,
there's no explosive silence,
none of us are too hard to love.

Tonight we're enough and
we unwind mangled roads with vueltas de cumbia,
as we break generational curses by eating flamin' hots.

Tonight our juju pulses, and we sound like ourselves.

Because these nights on the stoop are a ritual of persistence,
where through chisme we conjure a reclamation,
our ensuing carcajadas reverberate possibility,
as we call 'buenas' to proclaim our survival.

Veronica is from Chicago. She works as a digital organizer and when she isn't staring at a screen for justice or chilling on a stoop, she dabbles in poetry.

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.

Free online events with the Poetry Foundation

Register at PoetryFoundation.org/Events

Poetry Coalition Reading: Crip Ecologies with Kay Ulanday Barrett & Petra Kuppers

Reading and moderated discussion centering the intersection of disability justice and ecopoetics
Thursday, March 25, 2021, 7:00 PM

Open Door Reading Series: Mairead Case, Kenyatta Rogers & Erika Hodges

Highlighting Chicago's outstanding writers
Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 7:00 PM



PLAY WITH PURPOSE

Learn how every play helps at www.IllinoisLottery.com



#Doing**GOOD**

18+ Be Smart, Play Smart® Must be 18 or older to play.

Game odds available at IllinoisLottery.com





CONVERSATIONS
for Chicago's
LGBTQA+
community

CHICAGO

QUEER
& NOW

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

Subscribe & Listen at
chicagoreader.com/cqn

Losses and gains: Best of Chicago 2020

Contending with an *unprecedented* year and searching for hope

By **BRIANNA WELLEN**

When people describe 2020, it's very unlikely that they'll say it was the best year of their lives. Just that word on its own, "best," feels strange rolling off the tongue in association with anything that occurred amidst the police brutality, an increasingly incendiary administration, mounting natural disasters, and, oh yeah, the whole pandemic thing that we are still very much living through. So when it came time to start planning our annual Best of Chicago issue, we felt particularly uninspired at first. How did we know if the places and people and things we wanted to include would even still be around when the issue dropped? Will we feel guilty for not acknowledging how hard this year has been? How do we contend with so much loss?

Loss. There was a word that resonated more strongly. But the Best Things We Lost issue? That wasn't quite right, either. Piling onto the universal trauma without a sliver of hope wasn't doing anyone any good. And as we really started thinking about it, maybe 2020 wasn't all bad.

The positives of the year look different for everyone. For me, it was full of new experiences. I learned how to cook. I went on a 40-mile bike ride. I tried edibles, read new books, and donated all that money I was no longer spending at the bars to much more worthy causes fighting for social justice. And I, of course, mourned the closure of some of my favorite spots, felt the absence of in-person rituals, and am counting down the days until I can hug whoever I want (with their consent).

The losses and gains of this year have been very personal, so in turn the issue turned out that way too. It reads like group therapy—writers were given space to acknowledge what's being left behind and then move forward with optimism, maybe even excitement about what the city still has to offer us. Yes, we must reflect on the ways in which both Lori Lightfoot and the Chicago Bears fucked up in 2020. Of course we must grieve the permanent closing of many theaters and the loss of incredible artists. But we can also sing the praises of the new animals we met. We absolutely

must highlight the performers who made it work via livestream and telephone and pickup truck. We deserve to wear our locally branded merch with pride.

Some business to get out of the way: the reader poll results were determined by you, the readers! If you're angry about the results, you only have yourselves to blame! Let this be a reminder to keep a close eye on when voting begins next year so you can campaign for your favorites to get the top spot. Or better yet, share your own losses and gains on social media and tag us @Chicago_Reader with the hashtags #bestofchi and #BoC2020. Tell us what made your year worthwhile, shine a light on the people, places, and things that helped you survive, and we'll share with our followers. I should also acknowledge that a lot of writers' picks skew to the north side, in part because we weren't leaving our homes and that's where many of us live. It's something we recognize and are always working on changing—I hope this encourages all folks reading this to look beyond those borders.

There's no denying what we lost, but there's plenty we gained. For every beloved bar that shuttered, there is a restaurant pivoting to better serve the community. For every banger we missed out on listening to in the club, we gained an activist anthem to blast in the streets. And for every empty CTA car, there is someone sitting at home smiling because they don't have to waste precious hours on a commute.

If nothing else, we have to remember that we survived this year. If you are reading this and you are still breathing, there's plenty to celebrate. Maybe one day we'll be able to host a big party for you all as we originally planned. As we move further away from the one-year anniversary of the official start of the pandemic, things feel more and more hopeful. Holding onto that hope and remembering all that this great city has to offer is a celebration in itself. And if that's the best we can do, that's plenty. 📺

🐦 @BriannaWellen



CITY LIFE



SPORTS



BUY LOCAL



FOOD AND DRINK



CANNABIS



ARTS AND CULTURE



MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE

🎨 JASON WYATT FREDERICK



Lori Lightfoot just keeps fucking up

You'd think that with the pandemic still spreading, along with historic economic crises, uprisings for racial equity, and an attempted overthrow of our federal government, the city's first openly gay and only second female mayor would have made more strides for justice and equality in her city. For a mayor just halfway into her first term, Lori Lightfoot has racked up a stunningly long and sundry list of controversies.

But the disdain the mayor seems to have for some of her constituents, who she often refers to as Twitter trolls, has cemented her as a particularly callous leader; a far cry from what many thought, if misguidedly so, was going to be a term of progressive policy and racial justice.

It's hard not to see this disdain in her decision to raise the bridges last summer, protecting the luxury business district from protesters demanding racial equity. Or in her repeated attempts to withhold video showing in stark relief the failures of the city's police, like a nearly 40-minute video of a nude, sobbing, and pleading Anjanette Young's home being raided, or Martina Standley's leg being crushed under a police van for more than eight excruciating minutes. Or in the often-stalled negotiations with the Chicago Teachers Union. Or baseless attacks on reporters.

And if Lightfoot reads this, she'll probably just call me a troll or a critic. But it would do well on her to remember that trolls and critics like me have one thing she needs most: votes.

—ADAM M. RHODES

The Jackson Park heron

Dear Heron, Are you one or several? You stand still as a statue or stride through the water, limbs sliding through liquid with scarce a ripple. You stalk through the limpid pond, aloof as a reptile, then strike with switchblade speed to emerge, beak snapping and eyes impassive, a living lump wriggling down your throat. I have stood breathless in the thrall of

BEST ACTIVIST
Jahmal Cole
Runner-up: Miracle Boyd

BEST ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION
My Block, My Hood, My City
Runner-up: Brave Space Alliance

BEST ALDERMAN
Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez
Runner-up: Carlos Ramirez-Rosa

BEST ANIMAL RESCUE ORGANIZATION
PAWS Chicago
Runner-up: One Tail at a Time

BEST BLOCK CLUB
My Block, My Hood, My City
Runner-up: South Shore United Block Club Organization

BEST BLOG
Block Club Chicago
Runner-up: CHIRP Radio

BEST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Lincoln Square Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce
Runner-up: Andersonville Chamber of Commerce

BEST CHARITY
Greater Chicago Food Depository
Runner-up: Brave Space Alliance

BEST CHICAGO INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT TO FOLLOW
@chicagofoodauthority
Runner-up: @barrybutler9

BEST CHICAGOAN TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER
@ChiPartyAunt
Runner-up: @Jillhopkins



your strut, marveled at your shadowy reflection, observed you stirring less than the blades of grass ruffling in the breeze. I have seen you skimming with wings outspread, or sometimes felt just the brief resonance of wings as you depart. Predator. Sanctuary. Sparrows, orioles, owls, finches, blackbirds, warblers, gulls, terns, towhees, frigate birds, ducks, geese, flickers, merlins, parakeets, crows—of these, you are the greatest. Great blue heron. You lived through the summer of endless fireworks. You lived through parking lot bass beats and picnic carousing and dense clouds of marijuana. You regurgitated fish guts in the mouths of your young. I have never heard your voice. Among the willows. Among the brush. Among the oaks and maples. Among the ash and poplars. Among the flowering cherries. In fields of Queen Anne's lace. Next to the bridge. Next to the waterfall. Next to the pavilion. In the light of the moon. As the leaves fell. In the Japanese garden, there is no phoenix, only you. Until we meet again. —IRENE HSIAO

The highs and lows of CTA-less living

The pandemic allowed many to import workplace into living space, thereby reducing risk of illness and death. We talk about missing the experience of an office in addition to the other ways we used to socialize. But what about the commute? Some glorify that in-between time as an opportunity to read or “catch up” on phone-based tasks, but, for

me, it was nothing more than an exhausting, obligatory, unpaid extension of the workday. The commute isn't a break, it's time stolen by the constraints of modern urban capitalism that we're forced to borrow back only to kill. I made it disappear with podcasts or music, anything that didn't require much mental effort. The commute isn't productive time measured by remuneration, nor rest time measured by pleasure, but a liminal time measured only by fatigue. Having three hours a day back to myself has been priceless.

It is unfortunate that the joy of a life without commuting, of reclaiming dead time for rest and leisure and care for ourselves, our home, or other people, might come at the cost of a public good. Half of the CTA's budget comes from fares, the other from sales and real-estate transfer taxes. CTA experienced an 80 percent drop in ridership in the early months of the pandemic while shopping and home sales declined. Unlike other cities, Chicago never cut its services, and federal stimulus funding (of which CTA received more than \$817 million to date) has stemmed the revenue bleed. The CTA won't be forced to cut routes, increase fares, lay workers off, or suspend capital improvement projects through 2021. Still, the system saw a 57 percent drop in ridership in 2020 and though some of that has ebbed back, there are still less than 500,000 average daily rides today. It was 1.5 million before the pandemic. If most people who used to commute don't have to again, the long-term health of our public transit, which is essential to at least half a million Chicagoans' lives and livelihoods every day, could be in jeopardy. —MAYA DUKMASOVA



Before 2020, an empty CTA car was an uncommon sight. © FLICKR/RAED MANSOUR

Placing World of Wonders on hold at the Chicago Public Library website

Ever since I was a kid spending too much time at the Albany Park Library, I've always been a book borrower, not a buyer. There are few pleasures as all-engrossing as that of the public library: the sanctuary hush, the rows of shiny plastic-covered books, the grab-bag surprises on the carrel of recently returned tomes. But when Chicago Public Libraries reopened amidst the pandemic, I found myself worrying. Were the librarians given enough PPE? Did it make sense for me to dawdle in the aisles when I knew that public libraries were one of the few spaces left where unhoused people could spend time for free? How to social distance when crowded around the shelf of newly released fiction? And so, I discovered a new way to enjoy the library: the digital hold. How utterly magical, to read a review of a book or take a friend's recommendation and log into the Chicago Public Library website to place the book on hold at my local branch. Even the wait is exciting, giving me something to look forward to in the gray doldrums of pandemic life. I relish receiving the automated phone call, delight in striding (masked, of course) into the library, checking out my waiting book, and waltzing out. I enjoy it almost as much as the escape of a good story, or sinking into delicious prose, like that of this week's pickup: Aimee Nezhukumata-thil's transcendent collection of essays, *World of Wonders*. —NINA LI COOMES

Finding peace with virtual therapy

Seeking out others to lean on is an indispensable part of tending to our mental wellness. The Center on Halsted (COH) offers an array of virtual therapy groups for

BEST COWORKING SPACE

The Honeycomb Network

Runner-up: Ampersand

BEST ELECTED OFFICIAL IN CHICAGO

Lori Lightfoot

Runner-up: Rossana

Rodriguez Sanchez

BEST ELECTED OFFICIAL IN COOK COUNTY

Rossana Rodriguez Sanchez

Runner-up: Lori Lightfoot

BEST E-MAIL NEWSLETTER

Block Club Chicago

Runner-up: The Rundown

from WBEZ

BEST FEDERAL OFFICEHOLDER FROM ILLINOIS

Tammy Duckworth

Runner-up: Lauren Underwood

BEST LAWYER

Legal Aid Chicago

Runner-up: Ramsin Canon

BEST LOCAL TV BROADCAST NEWS

Morning News on WGN

Runner-up: Chicago

Tonight on WTTW

BEST LORI LIGHTFOOT FUCKUP

Anjanette Young raid cover-up

Runner-up: Being a cop

BEST NORTH-SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

Logan Square

Runner-up: Andersonville

BEST OVERALL RADIO STATION

WBEZ

Runner-up: WXRT



**Thank You for Making
The Red
Balloon Co.
the Best Children's
Clothing Store in Chicago!**



THE RED BALLOON CO.
a unique store for kids
In Bucktown since 1998!
Come visit us at
1940 N Damen Ave Chicago, IL 60647
773-489-9800

READER



Find **hundreds
of Reader-
recommended
restaurants,**
exclusive video
features, and sign up
for weekly news at
**chicagoreader.com/
food.**

BEST PODCAST

Singles Only

Runner-up: *Crushes!*
with Deanna Ortiz

BEST PODCAST HOST

Ben Joravsky, *The Ben Joravsky Show*

Runner-up: James VanOsdol,
Car Con Carne

BEST RADIO DJ

Lin Brehmer

Runner-up: Jill Hopkins

**BEST SOUTH-SIDE
NEIGHBORHOOD**

Pilsen

Runner-up: Hyde Park

**BEST STATE ELECTED
OFFICIAL**

Tammy Duckworth

Runner-up: J.B. Pritzker

BEST SUBURB

Evanston

Runner-up: Oak Park

BEST TOUR

**Chicago Architecture
Center boat tour**

Runner-up: Chicago Detours

**BEST WEST-SIDE
NEIGHBORHOOD**

Humboldt Park

Runner-up: West Town

continued from 15

cilitated by psychologists and counselors that support LGBTQ+ individuals and their allies facing similar challenges during the pandemic and beyond.

Although not pandemic-specific, two other groups provide coping strategies that apply to those suffering from COVID-related stress. Grief and Loss provides alternate ways to connect and grieve when attending a funeral isn't an option, and Queer Body Image & Body Positivity addresses struggles related to self-perception and those using food to self-soothe, particularly during the pandemic when many people are less physically active.

According to Ashley Molin, associate director of behavioral health at COH, there has been a significant uptick in support group participation during the pandemic, with a 50 to 75 percent increase depending on the group. "We've been able to reach people who I think otherwise may not have been comfortable coming into the Center, especially those who may not be as out or as comfortable with their identities yet," Molin says. "I think having other primarily queer people to connect with decreases that sense of isolation many of us are experiencing during COVID."

Participants in COH virtual therapy groups are required to complete a brief registration with a group facilitator. COH groups run three cycles per year (spring, summer, and fall) and group programming may vary per cycle. For more information, contact 773-472-6469 (extension 460) or behavioralhealth@centeronhalsted.org. —**TONY PEREGRIN**

Cuddling with Popcorn the chicken

It's hard to describe the otherworldly (and interspecies) connection that comes with holding a squawking hen, but in a year of no touching or socializing, it was a defining high point. I discovered Nettelhorst Elementary School's chicken coop on a neighborhood walk and dove headfirst into the community of "Chicken Tenders" that care for these nine charismatic ladies (names include Popcorn, Princess Fluffy Butt, Regina George, and Rosie). They were born in March 2019, the coop broke ground a month later, and Lakeview hasn't been the same since.

While volunteering, I've observed lines of individuals and families stopping by, bringing fruits and veggies for the chickens and asking

me questions that require a degree in zoology. Is it the novelty of this unexpected urban escape? The chance to care for something besides our narcissistic, doomscrolling selves? Maybe I just need a puppy, but this poultry version of the human-animal connection has brought me mindfulness and joy, from my first cuddle with Popcorn to a friend's uplifting bond with Rosie after her dog's passing. If only more of our communities could offer this unlikely opportunity for personal growth.

These chickens are domesticated but fierce, and with the help of a hilarious and human-run Instagram, unapologetically heartwarming. @NettelhorstCoop moves fluidly from chicken puns to Bernie Sanders memes to a surprisingly poignant anecdote about Congressman John Lewis preaching to his flock of hens as a boy. These intrepid ladies are the only reason you'll find me up early during this pandemic. They'll cross snow and ice for simple pleasures like a celery stalk, and I think we could all use a little more of that fearlessness. —**MARISSA OBERLANDER**

The changing streets of Chicago

In many ways the pandemic has devastated the Chicagoland transportation system. Starting with the human toll, at least 14 local transit workers died from the disease, and 1,874 employees tested positive.

The coronavirus has also contributed to a tragic spike in Chicago traffic deaths, from 96 fatalities on city streets in 2019 to 139 last year, a 45 percent increase. This epidemic was partly due to the increase in speeding during the pandemic, when fewer people have been driving and the roads are less congested. Nine of the victims were riding bikes, the highest number of any year in the past decade.

CTA, Metra, and Pace ridership has plummeted, and downtown foot traffic has also been at a fraction of normal levels. And, of course, for many months Chicagoans lost access to the Lakefront Trail and the 606, and shoreline parks and beaches didn't officially reopen until late February. That was pretty infuriating since Mayor Lightfoot reopened the beachfront bars last summer.

Unlike cities from Paris to Oakland, California, that radically reconfigured their street to enable safe walking, biking, and transit use, Chicago was slow to take action on that front. However, after a lot of cajoling from Streetsblog, the city finally launched a Slow Streets program in late May, banning through traffic

on residential roadways from Woodlawn to Belmont Cragin to Uptown to help residents stroll, jog, scoot, and pedal safely in the street.

The city also piloted new bus-only lanes on several miles of 79th and Chicago Avenue to help shorten commutes, reducing riders' chances of exposure to the virus. And Chicago's Cafe Streets initiative, pedestrianizing dozens of business strips for outdoor dining, proved wildly successful, so much so that I'm hopeful it will become a permanent feature during the warmer months long after COVID-19 is just a bad memory. —**JOHN GREENFIELD**

Community action is more important than ever

People have been doing the work in Chicago for years. For decades. For entire lifetimes. The city itself was built on activism—it cannot be stated enough that this is nothing new. And in 2020 nothing slowed down. If anything, the year allowed even more people to realize just how angry they were and turn to community stalwarts to finally do something about it. Endless resource sharing on social media gave folks the tools to safely attend protests, call or e-mail representatives, have tough conversations with family members, provide supplies for people in need, and unlearn harmful practices. Organizations like the Chicago Community Bond Fund, Black Lives Matter Chicago, Brave Space Alliance, and the Let Us Breathe Collective got the attention (and the money) they've long deserved. We saw the efforts of people like KJ Whitehead, who for the past nine months has stood at the corner of Winchester and Winnetmac Avenues with a different sign every day, inviting others in the neighborhood to join her in peaceful protests of racism, transphobia, Chicago Police, and more. People like Yesenia Chavez, Oscar Sanchez, and Chuck Stark who went on a monthlong hunger strike to protest a metal-shredding facility set to open along the Calumet River at East 116th Street. People like Mohawk Johnson who spent nearly a week in jail for defending protesters from police. And of course countless others who took to the streets, who provided for others in need, who maybe just started paying attention. If this year has taught us anything it's that the "community" in community action is one of the most important recipes for change, and to make big moves we *all* have to do the work.

—**BRIANNA WELLEN**

T-Mobile

Because you work at
City of Chicago Police, Fire and EMS

OUR BEST DISCOUNT
for first responder families
50% off family lines

50% off add'l line price for lines 2-6 vs. Magenta®; w/AutoPay. Present verification for account holder at activation, maintain first responder line, & re-verify when requested or pay up to \$20/line more per month.



First responder families get 50% off family lines with unlimited talk, text, and smartphone data on our network, and more.

Call T-Mobile Work Perks at 855-570-9947

During congestion, the small fraction of customers using >50GB/mo. may notice reduced speeds until next bill cycle due to data prioritization. Video typically streams on smartphone/tablet at DVD quality (480p).

Present first responder verification in store (or if activating by phone/online within 45 days at promotions.t-mobile.com/FirstResponder). First responder plan for eligible state & local law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical response personnel, pensioned retirees, & parents, children, or spouses of first responders killed in the line of duty; not available to federal employees. Confirm your organization considers you eligible. Limited time offer; subject to change. At participating locations. Credit approval, deposit, \$10 SIM card, and, in stores & on customer service calls, \$20 assisted or upgrade support charge may be required. May not be combined with other promotions/discounts and features; existing customers who switch may lose certain benefits. U.S. roaming and on-network data allotments differ: includes 200MB U.S. roaming. Unlimited talk & text features for direct communications between 2 people; others (e.g., conference & chat lines, etc.) may cost extra. Unlimited high-speed data US only. In Canada/Mexico, up to 5GB high-speed data then unlimited at up to 128Kbps. Not available for hotspots and some other data-first devices. Capable device required for some features. **Video streams** at up to 1.5Mbps. Optimization may affect speed of video downloads; does not apply to video uploads. **Tethering:** 3GB high-speed data then unlimited on our network at max 3G speeds. Smartphone usage is prioritized over tethering usage, which may result in higher speeds for data used on smartphones. **AutoPay Pricing** for lines 1-8. Without AutoPay, \$5 more/line. May not be reflected on 1st bill. **Int'l Roaming:** Not for extended international use; you must reside in the U.S. and primary usage must occur on our network. Device must register on our network before international use. Service may be terminated or restricted for excessive roaming. Usage may be taxed in some countries. Calls from Simple Global countries, including over Wi-Fi, are \$.25/min. (no charge for Wi-Fi calls to US, Mexico and Canada). Standard speeds approx. 128Kbps without Plus; with Plus approx. 256 Kbps. **Coverage** not available in some areas; we are not responsible for our partners' networks. **Network Management:** Service may be slowed, suspended, terminated, or restricted for misuse, abnormal use, interference with our network or ability to provide quality service to other users, or significant roaming. During congestion the small fraction of customers using >50GB/mo. may notice reduced speeds until next bill cycle due to data prioritization. On-device usage is prioritized over tethering usage, which may result in higher speeds for data used on device. See [T-Mobile.com/OpenInternet](https://www.t-mobile.com/OpenInternet) for details. See **Terms and Conditions (including arbitration provision)** at www.t-mobile.com. ©2020 T-Mobile USA, Inc.



SPORTS & RECREATION

BEST OF
CHICAGO
2020

The freaking Chicago Bears gave me agita

As a nonathlete and lifelong Chicago sports fan, I do more than my share of sitting in a chair and grumbling at televisions. Hey, we all have a role to play in the great game of life. There were certainly a lot of non-sport-related reasons to grumble in 2020 but then . . . the freaking Bears. The 2020 Monsters of the Midway came on strong and full of hope and then dissolved into a pile of tears and confusion, like a teenage boy desperate to lose his virginity. Perhaps they threw too much money into their pass rush and not enough into, uh, building a decent offense and reinforcing their quarterback leadership, but what's the point of caring when we know that the front office makes insane decisions like not seeing the worth of championship winner Patrick Mahomes when he was available? And some of us were already done with it after Halas Hall had the chance in 2019 to perhaps bring on the talent and star power of one Colin Kaepernick, and passed, giving us yet another season of Much Ado About Trubisky. Perhaps the secret plan was to keep us distracted from the insanity of life during a pandemic with illogical front-office moves, dumb plays, and a heartbreaking underutilization of some of the best defensive players we've had since the ones y'all know from the "Super Bowl Shuffle." In that case, thank you so much, 2020 Bears season. You gave me enough agita that I forgot about all the other ailments for a few weeks.

—SALEM COLLO-JULIN

BEST ALTERNATIVE TO
THE LAKEFRONT PATH
The 606

Runner-up: North Branch Trail

BEST ATHLETE
Javier Báez

Runner-up: José Abreu

BEST BILLIARDS
Surge Billiards

Runner-up: Chris's Billiards

BEST CANOE/
KAYAK RENTALS
Urban Kayaks

Runner-up: Chicago River
Canoe and Kayak

BEST DOG PARK
Montrose Dog Beach

Runner-up: Jackson Bark

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD
PARK
Humboldt Park

Runner-up: Winnemac Park

BEST PRO MEN'S
SPORTS TEAM
Chicago White Sox

Runner-up: Chicago Cubs

BEST PRO WOMEN'S
SPORTS TEAM
Chicago Sky

Runner-up: Chicago Red Stars

BEST SPORTS TV/
RADIO ANNOUNCER
Pat Hughes

Runner-up: Len Kasper



Bowling and rolling no more

Will we ever rent shoes again? It's a required act for two of my favorite activities, one that feels downright irresponsible in a post-pandemic, hyper-hygienic world. Just thinking about being in a bowling alley or a roller rink incites a scent memory of greasy foods, stale beer, sweaty socks—I can practically smell the germs. Still, I miss the lanes at Fireside Bowl, the snack bar at the Fleetwood Roller Rink, the camaraderie and sense of athleticism that both activities afford to even the most sedentary indoor kids.

Roller skating at least took on a life of its own in the past year, thanks in part to viral TikToks and humanity's desire to discover as many new hobbies to distract them as possible. Over the summer, the lakefront trail, parks, and sidewalks were full of skaters in shades and headphones, some skillfully weaving through crowded paths, others slowly scooting and trying their best not to wipe out. Every glimpse of a four-wheeled skate gave me butterflies followed by a deep longing to be sailing in circles under a disco ball to 80s tunes with a rink full of people.

Some speculate that bowling alleys might not survive the pandemic. And it's not hard to imagine why—there hasn't been the same urgency to save recreational spots as there has been for bars, restaurants, and venues, not to mention the “sticking your fingers into holes other people have stuck their fingers into” of it all. But for now, Fireside Bowl's doors remain open (with the proper precautions in place), and once I'm all vaxxed up it'll be one of my first stops to make sure it stays that way. In the not-too-distant future I'll be rolling strikes again. Soon enough, I'll be fishtailing around Fleetwood Roller Rink. And when the time comes, I'll be ready with a gallon of hand sanitizer and my very own pairs of shoes and skates, just to be safe. —**BRIANNA WELLEN**

Women's pro sports deserve our flowers and our dollars

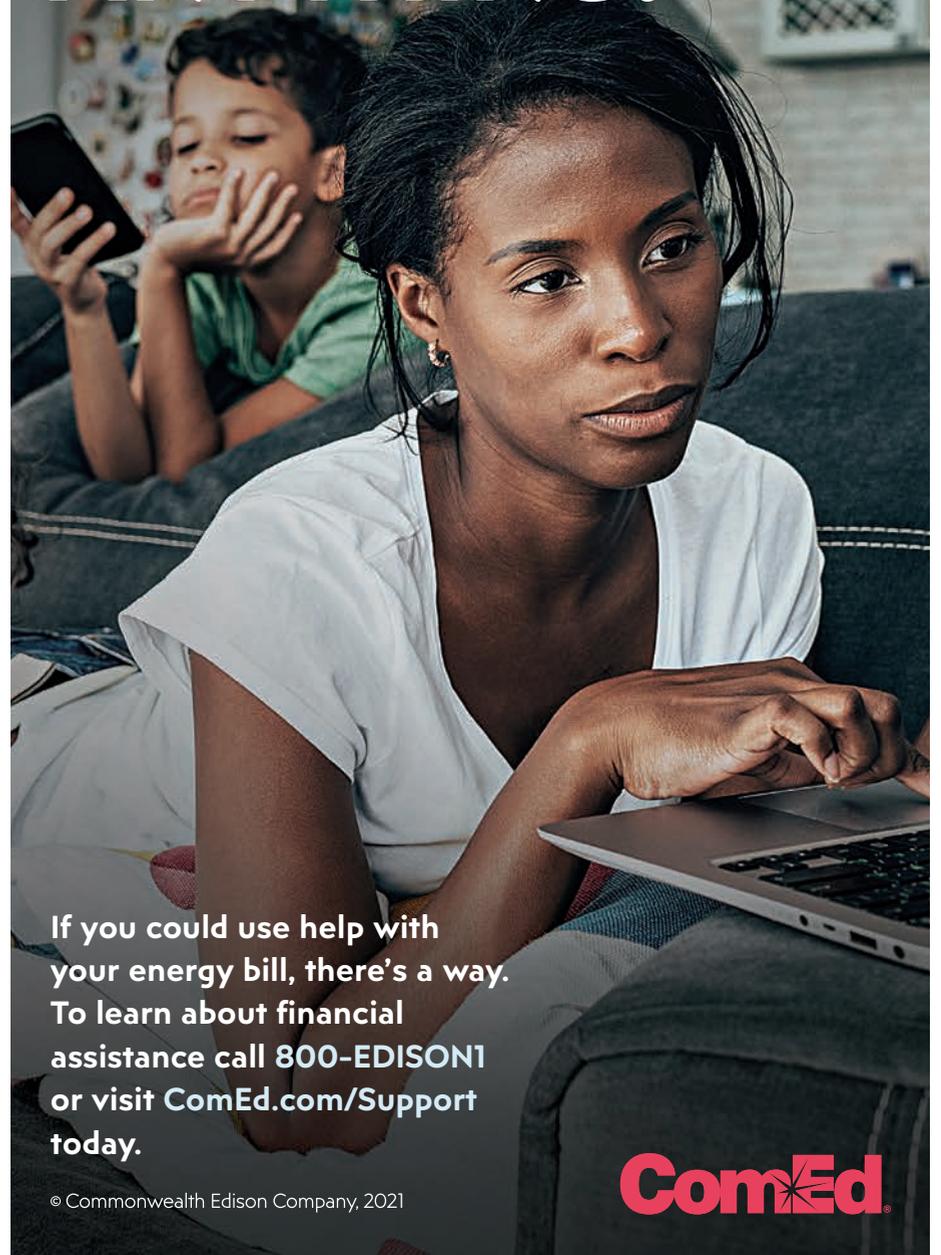
The pandemic forced some changes in how professional sports are played (and watched, as none of us can gather at stadiums at the moment), but our need for the occasional distraction from challenges led a lot of us to embrace the modifications and figure out a way to support our teams. Unfortunately, Chicago's women's professional teams still tend to get overlooked, which is shameful because we happen to have a lot of talented players.

