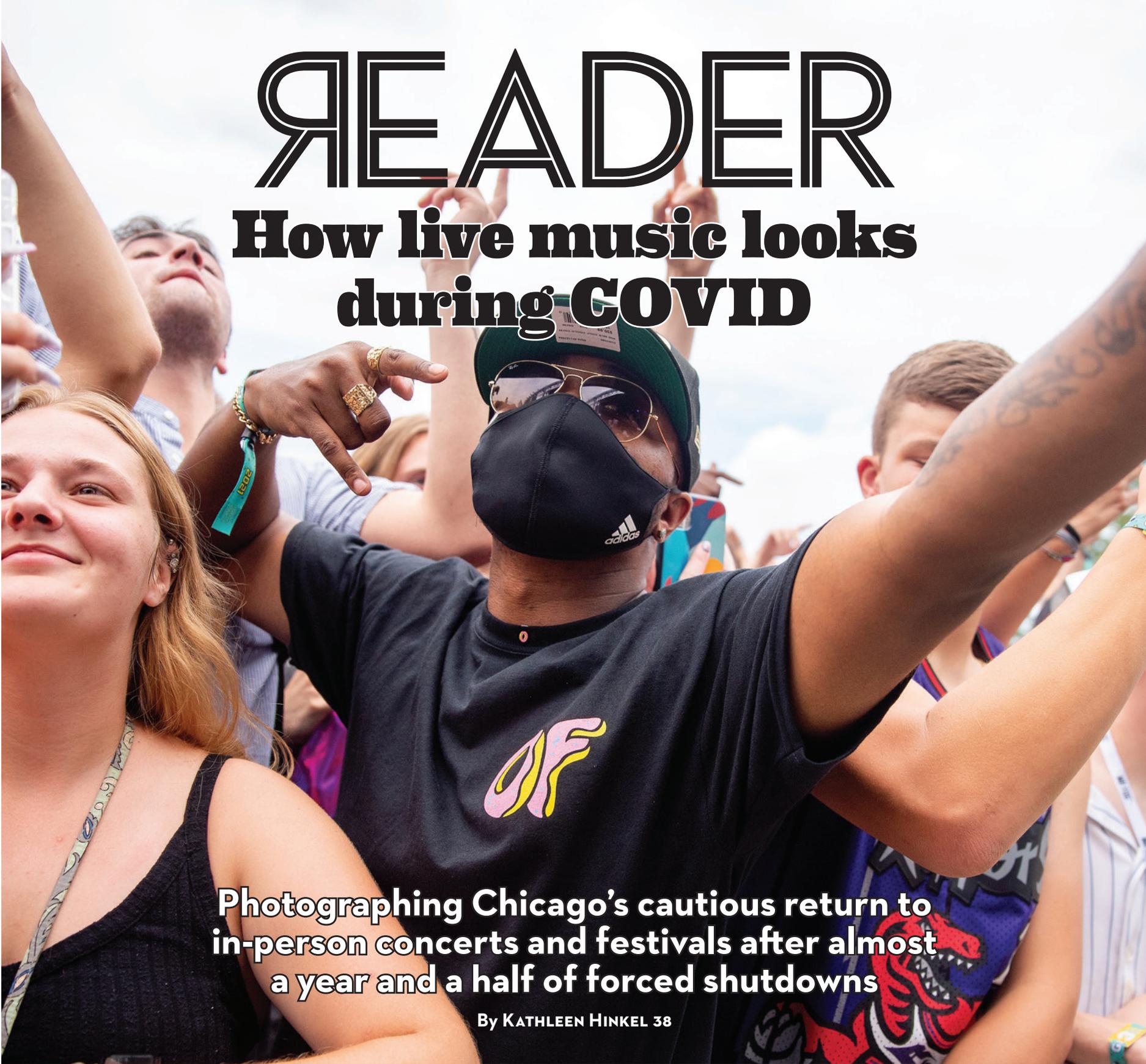


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FROM **PRISONER TO PRESIDENT**



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HUMAN RIGHTS APARTHEID MUSEUM

**MANDELA**  
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Closing Sept 12



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### Long live Squeak

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### Teflon Rahm

The shock and awe of Mayor Rahm's reign make him undeserving of being ambassador to Japan.

### Archive Dive

A daily dip into the stacks, leading up to our 50th anniversary

# FORD GENERAL



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## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

### Where the water flows

Magnet fishermen are finding treasure in the riverbeds of the city.

By S. NICOLE LANE

About a month ago, I saw a magnet being hurled over the 18th Street Bridge. Initially, I brushed it off and I continued to stroll along the Chicago River bank with my friends. But the sound of the splash carried some weight, like an anchor or rock colliding with the water. I expected the line to be empty, but then I saw that the two magnet throwers on the bridge were pulling up what appeared to be a barrier gate (the kind you see at large concerts). This is when I was first introduced to magnet fishing: the activity of metal scavengers cleaning up waterways all around the world.

Instead of hauling in a Lake Michigan salmon, these fishermen are anglers of rust and steel. Similar to metal detecting on land, magnet fishing finds submerged items below the surface of rivers and lakes. The simple outdoor activity involves approximately 50 feet of strong synthetic rope which is tied around a carabiner and attached to a magnet (ranging from 200 to 1,000 pounds of pull force). The magnet is designed to search for ferromagnetic objects (meaning no gold, silver, or bronze—only iron) in the water. Think old pipes, keys, nails, bolts, shopping carts, car parts, and sometimes—for the lucky sportsman—a gun, knife, or treasure.

Although mostly harmless, magnet fishing does come with the possibility of danger. One Kentucky fisherman found a grenade earlier this year which required a call for the bomb squad. Two fishermen found a handcuffed body in England. And in 2018, a father and son drowned while “catching” metal. A day for adventure can result in risky business.

Any place with water can be an area for magnet fishing, as long as it isn't private property, where magnet fishing is usually not permitted. Magnet fishing is legal in 49 states except for South Carolina and no fishing license is required. However, on some bridges, standing and fishing are illegal which may draw some attention to authorities. There are pages of videos of fishermen on YouTube where police stop fishermen for being a nuisance.

The prime locations for the exuberant fisherman include canals (these areas where transportation of local goods takes place provide a bountiful supply of metals); rivers (as with canals, rivers often host transportation and the Chicago River in particular has bounties under its bridges from passersby dropping items in); and old wells. Magnet fishers suggest looking into old wells for the occasional hidden treasure that was stashed there and also old coins that were tossed in over the years.

Even though all bodies of water can be fished in, some fishermen have their eyes on hot spots. Mark Freeburg, a 45-year-old former Chicago resident, says that he scouted out Bubbly Creek when he fished in the city. “I researched on a lot of blogs and Reddit forums. I didn't know the history of the south side so I decided to begin fishing in the notorious part of the creek,” he says.

The south stretch of the Chicago River, flowing from what used to be the country's largest stockyard, can be found between McKinley Park and Bridgeport. It was once known as the Stock Yard Slip—a dead animal dumping ground in the meatpacking industry—causing illnesses in the neighborhoods along the creek. The methane and hydrogen sulfide gas from the carcasses created a sludge so thick that folks could walk across it. It also led to gas bubbles, giving the creek its noxious name. As Upton Sinclair wrote in *The Jungle*, “Here and there the grease and filth have caked solid, and the creek looks like a bed of lava; chickens walk about on it, feeding, and many times an unwary stranger has started to stroll across, and vanished temporarily. The packers used to leave the creek that way, till every now and then the surface would catch on fire and burn furiously, and the fire department would have to come and put it out.”

In 1919 the gruesome Stock Yard Slip was filled by the city of Chicago, but Bubbly Creek is still considered an “environmental quagmire.” Somehow, after 100 years of animal carcasses, heavy metal objects, additional litter,



and an oil spill in 2017, the creek perseveres.

In January 2021, it was announced that Congress passed a bill that will begin the conservation and restoration of the 1.25-mile stretch. Until then, Freeburg says, “I go to Bubbly Creek whenever I go into the city. It has so much history. It was a literal dumping ground. I’d like to stick a camera to my magnet and see what it sees when it goes underwater.”

Jake Harold, 33, from Hammond, Indiana, sees magnet fishing as an environmental duty rather than a search for treasure. Two years ago, while volunteering at a Wolf Lake cleanup, he saw someone magnet fishing on the shore. “As someone interested in helping our environment,” he says, “I purchased a \$50 magnet online and began exploring local watering holes.”

When iron breaks down, it turns into ferric oxide. And when enough builds up, it becomes toxic to underwater life. In fact, rust is the number one threat to drinking water, with cities in the U.S. spending \$50 billion a year cleaning rivers, lakes, and underground aquifers where our water travels through rusty pipes that have been there for up to 100 years.

Urban areas and waterways become a dumping ground for metal parts that find their way to the bottom of river beds and remain there undisturbed. The ferrous metal objects impact the underwater ecosystem when iron combines with water to form rust and begins to corrode and flake off. Of course, low concentrations of metal exist in water naturally, and corrosion doesn’t happen overnight, but for folks like Harold, every little bit counts. “Sure, I’m not lifting up cars or preventing oil spills, but I do feel a sense of duty to keep my water safe,” Harold explains, “even if it means hauling in some trash and twisted metal from the bottom of the Chicago River.”

He typically walks alongside a river or stream with his magnet for two hours a day on the weekends. “I bring some beers, pack a snack, and try to clean up as much as I can. I

pack it out using a bucket or bag,” he says. “The midwest is filled with so much water, yet our communities abuse and neglect it. It breaks my heart.”

Harold says he usually packs out quite a bit of objects from the streams near his home. Bolts, screws, and corroded metals all fill his bucket which he throws into his truck bed and stores in his garage.

Although Freeburg isn’t as interested in the environmental component of magnet fishing, he says he’s hauled a good amount of debris. “You have to weigh through the garbage to find some treasures,” he says. Last year, while searching the Bubbly Creek area by the Chicago Maritime Museum on 35th, Freeburg pulled up a large knife from the river. He’s found several bicycles in the creek as well as riskier hauls. A few years ago, he lugged up a .38 caliber revolver which he assumes was tossed after a crime. If you find a gun, remember to treat the gun as if it’s loaded and keep it pointed in a safe direction. Rust and debris can also cause the gun’s mechanisms to operate poorly, so don’t bump or throw the weapon.

“Most of my buddies, and YouTubers, want to find guns or weapons. We know we won’t be finding many treasures. The thrill is finding something a little bit dangerous.” Freeburg—who isn’t really a fan of photos—called 911 after finding the gun in the river, but other folks take snapshots and videos of their hauls before contacting law enforcement.

Legally, folks are required to turn in all weapons that are found or they face the consequence of up to seven years of prison time, since it might be considered an illegal possession of a firearm. The majority of magnet fishers will call the authorities immediately after finding weapons rather than risk going to jail.

A quick YouTube search will yield results with videos named “Unbelievable!! Machine Gun Found Magnet Fishing! \*Police Involved\*” or “Chicago Magnet Fishing. Gun Found. Police Called. Lake Michigan.” These clickbait

titles invite and entice new treasure-hungry fishermen to try out the hobby. The sensationalism of solving a crime creates a vigilante approach. Reeling up weapons, and turning them in to the police, gives Freeburg in particular the feeling that he’s a crime-stopper.

Of course, when law enforcement arrives on the scene, they simply tag and bag the weapon and send it to the lab. Since all guns have a serial number, they can be traced and tracked. However, if a weapon has spent long amounts of time in the water, the serial numbers may rub off.

The 1982 murder of Dianne Masters, whose body was eventually found in her sunken Cadillac in the Cal-Sag Channel near Willow Springs, is also on the mind of some fishermen. “I remember that murder since my family lives near La Grange,” says Freeburg. “Divers went down and found all kinds of stuff. It was a huge dumping ground for stolen vehicles and objects.”

Masters’s car was pulled from the water late in 1982, and her body was discovered in the trunk. Since then, police have regularly looked at the Chicago waterways for potential cars, trucks, and evidence to help solve crimes or find victims. “I’m always thinking about that when I fish,” says Freeburg. “I want to find something that could help someone.”

But not every outing ends up like an episode of *Dragnet*. The appeal for magnet fishing enthusiasts also involves treasure hunting: the possibility that one might find a small token for themselves. “I never know what I’ll find but I always know I’ll never leave empty,” says Freeburg. “Chicago’s got so much water and so much to search. I’ve found watches and jewelry. Not sure how it ended up there, but it does and goes right into my pocket.”

Freeburg’s technique for magnet fishing is simple. “I make sure no one is close by to prevent any injury. Then I wrap my rope around my waist. I throw the magnet into the water as far as I can, usually from a dock or bridge. Then

I slowly drag or walk alongside the area where I’m standing.” Freeburg says he makes sure the magnet isn’t right on the bed of the water but a few inches above. “It feels like something has bitten your line, similar to a fish. There’s a slight pull to it,” explains Freeburg. By hovering the magnet above the bed, you can pull out items from the silt and sand easier.

When Freeburg finds an item, he immediately lets it dry out. While wearing gloves he uses a small wire brush to wipe away any metal or debris. If it’s something worthwhile, he uses white vinegar to remove the rust and applies WD-40 to protect the object from rusting again. “I think what I find most interesting are the things I don’t recognize. I like researching these weird blobs of metal after I pull them up and figuring out what they could possibly be. It’s learning a little bit about Chicago history,” Freeburg says.

For most fishermen, it’s the thrill of what they may uncover. “Feeling something hook to my magnet is super fun and exciting,” says Harold. Like Freeburg, he’s hungry for what’s tugging on his line below. In the last year, during the pandemic, magnet fishing has skyrocketed in popularity as folks yearn to get outdoors while safely distancing themselves. “I came out here every weekend to busy myself and get into nature while having a blast,” says Freeburg, who usually goes with friends or his 15-year-old son.

Magnet fishing may seem tedious for some, and others might miss the point, but for treasure hunting enthusiasts and environmentalists, the hobby has hooked their curiosity. When walking around Ping Tom Park on a Sunday afternoon, you may spot someone practicing tai chi under the bridge, a DJ set on the pagoda, a water taxi pulling up, or a fisherman tossing his rope from the bridge. It’s just another day near the water’s edge in Chicago.



 @snicolelane



Don Pablo's queso empanada © COURTESY PABLO SOTO

## FOOD FEATURE

# Don Pablo's Kitchen is one man's ode to empanadas

Pablo Soto is the Pablo Neruda of Chilean hand pies?

By **MIKE SULA**

Among the poems about common things Pablo Neruda wrote during his lifetime are a number of odes to food: “Ode to the Artichoke,” “Ode to Tomatoes,” “Ode to Conger Chowder.” But somehow, the Chilean Nobel laureate forgot to write an ode to one of his country's most ubiquitous signature

dishes.

Not only are baked and fried empanadas everywhere in Chile, they're all over South America—and all over the world, really.

Under various names and in different shapes and sizes from the Philippines to Lithuania, Wales to Uzbekistan, a good variety of them

have been well represented in Chicago too, particularly in Lakeview along Southport Avenue, where the Argentinian empanada holds sway at places like El Mercado Food Mart and 5411 Empanadas. We have Colombian, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Venezuelan empanadas too, but the Chilean empanada hasn't been

spotted in the wild since the 2012 demise of Irving Park's Rapa Nui.

That all changed in May when Pablo Soto took his obsession with his home country's signature hand pie and brought it to life in the form of Don Pablo's Kitchen & Bakeshop, a virtual, soon-to-be-brick-and-mortar Uptown Chilean restaurant.

Soto, a Santiago-born, former sports broadcaster (Radio Arte, Telemundo, Fox Deportes), along with his wife Julie Morrow-Soto, didn't name the business after himself, but rather for the country's most famous historical figure who wasn't a murderous dictator. The poet's conspicuous silence on the subject of empanadas hasn't overshadowed the pie-maker's admiration for his championship of the working class, particularly fishermen and cooks.

Soto was working for Yelp and his wife as a bilingual teacher's aide when the pandemic forced an existential reevaluation of life priorities. “I realized it was my time to start something,” he says. “I said, ‘We gotta do it now. If we have 10 to 15 years of work left in our systems, then we gotta do it for ourselves.’” This led to a three-week intensive course of empanada studies last January, when Soto flew back to Santiago and began daily sessions under the tutelage of his Aunt Natasha, the keeper of his family's kitchen traditions. She, in turn, introduced him to a friend, one of the owners of Los Hornitos in a suburb outside of the city. “He cooks in mud ovens,” says Soto. “It's like a hole in the wall, but the guy has a line of cars outside every day. He's not the type of person that has social media, but if you ask, the locals will tell you exactly where he is.”

It was here that Soto picked up a few “secrets,” he says, that allowed him to perfect his dough, one key part of what distinguishes Chilean empanadas from the rest, and one of which he'll allow is adding white wine to the mix. “The acidity keeps the dough from spoiling. The dough can be very strong in your stomach too. The wine gives it a balance.” Soto also made trips to coastal Valparaíso and studied the light, deep fried, seafood-stuffed empanadas of Los Roldán, another storied pie-maker.

“It's a lot of things you'd never think about, like how you even cut the meat. How thick it



Julie Morrow-Soto and Pablo Soto with their insulated cargo van for deliveries. COURTESY PABLO SOTO

can be. How thin it can be. When you chew on the empanada, little details that make a big difference. I was able to learn that there.”

Back home he practiced in his Glenview kitchen until the time was right to assemble a focus group: the same Chilean expats he bonded with when he immigrated 25 years ago. “I lined them up and I was like, ‘OK, I need you to tell me from the bottom of your hearts. If it sucks you gotta tell me because nobody else is gonna know better than you guys.’ We had a standing ovation.”

The couple launched Don Pablo’s in May, and Soto says he’s never worked harder. He’s up each day at 5 AM, taking inventory, shopping, rolling dough, and preparing fillings. At 11 AM they start taking orders via their website, and begin stuffing, folding, and cooking empanadas as each ticket comes in, available for pick up or delivered via their brand new insulated cargo van.

One of the other key differentials in Chilean empanadas is their larger size relative to their South American counterparts. This is best illustrated by the clásica, which Soto compares to the hamburger in terms of its ubiquity in Chile. It’s the sole baked empanada on Don Pablo’s menu, a hefty, buttery, flaky hot pocket encasing sliced sirloin, hard boiled eggs, and olives, seasoned with merken, a spice blend with chiles, cumin, coriander, and salt that Soto’s mother sends from her local street market in Santiago.

The crimped, blistered, and fried empanadas on the menu aren’t quite as supersized,

but still formidable. The napolitana is a kind of calzone oozing with melted mozzarella and gouda, while the poeta is packed with snappy shrimp and corn. The Greek tragedy is stuffed with artichoke hearts, mushrooms, and kalamata olives, and the pluma bulges with pulled chicken and basil. There’s a sweet, cinnamon-apple stuffed empanada (the granny), as well as delicate alfajores, powdered sugar-dusted, caramel sandwich cookies nearly as common in South America as empanadas.

Apart from a vivid green chimichurri, that’s the focus so far, though there are occasional specials like a limited edition (as long as corn is in season) pastel de choclo, a baked corn pie layered with sirloin, chicken, olives, and eggs. That’s a hint at Soto’s range, which will expand once they open their storefront near the corner of Argyle and Sheridan in October. Once installed, they’re planning to introduce more seafood-based empanadas such as the Isla Negra (named for Neruda’s seaside home), stuffed with a bouillabaisse of whitefish, clams, mussels, scallops, and shrimp. There will be ceviche and side salads, along with Chilean soups like the corn-based mazamorra.

In the meantime, they’ll be taking preorders and popping up at Fiestas Patrias, the local celebration of Chilean Independence Day at Forest Glen Woods on September 18. It’s a day Chileans historically celebrate with empanadas, likely something even Neruda did in his day. [f](#)

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The chojin salad was on the menu for the pop-up from the Vietnamese-Guatemalan mashup **Giong Giong**. COURTESY JEANETTE TRAN

## FROM INSTAGRAM TO IRVING PARK

# Are you ready for some Monday Night Football?

The *Reader's* chef pop-up series at the Kedzie Inn resumes on September 13.

By **MIKE SULA**

In January 2020 I assumed I had a lock on the annual Kedzie Inn chili cook-off, with a three-day smoked brisket braised with Cremeria La Ordeña mole picoson. I spent a lot of time peering into the Dutch oven, building it, finessing it—no, caressing it—making sure the judges would drown in its smoldering, head-spinning complexity. So I never really got over losing to bar owner Jon Pokorny's chipotle-spiked black-bean-lamb-and-sirloin bowl.

Jon, on the other hand, was drunk on victory, scheming about what other food competitions he could host and dominate in order to feed his insatiable, bloated ego. Barbecue? Casseroles? Hot dog eating?

It took a state-mandated lockdown two months later to slow his roll. But the dream never died. Back then, like everyone, we hoped that bars and restaurants would be back in business in short order once the nation united to vanquish the virus with proven science and common sense. Couple of weeks tops, right? Months? Next year?

What if that happened and the Irving Park bar started hosting some of the amazing itinerant chefs I'd begun writing about, popping up on social media to make life bearable for the sheltered-in-place?

It took a lot longer than we expected, but with respect to the city's mask mandate, the time is nigh. The *Reader* presents Monday Night Football at the Kedzie Inn, a pop-up series featuring some of my favorite chefs stepping out of their Instagram virtuality into a real-life brick-and-mortar Chicago neighborhood bar with a roomy dining room, shady patio, and fully stocked bar.

We've already hosted the Vietnamese-Guatemalan mashup Giong Giong and the regional Malaysian street food of Kedai Tapao. Next up on September 13 it's Jasmine Sheth of Tasting India cooking the food of Mumbai.

Here's more of what to expect over the remaining weeks: The Kedzie's not a rarefied cocktail bar (though you can get a blue motherfucker). But some nights will feature special beverage collaborations between the chefs and the front of the house (i.e. Jon). Have you ever spiked one of Eve Studnicka's opulent drinking chocolates? September 27 is your chance.

Some nights are just going to be wild. Mona Sang is bringing in Khmer dancers. John Carruthers and Dennis Lee are putting their very souls at risk, employing the dark arts to summon pizzas not of this world. Many more surprises are in store.

I'll be catching up with the chefs at [chicago-reader.com](http://chicago-reader.com) before each of their pop-ups and letting you know what and how to order.

Here's the lineup. See ya there.

**September 13:** Mumbai! with Tasting India

**September 20:** Cambodian prix fixe from Mona Bella Catering

**September 27:** Midwestern Weird with Funeral Potatoes

**October 4:** Pizza and Doughnuts night with John Carruthers (Crust Fund Pizza), World's Greatest Food Writer Dennis Lee, and Tubers Donuts

**October 11:** Khmer street food from Ethan Lim of Hermosa

@MikeSula

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## POETRY CORNER

### *Wedding Bell Blues*

By Chad Morgan

It's been spring for forty-five days & I am not at all in love. I might forgive my neighbors their lusty peonies, the mint teeming across the grass, but not the libertine daffodils which gape erogenous: I too have depths for plumbing. If I remember J's thumb parting my lips, I'll send him flirty texts, for it's the pleasure he took in me that I miss, the relish of his discovering. All across the city people are tripping from Ubers to embraces to bars & I am spitting this into the wind misting fishily off the lake. The shoreline erodes at a measurable pace & a group of bridesmaids struggles across the beach toward the season's first wedding. I'll be honest, I haven't even tried to parse meaning from their graceless stumbling over the sand, the murmur of their gowns frenzied on the breeze.

Chad Morgan's work has appeared in *The Adroit Journal*, *Columbia Poetry Review*, *Court Green*, *Landfill*, and elsewhere. A 2021 Lambda Literary Fellow in poetry, he is the author of *Chad Morgan & Other Poems* (forthcoming spring 2022, from Meekling Press) and lives in Chicago.

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## POLITICS

# Johnny MAGA

Liberty-loving John Catanzara and the FOP are silent on the war on drugs.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

Having been exposed to the wit and wisdom of John Catanzara for a couple of years, I've reached a rather obvious conclusion about the president of the local Fraternal Order of Police.

It would be better off for everybody—Catanzara included—if he just hurried up and moved to Florida, where he'll probably be living soon enough, as Dr. D, my podcast producer, predicted months ago.

As it is, Catanzara looks a little lost here in Chicago, what with his knee-jerk opposition to all things Democratic, his blind allegiance to MAGA, and his bizarre affinity for making Nazi metaphors.

But down in Florida? Man, he'd be the king of the castle. Probably get elected governor—at which point he'd be free to mandate that localities not mandate masks or vaccines—apparently a mandate that MAGA loves to make.

OK, for those who don't follow the news...

Out of nowhere, Mayor Lori Lightfoot recently proclaimed that by October 15 all city employees (police officers included) would have to be vaccinated against COVID. She now

apparently recognizes the virus as a problem again—now that Lollapalooza has conveniently come and gone.

Looking for comment, Fran Spielman—*Sun-Times* city hall reporter—turned to Catanzara. And Catanzara did not disappoint, going full MAGA, with f-bombs flying and everything.

"We're in America, goddamn it," he said. "We don't want to be forced to do anything. Period. This ain't Nazi fucking Germany, [where they say], 'Step into the fucking showers. The pills won't hurt you.' What the fuck?"

Only the *Sun-Times* didn't write "Nazi fucking Germany," they wrote "Nazi f---ing Germany" 'cause they're a family newspaper, dammit! And they want to protect readers from the kinds of things those same readers say every day. Even though it can get kind of tricky. Like when they turned "what the fuck" into "what the f---k" as opposed to "what the f---." Perhaps they weren't 100 percent certain readers could figure it out without that special k.

But I digress...

Once Catanzara's comments went public,

Maybe Chicago cops would have a better relationship with residents if they didn't love a certain former president so very much.

📷 DGMORN / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

the s--t hit the fan, as the *Sun-Times* might put it. And Catanzara had to apologize.

As MAGA apologies go, it was so-so. At least it was better than the one Congresswoman Mary Miller made after she said, "Hitler was right." Catanzara did say he was wrong to make an inappropriate analogy—but then he sorta blamed Spielman by saying he thought the conversation was off the record. As though she made him say it.

At this point, I must remind you that Catanzara was elected president of the FOP in 2020 after a heated runoff against Kevin Graham, the incumbent, in which both candidates battled to see who could be the biggest suck-up to Donald Trump.

Tough battle. Graham met with Trump in the White House. And was photographed hanging on to every word, no matter how batshit crazy, that came out of Trump's mouth.

He was only to be outdone by Catanzara, who took to walking around with a "Cops for Trump" T-shirt.

Far be it from me to give advice to members of the Fraternal Order of Police as to who they choose to lead them. But you might want to reconsider your bizarre affinity to Trump, seeing as he's reviled by most of the residents in the city you work and live in. That is, if you want to expand your base of support beyond a handful of southwest- and northwest-side precincts.

Having said all of that, let me say this...

Catanzara has a kernel of a point. There is something a little dictatorial about a mayor unilaterally imposing a vaccine mandate on city workers. Even if it's the right thing to do.

And I can understand why some police officers might be upset to be on the receiving end of such a mayoral mandate.

This is the sort of top-down command the mayor makes to teachers—with most of corporate and editorial Chicago, not to mention Catanzara's buddies at Fox—cheering her on all the way.

Now Chicago police officers are discovering what it's like to be treated like Chicago Public Schools teachers. And they don't like it one bit.

As a union man, I believe such mandates should at least be discussed with the rank and file, as opposed to dropping from the heavens

like bolts of lightning.

After all, leaders of the pro sports leagues discuss COVID policies with their employees. Wouldn't it be nice if Mayor Lightfoot treated city workers with the sort of respect that Adam Silver, commissioner of the NBA, treats basketball players?

So, yes, I understand why police officers might be put off by Lightfoot's mandate. Even as I urge every single police officer to get vaccinated ASAP—if they haven't done so already. No matter what bullshit about the vaccine they may be hearing on Fox or YouTube.

However, this outrage over mandates from the mayor seems a little, I don't know, selective, coming from Catanzara and the FOP.

In his apology for his "Nazi fucking Germany" comments, Catanzara said, "We need to learn from our history. We cannot let government dictate our freedoms."

You know what's an even greater infringement on the freedom of police officers? Making them pee into a cup to see whether they've smoked a joint.

And that's what the police department has been making police officers do for years—routinely testing cops for marijuana and other drugs. For that matter, the fire department makes firefighters pee into cups as well.

It's all part of the insane war on drugs that our country has been waging for as long as I can remember, dictating things we can and cannot do. Generally enforced, I have to add, by police officers who pull you over to see if you—God forbid—have a joint in your purse. Or your pocket.

Talk about infringements on our liberties. It sure would have helped to have had Catanzara, or any liberty-loving leader of the FOP, speak out against those impositions on our freedoms.

But as I learned long ago, libertarians and conservatives are generally nowhere to be found when the government really infringes on the rights of ordinary citizens.

Guess they only love liberty when it fits the MAGA agenda—which means they don't really love liberty at all. 📺

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Fred Hampton's childhood home in Maywood

DEANNA ISAACS

## CULTURE

# Fred Hampton is having a moment

Fifty-two years after our government assassinated him

By DEANNA ISAACS

If you've seen *Judas and the Black Messiah*, the multiple-award-winning film about the 1969 murder of Illinois Black Panther Party chairman Fred Hampton, you've got a picture in your head of the 4:30 AM raid in which a drugged and sleeping Hampton was killed by a barrage of police bullets.

The raid was carried out at Hampton's apartment at 2337 W. Monroe by a police unit assigned to Cook County state's attorney Edward Hanrahan. Although Hanrahan claimed that there had been a shoot-out there, the physical evidence in the apartment made it clear that, with the exception of a single shot, police had done all the shooting. Hampton had been riddled by bullets while sleeping in his bed next to his pregnant fiancée, Akua Njeri.

The police didn't bother to take possession of the scene, however, and in the days after

the raid, surviving Panthers, including current U.S. congressman Bobby Rush, opened the apartment to the public, who were able to walk through and see for themselves Hampton's blood-soaked mattress and the path left by the bullets that also killed Panther member Mark Clark and wounded four others.

It was powerful firsthand evidence, and a tangible lesson in Chicago history.

The Hampton apartment building doesn't exist anymore; it was torn down. So was the nearby Black Panther Party headquarters building at 2350 W. Madison, scene of a gun battle with police earlier that year. It's now a Walgreens.

The Panthers were militant and revolutionary. They also pioneered free breakfasts for Chicago school students, set up legal and medical clinics, and brought together a

Rainbow Coalition of disadvantaged groups that included Puerto Ricans and poor whites. A half-century later, with the values they sought—including jobs and decent housing for all, truthful education, free health care, courtroom justice, and an end to police brutality and wars—still elusive, there are efforts underway to identify and preserve what remains of the physical evidence of their work in the community.

