

A photograph of a man with a grey beard and mustache, wearing an orange t-shirt with a Godzilla logo, holding a microphone to a large, dark, textured Godzilla puppet. The puppet has a fierce expression with white eyes and a wide, toothy mouth. In the background, a sign with the word "EXIT" is visible. The overall scene is set indoors, likely at a convention.

EXIT READER

Swimming in the atomic waters of the largest Godzilla convention on earth

On the reptilian superstar, family, and other monsters.

By KATIE PROUT 18

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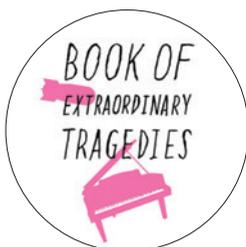
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A NOTE ON THIS WEEK'S COVER STORY

UNTIL THIS SUMMER, I hadn't been to G-Fest since 2004, when I was 16 and brought my high school best friend. My dad filmed that one, at one point catching my friend punching me in the arm, hard, while we all waited in line to see *Terror of Mechagodzilla* (1975). I wouldn't remember this incident except for that it's on film, one that my brothers have watched repeatedly, the punch growing stronger, more

violent in their mind. My friend had been complaining about the line and the people in it and called it all stupid. I told her she "wasn't a real G-Fan," and then she punched me. It's strange that something that was a non-incident to me got under their skin, made them feel righteous anger, a desire for understanding and, possibly, revenge. —KATIE PROUT, STAFF WRITER

CORRECTION: An article published in the June 21, 2022, issue, "On the south side, a quest to keep Black baseball alive," incorrectly stated Lewis Dean was a sophomore in the 2021-22 school year; he was a junior.



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STREET VIEW

Nothing to hide

A sex-positive outfit serving Barbiecore vibes

By ISA GIALLORENZO

Clothing reseller Sasha Smith, 20, claims to dress like a “pink 2000s bimbo Harajuku ballerina.” She’s inspired by dolls, the Playboy universe, and the now-defunct Japanese street style magazine *FRUITS*.

The day she was photographed, Smith was headed to a hangout with a friend. She was covered head to toe in her favorite rosy hue,

wearing a top sprinkled with hearts and a daring neckline.

Smith’s look was a harmonious mix of sweet and sexy vibes, in keeping with her daring yet cute aesthetic. Her style on that day was also evocative of Barbiecore, a current trend inspired by the Barbie doll. Not one to shy away from sensual pieces, Smith

affirms she’s never been a modest person. “I feel most confident and comfortable when I’m not hiding my body under baggy clothes,” she says. “I wear what I want to make myself feel good.” 

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Sasha Smith's look embodies some of the principles of the très summer 2022 trend Barbiecore—pink, flirty, with a bit of sass.  ISA GIALLORENZO



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A stack of sorullitos; ingredients ready to be ground into sofrito © BERNARDO MEDINA

FEATURE

Bernardo Medina's *Sofrito Manifesto* slaps like a flip-flop

The San Juan-based "Jibarito Pop" artist honors granny food in Humboldt Park.

By MIKE SULA

Bernardo Medina's mother chased him into art with a foam rubber flip-flop.

"Latina mothers call it a chancleta," says Medina, a San Juan, Puerto Rico-based pop artist and publicist. "It is the weapon that they use against you as a kid. I was very hyper, and since there were no medications for it, it was my mother's slipper."

As a lad in the rural northern coastal town of Hatillo, Medina knocked over a porcelain sheep and shepherd from his mother's prized Lladró nativity scene, and Medina's older sister Millie pronounced him dead. "My sister told me, 'She is gonna kill you physically,' so

I ran outside and climbed a breadfruit tree." Medina's mother stationed herself at the base, slipper in hand, and he was only spared the wrath of the chancleta after his father argued for clemency.

His parents thought they'd found a productive outlet for that kind of energetic "lack of precaution" by enrolling him in art class, where he produced his first bodegón, a simple still life of an apple and a book. But before long Medina began to disrupt class as well, rendering the fruit in impossible patterns and colors, eventually painting entirely imaginary varieties.

Medina, now 60, is still creating wild bo-

degónes, some of which are hanging for a few more days in Humboldt Park at the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture. "The Sofrito Manifesto" is a pop-up exhibition featuring 62 photographs from Medina's sprawling 250-page tribute to the cooking of his late abuelas. It's a hefty, bilingual coffee-table-sized tome full of recipes, and stories by his sister Emilia, aka Millie; it's all illustrated with eye-popping food photography, paintings, and pull-out posters rendered in Medina's defining style, which he calls "Jibarito Pop."

On the island, no one thinks of Chicago's iconic plantain sandwich when the word

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"jibarito" is invoked. Medina's never heard of it, let alone eaten one. The word originally means "little hillbilly," and in most circles it's a pejorative, unless you're Medina, who has come to embrace it as a "reaffirmation of the pride and beauty of my roots."

Medina is the president of Kroma, the commercial marketing agency he founded 20 years ago after a career bouncing between



Bernardo Medina with an armful of plantains
PEPE PEREZ CENTENO

the island, New York, Connecticut, and Luxembourg.

As an undergrad studying theater at the University of Puerto Rico, “I was very into musicals,” he says. “I want to produce shows and make money, and to my classmates I was extremely capitalist. So I didn’t belong there. And then I studied business and to the faculty I was a hippie. Getting into art and defining Jibarito Pop was a self-discovery process of fighting with my peers, my colleagues, and myself.”

Medina’s exhibited his artwork in New York, Madrid, Havana, Miami, San Juan, and now Chicago, where “The Sofrito Manifesto” hangs until August 13, after which it moves on to New York, Boston, Miami, and D.C.

It launched in early June with a Janellie’s Kitchen-catered spread of frituras: “all the fried foods,” including tostones, bacalaitos, empanadillas, sorullitos, piononos, and alcapurrias—the beef-stuffed plantain fritters whose *Sofrito Manifesto* recipe is illustrated with a photo spread of a ravishing, designer-clad couple foreplaying a romp in an an-

tique hotel suite with this iconic street food.

“You don’t eat alcapurrias in that environment,” says Medina. “It’s not made with caviar. It’s made with ground beef by a granny.”

Neither of his grannies ever cooked from recipes, but they cooked all day, every day, with produce they grew themselves. On his maternal side in particular, Abuela Inés Alonso Montijo cooked farm-to-table long before it was a marketing concept—say, scraping out a backyard coconut and extruding its milk, instead of buying a can for the jiggy pudding known as tembleque.

“She did everything with her bare hands and her brain,” says Medina. “It was a lot of code words.” “Un poquito de sal” for a pinch of salt; “un chinchin de sal” for a smaller pinch.

Medina and his sister wrote 50 recipes based on their abuelas’ cooking, combing through boxes of notes, clippings, and mementoes, and sitting down at kitchen tables with cousins and aunts back in Hatillo.

Medina summoned all the powers of his public-relations firm and assembled and printed 2,000 copies, of which there are about 500

left. He titled it for the diverse seasoning foundation of the food of Puerto Rico (and most of Latin America). “Sofrito is an alliance of six ingredients: garlic, culantro, cilantro, onions, and sweet and hot peppers”; they are disparate elements that form the base of a dish, much in the way different media comprise the book.

After “The Sofrito Manifesto” closes, Medina’s returning to Chicago this fall to collaborate with the artist Josue Pellot and the design studio 408 Fabrication on an outdoor mural somewhere on Pulaski Avenue in Hermosa. In the meantime he’s working on *The Sofrito Manifesto 2: Cocktails, Beverages, and Drinks*, the second in a planned series of volumes and an epic Jibarito Pop undertaking motivated as much by his sense of capitalism as his sense of home. “My son wants to be an oncologist,” he says. “He’s gonna study ten years. This book and the other eight that I produce are the way that I’m gonna raise the freaking half a million dollars to call my son Dr. Medina.”

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Louis Sullivan's Getty Tomb in Graceland Cemetery  ADAM SELZER

ON CULTURE

Walking with the dead

Adam Selzer's new book digs up the stories at Graceland Cemetery.

By **DEANNA ISAACS**

When Anne Ford interviewed Adam Selzer for the *Reader* in 2014, it was all about his job as a ghost tour leader. You didn't have to read between the lines to sense that it wasn't the perfect gig for a truth-seeking research glutton.

"No matter how skeptical I tried to be, I felt like I was just encouraging people to jump for bad explanations of things," Selzer says now. "They took it as permission to believe weird conspiracy theories."

At the same time, "I was doing so much research for the historical parts of those tours, and I was finding all these incredible stories that I couldn't really work on unless they were said to be haunting someplace."

And, oh yeah, he was also writing. More than 20 books in a decade, evenly divided between young adult novels and nonfiction, including one about H.H. Holmes subtitled "The True History of the White City Devil."

Selzer, an English major and self-described

"historical data miner" who came to Chicago right out of college in 2004, has moved on since then, but hasn't escaped the dead people. Since most of the stories ended up in cemeteries, he says, he started doing Graceland tours. Now he has a new book, to be published this month by University of Illinois Press's 3 Fields imprint, *Graceland Cemetery: Chicago Stories, Symbols, and Secrets*. Lucky for us, it's an adept melding of the tours, the research, and the writing.

I've blundered around Graceland's 119 acres and 175,000 graves often enough to know that it's an incredible but overwhelming repository of Chicago history and memorial art. Selzer has tamed it into ten self-guided walking tours organized according to location (five central stations, each the starting point for two walks), with breezy, intriguing biographies of some of the folks in each, plus historical and current photos and maps. Although the tours are numbered, it's a "choose your own adven-

ture" setup, not a sequential arrangement; he says they can be done in any order. Pressed to pick a starter, he mentions Route 2-A, which "has all kinds of great stuff in it." Truth is, they all do.

Graceland, which opened in 1860, was designed as a garden cemetery—a place of recreation as well as eternal rest, and a departure from the grim, chockablock church graveyards of earlier years. Like Rosehill, which is the same vintage, it received bodies that were removed from the older City Cemetery that became the southern portion of Lincoln Park. Selzer writes that "Soon, as all garden cemeteries strove to be, Graceland was at once a park, an open air museum, and an art gallery."

Who's in 2-A? Abolitionists, Civil War soldiers, and hosts on the Underground Railroad, along with a notorious burglar, a wealthy suffragist (Katharine Dexter McCormick), and the first Black lawyer in Illinois (Lloyd Garrison Wheeler). Also, detective Allan Pinkerton, and one of Selzer's favorites, "the completely illegible, nondescript monument" of Jeremiah Price, "a guy who was so fantastically boring that people were still telling jokes about how boring he was years after he died."

Another Selzer favorite is the three-person Getty Tomb designed by Louis Sullivan, in part because of the story of daughter Alice Getty, who, he says, "could have had her own Indiana Jones movie." The Getty Tomb is also the starting point for Route 4-A, which includes one of my own favorite monuments,

the marker for anesthesiologist Christopher D. Manuel—a bronze statue of a boy with a flute (one of a limited edition by Italian artist Rinaldo Bigi), seated atop a granite base engraved with lyrics from the 1930s jazz standard, "For All We Know." This, I would argue, is truly haunting. A short distance in front of it is the monument for architect Stanley Tigerman, which Tigerman himself described to me as "a granite slab cracked down the middle" that'll allow him and his partner and spouse, architect Margaret McCurry—fortunately not there yet—to lie head to head. (That *Reader* profile gets a mention in Selzer's footnotes.)

Graceland is famous for its architects; everyone from Daniel Burnham to Helmut Jahn is there (or soon to be) and in the book. But Selzer notes that along with the famous architects, politicians, artists, athletes, and business leaders are "countless others whose names were never widely known at all, but whose stories should have been a part of local history . . ."