The Chicago Sky made a notable move in February 2021 when they signed Candace Parker, an Olympian and WNBA Most Valuable Player. Since it has to be said, she's been referred to as the “Jordan” of the WNBA, but more importantly she's joining a team that already had a strong starting lineup including league All-Stars Courtney Vandersloot and Diamond DeShields.

I'm guessing that the takeaway for some of you is, “We have a women's professional basketball team?” We do! We also have a solid women's soccer team in the Chicago Red Stars, who start their season this spring at SeatGeek Stadium in Bridgeview and a talented professional fastpitch softball team, the Chicago Bandits, who play at the Ballpark at Rosemont in non-pandemic years. And plans are underway for the Chicago North Stars, a women's hockey team that includes former college and USA Hockey champions. The North Stars are currently playing in men's amateur leagues as a way to keep up their skills while they make a bid to join the National Women's Hockey League and become Chicago's first women's professional hockey team. There's a lot of ways to show our civic pride, but supporting our women's teams is the paramount way for us to show off what Chicago is all about.

—**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

TOGETHER, WE CAN POWER THROUGH ANYTHING.



If you could use help with your energy bill, there's a way. To learn about financial assistance call 800-EDISON1 or visit ComEd.com/Support today.

© Commonwealth Edison Company, 2021

ComEd



BUY LOCAL

BEST OF
CHICAGO
2020

Streetwear for your face with Jugrnavt's 'Chicago Everywhere' mask

I had trouble finding a mask that conformed to my face at the start of the pandemic. The ones I did have at my disposal at first tended to either be loose enough to slide around and reveal parts of my face I intended to conceal, or were tight enough to fold my earlobes over and press down on the tip of my nose with an intensity that left a mark. In the spring, I noticed Chicago designer Roger Rodriguez began making masks by hand using materials at his disposal, including coffee sacks and 3M reflective fabric. I'm not a hypebeast, but I have enough of a deep appreciation for independent Chicago streetwear companies that one of my dresser drawers is jam-packed with locally designed T-shirts; so I jumped at the chance to purchase a face mask by an owner of the great Loop boutique, Jugrnavt. Rodriguez's sturdy mask was just what I had been looking for, and bested only by the washable masks Jugrnavt began to produce in larger quantities last summer. I bought a couple of the store's masks, which have easy-to-adjust elastic straps that don't tug on my ears, a cozy shape that perches neatly on my nose and contains the lower half of my face in its compact frame, and a pocket to slide in a filter. I'm keen on the black mask with the phrase "Chicago Everywhere" superimposed over the mouth in clean letters. It's the mask I always want to wear whenever I step out of my house.

—LEOR GALIL

The much-needed affection of Neji the record store dog

The excellent record/vintage clothes shop Wild Prairie is one block from my pad and has been a godsend during quarantine. The small, very-easy-to-distance-

BEST APARTMENT FINDER

Craigslist

Runner-up: Domu

BEST AUTO DEALERSHIP

Berman Subaru

Runner-up: Honda of
Downtown Chicago

BEST AUTO REPAIR SHOP

Ashland Tire & Auto

Runner-up: Speedline

BEST BICYCLE SHOP

Working Bikes

Runner-up: Uptown Bikes

BEST BOOKSTORE

Women & Children First

Runner-up: Semicolon
Bookstore

BEST BOUTIQUE FOR MEN

Cowboys and Astronauts

Runner-up: Hazel

BEST BOUTIQUE FOR WOMEN

Hazel

Runner-up: Milk Handmade

BEST COMICS SHOP

AlleyCat Comics

Runner-up: Quimby's

BEST DANCEWEAR SHOP

Chicago Dance Supply

Runner-up: Gnat Glitter Kink

BEST FINANCIAL INSTITUTION/BANK

Wintrust

Runner-up: Kambs Jennings
Group of Compass Mortgage

BEST FINANCIAL PLANNER

Liz Krebs

Runner-up: Stephanie Zaide

BEST FLORIST

Flowers for Dreams

Runner-up: Fleur



within store has always felt safe, often with just one shopworker present (usually of the wonderful owner couple of Alex Gonzales and Natasha Rac) and there's usually a shopper or two perusing the bins. They have a great selection of vinyl including house, jazz, soul, and loads of 60s psychedelia (making this guy VERY happy). Despite this plethora of ideal factors, there's a running joke over at WP that people come into their establishment just to see their awesome pooch, and it's hard to deny.

The pup in question is a sweet, gentle Shiba Inu (one of my favorite breeds) named Neji. Neji used to sleepily hang in the back when I'd enter the shop, so I'd come to him for some petting-time, but these days he will run up and greet me as I enter the door (aww). Love is indeed hard to find in these distanced, messed-up times, but the affection I am missing most is that from dogs, and Neji has it in spades.

It's been truly comforting to know I can walk a few feet and have a quiet and even meditative cuddle session with a loving pooch. I know what you're thinking: *why not just get one?* Well, I (used to) travel/tour a bunch, and it can be a bit cruel to keep them in a cramped apartment like mine. I can still confidently say one day I will own a pooch, and I hope it's a dog as calming, endearing, and loveable as the best record store dog ever, Neji—because my offer of trading records for Neji didn't go over too well. —STEVE KRAKOW

The warm relief of the Gethsemane Garden Center

It was a bitter cold February day—the kind of day that Chicago is famous for, and the kind of day that makes lifelong residents wonder why they haven't broken down and moved to Miami—when I first explored Gethsemane Garden Center.

On this particularly brutal day, I met up with a friend to take a walk around Andersonville. In a pre-pandemic reality, we might have gotten lunch indoors or simply rescheduled, but the need for human interaction outweighed the frigid temperatures, and we weren't going to risk exposure to the virus to get it.

After trudging along the frozen ground for

BEST GARDEN STORE

Gethsemane Garden Center

Runner-up: Adams & Son Gardens

BEST HAIR SALON

Twisted Scissors

Runner-up: Penny Lane Studios

BEST HOME FURNISHINGS

Brown Elephant

Runner-up: District

BEST HOME GARDEN SUPPLY

Gethsemane Garden Center

Runner-up: Adams & Son Gardens

BEST JEWELRY STORE

The Silver Room

Runner-up: Bryn Mawr Jewelry

BEST KIDS' CLOTHING

The Red Balloon Co.

Runner-up: Peach Fuzz

BEST LANDSCAPE COMPANY

City Grange

Runner-up: Christy Webber Landscapes

BEST LOCAL CLOTHING DESIGNER

Hallie Borden of Milk Handmade

Runner-up: Seeker Intimates

BEST MOTORCYCLE SHOP

Motoworks

Runner-up: Federal Moto

BEST PET ADOPTION/ SHELTER

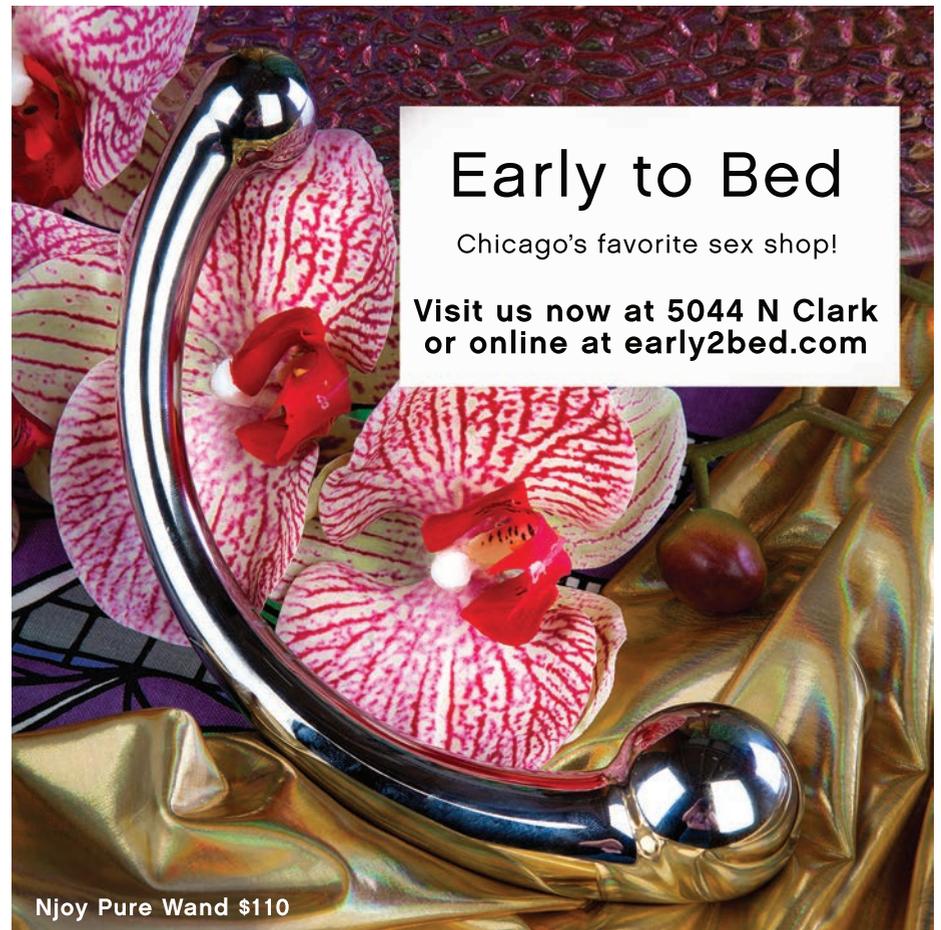
PAWS Chicago

Runner-up: One Tail at a Time

BEST PET STORE

Urban Pooch

Runner-up: Jameson Loves Danger



Early to Bed

Chicago's favorite sex shop!

Visit us now at 5044 N Clark
or online at early2bed.com

Njoy Pure Wand \$110

andersonville galleria

your year-round art fair

BEST OF CHICAGO 2020
ANDERSONVILLE GALLERIA
BEST PLACE TO BUY LOCAL WARES

Over 110 independent artists over three floors

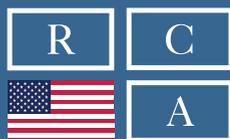
5247 N. Clark
in the heart of Andersonville
773-878-8570



“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](https://www.RecoveryCentersOfAmerica.com)
866-407-1399



continued from 21

a few miles, she pointed us in the direction of Gethsemane. When we walked in, the heat of the greenhouse provided instant relief, but the gorgeous assortment of plants—bonsais, succulents, pots full of greens hanging from nearly every direction—flooded me.

I'm something of a plant novice, with only a single succulent in my custody. But Gethsemane makes me want to empty my bank account and fill a car I don't have with everything I can fit under both arms. While I practiced restraint that day, I know I will be back soon to find a little beautiful something to brighten my apartment (which has also become my classroom and office).

There will probably be some cold days still before summer, but there is still beauty to be found even in the darkest Chicago winter; Gethsemane has enough beauty to go around until the next blizzard. —EMMA OXNEVAD

BEST PICTURE FRAMING STORE

Foursided

Runner-up: Blackbird Gallery + Framing

BEST PLACE TO BUY LOCAL WARES

Andersonville Galleria

Runner-up: Foursided

BEST PLACE TO GET MARRIED

Chicago Cultural Center

Runner-up: City Hall

BEST REAL ESTATE AGENT

Liz Jones at Keller Williams OneChicago

Runner-up: Michelle Schroeder at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Chicago

BEST REAL ESTATE COMPANY

@properties

Runner-up: Compass

BEST RECORD STORE

Reckless Records

Runner-up: Laurie's Planet of Sound

BEST RECOVERY CENTER

Howard Brown Health

Runner-up: Hazelden Betty Ford

BEST RESALE SHOP

Brown Elephant

Runner-up: Village Discount Outlet

BEST SEX TOY SHOP

Early to Bed

Runner-up: The Pleasure Chest

BEST SHOE STORE

Fleet Feet

Runner-up: Lori's Shoes

BEST STREETWEAR BRAND

Fat Tiger Workshop

Runner-up: ChicagoMidwestMade

BEST TATTOO ARTIST

Esther Garcia

Runner-up: Jonathan Watson

BEST TATTOO SHOP

Great Lakes Tattoo

Runner-up: Deluxe Tattoo

BEST T-SHIRT SHOP

Strange Cargo

Runner-up: Transit Tees

BEST VETERINARIAN

Uptown Animal Hospital

Runner-up: Blum Animal Hospital

BEST VINTAGE STORE

Lost Girls Vintage

Runner-up: Broadway Antique Market

BEST WESTERN WEAR

Alcala's Western Wear

Runner-up: Ace High Vintage

Kambs Jennings Group of Compass Mortgage
is honored to be first runner-up in the

Best of Chicago!

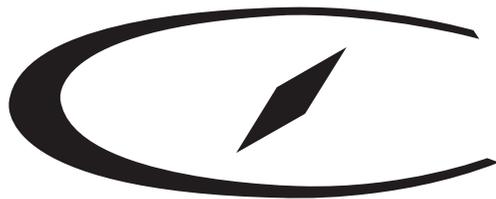
Win Your Dream Home!

Through our Get Committed Program, we can provide you with a **Loan Commitment**, that is better than a pre-approval. Our program solidifies your funding ahead of your competition and allows you to **close in 15 days***, putting you in the position to stand out and win in a multiple offer situation.

We're ready to serve our community and help you win the bid amidst this saturated market. Visit our website today to learn more!



KAMBS JENNINGS GROUP



Compass Mortgage

Your Local Independent Mortgage Banker

We're honored to be first runner up in the

Best of Chicago!

As your local, independent mortgage banker, we are here to meet your mortgage needs. With the current hot market, you need a team that can help you win the home of your dreams.

402-882-5626 (LOAN) • kjg@compmort.com
954 W Washington Blvd #500, Chicago, IL 60607

www.compmort.com/kjg

*15 day guarantee is subject to qualification and loan type

Illinois Residential Mortgage Licensee NMLS# 21808; John Kambs: NMLS# 224285; Caleb Jennings: NMLS# 1688645





FOOD & DRINK

BEST OF
CHICAGO
2020

Radical hospitality

“**T**he species in which peace and mutual support are the rule, prosper, while the unsociable species decay.” So wrote Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin, advocating for the concept of mutual aid, when communities care for their members rather than forcing them to eat each other to survive.

It’s a concept that has sustained a sizeable portion of the Chicago restaurant industry during the pandemic, while at the same time supporting farmers, vendors, bakers, and thousands of hungry Chicagoans. Launched in June at Kimski, the Community Kitchen + Canteen program has prepared and distributed or served nearly 61,000 free or pay-what-you-can meals, while employing 56 local chefs and expanding to four other restaurants all over the city, including Wherewithall in Avondale, Iyanze Bronze in Bronzeville, Whiner Beer Company in Back of the Yards, and Snakes & Lattes in Logan Square.

Since government has shown so little concern for the economic sustainability of one of the nation’s largest employers, nor given a flying fuck for the health and safety of its workforce, it’s on them—and us—to help. Born in Bridgeport as an outgrowth of Marz’s Community of the Future and the Co-Prosperity Sphere’s *Quarantine Times*, the program’s funded entirely through grants and individual donations to the Public Media Institute, which also published a comprehensive Mutual Aid Chicago map, plotting hundreds of other programs across the city where you can find free food—or fund it yourself. —MIKE SULA

The death (and resurrection?) of Crown Liquors

Folks living in the Logan-Avondale area vividly remember the crushing news of popular bar and liquor store Crown Liquors closing its doors in April last year. It was one of the early businesses to shutter due to the pandemic, which started the cycle of sadness we’ve been stuck in: watching our favorite bars, theaters, and restaurants get

BEST ALFRESCO DINING

Eris Brewery and Cider House

Runner-up: Beatnik

BEST BAGELS

New York Bagel & Bialy

Runner-up: Chicago Bagel Authority

BEST BAKERY

Dinkel’s

Runner-up: Lost Larson

BEST BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

Sultan’s Market

Runner-up: Redhot Ranch

BEST BANH MI

Nhu Lan Bakery

Runner-up: Ba Le Sandwiches

BEST BAR

Lost Lake

Runner-up: Liar’s Club

BEST BARBECUE

Smoque BBQ

Runner-up: Green Street Smoked Meats

BEST BARISTA

Haley Amicon

Runner-up: Tyrone Banks

BEST BEER SHOP

The Beer Temple

Runner-up: Andersonville Wine & Spirits

BEST BREAD

Bungalow by Middle Brow

Runner-up: Publican Quality Bread

BEST BURGER

Au Cheval

Runner-up: Kuma’s Corner

BEST BUTCHER SHOP

Paulina Market

Runner-up: Gene’s Sausage Shop & Delicatessen



uprooted. After mourning the loss of the staple that existed since the Prohibition era—a place that housed a plethora of memories, new friends, dance parties, and even networking meetings—my heart jumped at the newfound hope that we might be able to save it.

In December, I read our alderman's newsletter with excitement: The owner of the building at 2821 N. Milwaukee has plans to reopen the bar and liquor store under the same name. While this is a blessing for the community, the previous owners of the bar aren't involved. When it could open up is still a mystery, but I fear that the Crown Liquors we knew is not coming back. The bartenders I knew by name, the mini dance floor that didn't make me feel too exposed, the outdoor patio that had a perfect view of the neighborhood, and the free pizza from Dante's if you stayed late enough, it all fills me with nostalgia. I'm putting the old Crown Liquors into the history books but also looking forward to whatever "newness" the

revamped bar will bring once it reopens for a fresh start on the shelves of 2021—and what that fresh start might mean for other beloved shuttered dives. —ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Devon Market butter runs

I didn't have a list the last time I went grocery shopping without a mask. It was Saturday, March 14, 2020, and I had booked it down the alley between my apartment and the Devon Market to stock up on "the essentials" before a rumoured two-week stay-at-home order began. My cart was half full before I realized something awkward—I didn't know what the essentials were.

So I started over, snaking up and down each aisle, and I ended my trip in the dairy section. That's when I saw the butter: Amish and un-

BEST CARIBBEAN RESTAURANT
90 Miles Cuban Cafe
Runner-up: Casa Yari

BEST CARRYOUT/ DELIVERY COCKTAILS
Lost Lake
Runner-up: Scofflaw

BEST CHEESEMONGER
Cheeze & Thank You
Runner-up: Stamper Cheese Company

BEST CHEF
Stephanie Izard
Runner-up: Yari Vargas

BEST CHINESE RESTAURANT
Sun Wah BBQ
Runner-up: Lao Sze Chuan

BEST CHINESE TAKEOUT/DELIVERY
Sun Wah BBQ
Runner-up: House of Wah Sun

BEST COCKTAIL
Lost Lake
Runner-up: Scofflaw

BEST COFFEE ROASTER
Dark Matter
Runner-up: Intelligentsia

BEST DESSERTS
Bang Bang Pie & Biscuits
Runner-up: Hoosier Mama Pie Company

BEST DOUGHNUTS
Do-Rite Donuts
Runner-up: Stan's Donuts

Thank you
for voting us
BEST ONLINE COOKING INSTRUCTION
Try a virtual class at
thechoppingblock.com



Thank You, Chicago!
For being the Second [^]City.
Chance



Explore, Learn, Create

Summer art camps for ages four through nine develop your child's problem-solving and creative skills at a world-class institution.

Register now for
one-week and three-
week online programs.
saic.edu/cw

SAIC School of the Art Institute
of Chicago

Art, design, and writing courses
for adults, teens, and kids.

SAIC CONTINUING STUDIES | saic.edu/cw | cs@saic.edu | 312.629.6170



continued from 25

salted, with milky waxed paper wrapped and folded just so. It was beautiful—or was I losing my mind? I placed it on top of the rest of my cart's contents: a cheap bottle of red wine, a roll of cookie dough, two 28-ounce cans of Cento San Marzano Peeled Tomatoes, one white onion, and a box of dried rigatoni.

Two days later, I made my first batch of Marcella Hazan's Tomato Sauce, to which there are exactly three ingredients, one of which is butter (five tablespoons, in fact).

On the dozens of trips I've taken to the Devon Market since, I keep finding new treats that have helped me pass the time at home: rye flour for chewy chocolate chip cookies bigger than my head, little bottles of green juice with red caps for the days I need to detox. Perfect tins of anchovies for Caesar salads and bay leaves for bolognese. After a year of this pandemic, the people, places, and things I'm missing—my real essentials—don't fit on a grocery list, but I'm thankful to the market, for keeping me stocked on what I need to get by. —KAYLEN RALPH

Relearning to love fireside beers

The change of season from winter to spring in Chicago is all about looking forward. We anticipate that, some day in late May, White Man's Winter (my term for the seasonal mirror of "Indian Summer," blasts of cold after periods of vernal warmth) will finally end.

But this turn of season, from COVID Winter to Vaccine Spring, I anticipate something I will miss about recent months of working from home in a mostly shut-down city: cold beers beside a hot fire.

That combination I long associated with the family cabin in northern Wisconsin, on weekends when the weather might be fine or Pokegama Lake might be rimmed with new ice. The dockside fire ring was our evening ritual, and we'd stare into the flames while eating, drinking, and talking.

It's not the same in the city, of course, but many bars and restaurants that battled pandemic seating limitations brought fireside beers back, and I'm glad of it. A mostly solo moment, but nonetheless a reason to get out

BEST FALAFEL
Sultan's Market

Runner-up: Taste of Lebanon

BEST FARMERS' MARKET
**Logan Square
Farmers Market**

Runner-up: Green City Market

BEST FOOD RELIEF EFFORT
**Greater Chicago
Food Depository**

Runner-up: The Love Fridge

BEST FOOD TRUCK
DönerMen

Runner-up: The Fat Shallot

**BEST FRIED CHICKEN
SHACK**

**Honey Butter
Fried Chicken**

Runner-up: Harold's Chicken
(no franchise specified)

BEST GLUTEN-FREE PIZZA
Paulie Gee's

Runner-up: Spacca Napoli

BEST GOURMET MARKET
**Gene's Sausage
Shop & Delicatessen**

Runner-up: Eataly

BEST GREEK RESTAURANT
Greek Islands

Runner-up: Athenian Room

BEST HOT DOG
Superdawg

Runner-up: The Wiener's Circle

BEST ICE CREAM
Jeni's

Runner-up: Margie's Candies

BEST INDIAN RESTAURANT
The Spice Room

Runner-up: Ghareeb Nawaz

**BEST ITALIAN BEEF
SANDWICH**
Portillo's

Runner-up: Al's #1 Italian Beef



Staying out of the bars meant finding joy in a different drinking ritual. **BILL SAVAGE**

of the house and away from Zoom, to have a little (masked and distanced) social contact, and to savor the sensuous contrasts of frigid air and cool drink with bundled-up body heat and the fire's radiance.

So, as 2021 inches towards true spring, I plan to hit R Public House in Jarvis Square on every chilly happy hour I can, for a couple of Hofbrau Helles and the entrancing dance of propane flames. —**BILL SAVAGE**

No more date nights at Guthrie's

The hottest date I ever brought to Guthrie's Tavern was my dad. It was the day before Christmas Eve and we decided to hit the bar prior to *White Christmas* at the Music Box. My dad insisted on playing *Battleship* and I snuck a look at his board every time he went to buy us drinks. I apologized when I won and he assured me he was already winning by spending time with me. Snow covered Southport and continued coming down as we passed carolers under the blinking marquee. My dad's happy face is typically a big, dumb smile plastered ear to ear. This one took up his whole face.

I broke down when I heard Guthrie's closed. I laughed at the fact I was crying over a bar

BEST ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Monteverde

Runner-up: Piccolo Sogno

BEST KOREAN RESTAURANT

**San Soo Gab San
Korean BBQ**

Runner-up: Cho Sun Ok

BEST LIQUOR STORE

Binny's Beverage Depot

Runner-up: Andersonville
Wine & Spirits

BEST LOCAL BEER

Revolution Brewing

Runner-up: Half Acre
Beer Company

BEST LOCAL BREWERY

Revolution Brewing

Runner-up: Half Acre
Beer Company

BEST LOCAL DISTILLERY

Koval Distillery

Runner-up: CH Distillery

BEST LOCAL FARMER

Mick Klug Farm

Runner-up: Urban
Growers Collective

HE CHANGED THE WORLD FROM A JAIL CELL

3/27-4/11 KIDS VISIT FREE

SPECIAL EXHIBITION
MANDELA
Struggle for Freedom
Feb 20 - Sept 12

ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Presenting Sponsors:
ELIZABETH MORSE GENIUS PLACE, Airstate, WISCONSIN FRANCHISE

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.

APARTHEIDMUSEUM
CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS Canada

International Tour Supporters:
THE ASPER FOUNDATION, Manitoba, TD



continued from 27

and cried harder because I was laughing. I was with my girlfriend when I got the news and mapped out the first date we would have had there, how we'd play *Clue* and maybe admire the ceiling tile of a mermaid who was, uh, "well-proportioned." So many firsts happened on the corner of Waveland and Addison: first dates, first friends, first kisses. The most important first never came, one where I'd bring my girlfriend and my dad to the double Christmas feature at Music Box. We'd laugh when I cheat, drink lagers on tap, and end the night walking home from Guthrie's saying our presence was the present the whole time.

—MEGGIE GATES

Instagram takeovers

Last month Alexis Thomas of Black Cat Kitchen and Eve Studnicka of Dinner at the Grotto officially joined forces by re-branding their binomial meal delivery service "Funeral Potatoes," named for the classic mid-western cheesy hash brown casserole.