Fred Hampton Jr. is heading up an effort to save and repurpose his father's childhood home. He says the former two-flat at 804 S. 17th Avenue in Maywood has been rescued from a threatened foreclosure (thanks to a GoFundMe campaign), and that they'll be applying for local landmark designation in the near future. They don't need a public petition for that, but he's posting one to show

community support. His plan is to turn the house into a Black Panther Party museum and neighborhood resource center; he says they've started with a community garden and refrigerator, a recording studio, and a weekly program streaming on YouTube, *Free Em All Radio*.

Meanwhile, a pair of Loyola University graduate students working under Ted Karamanski, professor and founder of Loyola's public history program, and collaborating with journalist and media consultant Leila Wills, are working on a broader project. Adam Yunis, Mikey Spehn, and Wills, with advice from Landmarks Illinois, are seeking a multiple property listing on the National Register of Historic Places for a group of Illinois Black Panther Party sites. Yunis says they currently have a list of 11 potential properties, including the Maywood house, the former People's Church at 201 S. Ashland (now the Epiphany Center for the Arts), and other south- and west-side buildings where, for example, the Illinois BPP hosted free meals and clinics and held public meetings. They hope to have their submission ready by the end of the year. (*Black Messiah* fans: check out Wills's interesting online panel of original Panther members and some of their attorneys discussing the film. Wills, who was born in Altgeld Gardens, is the daughter of Illinois Black Panther Party members Tony and Linda Wills, and a diligent BPP documentarian.)

Last Sunday, one of those potential sites, Proviso East High School, dedicated its Social Justice Room to Hampton, a 1966 graduate. The dedication in the school auditorium featured impassioned speeches by Illinois senate majority leader Kimberly Lightford and house speaker Chris Welch, among many others. But the most dramatic moments came during a reading by *Judas and the Black Messiah* cast member Alysia Joy Powell that brought Njeri—who'd tried to shield Hampton during the raid with her own body and, 25 days later, gave birth to their son—to tears.

Njeri and Fred Jr. were the final speakers. They talked about carrying on the work and saving the Hampton House. It's "a place where you can go to get a political education" and more, Njeri said. "Power to the people." **✎**

[@Deannaisaacs](#)

## SOUTH SIDE JAZZ COALITION AND MARGARET MURPHY-WEBB



I started singing professionally when I was in my twenties. I decided that I wanted to be a jazz singer because the music always spoke to me the way other genres didn't. I started going to see Earl LaVon Freeman at the Enterprise and the Matador, and I ended up spending most of my musical life with him until he passed away. Von Freeman had a Tuesday night jam session, so right after he died in 2012, I started having a Tuesday night jazz jam at the 50 Yard Line. Then in 2015 I decided to start the South Side Jazz Coalition as a 501c3 and try to do pop-up jazz events and engage the community. It's turned into something crazy.

Before the pandemic, we were just presenting live programs. I partnered with St. Columbanus Church, which is now St. Moses the Black Parish, where I was music teacher. I was looking for some place to have our jazz jam, which I'd changed to the second Tuesday of every month. Father Matt O'Donnell, who is the most wonderful man, said, "Please bring it here."

When COVID hit, we partnered with the St. Columbanus pop-up pantry, giving food to people every Wednesday. We started doing food deliveries with the South Side Mutual Aid Network. I wrote grants to try to raise money. We were donating to musicians who were having problems with their rent or hospital bills, and identifying seniors who needed transportation to and from the store. We also started streaming live music from my backyard. We paid musicians to come over, and we'd stream our Tuesday Night Jams so people had something to watch.

As the restrictions started easing, I called Father Matt and said, "People are coming back outside. What can we do?" He said, "You can come on the stairs of the church." So that's how Jazzin' on the Stairs happened. We started doing that last year during the pandemic, and now it's turned into a big community affair—last week we had 350 people, and there's plenty of space. People barbecue, we have food trucks, and they call it the "South Side Ravinia."

We've partnered with a mobile vaccination unit. When they came out we had about 200 people. Only ten got vaccinated, but they said any time you get double digits it's a success. I've been scratching my head about what to do to try to get people to understand. We're going to keep pushing it. I just got a \$5,000 grant for programs that educate people about the vaccine. So I'm going to partner with the mobile unit

again, and have a small gathering where people can spread out. We're going to talk about the vaccine and try to educate more people and get them on board. It's not just the elders who won't get vaccinated, it's the young people too.

Ernest Dawkins has been doing the Englewood Jazz Festival for years. I live in the Black community, and everyone knows about it, just like the Bronzeville Jazz Fest. It's well attended, but it's a little known secret for a lot of people in Chicago. I'm glad that the Chicago Humanities Festival has partnered with him for this panel, because now it's going to be more wide-reaching. I'd heard of the Humanities Festival, but I had no idea who they were. I want to know who gave [CHF program manager] Dr. Ira Murfin my number. He called and asked me if we would partner with him, and what kind of program did I think they could do to unite with the Englewood Festival?

My feeling is that everything should be intergenerational when it comes to music, especially jazz. People think of jazz as old people's music, but there are a lot of young cats out here that are really handling the business. I said, "What I think you should do is, you have this older cat. Now put a young cat on the stage too, and let them talk about how they influence each other. Then have a performance." I thought that that would be excellent. The next thing I knew, I was moderating the panel.

You have to bring the generations together, musically. Maybe it's always been that "older people listen to this, young people listen to this," but for certain music you have to pass the torch. That's what I think that this event is going to do. Ernest will talk about what he's done for decades, Marquis Hill is up-and-coming and very educated. So it should be really good.

The message that I want to share more than anything is that south side jazz is going strong, even though we don't get the notoriety over here, and the clubs are all closed from Chicago. Back in the 60s and 70s, there were jazz clubs all over the south side: the Beehive, the Hummingbird, Alexander's Steak House. On 75th Street alone there were about ten jazz clubs up and down the street. Even though those places are now gone, people are still playing. South-side musicians are still working, and the music is still going on.

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Louise Fishman, *Untitled* 1985. Oil and charcoal on paper. 34 x 22 inches. Courtesy of the artist. © Louise Fishman; Lead exhibition support is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation American Art Program.

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# ‘Black people should have their babies where they live’

The push for more equitable, culturally appropriate, and accessible options for childbirth

By KELLY MILAN

“I should have said something,” said Telika Howard. “Why didn’t I say anything?” Howard gave birth seven times in seven hospitals, and seven times she was traumatized. She felt the medical professionals did not understand her needs or give her the best possible care.

In 2001, at the age of 21, Howard gave birth to her second child at Regional One Health Medical Center in Memphis, Tennessee. She said a nurse came in and administered a shot without her permission. When Howard asked what it was, she said the nurse replied, “It’s a birth control shot because you don’t need to be having any more children.”

In 2004, she gave birth in Chicago, where she lives now, at a hospital that is now closed. She said she felt like she was put on display, as several medical students observed her without her consent.

Then in 2011, Howard was pregnant with twins in Rose Medical Center in Denver, Colorado, and called an ambulance in a panic. “I’m freaking out thinking, ‘OK these babies are coming early,’” she said. “Well, when I got there, they said I’m fine and I just need to drink more water.”

When the nurse entered the hospital room, Howard said she was told she shouldn’t have called an ambulance because that costs taxpayers money. “She doesn’t know me,” said Howard. “She doesn’t know my insurance in-

formation. She is just assuming things about me: *I’m Black. I must be poor. I must be here on government medical assistance.* And even if I was, that wouldn’t be something appropriate to say to anyone.”

She continued. “It comes from history, you know, this fake welfare mother that was put out there,” said Howard. “Welfare queen—they are these Black women that just have lots and lots of babies just to drain the system and go into our precious pockets.”

Howard is one of the many Black people across the nation who deal with discrimination in the health-care system and suffer pregnancy trauma at the hands of hospital staff. Black women face higher maternal mortality rates, are more likely to have postpartum depression, and are 50 percent more likely to deliver a premature baby than white women. Black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related conditions than white women in Illinois and six times more likely to die in childbirth than other races in Chicago.

After her first traumatic birth experience, Howard became a certified birth and postpartum doula, who, while not a health-care professional, provides support during childbirth. She is among the growing number of Black women in Chicago helping other Black women have a more comfortable experience giving birth, by pushing for more equitable, culturally appropriate, and accessible op-

tions, including access to birthing centers, medical facilities staffed by midwives that are often more like homes than hospitals.

“This has been going on for a really long time since they’ve thrown out Black midwives and brought birth into hospitals,” said Howard. “They are not wanting babies of color to be born, to be here. They just feel like it’s a drain on our system.”

In her book *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*, Dorothy E. Roberts, Chicago native and law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote, “The picture of reckless Black fertility is made all the more frightening by a more devious notion of Black women’s childbearing.” There is a deep-rooted history of racial intolerance in the American health-care system. During the second half of the 18th century, physicians entered the field of obstetrics, breaking traditional midwifery and escalating tensions between Black midwives and medical professionals, who later banned the practice altogether.

The State Board of Health was organized in 1877, leading to the government-controlled medicalization of birth. (Illinois was the first state to require licensure for birth.) At the time, only white men were allowed to practice obstetrics. That year, the Medical Practice Act gave health boards the authority to determine who could be a physician, and

eventually pushed fundamental changes in medical school curriculums, purged unlicensed practitioners and outright frauds, reduced the number of nonmedical school graduates, revoked licenses of abortionists, unified the best organized of both regular and irregular medical practitioners, and marginalized midwives.

“These were white men,” said Tayo Mbande, cofounder of Chicago Birthworks Collective, an organization dedicated to improving birth outcomes for women of color and their babies. “White men who sought to have a better understanding of something they had no idea about.”

Indeed, the first State Board of Health was made up of five white men with full beards, one white man with a goatee, and one white man with just a mustache.

When Jeanine Valrie Logan, a certified nurse midwife, was about to have her first child in September 2010, she faced an obstacle. “I’m going to have a baby in a birth center, but there were none. I’m having my baby at home,” Logan said. “I’m not going to a hospital. No, I’m a doula and a student midwife.”

Logan said she could not find a Black midwife that practiced home birth in the city. Through a Google search, she found a white certified nurse midwife to deliver her baby at her Lincoln Square apartment. A 2007 law

had authorized only ten birth center licenses in the state: four total in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties; three in municipalities with a population of more than 50,000 that were not located in collar counties; and three in rural areas. And of those birth centers, one had to be owned or operated by a hospital and another by a federally qualified health center.

The first alternative birth center in the state, PCC Community Wellness, opened in Berwyn in 2015. A few years ago, Logan started working at the birth center as a certified nurse midwife after finishing school at Frontier Nursing University in Kentucky. She's now working to open a birth center on the south side. ("It's our vision to provide culturally-safe, evidence-based midwifery care alongside families and within community," she says in a fundraising video.) Logan's work on passing House Bill 738—which Governor J.B. Pritzker signed on August 20—will expand access to birth centers on the west side, south side, the far south side, and East Saint Louis. Eleven birth centers are now allowed

in those six counties.

Illinois representative Robyn Gabel, one of the main cosponsors of the bill, said expanding women's options in childbirth has always been a core component of reproductive rights. "Obviously, there's prejudice in the whole system," said Gabel. "Women should have maximum control over their bodies."

This year, Gabel was also a cosponsor for House Bill 0004, which provided coverage under the medical assistance program for doula services, and House Bill 354, which allowed out-of-hospital births by certified professional midwives (CPM). Until then, Illinois only legally allowed certified nurse midwives (CNM) to perform out-of-hospital births. Now, under the Licensed Certified Professional Midwife Practice Act, midwives trained to do home births will be allowed to practice midwifery as the "means of providing the necessary supervision, care, and advice to a client during a low-risk pregnancy, labor and the post-partum period, including the intended low-risk delivery of a child, and providing normal newborn care."

These bills came after Pritzker signed an Omnibus Health Equity bill that included provisions for doula training, providing support throughout the prenatal, labor, and delivery, or postpartum period; medical assistance coverage for doula and home-visiting services; and a requirement that the Department of Healthcare and Family Services consult with doula program experts and home-visiting experts.

"[That] women don't have access to deliver their children in their community is amazing to me and the fact that you're not surviving, so many women are not surviving the birth of their child, is amazing to me when we spend, again, trillions of dollars in health care . . . to create access to health care that people just somehow do not get," said Illinois representative Camille Lilly, one of the sponsors of the bill, in a Zoom meeting with the public and Planned Parenthood.

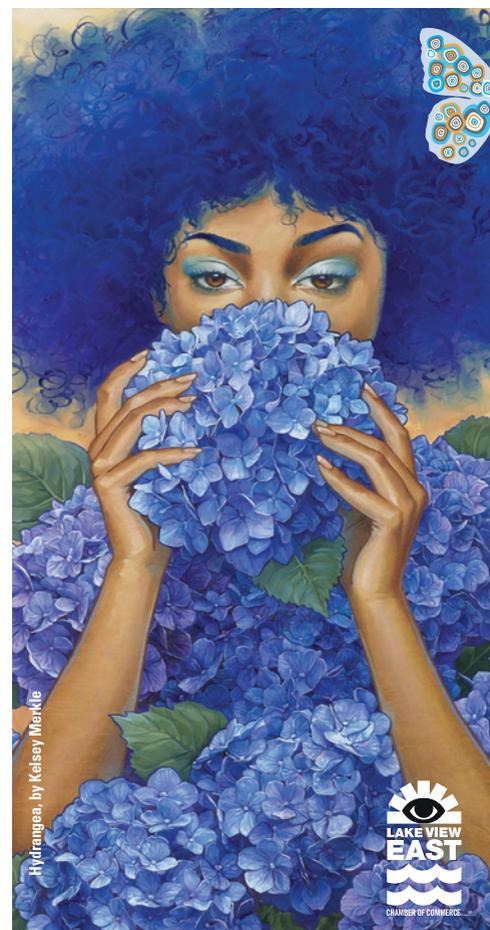
There are more women in Illinois who want a home birth than midwives who serve them. According to the 2020 demographic report from the American Midwifery Certification

Board, 85 percent of CNMs and certified midwives identified as white, while less than 7 percent of midwives identified as Black or African American.

"You can search high and low, you are not going to find any other Black CNM who is providing home birth support," said Mbande of Chicago Birthworks Collective. "All of the student midwives I know that are Black are training to be CPMs. CPM licensure would mean that there could be dozens of Black home birth midwives. I mean dozens of them."

"The doctors rushed me to having an emergency C-section," said Ashley James. "I really didn't really have a say in this situation."

Fourteen days after the C-section, James's baby passed away in the ICU at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn. "I wish I had someone who was there in my corner for me," James, who was 18 at the time, said. During her second hospitalized birth, James lost another child. "That's why I want to be



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- 5:00 PM..... Sunshine Boys
- 6:30 PM..... Expo '76
- 9:00 PM..... Hoyle Brothers

#### Garden Stage

- 11:00 AM..... Barry Winograd Trio
- 12:00 PM..... Arcadia
- 1:15 PM..... Gerry Hundt
- 2:30 PM..... Kerosene Stars
- 4:00 PM..... Andrew Fraker
- 5:30 PM..... Quarantini

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

#### Main Stage

- 11:30 AM..... Spare Parts
- 1:00 PM..... Naomi Ashley
- 2:30 PM..... Nelson Street Revival
- 4:00 PM..... Hemispheres
- 6:00 PM..... Amanda Coppetelli

#### Garden Stage

- 11:00 AM..... Steve Hashimoto Duo
- 12:15 PM..... Dave Lysien
- 1:30 PM..... Girl Named Nino
- 3:00 PM..... Jared Rabin
- 4:30 PM..... Decoy Prayer Meeting
- 6:00 PM..... Nathan Graham

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there for women, especially for Black women in Chicago.”

James works on-call for Chicago Volunteer Doulas and said her experiences shaped the way she views the current American health industry.

“There is this statistic that Black women are so strong that no one offers to help because they’re like, ‘Oh, well you’re a strong Black woman, you don’t need my help because you got it all together,’” James said. “But at the end of the day, we are all human as well and have emotions as well and some women don’t want to act like they are a burden and don’t seek the help they need.” James said that like many others, she kept quiet.

Only four hospitals on the south side provide delivery services—Mercy Hospital in Bronzeville, University of Chicago in Hyde Park, Advocate Trinity Hospital in Calumet Heights, and Roseland Community Hospital on the far south side. This year the lack of options became even more critical when it appeared Mercy Hospital would close, though an agreement was struck to keep it open thanks in part to strenuous community advocacy. The closing of Mercy would have eliminated 30 OB/GYN beds where 900 babies were delivered last year.

Though the expansion of birth centers on the south and west sides allows reproductive autonomy for Black women, Howard sees the continued exclusion of Black women in new birthing center laws. Previously, Howard worked with Chicago Volunteer Doulas, Birthways Chicago, and Chicago Family Doulas. She said the majority of the clients from the latter two organizations are from north-side areas that are predominately white.

“It was good money and everything, but it just wasn’t where my heart was,” said Howard. “I was basically treated like a servant, and I am not in this to just be a servant to the rich. I am in this to make a difference.” Recently, Howard left Family Focus Lawndale and will soon start as a lactation consultant specialist at the University of Illinois Chicago hospital in the mother and baby unit.

Mbande, who unexpectedly got pregnant in college, would later realize her experience was not traumatic because of the support around her, especially from her mother who was instrumental in all of Mbande’s pregnancies, births, and postpartum journeys.

“There are so many Black women who don’t have this,” Mbande said. “The support my family was able to provide influenced the

# “They are not wanting babies of color to be born, to be here. They just feel like it’s a drain on our system.”

—Telika Howard

information I sought out and influenced my confidence to seek out information and make decisions that at the time felt super radical, like saying no to an induction or choosing the position to birth in.”

When Mbande had her second child, she kick-started her organization Chicago Birthworks Collective, which aims to help navigate the health-care system, and teach those delivering how to advocate for birth rights or curate their own birth experience. “White women are not the folks that need more access to birthing options,” said Mbande. “Black people should have their babies where they live. If a Black person lives somewhere where they can’t have a child, then that is the problem.”

Angela Ellison was nine years old when her mother died from blood clots, nearly a month after giving birth to Ellison’s younger sister. “That’s probably why I am passionate about maternal health and child health,” Ellison, senior director of the Office of Community Engagement and Neighborhood Health Partnerships at University of Illinois Chicago, said. “It is that energy and my mother was a middle-class Black woman living in the south side of Chicago, living in the 60s, but she delivered at a hospital on the north side where they might or might have not given all the treatment they could have given to her.”

Her mother was in the hospital for three weeks. “Did they run the test in 1969 to see? Were there tests around blood clots in 1969? I

don’t know,” she said. “But it seems like to me there might have been.”

Ellison said when she comes into the doctor’s office and asks for a specific drug to alleviate her pain, the medical staff will question whether or not she is a drug addict, whereas a white woman might have a medical professional write a prescription when asking for similar pain relief medication. “Because of who I am, I have always sought doctors who look like me,” she said.

Ellison is a project director for UIC’s federally funded Healthy Start initiative, which is aimed at addressing health disparities experienced by women and infants in Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and South Shore. She said the Black and Brown communities she researched on the west side in the 1980s experienced 28 deaths per 1,000 live births, and on the south side as high as 36 deaths. The white infant mortality rate at the time was eight deaths.

The Adequacy of Prenatal Care Utilization Index scores “adequate” care as 80 percent or greater. According to the Chicago Health Atlas, today Englewood scores 51 percent, Auburn Gresham 58.5 percent, and South Shore 58 percent.

UIC was one of the five organizations in Illinois to receive Healthy Start funding in 2019, but the only organization with an academic medical center. Despite the pandemic, Healthy Start served over 300 Black women and babies this past year. It also partners with Uber to provide patients with transpor-

tation for their medical appointments. So far, Ellison said the program has made 30 trips a month. Ellison wants to hire doulas and has a community-action network to bring people to talk about common issues and create an agenda to address health equity.

“Doulas are critical to this work and are important in improving birth outcomes for Black women,” Ellison said. “If you can’t have a provider that looks like you, having a birth worker or doula would be very helpful.”

“I always hear there’s something wrong with Black women,” Ellison said. “Oh, I’m sure it’s because they’re getting high and drinking.’ More often than not, our clients are not drinking or smoking or getting high; that’s not contributing to low birth rate. What’s contributing to low birth rates is not getting proper rest, not getting enough exercise, not having access to quality food, running into health-care providers that treat them less than human, and who don’t talk to them and don’t speak to them.”

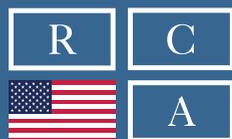
“If you care about the large-scale issue,” said Mbande, “which is all that is beneath maternal mortality for Black women, which is racism, then you would be looking at a whole big picture of things. It’s not just starting a bunch more birth centers. It’s not just about getting more midwives. It’s about radically changing the experiences and radically addressing how institutions feel about and how they value Black women.” 

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## ART SPACES

### A Black art renaissance

Art West seeks to nurture a thriving art scene on the west side.

By MEGGIE GATES

There's a painting hanging on the wall at Art West, an art space on the west side. The painting depicts a woman with an afro, while fake plants and ivies hang from the walls to help bring the exhibit alive. Inside her hair, butterflies point their wings toward the sky as they take flight within the two-dimensional art. The butterflies are real, dried and mounted to the painting. It's a colorful work symbolizing regrowth and the healing power of nature. Alexy Irving, the artist behind the "Black Plant-It" exhibit, is interested in highlighting these kinds of transformations with

her art in the same way that Art West works to inspire, enliven, and cultivate a thriving art scene on the west side.

"Black Plant-It" included multiple artists and bringing everyone's art together and telling one story by arranging art on walls that were once blank was inspiring," says Irving, a photojournalist and garden educator involved with facilitating art installations at Art West. "Art West has introduced me to so many more opportunities to give back to the community."

Art West's mission is to revitalize and rebrand the west-side experience through arts

and culture. Alexie Young, the founder of Art West, had the idea to open the business after seeing what little access people in the area had to the arts and culture scene. Young, alongside Irving, photojournalist Jay Simon, and co-manager Massiel Hernandez, make up the dynamic team building community outreach around Art West.

"We had artist Rick McNeal create beautiful pieces for the 'Black Plant-It' Exhibit and he sold one for a lot of money," says Simon. "That feeling of providing a platform for artists that might not be confident in their abilities to sell

art was incredibly rewarding."

Early on, Young had a vision. Working at Lawndale's MLK Exhibit Center inspired Young to partner with two west-side art venues: Legendary Art Gallery near Madison and Western and 345 Art Gallery at Carroll and Kedzie. Together, they curated "Art, Beats, & Vibes," a one-day event in 2019 that featured local artist performances and music by Chosen Few DJ Mike Dunn. The organizing around this event led to what became the first annual Art West Gallery Tour. Similar to the Bronzeville Art Trolley Tour, the Art West Gallery Tour

## REALLY LOVE

Art West will host a watch party and discussion of the 2020 film on Sat 9/4 at 6:30 PM. Tickets are available at Eventbrite.

Visitors to “Belizean Roots, Westside Raised,” a 2020 exhibition of work by Alexie Young at Art West.  COURTESY OF ART WEST

featured different exhibits at each museum location featuring individuals performing, artists mingling, and chefs serving top-tier food. From there, the idea for Art West was born.

“The tour was an opportunity to showcase various art-based cultural spaces on the west side, especially for individuals who may live in the area and didn’t know what was available,” says Young. “Curating a tour to open those spaces to allow people to visit within a span of a day gave people the opportunity to see what there is to offer.”

After raising \$10,000 in two months for the one-time event, Young saw demand for a consistent space showcasing art on the west side. Hoping to compensate artists, vendors, and wait staff for their time, the money went toward paying labor and providing transportation across exhibits for those on the west side.

The Art West space opened in October of 2020 with an exhibition of Young’s work titled “Belizean Roots, Westside Raised.” The project, an exploration of Young’s life as a first-generation Black woman in Chicago from Belize, detailed a promising future where residents rebuild their own community.

“‘Belizean Roots’ was one of the first shows we curated that captured what Art West aspires to be: a space our ancestors would be proud of,” says Simon. “All the pieces were a reflection of who [Young] is as an artist and we sold every piece besides two at that show.”

Overall, there are not a lot of organizations out west that offer exhibit space for artists in the community. Often, artists who live in Lawndale must travel to places like Hyde Park or Bronzeville to have their art featured, leaving their neighborhood to follow opportunities elsewhere. It’s Art West’s goal to bring those opportunities close to home and, in the words of Irving, this sense of collectivity is what brings people back to the establishment.

“Art West is a beautiful display of what trusting ideas, art, and the power we all have leads to,” says Irving. “I hope we get to continue this Black art renaissance and put communities together between artists, audience, and art investors.”

Thus far, the influx of followers from Insta-

gram has aided in helping the gallery maintain business, selling out events like an NPR Tiny Desk marathon screening in August. They hope that this long-term engagement helps Art West become a platform to help artists grow, exhibit, and profit from their work.

Despite the success they’ve seen, quarantine didn’t help Art West’s initial beginnings. Starting a business at any time can be an uphill battle, especially during a pandemic. Getting hit with the second city mandate in November, the space was forced to close for a few months, subsisting only on revenue it had earned during the time it was open.

“Having to close for months at a time when that second mandate happened in 2020 was hard,” says Young. “The aspirations you have as a business owner opening a space during a challenging time can be difficult.”

Gradually reopening in March, Art West found footing offering a number of events, including conceal and carry classes, stepping classes, and a Sunday Visual Series. With events ranging from creative mixers to live music, Art West is testing the waters in terms of what its showcases will look like. Offering experiences for both introverts and extroverts alike, Art West’s goal to showcase artists in Lawndale has brought comedians, musicians, and artists from all walks of life to its doors.

For further outreach, as part of their membership program, people can host classes in the space monthly or, if you’re open to a \$245 monthly rental fee, you can use the space as much as you need for get-togethers, exhibits, or hosting workshops of your own. Members get these perks as well as discounts to events in the space. The membership program was established in March and came from a desire to make Art West accessible as a collective space for artists to pilot some of their own ideas and experiment with concepts in a welcoming environment.

“There are package options you can pay on a monthly basis starting at \$39,” says Simon. “Right now we’re testing this out but it allows members to use the space once a month to host classes or come to our events at a discounted price.”

Acknowledging misinformation of Lawn-

dale’s negative image, Young hopes Art West’s presence will shift preconceived notions people have of the west side. Situated in an area considered to be a food desert (or more accurately, a food apartheid), Young has seen the community’s resilience in overcoming disparities despite what years of neglect and mistreatment have caused for the environment.

Overall, the team believes Art West will help change the narrative of people’s outlook and enrich experiences of the west side.

“When you’re trying to rebrand something that has been looked at a certain way for years, there’s a lot of backlash that comes with it,” says Simon. “The rewarding feeling is being able to look back at changing that narrative knowing we were a part of history.”

“Oftentimes we were concerned people would be afraid to come to this side of town but we’ve worked really hard to curate experiences worth people’s time,” says Young. “When they come to Art West, they don’t want to leave.”

Down the line, Young hopes to expand and revamp the outdoor area in order to drive business to the building. Additionally, the team aims to ensure all artists are compensated for their time as Art West expands. For now, the organization has an anniversary event in the works to commemorate their first year.

“We’re talking about doing something special for the anniversary in October,” says Simon. “We want to honor the anniversary year of opening the gallery because it’s been so successful and fulfilling thus far.”

The magic of Art West is the collective community that goes into it. Hierarchy is eradicated as artists mingle with the audience, branching out after their show to make genuine connections with the people they’re surrounded by. With “you deserve to be happy” painted in colorful bright letters on the side of the building, the experience at Art West lives up to its promise that you deserve to be happy and here in this space, you are.

Art West is raising funds to further expand art opportunities for the west side and those who would like to assist in that effort can donate to their GoFundMe (search “Bless Art West” at [gofundme.com](https://gofundme.com)). 

## ARTS & CULTURE

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## BOOKS

### Lit this month

Book discussions, poetry, and other literary events in September.

By SALEM COLLO-JULIN

**S**eptember brings us a bevy of book-related, word-inspired, and otherwise literary events. Here's a few to pencil into your calendar.

The **Paper Machete** has returned to its performance home in Uptown at the Green Mill, to the delight of fans. The organizers describe it as a "weekly live magazine," and while comedians are regularly featured, so are Chicago's literary cognoscenti: past readers have included Lisa Buscani, Samantha Irby, and Claire

Zulkey. Saturdays, 3 PM, Green Mill, 4802 N. Broadway, free, 21+

**OUTspoken!** has been bringing tales from LGBTQ lives to the stage at Sidetrack in Lakeview for years, and while they've added on a podcast, audience members can still be found at the bar on the first Tuesday of each month. This month's event is hosted by Chicago activists Kim L. Hunt and Art Johnston. Tue 9/7, 7 PM, Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted, free, 21+, sidetrackchicago.com/outspokenchicago

The 36th annual **Printers Row Lit Fest** brings

the largest free, outdoor literary showcase in the midwest to Dearborn Street this month. Highlights include talks from writers Colson Whitehead, Dawn Turner, Vu Tran, and more. Sat 9/11 and Sun 9/12, Dearborn between Polk and Ida B. Wells Drive, free, all-ages. A full schedule of events and list of participating vendors will be posted before the fest at [printersrowlitfest.org](http://printersrowlitfest.org)

The Seminary Co-op hosts poets **Chiyuma Elliott and Michael Collier** as they read from and discuss their respective new collections. This is an online event presented in part by the University of Chicago Press, and free registration is required (via Eventbrite). Tue 9/14, 4 PM, free, [semcoop.com](http://semcoop.com)

Author **Ana Castillo** will sign and discuss her new novel *My Book of the Dead* in an outdoor event hosted by Women & Children First on Clark Street near the store. Tickets are required, and can be purchased at Eventbrite. Fri 9/17, 4 PM, outside the store at 5233 N.