GRACELAND CEMETERY: CHICAGO STORIES, SYMBOLS, AND SECRETS BY ADAM SELZER

3 Fields Books (imprint of University of Illinois Press), paperback and ebook, (out 8/9/22), 320 pp., \$19.95 paperback, \$14.95 ebook, press.illinois.edu

"I've attempted to tell as many of these forgotten stories as I could," he writes in an author's note, concluding that "there's always more to find." He told me last week that since the book was finalized, several people came up that he "would have loved to work in."

With that in mind I have a suggestion for the next edition: the extraordinary *Reader* writer Lee Sandlin, who died in 2014. His marker, near a sycamore tree a stone's throw from the Red Line tracks on Graceland's eastern boundary, is inscribed—as Selzer's someday could be—"Midwestern Storyteller." 

Selzer will conduct two in-person limited attendance book release walking tours of Graceland, 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM August 14. Tickets are \$20 (plus \$2.85 booking fee) or, including the book, \$40 (plus \$4.06 fee); information and tickets at mysteriouschicago.com.

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43 Green (left) is expected to have 99 apartments, with 50 affordable units. The Forum, a historic venue that will be part of the project, is on the right. 

ABEL URIBE FOR CITY BUREAU

HOUSING

Can a new housing development revitalize Bronzeville without displacing residents?

Officials hope 43 Green can be a model for equitable development.

By **JERREL FLOYD, DAYON CLARK, FREDERIQUE DESROSIERS, CHARLENE RHINEHART, ERICA SCALISE, AND CITY BUREAU**

This story was produced by City Bureau, a civic journalism lab in Bronzeville.

The area surrounding the 43rd Street Green Line stop will look drastically different in the next couple of years and two buildings—one new and one historic—are expected to be the center of that change.

The buildings face each other across 43rd Street and are served by the Green Line stop that bears the same name. The new building is a ten-story apartment tower under

construction that developers promise will include affordable homes and retail shops. It's the first phase of 43 Green—a multiphase development project—and it spreads out over four vacant lots the city sold to the developer for \$1 each. The second building is the Forum, a historic assembly hall where jazz and blues legends performed. The venue, which shuttered its doors in the 1970s, is at the center of a fundraising effort led by community members to restore it to its original glory.

City officials and developers have promot-

ed the 43 Green development as one centered on the existing community, whom they hope won't be displaced. A development with new homes and businesses isn't enough to plug the affordable housing need or turn around the decades of disinvestment in the community. But Third Ward alderperson Pat Dowell said 43rd Green, which is part of a new city initiative to bring development near transit stops in the south and west sides, is a step toward keeping Bronzeville a vibrant neighborhood.

"So it's not a one-size-fits-all for

Bronzeville," Dowell said. "It's a tapestry that needs to be weaved together and balanced so that we can keep the community diverse in economics. And that's not easy."

If successful, advocates hope more affordable homes and businesses could be built near transit stops in the south and west sides. Those efforts are welcomed by residents, who want new development but worry it might lead to their displacement, according to interviews with more than a dozen Bronzeville residents. The majority of residents didn't know much about 43 Green. Some said they

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were skeptical of the nebulous concept that is “affordable” housing. Others viewed the development as positive for Bronzeville.

“I don’t want to see it not being affordable for people who have been living here when it was quote-unquote undesirable or a bad place,” said Candace Odili, 32, who lives down the street from the development.

City funding

In 2019, residents got a sneak peek of the project design and cost at a town hall hosted by Dowell. The opportunities for Bronzeville residents to weigh in and allegedly drive development led one Florida magazine to call the revitalization of the community an example of “withintrification,” which it defined as development led by the people and local residents. The reality in Bronzeville is a bit more complicated.

The first phase of the project was financed with more than \$38 million from an array of taxpayer-funded programs. The project counts toward two of Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s key initiatives—the \$1 billion effort to preserve and build affordable housing, and Invest South/West, the \$750 million program to invest in ten neighborhoods in the city’s south and west sides, including Bronzeville.

The project is also Bronzeville’s first Equitable Transit-Oriented Development. For nearly a decade, the city has been using incentives to encourage development near train stations. When the city analyzed the impact of those incentives, it found that the vast majority of projects supported were built in the north, northwest, and downtown areas of Chicago. To change that, the city created the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD) Pilot Program, which primarily focuses on communities ignored by developers in the west and south sides.

“Unfortunately, in Chicago it is much easier to build inequitable development and to build car-oriented development than it is to build equitable [transit-oriented development],” said Roberto Requejo, the executive director of Elevated Chicago, a collective of organizers and researchers partnering with the city to support equitable, transit-oriented developments. “Our vision is [that] buildings like the ETOD at 43rd Street should not be the exception—they should be the norm.”

Community leaders and organizers say the work doesn’t end when construction starts. Developers ought to have an ongoing

dialogue with residents before, during, and after construction. To do that, residents must feel empowered to speak up about issues and concerns and developers should address those issues.

“The people who live in the communities that we serve are the experts,” Requejo said.

Familiar territory

Bronzeville has gone through a variety of transformations. During the Great Migration starting in the 1910s, it was seen as the promised land for Black people escaping the Jim Crow south and looking for economic opportunities. In segregated Chicago, Bronzeville, known as the Black Metropolis, was one of the few areas where Black residents were allowed to live. They opened businesses and popular music venues along business corridors, including 43rd Street.

“It’s a place with just character,” said Sandra Washington, Urban Juncture’s director of engagement and partnerships. To Washington, who lives in Bronzeville, the character comes with the neighborhood’s history and culture. It’s the businesses, the people, the art created here, the block parties, the festivals, and the areas where the community can be seen and felt.

Public housing developments built to alleviate overcrowding in Black neighborhoods in the 1950s and 1960s housed thousands of families in Bronzeville. This included one of the largest public housing developments: the Robert R. Taylor Homes, which housed close to 30,000 people.

Those residents were displaced when public housing high-rises were demolished, as part of a plan by then-Mayor Richard M. Daley to replace them with mixed-income communities, many of which have yet to materialize. More than two decades after the plan was launched, many of the sites of those public housing high-rises are still vacant.

Between 2004 and 2008, Bronzeville residents and organizers attempted to take matters into their own hands. They pushed the city to establish a trust fund, financed by property taxes, that would build affordable housing on city-owned vacant lots. The effort was led by the Lugenia Burns Hope Center, a Bronzeville-based community organization with initiatives that support rent control and affordable housing. The proposal didn’t get traction with politicians and ultimately died.

The fight for affordable housing continues. Roderick Wilson, the current executive di-

rector of the Lugenia Burns Hope Center, said he’s been displaced twice in Bronzeville—once when an apartment was converted to a condo and another time when friends he was staying with sold their home because they couldn’t keep up with property taxes and other expenses.

Wilson said he would like to see developers set aside more units as affordable because many, like the 43 Green developers, cap affordable units at roughly 50 percent. Even at 50 percent, he said, it’s not enough because that figure does not take into consideration the need for affordable homes. The county is facing a shortage of affordable housing of nearly 160,000 units, according to a 2021 DePaul Institute for Housing Studies report.

In mid-July, the Chicago Housing Authority approved the sale of 28 vacant lots that once were part of the Robert Taylor Homes so a developer could build mixed-income housing. The developer’s plan is to build 28 for-sale units, including at least three affordable homes. Under the proposal, the CHA would allow families with incomes up to 120 percent of the area median income, or about \$125,000 for a family of four, to qualify for the affordable homes. Community members who attended the meeting and wanted more affordable units questioned the CHA’s motives and asked the CHA to do better.

The CHA’s CEO, Tracey Scott, said the agency was building strong communities that could sustain themselves in the future. “It’s about rebuilding the village where everyone is welcomed,” she said.

43 Green

The first phase of 43 Green is well underway. Developers are building an apartment tower with 99 units, mostly studios and one-bedroom apartments, and retail on the ground floor. A little more than half of those units will be designated as affordable. City records show the affordable rents are expected to be between \$870 and \$1,080, depending on the size of the unit. Developers and the city are defining affordable as people who make up to 60 percent of the area median income or about \$50,000 for a two-person household.

Taxpayer-backed financing totaling more than \$38 million is helping subsidize the cost of the affordable units. Funding for the project includes \$5 million in tax increment financing funds, more than \$18 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits equity, and

a \$3 million multifamily loan. The money would pay for construction, soft costs, professional fees, and a developer fee of \$2 million.

The principal developer is the Habitat Company, a major developer in Chicago, which partnered with P3 Markets, a minority-owned real estate investment firm co-led by Phillip Beckham III, a longtime Bronzeville resident and a businessman who has contributed to and worked in the local alderperson’s political campaign.

Beckham, who was paid \$1,500 in 2007 for outreach and supplies from Dowell’s political fund, said his goal with 43 Green is to cater to young professionals—not families. The affordable units, he said, are being built for young people who need a little help starting off on their first apartment.

Beckham and his firm have contributed at least \$2,750 to Dowell’s political campaign since P3 Markets was registered with the state in 2018.

Beckham said his previous work with Dowell and campaign contributions did not play a role in the city’s support for 43 Green. His work with Dowell, he said, included a stint as a campaign finance director. “Alderman Dowell needs no financial influence to do good things for the Third Ward residents,” Beckham said.

Asked about their relationship, Dowell’s office said in an email that the alderperson has been a longtime proponent of transit-oriented development and that “Phil Beckham is a long time member of the Bronzeville community who has supported the alderman since her first run for alderman in 2003.”

The expectation from residents and city officials is that the 43 Green development will address some of the community’s affordable housing needs to keep residents from being displaced. When all the phases of 43 Green are completed, the developers estimate it will cost at least \$100 million and hold roughly 300 units.

There is fear that longtime Bronzeville residents will be displaced, especially as home values continue to rise. Earlier this year, *Crain’s Chicago Business* reported that 28 newly constructed homes and townhouses were sold in 2021 in Bronzeville—the largest number of new houses sold in any Chicago neighborhood that year. Some of those homes sold at prices above \$800,000. Overall, homes in Bronzeville sold at a median price above half a million dollars, a figure higher than some popular neighborhoods on the north

NEWS & POLITICS

side, where home prices have traditionally been more expensive.

The land where 43 Green is being developed was once a part of a retail corridor. In addition to providing affordable housing, the expectation from residents, city officials, and the developers is that the housing development, along with the redevelopment of the Forum music venue, will spark a resurgence of that corridor.

Dowell supports that idea. She said the community needs a more vibrant business corridor close to transit stops and envisions the street resembling the amenities and movement of north-side neighborhoods, like the Fullerton or Belmont Red Line stops.

“There’s a lot of hustle and bustle activity around those stations,” she said. “People live around those stations; that’s not the case along the Green Line.”

More than just housing

Across the street from the first phase of 43 Green, the Forum is still waiting to be fully redeveloped. It opened in 1897 as an assembly hall that once welcomed renowned performers like Nat King Cole and Muddy Waters. It was shut in the 1970s following community disinvestment and later targeted for demolition. It was saved by Urban Juncture, a community development organization that bought the building in 2011 to preserve it and is now leading a fundraising effort to support renovations and a reopening. Once restored, the organization hopes it will become a destination and an engine for community revitalization.

“It’s always been this huge presence on 43rd Street,” said Bernard Loyd, president of Urban Juncture. The goal is to reopen the top floors as an assembly hall and event space and house a restaurant and other businesses on the ground floors.