It was a small but significant flag-planting for one of the first of many pandemic chef pivots I covered in the last year. In a time when we couldn't (and definitely shouldn't) go out to restaurants, Instagram pop-ups like theirs kept the creative life force of the Chicago restaurant industry alive. You could only order so much pickup or delivery, but even vicariously eye-gorging on what chefs like Jasmine Sheth of Tasting India, John Avila of Minahasa, or Mona Sang of Mona Bella Catering came up with each week was inspiring. In many ways these underground foodlums found ways to support themselves and feed others with concepts the old brick-and-mortar restaurant economy seemed too hidebound and risk-averse to greenlight. And as someone who lives for good food, they've certainly helped me get along without completely losing my mind.

New ones seem to pop up on my feed each day. These exciting young cooks are forerunners of a thrilling renaissance of the Chicago food scene. Who knows what that'll look like in a few months, but right now it looks fucking delicious. —MIKE SULA

Skylark in limbo

I haven't poured a drink, chosen a song to play, washed a glass, or greeted a regular at the Skylark since March 15, 2020. It was a Sunday that had an end-of-the-world feel. Nobody knew when we'd gather again. I made stupid-good tips. The next day, all Chicago restaurants and bars were ordered closed and everyone was told to stay home.

Within a day or two, a regular e-mailed me an invite to join SkypeLark—the kind of video group chat that is now the primary mode of communication for many millions. I politely declined, but I know a year later the group still meets nightly. I knew that the Skylark was a hub in Pilsen for more than 15 years, but it took the doors being shuttered to realize how many people made it the center of their social life.

Not a week has gone by since that Sunday in 2020 that someone hasn't asked me when the bar would reopen. I have no good news to share. The Skylark never shifted to takeout or built plexiglass screens or took over the narrow sidewalk to adapt to the new realities of public plague life. It is a place that thrives on mingling and freedom of movement and can't function under the necessary current restrictions.

I'd love to pour you a beer and tell you the name of the song on the stereo some Sunday night, but don't know if I'll ever get the chance again. Here's hoping. —DMITRY SAMAROV

Farmers' markets keep communities thriving

Throughout the summer of 2020, every cancelled street fest felt like a fresh punch in the gut. No more day drinking at Hot Dog Fest while dancing to Boy Band Review perform "Summer Girls" by LFO, an especially devastating blow. There was, however, a shining beacon of hope: farmers' markets.

Chicago deemed the outdoor collection of vendors as essential businesses, allowing them "to open across the city to increase neighborhood access to fresh and healthy food" as long as they followed certain safety protocols—given the circumstances, the 61st

Street and the Oak Park farmers' markets had successful seasons, and a bunch of markets around the city and state accepted Link payments, making them even more accessible. The Lincoln Park farmers' market that I've frequented for the past five years looked very different in 2020 with limited capacity, hand sanitizer stations, mask requirements, and only one flow for foot traffic. These changes were enforced by a team of energetic volunteers, and after months of sulking and doom-scrolling, I started helping out too.

I formed relationships with regular shoppers, volunteers, and vendors who'd sometimes give me free vegetables or doughnuts or a discount on cheese. When they needed some guerilla marketing around the neighborhood, I'd hop on my blue '76 Schwinn and ride around with a fanny pack of colored chalk and a portable speaker blasting Talking Heads and third-wave ska. It felt like the Chicago summers I love so dearly. The markets connected me with my community and provided safe and manageable human interaction that many of us lacked for months, not to mention so many vegetables. Farmers' markets thrive on community support, so check to see if there's a market in your neighborhood next time you need some produce! —RACHEL FERNANDEZ

BEST LOCAL FOOD PRODUCT

Upton's Naturals

Runner-up: Phoenix Bean tofu

BEST LOCAL GROCER

The Dill Pickle Food Co-op

Runner-up: HarvesTime Foods

BEST LOCAL SPIRIT

Jepson's Malört

Runner-up: Koval Bourbon

BEST MEAL KITS

Logan Oyster Socials

Runner-up: Alinea

BEST MEXICAN RESTAURANT

Mi Tocaya Antojería

Runner-up: 5 Rabanitos

BEST MIDDLE EASTERN RESTAURANT

Sultan's Market

Runner-up: Reza's

BEST NEW FOOD TREND Takeout

Runner-up: Quesabirria

BEST NEW POP-UP Chicago Vegan Test Kitchen

Runner-up: Birria Ta-Ta-Tacos

BEST ONLINE COOKING INSTRUCTION

The Chopping Block

Runner-up: The Wooden Spoon

BEST OVERALL RESTAURANT

Lula Cafe

Runner-up: Girl & the Goat

BEST PALETERIA La Michoacana

Runner-up: D'Fruta la Vida

BEST PANDEMIC PIVOT FROM A RESTAURANT

Alinea

Runner-up: Bungalow by Middle Brow

BEST PIEROGI

Kasia's

Runner-up: Gene's Sausage Shop & Delicatessen

BEST PIZZA

Pequod's

Runner-up: Spacca Napoli

BEST PIZZA BY THE SLICE The Boiler Room

Runner-up: Dante's Pizzeria



BEST PIZZA DELIVERY

Lou Malnati's

Runner-up: Dante's Pizzeria

BEST PLACE WORTH A WAIT

Lula Cafe

Runner-up: Au Cheval

BEST POLISH RESTAURANT

Staropolska

Runner-up: Red Apple

BEST PRESERVES

Rare Bird Preserves

Runner-up: Spoken: A Cafe

BEST QUESABIRRIA/BIRRIA DE RES TACOS

Birrieria Zaragoza

Runner-up: Tacotlan

BEST RAMEN

Wasabi

Runner-up: Furious Spoon

BEST RESTAURANT GROUP

Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises

Runner-up: The Alinea Group

BEST SANDWICH

J.P. Graziano

Runner-up: Bari

BEST SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Calumet Fisheries

Runner-up: Lowcountry

BEST SOCIALLY DISTANCED DINING

Eris Brewery and Cider House

Runner-up: The Warbler

BEST SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT

Luella's Southern Kitchen

Runner-up: Soul Vegetarian

BEST SOUP

Taste of Lebanon

Runner-up: Soupbox

BEST SOURDOUGH

Bungalow by Middle Brow

Runner-up: Publican Quality Bread

BEST STEAK HOUSE

Bavette's

Runner-up: Tango Sur

BEST SUSHI

Lawrence Fish Market

Runner-up: Kai Zan

BEST TAQUERIA

El Milagro

Runner-up: L'Patron

BEST THAI RESTAURANT

Opart Thai House

Runner-up: Sticky Rice

BEST UP-AND-COMING CHEF

Kelly Ijichi

Runner-up: Halee Raff

BEST URBAN FARM

Urban Growers Collective

Runner-up: Urban Canopy

BEST VEGAN RESTAURANT

Chicago Diner

Runner-up: Ground Control

BEST VEGETARIAN RESTAURANT

Handlebar

Runner-up: Chicago Diner

BEST VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT

Pho 888

Runner-up: HaiSous Vietnamese Kitchen

BEST WINE SHOP

Binny's Beverage Depot

Runner-up: All Together Now

WE **YOUR POOCH LIKE FAMILY!**

URBAN POOCH®
canine life center

When you arrive, you & your Pooch immediately feel the LOVE!

Experience a carefully curated variety of nutritious & yummy foods, treats, chews, FUN toys, accessories and the comfiest of beds.

FUN!

Our team is our greatest asset & are experts in all they do.

We have the BEST services in all of Chicago: Grooming & Bathing Spa, Daycare, Cageless-Boarding, Massage, Training & Puppy Enrichment at our sister facility.

www.UrbanPooch.com

SHOP.UrbanPooch.com
for delivery or in-store pickup too!
We've created the Happiest, Cleanest & Safest place in Chicago for Pooches!

4501 N Ravenswood Ave | 773.942.6445

BEST OF CHICAGO 2020
URBAN POOCH
BEST PET STORE

Here to help you create beautiful, sustainable and earth-friendly garden spaces...

BEST OF CHICAGO 2020
CITY GRANGE
BEST LANDSCAPE COMPANY

City Grange.
CityGrange.com



Delayed appreciation for all things weed

Some of my best friends are stoners.

In high school in the suburbs, my overlapping social circles included high-achieving kids who were high . . . a lot. They came to class high, took the ACTs high (and got better scores than I did), and giggled from the passenger side of my 1979 Volkswagen Rabbit as I drove their high asses home from parties.

But I never partook. Even after four years of college surrounded by corn and not much to do, I never smoked up, ate space cakes, or even lingered long in rooms where people were doing those things. I had my reasons, and at the time, it just wasn't my jam. And then 2020 happened.

After the summer of near-constant chaos and horror, I just wanted some guarantee of a good night's sleep and a way to feel even a few minutes of calm.

After one particularly bad night downtown, where I lived most of 2020, I went on a dispensary website, set up a ten-minute consultation with a doctor, and worried over how many details I should offer.

I don't have a medical condition, I thought, I just need to chill TF out.

Turns out just needing to chill TF out was enough. After a phone conversation of three minutes and three seconds, I was approved for a medical card. And stoners, I'm sorry I ever doubted your wisdom. When the world gets to be too much, a gummy that smells vaguely of my high school friends' lockers is all that stands between me and some peace. —**KAREN HAWKINS**

Everybody must get stoned

2020 was always going to be a historic year for cannabis in Illinois. The sale of recreational marijuana became legal across the state at the turn of the decade, all thanks to the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (CRTA) that Pritzker signed back in June of

BEST CANNABIS CHEF

Mindy Segal

Runner-up: Manny Mendoza

BEST CANNABIS COMPANY TO WORK FOR

Cresco Labs

Runner-up: Green Thumb Industries

BEST CLINIC TO GET A MEDICAL CARD

Mauricio A. Consalter

Runner-up: Innovative Express Care

BEST CONCENTRATE

Cresco Rollins Live Budder

Runner-up: Rythm

BEST EDIBLE

Mindy's Chef Led Artisanal Edibles

Runner-up: Incredibles

BEST GROW SUPPORT GROUP

Medical Cannabis DIY

Runner-up: Chicago Roots Hydroponics + Organics

BEST HOME GROW SUPPLY SHOP/SERVICE

Chicago Roots Hydroponics + Organics

Runner-up: Brew & Grow

BEST INFUSED GUMMIES

Mindy's Chef Led Artisanal Edibles

Runner-up: Wana by Grassroots

BEST LOCAL CBD SOURCE

Half Day CBD

Runner-up: Higher Healing

BEST MEDICAL BUTTENDER

Quinn Stifler at Dispensary 33

Runner-up: Brandon Sherlock at Rise Niles



THANK YOU!

FOR SUPPORTING WANA X GRASSROOTS

grassrootscannabis.com | @grassrootscompanies

GREEN element RESALE



www.big-medicine.org

We're all in this together!

aeriz

Love at first light.

Try **Ice Cream Cake** — voted Chicago's Best Strain for Enhanced Sexual Pleasure.



AERIZ.COM | @AERIZUSA



WHOLE FLOWER

live resin

Nothing added. Nothing taken away.
Never separated. Never reconstituted.
Flower, and nothing else.

CRESCO™
LIQUID LIVE RESIN



continued from 30

2019. Despite some supply shortages, limited licenses, and opening in the dead of Chicago winter, Illinois dispensaries sold around \$3.2 million worth of recreational cannabis on January 1 alone. That's nothing, though, compared to the overall profit brought to the state by local and visiting cannabis shoppers.

According to the *Tribune*, sale of cannabis brought Illinois more than \$1 billion of revenue in 2020, about two-thirds from rec and one-third from medical. Furthermore, the Illinois Department of Revenue shows more than \$175 million in cannabis tax revenue. One can only guess if the lockdown helped or harmed these numbers.

Illinois splits up cannabis revenue, with some going toward community development, substance abuse treatment and prevention, education, health research, and other funds. About \$62 million of Illinois's cannabis revenue has been set aside to help minority business owners and neighborhoods affected by poverty and violence, reports the *Trib*, but disbursement is slow going with so many requests for funds.

On the bright side, there are more and more local cannabis and ancillary businesses with equity goals of their own, focused on community aid, diversity and inclusion, education, and the like. Nature's Care, a store in Rolling Meadows and the West Loop, actively works on career development, community reinvestment, financial literacy, and more. Recently, there has also been talk of unions forming for cannabis workers, hopefully providing stability, higher pay, and other protections to those who deserve to reap the benefits of laboring in such a booming industry. The state has also been busy expunging nearly 500,000 cannabis arrest records by the start of 2021. That shattered the CRTA's requirement that Pritzker expunge 47,000 cannabis-related arrest records from 2013 to 2019, according to WSIL News 3.

The industry is far from perfect, frequently bogged down by political and legal roadblocks and dominated largely by white men. But there's no denying that when it comes to legal cannabis sales Illinois is a trailblazer. —TARYN ALLEN

BEST MEDICAL CANNABIS DISPENSARY

Dispensary 33

Runner-up: Sunnyside

BEST PAIN RELIEF BALM

**Avexia Pain Relief
Balm Harmony 1:1**

Runner-up: PTS Pure
Essentials Body Oil

BEST PLACE TO BUY PIPES AND BONGS

Sunnyside

Runner-up: Canna Bella Lux

BEST REC DISPENSARY

Dispensary 33

Runner-up: Greenhouse Skokie

BEST STRAIN FOR ENHANCED SEXUAL PLEASURE

Ice Cream Cake

Runner-up: Afternoon
Delight #7

BEST STRAIN FOR PAIN RELIEF

Orange Herijuana

Runner-up: Cresco Face Mints

BEST STRAIN FOR RELIEF OF ANXIETY

Kosher Kush

Runner-up: Cresco
LA Wedding Pop

BEST STRAIN FOR SLEEP

Cresco Bio Jesus

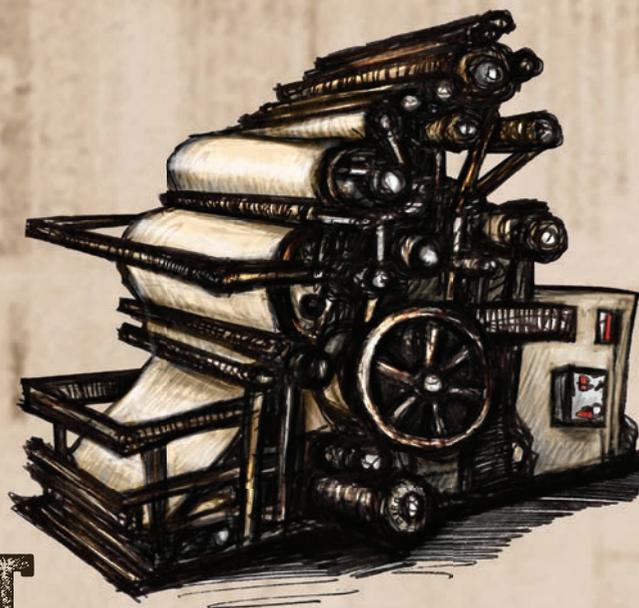
Runner-up: Bubba Fett

MOST SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS CANNABIS COMPANY IN ILLINOIS

Cresco Labs

Runner-up: Green
Thumb Industries

DRINK UP!



DON'T STOP THE PRESSES

LAGER

NOW AVAILABLE AT
HAYMARKET BREWING!

PROCEEDS FROM THIS BEER GO TO SUPPORT:

READER



The Daily Line

PICK IT UP STARTING FEB. 22, UNTIL IT'S GONE!



737 W RANDOLPH ST.
CHICAGO, IL 60661
312.638.0700

TUES-THURS 4PM-9PM
FRI-SUN 12PM-9PM



Chicago Roots

Hydroponics ★ Organics

Sweet home
Chicago grown.

A deep, heartfelt thanks to all of
our customers for your support.

For over 10 years Chicago Roots
has been the spot for Chicago
area growers to find experienced
service & quality equipment,
nutrients and supplies.

Be part of the growing revolution.
Let's grow together.

4020 W. Irving Park Rd.
Chicago, Illinois
chicagoroots.com
773.545.4020





Mindy's low-dose gummies © BRIGID O'KEEFE

A microdose will do ya

Not every edible needs to knock you on your ass. It's a lesson that took me until 2020 to learn. My first experience with eating weed was in high school (sorry, mom) when some friends baked a birthday cake for us to eat in the woods. The ratio of pot to cake was, ahem, *very high*, and the result was like a scene out of *Reefer Madness*—more than half the group ate giant slices that sent their brains to another planet and their stomachs to the floor. I remained terrified of edibles for the next 14 years.

Cut to Christmas 2020. Recreational marijuana has been legal for almost a whole year, and as a result culinary cannabis enthusiasts

have had time and resources to perfect their dosages. And lo and behold, chef Mindy Segal, always at the forefront of Chicago's edible scene, created a treat that would bring me back from the great cake disaster of 2006. As part of a holiday gift from a friend, I received a handful of Mindy's honey sweet melon gummies, only 2 mg of THC each. No need to measure out a chocolate bar into manageable pieces or nibble at the edge of a cookie hoping you don't go overboard. These perfectly portioned treats are just enough to calm your mind on a sunny afternoon or relax your body before bed. And it seems other companies are starting to follow suit, not to mention the treats I can potentially make for myself now that I know what dose works for me. It just definitely won't be a birthday cake. —**BRIANNA WELLEN**

DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT.

Winner of Chicago's Best Pain Relief Balm

"The pain balm is no joke - it helped my carpal tunnel x10000."

"Literally the best balm ever! I use it for every pain and it always works!"

"Saves my knees!"



"A complete must."

"This balm is great for menstrual cramps!"

"This is far and above any topical I have ever used. Amazing for incredibly overwhelming pain. My back pain melts under this amazing balm."



DISPENSARY



**Thank you
Chicago!**

Voted Best
Medical Dispensary
Recreational Dispensary
Medical Budtender, Quinn Stifler

WEST LOOP
RECREATIONAL DISPENSARY
COMING SOON

Now Serving
Chicago in
**Andersonville
& West Loop.**

DISPENSARY33.COM

5001 N. Clark Street
1152 W. Randolph Street



ARTS & CULTURE

BEST OF
CHICAGO
2020



Mercury Theater © BRUCE CUTLER

Closing doors, opening windows

Commercial theater has never been the lifeblood of Chicago the way it is in New York with Broadway, but that doesn't mean losing for-profit producers because of you-know-what doesn't leave a mark. Mercury Theater, the nifty 300-seat (plus intimate cabaret space) venue on the Southport corridor that started out as a nickelodeon in 1920, was originally renovated as a rental house for live theater by Michael Cullen in 1994, who also ran Cullen's Bar and Grill next door. Walter Stearns took over the space and ran Mercury as a for-profit production company (and one that used Actors Equity contracts—always welcome in this town) since 2011. When it shuttered in June, it marked one of the biggest losses this year.

Midsized venues that provide a bridge between storefronts and 800-1,000-seat houses are rare. Those that specialize in musical theater, as Mercury did, are even harder to find—and even more essential for the local performing arts ecosystem. I hope the building stays a theater as it enters its next 100 years, but I'm not super hopeful. Meanwhile, the incentive for others to jump into the commercial producing pool (as opposed to presenting touring shows, like Broadway in Chicago) seems pretty small even after reopening.

But while losing venues is a blow, the arts are ultimately about the people who make the work, not the buildings they do it in. I'm generally cynical when it comes to cheesy bromides about silver linings and gallons of lemonade squeezed from the Lemons of Suck, but seeing artists taking care of other artists and of their communities this past year in myriad ways remains awe-inspiring to me. Honestly, I think the best thing we can all do is help them get the tools and cash they need to rebuild,

BEST CHOREOGRAPHER

Joel Hall

Runner-up: Dawn Xiana Moon

BEST COMICS ILLUSTRATOR

Megan Kirby

Runner-up: Madeline Horwath

BEST COMICS WRITER

Megan Kirby

Runner-up: Caroline Cash

BEST DANCE TROUPE

The Fly Honeys

Runner-up: M.A.D.D. Rhythms

BEST DANCER

Starinah "Star" Dixon

Runner-up: Dawn Xiana Moon

BEST DIGITAL SKETCH/ IMPROV SHOW

Cigarette Sandwich:

Power Hour

Runner-up: Quarantine:

The Game Show

BEST DRAG PERFORMER

Lucy Stoole

Runner-up: Coco Sho-Nell

BEST DRIVE-IN MOVIE PROGRAMMING

Music Box Theatre

Runner-up: Davis Theater

BEST ESTABLISHED THEATER COMPANY

Steppenwolf

Runner-up: Lookingglass

One year ago, COVID-19 changed our community.

Today, we honor all of the lives lost during the pandemic
and acknowledge those serving our community.

Thank you to our many supporters, volunteers, staff and
community partners – especially those on the front line –
who have helped us meet the rising need.

Demand for food assistance is still soaring,
but your hard work and generosity are powering
a daily response to hunger.

The need is great. Together we are Greater.



**GREATER
CHICAGO**
– **FOOD** –
DEPOSITORY®

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



continued from 36

and then put on our hard hats and get out of the way while they do it. —KERRY REID

Magic is still real

One of the best things about Chicago is the city's magical history, that is, its history as a hub for magicians. For many years, these performance artists have provided Chicagoans a unique and compelling form of entertainment. Rooted in the close-up variety that magicians often performed in bars across the city, the scene has since evolved to include acts that continue to impress. Even in a year when attending a magic show in person wasn't an option, Chicago's magicians managed to adapt by adopting a "the-show-must-go-on" attitude. Take Jeanette Andrews, a Chicago-based magician known across the country for infusing her magic with science, history, and art, who created "Magic by Telephone" as an answer to newfound challenges. Paying homage to the 1969 Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago exhibition "Art by Telephone," Andrews aims to "be of service to others" by engaging them "in even a brief moment of stress relief." While different from her in-person performances, this top-notch project still inspires shock and awe as Andrews treats participants to an at-home illusion. After dialing 855-BY-MAGIC (855-296-2442), callers will hear Andrews say, "Thank you for calling the Magic Hotline. Please enjoy something that will look and feel a lot like a magic trick in the comfort of your own home," before she instructs them to choose their own illusion using a deck of cards, a dictionary, or their hands. The result is a fun and free experience that offers some excitement in this strange and solitary time. Magic is real. —BECCA JAMES

A non-obituary for Chicago improv

One cannot truly write an obituary for Chicago improv, because improv, like a zombie, is inherently undead. And like most horror flicks, improv is filled with the

exciting thrill of watching actors delight without the safety net of the script, combined with legitimately disturbing scares. But in improv, some scares aren't fiction—they are the very real horrors of harassment and racism.

The Black Lives Matter movement served as a catalyst for a long-overdue reckoning for major institutions, exposing inexplicable negligence under the harsh interrogation lights of social media and outlets like the *New York Times*. These embarrassing self-inflicted wounds, coupled with the risky choice to operate staggeringly expensive multistage complexes, along with devastating financial losses from COVID-19, forced the iO Theater to close its doors permanently, and longtime Second City owner Andrew Alexander to place the business for sale. Unlike iO, Second City was lucky enough to be purchased, and only time will tell if the past will be prologue for a new future—or more of the same.

Down but not out, the scrappy Annoyance Theatre is dark, but not yet officially closed. ComedySportz let go of its theater space, but was the first to agilely adapt to virtual shows and is dominating the online comedy landscape.

The most painful closures were the smallest. The house-party atmosphere of the Crowd Theater provided a chill space where both fringe and mainstream performers could play together. Early whispers of new theaters forming post-vaccine ensure that the beating heart of improv will surely reanimate. —SHERI FLANDERS

A new way to go live

When artists of all sorts pivoted to livestreaming, the results were mixed at best. The technical difficulties of a Zoom show, the learning curve of TikTok, the inevitable energy shift that comes with playing to a computer screen, it can all add up to a bad show. But once NoonChorus entered the scene, enjoying live performances from both sides seemed possible again. The Chicago-based streaming platform was designed with the artists in mind, whether that be musicians, comedians, podcasters, and more who have since found their shows a home on the site. That means dedicated

tech support, revenue for artists and venues, and tailor-made viewing options that make each show feel like it's in a different space. NoonChorus also encourages artist series, or in the case of the Hideout, allows an entire venue to host online performances almost as regularly as they did in person; for audiences, a monthly subscription costs only \$25. The system they've created, while certainly thriving during the pandemic, has been built for life in the after times—artists can sell more tickets beyond venue capacity, performances can exist online beyond the live timeslot, audiences can have access to shows that they might not otherwise be able to see. Nothing, of course, beats the experience of an in-person performance, but NoonChorus shows us that from the comfort of our home we can get pretty close. —BRIANNA WELLEN

The thrill of a Quimby's Customized Quarantine

A leisurely record store browse, a bartender's recommendation, an unplanned run-in with a friend—pandemic life lacks these moments of happenstance.

There's no real replacement for digging through zines at Quimby's Bookstore. The beloved store is open at limited capacity right now, but I live two bus transfers across town. Luckily, they've devised a pandemic-era innovation. They started selling Customized Quimby's Zine Packages.

It works like this: When you order a Zine Package online, you submit a list of your interests in the comment section. Then a Quimby's zine expert curates \$25 of periodicals to match your desires. (There are also \$69 and \$100 options.) They wrap it up in black plastic, and when you receive it, you get a little dose of staple-bound mystery and surprise.

The first time I ordered a Customized Zine Package, I listed "dumb pop culture, diaries, and classic children's books" in the comment section. Among my new treasures, I received a copy of cutesy journal comic *Flowery* by Mel Stringer, a vintage Dr. Dolittle coloring book, and minizine *Piscean Footnotes #2: A Quar-*

BEST FILM PROGRAMMING

Music Box Theatre

Runner-up: Gene Siskel Film Center

BEST FILMMAKER

Steve James

Runner-up: Caitlin Ryan

BEST INDEPENDENT

BOOK PUBLISHER

Haymarket Books

Runner-up: Belt Publishing

BEST LIVE LIT SERIES

The First Time (CHIRP Radio)

Runner-up: Write Club

BEST LONG-RUNNING PLAY

The Fly Honey Show

Runner-up: *The Infinite Wrench*

BEST MURAL

Black and Brown Unity Wall by the Mural Movement

Runner-up: *I Am a Man* by Darius Dennis

BEST MUSICAL

Hamilton

Runner-up: *Six*

BEST NEW LOCAL OPERA PRODUCTION

Chicago Fringe Opera's Corsair

Runner-up: Chicago Opera Theater's *The Transformation of Jane Doe*

BEST NEW NONFICTION BOOK BY A CHICAGOAN

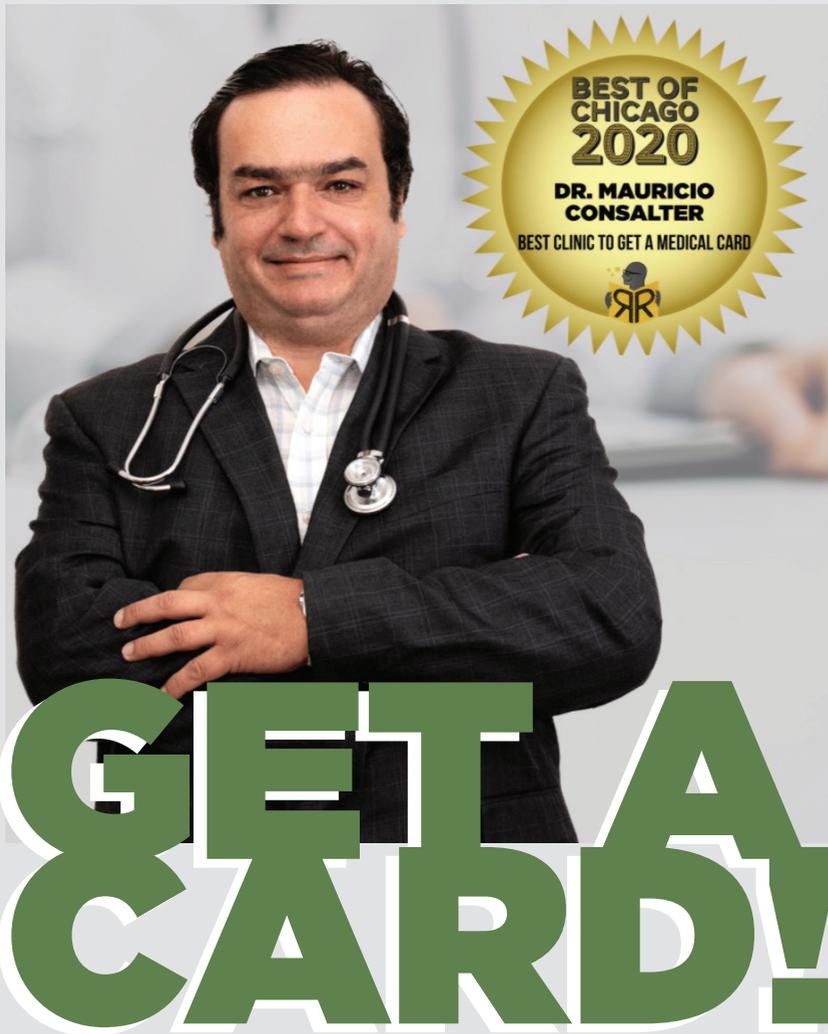
Hood Feminism by Mikki Kendall

Runner-up: *Wow, No Thank You.* by Samantha Irby

BEST NEW NOVEL BY A CHICAGOAN

The Taste of Sugar by Marisel Vera

Runner-up: *You and Me and Us* by Alison Hammer



GET A CARD!