Clark, \$28 includes a copy of the book, [womennandchildrenfirst.com](http://womennandchildrenfirst.com)

**Dear McSweeney's** is an online event celebrating the new publication with the same title from the long-running journal of American letters. Chicago's American Writers Museum is the local Zoom host for an evening of various contributors to the book in discussion with *McSweeney's* senior editor Daniel Levin Becker. Tue 9/21, 6:30 PM, free ticket via Eventbrite required for viewing

The Poetry Foundation will celebrate **Young People's Poetry Day** with an online presentation from poet Marilyn Nelson, winner of the 2019 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize as well as three-time finalist for the National Book Award. Nelson will read from her work and then take questions from the audience, via Zoom. Sat 9/25, 11 AM, free but registration required at [poetryfoundation.org](http://poetryfoundation.org), all-ages 📖

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## GROWING FOR GOOD with Green Thumb

Code for America: Clear My Record is transforming the process of record clearance

Featuring Alia Toran-Burrell, Associate Program Director, Clear My Record, Code for America

**Q: What is Code for America and where does it fit in the world of criminal legal system reform?**

**Alia Toran-Burrell:** At Code for America, we believe that government at all levels can and should work dramatically better than it does today. That's why we work shoulder to shoulder with community organizations and government to build digital tools and services, change policies, and improve programs.

The Clear My Record team at Code for America works to shrink the reach of the criminal legal system by fundamentally transforming the process of record clearance. Our goal is to make automatic record clearance—where all eligible criminal records get cleared automatically without people needing to go through a burdensome process—the standard across the country.

In the U.S. today, one in three people has a criminal record that appears on a routine background check. Decades of federal, state, and local criminal legal system policies and practices disproportionately targeting Black people and people of color—like the War on Drugs and mass incarceration—have made it so that criminal records are more common in these communities. A criminal record can be a life sentence to poverty, creating barriers to jobs, housing, education, and more.

But, with the right policies and conscious use of technology, government can work to repair decades of criminal legal system injustices and fully implement important reforms to achieve more just and equitable outcomes.

**Q: How did Clear My Record start?**

**ATB:** To help address the barriers criminal records impose, we launched an online intake tool in 2016 to connect people with the legal aid they needed to navigate California's expungement process and file a petition to clear their records. With this tool, our team helped 22,000 people get connected to legal aid services. But we saw firsthand how the petition-based process wasn't working—only a fraction of the people eligible for record clearance actually received relief. We wanted to go beyond tweaking the status quo to re-envision the whole process of record clearance so that anyone and everyone who is eligible for relief actually receives it. So in 2018, we shifted our focus to automatic record clearance.

**Q: What are some of your biggest successes to date?**

**ATB:** After we realized petition-based processes couldn't scale to meet people's needs, we partnered with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office to create a process for automatic record clearance. We developed technology that reads criminal history data, determines eligibility for relief under state law, and produces the necessary documentation for courts. This work expanded to become a first-of-its-kind partnership with five District

Attorney's Offices in California, and then we released the technology to District Attorneys statewide. The free, open-source application combs through criminal history data to find people eligible for record clearance—at a speed of up to 10,000 eligible convictions in just a couple of seconds. To date, Clear My Record technology has helped identify 144,000 cannabis records for clearance.

In 2018, Code for America also joined forces with the Clean Slate Initiative. This bipartisan national movement supports state legislative campaigns to replace petition-based record clearance processes with automated clearing of criminal records. The initiative also works to expand the number and types of records eligible to be cleared. As part of the Clean Slate Initiative and in partnership with state organizations, the Clear My Record team collaborates with courts, criminal history repositories, other executive branch agencies in state government, policymakers, and advocacy groups to design clean slate policies that are implementable by governments and beneficial for people; the team also partners with state governments to implement these important new laws.

With our support, states across the country have now passed and are working to implement Clean Slate laws, including Connecticut, Delaware, Utah, and Michigan, among others. These laws will automatically clear the records of millions of individuals.

**Q: What would need to happen to see these in Illinois?**

**ATB:** There is growing momentum across the country for passing Clean Slate policies that rectify the harms of the past and remove barriers to opportunity. Illinois can join the field, and doing so will help Illinois fulfill its commitment to equitable justice policies and economic recovery for people impacted by the legal system. Indeed government and advocates have already taken steps in this direction. Not only is automatic record clearance possible in Illinois, but it's the only equitable path forward, as record clearance leads to improved economic outcomes for people, at no risk to public safety.

**Q: How can individuals and companies like Green Thumb support your mission?**

**ATB:**

1. Advocate for automatic record clearance policies. Contact Clear My Record and the Clean Slate Initiative for more information.
2. If you're a company, become a second chance employer and hire people with criminal records.
3. Donate to organizations doing this work, including:
  - Code for America
  - Cabrini Green Legal Aid



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AMBER HUFF

## STAGES OF PANDEMIC

# Live theater is back—but questions remain

As the fall season opens, theatermakers voice COVID concerns.

By **KERRY REID**

Spring began so hopefully this past year, with COVID-19 vaccines ramping up and my inbox filling up with announcements of live performances returning in the fall. Back in May, I talked to Deb Clapp, executive director of the League of Chicago Theatres, about what she felt the major concerns facing their members might be as they geared up for a return to the stage and live audiences.

“I think most of all, what people are looking for is really good information and guidance,” said Clapp. “Every time there’s been an announcement [on reopening guidelines], mostly from the state, the city really hasn’t done anything.” She mentioned that the guidelines

for restaurants seemed clearer than for performing arts venues prior to the planned Phase Five reopening date in early June. For example, Clapp noted, “There was a lot of confusion when the state was talking about moving to what they call the bridge phase, the 4.5 and whether or not social distancing would still be required [in theaters].” (The state guidelines for the “bridge” phase limited “seated spectator events” to 60 percent capacity, whether inside or outside. But as Clapp noted, the distance required between groups of spectators was less clear.)

In the absence of clear civic guidance, even as the city entered Phase Five, theaters made

their own rules. One of the first live shows I attended, *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* at the Goodman, which opened in late July, did have audience members distanced by a couple of seats between “pods” of people who purchased their tickets together, and required masks ahead of the city mandate. The Goodman also eliminated concession sales to discourage people from removing their face coverings in order to eat and drink. Earlier that month, Theatre Above the Law’s production of *Henchpeople*, staged in the tiny Jarvis Square Theater with no distance between seats, required patrons to present proof of vaccination at the box office as well as wear

masks at all times. PrideArts requires proof of vax, masking, and a temperature check at the box office for their current production of *The Things I Could Never Tell Steven*.

But as the toll from the Delta variant continues to climb, the League decided to take action independently of the city. Hours before the new city mask mandate was announced on August 17, the League unveiled the “unified COVID-19 protection protocols” from a coalition of more than 65 performing arts venues and producers across the city and suburbs.

According to the press release, “Specific protocols may vary by venue, but in general, patrons will need to be masked and fully

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continued from 22

vaccinated with an FDA authorized vaccine in order to attend an indoor performance and must show proof of vaccination and identification at their time of entry into the venue with their valid ticket.” However, some venues may still accept proof of a negative test instead of vaxxing: “Where negative tests are accepted, guests may provide proof of a COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of the performance start time, or a negative COVID-19 antigen test taken within 6 hours of the performance start time.”

By contrast, The Broadway League, representing the owners and operators of 41 Broadway theaters in New York City, requires audiences to be fully vaxxed and masked, with the exception of “children under 12 and people with a medical condition or closely held religious belief that prevents vaccination.” Those who fall into those categories must present the same proof of a negative COVID test as required by the League of Chicago Theatres.

Things get further complicated depending on whether or not a venue is running on a union contract. Actors’ Equity developed several COVID protocols under the supervision of Dr. David Michaels, former head of OSHA during the Obama administration and a member of President Biden’s Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board. These protocols include everything from a “fully vaccinated safety rider” for nontouring productions to guidance on improved ventilation. The International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), which also represents stagehands in film, television, trade shows, and concerts, has developed its own exhaustive 27-page list of guidelines for reopening.

Of course, for nonunion theaters in Chicago who operate on slim margins, often in small rented spaces, the protocols are fuzziest and budgets and staff to implement them are smaller. Not in Our House developed the Chicago Theatre Standards to address issues of unsafe conditions, practices, and outright abuse in companies (most notably the now-defunct Profiles Theatre). But finding scalable workable solutions to ensure safety for artists and audiences in the face of a pandemic that’s far from over leaves a lot of open questions.

For some producers, the increasing numbers of COVID cases in the state has made them reassess opening in the first place. On July 27, *Into the Mist*, which had run as a streaming speakeasy/variety show through Evanston’s Studio5 earlier in the year, announced that they were going to take the production live

and in person in September. Later that same day, the CDC announced new masking guidelines in response to the spread of Delta. By August 3, the company pulled back from the plans for a live show.

In the postponement announcement, the producers noted: “We spoke with several knowledgeable physicians (including two noted immunologists), and they were in unanimous agreement: They believe this surge is going to get worse before it gets better, and if we were to proceed with our production, which is designed as indoors, close and interactive between performers and audience members (even with the audience masked), we would be putting people—including our cast—at risk and could be unwittingly hosting a spreader event, regardless of anyone’s vaccination status.”

Artemisia Theatre decided to postpone its Fall Fest of three staged readings of new plays by women, scheduled October 18-20 at Raven Theatre. Artistic director Julie Proudfoot noted that going into Phase Five meant “it really looked like a live event was possible. But I was also still concerned.” However, the Fall Festival, with its shorter run and limited rehearsal schedule, seemed like a safer option initially than a full production. “I thought, ‘This is doable, and I can keep everyone safe,’” said Proudfoot. But when things took “a pretty onerous turn” and Proudfoot noticed the number of breakthrough infections being reported by friends on social media, the company re-evaluated and decided to hold off for now.

“I love theater. I love a live audience. But I’m not going to risk it,” said Proudfoot.

An informal social media survey of theater artists I conducted last week provided an insightful range of ideas on what would make them feel most comfortable in returning to live performance.

Laura Fisher, one of the founders of Not in Our House, sent a comprehensive list of what she’d like to see producers provide on the audience side, including (in no particular order, she cautioned): proof of vaccine; masks; no drinks/food concessions sold; opening the house early enough so that the lobby isn’t overcrowded; curtain speeches that empower ushers (or other staff) to enforce the rules; notice on ticketing services and box office of the rules and the ticket buyers’ agreement; no talkbacks; no long shows.

For performer and crew safety, Fisher suggested: cleaning protocols for dressing rooms (she added that she’d be willing to pitch in on that); masks offstage, as is common in film and

TV production; testing of cast and crew twice a week; limiting extra activities; understudies that are prepared so that actors can take time off if exposed (and not just symptomatic); protocols discussed and consented to before signing on; limits on who’s in rehearsal.

Dawn Xiana Moon, founder and producer/director of Raks Geek and Raks Inferno belly dancing and fire dancing troupes, expressed appreciation for the League’s guidelines, but noted, “Testing is extremely useful, especially at scale, but a 72-hour window leaves a long time for someone to be infectious without knowing it,” adding, “And no test is 100 percent accurate, so COVID tests are calibrated to err toward producing false negatives rather than false positives.”

Moon, whose day job involves “working with COVID data and the CDC,” began producing shows again in June. “I decided to require proof of vaccination plus keep the venue at no more than 50 percent capacity (i.e., 60 people). As a cast we decided we all felt safe with this protocol, and I’ve been checking in with everyone before taking gigs at venues we have less control over. We also have a window open, air filters, etc. when people are in the space.”

But she added, “As a performer, I don’t want to work with anyone that’s not vaccinated—what we do requires close contact and we usually can’t be masked the entire time, and especially with Delta, even going into the same room an infected person was previously in can be enough to cause an infection. COVID is airborne, and Delta is much more contagious than the original strain.”

That level of contagion has left some wondering why producing live at all right now is worth the risk. Emma Cox, managing director for Kor Productions as well as the founder of her own independent production company, said, “I’m really angry. Really, really angry.”

Cox noted, “I believe the current situation brings to focus a very important point within our community, one that has been slowly building to a climax pre-pandemic: producers in this city seem to be extremely comfortable with sacrificing their own industry members in the pursuit of profit, with little thought about those being directly exposed to harm or risk.” Cox further noted that “insurance premiums are skyrocketing for personnel and venue rentals alike,” which places an additional onus on smaller companies with tighter budgets.

“Currently, the greatest financial risk any production company could take at this time is attempting to launch an in-person produc-

tion, one that could close at a moment’s notice without any form of return,” said Cox.

Indeed, it’s not hard to see growing concerns over the safety of reopening with Delta on the rise as a large piece of a growing movement demanding safer and more equitable working conditions for theatermakers—a movement that has come into sharper focus during the pandemic shutdown.

From the We See You White American Theater BIPOC Demands focused on racial justice and equity, to On Our Team’s organizing for designer pay transparency and equity, to the apparent sidelining of Broadway producer Scott Rudin after years of stories of egregiously abusive behavior, theater artists seem to be saying, on the one hand, that they will not stand for business as usual.

Yet there is also a palpable longing for, and joy in, the return to live theater, which has been apparent at the handful of productions I’ve attended so far. (Full disclosure: I surveyed all the *Reader* contributing theater and dance writers to assess their comfort with attending live performances; most responded that they would be OK with it, depending on a variety of factors such as vax requirements for patrons.)

As we gear up for many more shows opening in the months ahead, I can candidly say that I too am conflicted about what we’re doing here, and have Delta anxiety.

So far, I am unaware of any theater production having served as a “spreader” event, at least in Chicago. But that certainly doesn’t mean it hasn’t happened, or couldn’t happen. On the other hand, theaters that require proof of vax seem to be doing more than what a lot of bars and restaurants ask for (and of course people are taking masks off and on in those establishments). On the other, other hand—if theatermakers and audiences are OK with assuming the risk, along with accepting the protocol requirements, does that mean we’re free of responsibility for what could happen, even to people who weren’t at the theater? After all, people from out of state come here and see shows all the time.

I honestly have no clear answers. I do know that another shutdown could well be disastrous for companies that managed to survive the last 18 months. And I suspect that increasing the vaccination rates earlier this year would have saved a lot of fear and uncertainty.

Get the shot. Wear a mask. Assess your risks. Take care of each other. **■**

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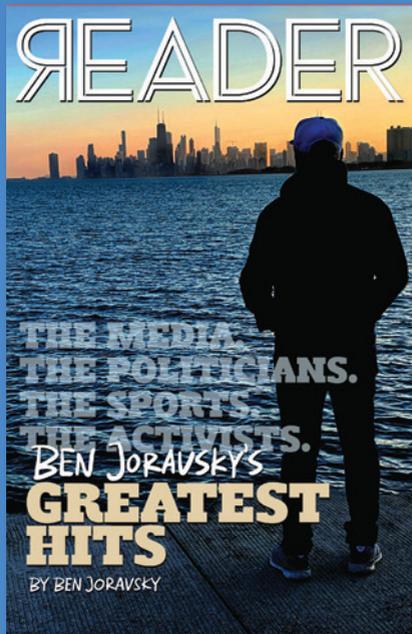
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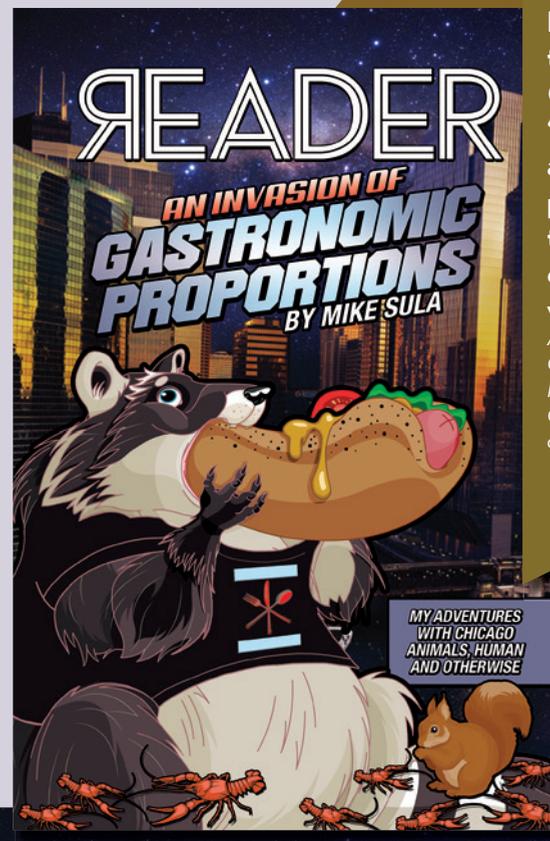
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Plover chicks at Montrose Beach © BOB DOLGAN

## BIRDWATCHING

# Plovermania hits the big screen

How two rare birds captured the hearts of Chicagoans

By **TAYLOR MOORE**

A Great Lakes piping plover can be hard to spot. Walking up to the Montrose Beach Dunes Natural Area, you may initially confuse it for a killdeer—its taller cousin—or a spotted sandpiper. You may even need a pair of binoculars. But the piping plover's light gray feathers, quick run, and distinctive “peep” will ultimately give it away—many birders affectionately call them “cotton balls with legs.”

It's been two and a half years since Monty and Rose, the city's most famous Great Lakes piping plovers, made their summer home in Uptown. One of about 70 breeding pairs of their species, and the first to settle in Chicago in 71 years, the couple's choice to nest on the city's busiest beach astounded local birders—

and even resulted in the 2019 cancellation of the music festival, Mamby on the Beach, due to concerns from conservationists. Monty and Rose have become celebrities in their own right, spawning posters, stickers, a limited-edition pale ale, and even their own holiday designated by Governor J.B. Pritzker. And this week, they're poised to become movie stars.

*Monty and Rose 2* is the first feature-length documentary about the all-star couple, set to premiere at the Music Box Theatre on September 4 and 6. (It is numbered “2” because it expands on the previous 23-minute short.) The hour-long film follows Monty and Rose from their hatching in 2017 to the trials they faced nesting in Waukegan and, later, Chicago. Heartwarming and comprehensive, it

combines original documentary footage, local bird photography, and interviews with wildlife scientists, birdwatchers, and some of the hundred-plus volunteers who educated the public about the plovers and monitored the area for predators, which include off-leash dogs and other birds. The film uses an original song from the local band Congress of Starlings, fronted by longtime birder Aerin Tedesco and her partner, Andrea Bunch.

“I was really spurred by how unlikely their story was,” filmmaker and Uptown resident Bob Dolgan told me. “Montrose [Beach] itself is such a spectacle every weekend, but to also have this rare bird there is a pretty amazing sight.” Dolgan, who has a background in non-profit communications and writes the newsletter “This Week in Birding,” was already fascinated by Great Lakes piping plovers, having seen them earlier in the year at Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan, so Monty and Rose's sudden appearance at Montrose Beach felt like fate. Dolgan hired a cinematographer days after the first sighting, and he later raised \$5,480 on Kickstarter to fund the project.

Shining through the movie is people's love for the birds. In a talking-head interview, artist Tony Fitzpatrick tells Dolgan about the measures he would've taken if Mamby on the Beach had occurred. “I had a motorcycle club—that shall go nameless—who were going to send a hundred soldiers and we were going to guard the perimeter of that nesting site,” said Fitzpatrick. “And believe me, buddy, nobody would've violated that nesting site.”

Cuteness is one factor, but the birders I spoke to described the plovers as resilient and even fierce. Brenda Janish, a UX designer who lives in Ravenswood, called them the “Chihuahuas of the bird world” because of how easily underestimated they are. Volunteers have seen the plovers pick fights with seagulls and fly circles around hawks to protect their young.

Janish did not previously consider herself a birder, but after volunteering for monitoring shifts over two summers, she's grown to love the plovers. In her spare time, she's designed plover-themed varsity shirts, patches, and even a hand-sewn Halloween costume. “It's nice to have something to commemorate all the hours that were put in to protect them,” Janish said.

Tamima Itani was one of the first people to spot the piping plovers at Montrose Beach in 2019 and, while on the phone reporting the sighting, she gave them the names Monty and Rose to more easily distinguish the two (they were identifiable because of the colored bands on their legs that denote the brood they came from and the breeding area). Itani, who goes by “Plovermother,” is vice president of the Illinois Ornithological Society and coordinator of the nesting monitor volunteer network, which arranges two-hour shifts between dawn and dusk, from late April to early August. In May, she released the illustrated children's book *Monty and Rose Nest at Montrose* in hopes of inspiring the next generation of conservationists. “I want people to want piping plovers in our future,” Itani said.

Perhaps greater than the fascination with the birds is how they've managed to bring people together. A whole community has formed around the Great Lakes piping plovers, there to mourn eggs lost to a hungry skunk, rejoice when a former fledgling forms a family of his own, and wave goodbye when they fly for their winter homes in Texas and Florida.

Ann Hetzel Gunkel, a philosophy professor at Columbia College Chicago, told me that the piping plovers changed her life. From an early age, her 20-year-old son Stás was interested in nature and the two went on birding trips together, but in spring 2019 they became even closer when they signed up for weekly volunteer shifts together. Stás found the experience so clarifying that he interned with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this past summer, working more directly with the piping plovers than when he was a volunteer.

Gunkel couldn't help but see the parallels between Monty and Rose and their chicks, and her own relationship with her son as he prepared to graduate from high school in early 2019. “When we first started, we were watching over this plover family and watching the chicks hatch, grow up, forage, and eventually fly away. It was like this microcosm that we watched—a whole life cycle of a little family,” she said. “It's been very special to share that with him.”

“You weren't kidding, that was sappy,” Stás joked.

“Yeah it was, but I'm the mom and that's my job,” Gunkel said, laughing. “It's kind of a magical thing to be involved in.”

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**FILM**

Yahya Abdul-Mateen II as Anthony McCoy in *Candyman*

**REVIEW**

## Nia DaCosta's *Candyman* hooks into something new

The reboot of the 1992 cult classic pays homage to the original while moving away from trauma porn.

By **SHERI FLANDERS**

The new *Candyman* film draws inspiration from the original from the very first scene of the opening credits. Just as the 1992 version began with a slow crawl along the highway, the 2021 version follows the path of the el tracks, then flips, traveling skyward and westward through downtown in a stunning, upside-down shot of skyscrapers ominously disappearing into a cloudy sky.

Those unfamiliar with the franchise should stop reading now, as spoilers will fly like bees from an open maw. The 1992 film is based on a terrifying urban legend which states that if a person says “Candyman” in the mirror five times, He (a chilling Tony Todd) will appear and murder them with a rusty hook placed on a bloody stump where a hand should be.

I have now typed it twice. Better pace myself.

In the original version, based on a Clive Barker short story, a naive white grad student (Virginia Madsen) delves into the legend and discovers that it is based on the real (in the film) brutal lynching of a Black man who had an affair with a white woman. Of course she promptly says . . . um . . . *you know* . . . in the mirror five times and summons him. A bloodbath ensues, and she goes insane. The film became a cult classic, striking terror in the hearts of Gen-X children everywhere, who were inappropriately allowed to watch it. (Boomer parents: The Worst, or The Best? Discuss.)

The 2021 version, directed by Nia DaCosta and written by Jordan Peele, Win Rosenfeld, and DaCosta, keeps most of what made the original so compelling (a solid plot, exploration of the intersection of race and class in Chicago in neighborhoods like Cabrini-Green, a visual love letter to the city), left behind some of the more awkward details (like an uncomfortable fetishization of white womanhood and gratuitous titties), and hooks into some new subject matter, including gentrification, generational trauma, and art as a provocation.

An exquisitely cast Yahya Abdul-Mateen II (*Watchmen*, *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, *Us*) plays Anthony McCoy, a struggling painter who co-opts the legend of Candyman for a last-ditch effort to reach the heights of the great master painters, and ends up ironically in Picasso territory in Peele's traditional Monkeypaw fashion.

Varied depictions of violence create an interesting juxtaposition, as evidenced by the film's tagline, “Say it,” a grim double entendre on the hashtags used in the wake of the very real victims of police violence. The lightheadedness of the “slasher” moments are blood-drenched and corny, while striking visual art, including graffiti, and modern art installations, play a sophisticated role in translating the unfathomable and unceasing generational pain of lynching from slavery to modern murders by the hands of the police, in a way that does not fully descend into trauma

pornography. The most impactful technique is constructed by the masterful artists at the Chicago-based Manual Cinema. Shadow puppetry is used as a storytelling technique to dramatize flashbacks of brutal violence. The effect is at once whimsical and devastatingly terrifying, with the mechanism that controls the marionettes operating in stark relief, creating a dreadful commentary about the inescapable hand of fate.

Chicagoans may recognize a lovely camera ascent up the iconic crocheted cotton sculpture by Ernesto Neto inside the doors of the Museum of Contemporary Art, aptly titled *Water Falls From My Breast to the Sky*, during a quietly devastating scene where the brilliant Teyonah Parris (*Dear White People*, *WandaVision*, *If Beale Street Could Talk*) as Brianna Cartwell is asked to give up her own dreams in service of others, like so many Black women before her. DaCosta's deft direction overshadows their figures with a silently screaming yellow neon sign (*You're Obviously in the Wrong*

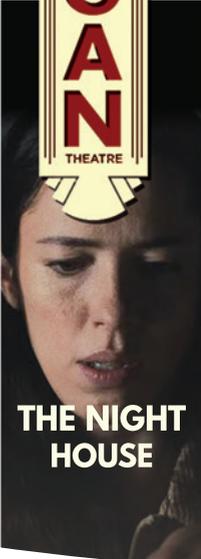
*Place*, Virgil Abloh) in a dark room, capturing the imperceptible implosion of her soul.

The film isn't perfect; it perhaps regurgitates too much of the original, and despite several great jump scares, never quite successfully anchors itself in a true sense of dread and foreboding present in the very best horror movies—though given some Black audience's growing hesitation to want to consume real Black trauma as entertainment, perhaps that choice is intentional.

Despite those minor quibbles, *Candyman* is a cut above the average slasher film, and the perfect summer thrill ride. Ultimately, the film does an excellent job of paying reverent homage to the original, then pivoting to position itself as a repeatable franchise that moves away from the heavy weight of depicting trauma to a revenge fantasy for those systematically denied justice. This is art that dreams the dream deferred of what could be—if change does not come—and that is the potential of the power of psychic collective rage coalescing in the fury of a buzzing swarm of a million bees. **✎**

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Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings

NOW PLAYING

He's All That

*He's All That* is an update to the 90s teen rom-com classic that we didn't really need. This time around the Freddie Prinze Jr. role is filled by TikTok star Addison Rae, playing high-school influencer Padgett who after being meme-ified during a livestream breakup must for some reason make over the school loner (breakout heartthrob Tanner Buchanan) to regain followers and keep a sponsorship deal that will help her pay for college. And speaking of sponsorship, further proving that this movie is simply a cash grab are the wildly obvious product placements throughout—I'd mention specific instances here but those brands don't need any more play. There are some fun moments to keep things interesting, like appearances from Rachael Leigh Cook and Matthew Lillard and a full on dance battle that is so ridiculous it just happens to work. Fans of the original might delight in the nods to *She's All That*, including a less than surprising reveal that the "weirdo" is actually hot and the word for word replication of the now iconic "Am I a fucking bet?" scene. But if that's what tickles your fancy the most, just throw on the original instead. —BRIANNA WELLEN 91 min. Netflix

RR It Takes Three

*It Takes Three* is the latest teen-take on *Cyrano de Bergerac*. When the coolest guy in school realizes the object of his affection sees through his bullshit, he enlists the class nerd to make his social media accounts more about substance than style. While not as strong as Netflix's *The Half of It*, the film is charming enough to hold viewers' attention thanks in large part to Jared Gilman (*Moonrise Kingdom*) and Mikey Madison (*Better*

*Things*). As the unpopular counterparts Cy and Kat to the popular Chris (David Gridley) and Roxy (Aurora Perrineau), they pull you into their scheming with a charm that almost excuses the sinister nature of their secrets. Cy and Chris are, as Kat dutifully points out, catfishing a classmate. Add that *It Takes Three* is clearly borrowing not only Edmond Rostand but also John Hughes, and viewers are gifted a coming-of-age rom-com that's easy to enjoy. —BECCA JAMES 90 min. In wide release on VOD

Ma Belle, My Beauty

Marion Hill's debut feature is a sun-kissed, but half baked, portrait of nontraditional romance. Set against the French countryside, *Ma Belle, My Beauty* explores the recent marriage and international move from New Orleans between aspiring jazz performers Bertie (Idella Johnson) and Fred (Lucien Guignard). Bertie starts to feel isolated by the overwhelming whiteness of France as a Black woman, her husband's lack of motivation to learn French or jump-start their career frustrates her, and she is still recovering from a family tragedy. So Fred decides to bring their old flame Lane (Hannah Pepper) to help heal those wounds. Marion Hill wears a lot of hats in this production—director, writer, editor, producer—which is not uncommon for a first film. However, she feels stretched thin in the end product, and it's the writing that ultimately suffers. The performances are wound tight and the setting is undeniably gorgeous, but *Ma Belle, My Beauty* feels uninterested in its characters' motivations and their main source of conflict—how to maneuver the complicated cogs of the polyamorous machine. —CODY CORRALL 93 min. Gene Siskel Film Center

RR No Man of God

While *No Man of God* isn't the one Ted Bundy movie to watch, it is one worth watching. Ostensibly about FBI analyst Bill Hagmaier, the film spans from his initial meeting with an incarcerated Bundy during the inception of the agency's criminal profiling unit to Bundy's last days alive. Bundy, of course, still steals the show, making the choice to present things from Hagmaier's point of view seem like a cowardly one aimed at skirting any criticism about sympathizing with a serial killer. But as the duo fills up the almost single filming location, a claustrophobic room in a Florida state prison, it's Luke Kirby's Bundy opposite Elijah Wood's Hagmaier that will undoubtedly captivate. With the details of the crimes laid bare, viewers are unlikely to sympathize. Instead, they'll be mesmerized by Kirby's ability to embody Bundy in a way many men before him have tried but failed to do. —BECCA JAMES 100 min. In wide release on VOD

RR Reminiscence

"Some things that happened for the first time," Mae (Rebecca Ferguson) sings, "seem to be happening again." She is lying in a bath with electrodes attached to her head, mentally replaying her live set from earlier in the day, while the technician guiding the machine she's hooked up to, Nick Bannister (Hugh Jackman), loses objectivity by the second, falling in love with the hologram-doubled memories of a stranger. As Nick's obsession takes him further away from reality toward the unattainable, first-feature director Lisa Joy grounds her telling in a landscape that matches it: the remains of a half-sunken Miami following some future climate disaster. As land slips away under the beating waves, the characters find less to anchor themselves to reality with, succumbing instead to the pull of memories, even where that means choosing death.

Joy finds the right balance of action and abstraction throughout the film. Nick's time in the Navy comes up a lot—he keeps almost getting shot by tough guys until they find out that he's a fellow ex-serviceman and cut him slack. But his business, the memory bath, started life as enhanced interrogation technology before filtering down to the civilian market, rechristened as a luxury. Who owns the world?