The road to restoration hasn’t been easy. It took around ten years for the property to be rezoned from residential back to commercial retail according to Loyd. In 2019, with support from Urban Juncture, the Forum was entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

Loyd said the city declined submitting a letter of support in the application. He is unsure why.

But his hard work seems to have paid off. The redevelopment effort is now receiving

heavy praise. Experts like Requejo have pointed to Urban Juncture’s work trying to save the Forum as being instrumental in the equitable development that’s happening in that area. Dowell said she hopes the development at 43 Green will lead to private investment in the Forum.

So far, Urban Juncture has raised \$8.5 million, Loyd said. But the organization still needs more than \$15 million to fully restore the building. And according to Loyd, the Forum hasn’t received city financial support despite appeals for support to Dowell. (Loyd and Urban Juncture have contributed at least \$7,200 to Dowell’s political campaign since 2002.)

“We’re hopeful that the city will step forward to provide some support,” Loyd said, especially considering the enthusiasm they’ve seen from residents.

Dreams and hopes for Bronzeville

During a warm afternoon in June, Loyd and Henry Wishcamper, a codirector of community development with Urban Juncture, guided guests through the interior of the Forum.

The two pointed out an aged mural and the cooling effect of the ceiling. Tiny pieces of the building could be heard hitting the ballroom floor every couple of minutes.

From a side door, attendees were able to get a look at the towering 43 Green development across the street. Though still in its construction phase, onlookers can see some of the early outlines for the units.

Odili, who lives down the street from the buildings, grew excited thinking about the possibilities of the Forum and what it would mean for the arts in the community and Bronzeville in general.

Odili and her family moved to Bronzeville from Albany Park right before the pandemic hit. Prior to moving to the area, she said when she was looking to support Black businesses, she always ended up in Bronzeville. And now she wants to be a part of helping the community preserve its history. She likes the idea of building homes for younger people, but also believes it is important to help lifelong residents stay in Bronzeville and enjoy the influx of investment.

“I just really have a lot of hopes and dreams for Bronzeville,” she said. 

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Proposed FY2023 MTW Annual Plan

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) is releasing the Proposed FY2023 MTW Annual Plan for public comment. The 30-day public comment period begins **July 28 through August 26, 2022**. While CHA encourages and welcomes all program participants, residents, and the community-at-large to review the proposed updates to the FY2023 MTW Annual Plan **you are not required to attend or view the livestream public comment hearings to submit comments. Your presence or absence does not affect your housing.**

CHA will livestream and host an in-person public comment hearing. The dates and times are as follows:

- Wed, August 3, 11:00 am Livestream:** Go to www.thecha.org
(Click on **LIVE FY2023 Annual Plan Comment Hearing**. Sign interpretation will be available.)
- Tue, August 9, 2022, 6:00 pm, FIC 4859 S Wabash**
(Sign and Spanish interpreters will be present.)
- Mon, August 15, 11:00 am Livestream:** Go to www.thecha.org
(Click on **LIVE FY2023 Annual Plan Comment Hearing**. Sign interpretation will be available.)

A recording of the livestream session will be available following the hearing.
The Spanish-translated session will be available the week of Aug. 8.

We ask that comments pertaining to the Annual Plan be submitted electronically to commentontheplan@thecha.org prior to the comment hearing or submitted in the chat during the livestream. All comments will be added to the comment grid and receive a response during the livestream and/or in writing in the comment grid.

A summary and the full Proposed FY2023 Annual Plan will be available on CHA's website at www.thecha.org beginning **July 28**. You may also mail or fax comments for the Proposed FY2023 MTW Annual Plan. **All comments must be received by August 26, 2022.**

Mail, E-mail or Fax comments to:
Chicago Housing Authority
Attention: Proposed FY2023 MTW Annual Plan
60 E. Van Buren Street, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605
Email: commentontheplan@thecha.org | Fax: 312.913.7837

If you have a question about this notice, please call 312.913-7300. To request a reasonable accommodation, please call 312.913.7062. TTY 866.331.3603



Paul Vallas (third from left) spoke at a fundraiser for Awake Illinois in June. SCREENSHOT OF AWAKE IL WEBSITE

POLITICS

Vallas rubs shoulders with the far right

The mayoral candidate spoke at a fundraiser for a group that has promoted transphobic rhetoric.

By **KELLY GARCIA**

Last month, former Chicago Public Schools CEO and second-time mayoral candidate Paul Vallas spoke at a fundraiser for Awake Illinois, a group that has been criticized for its transphobic and homophobic rhetoric.

The group hosted a fundraiser in Naperville about school choice in June, and Vallas was a featured panelist. In addition to promoting school choice, Awake Illinois has opposed COVID safety protocols in schools, and the teaching of what it calls “critical race theory.” Last month, the nonprofit called Governor J.B. Pritzker a “groomer,” a term increasingly used as an anti-LGBTQ+ slur by the far right, after he signed a sex-ed bill.

In July, Awake Illinois and other right-wing groups publicly maligned UpRising Bakery and Cafe in suburban Lake of the Hills for planning a family-friendly drag show. The bakery was subsequently vandalized, and the bakery’s owners canceled the show as a re-

sult. Joseph Collins, a 24-year-old from Alsip, was later charged with a felony hate crime and criminal damage to property.

At Awake Illinois’s June fundraiser, Vallas sat on a panel alongside former Indiana school administrator Tony Kinnett and Waukegan teacher Frank McCormick, both vocal critics of curriculum that they claim includes critical race theory. Other panelists included Nicole Neily, the president of a campus free speech organization, and Pastor Randy Blan, who challenged the state’s mask mandate as headmaster of a private Christian school in northern Illinois. Corey DeAngelis, a national leader for school choice, gave the keynote speech.

Shannon Adcock, Awake Illinois’s founder and president, introduced the panel as “the Continental Congress of school choice.” School choice is a catchall term for alternatives to public education, such as charter schools, school vouchers, and private

education.

In his remarks, Vallas discussed his experience and spoke about school choice, which he said he has supported since 1995, and which he called “the civil rights issue for this generation.”

“You have to define it as that,” he continued. “Because I’ll tell you, the unions are relentless.”

He also accused Chicago Teachers Union leadership of using intimidation to control teachers. “They intimidate these teachers, they threaten these teachers,” he said. “They call them out, they follow them, and they beat them up on social media.”

Vallas added that he thinks the school-choice movement “has got to find natural allies” such as police unions and conservatives and build coalitions with them to “advance a pure school choice agenda.”

The July attack on UpRising Bakery and Cafe came after weeks of transphobic harassment of its owners by conservative and far-right groups. On July 13, Awake Illinois tweeted, “They’re coming for your kids, McHenry County” along with screenshots of the event details. Adcock told the *Daily Herald* on July 19 that the group was not planning a protest of the drag show. That same week, the group tweeted that they “blasted this perverted event on social media and leave it to McHenry citizens to be informed and empowered to respectfully share their opinions/disgust.”

In June, VICE reported that the Proud Boys, a far-right neofascist organization, also targeted the bakery. The group gained

widespread notoriety after its leaders were charged with seditious conspiracy for their roles in the January 6, 2021, insurrection in the U.S. Capitol. Its members have attacked and disrupted Drag Queen Story Hour events around the country in recent months.

On Sunday, the *Sun-Times* reported that Collins, the man charged with attacking UpRising Bakery, was at the Capitol on January 6, and has been photographed wearing Proud Boys attire and posing with a prominent member of the group.

Hours after the bakery’s owners canceled the event, Awake Illinois tweeted that the attacker “needs to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.” The organization did not respond to the *Reader’s* questions by press time.

In 2019, during his first run for mayor, Vallas described himself as a “strong advocate for LGBTQ+ issues” in a questionnaire provided by the American Civil Liberties Union. That same year, he committed to advocating for an LGBTQ+-inclusive curriculum in CPS in an interview with the *Windy City Times*.

In a statement emailed to the *Reader*, Vallas said that he would not have accepted Awake Illinois’s invitation had he known about its “hateful rhetoric,” adding that he will be “more vigilant” about vetting future invitations. “Hateful speech, especially that can lead to violence, is unacceptable and I have always condemned it in the strongest possible terms,” he said.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

ShotSpotter held in contempt of court

Rather than release documents, a ShotSpotter attorney requested the contempt order.

By **MATT CHAPMAN AND JIM DALEY**

On June 22, an attorney representing ShotSpotter, a gunshot-detection technology company, made the unusual request that a judge in a criminal case hold the company in contempt of court to prevent ShotSpotter from being compelled to release documents about how it assesses gunshot alerts.

The case stems from a car stop made by Chicago police in November 2021 that culminated in the driver being arrested for a DUI. Attorneys from the Cook County Public Defender Office, contending the police pulled the man over solely based on a ShotSpotter alert, subpoenaed the company as a third party to find out whether that was the case.

Court documents show that a ShotSpotter alert was recorded on November 7, 2021, near the intersection of Hamlin and Lake Street, on the west side of Garfield Park. At least eight Chicago cops responded to the alert, and two of the responding officers arrested the defendant a few blocks away as he drove down Central Park Avenue, which bisects the park.

ShotSpotter alerts are triggered when one of the system's acoustic sensors identifies a gunshot, and they often bring police—but the sensors can also incorrectly pick up fireworks and other noises as gunshots. The company employs analysts who review certain alerts in real time and make judg-



A CPD surveillance device in Englewood MADISON MULLER

ments about what the sensors are actually hearing. Analysts can also reclassify alerts retroactively, days or weeks after a firework has been incorrectly logged as a gunshot, for example.

The defense's request included ShotSpotter analysts' qualifications and training materials; any instances in which the company's analysts reclassified alerts or the Chicago police asked ShotSpotter to do so; and the methods analysts use to reclassify alerts. The defense also requested ShotSpotter produce any data on sensors misidentifying gunfire or the location of alerts, as well as data on gunfire ShotSpotter failed to identify.

Rather than comply, attorneys for the company asked the judge to hold their client in "friendly" contempt of court.

Discovery orders such as these typically cannot be appealed before final judgment is issued. However, contempt-of-court sanctions for violating a discovery order can be appealed. The request for a so-called

"friendly" contempt-of-court order is designed to allow ShotSpotter to effectively appeal the discovery order by appealing the contempt order.

"ShotSpotter is refusing to produce the documents needed to allow the court to decide whether it was reasonable of the police to pull over our client based solely on a ShotSpotter alert, a technology that has repeatedly been shown to be unreliable," read a statement from the Cook County Defender Office. "Instead of standing by their service and welcoming an opportunity to have the quality of their technology subject to examination in open court, ShotSpotter is delaying a timely resolution of this case for our client."

Matthew Crowl, an attorney representing ShotSpotter, did not respond to the *Reader's* questions by press time.

The motion in this criminal case comes on the heels of an unrelated civil lawsuit filed against the city of Chicago last month by Lucy Parsons Labs and Northwestern

University's MacArthur Justice Center. That lawsuit accuses the Chicago Police Department of overreliance on a technology that the plaintiffs say rarely leads to evidence of gun crimes.

The lawsuit cites two cases—both unrelated to the one in which ShotSpotter was held in contempt—in which police made an arrest following the system's gunshot alerts. In one case, a 65-year-old grandfather was held in Cook County Jail for nearly a year at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic before his case was dismissed due to insufficient evidence. In another, a 36-year-old man was locked up by cops responding to a ShotSpotter alert. The lawsuit seeks class-action status for anyone the police have stopped in Chicago because of a ShotSpotter alert. It also seeks to bar the city from using the technology.

The next hearing in the DUI case is scheduled for August 23.