Why Illinois residents should get a medical cannabis card
Paid sponsored content by NeuroMedici

We want to thank our amazing Chicago community for voting us best clinic to get your medical card for the **SECOND** year in a row! Every day, we see patients who are seeking alternatives to opioids to manage their symptoms. Getting a medicinal cannabis card in Illinois is the first step to accessing medicinal cannabis at dispensaries. Along with being able to visit dispensaries as a medical patient, there are several other benefits as well. If you haven't gotten your medical cannabis card yet, what are you waiting for?! Check out the huge list of benefits below!

You can grow your own medicine

Do you have a green thumb? Are you interested in growing your own cannabis as medicine? As of January 2020, Illinois medical cannabis patients by law are allowed to grow up to five plants. There are great benefits to growing your own medicinal cannabis. Patients can grow their favorite strains and learn more about cannabis growing cycles. With cannabis short-

ages and dispensary prices potentially increasing, most patients find that growing their own cannabis helps save money on their medicine. Get a medical card and get your grow room blooming with your favorite strains in no time.

Possession and allotment

As an Illinois resident the scariest part about possessing cannabis is getting caught by law enforcement: getting arrested, having your car impounded, receiving fines or even jail time depending on the amount of cannabis in your possession. As an Illinois medical cannabis card-holding patient, legally, you can possess up to 2.5 oz (70 grams). Being able to legally possess up to 2.5 oz allows patients to stock up on their medicine and be protected by Illinois state laws. Patients who make their own edibles or cannabis oils tend to purchase in bulk. For example, a half ounce of raw cannabis flower may yield less than a 30-day supply of edibles. Having an adequate supply of cannabis can truly benefit

patients and maintain their medication regimen.

Qualifying conditions

Illinois has over 40 qualifying conditions approved for medical cannabis. Any Illinois doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant can certify patients for medical cannabis. Conditions range from cancer or post traumatic stress disorder, to chronic pain and Crohn's disease. From July 2019 through June 2020, there were over 47,400 patients approved for medical cannabis. Over 14,000 qualified under chronic pain. Many progressive healthcare providers are encouraging their patients to turn to medical cannabis as a holistic way of treating their illnesses. Some people turn to medical cannabis when other treatments or pharmaceuticals have failed. Becoming a patient and medicating with cannabis can help patients who are suffering live with a better quality of life.

Taxes and discounts

Prices on cannabis products may vary, but know that when you check out at a dispensary you will be taxed. As a recreational customer you pay 30-43 percent; as an Illinois medical cannabis patient you pay 1-3 percent taxes on the same medicine. For example, if you purchase 3.5 grams of flower as a medical patient, the price may be \$55-65. That same 3.5 grams of flower on the recreational menu after Cook County taxes added can cost \$72-85. Cook county recreational cannabis tax may continue to rise, so save money and get your Illinois medical cannabis card!

State-offered discounts

Patients that receive Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and veterans with proof of a DD-214, can get a reduced fee on the state application. Instead of paying \$100 for a one year card, the reduced fee is \$50. Take advantage of these discounts when submitting a medical cannabis card application.

Medicinal benefits

The Illinois Medical Cannabis Pilot Program began in 2015. Many people with serious qualifying conditions have been medical cannabis patients for years. Many studies have shown that cannabis, when used in a daily regimen, can be beneficial to patients trying to manage symptoms without the use of opioids. In 2018 the Opioid Alternative Pilot Program (OAPP) aimed to help people addicted to opioids heal with medical cannabis. Patients prescribed opioids for pain or other medical illnesses are allowed to use cannabis instead of opioids. Many medical cannabis patients have experienced an improvement in their health and a reduction in using pharmaceutical drugs. Cannabis can be a healing medicine!

Telemedicine

2020 was a challenging year for mental and physical health. Scheduling months in advance for a doctor's appointment can be stressful when you are chronically ill. In 2020, the Illinois Department of Public Health allowed cannabis-friendly health-

care providers to certify patients via telemedicine. Potential cannabis patients can now receive their certification via e-mail after speaking to their health care provider on a phone call or telehealth video call. In 2018, the Illinois Department of Public Health began allowing patients to submit their cannabis application via their website through the patient portal. Once the needed documents are uploaded and the state fees paid, new Illinois cannabis patients are able to print a provisional letter within 24 hours. The provisional letter allows a patient to gain access to their designated dispensary prior to receiving their actual card in the mail which could take 30-90 business days. With little to no wait time, getting your medical cannabis card is faster than ever.

Guidance and consulting

One positive thing about the pandemic is that people are realizing that cannabis is medicine. Dispensaries, cannabis cultivation sites, and budtenders were deemed essential in Illinois; this indicates the state government recognizes the importance of medical cannabis.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting your Illinois medical cannabis card, visit www.drconsalter.com and schedule an appointment today.

Speak with our cannabis consultants to learn how cannabis can help you achieve your treatment goals. In-person and virtual consultations are catered to your everyday lifestyle, health needs, and desired results. We are offering \$10 off for cannabis consultations when you book your March appointment.

To book your appointment, visit <http://bit.ly/RegimenConsultations>

For more information about the Illinois medical cannabis program, visit the Illinois Department of Public Health medical cannabis page.





continued from 38

anzine by Lynne Monsoon, handwritten in miniscule font with a plastic magnifying glass attached to the binding. The order was both specific and unpredictable. I felt like I was having a conversation with my favorite bookstore, from the safety of my couch.

In days scheduled with Zoom cocktails and grocery deliveries, a Quimby's Zine Package offered the rare opportunity for shock and delight in 2020. I hope Quimby's keeps offering them, even after we're all vaccinated and safely packing into the bookstore's photo booth once again. —MEGAN KIRBY

Stand-up anywhere with Comedy Pickup

Every time I walk to Humboldt Park, which is a weekly occurrence that has kept me sane and outside during the pandemic, I'm reminded of a patch of grass that was full of laughter and community during summer 2020: It was comedy in a pickup truck. When entertainment venues shuttered in the early half of the year, artists all over the city struggled. As the summer months brought much-needed brightness, the local comedy scene got creative. Eager to get in front of a crowd again and connect over some laughs, comedians hosted outdoor, socially distant open mikes.

And the one that was the most innovative—and that wouldn't have existed without the pandemic—was Comedy Pickup, a traveling stand-up show in the bed of a big blue pickup truck created by local comics Donovan Strong-O'Donnell and Ryder Olle. The duo traveled all over Chicago and several U.S. big cities, bringing relief to not only comedy fans, but also those who ordinarily wouldn't go see comedy, thanks to the accessibility of being outside. The duo produced more than 50 shows and put more than 2,000 miles on Olle's pickup. One show was on that small Humboldt Park patch of grass in September. This memory is a constant reminder that it's OK to laugh and that there's always something to smile about. Here's to hoping the Comedy Pickup will come back for summer—preferably with an end to the pandemic. —ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI



Liz Zagone at Comedy Pickup © ARIEL PARRELLA-AURELI

Yes, please

The dedication in Samantha Irby's latest book, *Wow, No Thank You.*, is made out to Wellbutrin. Fitting, then, that the pages that follow are an antidepressant in their own right. And it came just in time—the book dropped on March 31, 2020, right around the time we first lost all hope of ever leaving our homes. But who needs to go outside when inside is a list of more than 100 “sure, sex is fun, but have you ever . . .” jokes that are actually funny? Who needs to go to a bar when you can instead read a detailed, time-stamped account of a night out in the city in the winter of 2002? Who needs to socialize with others when your new best friend Sam has given you 300 pages of witticisms far more entertaining than anything anyone else has to say?

That being said, new work from Irby is a welcome gift at any time. With *Wow, No Thank You.* she blessedly proves that she isn't going to run out of things to write about

any time soon and that she just keeps getting funnier and funnier while doing it. The release of this book gave me an excuse to round out my personal Irby collection. I bought this and the title before it, *We Are Never Meeting in Real Life.*, from local bookseller Semicolon Bookstore. I hope others are inspired to do the same—no Chicago bookshelf is complete without the hilarious, all-too-relatable words of Samantha Irby. —BRIANNA WELLEN

Virtual hope

For the first few weeks, I was ignorantly, arrogantly certain we'd all pick up more or less where we left off. Soon. The last live show I saw, J. Nicole Brooks's *Her Honor Jane Byrne* at Lookingglass, would finish its run, and if the world was just, be extended. The sorrow of closing the show the same week it opened would become a do-you-remember-that-wild-time-when war story.

When Theater Wit's *Teenage Dick* opened

BEST NEW PLAY

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter
by Isaac Gómez

Runner-up: *45 Plays for America's First Ladies*
by the Neo-Futurists

BEST NEW POETRY COLLECTION BY A CHICAGOAN

***Finna* by Nate Marshall**

Runner-up: *Big Dark Bright Futures* by Growing Concerns Poetry Collective

BEST NEW THEATER COMPANY

The Story Theatre

Runner-up: Newport Theater

BEST NONFICTION WRITER**Eve Ewing**

Runner-up: Natalie Moore

BEST NOVELIST**Rebecca Makkai**

Runner-up: Michael Zapata

BEST OFF-LOOP THEATER COMPANY**Raven Theatre**

Runner-up: Steep Theatre

BEST OPERA COMPANY**Lyric Opera of Chicago**

Runner-up: Chicago Opera Theater

BEST ORIGINAL DIGITAL CONTENT (DANCE)**The Fly Honey Show**

Runner-up: Chicago Dance History Project

BEST ORIGINAL DIGITAL CONTENT (THEATER)**Chicago Magic Lounge**Runner-up: *The Infinite Wrench***BEST PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL****Chicago Musical Theatre Festival**

Runner-up: Pivot Arts Festival

BEST PHOTOGRAPHER**The Kid From Pilsen, aka William Guerrero**

Runner-up: Mercedes Zapata

BEST PLAYWRIGHT**Tracy Letts**

Runner-up: Ike Holter

BEST POET**Eve Ewing**

Runner-up: Growing Concerns Poetry Collective

BEST POETRY ORGANIZATION**Young Chicago Authors**

Runner-up: Poetry Foundation

BEST SKETCH/IMPROV TROUPE**Neo-Futurists**

Runner-up: Cigarette Sandwich

BEST STAGE DIRECTOR**Lili-Anne Brown**

Runner-up: Laura Alcalá Baker

BEST STAGE PERFORMER**Dawn Xiana Moon**

Runner-up: Sydney Charles

BEST STAND-UP COMIC**Sarah Perry**

Runner-up: Paul Farahvar

BEST STREET ARTIST**Hebru Brantley**

Runner-up: JC Rivera

BEST THEATER DESIGNER (SETS, LIGHT, SOUND, ETC)**Claire Chrzan**

Runner-up: Sydney Lynne Design

BEST VIRTUAL FILM FESTIVAL**Chicago International Film Festival**

Runner-up: Black Harvest Film Festival

BEST VIRTUAL OPEN MIKE**Cole's Bar**

Runner-up: The Slam Open Mic Poetry Club

BEST VIRTUAL PLAY**The Infinite Wrench Goes Viral**Runner-up: *The Big Lebowski 2***BEST VIRTUAL SALON****Salonathon**

Runner-up: Raks Geek

BEST VIRTUAL STORYTELLING SERIES**2nd Story**

Runner-up: Louder Than a Mom

BEST VISUAL ARTIST**Nick Cave**

Runner-up: The Kid From Pilsen, aka William Guerrero

BEST ZINE**Shit I've Cried About by Sarah Meyer**Runner-up: *Radical Visibility* by Rebirth Garments*Teenage Dick* © CHARLES OSGOOD

and closed the same night, cognitive dissonance smacked me like a fist full of nails, propelled by the realization that as far as theater was concerned, we were basically going to go through a historic catastrophe not seen since plague-era Shakespearean England. It was like learning James I was living next door. It was not possible.

“Everybody knows 2020 is over as far as live performances go. The real fear is what’s going to happen in 2021,” Ellen Placey Wadey, the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation’s senior program director for arts and collections, told me during a June interview.

Roughly ten weeks into 2021, that fear remains, but it is now accompanied by the weight of all the trauma 2020 left in all the most vulnerable places. Yet the sheer indomitability of artists remains in plain sight, defiant, blazing, grieving, and helping us mourn and even sometimes rejoice. Every time we stare at a screen in hope of being taken somewhere else, artists are there to remind us that not all is lost.

Teenage Dick was an early case in point. The streamed version (from the single live performance) was as emotional and entertaining as the live version, albeit in a way that was achingly solitary. Artistic director Jeremy Wechsler and his team of designers and actors delivered a terrific show, and in doing so, gave everyone who saw it reason to breathe a massive sigh of relief. The art’s not going away yet, you motherfucking virus.

In November, Manual Cinema rolled out its version of *A Christmas Carol*. Like *Teenage Dick*, the show testified to the almighty power of art as much as it entertained. Instead of Jacob Marley, the dead ghost who arrives

bearing the gift of redemption is a Black man killed by COVID-19. Ebenezer became his widow, Trudy.

Like Theater Wit, Manual Cinema created art with hope at the center, while also brutally acknowledging the losses that continue to pile up like cairns in a cursed forest. But while some things are beyond hope’s parameters, many things are not. Both *Teenage Dick* and *A Christmas Carol* nudged us to lean toward the latter, even when—especially when—we are overwhelmed by the former.

In Year Two of the plague, silver linings remain shrouded but not snuffed out. Right now, I’m thinking about a sequel to *Her Honor Jane Byrne. His Honor Harold Washington*, maybe. The legacy of COVID-19 is far from set. But one thing we can be certain of: theater endures.

—CATEY SULLIVAN

Chicago’s art gallery alley

Calling itself “The Most Instagrammable Alley in Chicago,” The 12 brings art into the alley of the Tri-Taylor neighborhood. Named for its zip code, The 12 is a housing development built by Home& where each unit has an artist-painted garage door. The developers reached out to Sara Dulkan, owner of Chicago Truborn gallery, to curate the project and bring on the artists.

The project, located at the 2500 block of West Polk Street, is on former Chicago Public Schools land. In the spirit of giving back, Home& has pledged a \$5,000 donation to CPS for each house sold. So far 15 units have been

Store

Shop the Reader

chicagoreader.com/store

continued from 41

built and their doors are painted with images ranging from cityscapes to a blue-striped cat. Thirty units in total are planned for that location, with another nearby 40-unit development expansion in the works.

The project began last March, allowing people to enjoy these murals on foot or even from their cars without having to step inside a gallery or museum. Nicolas Forte, one of the participating artists, says “it’s always nice to be part of something to give back to Chicago, putting colors out there.”

Dulkin explains, “I do believe it’s the first of its kind in Chicago. I can’t think of anything where developers work with an art gallery to curate a comprehensive experience to go to one area and see this many permanent pieces.”

—ELISA SHOENBERGER

The lasting impact of the late Terrell Davis

Even before visual artist and designer Terrell Davis began his first year of classes at the School of the Art Institute in 2016, he’d already helped define outre pop and Web-centric electronic music. In the early 2010s, he contributed to the hallucinatory retro vision and sound of vaporwave. He made slyly funky songs under the pseudonym Visa プリペイド; the artwork for his 2013 album, *スムーズ OCEANS*, for example, centers on a hyperclean disc shaded with a pastel emerald gradient and set atop a picturesque beachside image that looks too pristine to exist in real life. Davis became further involved in vaporwave as he made designs for the video-streaming music festival SPF420, and his vision expanded further to other Web-based music communities in the ensuing years. Underground pop singer Liz recruited him to make the album art for her 2015 single produced by Sophie, “When I Rule the World,” and Davis’s bright, gleaming close-up of a desk cluttered with a rococo hand mirror, stickers, potted-plant leaves, a baseball cap, small glass balls, and three phones (two cell, one rotary) accentuate the bubbly, hyperactive song. At SAIC, Davis’s portfolio expanded as he worked with clients as big as Nike and Travis Scott, while on the ground in Chicago he connected with queer dance party Rumors—he frequently designed their flyers. After the pandemic hit, Davis got involved with Zoom-based queer party Club Quarantine, and even designed their logo. After Davis died at age 22 on December 30, 2020, Club Q threw a tribute show

that featured a performance by two-time *RuPaul’s Drag Race* contestant Shea Couleé and a slew of DJ sets, including from Chicago producer Ariel Zetina and one of Davis’s closest friends from SAIC, MorenXXX. Davis had a tremendous influence on several overlapping artistic scenes in Chicago and around the world, and I imagine we’ll unpack the role of his influence for years to come. —LEOR GALIL

Singing “Loser” on virtual karaoke

I was once a regular at Logan Square bar Golden Teardrops’s Thursday night karaoke, but singing in a crowded basement is the opposite of safe during an airborne pandemic. I was resigned to lingering in livestream comment sections until mid-April, when my friends Erin McAuliffe and Matt Munhall sent an invite to virtual karaoke.

Virtual karaoke is just singing in your home, cueing up your own backing track on one device as you sing into the webcam of another. Liberated from the restrictions of an impartial MC with a finite songbook, you’re able to perform any song you can summon from the depths of the Internet. Rejoice in Megan Thee Stallion’s “Big Ole Freak.” Go for those high notes on “Zombie.” Sing Alanis Morissette three times.

To get in the proper spirit, I donned a loudly multicolored 90s Bulls long-sleeve that had accompanied me through the highs (housewarming parties) and lows (stumbling home from shows) of going out, sometimes in one night. When my turn came, I cued up “Loser,” Beck’s 1993 slacker-rap breakout hit. I stomped around my one-bedroom apartment, mugging into my phone as my girlfriend Mary followed with her phone camera at a second angle. As the first verse concluded, I brought out the pièce de résistance: a clip-on fish-eye lens saved from a corporate event years prior. When the chorus hit, I belted “Soy un perdedor” while jumping off my couch, my image rendered in the trippy bulbous view of a skateboarding video.

I can’t wait to get back to karaoke in the flesh, but it won’t be the same without a little cinematography. —JACK RIEDY

The birth of virtual art shows

Remember the days of crashing an art gallery opening for free wine and a fat gourmet cheese spread? Now the

thought of a crowd going open season on a platter of brie and sharp cheddar gives you the chills. Thankfully, galleries got savvy, hiring videographers to host virtual walk-throughs of shows with a voice-over from the showing artist, or in Gallery Guichard’s case, offering a virtual catalog loaded with past and current exhibitions.

Located in Hyde Park, Gallery Guichard made its debut in 2005 with the mission to expose patrons to multicultural artists specializing in the African diaspora. Artists and gallery owners Frances and Andre Guichard take the reins in walking viewers through collections of works on display. This innovation allows viewers a new window of access to the work. In Andre’s rundown of his show, “Art As Activism,” the artist shares details of his work in a very transparent way that viewers otherwise wouldn’t have access to unless they were lucky enough to sneak in a conversation with the artist at the opening—and even then it would be a rushed encounter. These virtual exhibits also allow for artists to speak about their work in an unprompted way, organizing their thoughts organically to match the flow the artist intended for the show.

Meanwhile, over at LVL3 on Milwaukee, the artist-run exhibition space is serving up a different virtual experience for art enthusiasts. To stay connected to the community and offer exposure to artists, LVL3 hosts an Artist of the Week feature interviewing makers of all mediums. Viewers can also check out documentation from past and current exhibitions on the gallery’s site (lvl3official.com) as well as on its Instagram page (@LVL3official).

For those who aren’t quite ready to explore the local art scene in person, take a scroll through a gallery’s website and social media platforms with a glass of wine in hand right from your couch. —JENNA RIMENSNYDER

The return of drive-ins

With closed theaters, movies played on my small TV, and the lukewarm reaction of the summer’s releases, I was itching to watch something with others. And lucky for me, the drive-in was back. I hope it’s here to stay.

By September, I’d seen friends post about their “new” drive-in experiences of watching family-friendly favorites with kids way too young to have ever remembered when pulling up to a lot with a huge screen and cars packed full of folks was a thing. So, I jumped at the chance to preview a new episode of my fall TV obsession: HBO’s *Lovecraft Country*.





For weeks, I'd been watching along Sunday nights with my phone glued to my hand and my Twitter app open. The show—a beautifully scary series that seemed to defy all limitations by diving into a different genre of horror each week—was just way too good to watch alone. And with the rates of new COVID-19 cases on the rise, I figured an online community was better than no community.

But this day at the Lakeshore Drive-In, armed with greasy food and one of my good friends by my side, I was ready for that to change. It felt good to ooh and ahh and gasp in a group. With windows down, you could hear the murmurs and laughs and jokes between folks in nearby cars. And in a year with so much uncertainty, it felt safe to get scared and scream together. —ARIONNE NETTLES

All the tees

Dressed in a GlitterGuts T-shirt under a Hideout sweatshirt, sipping from an Empty Bottle mug, staring at my Reader tote bag (plug!), I can hardly remember a time before I was surrounded by merch from my favorite cultural institutions. But it's a strangely recent phenomenon, one that was in part sparked by Barrel Maker Printing's early-in-the-pandemic push to support small businesses with a limited run of T-shirts, \$10 of each sale going directly to the business sported on the tee. Those who were lucky enough to jump on the trend early were able to grab now-discontinued designs for Thalia Hall, Music Box Theatre, Quimby's, Lula Cafe, Bucket O'Blood, and more—an especially popular shirt honoring beloved Tamale Guy, Claudio Velez, is still available for \$25.

Then came the much welcome deluge of puzzles, glassware, masks, books, buttons, blankets, full concession packages from movie theaters, and enough branded pieces of clothing to build a whole new wardrobe. And it's not just the venues and theaters and companies that these items are supporting. Local artists were called upon for signature items, like Alicia Gaines's capsule collection for the Empty Bottle that includes a hat, mug, and long- and short-sleeved tees. To be able to scratch that middle-of-the-night-online-shopping itch, have items that scream "I'm cool," and do your

part to keep your favorite places in business? That's a win-win-win. —BRIANNA WELLEN

The drag show must go on

An important aspect of drag that doesn't readily translate to a mini-challenge on *RuPaul's Drag Race* is an artist's ability to command a stage: whether that means lip-syncing in front of an audience, or marching in the streets. Chicago's drag community showed up and showed out in 2020 at the crucial moments when we needed their unique perspectives and leadership abilities.

In June, when civil unrest and public demonstrations were a consistent daily presence in the city, Black LGBTQ+ community activists organized the Drag March for Change, leading crowds on the "Boystown" strip in Lakeview to protest racial inequity in the neighborhood and beyond. Some of the organizing around the march resulted in the formation of the Chicago Black Drag Council, a group that helps empower both local drag performers and the wider LGBTQ+ community of Chicago by working toward restorative justice.

In addition to changing the world, our drag community still had to get paid. By August many Chicago venues that host drag shows had pivoted to online or outdoor and socially distanced programming. Kudos to all those who found a way to lip-sync with a face shield in traffic, especially the performers at Uptown's Baton Show Lounge and Hamburger Mary's (RIP) in Andersonville. And don't count out those who achieved reality TV fame: in January 2021, professional ice skater and season 13 *Drag Race* contestant Denali released *Chicago Drag Excellence*, a video by local trans-led film collective Transit Productions at Bridgeport's Co-Prosperity Sphere. *Chicago Drag Excellence* features a bevy of local performers beautifully captured as they respond to Crystal Waters's 1994 hit "100% Pure Love," including *Drag Race* alumnae, plus full contact information and Venmo/Instagram links in the credits. It's a tribute to the Chicago drag world of the 2020s: a cinematic balm to lift our city's spirits. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

True/False Film Fest
MAY 5-9, 2021 | COLUMBIA, MO
PASSES ON SALE!
truefalse.org

"If we hunt not Moby Dick,
God hunt us all."
THEATRE IN THE DARK
MOBY DICK
...IN THE DARK
live online audio theatre 3/11 - 4/10
Adapted & Directed by Corey Bradberry
from the novel by Herman Melville
All Tickets are Pay-What-You-Can
theatreinthedark.com

Do you love
the **BEN**
JORAVSKY
**** show?
Become a
BEN HEAD!
chicagoreader.com/joravsky



MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

BEST OF
CHICAGO
2020



DCG Brothers' video for "Mmhm" VIDEO DIRECTED BY JOSH JONES FOR NO MORE HEROES

DCG Brothers brought summer joy to a locked-down season with the "Mmhm" video

Every beautiful day last summer was like torture to me—a reminder that the pandemic had closed off almost everything I love about the season. Thankfully I could still get a taste of that old summertime feeling from the video for "Mmhm," by teenage west-side rap duo DCG Brothers. Chicago video collective No More Heroes brought Shun and Bsavv and regular collaborator Msavv to a Los Angeles golf course, where they worked with director Josh Jones to create a visual analogy for the joy bursting from DCG's minimalist drill-pop favorite. Dressed in pastel polo shirts buttoned all the way up, the MCs race golf carts, crouch down to rap at golf balls from inches away (shots that could be homages to *Happy Gilmore*), and dance like they've got the entire course to themselves. My favorite moment is 14 seconds in: the three rappers stand in a row, each in front of a golf cart, coolly resting their crossed hands on the caps of their clubs' grips, and lip-synch to Bsavv's blunt, springy hook while nodding along vigorously to Spank Onna Beat's bone-dry percussion and pounding bass. The rappers balance rambunctiousness and menace, and their deft, tightrope-walking verses give "Mmhm" an extra shot of adrenaline. The song makes it clear these three have tons of fun sharing the mike, and the video is even more contagious. I only wish DCG Brothers had released it earlier in the summer. —LEOR GALIL

BEST BLUES BAND

Buddy Guy

Runner-up: Devil in a Woodpile

BEST CLASSICAL GROUP

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Runner-up: Eighth Blackbird

BEST COUNTRY BAND

The Henhouse Prowlers

Runner-up: The Lawrence Peters Outfit

BEST DJ

Scary Lady Sarah

Runner-up: DJ Ca\$h Era

BEST DRIVE-IN CONCERT

Vic Mensa, Lakeshore Drive-In

Runner-up: Jeff Tweedy, Drive Inn

BEST DRIVE-IN CONCERT SERIES

FitzGerald's

Runner-up: Lakeshore Drive-In

BEST GIG POSTER DESIGNER

Clare Byrne

Runner-up: Jay Ryan

BEST HIP-HOP ARTIST

Noname

Runner-up: Chance the Rapper

BEST HIP-HOP GROUP

Pivot Gang

Runner-up: Glitter Moneyyy

BEST HIP-HOP PARTY

Slo'Mo

Runner-up: Glitter Fest



Tone Deaf Records responded to the stay-at-home order with vinyl delivery

When the pandemic forced Tone Deaf Records to shutter last March, proprietor Tony Assimos began delivering vinyl straight to his customers' doors. He saw it as a practical response to what he thought would be a short-term crisis, and a way to extend into lockdown the sense of community he'd cultivated in his Portage Park store. As he told Block Club at the time, perhaps optimistically, "People are going to be bored for the next few weeks." The many forms of pandemic-induced isolation have lasted far longer, of course, but listening to new records is still a good way to stay sane.