Jackman's Nick has some Sam Spade in him, but he's a Humphrey Bogart who doesn't get to excuse himself from emotional involvement anymore by saying it's all about a dollar at the end of the day. His city isn't just corrupt, it's underwater. Nick's a new type of noir detective, who when he finds that he's in too deep doesn't abscond back to the petty grind but ugly-cries into the camera and obliterates himself for what he wants. He might as well; the world's ended already. "Go ahead, shoot me," he says, right before a CGI shot of what climate apocalypse will likely really do to the Venetian

Causeway in ten or 12 years. —MAX MALLER PG-13, 115 min. Streaming on HBO Max, in theaters at AMC Theatres, Regal Theatres, ShowPlace Icon Theatre

RR Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings

*Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* is quite possibly Marvel's best film yet, a perfect storm of charismatic actors; breathtakingly well-shot kung fu; fun, often hilarious, action scenes; and an engaging story. Simu Liu (*Kim's Convenience*) plays the lead role of Shang-Chi, a prodigal son estranged from his 1,000-year-old father Wenwu, played by the legendary Hong Kong actor Tony Chiu-Wai Leung (*In the Mood for Love*). Instead of running the family terrorist organization and carrying out assassinations, he runs away as a teen to the U.S., abandoning his sister Xialing (Meng'er Zhang), and gets a job parking cars with his BFF Katy (Awkwafina). But after a decade, his father sends some goons to come looking for him, which leads to the first of many amazing fight scenes, this one aboard a bus. *Shang-Chi* delves into more serious and familiar Marvel themes of family legacy, grief, and finding one's purpose. One can understand the pain Wenwu feels over the loss he has experienced, and while he is the "bad guy" there are enough shades of grey to make him truly sympathetic. Awkwafina provides some comic relief as Shang-Chi's bestie, and thankfully the writers do not force her into being a love interest. Zhang's character of Xialing is a bit thin, but we will likely get more of her in future films. She holds a grudge against Shang-Chi for abandoning her so she . . . starts a fight club?! There are some clunky Marvel cameos, but overall *Shang-Chi* is a ridiculously entertaining ride. —JOSH FLANDERS PG-13, 132 min. In wide release in theaters

RR We Need to Do Something

*We Need To Do Something* is a single-location horror movie that skillfully packs a cramped space full of suspense and scares. After a family of four seeks shelter from a storm in their home's bathroom, they become trapped. The setup at first plays on the relatable fear of being surrounded by familial tension. In this case, parents Diane (Vinessa Shaw) and Robert (Pat Healy) are clearly miserable, unable to interact without an aggressive bent. Teenage daughter Melissa (Sierra McCormick) dodges this drama by escaping into her own on her phone. Bobby (John James Cronin) rounds out the room as the innocent younger brother. It's not long, however, before the family transitions from uncomfortable to unhinged, as supernatural horrors threaten to tear them apart and push them to their limits. While the story is ultimately a bit flimsy, the film sees success in McCormick's captivating performance and the film's teasing nature. —BECCA JAMES 97 min. In wide release in theaters and on VOD—R

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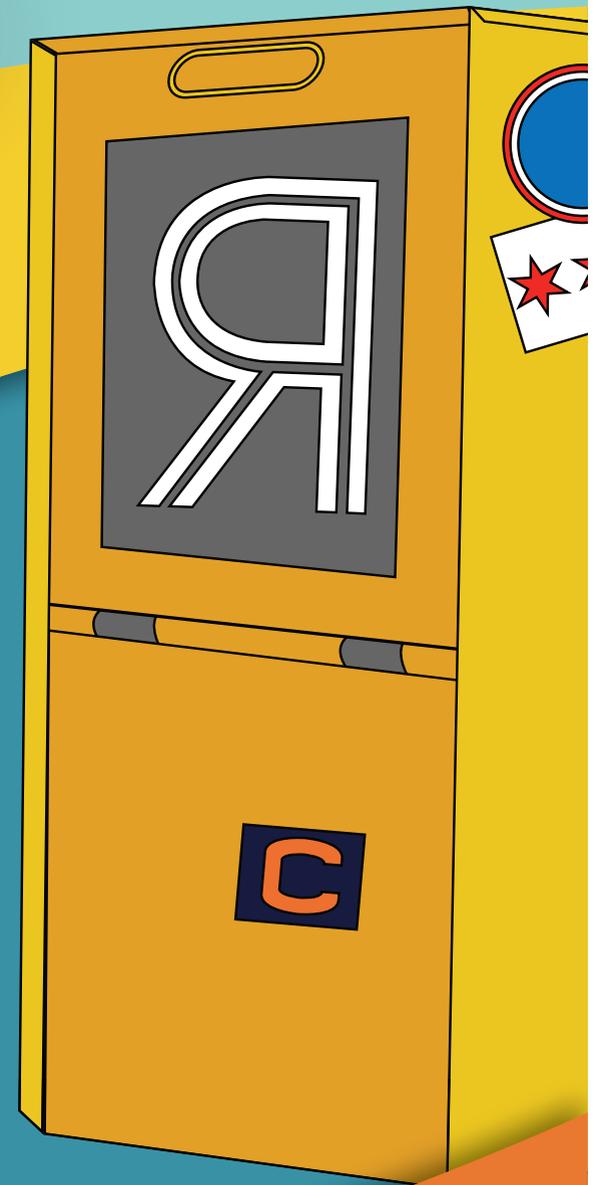
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## A guide to Pitchfork for the resonant body

When you're emotionally in tune with your surroundings, a music festival can be a revelatory experience.

By ANNIE HOWARD



JASON FREDERICK

Since 2015, my first year living full-time in Chicago, the Pitchfork Music Festival has been a watershed moment in my summer. In its regular July slot, the fest has created a fulcrum point in the season—it's a place to unexpectedly bump into forgotten friends and rest in the leafy tranquility of the Blue Stage, where the clock slows for an unhurried, resplendent weekend stretching beyond everyday time. Each year, without fail, it's given me something to cherish and linger over as summer died down and fall slipped into its place.

This year's fest is slated for mid-September, nearly 26 months after Pitchfork 2019, so I'm already prepared for it to hit different. New considerations make it stranger than any previous iteration—it arrives under a cloud of uncertainty around the rising Delta variant, even as it's freighted with extra weight because we've all lost a year of the regular social routines that make collective life meaningful. The revelatory experience I had at Pitchfork two years ago, combined with the intervening year-plus of dislocation, should make this festival powerfully emotional in ways I'm thrilled and overawed just trying to imagine.

Pitchfork 2019 was my first after I started transitioning in November 2018. While in the years before I'd loved the fest (and live music generally), concerts were rarely as captivating as I'd longed for them to be. Early in the pandemic, I wrote an essay about the dissatisfaction I used to feel, having realized why I'd grown so frustrated with people using phones at concerts: "Still, despite my protestations, I couldn't shake the sense of alienation I felt at shows; in retrospect, it's clear that cell phones were merely my scapegoat, occasionally responsible for an obstructed view, but hardly the root cause of my misery."

It wasn't as if I didn't enjoy the once-in-a-lifetime performance by A Tribe Called Quest in 2017 or all the sets by smaller acts that moved me deeply but never quite enough, like Blood Orange in 2016 and 2018. In my head, I could narrate my happiness to myself, or at least explain to myself why I appreciated what I was experiencing. But in reality, I couldn't have been further from what I truly wanted out of live music. Rarely did my body allow me the rapture I desired; I was held at a distance by my own hormonal makeup, only occasionally breaking through (with a little tab of chemical assistance) for transcendent sets such as

Brian Wilson and Sufjan Stevens in 2016.

For many years I didn't understand this separation, in part because I never perceived my dysphoria—the feeling of being in a body with the wrong hormonal makeup—through a gendered lens. It was obvious enough that my experience of the world was missing something, though then I didn't know that transition could enrich and texture my emotional landscape. Concerts were one of the most obvious places where I felt that absence.

My life has revolved around music's powerful meaning-making abilities since my early teen years. Because of that, the chasm I witnessed between my studied, cerebral appreciation of live music and the seemingly effortless joy that so many others felt grew more painful with each passing year until I transitioned. Finally, at Pitchfork in 2019, I felt the catharsis of being flooded, repeatedly and unexpectedly, with overwhelming emotion, triggered not just by the acts onstage but also by all the little in-between moments made possible by a festival.

I remember Cate Le Bon at that fest, in a full-length dress on a 100-degree day, cooing “Love you / I love you / But you're not here” and conjuring memories of friends who'd moved away or stopped being friends entirely. Belle & Sebastian's “Fox in the Snow” reminded me of how each fest stands on its own yet fits into the cycle of summers (“It only happens once a year / It only happens once a lifetime, make the most of it”). Charli XCX's “Boys” made me thankful for my years of attending the fest in “boy mode,” still not knowing who I'd become. As I vibed to Khruangbin on a balmy Sunday afternoon, I knew I'd soon be saying goodbye to friends that I wouldn't see again until the next year's Pitchfork (or so I thought). It all added up to something much greater than any fest I'd ever been to before.

Now another Pitchfork is upon us. Many unknowns surround this event, but I hope that my status—mid- to late 20s, fully vaccinated, still working from home—will mean I'm not putting myself or anyone else in harm's way. Doubts still whisper in my ears: that we're all in denial about the severity of the pandemic, that this is all a major mistake waiting to happen. But my body is primed to return to Union Park, aware that I'll be stretched and reconfigured in ways I cannot foresee, each set and chance encounter with friends and strangers magical enough to make up for lost time. This year's lineup has plenty of acts primed to touch me with grace and joy—emotions that

have been in short supply for far too long.

First on my list are what I'll call my heart-break headliners, all of them nearly guaranteed to reduce me to fat, sloppy tears, which I hope will be endearing to anyone who loves me and only mildly uncomfortable to nearby strangers. (Warning to the long-distant friends I'll be seeing for the first time in two years: I'm fully committed to my messiness for these acts.)

On Friday afternoon at 2:30, local darlings **DEHD** will bring their unassuming, plain-spoken energy to the Green Stage. Their latest release, 2020's *Flower of Devotion*, packs a punch, but it's their previous record, 2019's *Water*, that found me in the opening weeks of the pandemic, making me mournful for the friends who unexpectedly had to depart Chicago with no clear way to return. The track “Lucky,” where Jason Balla gives thanks for the “people in my life with the power to break my heart,” helped me sort through the ways the pandemic had remade my relationships and face the grief of not knowing when I'd see people again. It's just one example of the band's knack for unexpected moments of tenderness.

At 3:20 PM on the Red Stage, I'll fall under the spell of **HOP ALONG**'s winning sincerity—this Philadelphia band writes songs full of devastating revelations, and Frances Quinlan sings them with all of their beating heart. The song “How Simple,” off 2018's *Bark Your Head Off, Dog*, encapsulates this perfectly: first, a painful shot (“How simple my heart can be frightens me”), chased with a sing-along chorus (“Don't worry, we'll both find out, just not together”) whose expressive heft comes from its brilliant lyrics and inviting hook.

Friday's headliner, **PHOEBE BRIDGERS** (Green Stage, 8:30 PM), has invented alternate worlds I didn't believe existed. The first time I heard “Garden Song,” from her breakout second album, *Punisher*, I recalled my own girlhood, fleetingly real between my headphones even though it'd tragically never happened. I've chased that feeling to no avail every time I've relistened to the song, but I expect that the presence of so many friends, strangers, and Bridgers herself will finally rekindle it.

Saturday brings a dilemma, as two of the fest's greatest singer-songwriters, **FAYE WEBSTER** (4 PM, Blue Stage) and **WAXAHATCHEE**'s Katie Crutchfield (4:15 PM, Green Stage), play overlapping sets. The songs from Waxahatchee's excellent 2020 record, *Saint Cloud*,

will drift through the humid air with the grace of a divine cirrus, carrying devastating moments like these lines from “The Eye,” a song that demands repeated, patient listening for its full impact to settle in: “We leave love behind / Without a tear or a long goodbye.” Webster's new record, *I'm Know I'm Funny Haha*, uses disarming humor to draw in listeners and then drops lines on them like “You make me want to cry, in a good way” (from “In a Good Way”). Her gentle, reedy voice, which coincidentally matches a part of my own range where I'm still growing comfortable singing, will be wonderful company in the dying late-afternoon sunlight.

Saturday's penultimate act, **ANGEL OLSEN** (7:25 PM, Red Stage), is the most certain to reduce me to a puddle, consumed by emotions that have filled the two years since she released *All Mirrors*. So many of its tracks helped me process the highs and lows of the pandemic: the ruminations in “Spring” (“I'm beginning to wonder if anything's real / Guess we're just at the mercy of the way that we feel”) are never not gutting, only becoming more painful to hear as time goes on. “Chance,” the album's showstopping closer, has cut me down time and again, inducing clarity and catharsis through heaving sobs. I could quote the entire song, but I'll pluck out one perfect couplet as testament to Olsen's poetic brilliance: “I just want to see some beauty, try and understand / If we got to know each other, how rare is that?” Twenty-one words shouldn't be able to convey so much.

Sunday's lineup is less fraught for me, though I'll already be a wreck knowing I'll have to say goodbye to so many friends returning to lives elsewhere. I'm most excited for **CAROLINE POLACHEK** (4:15 PM, Green Stage), whose 2019 record, *Pang*, blends forward-facing pop production with shimmering storytelling. I'm hoping to hear her cover of Virginia Astley's “Some Small Hope,” whose painful truths (“All those dreams lie unfulfilled / All those lives that pass us by”) have narrated many of my quietest, unsteady nights, as I've contemplated the stories left unwritten in the course of my recent life.

My second tier of Pitchfork acts is less about emotional significance and more about the kinds of pure physical release I've also longed for. Local three-piece **HORSEGIRL** (1 PM Saturday, Green Stage) haven't recorded much, but their early tracks brim with joyous overabundance—they seem poised to have a moment at the fest. Ghanaian American artist **AMAARAE**

### PITCHFORK MUSIC FESTIVAL DAY ONE

Featuring Phoebe Bridgers, Yaeji, Big Thief, Kelly Lee Owens, Animal Collective, Ela Minus, Fiery Furnaces, Black Midi, the Soft Pink Truth, Hop Along, DJ Nate, DEHD, Dogleg, and Armand Hammer. *Fri 9/10, 1 PM, Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph, \$90 (children ten and under free with paying adult), all ages*

### PITCHFORK MUSIC FESTIVAL DAY TWO

Featuring St. Vincent, Jay Electronica, Angel Olsen, Jamila Woods, Kim Gordon, Georgia Anne Muldrow, Ty Segall & Freedom Band, Waxahatchee, Faye Webster, Amaarae, Maxo Kream, Divino Niño, Barteeks Strange, and Horsegirl. *Sat 9/11, 1 PM, Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph, \$90 (children ten and under free with paying adult), all ages*

### PITCHFORK MUSIC FESTIVAL DAY THREE

Featuring Erykah Badu, Cat Power, Flying Lotus, Andy Shauf, Danny Brown, Yves Tumor, Thundercat, Caroline Polachek, the Weather Station, Mariah the Scientist, Oso Oso, KeiyaA, Special Interest, and Cassandra Jenkins. *Sun 9/12, 1 PM, Union Park, 1501 W. Randolph, \$90 (children ten and under free with paying adult), all ages*

# MUSIC

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(3:20 PM Saturday, Red Stage) distills her sprightly, lilting voice and arrangements into perfection on “Fancy,” the first track on this spring’s *The Angel You Don’t Know*, and her corner of the park should be a prime spot for affectionate, playful sway dancing. I expect to see a gleefully sweaty swarm of bodies in the crowds for several electronic acts (Ela Minus, the Soft Pink Truth, DJ Nate), but I’m most excited for Welsh producer **KELLY LEE OWENS** (6:30 PM Friday, Blue Stage), who soundtracked some unexpected, sun-dappled midday grooving with friends in 2018. And the clarion voice of **JAMILA WOODS** (6:30 PM Saturday, Blue Stage) always resonates with outsize force in the city she calls home.

I’ve already expended a lot of energy imagining what this festival will be like, but I know that’ll be no match for the unanticipated moments that always pepper my memory afterward. Just before the pandemic, I had a bit of a Nietzsche parable tattooed on my left arm: “Show me where I stand, not where I am going.” It’s a constant reminder to not worry

too much about predicting what may come next, and a mantra that’s gotten me through my transition—an experience as fundamentally destabilizing as any other. Why bother worrying about what may come out of these three days? My tender heart and this body I now comfortably inhabit are enough to make any concert linger well beyond its closing notes.

**I**t will certainly be hard to shake some questions about Pitchfork: Should we even be here? Are we doing enough to be safe? I’ve tried to not feel selfish about the whole thing, despite the spectacle of Lollapalooza and my frustration with officials who’ve rushed a return to “normal” despite the rising impact of the Delta variant on children and the slowing rate of vaccination across the country. This pandemic is far from over, but I remain guardedly hopeful that Pitchfork’s older-than-Lollapalooza crowd will be more careful.

This event will also be carrying a weight that no previous Pitchfork festival has shouldered. The rainout two years ago could’ve been seen as a gift, blessedly cutting Satur-

day’s 100-degree heat, but any weather disruption now will be a crushing blow—we’ll all lose some of our precious time on the festival grounds, socializing and enjoying the community of live music in a way we’ve been denied for so long. I still have no idea if mass social gatherings in any form will ever feel the same. But I’m ready to sprint from stage to stage between sets, to know that my body still has that muscle memory, running deeper than the anxiety that’s pressed down on me every time I’ve been surrounded by people too tightly over the past year.

I still grieve knowing that last year’s fest would’ve included shapeshifting trans icon SOPHIE, an unparalleled presence in the musical fabric of so many younger queers. SOPHIE’s sudden death earlier this year amplified the sadness of losing so much in 2020. Because Pitchfork’s relatively consistent layout helps me layer many successive years in my memory, I can imagine last summer’s festival carrying on as if the pandemic never happened, a different version of me carrying on a life now unimaginable. In the 2020 that

really happened, of course, protests for racial justice filled Union Park last year, giving new meaning to coming together again after we were pushed into isolation in the first unsteady months of the pandemic. For many of us, those protests helped manifest new ways of feeling connected to others.

At the end of this festival, when I say goodbye to friends flying back elsewhere, I’ll hold them closer than I might have before. I’ll return the gaze of a friendly stranger with awe and attention, grateful at the thought of meeting someone new. I’ll trust that whatever sets I do or don’t catch, I’ll have found myself exactly where I was meant to be.

At peace, the body has a remarkable knack for serving as a tuning fork, resonating with its surroundings. For many years of my life, and for many Pitchforks past, this wasn’t the case. But it’s true today, and I cherish that fact, happy in whatever may come my way. No matter what transpires in those three eternal days, making it this far is reward enough. **✎**

 @t\_annie\_howard



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10•1 CIMA FUNK



~~10•6~~ **SOLD OUT** 10•7 BEACH FOSSILS & WILD NOTHING  
hannah jadagu



10•13 NOGA EREZ  
mckinley dixon



10•30 CHARLEY CROCKETT



11•19 MAVIS STAPLES  
beyond hunger benefit



12•2 STEVE GUNN & JEFF PARKER

9•8 KATHLEEN EDWARDS  
mick flannery

9•20 LIGHTNING BOLT  
problems

10•29 LOW CUT CONNIE

9•9 A-TRAK  
ric wilson  
boi jeansius

10•8 LALA LALA  
'i want the door to open'  
release show

10•31 TURNOVER  
widowspeak  
temple of angels

9•10 PITCHFORK AFTERSHOW FEAT.  
KIM GORDON  
keiyaa

10•24 THE WILD FEATHERS  
alvarado tour

11•4 POKEY LAFARGE  
esther rose

~~9•15~~ **SOLD OUT** 9•16 JAPANESE BREAKFAST  
luna li

10•26 SHANNON & THE CLAMS  
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SQUIRREL FLOWER (SOLO) • DIVINO NIÑO (DJ SET)

WED 9/8

9PM FREE

**VARIOUS DISTRACTIONS**  
WITH DJs BEAU WANZER & BLAKE CLARK

FRI 9/3

5PM-FREE  
HARD COUNTRY HONKY TONK WITH  
**THE HOYLE BROTHERS**  
**PLACK BLAGUE**  
OZZUARIO • HIM HUN (DJ SET)

TUE 8/31

**TEMPERS**  
NONE OF YOUR CONCERN • DJ CLUB DRIPPY

SAT 9/4

EMPTY BOTTLE & SCORCHED TUNDRA PRESENT  
**IN THE COMPANY OF SERPENTS**  
HIVE • ROMAN RING

FRI 9/10

PITCHFORK FESTIVAL AFTERSHOW  
**DIVINO NIÑO**  
MOTHER NATURE

SUN 9/5

**FOTOCRIME** (RECORD RELEASE)  
THE AUSTERITY PROGRAM • FOOL'S GHOST

SAT 9/11

PITCHFORK FESTIVAL AFTERSHOW  
**DEHD**  
81355

MON 9/6

FREE  
**ELI WINTER**  
JORDAN REYES • REBECCA VALERIANO-FLORES

SUN 9/12

PITCHFORK FESTIVAL AFTERSHOW  
**YVES TUMOR**

9/13: PITCHFORK AFTERSHOW WITH BARTEES STRANGE (FREE), 9/14 - 9/15: THURSTON MOORE, 9/16: TORRES, 9/18: ALGIERS, 9/19: COMBO CHIMBITA, 9/20: SPUN OUT (FREE), 9/21: HOLY WAVE, 9/23 @ GARFIELD PARK CONSERVATORY: SACRED BONES AND EMPTY BOTTLE PRESENT PLANTASIA, 9/25: MEAT WAVE, 9/27: STEF CHURA (FREE), 9/29: THE BELLWETHER SYNDICATE, 10/1: GREET DEATH, 10/2: FAT TONY + CADENCE WEAPON, 10/3: NATION OF LANGUAGE, 10/7: WILD PINK, 10/9: DEEPER, 10/10: FRANKIE & THE WITCH FINGERS  
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**TAIL DRAGGER**  
w/ JAMIAH ROGERS



SEP 7  
**LADIES NIGHT OUT**  
DRAG SHOW



SEP 10  
**LOVESEXY**  
Prince Dance Party



OCT 8  
**JUSTINE SKYE**



OCT 15/16  
**DONALD BYRD TRIBUTE**  
w/ KEVIN TONEY (Blackbyrds)



DEC 3  
**JAY ELECTRONICA**

SEP 12  
**SOCA w/ DJ PUFFY**

OCT 2  
**T. MURPH**

SEP 19  
**PASSPORT VIBES FESTIVAL**

OCT 22  
**AFRO KARAOKE**

SEP 30  
**NIVEA**

OCT 23  
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SEPT 26 AT 7PM



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## PICK OF THE WEEK

## Bnny make David Lynch-ian pop music for mourning



Jess Viscius of Bnny © ALEXA VISCIOUS

**BNNY, SQUIRREL FLOWER (SOLO), DIVINO NIÑO (DJ SET)**

Thu 9/2, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+

**FROM ITS FIRST REVERB-LADEN** guitar notes, Bnny's new *Everything* (Fire Talk) makes me wonder whether the Chicago band have logged some hours watching *Twin Peaks*. The hushed, ethereal whisper of vocalist and songwriter Jess Viscius channels dream-pop singer Julee Cruise (who sings on the show's soundtrack), while guitarists Adam Schubert and Timothy Makowski lean into the spooky, echoing, and despairing rockabilly of crooners such as Roy Orbison and Chris Isaak beloved by director David Lynch. The album grapples with the 2017 death of Viscius's partner, indie-rock musician Trey Gruber, at age 26, and songs such as "August" are swept with the stark, bleary half-light of grief. "Some people never change / But I'll change one day," she sings—a comfortless promise to make to a loved one lost, or to their memory. "Blind" locks into a slightly less ethereal though no less languid groove; bassist Alexa Viscius (Jess's twin sister) and drummer Matt Pelkey provide a shuffling lope while Jess muses, "You remind me that love doesn't always find a way." By comparison, "Time Walk" almost rocks; the drums come further up in the mix and the guitars sting with rockabilly energy, leading into a distorted, Chuck Berry-style solo. At 94 seconds, the track is over fast, and then the album sinks back into its Angelo Badalamenti fugue. Contrary to its title, *Everything* doesn't travel far from its obsessions. Though Bnny only really explore one haunted landscape, they know it—and its ghosts—well. —**NOAH BERLATSKY**



Tobacco City © COURTESY OF TOBACCO CITY

## CONCERT PREVIEWS

THURSDAY<sup>2</sup>

**BNNY** See Pick of the Week at left. *Squirrel Flower* (solo) and *Divino Niño* (DJ set) open. 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+

SATURDAY<sup>4</sup>

**TOBACCO CITY** *Country Westerns and Wet Wallet* (DJ set) open. This show has been moved from the Hideout. 9 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$15, \$12 in advance. 21+

Chicago country five-piece Tobacco City formed to cover Neil Young songs for a Halloween show, but thankfully they've since developed their own sound. Like Young, they have a way with plaintive melodies, but their music is rooted in bluesy honky-tonk and earthy, wistful country, with supple, pop-driven harmony vocals. Tobacco City's surefire rhythm section—drummer Josh Condon and bassist Eliza Weber, both of whom also play in Glyders—guides the band steadily through the giddy, up-tempo "Aa Blues" and the lonesome, melancholy "Half in the Bag" and "Tobacco City Waltz." Pedal-steel player Nick Usalis illuminates each song's sentimental panache, while guitarists and singers Lexi Goddard and Chris Coleslaw frequently entangle their voices or intensify the tenor of a song with a few lilting inflections. Goddard handles the bulk of the vocals on the outstanding "Never on My Mind," and her solitary sighs on the verses are as devastating as the song's potent climax. —**LEOR GALIL**



Ryan Patterson of Fotocrime © KATIE LOVECRAFT



Mind Maintenance: Joshua Abrams and Chad Taylor © LISA ALVARADO

## SUNDAY 5

**FOTOCRIME, THE AUSTERITY PROGRAM**  
*Fotocrime headlines; the Austerity Program and Fool's Ghost open. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+*

On the Jesus Lizard's 1989 debut EP, *Pure*, the noise-rock institution were still figuring things out. Working as a trio, the band hadn't yet discovered their distinctive mutant swing, instead suspending the metallic scrape and twang of their guitars in the flat, mechanical rhythms of a primitive drum machine. But drummer Mac McNeilly joined the crew before their 1990 LP, *Head*, and he changed everything. If you've ever wondered what the Jesus Lizard would sound like if they'd continued to evolve down that first path, look no further than long-running New York outfit **the Austerity Program**. The drum-machine-driven duo, who favor the high-tension sound of aluminum-necked guitars, have put out music at their own whenever-it's-finished pace since forming in 1997—their releases include CD-Rs with razor blades and firecrackers tucked into homemade sleeves, as well as LPs on Hydra Head with packaging that poses much less risk of personal injury. On their latest record, 2019's self-released *Bible Songs 1*, guitarist and vocalist Justin Foley and bassist Thad Calabrese offer up more of the metal-leaning Touch and Go worship they've spent the past two decades dialing in; the sound is minimal, repetitive, deadpan, and mean, with clanging guitars for days.

At this show, the Austerity Program open up for **Fotocrime**, the darkwave project of Ryan Patterson, who's celebrating the release of his third album, *Heart of Crime* (Profound Lore). Patterson is a Louisville metal and posthardcore staple, probably

best known for singing and playing guitar in Coliseum, but on Fotocrime's early recordings he messed around with drum machines and chorus-drenched bass. On the March 2020 record *South of Heaven*, Hayden Menzies of Metz filled in on drums, which turned the project into a creepy, hard-hitting post-punk machine. Patterson has returned to the electronic fold this time around, but *Heart of Crime* is more elevated and refined. The tracks are darker and catchier than on previous Fotocrime records, while Patterson's complex arrangements include sprawling Kraftwerkian Krautrock explorations and Echo & the Bunnymen-flavored new-wave pop pleasures. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

## THURSDAY 9

**MIND MAINTENANCE** Edward Wilkerson Jr. opens with a solo set. This show will also be livestreamed via Constellation's YouTube channel, where a donation is requested. 8:30 PM, Constellation, 3111 N. Western, \$15. 18+

Mind Maintenance is Joshua Abrams and Chad Taylor, two musicians whose concord transcends time, distance, genre, and instrumentation. They've been playing together since the 1990s, when they both lived in Chicago, and their collaborative relationship has endured since Taylor headed east 20 years ago. They've jointly backed the likes of singer Sam Prekop and cosmic cornetist Rob Mazurek; they've played with saxophonist Matana Roberts in cooperative jazz group Sticks & Stones; and Taylor occasionally participates in Abrams's Natural Information Society. Though Taylor and Abrams are both versatile multi-instrumentalists, they tend to get hired for their respective skills playing drums and bass;

together, they're a rhythm section capable of insinuating an organic ebb and flow into any groove. But on *Mind Maintenance*, their recent self-titled LP on Drag City, Abrams plays only the guembri, a Moroccan bass lute that he also uses in Natural Information Society, and Taylor sticks to mbira, a Zimbabwean thumb piano. Though the former is low and resonant while the latter is bright and sharp, with quick-decaying tones, both instruments can articulate melodies and rhythms simultaneously. The duo use this commonality to spin catchy figures into mesmerizing patterns. So many records released this year seem to be processing the pandemic's ongoing stress and strain, and a close listen to *Mind Maintenance* will dispel those states, at least temporarily. This headlining set is Mind Maintenance's Chicago debut. —**BILL MEYER**

## FRIDAY 10

**RP BOO** DJ Taye, Jana Rush, and DJ Manny open. 10 PM, Smart Bar, 3730 N. Clark, \$20, \$15 in advance. 21+

Footwork music's whimsical, tempestuous take on house wouldn't exist without Chicago producer Kavain Space, better known as RP Boo. In the mid-90s, he drew from his experience DJing for House-O-Matics dancers to devise skittish, hyperactive tracks that proved too puzzling for Dance Mania, a staple label of the scene that provided a home for the raunchy ghetto-house sound; instead Space and a coterie of wildly inventive local producers wound up self-releasing their tracks on colored cassettes. Because Space helped create the blueprint for footwork's evolving underground dance community, when British labels helped the music

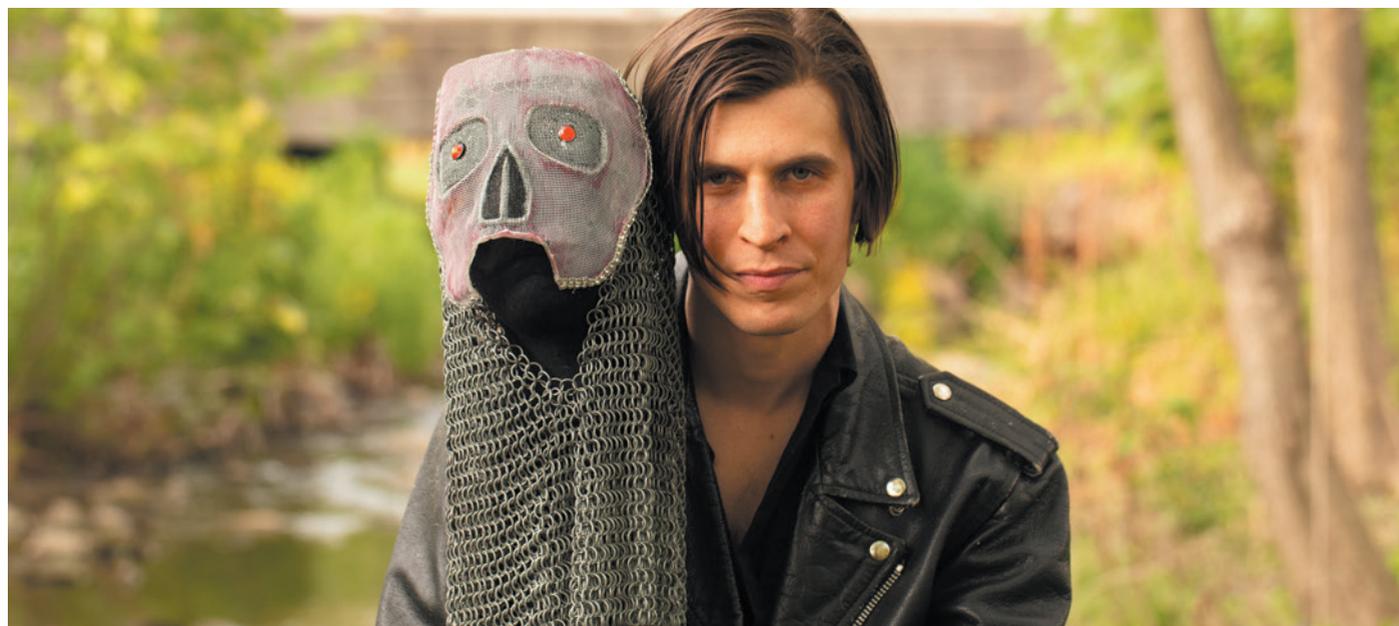
cross over with international audiences about a decade ago, the rising tide lifted Space's boat too—the new *Established!* is his fourth album for crucial UK dance label Planet Mu. Space's love for footwork's culture and form spills out of these tracks, which convey his reverence for the sound's history while remaining pliable to his most experimental whims. On the sweltering "How 2 Get It Done!" Space splays out every element like an engineer's exploded view of an engine, and in clarifying the smallest details he also magnifies his soulful impulses. *Established!* is the third tantalizingly progressive footwork album to come out of Chicago this summer, after DJ Manny's *Signals in My Head* in July and Jana Rush's *Painful Enlightenment* last month; both those producers will be on hand as RP Boo headlines Smart Bar, with the great DJ Taye in tow. —**LEOR GALIL**

## SATURDAY 11

**STARLESS** *Anatomy of Habit, Lavisher, and Sanford Parker* open. 8 PM, Reggies Music Joint, 2105 S. State, \$12, \$10 in advance. 21+

Chicago four-piece Starless launched in 2014 with a lineup including members of local bands Beak, the Timeout Drawer, and Our Earth Is a Tomb. This month the four-piece (not to be confused with the Japanese prog band or the Scottish art-pop band of the same name) are releasing their second full-length, *Hope Is Leaving You*. Their follow-up to 2016's *Deadly Light* likewise draws from postrock, shoegaze, metal, and indie rock and shows an adept dynamic range that highlights Starless's combined experience.