@foiachap @jimdaleywrites

Conversation, creativity, and coping strategies

Musician Mike Vinopal shares his perspective on mental health

Chicago musician Mike Vinopal is the bandleader, songwriter, and guitarist of upbeat Chicago funk ensemble Local Motive, the lead guitarist of moody rock band Badcandy, and a pet dad. A former special education teacher, and mental health advocate and speaker, his lived experiences with mental health challenges have inspired his fierce dedication to bettering himself and the world through music.

Alia Reichert, field marketing associate and wellness coordinator with Nature's Grace and Wellness, recently Sparked the Conversation with Vinopal to get his perspective on music and mental health.

Alia Reichert: Where do you get your song ideas? Does your songwriting act as a kind of therapy for you?

Mike Vinopal: My song ideas come to me in a bunch of different, often unpredictable ways. Sometimes it's a melody with no words that captures a certain feeling. Sometimes it's a compelling collection of words I can't shake, or the song comes as a guitar riff first, like it was waiting in the wood. And sometimes, when I'm not forcing it, a song will just come out all together—like my subconscious composed it—which always feels extremely satisfying. Songwriting allows me to express a range of emotions that words alone often cannot. Music has saved my life and continues to keep me healthy.

Is cannabis part of your creative process? If so, how?

Cannabis is a big part of my life, including my creative process. As an adult, I use cannabis to help manage the racing and overlapping thoughts that I often experience. It helps me to relax, which always helps my creativity flow. But most importantly, I think it helps keep me balanced. It's also the kind of thing that when you share the experience of smoking cannabis with someone, it can deepen conversations—not the tropes you see in movies—and it can be a really beautiful experience to share a joint with other thoughtful people and just talk. Conversations like that can cause bursts of inspiration, which is another way cannabis helps my creative process.

In 2014, I received a diagnosis of Bipolar I disorder after being hospitalized for a manic episode. It was only after that I began to really reflect on cannabis' role in my life. I've realized how much cannabis has and continues to support my personal mental health. Eventually, I began to feel more like myself again. I began writing loads of poetry and experimenting with other types of visual art. And eventually, songs began to flow again too.

Read the rest of this interview online at chicagoreader.com/vinopal

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Photo Credit: Rob Haberman

POETRY CORNER

An excerpt from “Southside”

By Ohana Bam

Southside
With all my people
& they right outside
Brought all my people
& they right outside

You see gang right here
I don't gotta watch my back
They can't hang round here
They know where we at
With all my people
& they right outside
You with ya people
Gone & rep ya side
Police think we deal
Cooking up all this crack
Yeah
She know I'm from the Chi
She know this ain't Chiraq
Yeah
City that got my heart
She know my soul attached
Know we gotta stay on guard
Can't go out like that

Poem curated by femdot. Rapper femdot. has continued to grow in his hometown of Chicago. His most recent projects Not For Sale and 94 Camry Music led to partnerships with brands like Toyota, lululemon, and the Chicago Bears along with two nationwide tours with Tobi Lou and SABA. He also started the 501c3 non-profit org Delacreme Scholars, which supplied free grocery delivery services, toy and coat drives, and college scholarships throughout the city.

If you are looking for music with that belongs in stadiums, commercials, your next popular video game or television show, look no further than Southside Chicago's very own Ohana Bam. With a catalog that transcends genre, Ohana Bam has created a lane for himself that blends rap, pop, dancehall, rock, soul and more. With a flash of live wire energy mixed with animated humor, Bam has arose as one of the most unique voices out of his city.

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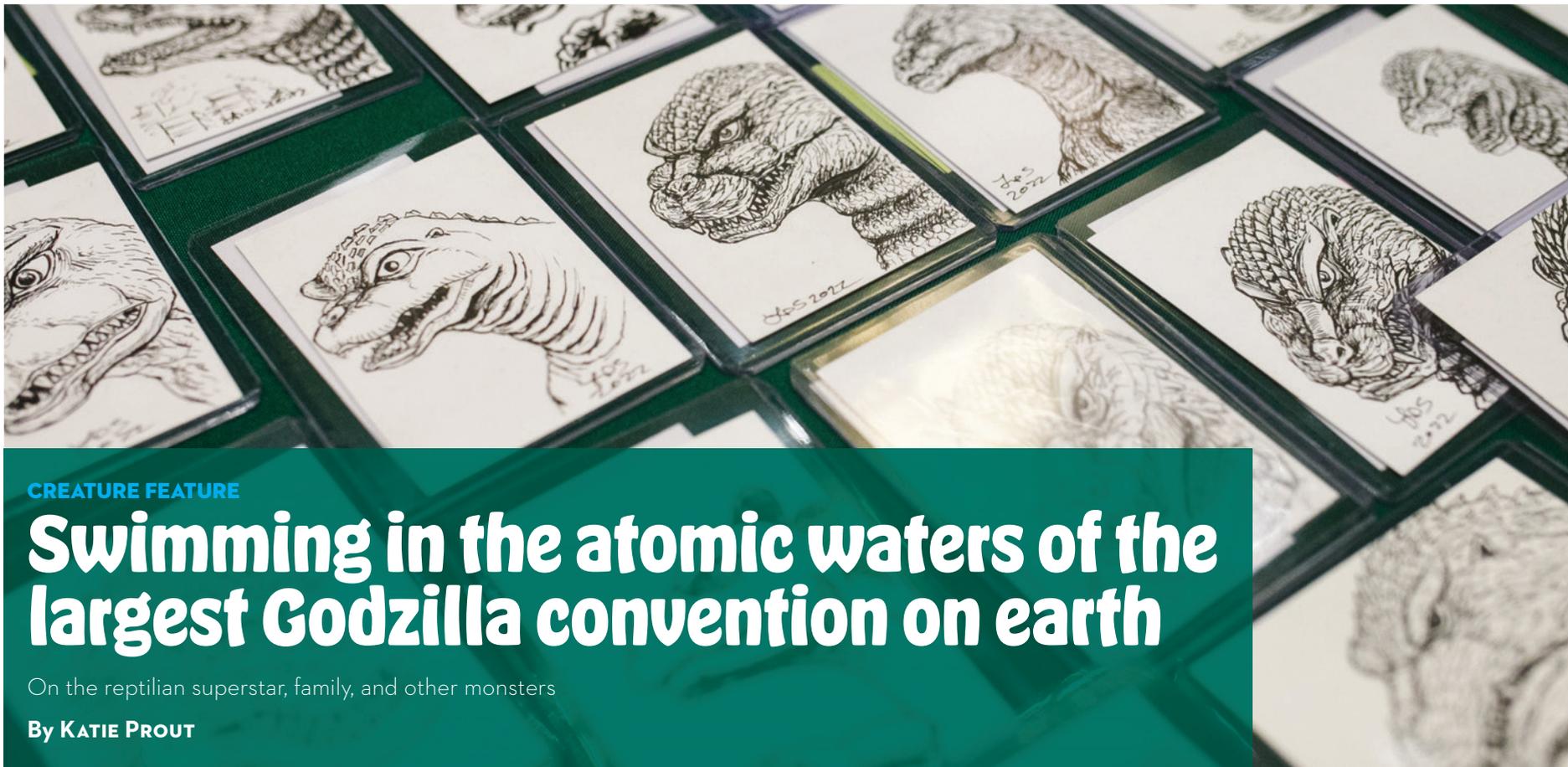
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CREATURE FEATURE

Swimming in the atomic waters of the largest Godzilla convention on earth

On the reptilian superstar, family, and other monsters

By KATIE PROUT

Words the author hadn't spoken in over a decade bloomed rapidly, uncannily, on her tongue. Toho Productions. *Destroy All Monsters*. Kaiju. Don Frye. *Gojira*.  MARK CAPAPAS FOR CHICAGO READER

In *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989), a grieving scientist grafts rose cells to cells he's salvaged from his dead human daughter. After the resulting human-rose is nearly destroyed, the scientist melds her with Godzilla cells he's stolen from a lab. The result is a monster-sister forever fighting those from whence she came.

I remember the first time I saw Biollante onscreen, cocooned with my brothers in the dry air of our GMC van, idling somewhere in the winter dark. The van's interior was a deep, velvety purple that blurred the boundaries between us and the night, giving the impression that I was in some ancient, warm, ever-expanding cave. Midway on the van's ceiling was a shelf: on that shelf, a tiny TV/VCR combo. I was mesmerized and more than a little afraid. In the film, after a terrific battle, Godzilla appears to immolate his sister with his legendary atomic breath. The camera lingers on Bio-

llante, by now an enormous, pulsating being of green vines, fearsome jaws, and human spirit, as she burns. As the viewer, you're certain she is dying, until you realize that what first appeared to be sparks flaring off of her body are actually spores, dissolving and floating in the sky. Once there, they linger before continuing their journey to space, and briefly form the outline of a rose. Biollante lives.

In July, I was one of 4,000 attendees at the largest Godzilla convention in the world. G-FEST XXVII, announced our rectangular yellow badges, returning after a two-year hiatus that included a pandemic, a rebellion, an insurrection. Underneath that font, enough space to write in our names. Walking through the doors of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Hotel in Rosemont, a suburb just outside Chicago, and stepping into a round glass elevator with half a dozen strangers, I felt the words I hadn't spoken in over a decade bloom rapidly, uncannily,

on my tongue. Toho Productions. *Destroy All Monsters*. Kaiju. Don Frye. *Gojira*.

Inside the elevator, a mother stood proudly next to her prepubescent son, each wearing T-shirts featuring the snubbed face of Godzilla in the 60s, when filmmakers began to portray him as the good guy in an effort to draw in kids. Rodan and Ultraman, two other kaijus (giant monsters from Japanese TV or film), peeked out from a crinkling plastic bag in the boy's hand, sure booty from the convention's hallowed Dealer's Room. Two other passengers, themselves strangers until this moment, happily dished about the panels they wanted to see ("Godzilla vs. Hedorah: A Belated 50th Birthday" and "Godzilla and the Japanese National Spirit"). Through the elevator glass, I could see thousands of green pothos plants trailing the railings that crisscrossed the open-air design of the hotel. Together, we zoomed up.

It's a powerful feeling, to come back to the salty, atomic waters that birthed you. I knocked on door 544. My dad opened it. He has brown hair that likes to puff up in humidity and gray-green eyes the color of a forest floor. We're 21 years apart: "It's cool," he likes to say, "that we're going to be old people together." Behind him I spied the gigantic Godzilla head my dad won in a raffle in 2003 after attending G-FEST X. Meticulously sculpted from a three-foot-by-three-foot block of Styrofoam, it sat kingily in its own hotel chair, looking me over with a baleful, milky eye. My dad drove the Godzilla head, along with two of his sons, a six-pack of diet Mountain Dew, a quart of half-and-half, and a PS2, across one time zone and two state lines. My mom, who opted for a rare weekend alone instead of coming to the convention, floated in our inflatable pool.

I turned on my recorder and made everyone introduce themselves to me as a test run. "Hi,"

said my dad. “Larry Prout Sr., G-Fest veteran and enthusiast.”

“Hi, I’m Larry Prout Jr.,” my youngest brother said. “I’m a big G-Fest fan and native.” Larry loves cats and football, and has the best eyebrows of us all. “It’s gonna be awesome,” he said seriously. “I’m grateful to be here.”

John gamely leaned in. Built like a brick shithouse, he’s a Navy veteran and a charmingly huge nerd: while stationed in San Diego, he briefly got away to Comic-Con. “I’m John Prout, one of the other Prouts. Excited to be back after a two-year hiatus. Excited for the new hotel. It’s gonna be a good time. G-FEST.”