Deliveries remain a crucial part of Tone Deaf's business mix today. Assimos keeps tabs on Chicago's COVID-19 infection rates and makes decisions accordingly. When the numbers dropped last summer, he suspended delivery and reopened the store; when infections spiked around Thanksgiving, he reversed course, even though the city didn't issue another lockdown order. "It was the right thing to do," he says.

Tone Deaf's customers have embraced vinyl delivery. "It made people feel like they were helping out a business in the community, and at the same time they were getting a special service that they could rely on," Assimos says. Deliveries peaked last spring, but Tone Deaf currently averages ten per week. Mail-order sales, curbside pickup, and appointment-only in-store shopping have picked up.

With spring coming, Assimos is cautiously hopeful about the future. "Record stores, book stores, all those small little shops down the street that we moved to Chicago to be able to access—let's keep supporting them!" he says. "We live in a wonderful city with so many great resources. I can't stress enough the importance of helping local businesses."

—JAMIE LUDWIG

BEST HIP-HOP PRODUCER

Peter Cottontale

Runner-up: Montana Macks

BEST HOUSE MUSIC DJ

Derrick Carter

Runner-up: The Chosen Few

BEST INTERNATIONAL/ WORLD MUSIC ACT

Dos Santos

Runner-up: Dawn Xiana Moon

BEST JAZZ BAND

Angel Bat Dawid & the Brothahood

Runner-up: Chicago Cellar Boys

BEST JAZZ MUSICIAN

Makaya McCraven

Runner-up: Angel Bat Dawid

BEST LIVESTREAM CONCERT SERIES

The Hideout

Runner-up: Music Friendly
Distancing, the Empty Bottle

BEST LOCAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Dehd, *Flower of Devotion*

Runner-up: Gramps the
Vamp, *Keeper of the Void*

BEST LOCAL LABEL

Bloodshot Records

Runner-up: Sooper Records

BEST METAL BAND

Bongripper

Runner-up: Pelican

BEST MUSIC PODCAST

Sound Opinions

Runner-up: CHIRP
artist interviews

BEST NEW BAND

Glitter Moneyyyy

Runner-up: Gazebo Effect

BEST OUTDOOR MUSIC VENUE

FitzGerald's

Runner-up: Pritzker Pavilion ↗

Find inspiration... and learn online!



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

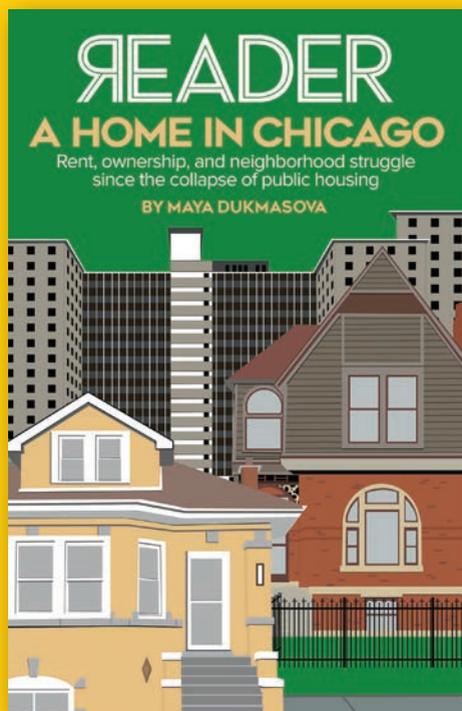
oldtownschool.org

 **Old Town School
of Folk Music**

MUSIC AND DANCE
CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

A HOME IN CHICAGO:

Rent, ownership, and neighborhood struggle since the collapse of public housing



The new book from *Chicago Reader's* own **Maya Dukmasova**

Available in paperback and PDF download



chicagoreader.com/mayabook



Billie Barrett Greenbey © CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Billie Barrett Greenbey of gospel legends the Barrett Sisters left us in 2020

Just days before COVID-19 shut Chicago down, mourners crowded Trinity United Church of Christ to bid farewell to gospel singer Billie Barrett Greenbey. A member of the world-famous Barrett Sisters and among the last survivors of gospel music's foundational generation, Billie died February 28 at age 91.

Born in Chicago in 1928, Greenbey studied at the American Conservatory of Music and sang Thomas Dorsey's new gospel songs with her sisters Delois and Rodessa in the Morning Star Baptist Church choir. By 1941, Billie, Delois, and their cousin Johnnie Mae Hudson had formed the Barrett and Hudson Singers. When Hudson died, Rodessa took her place and the

group re-formed as the Barrett Sisters.

For years, the Barrett Sisters worked alongside gospel's leading lights, among them Dorsey and Roberta Martin. They were favorite guests on *TV Gospel Time* and *Jubilee Showcase* (both launched in the early 1960s, the latter in Chicago) and cut their first of more than a dozen LPs, *Jesus Loves Me*, in 1964. Fans nicknamed the trio the "Sweet Sisters of Zion" for their Baptist soulfulness and crystalline harmonies. The sisters' distinctive three-part singing, anchored by Billie's alto, endowed gospel with an understated splendor and elegance.

The Barretts' crowd-pleasing performances in the 1982 documentary *Say Amen, Somebody* led to an appearance on *The Tonight Show* and years of touring as far afield as Switzerland and Africa. They were also the subject of Regina Rene's 2013 film *The Sweet Sisters of Zion*. Until the end, Billie soloed first Sundays at Lilydale Progressive Missionary Baptist Church in Roseland. "As long as I have a voice," she said, "I'm going to sing."

—ROBERT MAROVICH

BEST POP ARTIST
Nnamdi
Runner-up: SuperKnova

BEST R&B ARTIST
Jamila Woods
Runner-up: Jordanna

BEST ROCK BAND
Wilco
Runner-up: Beach Bunny

BEST PUNK BAND
Rise Against
Runner-up: Ganser

BEST RECORDING STUDIO
Electrical Audio
Runner-up: Uptown Recording

BEST SINGER-SONGWRITER
Jamila Woods
Runner-up: Kara Jackson



Old-school musicians beat lockdown with new-school platforms

Musicians are a scrappy lot. No matter what challenges life throws at them, they do whatever they can to pursue their art and bring the party (or whatever it is they're starting) to the masses. What happens when those challenges include an uncertain amount of time without concerts or even gatherings of any kind? How do you stay fulfilled when your work depends so heavily on having an audience? Everyone did whatever they could to stay afloat last year, and the Internet provided a lifeboat for many local entertainers.

Twitch isn't just a playground for Gen Z gamers. Veteran Chicago DJ Vince Adams, active since 1984, found a whole new audience and revenue stream when he created a Twitch channel in May. Adams's years of doing double duty at fundraisers as a DJ and host serve him well: His transmissions go heavy on audience interaction, and he incorporates a Zoom-based "VA Cam" where audience members can show off dance moves. Adams's mixes of house and R&B can already power a great virtual party, but making the broadcast a two-way street really turns up the heat. Another live-streamer well outside the typical demographic is 92-year-old blues musician Jimmy Johnson, who can be found weekly on his Facebook page, playing live solo sessions from his home. A family member turns on the camera, and Johnson fills the next hour or so with his electric guitar, his singing, and stories from the nearly 70 years of his music career. The international mix of fans who show up in the chat for these sessions have become a community of their own, weathering the pandemic as they embrace the blues. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

Born Yesterday Records had a better 2020 than you

Two members of local band Clearance, guitarist Kevin Fairbairn and bassist Greg Obis, launched Born Yesterday Records in 2018, but it wasn't till 2020 that the label really established a strong foothold. Born Yesterday works with artists from Chicago, of course, but also looks for talent further from home: this past fall, it released a hypnotic EP from Los Angeles rockers Dummy and an anxious LP by Massachusetts punks Landowner. Where the label really showed its colors, though, was with a terrific streak of local rock releases that began in April with *Change Is Bad*, a rangy, weather-beaten post-punk LP from Obis's new band Stuck. Born Yesterday followed it in May with the tantalizingly dreamy third full-length from psych unit Cafe Racer, *Shadow Talk*, and in August with the high-wire postpunk of the Knees' debut EP, *Posture*. Born Yesterday was hardly the only operation to release marvelous Chicago underground rock in 2020, but its efforts didn't get nearly as much attention as, say, Sooper Records' banner year or Brooklyn-based Fire Talk's one-two punch by Deeper and Dehd. Fairbairn and Obis have established their label as a crucial voice in Chicago rock, and their 2021 should be even better. —LEOR GALIL

Last year would've been a great one for bangers in Chicago clubs

We lost a lot of things last year. Without minimizing any of them, let's take a minute to grieve all the chances we didn't get to hear Chicago bangers in the club—those nights when your favorite DJ's in the booth, your skin's sticky from the collective body heat, and when Chief Keef's



The Power of Homeownership

When I bought my first home, it was the most empowering feeling. I'm honored that I get to help others achieve that with the work that I do.

When we support womxn to shine, to grow, and to be truly empowered - everyone wins.

Kat Barry

Kat Barry

Team Leader

Real Estate Broker, CIPS GREEN

412.735.2852 • kat.barry@compass.com

@katbarry1 • @modernliving.compass



Kat Barry is a Licensed Real Estate Broker with a principal office in New York, NY and abides by all applicable equal housing opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only, is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, and changes without notice. All measurements and square footages are approximate. This is not intended to solicit property already listed. Nothing herein shall be construed as legal, accounting or other professional advice outside the realm of real estate brokerage.

COMPASS

We are excited to launch our 50th Anniversary Reader Tshirts!

Get your shirt today and show your support for Chicago's free and freaky independent source for local journalism since 1971.

chicagoreader.com/store





Clockwise from far left: ÉSSO, Gabacho, A Flor de Piel, Lester Rey, and the Los Sundowns
 A FLOR DE PIEL BY JOSE CALVO, OTHERS COURTESY THE ARTISTS

continued from 47

“Faneto” gets its obligatory spin, everyone magically, simultaneously yells, “I just hit a stain, faneto.” It would’ve been a good year for it too. Who didn’t want to celebrate Lil Durk’s ascent to stardom? Both of his 2020 albums, *Just Cause Y’all Waited 2* and *The Voice*, hit number two on the *Billboard* 200 (the first has already been certified gold), and his onslaught of 2020 features included spots on songs by Drake, Megan Thee Stallion, and City Girls. We never got the chance to memorialize FBG Duck with “Slide” or King Von with anything from his brilliant third full-length, *Welcome to O’Block*. And we couldn’t gather to celebrate classic Chicago bangers from bygone days—songs that have brought people together for years, like Traxman’s “Get Down Lil’ Momma,” DJ Deeon’s “Let Me Bang,” and DJ Rashad and DJ Chi Boogie’s “Ay Ay Yo!!” By the start of 2020, East Room had already closed, but we all could’ve used the consummate blend of rap, R&B, house, and juke that DJ King Marie used to spin at that Logan Square bar, or DJ Ca\$h Era’s mix of Top 40 hits and golden-era jams from Emporium Wicker Park. The pandemic shuttered clubs—some of them, including the beloved Danny’s Tavern, for good—and forced DJs to rely on virtual sets. Sadly, it’s still impossible to say how long it’ll be till we can gather safely the way we did on those bewitching nights when everyone—lovers, haters, and all—unified for a single overriding purpose: to shake ass. —TARA C. MAHADEVAN

Chicago’s Latinx musicians rolled with the pandemic’s punches

Despite the misfortunes of the pandemic, arts communities in Chicago found ways to keep calm and carry on. Latinx musicians, like many of their peers, pivoted from canceled gigs or tours into developing virtual projects and producing new music.

Family trio A Flor de Piel are inspired by Mexican son jarocho, but their love of fusions resulted in the EP *Mental Lockdown*, which incorporates electronic and lo-fi pop sounds and includes a cha-cha remix of “La Bruja” by DJ AfroQbano.

Daniel Villarreal, founding drummer of Dos Santos, was in Texas working with Grupo Fantasma guitarist and producer Beto Martinez when the pandemic hit. “It forced us to work from a distance and collaborate with other guest artists,” Villarreal says. Together they made *The Los Sundowns*, the self-titled debut EP from their Latin psychedelic soul duo.

Latinx soul artist Lester Rey collaborated with Texas producer MoonDoctor to release the EP *CCFX* (it stands for “Chicago Caribbean

FX”), which highlights electro-Caribbean, tropical bass, and nu-movimiento sounds. Rey also appeared on the single “Por la Mañana” with Montreal reggaetonero Pierre Cruz and joined Súbele singer Jonny Fadez on the nu-cumbia tune “Mango Kisses.”

Los Gold Fires guitarist Siul Reynoso, inspired by traditional Latin music and other vintage sounds, stripped his music down for a chill, nostalgic solo project called Gabacho. He’d already released a few singles under that name when he dropped a self-titled debut EP just as COVID-19 broke in the U.S.

Latin Afro-jam funk band ÉSSO decided to repackage their album *Xicago* as a string of monthly singles, beginning in May. And last September, front man Armando Pérez dropped the cumbia-heavy EP *Raza*. —SANDRA TREVIÑO

Rapper Ric Wilson pours generations of activism into “Fight Like Ida B and Marsha P”

Most of the music I listen to isn’t responding to a society-shifting event that’s literally just happened—in fact, most music isn’t even trying to do that. I often

struggle to string together coherent thoughts about everyday injustices without repeating myself or, more commonly, repeating the words of other, smarter people. With that in mind, I don’t expect musicians to crank out work constantly in order to comment on everything that happens. When an artist instead distills down generations of knowledge about, say, economic inequality and racism, the songs that result will be deeply felt—and no matter how long they take to make or how often they come out, they might even seem prescient.

Three days before Juneteenth 2020, Ric Wilson dropped “Fight Like Ida B and Marsha P,” a radical call to action with an irrepressible melody. Wilson raps about abolishing ICE, freeing imprisoned trans people, and defunding the police atop a lean, funky bass line, and his smooth delivery recalls his sumptuous turn on *They Call Me Disco*, his recent collaborative EP with Terrace Martin. On the hook, Wilson celebrates the Black women central to his activism, including gay rights activist and Stonewall instigator Marsha P. Johnson, prison abolitionist Mariame Kaba, and journalist and early civil rights leader Ida B. Wells. “Fight Like Ida B and Marsha P” encourages listeners to educate themselves about radical movements to build the coalition of Wilson’s dreams. The song captures the exuberant communal energy that buoyed so many protests this past summer, but it’s not the work of a moment: Crista Noël, founder of Women’s All Points Bulletin (a nonprofit supporting



women who've survived police violence), recorded her spoken-word contribution more than five years ago. And Wilson's song will remain poignant and relevant for as long there's injustice to fight. —LEOR GALIL

Experimental Sound Studio has turned a streaming series into a virtual community

Experimental Sound Studio is a nonprofit music venue, recording studio, art gallery, and audio archive that's provided a nexus for creative work in Chicago since 1986. ESS has built an audience with concerts and public exhibitions, both of which the pandemic made impossible, but despite that constraint 2020 has arguably been the studio's finest hour. As soon as everyone's shows got canceled, the studio got to work launching the Quarantine Concerts, an ongoing series that kicked off March 20 and has since included hundreds of streamed performances (some live, some prerecorded for the occasion) by musicians playing in their homes and rehearsal spaces, out in the woods, and in at least one pottery studio. It's always free to watch, but audiences are encouraged to donate—and 100 percent of their money goes to the artists. Initially the bookings leaned heavily on Chicago's improvised-music community, but as the series grew it recruited guest curators from other cities or even other continents. They've brought in experimental, folk, classical, and psychedelic rock musicians from Europe, Qatar, Japan, and around the States, allowing collaborations that would've been prohibitively expensive in person. Fittingly, some of the best performances traded on their domestic settings. Octogenarian multi-instrumentalist Joe McPhee gave a shout-out from his basement lair in Poughkeepsie to fellow saxophonist Peter Brötzmann, who was isolated by age and health in Wuppertal, Germany; Chicago-based composer Olivia Block played part of her set with a cat on her shoulder; and

Ohio-based tape-loop fiend Aaron Dilloway let a couple chickens loose on a guitar and cymbals that he'd wired for sound, turning their pecking into music. —BILL MEYER

Chicago music writers carry zine culture into the Substack era

Massive newsroom job cuts and a populace in isolation helped drive the upsurge in single-operator newsletters in 2020. The number of active writers on Substack doubled between March and June alone, and Mailchimp and Medium also reported increased activity.

Chicago music journalists—including the three *Reader* contributors quoted in this piece—have contributed to that boom. Ernest Wilkins, who writes about the business of culture on Office Hours With Ernest Wilkins, describes newsletters as a “necessity-built thing” that arose in the mid-2010s when the demand for highly curated content outstripped the resources that traditional publishers devoted to the specialized writers who could create it. Trust in newspapers also declined, with plenty of help from the Trump administration. “So we've got to figure out a new strategy to touch people,” Wilkins says. “If I don't trust this newspaper, maybe I trust this columnist.”

The accessibility and flexibility of newsletters allow for a limitless variety of approaches. Joshua Minsoo Kim has built the increasingly popular experimental-music newsletter Tone Glow around a tight-knit community of contributors, rather than writing everything himself. “Everything's always more fun when it goes beyond yourself and your own interests,” Kim says.

David Anthony launched Former Clarity in 2019, but after he developed a serious illness, it stopped being a music newsletter and started being a newsletter about music, navigating the healthcare industry, and “finding clarity,” as he puts it. He says his work has fostered deep connections between him and his readers. “People are willing to open up a bit more because they're just replying to an e-mail that



saint + ripleu
god complex

DB MATTERHORN GROUP
A Capital Funding Consulting Firm

WE WILL PREPARE, POSITION, AND
PRESENT YOUR COMPANY TO
OUR FUNDING PARTNERS
FOR CAPITAL FUNDING.

CALL NOW 312-268-5842 OR VISIT DBMATTERHORN.COM OR TEXT “ACCESS” TO 59769



Tyler Damon, Dave Rempis, and Bill Harris in Margate Park on November 7, 2020 © PHILIP MONTORO

continued from 49

only I'll see instead of sending a tweet out into the world," he says.

Wilkins doesn't think the market is saturated yet—he's confident there's more room for Chicago music writers to succeed with their own newsletters, provided they're willing to put in the work. "What I see happen, especially in our city, is that people keep sitting and doing things, expecting someone to descend from the sky and tell them that they are valid and worthy," Wilkins says. "Anna Wintour does not live here. You're not going to get chosen. So you have to do it yourself."

—JAMIE LUDWIG

The pandemic pushed indoor music into the parks

I go to a lot of concerts—one recent year I counted 139—and aside from the occasional festival, jazz and improvised music almost always happen indoors. For more than a year now, the pandemic has kept me from my regular haunts—Constellation, Elastic Arts, Experimental Sound Studio—but it's also brought me a new kind of show. For a few months this past summer and fall, saxophonist Dave Rempis and drummer Tyler Damon played regularly, usually on Friday evenings, in Margate Park near Foster and Lake Shore Drive. The Chicago Jazz Festival is outdoors, of course, so this wasn't entirely novel, but in Millennium Park you won't see bemused volleyball players watching between points, a couple

passing by with a toddler in a cargo bike and doubling back to listen, or the driver of an out-of-service bus stopping on the access road to LSD and opening the doors to hear. You'll get sun and breeze anywhere outside, but in Margate Park on Saturday, November 7—just hours after the major news networks called the election for Biden—Rempis, Damon, and drummer Bill Harris opened with Albert Ayler's "Ghosts" as a burst of wind carried a flickering swirl of golden honey locust leaves around their heads. The first time I saw the duo, on Friday, September 25, was also the first time I'd seen live music in person in more than six months. "You know those before-and-after diptychs of Death Valley that show how suddenly and extravagantly the desert blooms when it finally rains?" I wrote on Instagram at the time. "That's the inside of my brain right now." It feels strange to say this, but I can't wait for concerts to be so ordinary again that I won't be on the edge of tears whenever I see one. —PHILIP MONTORO

WGCI helped define 2020 with two big shows—one that happened and one that didn't

After quarantine took away live concerts, all you had to do was scroll Twitter for a minute to see just how much people missed live venues and enjoying their

favorite tunes with like minds.

In February 2020, Chicago streets bustled with activity in celebration of the NBA All-Star Weekend. It was the first time the city had hosted the event since 1988, and in addition to the usual attractions—including the celebrity game, the dunk contest, and of course the main event—the weekend featured WGCI's Big Jam 2: Rappers and Ballers Edition at Credit Union 1 Arena on Saturday, February 15. (The Big Jam usually happens in fall or winter, and the previous installment had arrived just two months earlier.)

Unbeknownst to the performers or to the crowd that gathered to be in the midst of the All-Star Weekend action, this would be the first and last show of the year for WGCI. Headlined by DaBaby and Lil Baby, the concert also allowed NBA players Iman Shumpert, Andre Drummond, and Daniel Gibson to showcase their talents for a different kind of arena crowd.

It's hard to say how many live shows WGCI would've hosted in 2020, but the annual Summer Jam would've happened around August. The year prior, the show was held at McCormick Place and headlined by Teyana Taylor, Gucci Mane, and Yo Gotti.

I used to work for iHeartMedia, WGCI's parent company, and I was often behind the scenes at these shows—I especially loved seeing the faces of my neighbors illuminate as they congregated with people from all over Chicago. The Big Jam and Summer Jam offer a collective celebration of the arts, a way to escape the nuisances of daily life, and a chance to meet friends and make new ones. They're two of the most anticipated concerts every year—a staple for the city's Black community.

—CORLI JAY

Chicago indie musicians rally for jail support with the *Warm Violet* compilation

After the pandemic eliminated gig and touring income, Chicago's independent musicians sometimes had to ask for

help—but at least as often, they proved willing to step up and support others. Sometimes that took the form of benefit compilations, including December's *Warm Violet: A Compilation for Chicago Community Jail Support*.

Chicago Community Jail Support is a mutual-aid project launched in response to mass arrests during protests against police brutality following the killing of George Floyd. The weekend of May 29 alone, 2,172 people were arrested in Chicago. CCJS maintains a presence outside Cook County Jail in order to help people released from custody, who often have nothing but the clothes on their backs—volunteers provide food, drink, transportation, or even temporary housing.

The members of CCJS describe their group as part of a broader Black- and Brown-led Chicago abolitionist movement—ultimately they want the city to defund the police and invest in resources that actually keep communities safe. Many CCJS volunteers are involved in the local music scene, so when the organization needed money to winterize its operations, a compilation album was a natural fundraising choice.

The 46 tracks on *Warm Violet* cover a lot of genres, among them techno, ambient music, indie rock, acoustic pop, jazz, and whatever Fire-Toolz is. The compilation's eclectic lineup also includes Ariel Zetina, Nnamdi & Post Animal, Ohmme, and Ken Vandermark. So far the release has raised more than \$10,000, and most of that has come from Chicagoans—which CCJS organizers say is "the cherry on top," because it demonstrates grassroots support for their cause and for local music. You can learn more about how the organization is using this money at opencollective.com. —JAMIE LUDWIG

Bedroom-pop newcomer Serena Isioma finds a trajectory to stardom

I'm never at a loss for invigorating new music, but few emerging artists I encountered last year entranced me like Chicago bedroom-pop singer-songwriter Serena



Isioma. The idiosyncratic and fully evolved aesthetic of their March 2020 EP, *Sensitive*, fulfills the promise of our allegedly “genreless” future, incorporating signifiers from across the pop spectrum: its radio-ready songs combine sensitive R&B singing, sophisticated indie-rock riffs, suave hip-hop rhythms, and featherweight synth-pop melodies, deploying every element for maximum immediacy. Isioma sounds as self-assured as a star who’s been headlining arenas for years, and I felt certain their music would break out eventually—which it did before the end of the year. On December 8, their knockout single “Sensitive” reached number three on Spotify’s U.S. Viral 50 chart, remaining there for nearly a week; by the start of this month, it had amassed more than 26 million plays on the platform. I don’t think Spotify should have such monolithic power in the music industry, particularly since its per-stream payouts are so stingy they make the federal minimum wage seem humane. But I’m glad to see Isioma’s rise on that platform, even though the metrics that generate Spotify’s viral charts remain opaque to me. I’m happier to see their growing popularity outside Spotify, though, because it’s an even clearer indication that their stardom is closer than I imagined. —LEOR GALIL

A personal remembrance of DJ Kwest_On

The best perk of my job booking the Promontory is hearing brilliant DJs mix house, hip-hop, and Afrobeat while I do spreadsheets. The pandemic put that on hold, but the loss was tempered when DJs took to Instagram, Twitch, and Facebook. When I got a notice that Jay Illa, Dee Money, or Vince Adams was starting a livestream, it meant my next quarantined hour would have a world-class soundtrack. My favorite streamer was the Promontory’s favorite DJ, Matt “Kwest_On” Cannon. We hosted Prince nights, Dilla Day events (Matt brought doughnuts), and day parties with 3xDope (his old-school crew). When I heard Prince had died, I called Matt to say that if it were true (we had doubts), then Friday was his. Matt’s life-affirming four-hour mix spiritually uplifted 500 sweaty, joyous dancers.

Like many livestreams, Matt’s were intimate. We saw his home, we interacted . . . for one late-May stream, he even took requests. I stumped him with a deep cut, so I pulled an



DJ Kwest_On, aka Matt Cannon © JAKE AUSTEN

extra copy to gift him. Two mornings later, I got a jolting call: Matt was gone, the most robust, alive person I knew taken by heart failure. I was a friend (he tutored my kids), but more than that, I was a fan of the integrity, knowledge, and soul Matt sent through speakers. One of our top parties has been a pre-New Year’s blowout with WeLoveSoul, Matt’s Avengers-esque supergroup with

Duane Powell, Sean Alvarez, and Joe Kollege. In 2020 they streamed from an empty venue and included an archival Kwest_On set. When Matt’s prerecorded banter commented on his partners’ performances, it was more than eerie. Like Prince, he seemed too vital to be gone. Also like Prince, he continues to bring life with his music. —JAKE AUSTEN

Make your goals a reality.

Earn your **high school diploma** and get **free career training** at Job Corps. Ages 16–24.