If the postrock movement had an Achilles' heel,



Billy Brett of Buck Gooter with a mask worn by his late bandmate, Terry Turtle © PAUL SOMERS

**continued from 35**

it was its air of emotional distance and calculated abstraction—you might have found it hard to connect to the music, especially if you preferred bands with broken hearts on their ragged sleeves. Starless don't have this problem; the raw emotion in the harmony vocals of guitarists Jessie Ambriz and Jon Slusher fits perfectly into the band's elaborate arrangements, establishing a tone of unease, regret, and yearning. The band excel at one of postrock's best tricks, namely the clean, evocative intro that only barely prepares you for the whirlwind you'll soon reap; the sparse, quiet sadness of the opening to "All the Winter" builds into a crunchy, epic vortex of squalling guitar. But "Helvetii" opens with effects-laden space-rock howls, breaking this pattern to great dramatic effect. Bassist Alan Strathmann and drummer Quinn Curren anchor the group's trippiness with solid, grounded, slightly ritualistic rhythms, sometimes playing in counterpoint and sometimes in satisfying unison.

Lyrical and musically, Starless dance all over the map. "Demons" is a gothic cautionary tale with Paradise Lost grandeur and doom-metal chug and throb. The dystopian "Citizen" muses about manipulation and control, using a deceptively bright sound that contrasts with its bone-chilling lyrics: "Called you to secret room, good people / I only want what is best for you people." Ambriz and Slusher sing. "Guide these hands pressing flesh vapor trails / Got you to believe in fairy tales." Alison Chesley of Helen Money lends her evocative, cinematic cello soundscapes to two post-apocalyptic songs, "Forest" and "Hunting With Fire." Recorded at Electrical Audio and Palisades by Sanford Parker and mastered by Colin Jordan at Boiler Room, *Hope Is Leaving You* has the spaciousness and range to support a multitude of interpretations and variations, and hearing the band play these songs live should be a spectacular experience. —MONICA KENDRICK

**ALBUM REVIEWS**

**BUCK GOOTER, HEAD IN A BIRD CAGE**

Ramp Local  
[buckgooter.bandcamp.com/album/head-in-a-bird-cage](http://buckgooter.bandcamp.com/album/head-in-a-bird-cage)

The style and sound of experimental music don't hew to geographic regions. And Buck Gooter, a noisy duo from Harrisonburg, Virginia, perhaps best exemplify the concept. Convened in the early aughts, after Terry Turtle and Billy Brett met working at local restaurant the Little Grill Collective (known for hosting an early-career Old Crow Medicine Show at its open-mike nights), the band evolved into a succinct, prolific, and unpredictable dispenser of despondent industrial-blues sounds. The duo had been working on yet another record when Turtle succumbed to cancer in late 2019. With the spirit of his collaborator in mind, Brett soldiered on to complete *Head in a Bird Cage*. Turtle had recorded some vocals from the hospital to help cope with the misery of his treatment, and Brett included them on tracks such as dirgey opener "Nailed to a Cross"—its spectral chorus features Turtle moaning ghostly contributions from his hospital bed. Compared to Buck Gooter's usual sound, *Head* is more claustrophobic and sinister and less driven by rock 'n' roll antecedents—it spotlights Brett's synthetic drum programming and keyboard work, as well as his unheinged antics on the microphone. While some of the lyrical conceits here angle at something transcendent and miss ("Craters of the Moon," "Three Wordless Books," "Dying to Believe"), Buck Gooter are more than capable of rendering the desperation and claustrophobia of living in a tiny rural enclave. Some of the work here also dives into the puerile: "Cobwebs" compares the travesties of humanity with a dirty room, ignored and unempt and draped with cobwebs that still aren't enough to fill the narrator's wounds. But conviction and self-

determination help make *Head*—or really any Buck Gooter recording—an interesting artifact from an experimental rock-music culture that's spread widely enough to pull in sounds from every holler in the world. Each of the short, sharp, and baleful blasts here conveys not just the despair of lost friendship and stifled creativity but also a disdain for the state of the world at large. —DAVE CANTOR

**CENTRAL HEAT EXCHANGE, CENTRAL HEAT EXCHANGE**

Sunroom/Citrus City/Birthday Cake  
[centralheatexchange.bandcamp.com/album/central-heat-exchange](http://centralheatexchange.bandcamp.com/album/central-heat-exchange)

Throughout the pandemic I've noticed an uptick in long-distance musical collaborations, and the new self-titled debut from dyed-in-the-wool indie rockers *Central Heat Exchange* (Sunroom/Citrus City/Birthday Cake) is among the best. Chicago provides an anchor for the four-piece group, since more of the members live here than anywhere else: brothers Jake and Paul Stolz of local indie staples Varsity, Pool Holograph, and Discus contribute their preternaturally effervescent melodicism. Jake Stolz kicked off the project in spring 2020 by sending a fragment of a song to Austin musician Santiago Dietche, who records kindhearted, folksy music under the name Daphne Tunes; Paul Stolz and Adam Soloway of Winnipeg band Living Hour rounded out the track, and their collaboration snowballed into an album.

*Central Heat Exchange* flits between lush eloquence and low-key nonchalance, humming with a collectivist energy that encompasses more than the band's core lineup—partly because the four initial partners roped in more than a dozen friends to complete it. That indie-rock army realizes *Central Heat Exchange*'s wide-screen, grandly emotional vision in a style that should remind you of Broken Social Scene, due in no small part to shared DNA—BSS contributors Julie Penner (violin) and Jason Tait (key-



## MUSIC



Central Heat Exchange © COURTESY THE ARTIST

boards and vibraphone) brighten the edges of the forlorn “Drumless.” Central Heat Exchange also draw from a well of Chicago talent to pull off their dreamy hearthside sound: Lala Lala’s Abby Black drums on knockout singles “Tulips at My Bedside” and “Directly Down,” the latter of which features featherweight lead vocals from Varsity’s Stephanie Smith. I’ve struggled to get my head around the newest flavors of pandemic anxiety, seclusion, and sadness as the Delta variant triggers a fourth U.S. COVID-19 surge, but *Central Heat Exchange* has provided a salve. The music’s comforting uplift reminds me of the ways I can renew bonds with friends and family, and even forge new communities, as long as I’m willing to work as hard as these four musicians. —LEOR GALIL

### WINGTIPS, CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

Artobject  
[wingtips.bandcamp.com/album/cutting-room-floor](http://wingtips.bandcamp.com/album/cutting-room-floor)

In 2021, the idea of editing yourself can sound cynical—it’s been tainted by social-media influencers who manufacture images and videos of a blemish-free life of luxury while struggling to make ends meet offline. But on their brand-new second album, *Cutting Room Floor*, dark Chicago synth-pop duo Wingtips sug-

gest that self-editing can be part of a process of personal growth, where you let mistakes and insecurities flit away like strips of celluloid snipped from a film. Vincent Segretario and Hannah Avalon have developed an aesthetic steeped in love for theater and the dreamy, dreary sounds of gothy 80s and 90s synth-pop bands, but on *Cutting Room Floor* they also embrace new directions and experiments—as well as some of their best songwriting yet. “Minimalistic” starts the record with what sounds like a dial-up modem, then opens up into a patchwork of melodic verses, squalling guitar sleaze, and multi-textured backup vocals. That sweet-and-salty combo continues throughout: pristine, anthemic choruses (“Crystal Clear”) and dreamy ballads (“Fallback”) contrast with sinister, pulsating bangers (“Repetitive”). Segretario takes the lion’s share of lead vocals, but some of the record’s most interesting moments come from the interplay between his singing and Avalon’s, notably on the bright, up-tempo “Cross the Line”—and when Avalon takes center stage on “Run for Cover,” she’s a commanding presence. It’s a tall order to cast any album this goth-indebted as uplifting, but as the Delta variant threatens to strip away our “new normal,” *Cutting Room Floor* feels like permission to accept what we can’t change as we strive to keep our heads up. —JAMIE LUDWIG

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In Szold Hall

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 8PM**

**Steven Page**

(formerly of Barenaked Ladies)

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 7PM**

**Cerqua Rivera Dance Theatre**

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**James McMurtry**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 8PM**

**Dan Tyminski**

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 5PM**

**Muriel Anderson**

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**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 7PM**

**Madeleine Peyroux**

Careless Love Forever Tour

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**Courtney Marie Andrews**

with special guest The Brother Brothers • In Szold Hall

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8 8PM**

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## MUSIC

# How live music looks during COVID

Photographing Chicago's cautious return to in-person concerts and festivals after almost a year and a half of forced shutdowns

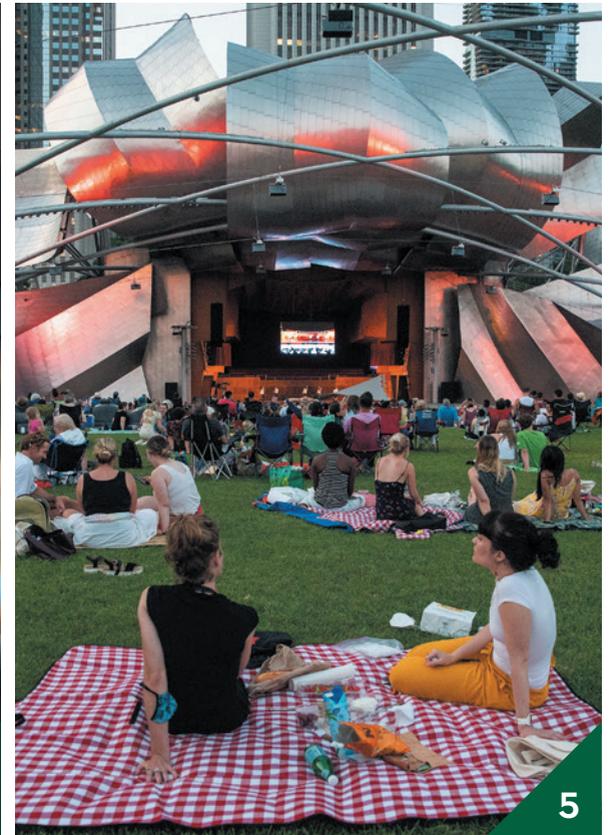
By KATHLEEN HINKEL



**L**ive music is back, though it looks different today than when it went away in March 2020. For 16 months we carried on without the collaborative magic of artist and audience. We've watched musicians find creative ways to keep gigging and be safe, whether delivering livestreams from their homes or playing on porches. Our favorite venues, whether shut down entirely or operating at reduced capacity, have been challenged to adapt. The artists, fans, and industry workers who most cherish and depend on live concerts know that this return to the stage may be fleeting—the rapid spread of the Delta variant has already pushed many venue operators to require full vaccination or a recent COVID-19 test, and Chicago's reinstated mask mandate was recently adopted by the entire state. Venues and musicians continue to cautiously evolve, hoping to keep delivering the in-person musical experience that so many people find sacred. For the foreseeable future, fighting the virus with every tool science has given us remains the most promising way to let the music play. [f](#)

[@kathleen\\_hinkel](#)

1. Crowds at the Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash in Douglass Park during the set by Chicago rapper Lil Eazzy on Saturday, August 21, 2021. The Summer Smash required proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test within 72 hours for entry, and the festival offered on-site vaccine shots.
2. From left, 33-year-old Anthony Cruz, 45-year-old Rocio Diaz, and 41-year-old Dani Garza wear masks as they enter Ruido Fest on Friday, August 20. Ruido Fest is a three-day Latinx music festival, and in 2021 it took place in Union Park. The festival required proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test within 48 hours, and both COVID testing and vaccines were available free on the grounds. Caverio Medical Group was administering the vaccines.
3. From left, 26-year-old JakexSolo, 24-year-old LILBOYROCC, and 21-year-old Yé make up the group Slime World. They were photographed on August 21, 2021, as the Lyrical Lemonade Summer Smash was being evacuated for extreme weather. As JakexSolo puts it, "As music and concerts return, we wanted to show that you can go out and still have fun while being safe. We are part of a group called Slime World that wants to see the world in a better place than it was yesterday." LILBOYROCC adds, "I think the return of music has really impacted every city's music scene in a positive way. Summer Smash in Chicago on Saturday really gave that vibe we've been missing for a while. The energy of a festival experience makes the music hit ten times harder after that experience."
4. Thirty-two-year-old Misael Aranda administers the COVID-19 vaccine to 22-year-old Yvan Flores at the entrance to Ruido Fest on Friday, August 20, 2021.
5. Thirty-three-year-old Julie Pernaudet and 36-year-old Melissa Segovia take in Dance for Life on August 26, 2021, at Jay Pritzker Pavilion. Concerts at the Millennium Park venue reopened at full capacity in July.
6. The Sistazz of the Nitty Gritty performed one of the first shows on the patio of the Hideout when the venue reopened for the first time in 16 months in July. From left, they are pianist-vocalist Anaiet, bassist Brooklyn Skye Scott, and multi-instrumentalist Angel Bat Dawid. Bat Dawid formed the trio by performing remote concerts during the pandemic, and her passion for music shines through in everything she does. As she recently told NPR, "That's what my whole message is to this world—just do music as often as you can. Like drinking water or eating food—you should be doing music all the time."



# MUSIC



7. Sean Nyary, 30, checks identification and vaccination cards at the entrance to the Empty Bottle on August 27, 2021.
8. Signage at the entrance to the Empty Bottle. The Bottle requires proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours for entry. These requirements will be in place at least through October 31, 2021.
9. Thirty-year-old Holly Bomer, left, and 32-year-old PJ Verica, wear masks as they take in a late-night show at Kingston Mines on August 20, 2021. Joanna Connor, who's played regular gigs at Kingston Mines since the 1980s, spoke about the pandemic before an early-morning set. "It's been the most surreal experience of my life. I've been playing since I was 17 years old in clubs. I'm 59," she said. "I taught guitar online for like a year. It was a frightening time. As a musician, nothing is secure. Is this the end of my career? I got a vaccine as soon as I was able to in March—this is my mainstay gig. Practicing in your room or teaching is a whole different thing than playing in front of an audience. Everyone should get vaccinated so that we can keep going. The reason I became a musician is playing for an audience and the magic that happens. It's a communal experience—they need you as much as you need it." With the obvious recent exception, Kingston Mines has provided almost nightly blues on its two stages since opening in 1968. The club currently requires proof of vaccination.



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## NEW

**Algiers, Zen Mother** 9/18, 10 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Angels & Airwaves, Bad Sons** 10/9, 6 PM, Radius Chicago **FREE**  
**Animal Sun, V.A.S.E., 9/14,** 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+  
**Argonaut and Wasp** 11/2, 8 PM, Schubas  
**Atomic Bitchwax** 9/9, 8 PM, Cobra Lounge, 18+  
**Ana Bárbara, Las Cafeteras** 9/12, 6:30 PM, Ravinia Festival, Highland Park **FREE**  
**Bartees Strange, Ganser** 9/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle **FREE**  
**Beabadoobee, Christian Leave** 12/6, 7 PM, Metro **FREE**  
**Big Brother & the Holding Company** 9/25, 5 PM, Arcada Theatre, Saint Charles **FREE**  
**Bitchin Bajas** 9/18, 9 PM, Hungry Brain  
**Black Tusk, Savage Master** 9/9, 8 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+  
**Black Violin** 9/11, 7:30 PM, Ravinia Festival, Highland Park **FREE**  
**Blato Zlato** 9/29, 8:30 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **FREE**  
**Willie Buck** 9/9, 9 PM, Rosa's Lounge  
**CalenRaps, Price** 9/9, 7:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+  
**Chain Station** 9/30, 8 PM, Martyrs'  
**Chicago in Tune: Blues featuring Cash Box Kings with Shemekia Copeland, Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials with Billy Branch, Nick Moss Band with Wayne Baker Brooks** 9/18, 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE**  
**Chicago in Tune: House featuring Roy Davis Jr., Mark Hubbard with DJ Terry Hunter, DJ Lady D** 9/11, 5:30 PM, Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park **FREE**

**Chicago Metal Fair featuring DJ Rodney, DJ Suzi Uzi** 9/11, 11 AM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies **FREE**  
**Chicago Soul Jazz Collective featuring Dee Alexander** 9/15, 8 and 10 PM, Jazz Showcase **FREE**  
**Isaiah Collier & the Chosen Few** 9/16-9/18, 8 and 10 PM; 9/19, 4 and 8 PM, Jazz Showcase **FREE**  
**Combo Chimbita, Rudy De Anda** 9/19, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Cradle of Filth** 10/16, 6:30 PM, Radius Chicago, 17+  
**Crystal Method, Acid Daddy** 9/18, 10:30 PM, Sleeping Village  
**Dayglow** 10/28, 7 PM, House of Blues **FREE**  
**Dead & Company** 9/17-9/18, 6:30 PM, Wrigley Field **FREE**  
**Delta Waves, Bread Machine, Ginamaya** 9/10, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+  
**Dokken, Hoodlum Johnny** 9/25, 8:30 PM, Arcada Theatre, Saint Charles **FREE**  
**Dolly Varden** 9/10, 7 PM, American Legion Hall Post 42, Evanston  
**Gerald Dowd & Robbie Gjersoe** 9/10, 8 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE**  
**E Woods, Pesto Western, Just Jax** 9/10, 8 PM, GMan Tavern  
**Ear Taxi Festival presents Matt Ulery's Mannerist** 11/9/17, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**8-bit crEEps, Man's Body, Blind Trust** 9/11, 8 PM, Montrose Saloon  
**Katie Ernst (solo), Gold/Ernst/Black** 9/11, 6 PM, Hideout  
**Feelin' Groovy featuring Black Oak Ensemble** 9/13, 6 PM, Hideout **FREE**  
**Flamingosis, Ian Ewing** 9/26, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

**42 Dugg** 11/3, 7 PM, Patio Theater, 18+  
**Friko, Modern Nun, Sick Day** 9/27, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+  
**Front Bottoms, Oso Oso, Sydney Sprague** 10/15, 6:30 PM, Radius Chicago **FREE**  
**G Krish, the 86** 9/10, 7 PM, Cubby Bear **FREE**  
**Kevin Galloway** 9/9, 7:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn **FREE**  
**Ghostface Killah, GZA (live band), Raekwon** 10/20, 8 PM; 10/22, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+  
**Glorious Sons** 12/14, 8 PM, Metro, 18+  
**Richie Goods & the Goods Project** 10/7, 8 PM, the Promontory **FREE**  
**Chris Greene Quartet** 9/9, 7:30 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts  
**John "Papa" Gros** 9/16, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn  
**Hat Stretchers** 9/9, 6 PM, Hideout  
**Justin Hayward, Mike Dawes** 9/13-9/14, 8 PM, City Winery **FREE**  
**He\$h, Bommer, Zia** 10/14, 9 PM, House of Blues, 17+  
**Hooten Hallers, Dust Biters** 9/18, 10 PM, Live Wire Lounge  
**Griffin House** 9/16, 8 PM, City Winery **FREE**  
**Indigenous Peoples' Day concert featuring Opliam, NuFolk Rebel Alliance, Huguito Gutierrez & Armando Bakle** 10/13, 8:30 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **FREE**  
**Indigo Girls, Ani DiFranco** 9/10, 7 PM, Ravinia Festival, Highland Park **FREE**  
**Instigation Festival presents Kim Alpert, Jim Baker, Charles Rumbak, James Singleton, Greg Ward, and Ed Wilkerson** 9/18, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

**Instigation Festival presents the Instigation Orchestra** 9/17, 9 PM, Hungry Brain  
**Serena Isioma, Hatesonny, Deryk G** 9/29, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall **FREE**  
**J. Cole, 21 Savage, Morray** 10/7, 8 PM, United Center **FREE**  
**Erol Josué, Kreyol Roots** 10/6, 8:30 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **FREE**  
**Judas Priest, Sabaton** 9/20, 7:30 PM, Rosemont Theatre, Rosemont **FREE**  
**Kidd G, Spencer Crandall** 10/30, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+  
**Chris Knight** 10/28, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn  
**Davy Knowles** 9/11, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston **FREE**  
**Kompany** 11/24, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+  
**Legendary Shack Shakers, Mystery Actions, Robert Rolfe Feddersen, Royal Son of a Guns** 9/10, 8 PM, Reggies Music Joint  
**Lydia Lunch Retrovirus, No Men, Chicken Happen** 9/10, 9 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+  
**Machinedrum** 10/8, 10 PM, Smart Bar  
**Melt, Corn on My Dinner Plate** 9/9, 8 PM, Martyrs'  
**Metz, Preoccupations** 12/15, 9 PM, Metro, 18+  
**Mind Maintenance** 9/9, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**Miró Quartet** 9/14, 7:30 PM, Ravinia Festival, Highland Park **FREE**  
**Model Stranger, Burrn, Well Tempered, Egxbh** 9/11, 8:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+  
**Thurston Moore, Matchess** 9/15, 9:30 PM, Empty Bottle  
**Mörk Gryning, Arsantiqva, Well of Night** 5/1/2022, 8 PM, Live Wire Lounge  
**Muna** 9/10, 10:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston **FREE**  
**Music of the Baroque Orchestra** 9/20, 7:30 PM, Harris Theater **FREE**  
**Natty Nation** 10/20, 8:30 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music **FREE**  
**Necropolis: A Gothic Paradise featuring French Police, Kevin Lux, Roninn, Flores Negras DJs** 9/10, 10:15 PM, Subterranean  
**Negative Approach, Shitzen, Snuffed, Wrong War** 9/10, 7 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+  
**Nick Moss Band** 9/10, 7:30 PM, Epiphany Center for the Arts  
**Nivea and friends** 9/30, 7 PM, the Promontory  
**Emily Nott with Aaron Smith & Jess McIntosh** 9/9, 7 PM, Montrose Saloon **FREE**  
**Nude Party, Twen** 10/7, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+  
**Oliver Francis** 9/12, 7:15 PM, Schubas **FREE**  
**100 Gecs** 10/21, 11 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

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**Oux, Orisun, Bonita Appleblunt** 9/15, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village  
**Palmer Squares, Tiny Chain Gang** 9/17, 8 PM, Chop Shop, 18+  
**Phangs** 10/14, 6 PM, Cobra Lounge **FREE**  
**Stefan Ponce and friends** 9/11, 9 PM, Chop Shop  
**Pop Punk Pizza Party featuring Max Stern, the Burst and Bloom, and more** 9/18, 9 PM, Chop Shop  
**Rhythm Is Image** 9/16, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+  
**Riot Fest 2021 preview party featuring Morrissey and more** 9/16, 2:30 PM, Douglass Park **FREE**  
**Kevin Ross** 9/9, 8 PM, City Winery **FREE**  
**Runaway June, Drake Milligan** 9/9, 7:45 PM, Joe's Live, Rosemont  
**Todd Rundgren** 11/1-11/2, 8 PM, House of Blues **FREE**  
**Joey J. Saye** 9/9 and 9/16, 8:30 PM, Rosa's Lounge  
**Senpai.Fest, Lasalle Grandeur, Ausar, Heartgaze, Will Williamson** 9/11, 10 PM, Schubas, 18+  
**Signs of the Swarm, By the Thousands, Hive, Worm Shepherd, Reaping Asmodeia** 9/11, 6 PM, WC Social Club, West Chicago **FREE**  
**David Singer, Eric Ziegenhagen** 9/9, 8 PM, Golden Dagger  
**Justine Skye** 10/8, 9 PM, the Promontory, 18+  
**Skylight Cinema** 9/10, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge **FREE**  
**Morry Sochat & the Special 20's** 9/9, 9 PM, Buddy Guy's Legends  
**Ben Sollee, Phillip-Michael Scales** 9/10, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston **FREE**  
**Sponge, Back Alley Riot** 9/11, 9 PM, Live Wire Lounge  
**Tardi Gras featuring Terrance Simien & the Zydeco Experience** 9/11, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn  
**Demetria Taylor** 9/10, 8 PM, Buddy Guy's Legends  
**Tee Grizzley, Jackboy** 10/17, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 18+  
**Terrapin Flyer** 9/10, 9 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn  
**Thrice, Touche Amore** 10/17, 7:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, 17+  
**Von Tramps** 9/9, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen  
**Ward/Cunningham Quartet** 9/12, 9 PM, Hungry Brain **FREE**



## GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

**MULTI-INSTRUMENTALISTS** **Havadine Stone** and **Ben Baker Billington** have played a handful of compelling local shows as the duo **Blue Lick** since 2017, but they haven't released any recordings yet—probably because they both keep themselves busy. Stone has dropped solo cassettes on Reserve Matinee and American Dreams Records over the past few years, and Billington (who also has a solo venture called **Quicksails**) is easily among the city's most prodigious musical collaborators. In 2020, Stone sent Billington a 30-minute monologue about love, lust, and the geographic and emotional flatness of the midwest that she'd recorded alone in her closet, and he paired it with modular synth pieces whose floating ambient tones occasionally blossom into bits of dance music or jazz. On Friday, September 17, **American Dreams** will release the resulting work on Blue Lick's debut LP, **Hold On, Hold Fast**, and this wolf thinks it's thoughtfully oblique and winningly deadpan jams make it one of the best releases so far this year.

Guitarist **Michael Damani** came to Gossip Wolf's attention playing onstage with the **Original Chicago Blues All Stars** and in **Wyatt Waddell's** exceptional band. On his standout 2020 track "White City, Black World," though, he showed himself more than a sideman—he's a songwriter with a righteous gift for melody and a keen eye for injustice. Damani says his soulful new single, "**Better Off**," which recently hit streaming services, is about the end of a love affair and being "better off for having known this person, but also better off now that the relationship has ended." Who can't relate to that?

Got a hankering for avant-garde stoner metal with a horn section? Local six-piece **Shed**, led by cellist **Calvin Armstrong**, includes **Steve Wasilczuk** on tenor and baritone saxes, **Drew Baxter** on bass trombone, and **Chris Misch-Bloxdorf** (aka beat maker **Artie Do Good**) on tenor trombone. They just self-released their wild self-titled debut! —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip\_Wolf or e-mail [gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com](mailto:gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com).