“I’m Mike Prout, I’m the brother of John and Larry.” Like everyone else, Mike wore a Godzilla T-shirt, his shaggy blonde hair held back by a rolled bandana. Tall, strong, and lean, he’s rarely without an energy drink in his hand. “I’m excited that G-Fest is finally back.”

Barb was peeking out from behind a door. Too private to be described in detail, I’ll only say that she’s tenderhearted; for her birthday this year, John surprised her with a trip to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter at Universal Orlando. I approached cautiously, holding my recorder in what I hoped was a benign and welcoming way. “I’m here for the antique stores.”

After stepping out on the patio to take a rip off his vape, Mike came in and nestled his speakers into his drawstring backpack. He hit play. The first notes of the theme song for *The War of the Gargantuas* (1966) soared into the room. “Do-do-DOO, do-do-do-do-do-do,” my dad sang along with the horn, turning on the video camera in his hand. As we rolled out, I kept recording audio. My dad stopped in the doorway to zoom in on each of our faces as we passed by.

In *Godzilla on My Mind*, William Tsutsui writes, “If all the letters I received, the fanzines I read, and the websites I scoured left me with one abiding impression, it is this: the emotion that Godzilla stirs most powerfully in the hearts of his admirers is, without question, a bittersweet sense of nostalgia.” My dad recommended the book to me. Later, after I asked him via text what his favorite Godzilla movie is (it’s the 1954 original), my dad wrote, “It’s all very nostalgic for me. It puts me back at home as a kid watching the creature feature on a Saturday afternoon. That’s a good quote, so print that!” He is the one who introduced all of his six kids to Godzilla films; we all have memories now of checking them out at the public library, watching them while splayed out in front of our living room box fan on early



The Dealer’s Room houses dozens of vendors, hundreds of people, and thousands upon thousands of items of kaiju paraphernalia for G-Fans to buy, barter, and beg for in multiple languages.  MARK CAPAPAS FOR CHICAGO READER

August afternoons.

In the years since we’ve grown up, my brothers—all of whom are younger than me—and I have had days or years of strain, of relationships that, for me, have been sometimes characterized by hurt, anger, and longing as I realize the fundamental distance between us. Our politics and principles, the world as we understand it and our place and responsibility within it, contain jagged differences. And yet, so much else remains: jokes and songs, the incessant need to be together, even, or especially when, it might be a good idea to take some space. Group chats are forever dissolving and reappearing, depending on who is feuding with whom. We cycle in and out of sharing the same apartment, the same clothes, the same nest.

Perhaps because of all that, plus the mortal threats some of us regularly face—Larry with his spina bifida and 100-plus surgeries to keep him alive, our dad with a progressive liver disease that flared so bad last summer he nearly died—it’s no wonder that we share a compulsive need to document each other. Larry spent the weeks before G-Fest this year watching as many of the 36 Godzilla movies as he could, and along with that, videos of us from past conventions. It might’ve been his idea to film us all this weekend, but my dad happily obliged. The temptation is to try and recreate the familiar videos of the past, rather

than open up to the uncertainty of the present.

The Dealer’s Room is the beginning and the end, Valhalla via the Maxwell Street of old Chicago. Inside this high-ceilinged ballroom are dozens of vendors, hundreds of people, and thousands upon thousands of items of kaiju paraphernalia for G-Fans to buy, barter, and beg for in multiple languages. There are figurines of every kaiju you could think of and some you couldn’t: tiny King Kongs, squat Mecha-King Ghidorahs with absurdly large heads, immaculately constructed models of Godzilla from every era that go for hundreds of dollars or more. There are carefully preserved monster board games from the 1970s, only lightly water stained; tables straining under the weight of hundreds of T-shirts; original watercolors of Mothra, Ultraman, and Gamera; laundry baskets full of copies of monster movies that went straight to VHS in the 1980s; neatly stacked piles of serious, self-published lore, and boutique comic books. One man, at his table, simply holds up a hand-drawn sign: AWESOME ELECTRONIC MUSIC. The layout has room for wheelchairs—when she saw Larry, the woman counting heads at the door nodded, unhooked a velvet red rope, and let us skip the line—but it’s a real crowd. Long-separated comrades heartily embrace, slap each other’s backs, and reminisce. New friendships are forged. And small shrines to

the dead are everywhere, once you begin to look.

The Room officially, ceremoniously opened for the weekend at 10 AM Friday morning. By two, the hotel lobby ATM will run out of cash, forcing who knows how many collectors to trek to gas station ATMs, or call family members still on their way and ask them to bring a little extra. I imagine the temple Jesus famously loses his temper in looked a bit like this, but the Dealer’s Room at the heart of G-Fest is not defiled by trade. The trade is part of the holiness.

A white man with a goatee and long, graying hair sat busily sketching at a table near the entrance, artwork for sale before him. “Huh,” John said. “That’s Eggleton. Tell him I had one of his paintings over my bed as a kid.”

Bob Eggleton, Hugo Award-winning artist who sketches and paints horror, sci-fi, and all things Godzilla, traveled from Rhode Island to get here. Eggleton started coming to G-Fest in the 90s. Like quite literally every one of the two dozen G-Fans I interviewed over the weekend, Eggleton’s interest in Godzilla has an origin story. In 1966, his mother gave him a Godzilla board game. “From then on, it was kind of a love affair.” In 2002, Eggleton was even a running extra in *Godzilla Against Mechagodzilla*, two seconds of glory caught forever on film.

At the next booth, a cheerful white couple

ARTS & CULTURE



For two hours, G-Fans walked, stomped, and crawled in a costume parade.  MARK CAPAPAS FOR CHICAGO READER



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from Missouri named Eric and Amy were busy selling Godzilla and related Japanese monster toys, books, records, and ashtrays to their discerning buyers: mainly vintage, mainly from the 1960s and '70s. "I grew up watching Godzilla as a kid. He's always been like my hero," Eric told me. The 54-year-old has attended G-FEST since 1995, and has been collecting items since he was a teenager. His favorite? A 24-inch-tall plastic Godzilla produced in the 1970s called a Popy Jumbosaurus Godzilla.

"Luckily, I found someone who is mentally insane and likes this stuff as much as I do," he said. "It's the only reason she's still here with me."

"That's not true!" Amy said. "Other people have pictures of houses and barns and beautiful landscapes," she explained to me. "We have Gojira."

The vibe of G-Fest is almost universally PG. A middle-aged Black man wore a T-shirt that said "World's Greatest Dad," with a picture of Godzilla and Godzilla's treacherous son Minilla underneath. A white man in his early 30s stopped to study some comic books, wearing a tracksuit and all of his IDs from previous G-Fests. Someone else wore a sweatshirt that zipped up to the hood, replacing their face with that of Godzilla's. Down their back, a cotton representation of Godzilla's famous spine gently waved as they walked. A white woman in head-to-toe Harley Davidson; another, holding her toddler tightly by the hand, wore a T-shirt that depicts a stick figure human being beamed up to a flying saucer. "Get in

loser," it read, in an unusual foray into the risqué, "We're doing butt stuff." Everywhere there were kids, wild-eyed, astonished, shouting. A few were already cosplaying: mini-Godzillas and Mothras were a favorite, but there were several prepubescent Ultramans. Teenagers with hair the color of the rainbow huddled together in groups, geeking out over old DVDs. I spotted Larry up and out of his chair, closely examining a Mecha-Kong figurine.

Two Japanese women stood behind a table of paintings and comic books. I approached the woman wearing a kimono swirling with red, white, brown, and blue first. Her hair was neatly pulled back; her face mask was screen printed with Godzilla's jaws. She directed me to Ninsai, a 25-year-old kaiju artist who writes and illustrates a comic about a girl whose magical powers allow her to transform into a kaiju herself and fight monsters.

"What do you like about kaiju?" I asked her.

"Ahhhh," she groaned with pleasure, "Everything. Everything! The height? Strengths? Everything."

Ninsai's gateway kaiju was Gamera, a giant, prehistoric, fire-breathing turtle cooked up by Daiei Film, a rival studio to Godzilla's Toho Productions. She saw *Gamera 3: Revenge of Iris* (1999) in junior high. As we talked, I studied a bright, riotous drawing of Biollante she had for sale. Biollante's red-orange abdomen, which glows in the films, appeared to glow here too.

Rodney Rodis is the 46-year-old Filipino American editor-in-chief of Bustillo Publish-

ing—and, in a previous life, an art teacher who proposed a classwide project called "The Secret History of Japan" to his middle school students. "We had tokusatsu, we had kaiju. I sold it to [them] as, 'Hey, these were actual people, things, events that happened,' and just wove this alternate history. And they ate it up."

Today, he drove in from Mount Prospect, his third year as a seller, but he originally attended G-Fest as a fan. He spoke elliptically about what he called the politics of the last few years, and the parallels he saw in the movies and cartoons of his youth. "When did life start imitating satire?" he said and laughed.

I waded through the crowd and found my family near the exit. As we talked, Larry suddenly hollered. "He found one! Oh my gosh!" In Mike's hand was a challenge coin. Godzilla's face snarled on the front; on the back, his silhouette seemed to lurch into a silver abyss.

Challenge coins are commemorative coins traditionally given out in the military to members as rewards or to build morale. At a port bar, if one member slaps their challenge coin down at the table, everyone else follows suit: whoever doesn't have a coin buys that round. John has one from his time in the Navy; Steve, our other brother who skipped this G-Fest to spend time with his wife and new baby, was given one by his trade union. Mike was bringing this coin, minted for the 50th anniversary of *Godzilla* (1954) back to our mother as a surprise. Now she too belonged to a brotherhood.

The hotel's basement floor was humid and smelled like french fries. Mothers, dressed in matching Mothra T-shirts with their daughters, rested on benches as their youngest kids lightly napped. I stood there, awash in people, and listened to a goat-teed man with a leashed pet pig explain that pet pigs don't master bladder control until six months old.

Two hallways led off the chamber. Down one, G-Fans could display their homemade art, attend a how-to session on constructing intricate models, or demo board games like GigaBash ("an arena style Kaiju Brawler for up to four players!"). The Mecha-Godzilla Arcade, a warm and windowless room, contained a half-dozen monster pinball machines, including a Godzilla one built from scratch, and rows of desktop computers on which G-Fans of all ages played Godzilla video games two to 20 years old. At the volunteer table, a volunteer dressed as an off-brand Fabio—box dyed-blond ringlets, open leather vest, spray tan—helped Larry sign up to play in the *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* tournament, then winked at me.

Down the second hallway, you could get a massage ("Feeling a little tense?" asked the program. "Go for a monster massage. Expert attention at reasonable rates.") or take your child to the playroom Minya's Place. We met Preston Pollard, an outgoing, 23-year-old white Texan, near the quiet room, "which is really nice," he explained, "because a lot of people here have special needs, like me."

Preston wore a Godzilla ball cap on his head, his name scrawled on it in Japanese. In his hand was a Godzilla figurine he purchased in the Dealer's Room, a miniature of the creature featured on a ride at Universal Studios, Japan. He'd driven here, with his mom and brother, for the fifth time. "G-Fest is pretty much a family reunion to meet up with people who are exactly like me," he said cheerfully. "I can be myself and not feel like a freak. Where I'm from, people are like, 'Who are you talking about?'"

When he was seven, Preston was watching an episode of *VeggieTales* when one of the characters made a Godzilla joke. "So I asked my grandfather, 'What's Godzilla?' He gets excited." Later that night, *Godzilla* (1998) was on cable. A movie so universally loathed by G-Fans that, in a passing joke, Preston didn't even need to name it ("You can literally do no wrong with [Godzilla]. Except that one time, but we don't talk about it."), it still served as a portal to profound meaning and connection.