Joliet Job Corps Center

Building Construction Technology
Cement Masonry
Culinary Arts
Homeland Security
Office Administration
Pharmacy Technician
Security and Protective Services

Paul Simon Chicago Job Corps Center

Bricklayer
Carpentry
Certified Nurse Assistant
Distribution Operations
Material Handling
Painting
Pharmacy Technician
Security and Protective Services



CAREERS
BEGIN HERE

Visit [jobcorps.gov](https://www.jobcorps.gov) or call (800) 733-JOBS [5627].

| [doljobcorps](https://www.doljobcorps.gov)

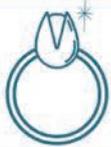


I DID MY PART by Mads Horwath

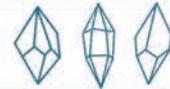
Hey I am feeling pretty good today! It makes sense though since I now have a good grasp on everything and know this is not an artist retreat and I am not quarantined to be creative. This is for public safety. I can't put pressure on myself to be in my prime while I can't see my friends, which is not something I should take personally.

All that matters right now is to take it easy. I do my work, play Animal Crossing, and rest. It's so pleasant and simple. Ohay but why am I crying?
That's so much snot.





SHOP PISTACHIOS *Handmade Jewelry*



www.pistachiosonline.com | Pistachios Jewelry | Pistachios Jewelry and Crafts

PISTACHIOS

CONTEMPORARY ART JEWELRY

(312) 929 - 6575

info@pistachiosonline.com



Heather Guidero



Yasuko Azuma



Luana Coonen



Radoslaw Szwed



Who are we?

Pistachios is a two women team operated by Jessica and Isabella. We left our downtown Chicago location of over 25 years to run as a fully virtual gallery while we find a new location. We curate the best in Contemporary Art Jewelry and Objects and take pride in the craftsmanship of the artists we represent from around the world. We can't wait to work with you and thank you for supporting our small business! – *Pistachios*

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



The Inheritance

NOW PLAYING

RR *The Courier*

The Courier details a fascinating tale of deceit. A recap of real events, the film follows Greville Wynne (Benedict Cumberbatch) as he's recruited into one of the most significant international conflicts in history. Tasked with helping put an end to the Cuban Missile Crisis, he forms a partnership with Soviet officer Oleg Penkovsky (Merab Ninidze) in an effort to provide crucial intelligence needed to prevent a nuclear confrontation. Cumberbatch is a calm force throughout. While seemingly accurate to Wynne's disposition, it makes the addition of Rachel Brosnahan and Jessie Buckley all the more welcome. Brosnahan plays CIA agent Emily Donovan, and Buckley plays Wynne's wife, Sheila. Both work to add some compelling and familiar relationship dynamics to the otherwise distant exchanges between Wynne and Penkovsky in drab locales. The heightened level of emotion they provide propels the story and Cumberbatch forward, keeping viewers engaged as they approach a climactic ending. —**BECCA JAMES** 111 min. [In wide release in theaters](#)

RR *Days of the Bagnold Summer*

Days of the Bagnold Summer is a bittersweet bildungsroman that hits all the right notes. Based on the graphic novel of the same name, it sees 15-year-old Daniel Bagnold (Earl Cave) and his mother Sue (Monica Dolan) dealing with the lingering disruptions of divorce. Things come to a head when Daniel's dad cannot host him in Florida for the summer as promised, forcing mother and son to spend six long weeks together. While Sue sees this as an opportunity to mend a broken bond, Daniel isn't too keen on the idea. He would rather focus his attention on starting a heavy metal band. Both Cave and Dolan are quietly captivating, pulling viewers in with their relatable and charming discomfort. Minimal and with no sense of urgency, the story unfolds authentically as seemingly small moments are given the attention

they deserve to reveal the tangled and touching emotions behind each interaction. —**BECCA JAMES** 86 min. [Through 3/25: Gene Siskel Film Center From Your Sofa](#)

RR *FTA.*

In July 1972, not long after Jane Fonda's now-famous visit to North Vietnam, this galvanizing documentary about Fonda's anti-war revue, the FTA Show (an acronym here meaning Free/Fuck The Army), was pulled from theaters by the distributors less than a week after it was released. Little seen since then, it's obvious as to why: Fonda and her fellow participants—among them Donald Sutherland (with whom she'd just made *Klute*), Michael Alaimo, Holly Near, Len Chandler, and Rita Martinson—lay bare the inequities of the Vietnam War and other such imperialist offensives, as well as injustices within the military and America itself. The performances are quite entertaining, but it's the conversations with troops stationed along the Pacific Rim that provoke. Not surprisingly, many of the soldiers, especially the Black conscripts, were fundamentally against the Vietnam War, persuasively arguing they had no reason to be there. "The only place a Black man should fight," says one marine, "is where he is being oppressed," implying that it's back at home where he's really at war. Likewise impactful are scenes detailing the treatment of women in the armed forces; all this is to say nothing of how our purported adversaries fare, which the film touches on, too. As a sort of anti-U.S.O. cabaret with smartly written sketches and songs, it's trenchant and exhilarating; in its depiction of the oft-overlooked GI anti-war movement, which consisted of men and women from various racial and socio-economic backgrounds speaking out against a common oppressor—the U.S. military-industrial complex—it's inspiring. Directed by Francine Parker. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** 97 min. [Through 3/25: Facets Virtual Cinema](#)

RR *The Inheritance*

This quixotic first feature by experimental filmmaker Ephraim Asili (*The Diaspora Suite*) is equal to the sum of its parts—part narrative, part documentary, and part collage, it's a combination of filmic modes and revolutionary ephemera fused to uncommon effect. The scripted parts of the film, based on Asili's own experiences as a member of a Black liberationist faction, center on an emerging Black radical collective in west Philadelphia called the House of Ubuntu. The 20-something Julian (Eric Lockley) inherits his grandmother's house, as well as her personal archive of materials related to Black life and liberation; Julian's partner, Gwen (Noziph Mclean), is the one to suggest they turn it into a communal living space. The couple opens the house to other Black people—mostly creative types, like poets and musicians—aiming for all official decisions to be made by consensus. A prominent focus of the film is the separatist group MOVE, whose headquarters the Philadelphia police bombed in 1985; the assault started a fire that killed 11 people (including five children) and destroyed 65 homes. In several illuminating sequences, real-life members of MOVE come into the house to speak of their experiences. Likewise, the poets Sonia Sanchez and Ursula Rucker also appear, further blurring the line between fiction and reality. In the manner of Jean-Luc Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), a key influence on the film, Asili makes observable cultural references through shots of books, magazines, records, and posters (including one for Godard's film), often contrasted against the house's colorful walls. This was shot on 16mm; between the grain of the film and the grit of the past, it's palpable here in the present. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** 100 min. [Through 4/8: Gene Siskel Film Center From Your Sofa](#)

RR *Slaxx*

In Elza Kephart's horror-comedy, late-stage capitalism is the true villain. *Slaxx* follows Libby (Romane Denis), a plucky new hire at a trendy clothing store the day before an important launch—but the stylish form-fitting jeans have a life of their own and start murdering employees and influencers one by one. Kephart balances humor and gore with precision while managing to comment on unethical labor practices, exploitation, and our toxic relationship with fast fashion and consumerism. And with a breezy less-than-80-minute runtime, *Slaxx* doesn't waste time with grandiose exposition—it says exactly what it wants to say and nothing more. Anyone who has worked in retail will surely relate to the film's beleaguered protagonists, paid too little and pushed to the brink in order to uphold the farce of capitalism. —**CODY CORRALL** 77 min. [Shudder](#)

RR *The Winter Lake*

The Winter Lake offers a chilling character study. Depicting dreary day after dreary day, the film takes place in the Irish countryside, where Tom (Anson Boon) has just moved with his mother (Charlie Murphy). Their counterparts, Holly (Emma Mackey) and her father (Michael McElhatton), would in any other movie signal the start of a coming-of-age romantic comedy, à la *Drive Me Crazy* (1999), but *The Winter Lake* is a much darker affair. While Holly appears confident, a light in Tom's new dark and cold world, there's an underlying tension in the film that hints at something sinister lying just under the surface. Sure enough, there is. Holly has a secret, which Tom uncovers, setting in motion a violent confrontation with her father, who is determined to keep his family's dysfunction hidden. Produced by the same team behind *The Lodgers* (2017), the film provides a similarly atmospheric look at familial obligation. —**BECCA JAMES** [In wide release on VOD](#)

RR *Wojnarowicz: F**k You F**ggot F**ker*

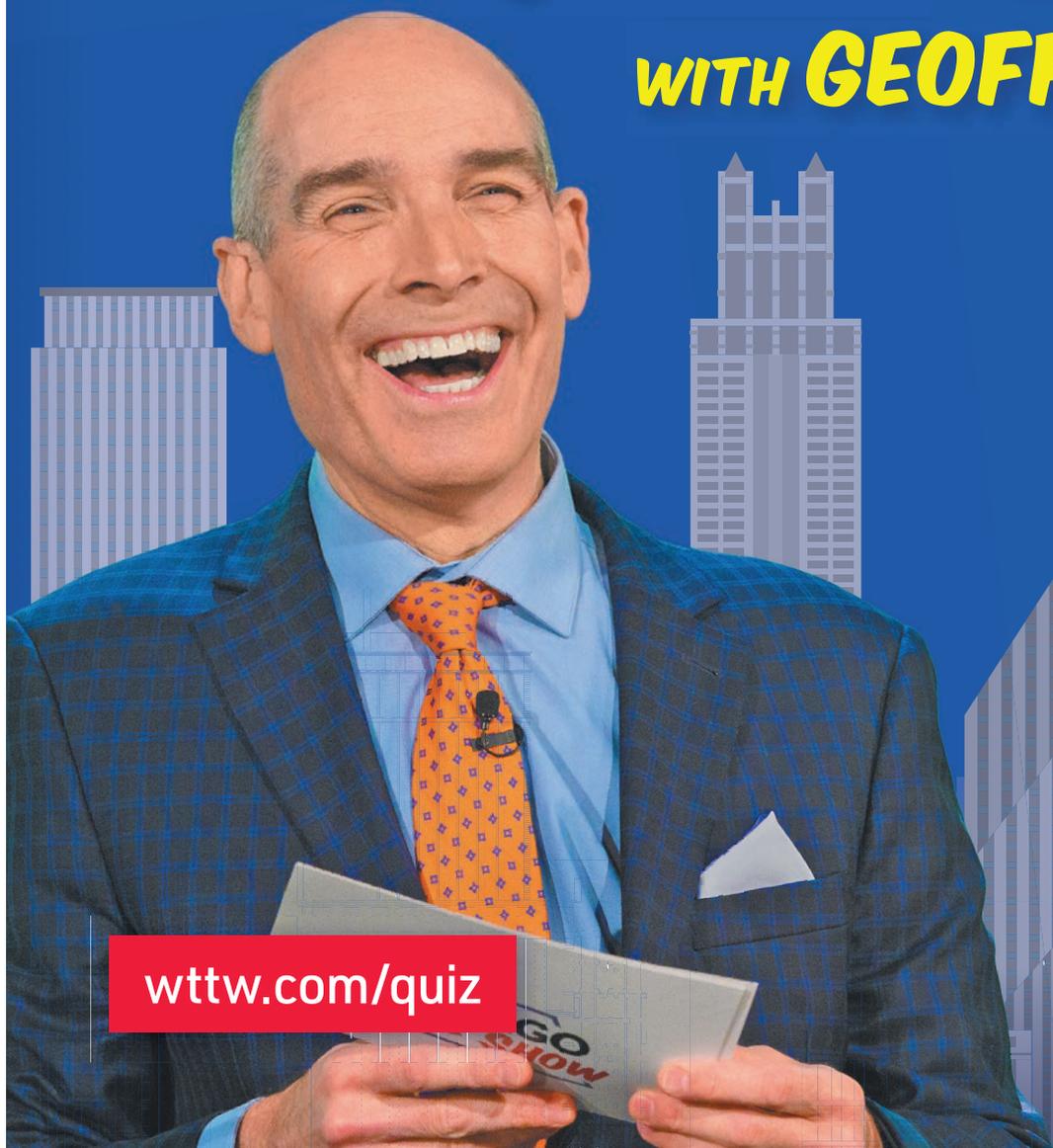
Queer artist David Wojnarowicz chronicled his life as if he were preparing for this record of it. His predisposition toward creating art as a way of verifying his own existence wasn't borne of self-interest, however, but rather a desire for vindication in a world that routinely censors voices of the oppressed. This paradox is at the heart of Wojnarowicz's practicable mythology, succinctly captured here by nonfiction filmmaker Chris McKim (*Out of Iraq*), who utilizes the vastness of Wojnarowicz's personal archives to create a portrait of an artist who spent his short life (Wojnarowicz passed away from HIV-related complications in 1992 at the age of 37) putting forth a body of work that itself composes a likeness of sorts, through myriad paintings, photographs, films, texts, and various other creative experimentations. The documentary explores Wojnarowicz's troubled childhood, his tenure as a controversial member of the downtown New York arts scene in the 70s and 80s, and his efforts as an activist for queer rights amidst the emerging AIDS epidemic. His vivid and provocative work is at the center of the film, often featured in all its obscene glory; the title comes from a multimedia collage that includes a drawing of two men kissing and photos of Wojnarowicz and other artist friends in the nude. Needing a name for the piece, Wojnarowicz borrowed from a homophobic note he'd found on the ground, his anger and proclivity for self-reclamation palpable in such an appropriation. McKim's film is an evocative summation of Wojnarowicz's life and legacy—interviewees include family and friends, such as writer Fran Lebowitz and Wojnarowicz's long-time partner—but it succeeds best in allowing the subject to speak for itself. —**KATHLEEN SACHS** 105 min. [Gene Siskel Film Center From Your Sofa, Music Box Direct](#)

#quizWTTW

THE GREAT CHICAGO QUIZ SHOW

WITH **GEOFFREY BAER**

**Fridays
beginning
MAR 26 | 8PM**



wttw.com/quiz

wttw 

PICK OF THE WEEK

Valerie June leaves her roots for the stars



RENATA RAKSHA

VALERIE JUNE, *THE MOON AND STARS: PRESCRIPTIONS FOR DREAMERS*

Fantasy
valeriejune.bandcamp.com

VALERIE JUNE'S BEST-KNOWN ALBUM, 2013's Dan Auerbach-produced *Pushin' Against a Stone* (Sunday Best), is a raw, playful mix of blues and country. Eclectic and ambitious as that effort is, though, it doesn't capture June's full range. On the cover of her new fifth album, *The Moon and Stars: Prescriptions for Dreamers* (Fantasy), June wears a spectacular silver gown, and the music matches the portrait's dreamy, dazzling sophistication. Produced by Jack Splash (who's also worked with Alicia Keys and John Legend), the album is dense, lavishly arranged R&B. "Call Me a Fool" feels like some rapturous combination of Etta James and Patsy Cline, while "Fallin'" channels the folk purity of Nick Drake, the guitar pulsing and circling with June's breathing—it's the track most like June's earlier work, but subtle overdubs give it a richer, fuller sound. "Stay" starts with a piano melody, then adds a martial drum, a full string section, and June's voice in a multitracked chorus. That voice, harmonizing with itself or otherwise, remains a wonder. In her earlier work, June's nasal burr and laid-back phrasing evokes calluses and dirt roads, but on *The Moon and Stars* it sounds more like sandpaper drawn gently across velvet—a sound so harsh it's sensuous, and so smooth it cuts deep. —NOAH BERLATSKY



Autarkh @STEPH BYRNE

AUTARKH, *FORM IN MOTION*

Season of Mist
autarkh.bandcamp.com/album/form-in-motion

Dutch avant-garde metal band Dodecahedron released two spectacular albums, 2012's self-titled debut and 2017's *Kwintessens*, that promised a bright future for the band with their use of disturbing dissonance, bleak synthesizer textures, and gnashing industrial rhythms. But tragedy struck before they could live up to their potential: front man Michiel Eikenaar (also of black-metal group Nihil) was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in April 2019 at age 42. That same year, cofounding Dodecahedron vocalist and guitarist Michel Nienhuis moved forward with Autarkh, which sticks with some of Dodecahedron's tricks and expands into new arenas. In a 2012 Dodecahedron interview with music blog *American Aftermath*, Nienhuis cited Dutch sound artist Jaap Vink as an influence, and on Autarkh's debut, *Form in Motion* (Season of Mist), he embraces an even wider palette of electronic music, marrying playful touches of avant-garde electronica with ferocious black metal. A four-piece consisting of Nienhuis, synthesist and sound designer Joris Bonis (also formerly of Dodecahedron), guitarist and vocalist David Luiten, and synthesist and beat designer Tijnn Verbruggen, Autarkh stomp across a blasted soundscape, absorbing everything that's not nailed down and a few things that are. Their harsh, challenging sound isn't particularly invested in any genre, and often storms through several in one song. The majestic "Lost to Sight" touches on prog, black metal, noise, and thrash. The cyclical whirlwinds of "Cyclic Terror" and the unsettling intro and wiry, athletic riffing of "Impasse" gleefully merge industrial, punk, prog, and EDM influences, while the eerie abandoned-city vibe of "Metacognition" segues into the raw hardcore energy of "Clouded Aura." *Form in Motion* is a rich album with tons of replay value; it's fierce and fresh, and I look forward to spending more time with it. And I'll call it now: given the time to flourish and sink into the ears of an audience, Autarkh will become highly influential on the next generation of extreme metal.

—MONICA KENDRICK

NICK CAVE & WARREN ELLIS, *CARNAGE*

Goliath Industries
nickcave.com/carnage



Don't just get a job.

Launch your career.

At Jane Addams Resource Corporation, we offer **FREE** job training, supportive services and job placement to low-income workers, so they can learn the skills they need to achieve their financial goals.

Contact us today
708.581.8356
www.jane-addams.org

JARC

JANE
ADDAMS
RESOURCE
CORPORATION



Warren Ellis and Nick Cave **JOEL RYAN**

continued from 56

In 2018 Nick Cave opened a new portal into his world with a question-and-answer newsletter titled the Red Hand Files. As queries from fans flooded in, Cave dutifully replied with poetic meditations, splashy Polaroids of his opulent Brighton home, and the occasional errant one-liner that shed new light on the mystique that he's meticulously cultivated for 40-plus years. On February 25, Cave revealed one of the most momentous installments of the Red Hand Files: the surprise release of *Carnage*, a collaborative album with longtime cohort Warren Ellis that he describes as "a brutal but very beautiful record nested in a communal catastrophe." Though Cave and Ellis have worked together in various capacities since the mid-90s, including the Bad Seeds and Grinderman, *Carnage* is their first pure duo release outside the soundtrack realm. The Bad Seeds' most recent albums, 2016's *Skeleton Tree* and 2019's *Ghosteen*, took shape in the shadow of the accidental death of Cave's teenage son, Arthur, in 2015, and they're devastating. On *Carnage*, though, Cave ruminates on a different sort of death: the implosion of a world that once seemed laid out at our feet, and our collective mourning of all we've lost. The album pulls from a thematic palette similar to that of the Bad Seeds' past decade—grief, devotion, yearning—and Ellis sows an even more bountiful crop of piano, synthesizer, and percussion. On album opener "Hand of God" Cave delves into the fire-and-brimstone vocals of the early Bad Seeds years, lent extra menace by a chanting choir. Any sense of danger quickly dissipates, though, thanks to the Alan Vega-esque throbs and jolting piano of "Old Time" and the lounge-lizard melodrama of the title track. As he's aged, Cave has increasingly melded his favored Biblical themes with cheeky

romanticism: naked women in water, naked women in beds, hotel-room walls adorned with the images of naked women. It's at once poetic, comical, and smutty—and on *Carnage* it eases the album's existential weight. Even in the most trying of times, Cave finds ways to summon his characteristic roughshod glamour, injecting vivid depictions of his "lap-dancing shoes" ("Balcony Man") and a "Botticelli Venus with a penis" ("White Elephant"). *Carnage* also showcases Ellis's abilities as a musical architect, as he erects sonic tabernacles from which Cave can praise or condemn at will. The album does best when it celebrates the Cave-Ellis dyad at its most uninhibited, prioritizing boldness above overall cohesion. That's not to say lack of coherence is a weakness; when describing how to build a perfect house of worship in *The Cathedral Is Dying*, sculptor Auguste Rodin wrote, "There is no beginning. Start where you arrive." With *Carnage*, Cave and Ellis invite listeners to simply exist in the moment, and in a time where so many are preoccupied with the past or the future, that feels like a gift. —SHANNON NICO SHREIBAK

DRE IZAYA, *I FALL APART WHEN THEY LEAVE* Loop Theory looptheoryinc.com/ifawtl

Englewood rapper Dre Izaya has recently emerged as part of a loose collective of pop, R&B, soul, and hip-hop artists associated with Loop Theory, a local indie artist-development and management company founded by producer Disrupt and rapper Navarro. (The agency also releases music by the artists on its roster.) Last year, Loop Theory put together a big rollout for the October debut of rapper Brit-



Kuzu: Tyler Damon, Dave Rempis, and Tashi Dorji **JULIA DRATEL**

ney Carter, *As I Am*, and with the arrival of Izaya's new *I Fall Apart When They Leave*, the label is finishing a one-two punch. Izaya tops gleaming instrumentals with buttery half-sung verses, sometimes draping his voice with Auto-Tune to amplify its sumptuousness, as he does on the neon-colored "I Understand/Separate." He raps with the cool poise of a star in the making, which helps sell some of the sleeper songs in *I Fall Apart When They Leave*—it feels like he's just one inescapable hook away from becoming an unstoppable hit machine. —LEOR GALIL

KUZU, *THE GLASS DELUSION* Astral Spirits rempisdorjidadamon.bandcamp.com/album/the-glass-delusion

Kuzu formed in 2017, when electric guitarist Tashi Dorji and drummer Tyler Damon invited saxophonist Dave Rempis to join their duo onstage at Elastic Arts. The set went so well that they recorded an album the next day. Anyone who knew what that record's title, *Hiljaisuus*, means in Finnish probably just thought the trio were trolling—"silence" was the last thing you'd expect from three musicians so adept at managing high volume, and they'd delivered exactly the sort of blistering barrage you'd expect. But on their first tour in fall 2018, Kuzu added nuance and variety to their improvisations' default intensity. They had the presence of mind to record evidence of their evolution as they went, and they've been releasing documents of it ever since. This month's *The Glass Delusion*—named for a psychological phenomenon first identified among affluent medieval Europeans, which causes the afflict-

ed to believe they're made of breakable crystal—is the third such album. "It Simply Becomes Jammed" is a 31-minute set recorded at their de facto home base, Elastic Arts, and despite the intimations of stuckness in its title, it's a study in the cultivation and management of dynamic tension. The trio build from tiny gestures to a stampeding charge, then subside to a simmering stew of tart tones before breaking into an unmeasured sledgehammer duel. And "Gnash," recorded at the same Milwaukee concert that yielded last year's *Purple Dark Opal*, layers together long reed tones, rustling brushwork, and ridgelines of feedback to create a sonic expression of bleak lunar topography. Each of Kuzu's 2018 recordings has taken us further from where they started, which makes it less certain what the group might sound like next—and more exciting to find out. —BILL MEYER

HEDVIG MOLLESTAD TRIO, *DING DONG. YOU'RE DEAD.* Rune Grammofon runegrammofon.com/collections/next-releases/products/copy-of-rcd2215-hedvig-mollestad-ekhidna-lp-cd

Norwegian guitarist Hedvig Mollestad has an uncanny ability to merge rock and jazz in arrangements that transcend the clichés of both genres. On her new album, *Ding Dong. You're Dead.* (Rune Grammofon), this hybrid sound is defined in no small part by a sense of play. She returns to her long-running trio following the 2020 detour *Ekhidna*, where she was backed by a larger ensemble. The perpetual shredding on the new record could sound over-the-top alongside some of the more



Hedvig Mollestad Trio: Ivar Loe Bjørnstad, Ellen Brekken, and Hedvig Mollestad  JULIA MARIE NAGLESTAD



Leanne Betasamosake Simpson  ZAHRA SIDDIQUI

somber work on *Ekhidna*, but it's well-suited for this trio setting. On album opener "Leo Flash' Return to the Underworld," Mollestad seems instantly inspired by Ellen Brekken's persistent bass line, and the following track, "All Flights Cancelled," perfectly slots into the album's hesher feel (even though its title directly references life during the pandemic). Mollestad brings her sense of humor to bear on the title track, giving listeners a more nuanced display of her skills as a bandleader: the powerful gallop of Brekken and drummer Ivar Loe Bjørnstad cedes space and creates a pastel background over which the guitarist ruminates. (The closer, "Four Candles," functions the same way.) "Magic Moshroom," whose title is a wink and a nod to the band's Sabbathian tendencies, stands at the precipice of full-till head-banging but doesn't leap, instead perfectly lacing together jazz and metal and underlining the trio's synthesis of sounds. —DAVE CANTOR

PORCUPINE, THE SIBYL

New Morality Zine
porcupinehardcore.bandcamp.com/album/the-sibyl

Chicago hardcore five-piece Porcupine use society's fetid underbelly like a renewable energy source—they must know they'll never run out of cruelty to drive their outrage. Their new album, *The Sibyl* (New Morality Zine), opens with "Pederasty," sung from the point of view of an adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse who's still haunted by trauma; its nonstop barrage of vicious drumming and guttural riffs sharpens the plainspoken anger and grief in the desperate lyrics. Porcupine know that the hostility in their music has power, but they're

also aware it could drown out their vision if they ratchet up its intensity too far—and the ricocheting grindcore blastbeats on the raging "Unauthorized" and "Funeral Grief" push right up to the line between "unbridled" and "out of control." They also throttle back for the reflective burner "The Kingdom of Heaven," a much longer, slower song where Porcupine's ferociousness invigorates a drawn-out shoegaze melody that lunges into an acidic climax. The band are learning to translate hardcore aesthetics into new musical territory and growing more capable of exploiting their potent possibilities. —LEOR GALIL

LEANNE BETASAMOSAKE SIMPSON, THEORY OF ICE

You've Changed
leannesimpson.bandcamp.com/album/theory-of-ice

In 1876, the Canadian parliament passed the Indian Act, a sweeping piece of legislation that still dictates how the government interacts with the First Nations bands indigenous to the country and legally defines Indian status and band membership. Though heavily amended over the years, the Indian Act initially included policies that disenfranchised Indigenous women who married outside their band, stripping them and their children of Indian status and restricting their access to native communities and traditional land. In the early 90s, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's grandmother and mother regained their Indian status after the passage of Bill C-31, and Simpson and several other family members followed in 2011 upon the passage of Bill C-3; Simpson's grandmother had been born in Alder-

ville First Nation, and they all became recognized as off-reserve members of that band. By then, Simpson had become a prominent scholar, poet, and activist of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg people, also known as the Mississauga Ojibwe people, whose territory includes the north shore of Lake Huron (and two Alderville First Nation reserves). Her work, which includes several books, four records, and many academic papers, addresses contemporary Indigenous life and intellectual practices (such as resistance to cultural appropriation and environmental degradation) and describes her quest to reconnect with traditions from which she'd been largely cut off in her youth.