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9.7 **LOUIS PRIMA JR. & THE WITNESSES**  
9.9 **KEVIN ROSS**  
9.10 **JIM NORTON**  
9.12 **LOOSE ENDS**

9.13-14 **JUSTIN HAYWARD** WITH MIKE DAWES  
9.16 **GRIFFIN HOUSE**  
9.17 **KALEO WASSMAN** OF PEPPER  
9.18 **MINSTREL VS PUPPET** EXCLUSIVE DEBUT (12PM SHOW)  
9.18 A NIGHT AT **MISTER KELLY'S**  
9.19 **EDDIE FROM OHIO**

**UPCOMING SHOWS**

9.21 **MEAGAN MCNEAL**  
9.23 **MAX WEINBERG'S JUKEBOX**  
9.27 **JOHN SPLITHOFF**  
9.28 **LADY LAMB**  
9.29 **TOM RUSH**  
9.30 **JOHN CRAIGIE** WITH HONEYSUCKLE  
10.1 **IRIS DEMENT** WITH ANA EGGE  
10.3 **NEW POWER GENERATION**

10.5-7 **SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE ASBURY JUKES**  
10.10 **THE ACCIDENTALS & SAWYER FREDERICKS**  
10.11 **ROBERT FINLEY**  
10.13 **CARBON LEAF**  
10.14 **JOSH KELLEY** WITH HARPER GRAE  
10.15-16 **THE HEATHER MCDONALD EXPERIENCE**  
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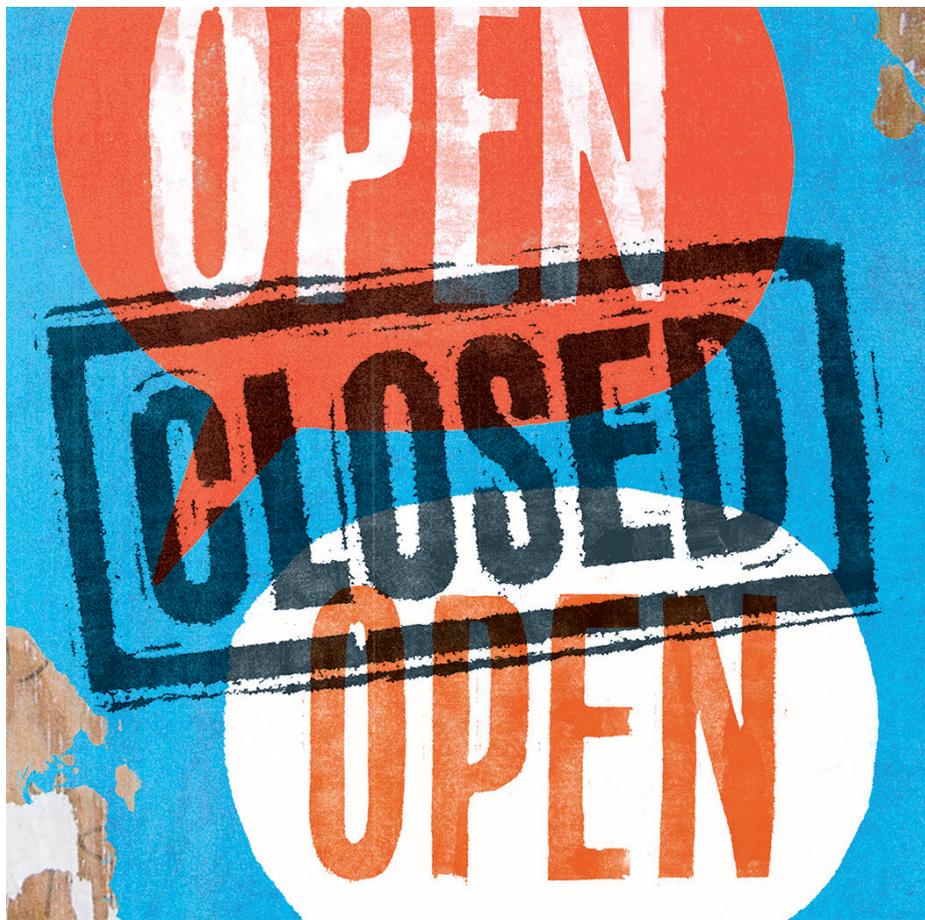
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couples like you to make sure you're not wasting your time on anti-open and/or sex-negative counselors, SHRINK, and that's to ask the therapist or counselor what their positions are on open relationships before making your first appointment.

Zooming way out for a second: It's flabbergasting that so many couples counselors think a marriage that isn't monogamous—or one that has to become non-monogamous for both parties to remain happy in it—isn't worth saving. The bias against nonmonogamous relationships is so insidious that even people whose job it is to help couples that wanna stay together figure out how they can do that will urge couples to divorce, instead of exploring nonmonogamy. Never mind suggesting nonmonogamy to a couple that is clearly being failed by—not failing at—monogamy.

OK, now let's talk about those threesomes . . .

Your wife came out as a lesbian, SHRINKS, she didn't come out as bisexual, so it doesn't follow that you're in line to have a bunch of threesomes. Even if your wife had come out as bisexual, SHRINKS, that doesn't mean you hit the pussy lottery and you're going to be having a lot of threesomes now. Or any threesomes. Maybe you and the wife discussed this, and she wants to have sex with you despite being a lesbian—maybe she's willing and/or able to grandfather in your dick (grandmother in your dick?) and is looking forward to having threesomes with you and a girlfriend to be named later—but if you haven't heard that from your wife's mouth, SHRINKS, you might wanna tamp down those expectations. And if you haven't heard that from

your wife and you've been excitedly telling every couples counselor you see about all the threesomes you're looking forward to having now that your wife is a dyke, SHRINKS, it's possible that all those couples counselors urged you to get divorced because your wife was sitting next to you on the couch blinking out distress signals.

2. Open relationships can be awesome! They can also suck! If you're happy and the wife's happy and her future girlfriends and/or your thirds are happy, that's awesome. But if you and/or the wife are unhappy after opening the marriage up, SHRINKS, then you'll either have to close it again or you'll end up having to take the advice of all those shrinks and end it.

**Q:** I'm a 36-year-old woman from the UK who currently resides in the Middle East. I've been seeing a man my same age who is also from Western Europe. The relationship is rather new and we are still getting to know each other, but we have grown very close. However, he has only managed to come inside me once. He is a fit and healthy man who exercises regularly and does not have any underlying health conditions. So why does he lose his erection every other time and have to finish himself off when he doesn't? He said he doesn't know why this keeps happening, but he thinks it might be because he is "too in his own head" to come when he's inside me and often loses his erection because of it. I brought up the fact that we reside in the Middle East because, as an unmarried couple, it is impossible for us to seek professional help here. I have tried reassuring him and prolonging foreplay and we have an open dialogue over what we like sexually, all to no avail. Should I give it more time? Are there any

toys we could use that would help? Should I advise him to seek professional help when he travels home for his holiday? I feel helpless when he gets more frustrated with every unsuccessful attempt. —**HAVING A REALISTIC DISCUSSION ON NEEDS**

**A:** This is going to sound weird, HARDON, but you need to watch some gay porn with your boyfriend. (If you can safely view it where you happen to be living right now.) In gay porn you'll also see a lot of tops "finishing themselves off." The top fucks the bottom for a while—sometimes for a long while—and then the top pulls out and strokes himself until he comes. Sometimes you'll see tops pull out, give their dicks a few pumps, and shove back in. Right now your boyfriend has it in his head that he's disappointing you when he does what most guys in gay porn seem to enjoy doing—stroking themselves a little during sex, sometimes finishing themselves off at the end—and he's got that in his head because you put it there, HARDON, or it was already there and you've been reinforcing it. Here's how you can help: stop pathologizing the way his dick works. Tell him it's fine: tell him the sex is still a success if he wants to stroke himself now and then during sex; tell him the sex is still a success if he wants to "finish himself off" at the end like all the gay porn stars and many women do; and tell him it's fine if he wants to bail on vaginal intercourse for whatever reason—including going soft—and eat your pussy instead. Take the pressure off his dick and his dick is likelier to come through. **FI**

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

## SAVAGE LOVE

### Counseled culture is a real thing

The bias against nonmonogamous relationships can be insidious.

By **DAN SAVAGE**

**Q:** Hello! I am a heterosexual man! My wife came out as a lesbian after 30 years of marriage. We have children together and we love each other. Therefore, we've decided not to divorce. We visited some therapists and they all coerced us to divorce, even though we really do not want that. We believe that an open relationship would satisfy both of us. I've always wanted a threesome anyway! We read some books about opening up a relationship and we feel like we could make an open marriage work. And we know there are

others out there, so we know it's possible! Divorce is not in our plan. My questions: 1. Is it normal for therapists to force a couple to divorce when the couple does not want that? 2. Can open relationships be awesome relationships? —**SHRINKS HEREABOUTS REVEL IN NOT KNOWING SHIT**

**A:** Hello! I am a gay man! My answers: 1. Calm down. Only your wife can force you to get a divorce, SHRINKS, and you're still married. Which means you haven't been coerced into doing anything. And while I wouldn't describe

what you encountered as normal, SHRINKS, there are a lot of therapists and counselors out there who regard preserving and protecting monogamy—its practice by individual couples, its position as a sacrosanct norm—as their chief responsibility. Now I don't know where you live, SHRINKS, but a married couple that sees more than one therapist or counselor in a big city like mine is gonna encounter at least one open to helping married couples negotiate the transition to nonmonogamy. But there's a really simple way for

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- Dec. 9, 2021 ..... Drinks Issue + WCT Insert
- Dec. 23, 2021 ..... Year in Review



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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

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**Natalie Moore**

*The South Side*  
Author Talk: Apr. 22, 2021

**Rebecca Makkai**

*The Great Believers*  
Author Talk: May 26, 2021

**Fatimah Asghar**

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

**Kayla Ancrum**

*Darling*  
Author Talk: July 22, 2021

**Jessica Hopper**

*The First Collection of Criticism by a Living Female Rock Critic*  
Author Talk: Aug. 26, 2021

**Precious Brady-Davis**

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

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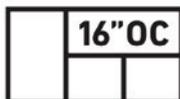
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**Author Talk**  
September 23, 2021

## Precious Brady-Davis Author



Precious Brady-Davis is a true Renaissance woman for the ages; as a native Nebraskan, she has never lost her midwestern charm.

Lauded internationally as an award-winning diversity advocate, communications professional, and public speaker, she currently serves as the central region communications director for the Beyond Coal Campaign at Sierra Club.

With over 15 years of experience in nonprofit administration, leadership development, and public relations,

Brady-Davis is a dynamic speaker and panelist who has been featured at University of Chicago, Northwestern University, Reed College, University of Michigan, The Chicago Community Trust, Hampshire College, James Madison University, and the University of Cambridge.

Brady-Davis finds deep meaning in discovering the root of what proliferates bias, bigotry, and prejudice in our world. Through celebrating the beauty of coexistence, uplifting and centering the stories of those who are most marginalized, and seeing that all issues that damn the human condition are interconnected, she invites all who come in contact with her to see the resilience that lives within us.

She previously served for three years as the assistant director of diversity recruitment initiatives at Columbia College Chicago, her alma mater from which she received a bachelor's in liberal arts. Brady-Davis implemented the campus-wide diversity initiative and under her tenure provided leadership and oversight of national diversity recruitment and strategic inclusion policy initiatives.

Brady-Davis also served for three years as the youth outreach coordinator at the largest LGBTQ+ community center in the midwest, Center on Halsted. Under Brady-Davis's tenure she launched and coordinated a 1.6 million dollar CDC HIV prevention grant which provided outreach, education, youth programming, and testing services to more than 3,000 young African American and Latinx gay, bi, and trans youth between the ages of 13 and 24.

Her debut memoir *I Have Always Been Me* is set for release in 2020 with Tople and Amazon Publishing.

Brady-Davis is married to Myles Brady and they are proud residents of Hyde Park on the south side of Chicago.

With moderator **Adam M. Rhodes**

Presented by:

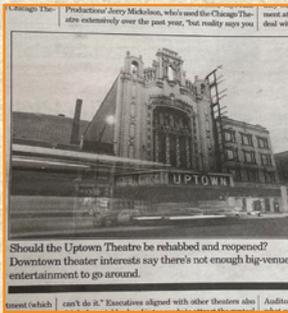
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# 1991

The debate about the potential rehabbing/reopening of the Uptown Theatre has been raging for decades, as evidenced by this October 18, 1991 installment of The Culture Club.



Productions Jerry Mickelson, who's used the Chicago Theatre extensively over the past year, "but really says you should rent it if you can't do it." Executives aligned with other theaters also...

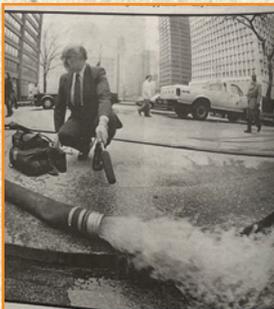
# 1992

Cartoonist Norman Dog reflects the hope for change that was in the air on September 25, 1992, leading up to the historic Clinton/Bush/Perot face-off that November.



# 1993

In the April 9, 1993 issue—the first anniversary of the Chicago flood—James Krohe Jr. opens the gates to the “Flood of Memories,” including this Marc PoKempner photo of a reporter capturing audio of gushing water.



# 1994

“Who owns the dances Randy Duncan choreographed while he was artistic director of the Joseph Holmes company?” was the question posed by Lewis Lazare in the January 14, 1994 issue.



Who owns the dances Randy Duncan choreographed while he was artistic director of the Joseph Holmes company? There seems to be a difference of opinion.

# READER Archive Dive

A DAILY DIP INTO THE STACKS, LEADING UP TO OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY

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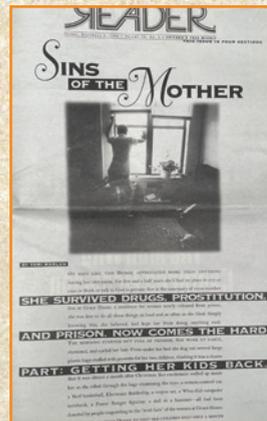
# 1995

With the summer of 1995 coming to a close, this ad from Flashy Trash in the August 18, 1995 issue gives some new and vintage style ideas for back-to-school time.



# 1996

Writer Tori Marlan tells the heartbreaking story of a mother, having paid her dues, just trying to be a mother again in this November 8, 1996 cover story.



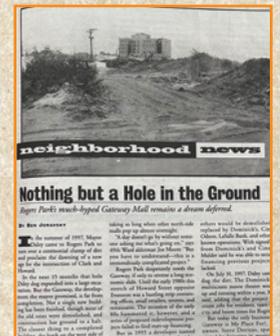
# 1997

Ever up with the times, this Reader column, “reeled in” by writer Jane Rosemont in the April 18, 1997 issue, reveals the gritty truth about the scourge of the day: lip-balm addiction.



# 1998

The Reader's own Ben Joravsky digs into the hole in the ground left by the pending Gateway Mall project in Rogers Park in this October 9, 1998 installment of Neighborhood News. UPDATE: The project was completed, anchored by a Dominick's, which is now a Jewel.



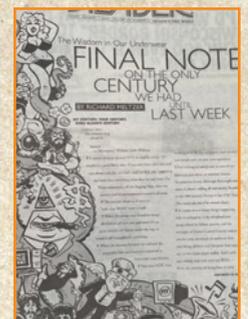
# 1999

Hip-hop was only getting hipper in 1999, due in large part to Ruff Ryders and Nas, as proclaimed by music writer Josh Goldfein in the June 4 issue.



# 2000

Free and freaky since the previous millennium, the Reader kicked off the new one with this insightful cover piece of the January 7, 2000 issue.



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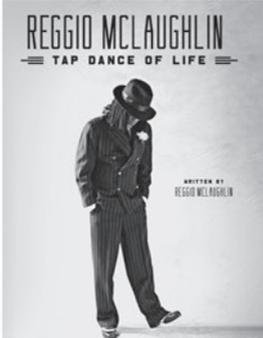
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# WINDY CITY TIMES

VOL 36, NO. 4

SEPT. 2, 2021

SPECIAL QUARTERLY INSERT IN THE CHICAGO READER, PRODUCED BY WINDY CITY TIMES. SEE WINDYCITYTIMES.COM FOR MORE LGBTQ NEWS AND CULTURAL COVERAGE.

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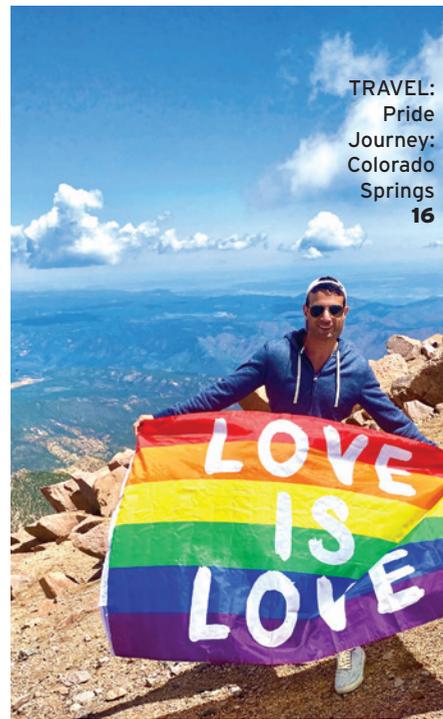
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Illustration of Ellis Haizlip, surrounded by members of the J.C. White Singers by Reid Rosati, based on a photo by Alex Harsley. For more of Reid's work, find @r\_\_rosati on Instagram.

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HIV AT 40

# GLOBAL ACTIVIST PHILL WILSON

## talks Chicago, the '80s and vaccines

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Phill Wilson is one of the best-known HIV/AIDS activists/educators around the globe.

The Chicago native was the co-founder of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum and the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention. He has been involved in the founding of a number of other AIDS service organizations and community-based organizations, including the Chris Brownlie Hospice, the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, the National Minority AIDS Council, the Los Angeles County Gay Men of Color Consortium, and the CAEAR Coalition. Most famously, Wilson is the founder and former President and CEO of the Black AIDS Institute—a think tank whose mission is to stop the AIDS pandemic in African American communities.

With this year marking the 40th anniversary of the official discovery of HIV, Wilson talked with *Windy City Times*.

**Windy City Times:** You've been around the world so often that I don't think many know of your Chicago roots.

Phill Wilson: Yeah; I'm originally from Chicago, and was recently there on family matters.

I was born in Cook County Hospital and grew up in Altgeld Gardens until I was 10 or 11. Then my family moved to south suburbs and I went to high school in Harvey, Illinois. I went to Thornton Township High School and then to Illinois Wesleyan University. Even now, I own a house in Bronzeville—so I've never given up my Chicago roots.

Also, an ex of mine, Mark Schools, was an editor for *Windy City Times* many years ago. He's currently the editor-in-chief of BuzzFeed.

**WCT:** Could you take our readers back to the day when you discovered your status?

PW: Sure. I think some people refer to the [long-term] survivors as "AIDS pioneers."

With my personal relationship with HIV, there are two stories. One happened in 1981. I came out in 1980, and my first sexual encounter turned into a relationship that lasted 10 years—until my partner died of HIV in November 1989.

In the late summer of 1981, he was told by his doctor that he had swollen lymph nodes, and he provided an update on a disease that was primarily impacting gay men in New York and California that somehow involved swollen lymph nodes. I discovered that I also had swollen lymph nodes at the time. As it turns out, I was probably experiencing acute infection; my partner was probably in a state of chronic infection. They took biopsies of the nodes, and the [results] came back abnormal—but, at the time, we had no idea what that meant.

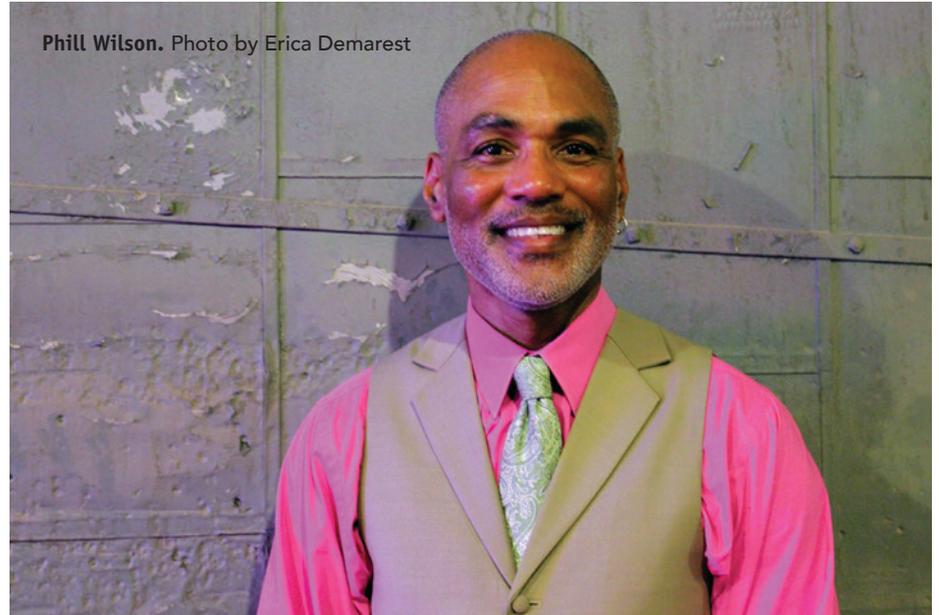
Shortly thereafter, we moved to Los Angeles in the winter/spring of 1982, when a serious conversation of this new epidemic was just starting. We were pretty confident at that point that we were infected—and that was the catalyst of my involvement. In 1985, my partner got sick with AIDS; he was diagnosed by having a low T-cell count.

In 1986, they developed the test, and that's the second story for me. I tested positive at that time.

**WCT:** At that point, in the '80s, HIV/AIDS was seen by many as a death sentence. What was going through your mind after being diagnosed?

PW: Well, at that time, there were HIV, ARC [AIDS-related complex] and AIDS. The conventional wisdom was that ARC wasn't necessarily a death sentence, but that AIDS was. So I just wanted to put things into context.

But having said that, I certainly did feel like it was a death sentence. I was living with someone who had AIDS, and I saw what was happening to him. I anticipated that I would get AIDS, and my doctors told me that I probably had six months to live and that I should get my affairs in order. But—unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your perspective—we were on the front lines at that time, so we really didn't have time to think about it. Some people have a hard time understanding that, but when you're on the front lines, you're fighting; it's like a war when the guy next to you is killed, but you don't have time to react because the enemy is still coming at you. From getting that information, I literally had minutes



Phill Wilson. Photo by Erica Demarest

before getting home and taking my partner to the hospital; then I had to get home and prepare for a memorial service the next day.

**WCT:** I remember speaking with the writer Edmund White and he said that, at one point, he was going to hundreds of funerals. I can't even fathom what that would've been like.

PW: Right. There were years in my life, actually, there were [periods] that went by when someone I knew found out they were positive or had AIDS, had been admitted to a hospital or had died. Those often happened on a weekly basis—but sometimes on a daily basis.

**WCT:** I came across a quote attributed to you: "I needed to focus on the living..."

PW: "...because the dying was going to take care of itself."

**WCT:** So is that what kickstarted your activism, in part—that realization?

PW: Hmmm ... no. I was involved as an activist before that. For me, it wasn't a question: My community was under attack, my lover was under attack and my family was under attack. It is an organic reaction. It wasn't particularly heroic; it was just organic.

**WCT:** Black people continue to be affected disproportionately by HIV/AIDS. What can the community do to reverse that?

PW: One is to take ownership of the disease. It's not only our disease, but it is our disease. Also, make sure we have the information—get the facts and understand what's going on. Then, people need to take action and take control.

So those are three things people need to do. I think, in some ways, we are doing it and that's how we're going to get out of it. No one can save us from us but us. Also, the days of waiting for a savior to come and rescue us have to be over.

**WCT:** So being proactive instead of reactive is key.

PW: Yes—but it goes even deeper than being proactive. I think understanding that the virus [couldn't] give a hoot [is important]. This virus isn't who we are, although it's a part of who we are.

**WCT:** What similarities do you see between

the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the COVID one?

PW: Everything. It is easier to talk about how they're not similar. COVID-19 has a much, much greater footprint than HIV. Obviously, they're both viruses—the coronavirus is airborne, while HIV is not. So the science at the epidemiological level is different; but, on the psychosocial and economic levels, they're the same. There were miscommunication and misdirection regarding both, and they're were levels of stigma and political manipulation. And the solutions involved advances in science and community mobilization.

**WCT:** Are you surprised that there's no HIV/AIDS vaccine, especially with those having been developed for COVID-19?

PW: I'm not surprised, although I'm disappointed—and I'm not surprised that vaccines were found much, much faster for COVID-19. People were able to develop the COVID vaccines because of the groundwork and sciences that had been created because of HIV. Were there no HIV, there'd be no coronavirus vaccine. So that's number one.

Number two: As they say, if men got pregnant, abortion would be a right. With wealthy white people being at risk for COVID-19, it didn't surprise me that there was this sense of urgency. It was different from HIV, where the characterization of those who suffered was "the other."

**WCT:** With everything that's happened the past 18 months—from COVID to the country's "racial awakening"—what did you learn about yourself?

PW: Hmmm.... I thought there were a lot of things in my life, and it's difficult to parse out what was driven by other things and what was driven by COVID as well as HIV/AIDS. But while I don't know if I can precisely parse out what was driven by which—I lost my mother, I retired—what I can say, relative to where I am today, is that I have come to understand the importance of personal joy at this point of my life. There's also a critical necessity to explore and discover what makes me joyful, and to make a commitment to be in pursuit of that.

# ‘Mr. SOUL!’

*Looking at the groundbreaking ‘60s show—and Black, gay host*

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Al Green, Stevie Wonder, Patti LaBelle, Gladys Knight, Nikki Giovanni, James Baldwin, Cicely Tyson, Harry Belafonte, Muhammad Ali, The Last Poets, Earth, Wind & Fire, Sidney Poitier, Mavis Staples and even a teenaged Arsenio Hall were just a few of the artists who appeared on the seminal 1968-73 Black variety show SOUL! The show was groundbreaking not only for its focus on Black features but also for its host: Ellis Haizlip, who was political, outspoken—and openly gay.

His niece, Melissa Haizlip, is the force (producer/director/writer) behind the documentary Mr. SOUL!, which debuted on HBO Max on Aug. 22. She talked with Windy City Times about the show and her uncle.

**Windy City Times: I was stunned, in a good way, on several levels by this documentary about a show that I didn’t know existed. Is Mr. SOUL! a tribute to your uncle, an educational tool or something else?**

Melissa Haizlip: It’s all of the above.

There are so many hidden figures in our history, in our culture—not necessarily hidden to us, but by the sands of time or other agendas. The most important thing is to find those hidden figures and illuminate their lives and importance; otherwise, you’re dealing with this whole concept of erasure. We’re actually celebrating and illuminating the contributions of African Americans to the culture, to the history of this nation.

And you’re talking about Ellis Haizlip—who was a very proud, out gay man who’s somewhat of a queer icon in modern-day parlance. That wasn’t even a possibility, pre-Stonewall. I thought it was really important to illuminate his story—the triumphs and tribulations. He had to have a double consciousness in order to survive and be welcomed into the world of media. This story illustrates the nuances of this culture; it’s not a monolith, and we’ve always had queer icons, whether they were known or unknown.

We’ve always had Black excellence. The movie is a cultural corrective, if you will—a resetting of the narrative. We should recognize that we’re standing on the shoulders of giants.

It’s also an educational tool. We did have an educational distributor, and we wanted to bridge the gap for our young African-American youth, and to be inclusive of all those who really don’t know about this era. We also wanted to be incredibly uplifting and entertaining in curating

Black joy.

It’s a huge conversation right now, as we’re experiencing a cultural PTSD regarding the events of last year. I think of [the film] as a Balm of Gilead, and as a wonderful educational tool, as you say. I think SOUL! is a tide that lifts all boats.

**WCT: How true do you think the following statement is? “SOUL! was revolutionary, in part, because it featured revolutionaries.”**

MH: Yes. I do agree with that. The statement is very accurate because that was only part of the reason it was revolutionary.

There are many different kinds of revolutionaries, as we know. There are outspoken revolutionaries and activists who become [them], but there are also quiet revolutionaries and people who change thought. I think Ellis was in the business of changing minds. He didn’t have a tremendous amount of power, but he did decide that by illuminating the multifaceted corners of the Black experience, that would be a subtle way of changing the perception of African-American culture.

With all the civil-rights struggles that were happening at that time, people weren’t experiencing Black folks—they weren’t checking for us, as we say. So this idea that you could experience Black culture for yourselves—along with women and queer folks behind the scenes—was revolutionary.

Ellis Haizlip didn’t really take sides about what was good or bad, or the sacred or profane. I think he knew there was room for all of that; that, in itself, was revolutionary. He had the Black Panthers on there, and I’m sure they were on the [FBI] watchlist. And there was also art as activism. Giving visibility to the invisible is revolutionary. And there was a limited platform



Ellis Haizlip surrounded by members of the J.C. White Singers. Photo by Alex Harsley, courtesy of Shoes in the Bed Productions



From top: Patti LaBelle on the television show SOUL! Photo by Chester Higgins/MR. SOUL; SOUL! host Ellis Haizlip (left) sits with playwright and author Amiri Baraka. Photo courtesy of Shoes in the Bed Productions

to change minds with; at that time, you had ABC, CBS, NBC and PBS.

**WCT: And there was a limited platform. Did SOUL! air on public access in New York City?**

MH: Well, it started on a public television station—not really public access.

Remember: Before the Public Broadcasting Act [of 1967], there were independent, educational stations around the nation—but they hadn’t been joined together in a system. That system became PBS. And that’s what was really unique about the timing of SOUL! It happened just when a national audience was forming. The show went to being on the flagship PBS station in New York City, WNET.

For the first season, the show was local, in the New York/New Jersey area. However, after, it was broadcast to major cities where PBS was available.

With SOUL!, Ellis decided to take things one step further and make it “Black power television.” But he included artists, activists, poets and musicians, and made it a cultural space. But the Nixon administration didn’t like it because it wasn’t conservative. You had this unapologetically Black agenda being funded by the government—and they weren’t having it.

It’s hard to imagine in this day and age, with all the streaming and [technological] options, so we had to set this up in the film so people could understand and appreciate SOUL!

**WCT: This documentary has so many factual nuggets that I’m sure I’ll have to watch it five more times to absorb it. [Haizlip laughs.] And it was interesting to see singer Billy Preston—someone who struggled with his own sexuality.**

MH: Many people have said to me, “Melissa, I

had to stop the film because I couldn't believe what I was seeing."

With Billy, it was a struggle because he was so spiritual; the gospel was his foundation, as it was for Ellis. He said, "Gospel music is the floor for Black pride." But there is this duality that queer Black men have to straddle between loving their community and not being accepted by their community/family. And we tried to show this struggle.

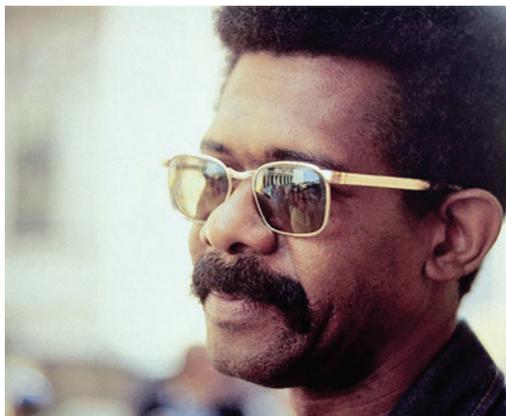
The beauty of the creativity of someone like Billy Preston or the furtherance by Ellis Haizlip—while still being constricted—is some of the melancholy you might feel while watching the film. Those might be the underpinnings of our culture, in general, but we still carry on, create and love. We have to be honest about those incongruities. This is a universal story.