ARTS & CULTURE

As he said it, that was the night Preston fell in love.

“He’s this giant, misunderstood creature who, in one movie, could be the villain; in one movie, he could be the hero. . . . There’s this tragedy to this character,” Preston continued:

“We have this animal that was bombed by nuclear weapons and became this monstrosity. He takes his vengeance out on humans for having created him, but yet he would become the hero and fight off other, more evil monsters. And yet, Godzilla still has this shaky relationship with humanity. So I guess some people with special needs kind of relate to that sense of wanting to be away from people, but also want to be with people.”

Hence, among other reasons, the quiet room.

During their two years apart, Preston kept up with his G-Fest community via YouTube, Discord, and other forums. “Oh, it’s been very nice, getting to see everyone again,” he said. “It feels very nostalgic.” A cosplayer who’d been missing his favorite stage, Preston came this weekend ready for the costume parade. He would be Controller X, the Xilien bad guy from *Godzilla: Final Wars* (2004). “The guy in the trench coat and red visor. The one who yells,”—Preston widened his posture, spread his hands, titled his face to the heavens—“GIGAN!”

“I’ve loved Godzilla since I was five years old,” said Walter Ross, a middle-aged Black man from Shreveport, Louisiana. It was evening now, with many G-Fans catching dinner before deciding between “Radioactive Karaoke” or a late-night showing of *Godzilla vs. Kong* (2021). I took a walk through the bar, then walked along a series of chairs on my way back to the elevator. Walter sat alone in one, reading through the program.

When he was younger, Walter took a look at his older brother’s copy of the magazine *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. That issue, Godzilla and Rodan happened to be on the cover. Later that very night, *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973) was on TV; together, they watched it in his brother’s room. “It’s stuck in my mind, in my heart,” he said. “That just changed me forever.”

Before he attended his first G-Fest, Walter said he was incredibly nervous. “It was just the fact that I’m involved with people that A) I don’t know and B) I’m gonna stand out like a sore thumb. Even though I love Godzilla, it’s like, well, am I gonna really be—not so much welcomed with open arms—but will I actually

feel like I belong here?” To his surprise, G-Fans made him feel not only welcome, but wanted. “They do not look over newcomers. No, [they] say, ‘Hey, you’re one of us. You like Godzilla? We will give you a hug.’” Over the years, Walter’s grown comfortable arriving at G-Fest on his own, alone but really not. These days, he’s woven into the community tapestry, such a reliable thread that strangers greet him by name. “They say, ‘Wait a minute, you’re Walter, we know you!’ It humbles me, you know?”

When I asked him what it is that he finds so compelling about Godzilla, Walter took a beat before sharing that he grew up without a father. “And we won’t go into that detail,” he continued. “But Godzilla helps individuals like myself realize, ‘OK you may not have a father, but at least you have something that you can look over as a father-figure motif, somebody who doesn’t take no guff. He’ll fight his own battles. He’s someone who is going to stand up for what he needs. He doesn’t have to back down in a corner.’”

After saying goodbye to Walter, I met up with my family upstairs. Within 15 minutes, John and I were in a shouting match that ended only when Mike tiredly asked if we were going to check out Radioactive Karaoke or what. While John and Barb stayed behind, I followed him down the glass elevator and into an immense ballroom, where around a hundred G-Fans watched a 34-year-old Mothra sing “Love is a Battlefield” under uncomfortably bright lights. Out loud, Mike wondered if she had a boyfriend. Having interviewed her a few hours before, I knew she had gotten into Godzilla because of a New Year’s resolution she’d made as a joke; the joke became sincere and changed her life. Now, she’d driven in from North Carolina with her brother, who wasn’t a G-Fan but who nevertheless gave her his full support. “She’s here with a brother who respects her,” I whispered furiously into my recorder while the song went on, careless of who saw me cussing into my hands. “Must be fuckin’ nice.”

At 4 PM on Saturday, an hour before closing for the night, the Dealer’s Room was much less crowded than before. At the G-Fans Helping G-Fans table hung “in memoriam” posters, dedicated to Godzilla actors, directors, and fans who had died since the last convention. Behind the table, a small woman with long black hair, red lipstick, and a bright-blue shirt kindly explained to the G-Fans who approached her too late, clutching their tickets, that the raffle had already been called.



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ARTS & CULTURE

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But did they sign up for the silent auction? she asked. There was still time. How was the Arcade Room? Did they play in the video game tournament? How'd it go? She was very good at being empathetic without being patronizing. The front of her shirt was a screenprint of a beaming boy's face—glasses, bright full cheeks—wearing a Pokémon ballcap. I'd seen a few other G-Fans wearing it, too.

Mary Jane Lee is a Chinese American G-Fest fan, volunteer, and longtime community member. For the last seven or eight years, she and her son, Nicholas, drove to G-Fest from Downers Grove. Growing up in the Chicago area, Mary Jane used to watch old monster movies on Channel WFLD TV-32. She loved Godzilla, but she really adored Mothra, a glistening, powdery giant moth with blue eyes and gorgeous black, red, and yellow wings who first appeared in her own feature film of the same name (1961). Of the kaiju, Mothra is the most benevolent, the most consistently heroic. She's also, unlike many other monsters, female.

As a child, Mary Jane loved that Mothra was beautiful, strong, and good. As an adult, her relationship to this kaiju deepened. When I asked her to explain, she mentioned *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* (2019). In the film, Mothra sacrifices herself to help save Godzilla. "I didn't see those connections when I was younger. But then, as a mother myself, when you know that you would do anything for your child, then I'm bawling, instead of being just wowed by the fantasy."

After hearing her repeatedly name "inclusivity" as one of G-Fests best qualities, I asked Mary Jane to elaborate. "My son Nicholas—that I'm just talking about so much—is this boy," she said and pointed at her shirt. "Nicholas. Godzillaguy54, that's his YouTube channel. He's a stop-motion creator. I would help him with the filming and stuff like that. He just passed away—" a huff, a huff of sound, escaped her involuntarily—"just three days after high school graduation, unexpectedly."

Nicholas was born with Morquio Syndrome, an extremely rare genetic disorder that progressively impacts spine, bone, and organ development. When he was born, Nicholas was "an average baby," Mary Jane said, but as he grew, his body began to change, and his health deteriorated. Still, she said, her only child lived every day like it was his best day—not because it's the comforting thing to say about disabled children who may live short lives, and

not because she worked to keep the fear of his prognosis out of their home, but, she said, because he was just like that: warm, bighearted, and curious about the world.

In life, Nicholas made the kind of fan movies teen kaiju lovers so praise. He loved to study lore on Monsterpedia. Once, during a sudden, unexpected hospitalization, Mary Jane asked him what he was looking at on his phone so intently. "He was studying," she said now, "his Monsterverse!" He loved Godzilla for his great battles, but, said Mary Jane, he really cared about a movie monster's motivation. He loved plot. "His favorite characters were like Godzilla or King Kong. He would say they were misunderstood. He knew that they needed support, so he would root for the underdog in every movie."

The first G-Fest they attended, Nicholas and Mary Jane closely bonded with the volunteer staff. From then on, Nicholas was a G-Fest VIP. Every G-Fest activity was (and remains) accessible to G-Fans who use wheelchairs. One year, Nicholas was desperate to enter the Saturday night Costume Parade, a G-Fest tradition and cosplayer's delight. Film and costume makers (and G-Fest staples) Dojo Studios designed a costume for Nicholas that would work with his wheelchair, rather than against it. That night, Nicholas was transformed into Tank M.O.G.U.E.R.A., a cyber kaiju shaped a little like a rocket. Regardless of who pushed his chair, it looked like Nicholas was driving.

Their G-Fest friends were at Nicholas's celebration of life. Afterward, one made sure that Mary Jane knew she was wanted at G-Fest XXVII. The hotel room originally meant for two could still be hers. And if she came, he promised to put her right to work. "That just really struck a chord with me," Mary Jane said to me. "I can do that! I'll have a role. I'll have a purpose."

Normally, in times of great transition or great stress, Mary Jane said she vanishes, pulls in and away. But their friend kept gently checking in to see if she had the convention on her calendar. "He helped me not retreat," she told me. She decided she had to be there, because she wasn't the only one who missed Nicholas. At G-Fest, the community could talk about him as they liked, grieving and healing together.

When I went home, I told myself I'd watch one of Nicholas's videos. Mary Jane even sent me one to start with. One week became two. It wasn't until I was home, visiting my family again, writing upstairs in Larry's bedroom

while he played with our niece below, safe in the knowledge that he was still living, that I was able to watch. I hit play on "Godzilla War on Monster Island," and settled in.

Through so much of G-FEST weekend, I was suspended from the world outside the hotel, avoiding news about the next presidential election or a morphing pandemic, burning forests and mass death by bullet. I wanted it that way. I wanted to pretend that the good times my siblings and I had at G-Fest were common, would always last. I was afraid to view his movie, I think, because the idea of watching a stop-motion Godzilla film created by a disabled boy who was now dead would make me far too sad. I was wrong. "Godzilla War on Monster Island" connected me to the artistry, humor, and deft eye of a boy who knew how to live. It rips. You should see it.

The costume parade Saturday night began with a memorial and ended in applause. Over a thousand G-Fans crowded into the ballroom until they lined the walls and sat on laps. After a short, tearful tribute to the actor Akira Takarada, followed by a moment of silence, was the G-Fan Hall of Fame ceremony. Then: "Please leave the aisle clear," the MC announced, "so our contestants have a way to walk."

You could call it walking, or you could call it stomping or crawling, swimming or flying. For two hours, over 40 G-Fans paraded, ages single digits to 70s, veterans and first-timers, from every coast in the country and a few coasts that aren't. Tomorrow, a winner would be announced, but tonight, the applause was theirs.

A Godzilla in a green onesie too short to reach the mike: the MC had to bring it down to him to roar. When three sisters from New Jersey—one dressed as Mothra, two dressed as the Elias, her tiny fairy priestesses—sang Mothra's song, the thousand went silent. When another Godzilla stomped and snarled his way across the stage, only to be tackled out of nowhere by a lumpy King Kong, they leapt out of their seats with their fists in the air, shouting as the two tussled. Preston was there, serious-faced, committed to every step as Controller X, halting dramatically in the middle of his walk to give the Gigan speech. So was Ninsai, gender-bending in silver, her hair spiked as she put her own strut to Controller X's character. More Godzillas, multiple Mothras, whole families as different beloved side kaiju from the 70s, 90s, now, and a handful of Biollantes, hideous and powerful in their full

monstrous bloom. Every character got their applause, every monster their opportunity to roar. One G-Fan, dressed in costume, made his way deliberately, with intention, and leaned into the mike. Here was his chance. He took it.

"Up from the depths," he began, his voice alone at first, then joined by dozens, hundreds, a thousand others, including me, "30 stories high":

Breathing fire!
HIS HEAD IN THE SKY!
GODZILLA!
GODZILLA!
GODZILLA!

I want to graft memories to memories, an effort to keep those earliest bonds with my siblings alive. And yet, to do that is to overlook the present, alive and roaring all around me. A new memory now, and unexpected. After a few songs, Mike and I left karaoke, but when the elevator door opened, John and Barb were inside. Together, we headed back to the ballroom. On the escalator, John abruptly put his arm around me. I'm sorry, he began. His apology was so specific and sincere that it startled me into offering him one, too. Later, a whiskey deep and cheering from the audience, I have a thought. Like Godzilla, my idea is neither good nor bad, but chaotic, instinctive.