On her new album, *Theory of Ice*, Simpson blends spoken word and singing with quiet, unhurried, and sometimes otherworldly folk rock provided by a band that includes her sister, Ansley Simpson. On opening track "Break Up," Simpson speaks of slowly morphing states of being, trading off hushed poetry and soft singing over twinkling synths and warm keys. Some of the lyrics from *Theory of Ice* also appear in her poetic 2020 novel *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies*, which features a narrator who appears in an iced-over lake. In "OK Indicts," which combines a driving beat, pensive acoustic guitars, and sun-speckled electronics, that narrator bears witness to the beauty of time slipping by ("the sky is falling up") and the destruction of nature ("melted by greed") while frozen in place. On "I Pity the Country," a cover of the 1973 protest song by musician and filmmaker Willie Dunn, Simpson sets powerful lyrics about the impacts of bigotry and institutional racism against soft, twangy guitar. Though the song reckons with Dunn's experience as an Indigenous man living in white-dominated Canada, by the time a chorus joins Simpson in its final

section, its message feels universal and timeless. Simpson's own takes on daily life, relationships, and the interconnectedness of people, nature, tradition, and spirituality all reach us through an Indigenous lens, but the fuel for resistance they provide can teach anyone. —JAMIE LUDWIG

TREE, SOUL TRAP

Self-released via Soul Trap Music
mctreeg.bandcamp.com/album/soul-trap

In the past decade, Chicago hip-hop has elevated many talented acts to the national stage, among them rapper-producer Tremaine Johnson, better known as Tree—and his wildly idiosyncratic sounds set him apart from most of those newly minted stars. The Cabrini-Green native specializes in calamitous productions whose tough-as-nails percussion frames honeyed vocal samples warped till they sound ghostly; it's a style Tree calls "soul trap." This sound enriches his storytelling, giving his worldly-wise perspective more heft and making the detailed snapshots from his youth feel as tangible as flesh. Tree's new *Soul Trap* (self-released via Soul Trap Music) takes a more restrained, minimal approach to this aesthetic, to excellent effect; the sparse arrangement of "Scared of Airplanes," with its acerbic electronic claps, rubber-band bass, and sproingy synths, enlivens Tree's reflective, searching verses about his role as a mentor and the choices he's made in life. Respected veterans Roc Marciano and King Louie are among the guests dropping verses on *Soul Trap*, which gives me hope that more people will be introduced to one of Chicago's most gripping and underappreciated artists. —LEOR GALIL 



PHOTO BY LORI MENDOZA

CHICAGOANS OF NOTE

Alejandro Ayala, aka King Hippo, DJ and producer

“You bring people together and something will always happen... The how is pretty easy, but the why is more important to me.”

As told to SALEM COLLO-JULIN

Alejandro Ayala, 42, is a Chicago event organizer and record collector who DJs as King Hippo. He runs the biweekly show QC on Lum-pen Radio, and he's hosted or cohosted a series for Worldwide FM that focuses on Chicago R&B, jazz, soul, and more, beginning with the 2018 show Chicago Overground. He's worked in various capacities for Sleeping Village and the Whistler as well as for the label International Anthem.

I posted to my social media: “If a person has lived in Chicago for the better part of 24 years, can they be considered an Honorary Chicagoan?” When I lived abroad, people would ask me where I was from, and I would always say “near Chicago,” because when I first moved I had been living in Cicero. I grew up in beautiful Arlington Heights, northwest of the city, and I moved to Chicago in 1997. One of my friends replied to my post that you can consider yourself a Chicagoan if you've lived here for ten winters.

When it first started snowing this winter,

my girlfriend and I noticed that a neighbor of ours had shoveled out our car. And I thought, “Oh man, that's really nice of them.” So the following day I went out to shovel, but I think my Virgo tendencies kicked in and I ended up clearing something like 15 parking spots—a quarter of the block. It was the only exercise I was getting, so I was out there maintaining it every day. Lining it up, making sure you see the curb right over by the fire hydrant, the yellow paint.

I would say I'm a DJ first, but my gut wants to say that I'm just a fan of music and the arts

in general first, because I think that's what kind of drives everything that I do. Primarily I've been a DJ for about 15 years now here in the city. But beyond that I'm a radio broadcaster, event producer, an instructor. I have my hands in digital marketing, and I was a talent buyer before the pandemic. I help produce records—well, you know, I guess a lot of different sorts of things. I was booking for the Whistler just before the pandemic. [Owner] Billy [Helmkamp] asked me to help him out starting in late 2019, and we were really getting things going by February of 2020. We had a lot of awesome stuff planned out for spring. And I was excited about the summer.

When the lockdown first started, I was in Mexico on vacation. I left Chicago and actually never really came back to the same world. As my vacation kept going, I was seeing an increasing amount of strange posts from America and seeing all these weird e-mails. And, you know, I was on vacation. I was trying not to read them, but a lot of them were like, “Cancellation! Cancellation! Cancellation!” I'm like, “What is going on over there?”

My bosses at the Whistler were having conversations with staff at this point, and they decided to close. Back then I guess everybody was looking to South Korea or China as the model for shutdown, and it looked like it was going to be a three-month thing, you know? But yeah, I mean, shit, we fucked that up.

When I got back from Mexico, my work was just tons of e-mails to people that were doing shows, to agencies, to everybody—I mean, it was a week and a half of nonstop e-mailing, either outright cancellations or rescheduling. But then, that was it. I think I may have put 45 minutes of work into the Whistler since then, just to help run some ads on Facebook, you know. So it's almost like that's completely disappeared from my life.

In the summer the city got creative, and I was at least able to do one event on my own and help out with a few others. In 2019, I got a grant through DCASE to do a two-night series called the Preservation of Fire, to be hosted specifically on the south and west sides of the city. And then in January 2020, I got another grant to do the same thing in the summer of 2020, which would have been connected to the Chicago Jazz Festival. But that was canceled, and at a certain point, DCASE reached out and said, you have the option of either holding the money until next summer and seeing what

happens or using the money to produce a video for the Millennium Park at Home: Chicago Jazz series.

Angel Bat Dawid, Isaiah Collier, Julian Otis, Jeremy Warren, and Kennedy Banks had started doing a weekly outdoor jam series called the Royal Sessions in July, and that really saved me, really nourished my soul. Attending for the first time really helped balance me back out and made me realize just how much I missed live music and human interaction.

I remember thinking that the Royal Sessions felt exactly like what the Preservation of Fire events had been about. So I asked Angel and Isaiah if it was cool if I came by and documented everything to then present to the city. They were hosting weekly sessions at the Perennial Garden in Jackson Park, and the first few were pretty sparsely attended, but as the summer went on and into the fall it started to swell up. The garden is so wide and people that went were very careful, so their picnic blankets were really far apart from one another. And even if they weren't on their

blankets, it wasn't like people had their masks off. Everyone always had their masks on. They would take a sip of their drink and then cover their face right back up.

When we did the Preservation of Fire sessions, we made sure to really drive that idea home—to respect and take care of the talent of the city, you know? They're treasures for the city. We can't jeopardize that just for the sake of having fun. And more importantly, those sessions, like I said, were nourishment. So we were really wanting to make sure people were respectful, because what the musicians were doing was invaluable.

I started teaching young people in a program for After School Matters called Event Planning and Production. I'm amazed how many students have said this is something that they're so excited about and that they've always wanted to do. I've been really lucky to meet a lot of very enthusiastic young people, and surprisingly, a good amount of them have already had practical experience in one way or another.

I'm constantly surprised by the professionalism of the teenagers that I'm meeting. A lot of the students have done weddings and celebrations, things like that, and in some other cases they have organized fundraisers or protests.

I suppose what I like to help them focus on is the importance of community and the importance of gathering and what happens once you bring people together. It's magical. In my experience, you bring people together and something will always happen. And I think that's an incredible thing to experience. It's the why, more than the how. The how is pretty easy, but the why is more important to me.

I'm currently working with Sura Dupart, who's an elder here in the city. I've been working with him and his group for the last two years, creating events that the band can play at and recording them. I found Sura and his band because Joe Bryl and Angel were telling me about this group that I should check out, and I went with them to see them play at the Silver Room. I got to meet the band, and I fell

in love with their sound.

I wouldn't say it's like entertainment or music per se, but I would say it's more medicinal than anything else. When you sit down and you listen through their entire set, they pull your spirit and move it around. It's almost like a chiropractor manipulating your spine or something like that, but with your spirit. I definitely physically feel less tension on my shoulders when I see them play. We're going to release a CD sometime this year.

My girlfriend and I stayed at home for ten days a few times in the last two months. We didn't go outside at all during those periods so we could go meet with our families without our masks on. And even then I was anxious about taking my mask off. So I don't know how ready I'm going to be to gather with groups anytime soon. There's a lot of things I wish, but at this point, with the way we are, I think everybody needs to chill out until next spring. 

 @hollo

Celebrate
**Money
Smart
Week!**

April 10-17, 2021

Special Section: April 1, 2021

Make your money work for you with a special section devoted to financial literacy. Want to be involved?

Contact us at ads@chicagoreader.com for advertising opportunities! 

EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE



Wyatt Waddell SAM FUEHRING

NEW

Adiaphora Orchestra 3/20, 8 PM, livestream at youtube.com/constellationchicago **FREE**

Afro Fusion dance party 3/20, 8 PM, Bassline

Afro Fusion dance party featuring DJ Dee Money, DJ 3k, DJ Matrix 3/27, 8 PM, the Promontory

Phil Angotti 4/1, 6:30 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE**

Aniba & the Sol Starz 4/2, 9:30 PM, Bourbon on Division

Asian Improv Arts Midwest presents Kioto Aoki, Mai Sugimoto, Da Wei Wang 3/20, 7 PM, livestream at twitch.tv/elasticartschicago **FREE**

Best of "The Music Of" featuring Glen Hansard, Patti Smith, Billy Gibbons, Keb' Mo', Rosanne Cash, Mountain Goats, Marc Cohn, Shawn Colvin, Raul Malo, Nicole Atkins, Marc Roberge, Oliver Wood, Joan Osborne, Deva Mahal, Martin Sexton, and more 4/15, 7 PM, livestream at mandolin.com

Bifunkal & Friends 3/27, 7 and 9 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts

Billy Strings 3/24-3/26, 8 PM, livestream at nugs.tv

Body: Afro-Caribbean dance party hosted by Ms. Mighty 3/21, 8 PM, the Promontory

Bricolage series featuring Ken Vandermark and Mazen Kerbaj 3/19, 8 PM, livestream at twitch.tv/elasticartschicago **FREE**

Brandi Carlile 3/28, 7 PM, livestream at brandicarlile.veeps.com

Edwin Daugherty 3/25, 6 PM; 4/1, 6 PM; 4/8, 6 PM; 4/15, 6 PM; 4/22, 6 PM; 4/29, 6 PM,

Porkchop West Loop **Deeper one-year anniversary show in honor of Auto-Pain** 3/27, 7 PM, stream at noonchorus.com

Dub Dungeon featuring Orbiiix, Roundz 3/27, 9 PM, Bourbon on Division

Dub Dungeon featuring Smokahauntas, DubhSheep 3/20, 8:30 PM, Bourbon on Division

Expo '76 3/31, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE**

Freedom From and Freedom To #4 featuring Julian Otis, Janice Misurrell-Mitchell, Ramah Malebranche, Olivia Harris, Luc Mosley, Angel Bat Dawid, Scott Rubin, Adam Zanolini, Jefferey Thomas, Cameron Pfiffner, Ugochi Nwaogwugwu, and Julius Sabbagh 4/2-4/3, 7 PM, livestream at twitch.tv/elasticartschicago **FREE**

Gin Palace Jesters 4/2, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE**

Girls Love R&B Paint & Drank featuring DJ Unstable 3/21, 4:30 PM, the Promontory

Chris Greene Quartet 3/25, 7 and 9 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts

Steve Gunn 4/1, 7 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/steve-gunn

Juke vs. Hip-Hop featuring DJ Mike P 3/19, 9 PM, Forest Park Tap Room, Forest Park

Rick King & Marty Sammon 3/26, 7 and 9 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts

Stephanie Lamprea 5/1, 8 PM, livestream at youtube.com/constellationchicago **FREE**

Jon Langford & 3 Blokes 3/27, 5 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/hideout

The Make-Out Party Film: An Evening of Aural Intercourse featuring Kristin Johnston, Gabriel Wallace, Bindu Poroori, David E. Smith,

Sharon Lanza, Bobby Conn, Monica Boubou, Marc Ruger 3/20, 8 PM, stream at noonchorus.com/hideout

Mariachi Sirenas & Comparza, DJ Jaime Garza 4/1, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE**

Marina 4/2, 6 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE**

Marlana 3/23, 9 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/hideout

Metropolis String Quartet Expo '76 3/24, 6:30 and 9 PM; 3/31, 6:30 and 9 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts

Minks, Aaron Lee Tasjan, Sierra Ferrell 4/2, 8 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/the-minks

Minor Moon 4/1, 4 PM, livestream at audiotree.tv **FREE**

MyVibe featuring Andy Gresh, Samuel Sonder, Karim, C-Train, Justin Lang 3/20, 7 PM, Le Nocturne Chicago

Neil Frances 3/19, 5 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com/neil-frances

Ossia Musical Forum ensemble with Thai Institute dancers 3/20, 6 PM, the Golden Triangle

Morgan Pirtle 3/24, 7 and 9 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts

Refresh Sunday Brunch featuring Dustin Sheridan, L3xx, Paul Johnson, Jaygee, Randall Dean 3/21, noon, 2:30 and 4:30 PM, Le Nocturne Chicago

Tomeka Reid & Junius Paul, Mars Williams/Steve Marquette/Brian Sandstrom/Tyler Damon 4/8, 7:30 PM, livestream at twitch.tv/elasticartschicago **FREE**

Erica Renee 4/2, 8 PM, Carol's Pub

Maggie Rose, Them Vibes 12/18, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

DJ Samorama 4/2, 8 PM, Mon-

trose Saloon **FREE**

Jeff Shepherd, Snake Oil Bandits 4/24, 7 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggie's

Slide Thru Sunday: DJ D9-3 birthday celebration hosted by Live Young 3/28, 8 PM, the Promontory

Erthe St. James 3/20, 7 and 9 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts

Stella Blue's Band 3/26, 7 PM, livestream at fans.live

Sunfallen 3/27, 8:30 PM, Carol's Pub

3xDope honoring Kwest, On featuring Jay Illa, Joe Kollege 3/20, 3 and 6 PM, the Promontory, 6 PM sold out

Wyatt Waddell 3/27, 8 PM, Uncommon Ground

We Love Soul 11 Year Anniversary Celebration featuring DJ Sean Alvarez, DJ Duane Powell, DJ Joe Kollege 3/28, 2 and 5 PM, the Promontory

UPDATED

Bounce and Break Yo Back 3 featuring Thank You Chicago, DJs 4/17, 10 PM, the Promontory, postponed

Albert Cummings 4/6, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, postponed

Iris DeMent 10/1, 7 PM, City Winery, rescheduled

Dustbowl Revival 10/30, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, rescheduled

Freddy Jones Band 12/10, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, rescheduled

James Hunter Six 3/9/2022, 8 PM, City Winery, rescheduled

Bill Kirchen 4/7, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, postponed

Lost Dog Street Band 3/13/2022, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, rescheduled, 18+

Modern English, Bootblacks 9/1, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, rescheduled

The Music of Cream featuring Kofi Baker, Malcolm Bruce, and Will Johns 4/9, 7:30 PM, Park West, canceled

Natewantstobattle, CG5, Vespera 9/7, 7 PM, Lincoln Hall, rescheduled

Sinead O'Connor 8/18-8/21, 8 PM, City Winery, sold out

Purity Ring 11/5, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, rescheduled

Chris Renzema, Ry Cox 10/18, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, rescheduled

Eric Roberson 4/1-4/3, 8 PM, City Winery, postponed

Dan Rodriguez 9/25, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, rescheduled

Swallow the Sun, Infected Rain, Wheel 3/22, 6:30 PM, the Forge, Joliet, canceled

Tennis, Molly Burch 11/15, 8 PM,

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

the Vic, rescheduled

Texas Gentlemen 11/11, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn, rescheduled

They Might Be Giants 4/7/2022, 8 PM, the Vic, rescheduled, 17+

Paul Thorn 4/21, 8 PM, City Winery, postponed

Toastamania X featuring Ghoul, Nunslaughter, Cross Examination, Sanguisuga-bogg, Texas Toast Chainsaw 6/4/2022, 4 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+

Toastamania X featuring Oxygen Destroyer, Paralysis, Deterioration, Nemesis, Insinnerator, Voice of God, 200 Stab Wounds, Death-run, Democide, Infowars 6/4/2022, 1 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, rescheduled; lineup changed

Rock Club, rescheduled, 17+



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

THE PAST FEW YEARS have been bitter-sweet for local postpunk four-piece **Deeper**, who released their excellent second album, **Auto-Pain**, last March. When it came out, they were still recovering from the loss of guitarist Michael Clawson, who took his own life in fall 2019, just after the album was completed. Then COVID-19 forced the band to cancel what surely would've been successful tours of Europe and North America. Fans eager to see *Auto-Pain's* taut, danceable songs performed will finally get a chance on Saturday, March 27, at 7 PM, when Deeper stream a set from the **Chicago Cultural Center** via online venue **Noonchorus**.

In late February, Chicagoan **Ben Geier** began uploading live video of entire late-90s sets from the **Fireside Bowl** to YouTube, using a channel called the **Fireside Tapes**. Geier captured a smattering of shows at the old bowling alley starting in 1997 and recently began digitizing the tapes, inspired by Facebook and Instagram accounts dedicated to Chicago's 80s and 90s punk past. "I've been wanting to do it for years," he says. "With the pandemic, it was a perfect time to do it, because nobody's getting to see live music." Geier says he shot about 30 shows, and he's also begun to edit and post footage that strangers send him—anyone interested in contributing can message the Fireside Tapes on Instagram.

Experimental musician and **Bodymilk Tapes** cofounder **Hedra Rowan** dropped her new album, **Nothing's Wrong, Now You're Beside Me Again**, early this month, and she says it required "several years of training and technological advancement." With just one exception, every track consists only of Rowan's voice and an array of software voice synthesizers, which create constellations of beautiful, uncanny sounds. "Noise Becomes Female" could be an AI stuttering itself into madness, and "Ur Deadly, Ur Heavenly" employs delicate harmonies like a Renaissance choir.

—J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL

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

NATIONAL POLITICS

Meet the new boss, Joe Biden

And meet his bosses—corporations and the investor class.

By **LEONARD C. GOODMAN**

Leonard C. Goodman is a Chicago criminal defense attorney.

There is an odd dichotomy today in our nation's Capitol. Congress has just approved a bill known as the American Rescue Plan (ARP), providing temporary assistance to struggling families. But at the same time, our Capitol—the place where America's children go to learn about democracy—remains locked down, surrounded by thousands of armed National Guard troops and seven-foot fences with concertina wire.

Official explanations for the continued militarized lockdown of our Capitol keep shifting. First it was in response to the January 6 riots, planned openly on social media and yet somehow catching our 16 intelligence agencies by surprise. Next the FBI predicted violence on Inauguration Day, January 20. Then we were warned about online chatter that QAnon adherents were planning something scary on March 4.

Now it's late March. Why are the troops and the barriers still there? The answer likely relates to recent polling showing that dissatisfaction with the two governing parties has reached an all-time high in America. According to a recent Gallup poll, 62 percent of survey participants think that the Republican and Democratic “parties do such a poor job representing the American people that a third party is needed.” Yet, the two-party duopoly has completely shut third parties out of national politics. Third parties can't get on the ballot, and they can't get into the debates. No wonder there is fear and loathing in our nation's Capitol.

Republicans pretend to care about traditional values; they pledge to fight the woke liberals trying to control our lives. Democrats pretend to fight for the poor and working class. But behind the scenes, both parties serve the interests of the investor class that funds them and demands, in return, a high rate of return on their investment capital. The public feuding between the two corporate parties depicted nightly on our cable

news shows is as phony and staged as the 1970s-era wrestling matches between The Sheik and Dick the Bruiser.

Popular support for the Republican Party is so thin that the party has been taken over by a game show host who posed as the protector of working people and Christian values. The party limps along, relying on anti-democratic measures like filibusters, gerrymandering, and voter suppression to protect the interests of its donors.

The Democratic Party is only slightly more functional. It portrays itself as the champion of the working class. But behind the scenes its leaders assure their corporate donors that working people will receive no significant advances—such as universal health care or a living wage—under Democratic rule. Carrying out such a schizophrenic program requires almost constant deception. Democratic lawmakers pretend to support popular programs like Medicare for All (M4A) knowing full well that if M4A ever passed into law, their party would lose its major funders from the insurance industry. Thus, when more than a hundred House Democrats cosponsored Representative Pramila Jayapal's M4A Bill in 2019, they knew Speaker Nancy Pelosi would never risk letting the bill reach the House floor. Democratic voters overwhelmingly support M4A. An open debate and floor vote might encourage these supporters to organize and overwhelm the resolve of the bought-off lawmakers.

The Democrats rely heavily on a lapdog corporate press to support their deception. Outlets like the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, CNN, and NPR can be counted on to endorse the fiction that Democrats, who now control both houses of Congress and the presidency, really want to improve the lives of working people but are stymied by centrists like Joe Manchin, by the Senate parliamentarian, or by the threat of a Republican filibuster.

The corporate press has praised the ARP bill as a historic victory for the poor. But struggling Americans see a different reality.

After a year of COVID lockdowns, many are facing crushing levels of debt and can expect assistance checks to be gobbled up by landlords, lenders, medical providers, and credit card companies. Further, because we don't have universal health care, the ARP funnels billions of taxpayer dollars into the coffers of giant health insurance companies like Aetna and UnitedHealthcare to “cover recently laid-off workers and those who purchase their own coverage” with no price restraints on premiums or guarantees that the private insurers will actually pay for health care when workers get sick.

Working people have also noticed that after taking office, Biden immediately jettisoned every single one of his campaign promises that was opposed by major donors to the Democratic Party, including the central promise of his campaign: to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$15. This was hardly a radical promise by a president whom the establishment press describes as a “crusader for the poor.” (The press generally ignores the fact that Biden has largely been funded by corporate and financial services industry cash for decades.)

A person working full time, year-round for \$7.25 an hour earns about \$15,000 a year, keeping them below the poverty line and eligible for food stamps. Yet major Democratic donors believe they can earn a higher rate of return on their investment capital if workers are paid poverty wages, requiring them to spend their off hours participating in the gig economy, driving us around and delivering our groceries.

Biden's excuse for abandoning a living wage for workers—his respect for the opinion of the Senate parliamentarian—rings especially hollow since Biden has already bombed Syria without authorization from Congress, showing little respect for the law or the Constitution, or for the voters to whom he had promised a “foreign policy for the middle class” that will end “forever wars.” This illegal bombing did please the weapons industry, major donors to both governing parties.

The fact that Biden broke campaign promises to please Democratic donors is not surprising. The affluent and the well-organized routinely block popular policy proposals and

enact special favors for themselves. Yet, the speed at which Biden abandoned the core principles of his campaign was jarring even to his most loyal supporters.

Of course, the corporate press will continue to provide cover. But fewer and fewer Americans are relying on the corporate press for news and information. Nearly every week, new platforms emerge on the Internet where journalists can do reporting, break major stories, or provide commentary outside of the repressive constraints of the corporate press.

Recognizing the threat posed by unconstrained truth-telling and actual journalism, Congress has been summoning the chief executives of Google, Twitter, and Facebook before it, encouraging them to censor divergent voices. The goal is to disempower, deplatform, and demonetize dissenting voices by accusing them of advancing false claims or spreading extremism.

These efforts at censorship are incredibly dangerous and destructive. But they are also destined to fail. Americans have been turning away from corporate news in droves. They have tasted free thought and real investigative journalism online and won't give it up without a fight.

The narrow range of opinions allowed on corporate news platforms can never be imposed on a free Internet, even one dominated by just three or four companies. To illustrate the absurdity, consider the issue of NATO expansion. In 1990, Secretary of State James Baker assured Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not expand even one inch eastward. Today, official U.S. policy is to antagonize Russia by expanding the NATO alliance up to Russia's border. But if you disagree with that policy, you can be kicked off Twitter for “undermining faith in NATO.”

A national government that represents corporations and routinely lies to its voters needs Silicon Valley and the corporate press to maintain a stranglehold over the dissemination of information. But as that wall of protection continues to crumble, expect the wall of troops and nonscalable fencing to become a permanent fixture in our nation's Capitol. 

 @GoodmanLen

CHICAGO READER INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE PROFILE: THE SEMINARY CO-OP BOOKSTORES

WRITTEN BY TARYN ALLEN



COURTESY PIERRE GRATIA

Originally founded by five students in the basement of the Chicago Theological Seminary in 1961, the Seminary Co-op is now a Chicago staple at two Hyde Park locations.

The first, the Seminary Co-op Bookstore, is the largest academic bookstore in the U.S., shelves stocked largely with books from university presses and small publishers. The shop prioritizes underrepresented voices, older works, lost volumes, soon-to-be classics, and titles that rarely get shelf space elsewhere.

The second location, sitting just two blocks away, is 57th Street Books. The store has served Hyde Park and the larger south side community since 1983, with a world-class selection of children's books, cookbooks, travel guides, mysteries, romance, and science fiction. 57th Street Books received the Pannell Award in 2019, the highest honor in children's bookselling.

According to these not-for-profit bookstores, "While we make our living selling books, our primary mission is cultural: to support the life of the mind and provide a physical space for discovery, browsing, conversation, and community." In 2019, the Seminary Co-op stores became the country's first nonprofit bookstores whose mission is browsing, and the cultural-mission approach has allowed them to continue making an incredible impact on their communities both locally and beyond. First and foremost, they sell books for the cultural and communal good.

The Seminary Co-op team has around 700 author events each year, digitally publishes *The Front Table*, creates the podcast *Open Stacks*, runs a blog, hosts academic conferences and book fairs, holds cultural and civic partnerships, and maintains an excellent browsing experience at their two locations. More than 80,000 members have joined the Seminary Co-op community over the years, including names like Barack and Michelle Obama, Saul Bellow, Sara Paretsky, Friedrich Hayek, Paul Ricoeur, Sandra Cisneros, Susan Sontag, Harold Washington, Toni Preckwinkle, and Harry Davis.

The Seminary Co-op Bookstores understand and value their place in Chicago's literary community; their bookstores are just one piece of that, which includes prolific writers, national organizations, libraries, museums, publishers, and more.

"Clearly, Chicago cares about book culture. It's no surprise then that Chicago cares about its bookstores; indeed, we play a critical part in a vibrant and engaged ecosystem committed to the book."

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

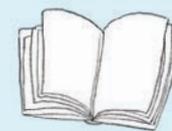
Poetry Foundation | 61 West Superior Street | poetryfoundation.org



CHICAGO READER IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH THESE INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES!