I think the key is showing things that are intimate with love and not with judgment. That's a very delicate hand we had to play. There's obviously no tragedy in being queer; Ellis was a strong Black man, but he had his struggles.

**WCT: What was the most surprising thing you uncovered?**

MH: There were a lot of surprising things, as this documentary took 10 years to make. I went down a lot of rabbit holes. [Laughs]

But for me, the most surprising things were the profundity of people's memories of SOUL! and the transformative nature of those experiences—they were immediate. I was worried about how to make these 50-year-old stories dynamic and present instead of just a trip down memory lane; I knew there was more depth than that. What



**Above: SOUL! host/producer/creator Ellis Haizlip.** Photo courtesy of Ivan Curry; **Right: Melissa Haizlip.** PR photo



impressed me was hearing these people in their 70s, 80s and even 90s—and that their experiences were right at the surface. It was as if these experiences had just happened; you don't see that every day. One person we interviewed—Felipe Luciano—just went all IN, cursing and swearing; we were just blown away, and the whole crew had tears streaming down their faces. I just wasn't prepared for that.

**WCT: I figured this took some time, as I saw an interview with Ashford & Simpson. [Singer Nick Ashford died in 2011.]**

MH: Yeah—we didn't know he was ill. He was coughing and sweating profusely during our 10-minute interview with him. We thought he had a cold, but he passed away a few months later of cancer. But they wanted to do the interview because they loved Ellis and they feel he made them who they were.

**WCT: If SOUL! ran today, what guests do you think would be on it?**

MH: Oh, my gosh. I've thought about that as well as reboot of SOUL! I'm actually working on a concept with the wonderful Stan Lathan, who

was part of the original crew and who is in the film. [Note: Lathan is also the father of actress Sanaa Lathan, among others.]

I think Ellis would have outspoken artists and activists. Colin Kaepernick would be sitting up there as well as 1619 Project's Nikole Hannah-Jones. Black Lives Matter would absolutely be up there. We're seeing the same types of ideologies that people saw during the Black Power movement.

**WCT: Your uncle certainly didn't shy from controversial people and subjects. What do you think he would have made of Rachel Dolezal [the former college instructor and activist known for claiming to be a Black woman]?**

MH: Whoa! [Laughs] I can't use the words he would've used. He had a sharp tongue, but he was also kind. He had love for all the inconsistencies of this culture.

**WCT: This year marks the 30th anniversary of Ellis Haizlip's passing. If he were alive, what's one question you definitely would have to ask him?**

MH: Oh, my goodness. I would ask him the most important question: Do you feel you did enough?

I always sensed a certain melancholy around him—that he hadn't done enough. He wanted more for our people. I think he'd be so excited by the cultural strides we've made, but he'd still be so critical of not being where we need to be. That's why we ended the film the way we did; it's just a beginning. There has always been Black excellence, and there always will be.

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# Walk it OUT

## Trans woman and cancer survivor makes her debut at SEA BLUE Prostate Cancer Walk & Run

BY MELISSA WASSERMAN

Among all the men, Iris Farley—a prostate cancer survivor and trans woman—will be running in Us TOO's SEA Blue Prostate Cancer Walk & Run on Sept. 26 in Lincoln Park.

Farley, a Chicago resident, is the senior director of HR at Komatsu America Industries, LLC. Outside of work she is married with a son, part of the pin-up community, enjoys yoga, reading, film and running. Farley said she ran during her high school years, and after some time off, started back up in 2017.

Her transition began Jan. 1, 2020, but Farley had been working with a therapist for over two years. But running in the February 2020 Disney Princess Half Marathon provided one of the most memorable moments during that transition process.

The day of the race, Farley stopped for pictures with Disney characters. She recalled a group of four women in front of her in line talking. One of the women was trans, sporting full hair and makeup and a Snow White gown. Overhearing her talking about her transition, Farley, a self-proclaimed aspiring Disney princess, said she was mesmerized and things started to crystalize for her. By March 2020, Farley was sitting down, talking to her wife about what she was feeling.

"It's a thing I was fearful of because I knew that making that acknowledgment to myself had the potential [for] some pretty major upheaval in my life," Farley said, emphasizing her marriage and job concerned her the most. "So I avoided it for a long time."

Farley started her transition actively in June 2020, coming out slowly to people. By January 2021, she was living fully as Iris.

In April 2015, before her transition, Farley went experienced a different challenge—being diagnosed with prostate cancer. Her doctor ran a Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test in 2010 and, over the next couple of years, her levels rose. Continuing those checks with a urologist, even-

tually she had an inconclusive biopsy in 2012 and continued to get tested.

"Get the damn test," Farley exclaimed. "Take care of yourself. They say that a large percentage of men die with prostate cancer in their bodies. It's super slow growing and you can find out it's there. So, when I found out I had it I was like 'I'm not messing around with this thing and I'm getting it out.'"

"In many, many men, the survivor rates, if they catch it early, are incredible," said North-Shore University Health System Director of Sexual Health Jeffrey Albaugh, PhD, APRN, CUCNS. "The five-year survivor rate is 99%, which is amazing, but only if you catch it early. So, the problem is, if you have symptoms that means you probably have metastases and you're in a late prostate cancer situation, which is much, much more difficult to treat and now we have to deal with all of that. So it's so important for men to get screened..."

He went on to explain when screening is dependent on individual factors. Care is more individualized now in terms of screening and treatment because genomic information can reveal important things about how often a person should be screened. Other risk factors are also considered when talking about screening and treatment.

Albaugh has worked in the prostate-cancer field for more than 25 years and has been involved with Us TOO for 17 years, even serving on the board for three years. He is a board-certified advanced practice urology clinical nurse specialist and certified sexuality counselor with a PhD in sexual-health research and prostate-cancer research. Additionally, he runs the Sexual Health Clinic at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.

"Now we're trying to turn the tide back, so men understand [that] women would never fathom not getting their mammogram and they have the same screening levels with it," Albaugh added, comparing the screening rates.

Us TOO International is a 501(c)(3) charita-



Iris Farley. Photo by Nicole Farley

ble/not-for-profit organization geared toward empowering men diagnosed with prostate cancer and their loved ones, by providing educational resources and support services to fight against prostate cancer. Its home office is located in Des Plaines.

Providing tools like support groups, online support services, newsletters, educational materials and events, Us TOO has the vision of a patient-centered prostate cancer model that boosts emotional and physical well-being, while its mission is to "help transform resignation into determination and fear into hope."

Us TOO's annual SEA Blue Prostate Cancer Walk & Run celebrates the lives of those who have fought prostate cancer, the lives that have been lost to the disease and those who will combat it in the future. The "SEA" in the event's name stands for support, education, advocacy and awareness.

Terri Likowski, Us TOO's program director/support group services has seen the SEA Blue event grow over its 17 years and has been a part of its development.

"The bond of the people that are out there the day of the event is so special," Likowski said. "Even for families who are coming into the event new, men who might've just been newly diagnosed, a lot of times we'll get teams that are men who are newly diagnosed and their family comes in to support them for that and it's just a great time for everyone to be together, knowing that

they're not going through this on their own; that we have this huge network of support for them available."

If someone were to inquire about Us TOO's support groups, they would be in contact with Likowski. She said among the many groups, the organization offers "A Prostate Cancer Forum for Gay Men and Their Partners (Everyone from the LGBTQIA+ Community is Welcome)," which is an inclusive, call-in support group.

"We all now have to be very open about what the conversations are," said Likowski. "We've got such a variety of support groups these days and I'm really proud of the fact that we have this group that's open for the LGBTQIA community, but we also have groups that are specific to female caregivers who are in their mid-50s, but have a partner with advanced stage prostate cancer. So the world is becoming much more specific in what their needs are."

Likowski went on to say that Us TOO and its support groups recognize that everyone's needs are different depending on the scenario, but it's also important to be careful not to be too definitive and specific because it's about being able to help everyone with prostate cancer.

Farley explained that, for the last few years, she has been trying to figure out how to personally contribute to awareness and research as a survivor.

"This year it's different because what I'm finding, and I certainly can't speak for the whole

trans community, but I know a lot of people who are transwomen for whom any sort of association with their male biology is painful and difficult," she said. "So I think about all of the effort that goes into creating awareness and trying to convince cisgender men to go out and get tested. I think 'wow you're facing that hurdle plus the potential hurdle of somebody who doesn't want to acknowledge that this thing is still in them and has forgotten about it completely.' It seems like it's a possibility, especially I know it's a thing where doctors have to remind people [that you] still have to get tested even though you're going and getting mammograms now. Don't forget about that prostate because it's still there and can still be an issue."

Hoping to have an opportunity to start a conversation, Farley thinks about awareness, communication and education for everyone with a prostate. She added that trans women with pros-

tates "should be receiving that information and I don't think we always do."

"I recognize how fortunate I am and that says to me I have to take this and do something with it," said Farley of her experience. "This is one aspect of advocacy that I can see right away and it's just an intersection of things I care about. This feels like it makes a lot of sense. Not sure I'll get into other things over time because I want to be a voice in the community, but this feels like a start for me of something bigger that I can start to have a positive impact on the community in some unexpected ways. I don't think anyone sees prostate-cancer awareness as necessarily a big space for the trans community to engage in, but, hell, why not?! Especially if no one else is doing it then let's get the word out."

Farley lightheartedly said she is looking forward to "throwing people for a loop" at SEA Blue this year, sharing that in the past some people

were confused when she picked up and wore her "warrior" event T-shirt because of age. This will be Farley's first time running at SEA Blue as Iris and she plans to wear a trans flag-colored running dress. She has participated in three other SEA Blue events prior to her transition.

"Here's the hard part: I've moved on, I don't want to think about my prostate anymore, but I still have to think about prostate health because it's super-important," explained Albaugh of one of the challenges within the trans community surrounding prostate cancer and getting screened. "That's a difficult thing. It's monumentally important for that community."

For more information on Us T00, visit [ustoo.org/Home](http://ustoo.org/Home).

To learn more about SEA Blue, visit [ustoo.rallybound.org/sea-blue-2021/](http://ustoo.rallybound.org/sea-blue-2021/).



2017 SEA Blue event.  
Photo by Nicole Farley

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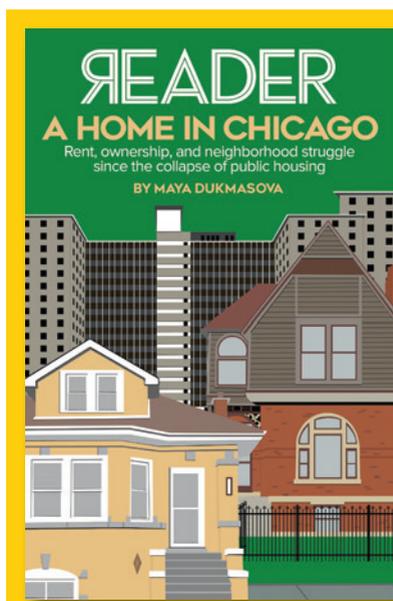
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Frank Ferrante in Teatro ZinZanni.  
Photo courtesy of Broadway in Chicago



## FALL THEATER PREVIEW

# ALL TOGETHER IN ONE ROOM: Indoor theater returns

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

Two years ago, September would have been greeted by a cluster of opening nights—sometimes as many as three overlapping the same evening—to signal the entrance of the bright-lights-and-glamour CHICAGO THEATER SEASON. This year is 2021, however, and just as its Fourth of July marked the beginning, not the middle, of summer (Memorial Day? Who remembers? Did we have one?), the buzz-and-bustle we remember won't hit its stride until the post-Halloween holidays.

Don't settle back on the couch just yet, though! Labor Day 2021 still welcomes opportunities to shake the dust off your fancy duds and re-acclimate to the dazzle of indoor shows delivering the kind of experience you can't get staring at a screen.

Check with individual theaters for safety policies, bring a mask—oh, and be kind to your fellow audience members (especially the tourists). It's been a long haul for everybody.

### OPENING and REOPENING:

—**Mr. Burns, A Post-Electric Play:** Theater Wit, Sept. 8-Oct. 3: The photos may hint at a raucous romp for fans of *The Simpsons*, but Anne Washburn's multi-layered narrative dwells in an apocalypse bereft of grid media or print libraries, with only ancient oral tradition providing a source for its myths. Details: TheaterWit.org

—**Twilight: Los Angeles 1992:** Fleetwood-Jourdain Theatre at Noyes Cultural Art Center in Evanston, Sept. 11-Sept. 26: His name was Rodney King, his brutal beating was the first ever to be broadcast on national television, and Anna Deavere Smith's solo show, starring Jazzma Pryor, recounts its aftermath in the words of those who witnessed it. Details: FJtheatre.com

—**Thirteen Days:** City Lit Theatre at Edgewater Presbyterian Church, Sept. 10-Oct. 24: On October 16, 1962, the United States held its breath while men in Washington—played by an all-female cast in this production—decided whether what historians now call the Cuban Missile Crisis would usher in Armageddon. Details: CityLit.org

—**Golden Girls: The Lost Episodes, Volume 5—SEX:** Hell in a Handbag Productions, Sept. 19-Oct. 23: David Cerda's irrepressible drag-dowagers explore the "naughty" side of geriatric erotica amid the site-specific surroundings of the Chicago Leather Museum and Archives. Details: Handbagproductions.org

—**Last Night In Karaoke Town:** Factory Theater, Sept. 24-Nov. 6: The oldest karaoke bar in Cleveland has one night to stop the invasion of gentrification, and Factory Theater was only a few weeks into its run when Covid shut their play down—if you want everything to end happily, prepare to sing "Don't Stop Believing" as loud as you can. Details: TheFactoryTheater.com

### CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC

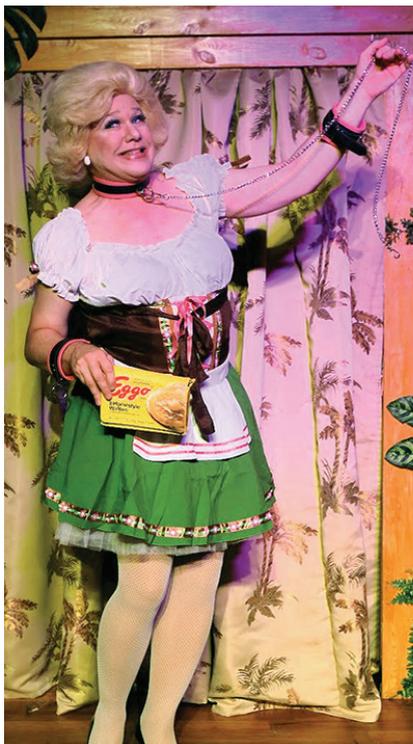
—**Kinky Boots:** Paramount Theatre in Aurora, running through Oct. 17: Aurora's oasis-for-the-arts landed the rights to one of the first regional productions of Harvey Fierstein and Cindi Lauper's tale of two country cobblers whose footgear (in the words of its rousing chorus) changed the world by changing minds. Details: ParamountAurora.com

—**The Things I Could Never Tell Steven:** PrideArts Broadway, running through Sept. 19: Steven's gone missing, leaving his mother, father, wife and ex-boyfriend to wonder about the motives behind his flight in this musical symposium by Australian composer Jye Bryant making its North American premiere. Details: PrideArts.org

—**The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace/Petticoats and Sliderules:** Third Eye Theatre Ensemble at Edge Theatre, Sept. 17-Oct 3. The company that brought us the love story of early-American settlers Patience and Sarah now presents a double-bill of operas celebrating two barrier-breaking women of science. Details: ThirdEyeTe.com

—**Songs For A New World:** Theo Ubique at the Howard Street Theater (technically in Evanston, but cross the street and you're in Chicago), Sept. 27-Oct. 24: Courage, hope and I-can-do-this determination are built into the very premise of Jason Robert Brown's anthology of anthems for pilgrims embarking on uncertain futures. Details: Theo-U.com

—**American Mariachi:** Goodman Theatre, Sept. 30-Oct. 24: The Mexican mariachi is said to have power capable of pulling the aged and infirm back from the fog of dementia—but only if five young women with no previous instrumental training defy centuries-old cultural tradition to make the hitherto male-exclusive musical form



From left: Ed Jones, Grant Drager, David Cerda and Ryan Oates in *Hell in a Handbag Productions' The Golden Girls—The Lost Episodes*. Photos by Rick Aguilar Studios

their own. Arriba! Details: GoodmanTheatre.org

—**Songs For Nobodies:** Northlight Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, Oct. 1-Oct. 31: Judy Garland, Edith Piaf, Maria Callas, Patsy Kline and Billie Holiday stood tall in the spotlight, but they didn't stand alone. Bethany Thomas portrays the stars AND their support staff in Joanna Murray-Smith's solo revue. Details: Northlight.org

### JUST FOR STREAMERS

—**Sense and Sensibility:** Lifeline Theatre, Sept. 3-Oct. 31: Last spring's serialized Sherlock Holmes-in-skirts audiodrama proved so successful that the Lifeline scribes have crafted another miniseries, this one serving up the adventures of Jane Austen's penniless young singles in tea-time-sized episodes that you can enjoy at home. Details: LifelineTheatre.com

—**The Music Cure:** Misalliance Repertory Theatre, running through Oct. 31. After officially disbanding, the ShawChicago alumni rallied with this audioplay adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's satirical sketch involving politicians, financial scandals, quack doctors, nervous patients and a pianist with supernatural powers. Details: MisallianceRepertory.org

—**Three Short Plays by Tracy Letts:** Steppenwolf Theatre, Sept. 29-Oct. 3: The bill features three mini-plays by Pulitzer-prizewinning playwright Tracy Letts, anchored by a 10-minute debate in a diner between a pair of codgerly puppets voiced by William Peterson and Mike Nussbaum. Details: Steppenwolf.org

### FAMILIAR FRIENDS and DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIONS

—**Late Nite Catechism:** Greenhouse Theatre

Center, Sept. 10-Jan. 2022: It's been 28 years since it first opened, but our intrepid teaching sister (currently played by Jenna Steege) is still acquainting her flock—although strays are welcome, too—with the often ironic mysteries of the Catholic faith. Details: Nuns4Fun.com

—**Theatre ZinZanni:** Cambria Hotel, open run. When architects discovered a former Masonic Temple/Lecture Hall hidden in the upper floors of the 1926-vintage Oriental Theatre, it seemed only natural for a vaudeville/cabaret show encompassing acrobats, vocalists, old-school comedy and drinks to take up residence. Details: ZinZanni.com/chicago

—**Blue Man Group:** Briar Street Theatre, open run: In the quarter-century since the silent blue-faced stunt-aliens moved into Chicago's Lakeview district, generations of curious seekers have ventured into this leafy lane off Halsted Street in search of all-ages spectacle inspired by modern enigmas. Details: Ticketmaster.com

—**The Magic Parlour:** Palmer House Hilton, open run: Sequestered in a chamber deep in the gilded-age Palmer House, magic can sometimes grow scary, but Dennis Watkins always assures his audiences of their safety, even when the illusions involve nails, knives or Sharpies. Details: TheMagicParlourChicago.com

—**Out of the House Party:** Second City e.t.c. at Pipers Alley, running through Jan. 2: The training exercises that spawned an empire are back with new material gleaned from recent events. Also at Pipers Alley: She The People at the UP Comedy Club, running through Dec. 31. Details: SecondCity.com

*Coming later in the fall are three Shakespeares, a Broadway-bound work-in-progress and another dining-at-the-play extravaganza from theater aficionado and master chef Rick Bayless. Get vaccinated if you don't want to miss them.*



Jazzma Pryor stars in Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*. Photo courtesy of John Olson

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There are a million things to love about traveling the United States—from our sprawling national parks and historic coastal cities to tucked-away small towns and southern hospitality—but every once in a while we need to experience our people in our places.

As it turns out, there's queer fun to be found everywhere—in areas that you would never suspect, in fact—throughout the entire country. When planning your next “family”-friendly getaway, consider these welcoming attractions, establishments, events and gatherings in all 50 states and the nation's capital that exist by and for the LGBTQ+ community.

#### Alabama

Praise Him on high (before hitting a boozy brunch; wine is Jesus-approved, remember) at **Cornerstone Metropolitan Community Church** in Mobile, a predominately LGBTQ+ congregation led by lesbian pastor Rev. Sara Silles. Sunday service begins at 10:45 a.m. Arrive early for easy parking, visit the institution's welcome center and take a guided tour of the campus.

#### Alaska

Newly renovated **Mad Myrna's**, located in downtown Anchorage, hosts a wide range of LGBTQ+ events, including movie nights, drag and strip shows, karaoke and Pride pageants. This nightlife mainstay, along with queer dive bar **The Raven** just down the street, has provided last-frontier fabulousness for over two decades.

#### Arizona

A pair of well-worn cowboy boots and a bottle of sunscreen are all you'll need for a rugged, clothing-optional weekend at the all-male **Copper Cactus Ranch**, quietly nestled deep in the foothills of the Superstition Mountains in Queen Valley. Weekends feature bonfires, musical jam sessions, drum circles and body painting, among other activities that encourage boys to be boys.

#### Arkansas

Pet-friendly **Pond Mountain Lodge** is the longest continuously operating gay-owned resort in Eureka Springs where you can enjoy the great outdoors while hiking, fishing, swimming, picnicking and more. It's also become a queer wedding destination in the south since the landmark SCOTUS marriage-equality decision was handed down.

#### California

You may recognize lesbian-owned **Hicksville Trailer Palace** as the setting for Lana Del Rey's “White Dress” music video, but this dog-friendly, 21-and-older desert oasis in Joshua Tree hosts travelers in 11 individually designed vintage mini-mobile homes situated on seven acres flush with fun and games, including a ball pit, arcade, cornhole, putt-putt, a BB gun and archery range, shuffleboard, ping-pong and darts.

#### Colorado

Memorialize your road trip with fresh ink—maybe your route map or a memorable symbol—at LGBTQ+-owned **Pens & Needles Custom Tattoo Company**, voted Best Tattoo Shop in Colorado Springs.

#### Connecticut

Once you've quelled your hunger pangs with the **Traveler Restaurant's** classic dining options, like linguini and meatballs, pizza, fried seafood platters and BLTs, browse the stacks—of books, that is—to find your favorite LGBTQ+ authors or stories. This quaint country eatery in Union allows each person to take home up to three titles—for free—from the selection of thousands that line its walls.

#### Delaware

Frolic in the sand and surf on decidedly gay **Poodle Beach**—you'll find it at the far southern end of the Rehoboth Boardwalk near Queen Street (a bit on the nose, but what can ya do?)—before

# The U.S. of Gay

*51 ab-fab road-trip destinations and pit stops—one in each state and the District of Columbia—that are must sees and dos for out-and-proud wanderlusters*

BY MIKEY ROX

cleaning up and heading out for a night of queer revelry in this lively shore town with a rich LGBTQ+ history.

#### District of Columbia

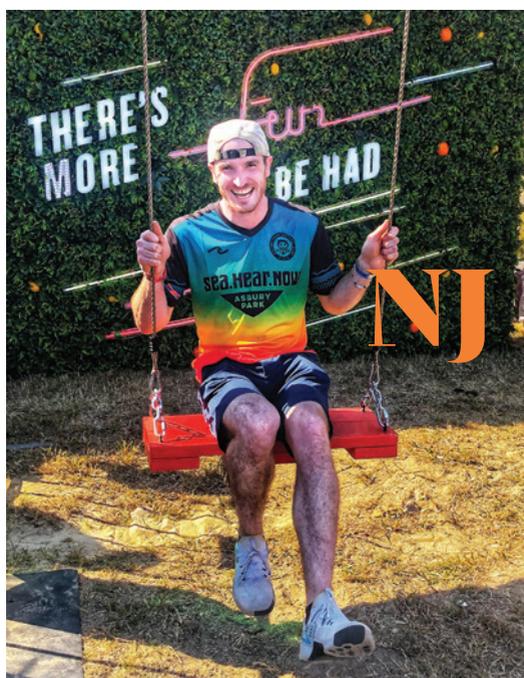
Queer or not, every American should pay a visit to **the Supreme Court**, judiciously located at 1 First Street in Washington, D.C., the battleground for many milestone equal-rights cases, including the game-changing *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which, in 2015, granted marriage rights to same-sex couples across the United States.

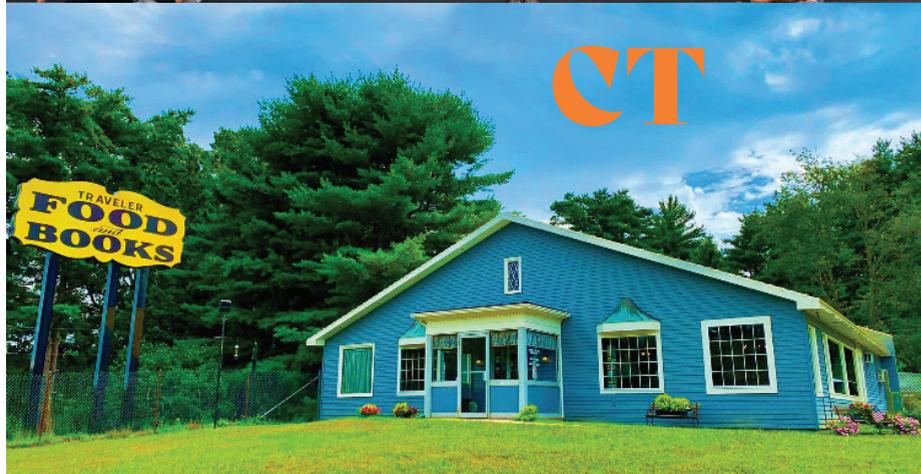
#### Florida

Dedicated solely to LGBTQ+ history, civil rights, art and culture, the **Stonewall National Museum and Archives** in Fort Lauderdale (with a branch in neighboring Wilton Manors) features three gallery spaces with changing monthly and bimonthly exhibits and includes a permanent timeline of American queer history.

#### Georgia

Strip down and relax in the steam room, sauna and pools of **FLEXSpas Atlanta**, a clothing-optional, membership-only men's bathhouse in Mid-





town that hosts weekly events like Bear & Daddy Night on Tuesdays, \$5 lockers on Wednesdays and a complimentary BBQ on Sundays from 2 to 6 p.m.

#### Hawaii

Join the **LGBTQ+ Honolulu FrontRunners/Walkers** every Saturday at 8:30 a.m. in Kapi'olani Park for a tourists-are-welcome sweat sesh around stunning Waikiki (\$10 for singles/\$15 for couples) before brunching with the group at a downtown restaurant, pit stains and all.

#### Idaho

You'll need to lace up your hiking boots to reach the two-miles-in-and-back **Goldbug Hot Springs**, the trailhead of which starts on BLM land just south of the Elk Bend community, but it'll be well worth your while when you slip out of your shorts and soak nude in natural pools of varying degrees, surrounded by picturesque scenery.

#### Illinois

Pay homage to the queer pioneers who blazed their own trails toward LGBTQ+ equality on a self-guided tour of the **Legacy Walk** in Chicago's Northalsted/Boystown neighborhood, the placards of which on the area's 40 rainbow-colored pylons honor our community's heroes, including Oscar Wilde, Frida Kahlo, Harvey Milk, Antonia Pantoja and Alvin Ailey.

#### Indiana

Put your name on the list at popular Bloomington distillery/bar/kitchen **Cardinal Spirits**, where you'll nosh on inspired (but affordable) dishes like lamb barbacoa tacos and gochujang tomato and cantaloupe gazpacho, sip on canned bourbon cream sodas and take home a bottle of its Indiana corn Pride vodka, 10 percent proceeds of which support local LGBTQ+ orgs.

#### Iowa

Stop for a photo op at the "**American Gothic**" cottage in Eldon, famously depicted in gay artist Grant Wood's oft-parodied same-name 1930 painting, which has since become an iconic example of 20th-century American art.

#### Kansas

With its rainbow-flag-painted façade, **Equality House**, a project of Planting Peace in Topeka, gained international notoriety (surely you saw the news stories; they were everywhere) when it revealed itself as a beacon of hope and equality against evil forces, specifically the anti-everything Westboro Baptist Church, which is right across the street.

#### Kentucky

Bourbon—but make it gay. That's your task as you bounce from one celebrated distillery to the next (most of which are within walking distance of each other along the Ohio River) in downtown Louisville. Stumble back and sleep it off at tobacco warehouse-turned-boutique hotel **Vu Guesthouse**.

#### Louisiana

Beat the oppressive New Orleans heat with a summertime treat at queer-women-owned **Chance in Hell SnoBalls**, a traveling winter-in-a-cup pop-up shop in the Bywater that serves frosty flavors like grape Nehi, pineapple-cilantro-chili, refreshing cucumber-cardamom-basil and ginger matcha.

#### Maine

When in Maine you order the lobster roll—given—but when dining at Ogunquit's gay-owned **The Front Porch** you have your pick of elevated seafood. Start with blue cheese mussels or the oyster trio before settling into entrees like lobster risotto or haddock tacos. When you're stuffed to the gills (fish pun intended), head upstairs to the restaurant's bar where you can sing along nightly to show tunes and standards around a grand piano (the pianists take requests), lit from above by fixtures fashioned from old hats.

#### Maryland

One of the last bastions of LGBTQ+ Baltimore nightlife (Charm City has lost most of its queer bars and hangouts in the past few years), the **Eagle**, which celebrates 30 years on the scene in 2021, has triumphed over financial ups and downs to keep its doors open to the leather and kink communities and those who love them. Pro-tip: Head to the Toolbox for all the what-happens-there-stays-there excitement you're seeking.

#### Massachusetts

Following the route of Boston's first Gay Pride March in 1971, the **Equality Trail walking tour** includes 13 sites around Beantown, including 81-year-old Bay Village gay bar Jacques, the police headquarters on Berkeley Street, the State House on Beacon Hill and St. Paul's Cathedral on Tremont Street, where, 50 years ago, peaceful protesters issued a list of civil-rights demands at each location.

#### Michigan

Test your pop-culture prowess at **Five15**, a retail shop with a stage (and bar) in downtown Royal Oak, on its drag queen trivia nights, the latest of which featured "Schitt's Creek"-centric questions. If memory games aren't your milieu, opt for less-skilled activities, like weekend drag bingos and the some-Sundays Drag Brunch Cook-out.

#### Minnesota

Friends of Dorothy can follow a yellow brick road (of sorts) to the **Judy Garland Museum**, established in the actress's birth town of Grand Rapids, where you'll learn about the troubled star's illustrious life and career, or, on a lucky day, attend a Garland-focused event, book signing, or festival.