"Have you ever done karaoke before?" I asked John.

"Nah," he said.

"Will you do it with me?"

Nearly three hours passed before the MC called our names. We spent them drinking, whooping, catching up. Some of the songs were Godzilla or monster-adjacent, some were not. Someone's pubescent kid went up and sang "Bohemian Rhapsody" with their whole pure heart. "Like a G-Fest, like a G-Fest," sang a middle-aged man with spiky hair triumphantly. "Now I'm feeling so fly, like a G-Fest." The crowd lost their minds.

Occasionally, John left the ballroom with his phone pressed to his ear: I found him in the quiet hall, listening carefully to the song we selected, after much discussion, from a Halloween playlist we made years ago. Back in his chair, he jiggled his leg the way he's always done whenever he's nervous or excited. By the time we go up, it's midnight. Perhaps 15 people are still watching. We're the last G-Fans to perform. We scream-sing with all we've got. Together, we close out the night. **■**

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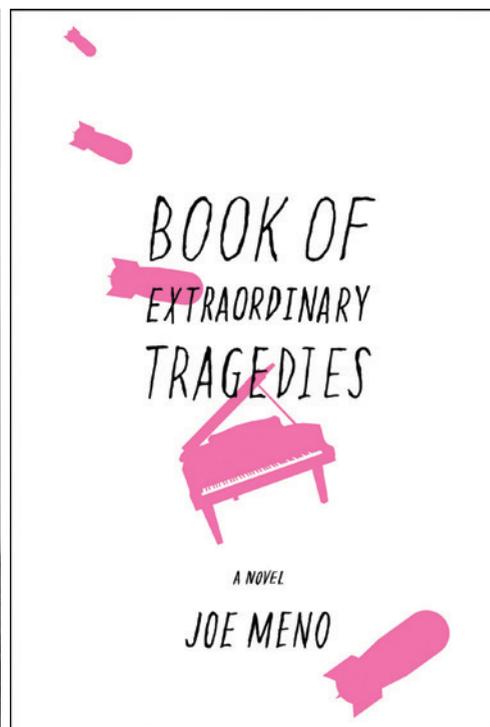
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BOOK REVIEW

The extraordinary tragedy of daily life

Joe Meno's new novel looks at an Evergreen Park family with complicated dreams.

By **DMITRY SAMAROV**



Joe Meno; cover art for the hardcover edition. LEFT: LUCIA AND NICO MENO; RIGHT COURTESY AKASHIC BOOKS

Wolfgang Amadeus Aleksandr “Aleks” Fa has a lot of baggage. The protagonist of Joe Meno’s new novel *Book of Extraordinary Tragedies* has that name, after all—which also serves as a clue about what burdens the young man.

Born into a perfectionist but impoverished Bosnian/Croat/Polish family in Evergreen Park on the border with Chicago’s south side, Aleks is a 20-year-old musician who’s abandoned his studies to help take care of his niece. He also works a succession of menial jobs, and is slowly going deaf.

Everyone else in Aleks’s family also faces long odds. His sister, Isobel, a child prodigy in music and math, works as a bank teller, hooks up with a succession of losers, abuses whatever drug is handy, and is diagnosed with cancer. His mother is bedbound and mostly lives out a fantasy life in which Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, and George Clooney turn out to be Polish and have complicated romantic entanglements. Brother Daniel is working on an epic history book of tragedies, when not skipping school to climb trees in a stolen Halloween ghost costume. You get the idea. “Normal” is not within this family’s vocabulary.

Aleks rides around the south side composing what he calls “AMAZING COMPOSITIONS” in his mind without ever touching an instrument or putting a single note down on paper.

He imagines symphonies made of street noises and half-heard voices. He tries to connect with his father, who lives in the neighborhood but has left the family and provides no financial or emotional support. Aleks attempts to connect with his grandfather, who, when Aleks begs for money to pay this or that overdue bill, instead relates their family’s snakebitten origins in the former Yugoslavia. A relative who planned to assassinate Archduke Ferdinand but lost his nerve—and became a pariah nevertheless; a succession of musical obsessives who fail for lack of actual talent or a variety of mental problems, when not hamstrung by bad luck.

Riding down 95th, Kedzie, or 103rd, he muses that “everything we think is important or unique about our lives means nothing in the face of history. Even our tragedies are entirely ordinary.” And yet life still has to be lived. As he mops floors in a crumbling rehab center or coaches bored, unathletic kids in tennis after school, Aleks dreams of escape. He’s not the only one. When he asks his 14-year-old brother about the scrapbook of disasters, in which historical captions are either whited-out or rewritten completely, Daniel explains, “I’m tired of our family being from places that are only famous for getting conquered.” Everyone in the Fa family wants a way out but hasn’t a clue how to take the first step.

Outside the family, friends and loved ones

are baffled by their intense passions. When Aleks starts dating a beautiful UIC student and shares his favorite orchestral music with her, she comments, “It’s like all this music for rich, sad white people played by poorer, sad white people.” He’s upset by her reaction but can’t find a way to make her feel what he feels and they wind up drifting apart.

Aleks’s travails are engaging in no small part because of Meno’s sure grasp of Chicago geography and the city’s topographic, economic, racial, and ethnic particularities. It’s a rich and underexplored terrain in both literature and pop culture. This is not the Chicago of Ferris Bueller, the Blues Brothers, or Al Capone, but the patchwork, maddeningly contradictory city longtime residents know and grudgingly adore. The neighborhood in which Aleks has memorized every broken piece of sidewalk is far away from the lakefront or any other aspect the city offers up to outsiders and tourists. When he finds himself downtown, he’s tentative and feels undereducated and poorly dressed, as too many lifelong Chicagoans do.

As Aleks scrambles from dead-end job to dead-end job, even the mindless factory work he tries to avoid dries up. More and more of the storefronts he passes on his bike rides are boarded up. It’s as if the neighborhood is becoming as hopeless as Aleks’s sister, brother, and mother. But despite the long odds stacked

against his characters, Meno keeps their story buoyant when it could have been a maudlin litany of misery and complaint. These people have hope and keep trying. They’re hopelessly optimistic in their own twisted way.

This book continues a through line that’s clear all the way back to Meno’s celebrated 2004 novel, *Hairstyles of the Damned*. An overly sensitive young person uses music to both make sense of and escape intractable familial and societal problems with very mixed results. The change of genre from punk in *Hairstyles* to classical in this new novel is an effective way for Meno to explore ties to, and schisms from, European ancestors who continue to exert undue influence from beyond the grave. What this story gets so right is how so many of us live in the past and the present all at once.

Before passing away, Aleks’s grandfather gives him a pile of notebooks filled with musical notations—his own brother’s attempt to tell their family history, encoded in compositional language. Adapting his dead relative’s work, shows Aleks a way out. “As I ride it’s like the entire block is a symphony, the entire neighborhood, the south side, the city, all the instruments ringing out, everything—even the street signs—having something to say.” 

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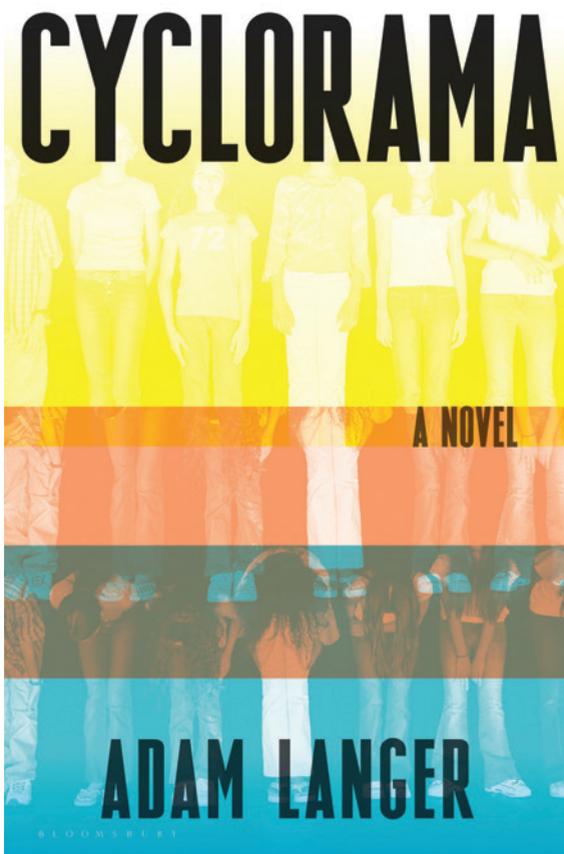


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Cover art for the hardcover edition; Adam Langer LEFT: COURTESY BLOOMSBURY; RIGHT ANTHONY COLLINS

TEEN DRAMA

Fast times at North Shore Magnet High

Adam Langer's new novel revisits adolescent suburbia of the 80s.

By JACK HELBIG

Journalist, playwright, screenwriter, theater critic, arts editor, and novelist Adam Langer was born in Chicago, grew up in West Rogers Park, went to school in Evanston, and spent the early part of his career here writing and editing for various Chicago publications, including the *Reader*, *Inside Chicago*, *Book Magazine*, and the alternative music magazine *Subnation*. (He also served as artistic director for Shattered Globe Theatre for a few years in the early 90s.) But he didn't begin to write novels about Chicago until he moved to NYC in 2000 to do a journalism fellowship at Columbia University.

"When you're writing about the past of a city, as I have been to some extent," Langer tells me, "it's probably hard to do that right

when you're in the midst of it because you keep on getting your past mixed up with your present, whereas if you leave, it's a little more frozen in time."

Langer has had seven novels published, three of them set in Chicago, since he moved away. His first novel, 2004's *Crossing California*, is set in the world of Langer's adolescence—Chicago in the late 70s and early 80s. It chronicles the lives of a handful of teens and their parents in a world where expectations, social status, and life experience depends on whether you live east or west of California.

"West of California were the parks and single-family homes," Langer writes in *Crossing California*, "the houses with evergreen bushes, maple trees, and underground sprinklers

out front. . . . East of California . . . the red brick apartment buildings and smoke grey bungalows soaked up the sun, and the streets seemed just a bit narrower. East of California, there was precious little greenery or open space."

Cyclorama by Adam Langer
Bloomsbury, hardcover, 352 pp., \$27,
bloomsbury.com

When *Crossing California* was published, it was very well reviewed and received. It continues to be. Just last month it was listed as one of the ten best 21st-century Chicago novels by *Chicago* magazine.

Langer's latest, *Cyclorama*, returns to the world of dysfunctional adults and disaffected youth he chronicled in *Crossing California* and the 2005 follow-up novel, *The Washington Story*. Divided in two parts—the first half set in 1982, the second half in the months before and after the election of Donald Trump—*Cyclorama* concerns the loves and likes of a handful of characters involved in one way or another with a stage adaption of Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl* being performed at the fictional North Shore Magnet High School, an alternative school located in Evanston, Illinois.

Why set the novel at a fictional high school in Evanston, and not at Langer's own real high school, Evanston Township High School?

"I knew the territory so well," Langer tells me, "that there was going to be this constant kind of cognitive dissonance of what's real and what's not. And I wanted to also kind of emphasize the universality of it to create this alternative school, which drew not only from Evanston, but also from Lincolnwood and the suburbs all around the North Shore because it was important to me to try and have this kind of fictional world so that the reality of it didn't intrude too much. And I could kind of take the time to not be worried so much about what's real and what's not, and just kind of rely on telling the story. So I looked at the map, I was like, 'OK, where would there be another high school? What would it be like?'"