*Book Club members receive an
additional 10% off
at the following stores:*



The Book Cellar | 4736 N. Lincoln 60625
773-293-2665 | bookcellarinc.com

Bookie's | 10324 S. Western 60643
312-890-3860 | bookiesbookstores.com

Bucket O'Blood Books and Records | 3182 N. Elston 60618
312-890-3860 | bucketoblood.com

The Dial Bookshop | 410 S. Michigan, 2nd Floor 60605
dialbookshop.com

Madison Street Books | 1127 W. Madison 60607
312-929-4140 | madstreetbooks.com

Pilsen Community Books | 1102 W. 18th St. 60608
312-478-9434 | pilsencommunitybooks.com

Roscoe Books | 2142 W. Roscoe 60618
773-857-2676 | roscoebooks.com

Semicolon | 515 N. Halsted 60642
312-877-5170 | semicolonchi.com

Seminary Co-Op Bookstore | 5751 S. Woodlawn 60637
773-752-4381 | semcoop.com

Volumes Bookcafe | 1474 N. Milwaukee 60622
773-697-8066 | volumesbooks.com

Women & Children First | 5233 N. Clark 60640
773-769-9299 | womenandchildrenfirst.com

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

Poetry Foundation | 61 West Superior Street | poetryfoundation.org



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 27, 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 ♻️-

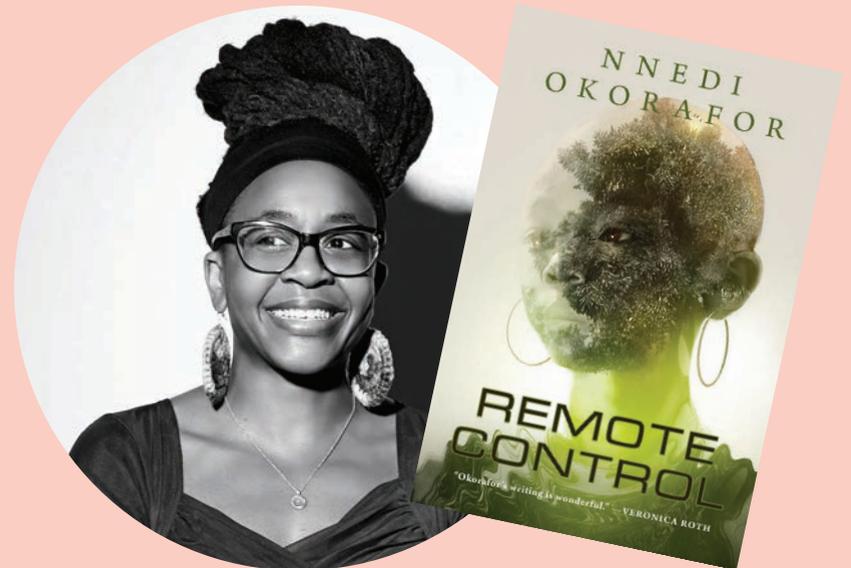
PO
ET
RY FOUNDATION



Learn more at chicagoreader.com/bookclub

The Chicago Reader
BOOK CLUB

Author Talk
March 25, 2021



Nnedi Okorafor
Author

Nnedi Okorafor is an international award-winning writer of science fiction and fantasy for both children and adults. The more specific terms for her works are Africanfuturism and Africanjuism. Her many works include *Who Fears Death*, winner of the World Fantasy Award and in development at HBO as a TV series; the Nebula and Hugo Award-winning novella trilogy *Binti*, in development at Hulu as a TV series; the Lodestar and Locus Award-winning *Akata* series; and her most recent novella *Remote Control*. Her debut novel *Zahrah the Windseeker* won the prestigious Wole Soyinka Prize for Literature. Okorafor is busy adapting Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* for TV with Amazon Studios, and she currently lives with her daughter Anyaugo in Phoenix, Arizona. Learn more about Okorafor at nnedi.com and follow her on Twitter (@Nnedi), Facebook, and Instagram.



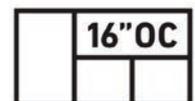
Jill Hopkins - Moderator

Jill Hopkins is the host of *Jill Afternoons* on Vocalo Radio, the *Making Beyonce* podcast for WBEZ, and *The Opus* podcast for Consequence of Sound. She's also a comedic essayist and culture journalist with bylines at The Onion's A.V. Club, Vice's Noisey, the *Chicago Reader*, and more. In addition to writing and hosting, in the *Before Times*, you could find Jill DJing and playing in rock bands in Chicago. But, these days, you can find her almost exclusively at her desk in her attic.

Presented by:

THE-FOLEY--
FOOD-+-WINE
SOCIETY ♻️-

PO
ET
RY FOUNDATION





JOE NEWTON

SAVAGE LOVE

I can't give my friend another phone job

He pleasures himself to the details of how I have sex with his wife.

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: A male friend—not my best friend but a close one—told me his wife was really attracted to me and asked if I was attracted to her. His wife is an incredibly hot woman and I thought it was a trick question. I read your column and listen to the *Savage Lovecast*, Dan, so I know there are guys out there who want other men to sleep with their wives, of course, but I didn't want to risk offending this friend by saying "FUCK YEAH" too quickly. After he convinced me it wasn't a trick, I told him that of course I wanted to have sex with his wife. She's incredibly beautiful and a really great person. I told him that I was not the least bit bisexual and not into MMF threesomes and he told me he wouldn't even be there. He just wanted to hear all the details later—and hear

them from me, not her.

I've slept with his wife four times since and the sex we've been having is phenomenal for both of us. But the talks I have afterwards with my friend make me uncomfortable. We've gotten on the phone later in the day or the next day and I give him the details and insult him a little, which he likes, and honestly none of that is the problem. What makes me uncomfortable is that I can hear him beating off during these phone calls. Which makes me feel like I'm having phone sex with a guy. I'm not comfortable with this and I feel like our friendship has become sexualized in a way that just feels unnatural for me. The one time we met in person to talk after I fucked his wife he was visibly aroused throughout our entire conversation. I would

like to keep fucking my friend's wife and she wants to keep fucking me, but I don't want to talk with my friend about it afterwards. Shouldn't it be enough for him to just know I'm fucking her? —**DISTRESSED AUSSIE CHAFES UNDER CRINGE KINK**

P.S. This is his thing, not hers. She loves having sex with me but the calls to her husband don't do anything for her.

A: It's obviously not enough for him to know you're fucking his wife. If that was enough for him, DACUCK, he wouldn't want to get on the phone with you afterwards.

This is a consent question. If your friend consents to his wife having sex with other men on the condition that he hears about it afterwards—and hears about it

from those other men—that condition has to be met for the sex she's having with other men to be consensual. And while the calls afterwards aren't a turn-on for his wife, DACUCK, if those calls make it possible for her to sleep with other men and she enjoys doing that, well then, the calls actually are doing something for her too. You're not obligated to have these conversations with your friend if they make you uncomfortable—because of course you're not—but if you were to refuse, DACUCK, then your friend might withdraw his consent for you to fuck his wife. Your friend and his wife might be willing to revise these conditions just for you, DACUCK, so it couldn't hurt to ask. But if he says no you don't get to fuck his wife anymore. Or if he says no and his wife keeps fucking you, well then, she'd be cheating on him for real and not "cheating" on him for fun.

Zooming out for a second: you knew this was a turn-on for your friend before you fucked his wife. You knew he was a cuckold, which means you knew he would be getting off on you fucking his wife, DACUCK, which means you knew he'd be out there somewhere beating off about you and your dick. Even if he didn't want to hear from you directly afterwards, even if he was pumping the wife for the details, your friendship was sexualized pretty much from the moment he asked you to fuck his wife and you agreed.

So the problem isn't the sexualization of this friendship or the awareness that this dude is out there beating off about you. The problem is having to listen to him beat off when you get on the phone—or having to see him become visibly aroused when you meet up in person—and there's a pretty easy workaround for that. (I love a solvable problem!) Instead of

giving him a call after you've fucked his wife, use the voice memo app on your phone to record a long, detailed, insult-strewn message after you've fucked his wife and send it to him. You'll still get to fuck his wife, he'll still get to hear about it from you, and you won't have to listen to him doing what you damn well knew he'd be doing after you fucked his wife, i.e. furiously beating off about you.

Q: I'm a 20-something hetero female living in the south. I'm having trouble with my boyfriend of almost three years. We are very happy together but our sex life is lackluster. The really strange part is that the sex, when we have it, is always good. It's intense and satisfying. However, getting sex to happen is a challenge. My boyfriend has a lower libido but it's not a huge discrepancy. I want sex two to three times per week and he wants it maybe once per week. We have compromised on twice a week. However, the sex is routine and banal. It always happens on the same days—Sundays and Wednesdays—and there's no spontaneity at all, which makes it boring for me. In addition, my boyfriend never initiates. He has a history of being promiscuous—he slept with about 100 women before we were together—and I am completely fine with that. But he has admitted to me that he misses his promiscuous life and that monogamy is difficult for him. He says he loves me and that he wants to make this work. He is the person I want to marry but I feel like I'm settling sexually. Please help. —**BECOMING ANNOYED NOW ABOUT LOVEMAKING**

A: The sex, when you have it, is intense and satisfying . . . but routine and banal at the same time because there's no spontaneity. The answer is obvious: If having

sex at the same time and in the same place is ruining the intense and satisfying sex you're having, BANAL, maybe don't always have sex at the same time or in the same place? And since you're the initiator and that's unlikely to change—turning a cheater into a faithful partner is easier than turning a non-initiator into an initiator—that means you're in charge of the when and the where. You've already compromised on having sex twice a week, which is your low-end preference and double his preference (so you got the better end of that deal), and now all you gotta do is initiate sex on different days, at different times, and in different places. Easy-peasy.

Now for the nonobvious answer, BANAL: You need to listen to what your boyfriend is telling you. Monogamy is difficult for everyone, not just your boyfriend, but some people find it more difficult than others. And asking someone who finds monogamy extremely difficult to make a monogamous commitment . . . yeah, that's not a great plan. This isn't entirely on you; someone whose libido tanks when they're in a monogamous relationship and/or someone who's way more interested in sex when they're free to sleep around shouldn't be making monogamous commitments. Or not making them yet. Monogamy might not be right for your boyfriend at the moment, BANAL, but that doesn't mean it won't be right for him ever. Just like sex you have to schedule might not be right for you now, while in your mid-20s, but that doesn't mean scheduled/routine/maintenance sex won't be right for you ever. **FI**

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

The *Chicago Reader* is now biweekly

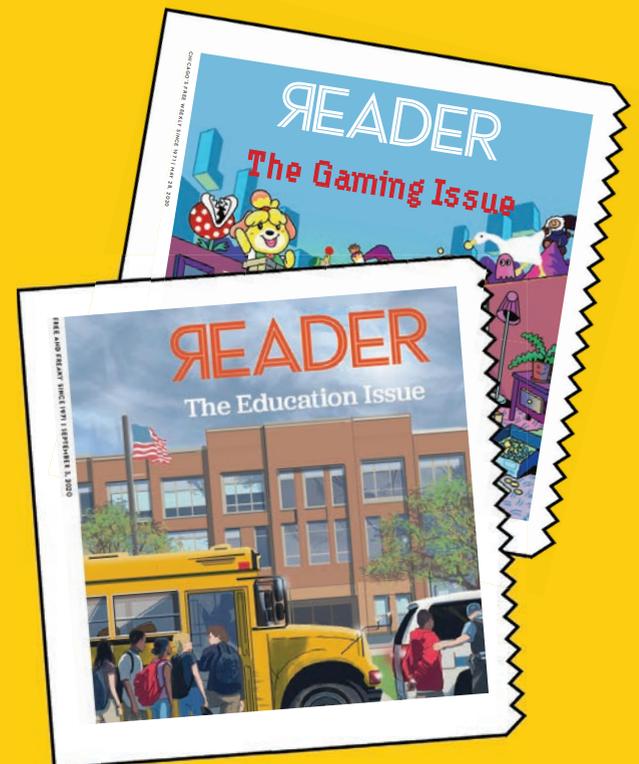
More than 50,000 copies will be available at nearly 1,200 locations across the city and suburbs.



Find one near you:
chicagoreader.com/map

Upcoming Issues:

Apr. 1, 2021	Money Smart Week
Apr. 15, 2021	
Apr. 29, 2021	
May 13, 2021	
May 27, 2021	Cannabis Special Section
June 10, 2021	Pride Issue + Windy City Times Insert
June 24, 2021	
July 8, 2021	Music Issue
July 22, 2020	
Aug. 5, 2021	
Aug. 19, 2021	Cannabis Special Section
Sept. 2, 2021	Windy City Times Insert
Sept. 16, 2021	Fall Arts Preview
Sept. 30, 2021	



Download a free copy of any *Reader* issue here:
chicagoreader.com/chicago/issuearchives

READER

CUSTOM LEATHER

ANY STYLE | ANY COLOR
WWW.LEATHER64TEN.COM

64TEN
CHICAGO

6410 N. CLARK ST CHICAGO, IL 60626 | 773.508.0900 | [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) /LEATHER64TEN

Real Men. Real Community.

VISIT WWW.SQUIRT.ORG AND CHECK OUT OUR NEW FEATURES:

- Video Chat
- Video
- Push Notifications
- Search Filters
- ... and more!

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

GREEN MIND PHYSICIANS

MEDICAL CANNABIS CARD CERTIFICATION BY PHONE
QUICK & CONVENIENT TELEMEDICINE

LIFETIME SUPPORT EXPERIENCED PHYSICIANS

GREEN MIND PHYSICIANS

RESOURCES FOR CHICAGO PATIENTS
greenmindphysicians.com/thereader

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.

CANNABIS CONVERSATIONS

We're continuing the conversation!
Watch for the Cannabis Issue on April 15, 2021 and 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

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

ThoughtWorks Inc. seeks Lead Product Analyst to work in Chicago, IL & various unanticipated U.S. locations to Working as an analyst on leading custom-designed, enterprise-level software applications that utilize object-oriented (OO) technologies, such as Ruby, .NET and/or J2EE and Agile Methodologies. The position requires a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Engineering, or a related field. The applicant must have 5 yrs exp. in the job offered, Analyst, or related position. Must have 12 mo. exp. in: (1) Leading full life-cycle software solution experience using object-oriented technologies, including requirements gathering, development and testing; (2) Interacting with clients and stakeholders to gather functional and technical requirements and present them to development and test teams; (3) Collaborating with product managers to write stories, lead iteration meetings, and drive user stories for development; (4) Have an understanding of business processes and drivers in medium or large scale organizations; (5) Facilitating daily stand up meetings, story sign off sessions and feature showcases; (6) Coordinating weekly meetings with User Experience experts to run tests and establish solutions that fit within development capacity and release plans; (7) An understanding of how the roles of product, SME, experience design, analysis, development and quality assurance work together to build great software; (8) Collaborating with Quality Analysts to write automation tests and scenarios for functional/interface level tests; (9) Planning release schedules; (10) Employing Agile Development Methodologies and Practices including pair programming, Test-Driven Development (TDD), Continuous Integration and Continuous Delivery; (11) Utilizing Distributed Agile including acting as liaison to coordinate communication between onshore and offshore teams; and (12) Utilizing the following technologies: Java, GO, Python, Javascript and Cucumber. Willingness to travel at least 80% across U.S. Send resume to ijobs@thoughtworks.com w/Job ID OA-LPA022021.

Automated Business Designs, Inc. seeks Sr. Software Developer in Chicago, IL to develop, create, and modify general computer applications software or specialized utility programs. Reqs. MS Computer Engineering, Computer Science or rel. field, one (1) year post-baccalaureate exp. as Software Engineer, Software Developer or related role. Experience with .NET 3-5/4.0, ASP.NET, C#, n-Tier architecture, SOA and XML-based web services and application development tools such as Microsoft Visual Studio and SQL Server Management Studio, and .NET using Razor/MVC3/MWM architectural patterns. Mail resume to: Automated Business Designs, Inc. c/o HR Department, 8755 W. Higgins Rd., Ste. 600, Chicago, IL 60631.

ENGINEERING TECH - Chicago - collaborate w/engrs to implement designs in industrial fab. or equipt., use CAD, engage in QA. Bach. Mech. Eng./related, mail res., cov. let. to Careers at Roadwork, 11800 S. Ewing Ave., Chicago, IL 60617

SALT Sr. Assoc - (Chicago, IL) RSM US LLP: Prov. State & Local Tax (SALT) srvs to clts with tax advice & consult'n that enable clnts to incr'se shareholder value. Reqs: Bach's in acct'ng, fin, buss. Admin or rlt'd fld; 2 yrs' exp as a Tax Analyst or rlt'd pos, & must incl: Prep & file US Person'l prprty tax, sales & use tax, Canad'n Goods & Srvc Tax, Harmniz'd Sales Tax, & Provnc'l Sales Tax; Cond. tax res us'g CCH AnswerConnect & Checkp'nt to ens'r compl'nce to state & local sales; Ds'gn & implm'nt a digit'lzd workflow us'ng OneSource. Mail resumes to: Attn: C Volkening - Ref #2045, 30 S. Wacker Dr, Ste. 3300, Chicago, IL, 60606.

In Home Caregiver NEEDED - Work Schedule is 5 days a week and 5 hours per day. Salary is \$20/hr. Qualifications: A flexible scheduling with either part-time or full-time hours. Reliable transportation. A caring, compassionate demeanor and Patience.

Paylease, LLC. seeks Site Reliability Engineer Lead in Chicago, IL prvdre optonl eng ledrshp 2 a team of talntd engrs. Snd Resume to egyure@gozogo.com, REF# SREL122020

LEGAL ASSISTANT - Chicago - Meet/communicate w/clients; research in PI and workmen's comp - negotiate medical bills, insurance - US JD or LLM - lic. not req'd - res. cov. let. to K. O'Brien, 105 W. Madison # 700, Chicago, IL 60602

Search for Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Bioengineering

The Department of Bioengineering, at the Univ of IL at Chicago (UIC), located in a large metropolitan area, is seeking a full-time Clinical Assistant Professor with the following responsibilities: Under direction and supervision, assist department teach undergraduate and graduate students in the field of Bioengineering. Utilize knowledge of instrumentation design, biomedical statistics, physics, and cell/tissue modeling skills to perform teaching and research tasks. Participate in student advising, mentorship, and guidance. Assist department conduct curriculum design, perform pedagogical research, collect and analyze data, and publish and present scientific research findings. Attend national and international conferences/meetings and perform administrative duties and University service as assigned. Requires a Ph.D. degree or its foreign equivalent in Bioengineering or related field of study. Some travel may be periodically required for conferences and/or professional development. For fullest consideration, please submit CV, cvr ltr, & 3 references by April 13, 2021 to HR Coordinator, Dept of Bioengineering, 851 S Morgan St, Chicago, IL 60612 or via email to bioejobs@uic.edu. UIC is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action employer. Minorities, women, veterans, & individuals w/ disabilities are encouraged to apply. UIC may conduct background checks on all job candidates upon acceptance of a contingent offer letter. Background checks will be performed in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

City Sports on 87th seeks Manager to manage daily operations, develop marketing strategies, & purchase fashion items for sports clothing/goods store. BA in Fashion Studies, Merchandising, or rlt'd req'd. Send resume to job loc: 112 W. 87th St. M4, Chicago, IL 60620

Northwestern University, Medill School of Journalism, Media and IMC, Evanston, IL. Position: Assistant Professor. Duties: teach, advise students, conduct & publish research. Required: PhD in Marketing, Statistics or related field, outstanding research record, excellent recommendations, teaching ability. Send CV, research papers & 2 reference letters to robin-young@northwestern.edu. AA/EOE.

ThoughtWorks Inc. seeks Senior Consultant/Developer III to work in Chicago, IL & various unanticipated U.S. locations to work on large-scale, custom-designed, enterprise-level software development projects that use object-oriented technologies, such as Java, Ruby, or .NET. Must have Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Information Systems, Engineering, or related field. The applicant must have 5 yrs exp. in the job offered, Consultant, Developer, or related IT occupation. Must have 12 mo. exp. in: (1) Analyzing, developing, designing, and testing object-oriented and full life-cycle software development projects using JavaScript, Junit, Spring, MySQL, Oracle, and Selenium; (2) Utilizing Agile development methodologies including Continuous Integration, Extreme Programming, Continuous Delivery, Test-Driven Development and pair programming; (3) Performing automation test frameworks, including unit, functional, and integration testing; (4) Developing software application using Java, Ruby, or .NET; (5) Working on projects with distributed teams, including coordinating across countries and time zones; and (6) Coaching and mentoring junior developers in all aspects of software development, including Agile development methodologies. Willingness to travel at least 80% across U.S. Send resume to ijobs@thoughtworks.com w/ Job ID NT-SCD032021.

Fire by Design, Inc. seeks Sr. Engineers for Chicago, IL location to architect & design network infrastructure. Master's in Info Tech/Comp Eng or any Eng/related field + 2yrs exp or Bachelor's in Info Tech/Comp Eng or any Eng/related field + 5yrs exp req'd. Req'd skills: info security exp w/ Linux sys admin, Red Hat, scripting using bash, Perl, Python, SSL/TLS patching & upgrades, Active Directory, Splunk, elastic stack cluster, Docker, network troubleshooting. 40% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: A. Goodpasture, REF: SGJ, 555 W Adams, Chicago, IL 60661

Store Manager (North Riverside, IL). Mail resume to lqbal Jumma, Diamonds 4Ever Inc., 7501 W Cermak Rd, Space F-13, North Riverside, IL 60546

Markit North America, Inc. d/b/a IHS Markit seeks Principal Software Engineer for Chicago, IL office. Develop centralized onboarding system for Research Signals & other investment services products. REQD: Master's in Comp Sci, Info Tech or rel plus 2 yrs exp. Emp will accept Bach in Comp Sci, Info Tech or rel plus 5 yrs exp. Must have 2 yrs exp architecting & dev apps for investment srvc; performing data analysis & building APIs to distribute data. Please send resume with cover letter to mobilityrecruitment@ihsmarkit.com indicating job reference # 51667-0552 (Principal Software Engineer).

TransUnion Interactive, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of TransUnion, LLC) seeks Consultants for Chicago, IL location to extract data & perform descriptive analytics, research, risk modeling, segmentation & statistical analysis on large population data sets. Master's in Statistics/Applied Mathematics/Data Sci./Comp. Eng./ Comp. Sci/related Quantitative field + 2yrs exp. or Bachelor's in Statistics/Applied Mathematics/Data Sci./Comp. Eng./ Comp. Sci/related Quantitative field + 5yrs exp. req'd. Skills req'd: analytics exp. in financial tech. or credit services industry performing risk modeling, using SQL queries for data extraction, R, SAS, Web Analytics, ETL techniques, Python on Linux and/or Windows, Hadoop, Hive, Spark, Big data, Tableau, feature engineering, data visualization, machine learning, Predictive modeling, time-series modeling. 20% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: A. Goodpasture, REF: KL, 555 W. Adams St., Chicago, IL 60661

TransUnion, LLC seeks Sr. Engineers for Chicago, IL location to architect & design network infrastructure. Master's in Info Tech/Comp Eng or any Eng/related field + 2yrs exp or Bachelor's in Info Tech/Comp Eng or any Eng/related field + 5yrs exp req'd. Req'd skills: info security exp w/ Linux sys admin, Red Hat, scripting using bash, Perl, Python, SSL/TLS patching & upgrades, Active Directory, Splunk, elastic stack cluster, Docker, network troubleshooting. 40% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: A. Goodpasture, REF: SGJ, 555 W Adams, Chicago, IL 60661

PROFESSIONALS & SERVICES

Teen Chicago Melodeath/Funeral Doom/DSBM band looking for members!!! I'm Juniper Balbus-Holmquist, Lead Singer/Rhythm Guitarist. Seeking Wagnerian Soprano and oktavist vocalists, unclean vocalist, two lead guitarists capable of advanced techniques, keyboard player proficient in classical jazz/honky-tonk, drummer proficient in double kick/varieties of blast beats, bassist proficient in slap/double thump, 1 rapper, 1 producer proficient in dubstep drops/abstract hip-hop. Also seeking publicists/networkers and artists to design album covers. Horn and string players welcome. 312-593-4660, coast-erdude456@gmail.com

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

RENTALS & REAL ESTATE

Buy historic Pine Manor get successful in-home wedding chapel Business! Destination-WeddingChapel.com Be your own boss and gross \$65k without leaving your garden. Sunday Open House.

ADULT SERVICES

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

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

Are You WFH Like Me? Let's Walk Together
I'm a Work From Home (WFH) who used to work in an office. I don't get out much except for basic errands. Now that weather is warmer, I am walking the beach during the day. Usually 15 mins from North Ave to Oak St. Wanna join me? Let's meet up at either end, walk, then depart. Go. goldcoastchibeachwalker@gmail.com

A hot fun one night stand? Call 24/7.
Fun cool clean straight white male call 773-977-8862. Looking for female or couple....

My fair maiden
Your King of Kunnilingus requests Ur presence in my royal chamber ~ B my Kween, & let me eat my way to Ur heart ~ This nice looking male will make U wanting to cum back for me ~ alluring1960@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 MATTERTHORN GROUP
A Capital Funding Consulting Firm

WE WILL PREPARE, POSITION, AND PRESENT YOUR COMPANY TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS FOR CAPITAL FUNDING.
CALL NOW 312-268-5842 OR VISIT DBMATTERTHORN.COM OR TEXT "ACCESS" TO 59769



Herrera Landscape
We bring your outdoor vision to life!

847-679-5622
DESIGN • BUILD • MAINTAIN
www.herreralandscapes.com



Noise from Outside?
Soundproofing Window Inserts
Visit stormsnaps.com or noisewindows.com
Reduce or Eliminate Fog & Water
Keeps Bugs & Spiders Out
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
American Owned American Made

entertainment



LIVE & VIDEO
Entertainment
KIDS • CIRCUS
NIGHTLIFE • TELEGRAMS
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

legal

Mulryan & York
Attorneys at Law

4001 N. Wolcott, Chicago, IL 60613
773-248-8887
www.mulryanandyork.com

Considering Divorce? We Can Help.
COLLABORATIVE | PRENUPTIAL
DIVORCE | MEDIATION



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

education



Be a Healthcare Hero

- 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
19 S. LaSalle Street, Chicago (Loop) | 312-687-3000 | stellarcollege.edu

sports

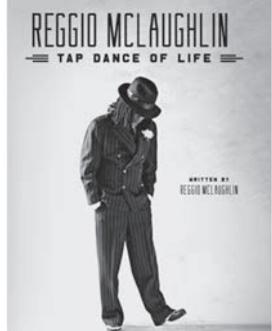
ENJOY YOUR SPORT IN STYLE



LGBT+
www.LGBTQGOLF.ORG



books



REGGIO MCLAUGHLIN
TAP DANCE OF LIFE
WRITTEN BY REGGIO MCLAUGHLIN

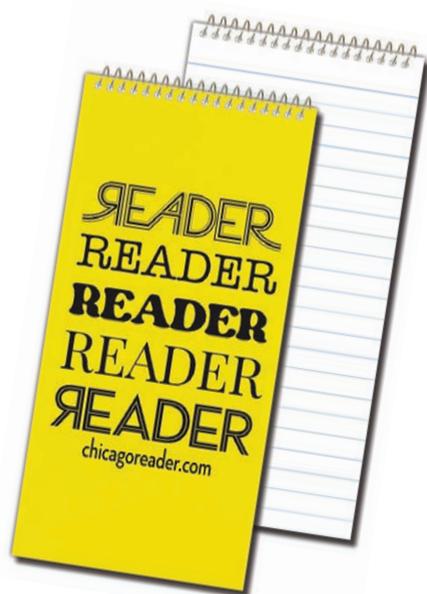
AVAILABLE AT AMAZON, BARNES AND NOBLE AND OTHER FINE BOOKSTORES. CHICAGO TEACHER, PERFORMER AND AUTHOR.

your heading here

YOUR AD HERE

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

Chicago Reader Reporter's Notebook



The perfect notebook for when you want to keep things on the record.

\$12 (shipping included)
chicagoreader.com/store



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

the platform

continued

health and mental health

insurance services

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.



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



- 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

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

**THANK
YOU!**

**Thank you Illinois.
Thank you Chicago Reader.**

**Every vote cast
is a celebration of Cannabis
and the joy it creates.**

Visit a RISE dispensary to try our award winning products.
Canton, Effingham, Joliet, Mundelein, Naperville, Niles, Quincy

RISE

risecannabis.com

[@rise.cannabis](https://www.instagram.com/rise.cannabis)

BEST OF CHICAGO
2020 

ORANGE HERIJUANA by Rythm

Best strain for pain relief

KOSHER KUSH by Rythm

Best strain for relief of anxiety