#### Mississippi

Set sail for **Ship Island**, off the Gulf Islands National Seashore in Biloxi, in your private vessel, or hop aboard the public ferry in Gulfport from March to October. If you arrive in your own boat,

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Continued from page 13

anchor near Fort Massachusetts, swim ashore and make the trek on foot to the easternmost end of the isle for legal sunning and funning in the buff.

### Missouri

Foodies will get a crash course in late-18th-/early-19th-century U.S. cuisine from LGBTQ and James Beard semifinalist chef Rob Connoley, who presents a reservations-required, seven-course, Ozark-inspired tasting menu Thursdays to Sundays at **Bulrush** in St. Louis. Each meal includes staff explanations of the dishes, a history and QR code-accessible videos on the top-rated restaurant's research projects.

### Montana

Research will show that there's not much in the way of LGBTQ+-specific recreation in traditionally conservative Montana, but if you're traveling through Big Sky Country, consider a stop into **Missoula's Gay Men's Meeting at The Center**, held every Wednesday from 7 to 9 p.m.

### Nebraska

Belly up to the bar at **Omaha Mining Company**—an on-the-fringe gay watering hole that has, according to one Yelp reviewer, “existed since the 1960s between the Douglas County jail and urban blight” (though tighter parking has made the area much safer these days)—and order an ice-cold lager or similar no-nonsense libation before heading downstairs to the Mineshaft for pool tables and art. Every fourth Saturday of the month the Big O! Bears group hosts a growling good time.

### Nevada

After you've made your requisite donation to Las Vegas' glitzy casinos, ease the pain with a trip to the **Fruit Loop**, a cluster of gay bars and clubs along East Naples Drive, near the University of Nevada. **Badlands Saloon** and **Charlie's**, both country-western bars (this is the desert, after all), along with the **Las Vegas Eagle** and **Free-Zone** offer plenty of merriment without losing your ass—unless that's what you're into.

### New Hampshire

Dabble in the dark arts with a visit to the “magick retirement” cottage of bisexual British occultist and “Wickedest Man in the World” **Aleister Crowley**, whose four-month stay at this house in Hebron, owned by self-professed medium Evangeline Adams, resulted in myriad “secret and arcane” activities. If you're superstitious of the supernatural, there's a church conveniently located next door to cleanse your sassy soul.

### New Jersey

**Asbury Park**, a 1.6-square-mile city located on the northern Jersey Shore, has a long and sordid history—from disproportionately impoverished minority communities and race riots to political corruption and a severely underserved school system—but it has since overcome many of those obstacles to emerge as one of the most densely populated LGBTQ+ communities in the Mid-Atlantic. There's tons for you and your fey friends to do here, too. Shop for kitsch at **Severedwing**, belt

your signature tune on karaoke nights at **Georgie's**, enjoy a chef-prepared meal at **Hotel Tides**, dance poolside at **Paradise** and carryout an artisanal pizza from **Medusa Stone Fired Kitchen**, all of which are gay-owned and -operated (and just a sampling of the abundant LGBTQ+ businesses around town).

### New Mexico

Rest your weary head at the eponymous, **well-appointed house of** wealthy bisexual arts patron **Mabel Dodge Luhan**, now a National Historic Landmark and B&B in Taos, which has welcomed such visionaries as Georgia O'Keefe, D.H. Lawrence, Ansel Adams and Martha Graham.

### New York

Directly across the street from Manhattan's Stonewall Inn—the site of the June 28, 1969, Stonewall riots—is the **Stonewall National Monument**, designated as such by the National Park Service on June 24, 2016, which encompasses Christopher Park and the block of Christopher Street bordering the park in the West Village. Pop into the gift shop for a souvenir before entering the inn for cocktails and local oral history.

### North Carolina

Pick up a few cans of spray paint and head to the ever-changing **Free Expression Tunnel**, connecting the north and central campuses of North Carolina State University in Raleigh, where you can add your own progressive designs and messages that students and tourists alike can enjoy for years to come (or at least until another artist paints over them).

### North Dakota

If you're seeking more stimulating conversation on your gaycay than your travel partner is capable of providing (dull queers do exist, y'all), join the **Queerly Reading book and discussion club**, which meets every second Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in the Bismarck Barnes & Noble Café. Join its Facebook group for title selections and to contribute ideas.

### Ohio

Cleveland-based DJ Alan Freed is widely credited for coining the term “rock and roll” in the early 1950s—or, at the very least, popularizing it—so it's only fitting that the **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame** was born here, too. Inductees include many of your LGBTQ+ music idols, from Janis Joplin and Joan Jett to Freddie Mercury and Elton John.

### Oklahoma

Many queer folk got their first sensation of same-sex attraction by playing with shapely superheroes when they were kids (what future gay boy didn't pine for a peek under the Caped Crusader's codpiece?) and you can relive that age of innocence at the **Toy and Action Figure Museum**, filled to the brim with over 13,000 distinct characters and many mint-condition collectibles, located in Pauls Valley.

### Oregon

Portland-based **Wild Diversity** offers a full

slate of outdoors activities (that require advance reservations)—which include bird watching around Whitaker Pond, a two-day Willamette River paddling adventure, writers' retreats and a deaf community campout, among many others—specifically geared toward (but not limited to) BIPOC and QTBIPOC.

### Pennsylvania

Pay your respects by setting a can of Campbell's Soup beside the **final resting place of gay pop-art icon Andy Warhol**, whose gravesite at St. John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Cemetery in the town of Castle Shannon is broadcast 24/7 on his museum's website as part of a project called “Figmat.”

### Rhode Island

After a day of exploration in queer-friendly Providence—**The Stable**, **Mirabar** and **The Dark Lady** are known for their neighborly customer service—spend a night or two at the **Old Town Inn** in New Shoreham or Newport's **Francis Malbone House**, both gay-owned and secluded on nearby islands.

### South Carolina

In a walking city like Charleston you can spend an entire day sightseeing and one of the can't-miss photo ops is **Rainbow Row**, comprised of 13 brightly colored townhomes along East Bay Street on the Charleston Harbor. After you've fulfilled your daily step requirement, take a load off and relax with a crafty selection of Moscow mules at historic queer haunt **Dudley's on Ann**.

### South Dakota

**Club David** is as good as it gets for queer congregating in a state not exactly known for its LGBTQ+ progressiveness. Still, you'll manage to catch a penny-pinching buzz with nightly drinks specials (many of which are half-price) and occasional events like drag bingo on the rooftop patio.

### Tennessee

Throw your hands up as you barrel through the Thunderhead rollercoaster, stroll through the Chasing Rainbows Museum and tap your feet to the Dreamland Drive-In musical show at **Dollywood**, the namesake theme park of everybody's favorite LGBTQ+-lovin' glam-ma Dolly Parton, in Pigeon Forge.

### Texas

Download the 1956 Western film *Giant* to your tablet, open a bottle of wine, snuggle up in bed and press play in a stately room at Marfa's **Hotel Paisano**, which hosted LGBTQ+ icons Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean (in his final role) as they shot scenes for the flick in this charming Far West Texas town 66 years ago.

### Utah

Despite his Mormon upbringing, wanted **Wild West outlaw Butch Cassidy** might have been gay. Allegedly, his mother heard noises and wondered what he and his new cowboy friend Mike Cassidy, whose last name he eventually took, “were doing down by the corral.” (A mother always knows

what's up, doesn't she?) See where it all started with a visit to the thief-with-a-heart-of-gold's **humble boyhood abode** and poke around the family plot, located in Panguitch.

### Vermont

Fill a waffle cone with your favorite **Ben & Jerry's** flavor at its factory-based **Scoop Shop** in Waterbury before taking a saunter through the behind-the-building-and-up-the-hill Flavor Graveyard where discontinued pints, like *Schveddy Balls* and *Vermonty Python*, rest in peace. The confectionary connoisseurs are longtime supporters of the LGBTQ+ community, most recently celebrating International Transgender Day of Visibility.

### Virginia

Satisfy your sweet tooth at **Ruby Scoops**, a Black- and LGBTQ+-owned ice cream shop in Richmond's Brookland Park neighborhood, which serves up premium, small-batch, made-from-scratch ice creams, sorbets, sherbets and desserts in tantalizing taste combos like roasted pineapple/rosemary, strawberry/sweet red bean and guava daquiri, plus a few tried-and-true standards, too.

### Washington

Come for a haircut, stay for the coffee at Seattle-based **Squirrel Chops**, a queer-owned hybrid salon and café where you can kill two birds with one stone when you get a perm and your daily pick-me-up.

### West Virginia

Photo-capture rainbows in the mist as sunrays reflect off the tannic acid-darkened water of the 57-foot cascading **Blackwater Falls** in the Allegheny Mountains of Tucker County, then pitch a tent at the state park's campground for a night of slap-and-tickle under the stars.

### Wisconsin

Pizza and wine is a treasured culinary combo—at least for booze and junk-food enthusiasts (i.e. non-psychopaths)—and you'll find options aplenty at wife-and-wife-owned **Trouble and Sons** in Whitefish Bay, where you also can order fresh salads to trick yourself into feeling healthy while getting fat and happy.

### Wyoming

You may have trouble finding the exact spot where **Matthew Shepard** was brutally beaten and left to die by two homophobes in 1998, as it remains unmarked to this day, but a **memorial bench on the University of Wyoming campus in Laramie** serves as a sufficient spot to remember our modern-day martyr.

*Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBT lifestyle expert whose work has been published in more than 100 outlets across the world. He's currently traveling across the country in his van, seeking queer excitement everywhere he roams. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @mikey-roxtravels*

All photos courtesy of the sources.

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# WHEN FREEDOM RINGS, ANSWER

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# Pride Journey: Colorado Springs

BY JOEY AMATO

Did you know that Colorado Springs is also known as Olympic City U.S.A.? Neither did I. Not only is the city home to the U.S. Olympic Training Center, but Colorado Springs recently celebrated the grand opening of the **U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum**, a stunning state-of-the-art building showcasing the history of the Olympic games as well as athletes that competed. The 60,000 square-foot facility focuses on the core values of the Olympic and Paralympic movements: friendship, respect and excellence, determination, equality, inspiration, and courage. The museum was voted “Best New Attraction” by USA Today and it’s easy to see why.

Visitors enter a grand lobby and take an elevator to the top level of the building where they can view a chronological history of the Olympic and Paralympic torches, medals, and other items. The museum is divided between the summer and winter games and the self-guided tour includes an emotional video highlighting the greatest U.S. Olympic triumphs as well as some struggles Team U.S.A. has faced along the way.

The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum is within walking distance from the new **Kinship Landing hotel**, so it is well worth the visit. After a morning at the museum, grab a quick bite at the hotel’s restaurant, Home Café + Bar. I ordered the North Park sandwich, consisting of roasted pork, caramelized onions, banana peppers and served with a black garlic aioli. It was a messy, but delicious way to begin my stay at Kinship Landing.

The hotel is meant to be a gathering place. Many spaces in the lobby are designed so guests can mingle and socialize with each other. The hotel gears towards a younger, more adventurous traveler who is looking to make friends and create wonderful memories along the way. This is no way means the hotel skimps on luxury. The bed was probably one of the most comfortable I’ve slept on.

A brief 15-minute ride from the property is the **Cheyenne Mountain Zoo**, which was recently voted one of the best zoos in the country. While the setting is truly breathtaking, the zoo itself was a bit challenging to navigate. There were a few times my guest and I had to back track and ask zoo staff for directions as some of the exhibits weren’t clearly marked. Some of my favorite areas of the zoo included the penguin habitat as well as the Australian exhibit. Visitors can also purchase unique experiences including the chance to feed elephants and giraffes.

For dinner, head over to **Paravicini’s Italian Bistro**, an old-school Italian restaurant located in Old Colorado City, or “OCC” as the locals call it. The restaurant was featured on an episode of Guy Fieri’s Diners, Drive-ins & Dives, and I can

now see why Fieri was so in love with this place. The chicken marsala and side of penne Bolognese were prepared to perfection. I wasn’t expecting a great Italian meal in Colorado, but I sure got one.

Colorado Springs is home to two LGBTQ bars, **Club Q** and **ICONS**. Although I didn’t have a chance to visit Club Q, I did swing by ICONS, which is located in the heart of downtown. The piano bar is probably one of the best LGBTQ bars I’ve been to in recent memory, not only for the theme, but also the friendliness of the staff and quality of the cocktails. The venue opened in 2020 and features a talented group of bartenders, who also perform throughout the evening, singing a variety of music from old standards to more recent hits from icons including Whitney Houston and Lady Gaga.

The next part of my trip focused on wellness and nature. I began the morning with an incredible yoga class from **Dragonfly Paddle Yoga** where we did yoga on a paddleboard in the middle of a lake. Get ready to engage your core muscles for this one, or you will be drenched before class is over. The class meets at the boat ramp of a man-made lake near downtown and paddles to an alcove surrounded by lush trees, with mountains soaring in the background. At first, I was hesitant to try to stand on the paddleboard, but as time went on, I gained confidence in my yoga skills (or lack thereof) and was able to stand and perform yoga poses on the paddleboard. Some were more challenging than others, but I did get a fabulous workout while enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

After grabbing a light snack and latte from Loyal Coffee located directly across from Kinship Landing, head to **the Cog Railway** and prepare to ascend to an elevation of over 14,000 feet to the top of **Pike’s Peak**. The entire journey takes a little over an hour but is well worth it. The view from Pike’s Peak is spectacular and was said to be the inspiration for the song “America the Beautiful.” The original railway opened in 1891 and was recently restored, making it the highest in the United States and longest cog railway in the world. Bring your camera for this journey!

End your vacation in Colorado Springs with a visit to the **Garden of the Gods Resort and Club**. Located just 15-minutes from downtown, the resort is positioned on the edge of Garden of the Gods Park and the view is nothing short of extraordinary. Guests can dine on the mesa while watching the sunset over the mountains or wake up early for some sunrise meditation.

As soon as I arrived at the hotel, I went for a walk around the property and was overwhelmed by the sheer beauty of the resort and the park itself. My room featured two queen size beds and an enormous bathroom with walk-in shower and separate soaking tub. I really didn’t spend much time there as I was too busy enjoying the natural



Joey Amato at Pike’s Peak.  
Photos courtesy of Amato

wonders.

After a few days spent touring the city, I was most excited about my treatments at **STRATA Integrated Wellness and Spa**. I began my spa day with Functional Neurology, a complex science which uses signals from the body to reset the brain. The alternative treatment is used to properly align the body’s musculoskeletal structure and restore mobility. It’s like a combination of chiropractic and touch therapy. Speaking of touch therapy, I had the chance to experience a wonderful treatment in which the therapist used her hands to help treat aches and pains. I wasn’t sure what to expect, but the treatment was quite relaxing and something I would do again. I was able to feel the heat and energy from her hands as she ever so slightly touched problem areas.

My favorite treatment of the day however was the Royal Thai Poulitice Massage, an 80-minute

experience which combines an organic herbal poultice with Thai stretching, and aromatherapy. How’s that for a day of pampering?

Begin the following morning with Breathwork and Mindfulness on the mesa led by the STRATA’s wellness coach Kelly Stoinski. It’s rare that I have a chance to slow down, especially in the morning, but this was a perfect way to end an incredible visit.

Colorado Springs is a great place for LGBTQ travelers seeking a combination of outdoor adventures as well as city life. While the city itself isn’t as large as its neighbor to the north, it is very walkable, easy to navigate and everything you need to experience is within a 15–20-minute drive from the airport.

To book your Colorado Springs gaycation, visit [Orbitz.com/Pride](http://Orbitz.com/Pride).

Enjoy the journey!



Amato (third from right) participating in Dragonfly Paddle Yoga.

# Get Out!

## LGBTQ travelers show how to travel safely this fall

BY ED SALVATO, COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LGBT MEDIA ASSOCIATION

Just when we thought it was safe to hit the road, we were walloped by the Delta variant, the latest plot twist in the 18-month-and-counting pandemic story. The surprising data that fully vaccinated people could transmit the virus came shockingly from Provincetown with a 90% vaccination rate. Ptown quickly tightened restrictions requiring masking at all indoor locations and proof of vaccine at all entertainment venues — interventions that worked. As of press time, the positivity rate there is much lower than much of the rest of the U.S. and it remains one of our top recommendations this fall and beyond. Ptown demonstrated a successful response — stressing safety yet continuing to deliver a deeply satisfying experience.

Read on for our favorite queer-friendly destinations striving to create a safe space for you and strategies for navigating the increasingly complex world of pandemic travel. Safe, beautiful and fun LGBTQ-friendly destinations, experiences and accommodations beckon whether you seek to recharge your batteries, deplete them or a little of both.

### Queer and safe destinations

**Provincetown, Mass.** is our very own home beyond the rainbow as suggested by this year's Carnival theme. Book far ahead for popular weeks (July 4; Bear Week; and Carnival) but we recommend visiting outside of the most popular times for a less frantic more enjoyable stay. There are diverse LGBTQ-oriented events almost every weekend through New Year's. Eve Information: Provincetown Business Guild (<https://ptown.org>) and Provincetown for Women ([www.provincetownforwomen.com](http://www.provincetownforwomen.com)).

**Fort Lauderdale and Miami** remain the beating heart of LGBTQ-friendly Florida despite the barbaric state-level response causing the Sunshine State to be among the worst-hit in the U.S. by the pandemic. Fort Lauderdale has been world-renowned for its authentic and inclusive vibe for all visitors since 1996. Over 1,000 local businesses have taken the Safe & Clean Pledge ([www.sunny.org/travel-resources/safe-clean-pledge/](http://www.sunny.org/travel-resources/safe-clean-pledge/)). Likewise, Miami has implemented the Greater Miami Travel Guidelines and Destination Pledge accessible from the destination's home-

page <https://www.miamiandbeaches.com/travelguidelines>, outlining how safety measures are being implemented throughout the community.

**Puerto Rico** is the undisputed LGBTQ capital of the Caribbean, enticing visitors with reliably warm, sunny weather and a sincere outreach to queer travelers. Despite unfortunate, highly publicized attacks on local transgender people, Puerto Rico boasts a visible and vibrant trans community, and nightlife options that specifically cater to queer and non-binary folks. This helps

create a safer and more comfortable environment than other warm-weather destinations in the Caribbean or Mexico, which lack venues for a trans community that mostly lives in hiding. Discover Puerto Rico at [www.discoverpuertorico.com/things-to-do/lgbtq-travel](http://www.discoverpuertorico.com/things-to-do/lgbtq-travel)

**Philadelphia, Pa.** makes for a fun urban week-end getaway. Once the kids are back in school and the lines at the Liberty Bell disappear, you'll find a warm, walkable and LGBTQ-welcoming city. Find LGBTQ restaurants, safe nightlife, engaging events and recommendations galore at Visit Philly ([www.visitphilly.com/lgbt/](http://www.visitphilly.com/lgbt/)). Pro tip: Try to schedule a half-day at the Barnes Foundation ([www.barnesfoundation.org](http://www.barnesfoundation.org)) art collection.

**Cedar Rapids, Iowa.** Wait, what? Yep, this charming Midwestern town is our top unexpected recommendation. You'll find historic cultural venues, a walkable entertainment district with plenty of top-notch live music and theatrical performances, a delectable culinary scene and a truly warm welcome. Find trip-planning recommendations at the destination's website, [www.tourismcedarrapids.com/lgbtq/](http://www.tourismcedarrapids.com/lgbtq/).

### Queer cruises and land vacations

Cruises are coming back, and it may be surprising to hear that they are probably the safest vacation you can take. According to Randle

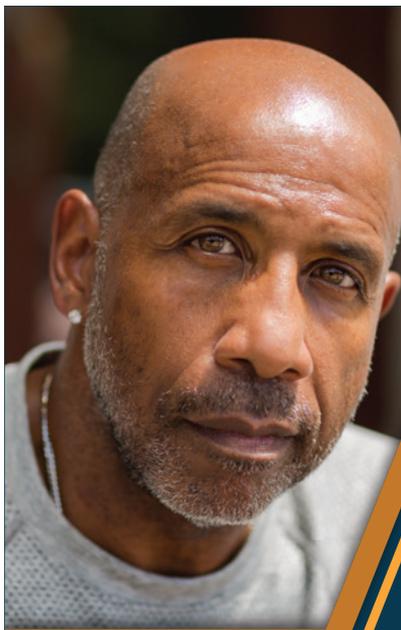
Roper, CEO at **VACAYA**, an LGBTQ+ vacation company, "[w]ith cruise lines soon to mandate that all guests and crew members must be vaccinated, cruise ships will be among the very safest locations on the planet, with the entire population vaccinated. Making sensible choices like masking and social distancing while ashore, cruisers can avoid infection altogether." Resort vacations are also safe with similar universal vaccinations and plenty of room for guests to spread out. Remember with no children during LGBTQ weeks at mainstream resorts, they offer much more space per adult guest. VACAYA's big 2021 fall events include their all-inclusive Mexico Resort vacation (Oct. 30 - Nov. 6) and their New Orleans Cruise (Nov. 14-22). In 2022, there are only two trips that still have rooms available as of press time: their Caribbean Cruise (Jan. 10-17) and their all-inclusive Costa Rica Resort (Jun. 5-12). Information and booking at [www.myvacaya.com](http://www.myvacaya.com).

Not only will queer tour companies get you there and back safely, but "they also can ensure your money is being spent with other welcoming, progressive and even queer business and individuals around the world," according to Robert Sharp, founder of Out Adventures ([www.outadventures.com](http://www.outadventures.com)). "This is even more important," he continues, "when planning travel to countries

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Diving off the Seychelles is but one adventure awaiting from VACAYA Cruises. Photo courtesy of VACAYA



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that are known to be less than queer welcoming.” Visit their site to read about their New Year’s Eve trips to Thailand and Cuba and in 2022, their Iceland Winter trip, and four back-to-back Croatia small group cruises, which are starting to sell out.

**R Family Vacations** is one of our top recommendations for planning an incredibly fun and satisfying tour or cruise (big ship and river cruises) in the company of other queer travelers and allies. You don’t even have to have children to join their trips. In 2022, R Family offers land tours in Thailand and Ireland; an LGBTQ group on board a cruise in Alaska; and a magical all-queer full-ship-charter Uniworld river cruise in Northern Italy among other trips. More information available at [www.rfamilyvacations.com](http://www.rfamilyvacations.com).

### Expert LGBTQ travel advisors are standing by to help you. And they’re free!

Even in this uncertain time, you can enjoy enriching and joyful travel opportunities in LGBTQ-friendly environments in a way that maximizes safety and minimizes risk. You just have to plan a little more. We highly recommend using an LGBTQ expert travel advisor who keeps up to date on LGBTQ-friendly tour, cruise and safari providers, as well as destinations and hotels and who understand innately the needs and concerns of LGBTQ travelers. They dedicate themselves to both LGBTQ travel safety and keeping up with the latest, ever-shifting pandemic-era guidance, health protocols, openings, and closings. They know how to get the best value for your time and money, and, thanks to their global connections, they can often score VIP upgrades for you at hotels, on cruise lines, on tours, and more. They are

also your most important advocate when trips are cancelled or rescheduled. Best of all clients use travel advisors, like our top picks here, for no additional fees:

—**Kelli Carpenter**, who also co-owns R Family Vacations; [Kcarpenter@tzell.com](mailto:Kcarpenter@tzell.com)

—**Jonathan Alder**, Travelstore USA; [Jonathan.a@jonathanstravels.us](mailto:Jonathan.a@jonathanstravels.us)

—**Sandie Anders**; Bursch Travel; [Sandiea@burschtravel.com](mailto:Sandiea@burschtravel.com)

—**Giuseppe Giulio**; Gay Friendly Italy; [giuseppe@gay.it](mailto:giuseppe@gay.it)

### Choose LGBTQ-welcoming accommodations

We’ve heard far too many stories of queer guests receiving a frosty welcome (or worse) when checking into a hotel or AirBnB. These are our top choices for LGBTQ-friendly resources for accommodations where you can truly relax and be your authentic selves:

—**MisterBnB** [www.misterbandb.com](http://www.misterbandb.com) includes one million LGBTQ-friendly listings in 200 countries and is primarily geared towards gay men.

—**FabStayz** <https://fabstayz.com> proudly offers accommodations inclusive of all the letters of our ever-growing acronym.

—**Orbitz Pride** [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com) lists LGBTQ-friendly accommodations

—**Booking.com** is rolling out an LGBTQ certification program—including live training and ancillary materials—for their hotel partners over the next year. Look for the “Proud Hospitality” label on listings.

*NYC-based Ed Salvato is a freelance travel writer, instructor at NYU and the University of Texas at Austin’s NYC Center, and an LGBTQ tourism marketing specialist.*

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**October 11:** Ethan Lim of Hermosa

See [chicagoreader.com/food-drink/](http://chicagoreader.com/food-drink/) for weekly menus and ordering info



Revelers in Provincetown.  
Photo by Ed Salvato

# Feds expand insurers' requirements for PrEP coverage

BY MATT SIMONETTE

Insurers and service-providers have until September to comply with a new federal guidance requiring insurance companies to cover the entire cost of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) interventions.

Many insurers have been covering the cost of PrEP medication, widely available as the pills Truvada or Descovy, for several years. Truvada became available in a generic formulation in 2020, and U.S. insurers have been prevented from charging co-pays for PrEP since the beginning of 2021.

But one aspect of PrEP has remained daunting for some community members unable to access comprehensive coverage through insurance or assistance programs: Paying for additional lab work or even follow-up medical visitations that a PrEP prescription requires. Those requirements could be "bracing" for some patients, according to activist Jim Pickett, who is at AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC).

"If you have insurance, that insurance must cover PrEP in full, and 'PrEP on full' means not just the prescription," said Pickett. "It means the office visits, the lab tests, any kind of counseling—all those things need to be covered completely. So that's a huge win."

PrEP was given a "Grade A" rating by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, an independent panel that issues recommendations about clinical preventative services. Under Affordable Care Act guidelines, that rating means insurers have to pay for PrEP services in full. The federal government issued the guidance July 19, and Illinois issued a follow-up about the state's implementation of the rule July 29.

"People often seemed to have everything covered, and then might get a lab bill," Pickett said. "Every insurance plan has different ways that they provide services or refuse services. There's not a lot of plans that up front will say that they will [pay for] a set of labs for you every three months. So people might get a [first] set of labs and it's okay, and then six months in, they get hit with hundreds of dollars in a lab bill."

Care providers generally recommend bloodwork, mainly to monitor kidney functions, every three months for persons using PrEP.

Pickett added, "There are a lot of programs in Chicago that try to find support [to avoid financial surprises] so people can still move forward and aren't left hanging, but any time any kind of friction like that comes up in the system, it's a huge deterrent. Getting an \$800 bill is obviously a real deterrent."

PrEP adoption has increased in recent years. PrEP has been a central focus in the state's Getting to Zero initiative, which aims to reduce new HIV transmissions to "virtual zero" by the year 2030. Pickett said that it is too early to determine whether PrEP use has been on an upward-

or downward-swing since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold. While some PrEP users might not have seen the point of continuing to use their medication when they were relatively isolated and having less sex, some providers eased access since so much of the work can be done via tele-health visits and at-home testing.



Jim Pickett.  
LinkedIn photo

"We're still in the middle of it all," Pickett added. "We've had waves [of COVID transmissions], but obviously this ain't over. ... We'll have a better look at what goes on with COVID and PrEP as time goes on and we have more data. It's just the middle of 2021, and 2020 is when the whole shit-house came down. Oftentimes, we need a year out to see things better."

The PrEP landscape is likely to change even more in the months ahead. Researchers have been looking into administering the drug cabotegravir through injection as a PrEP intervention (as well as an injectable HIV treatment when combined with rilpivirine). Pickett has long spoken of a day when HIV-negative people might choose from a "menu" of PrEP options that best suited their particular situation: Persons who expect difficulty adhering to a strict pill regimen might choose a long-lasting injectable option that only needs to be administered every few months, for example. Less sexually active people already can use a "PrEP on demand" protocol to guard against transmission when they anticipate an encounter.

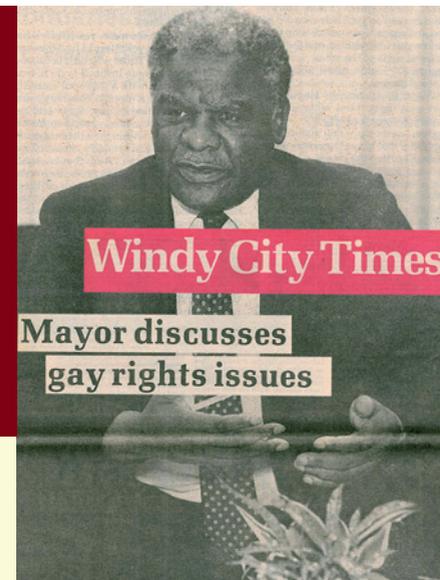
Pickett added, "What I'm really interested in are multi-purpose technologies. Imagine an injection or an implant that also protects against other STI's. Also, this is coming soon: a dual pill that has contraception and HIV-prevention. You take one pill and you don't have to worry about unwanted pregnancy and you don't have to worry about HIV."

He added though, that advocates and providers shouldn't get overly excited about "the new shiny thing," since getting these medications and technologies to the people who need them is where systems tend to fall apart.

"Our health care system is confusing and is filled with friction," Pickett said. "It's filled with challenges. We make people jump through hoops and backflips with their insurance, assistance programs and pharmacy benefits. ... You can have the best technology in the world, but if you make it hard to get, and make people deal with paper, bureaucracy and waiting, guess what? It's not going to happen. We need a system focused on individuals."

## Mayor Harold Washington: His LGBTQ+ Legacy

Wed., Oct. 13, 6-8 p.m.  
Center on Halsted  
3656 N. Halsted  
FREE



### Part of a series of events marking late CHICAGO MAYOR WASHINGTON'S 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY

Featuring LGBTQ+ advocates discussing Washington's role in the city's gay-rights ordinance, HIV/AIDS, appointing the first mayor's liaison to the gay and lesbian community, the first gay and lesbian advisory council, and more.

**MCs**  
Kim Hunt &  
Channyn Lynne Parker



**SPEAKERS**  
Sen. Mike Simmons  
& Tracy Baim



#### PANEL: Washington's Campaign and Outreach

Peggy Baker  
Ann Christophersen  
Moderator: Mona Noriega



#### PANEL: Advocacy for the Gay-Rights Bill During Washington's Tenure

Laurie Dittman  
Rick Garcia  
Art Johnston  
Moderator: Mary Morten



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