And why worry about readers wondering about what's real and what is not? Because one of the major characters in the book is a charismatic theater teacher who routinely crosses boundaries with his student actors—both mentally and physically. He pushes his actors to deliver strong performances. But he also does things that definitely cross lines, and lead to him being accused of assault. And his story parallels, to some extent, the case of one of the actual theater teachers at ETHS: Bruce Siewerth.

After his retirement from ETHS, Siewerth was accused by several former students of sexual abuse. Lawsuits were filed in 2017, and, as reported in a WTTW news story, the Evanston police investigated "35 separate allegations of sexual misconduct," and turned the

THEATER

material over to the Cook County state's attorney. The state's attorney ultimately declined to file criminal charges because the statute of limitations had passed on the alleged crimes. Nevertheless, in 2019, the Evanston Township High School District 202 Board of Education approved a \$100,000 settlement with four of Siewerth's former students over allegations of sexual abuse.

When asked about this, Langer emphasizes his novel is fiction, not a memoir. "First of all," Langer explains, "I did not study with [Siewerth]. Obviously I know the case against Bruce Siewerth. I was in a couple of shows he directed both as a kid and in high school. But I think what's important to me is how widespread these sorts of stories were—and are—and to kind of focus it on one particular individual sort of misses the overall point and the overall theme. In an earlier draft of the novel, I had the word 'Trump' in it a lot, and I kind of pulled back from it, because to focus a lot of anger and energy towards one particular individual means you're kind of missing the overall picture.

"I mean, obviously, if I were writing a memoir or if I were writing a piece of journalism, I would have a lot to say on that subject from what I experienced myself, what I saw firsthand, what happened to me, what happened to friends of mine. But it was important to me not to do that, to write a novel, to write something that's fiction that uses this phenomenon that I set in the 80s, but I'm sure it could be set in the 70s or 60s or 90s."

And it is true it would be a misreading of the novel to say it is just about a toxic teacher, who may or may not resemble someone from life. The book is about an ensemble of wounded and wounding people, entangled in the toxic, sexist, homophobic, hypersexualized world of teens in the early 80s. And about the ways that the trauma and abuse of that era continue to reverberate through our world today.

"One of my interests in writing this," Langer adds, "was my first couple of novels, *Crossing California* and *Washington Story*, were very much novels about particular times in the past. And this novel, I feel, even though half of it is set in 1982, is very much a novel about the present moment and how we got there. Because when #MeToo started happening, when Donald Trump was elected president, we were seeing stories about, God knows, Harvey Weinstein, Jeffrey Epstein, Donald Trump, et cetera—and Brett Kavanaugh."

Case in point: there is an assault at a wild high school party that echoes the accusations

made against Kavanaugh at the time of his Supreme Court confirmation hearings (which were going on while Langer was working on the novel). But again, as Langer repeats, the novel is not just about someone who may have behaved the way Kavanaugh is accused of having behaved in high school in the early 80s.

He recalls that at the time of the Kavanaugh hearings "a lot of the people I grew up with . . . started sharing stories. Like people were looking at Brett Kavanaugh like this was some kind of anomaly. [But] I remember sitting in a bar in LA with a few friends talking about Kavanaugh and what he was alleged to have done, and we came up with a list of 12, 15—" Langer cuts himself off, and begins again, "It was like we just started listing things that we remembered that were almost carbon copies of [what was alleged to have happened with Kavanaugh]."

One of the dangers, Langer admits, in writing a book about a toxic high school culture, and various ways teens physically and mentally violate each other—and are violated—"is when you focus too much on one particular individual, one particular moment, whether it's Kavanaugh, whether it's Trump, you kind of lose sight of what is represented, how many other stories aren't [being] told."

By pointing a finger at a few individuals and blaming them, everyone else gets off the hook. Worse still, this blame game leaves plenty of victims unnoticed, unrecognized, and voiceless.

"A few stories get told," Langer reminds me, "but hundreds more have happened. So my book was kind of an attempt to think, yeah, this moment we're in, it didn't come from nowhere. There were signs of this before. There were stories that echoed this before. If you look at some of the stories that we lived through in the early 80s, it's all utterly predictable and utterly familiar and chilling in a way."

The book is not a roman à clef. Langer is not stealing a page from Jack Kerouac or Thomas Wolfe and retelling actual stories from his life with the names changed to protect the not-always-innocent.

"It's funny," Langer adds, "because when you talk to people from Evanston about this novel, they're like, 'Oh, are you writing about this particular individual?' And you're like, 'Well, no, not really.' But when you talk about it to people who are from different parts of the country, they say, 'Oh, this reminds me of this thing that happened when I was a kid,' be it in Saint Louis, be it in Duluth, be it anywhere."

For all of the darkness in the book, there is a quality in the book that reminds one of John Hughes's movies. Perhaps it is *Cyclorama's* setting—the protected bubble world of mostly white, mostly middle-class and upper middle-class kids, and their adult counterparts, which is also very much the world of *Sixteen Candles*, *Pretty in Pink*, and *The Breakfast Club*.

"Well, the funny thing about growing up as I did in Chicago," Langer explains, "in the late 70s and having gone to high school in Evanston is our lives were taking place with the backdrop of actual John Hughes movies being filmed where we were. So there were those of us growing up in that period who were into theater who had friends who would just randomly—well, not even randomly—would show up in John Hughes's movies. But John Hughes obviously captured something. There's a reason why his movies were as popular as they were, but that didn't really reflect what we thought was our reality growing up during that time."

Langer pauses a moment and then adds, "There [are] a lot of creepy undercurrents in those films that kind of get laughed off as throwaway jokes, whether it's sexual misbehavior, whether there's a big racist component of the movies." (Molly Ringwald commented on this in an article in the *New Yorker* in 2018.)

"The reality is there was some really dark stuff going on back then," Langer continues, "that I think we were able to cope with as kids through humor. We joked about these things that were happening before our eyes. But when you have a little bit of perspective, as I do now, writing about 1982, you look back and say, 'Wow, what was really going on there?'"

Then Langer quips that the world he describes could seem more like a Harmony Korine film.

So is there a message Langer wants the readers to get from his book?

"I am always kind of leery of writers who say they want the reader to come away with this particular idea or message, because if you do a good enough job of creating a world in three-dimensional characters, you may think you have a specific message. [But] someone may read it and come up with a totally different point of view, and that's to the good. I think I try not to slant the novel one way or the other. I want the characters to follow trajectories of their own and have the reader come to their own conclusions." ■

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FEATURE

MUBI GO to the movies

A new curated “movie pass” offers tickets to art house standouts.

By KATHLEEN SACHS

I recently got a tattoo of these opening lines from Frank O’Hara’s 1964 poem “Ave Maria”:

“*Mothers of America
let your kids go to the movies!*”

A metaphorical approximation of a cinephile’s clarion call, to be sure, but one to which I still can’t help imagine today’s parents replying, “In this economy? I think not.”

It’s not so much that the price of admission has risen drastically in recent years; per one source the average cost of a movie ticket in the U.S. has increased from \$9.11 in 2018 to \$9.17 in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Rather, with rising inflation and the threat of a recession, people are having to be especially prudent with their woefully minor ducats. (You can thank a recent screening of *Clueless* at the Rooftop Cinema Club for that reference; but with tickets starting at \$19.75 for lounge seats at the novel moviegoing experience, it came at a cost.)

There are options to alleviate this burden, ranging from yearly memberships at independent theaters, which typically come with a per-ticket discount and other localized benefits, to robust monthly programs with major chains like AMC Stubs A-List and Regal Unlimited, offering any number of movies for one low price.

But with plans like the latter come that which plagues the modern moviegoer: the paradox of choice, of having so many options from which to choose that it becomes more difficult to do so. This makes programs like AMC’s and Regal’s a double-edged sword, leaving something to be desired for a cinephile—especially one who might not frequently see what they’re interested in on the multiplex marquee—looking to make the most of their money and time.

As Rebecca Fons, director of programming at the Gene Siskel Film Center, remarked in an email about the fabled days of MoviePass past (when, for one low price per month, audiences could see as many movies as they wanted, which they did with such gusto that it eventually went out of business), she was baffled by a patron at one of the previous venues where she worked who had the service and “walked

out of movies as much as he walked into them.”

“I think that ‘too much of a muchness’ (as my mom says) meant there was an undervaluing of individual films and a lot of noise,” she says.

Enter MUBI GO, a new offering from the streaming service, film distributor, and editorial publisher MUBI. (Full disclosure that I sometimes write for MUBI’s *Notebook*, but before that was a longtime subscriber to the streaming platform.)

Each week MUBI GO features a new film, and users can redeem a ticket for that movie at participating theaters on the MUBI GO app (separate from the regular MUBI app). It’s somewhat similar to their streaming service, on which a new film is released every day. Past MUBI GO selections include such lauded 2021 films as *The Power of the Dog* and *Drive My Car*, as well as recent standouts like *Cha Cha Real Smooth*, *Neptune Frost*, and the Music Box Films release *Lost Illusions*.

After several years of success in the UK, MUBI GO came stateside last October, when it started in New York City and soon rolled out to Los Angeles and, on Friday, July 26, became available in Chicago, at the Gene Siskel Film Center and the Music Box Theatre.

Chicago native C. Mason Wells, the director of distribution for MUBI’s U.S. market, previously worked in exhibition himself (at the Quad Cinema in New York City), and was pitched on the service before he went to work for MUBI.

“I was impressed at how sustainable the model seemed, on a financial [and] logistical level, and how aggressively curated it was,” he says. “I liked that the idea behind it was that, we’re not just sending people to go to any movie, we’re picking something for them, which is at the heart of what MUBI does. It’s curatorial, always, and it hearkens back to a staff-pick section at a video store.”

The first film for which MUBI GO was available in Chicago was Jono McLeod’s 2022 quasi-documentary *My Old School*, which opened at the Film Center last Friday. A caveat

with the service is that participating theaters (such as, in this case, the Music Box, who did not open McLeod’s film) are not guaranteed to have that week’s selection, though once that film becomes available at a theater, users will have from that Friday through the following Thursday to redeem their tickets.

For example, Clio Barnard’s 2021 romance *Ali & Ava* opens at the Film Center on Friday, August 5. Tickets can be redeemed for this using the MUBI GO app, even if another film has taken its place as the main MUBI GO pick. Optimally, subscribers can see up to four movies per month with the service.

To utilize this functionality at the Film Center, MUBI GO users will select the film on the app and then redeem it for a physical ticket at the box office; at the Music Box, tickets will be redeemed straight from the service’s app.

Though Music Box hasn’t programmed any of the films that coincide with the first weeks of MUBI GO being available in Chicago, theater staff are confident in the partnership. MUBI has sponsored several of the theater’s bigger series these past few years, including the recent 70mm Film Festival and David Lynch: A Complete Retrospective—The Return.

No one I spoke with at either theater expressed concerns over this program affecting ticket sales (in large part, I’d imagine, because MUBI fully reimburses them monthly for every ticket redeemed via the app) or their respective membership programs.

Keeping in mind the business model, MUBI’s already strong relationship with the Music Box, and both theaters’ own interest in curat-

ed programming, MUBI GO seems to be a good opportunity, one that will hopefully benefit these beloved theaters and emphasize Chicago’s standing as one of the country’s premier cities for groundbreaking cinema and unique moviegoing experiences.

“We already show a lot of films that the audience hasn’t necessarily heard of—but they trust our curation, so they take a chance,” says Kyle Westphal, programming associate for the Music Box. “If subscription services enhance that dynamic, it’s good for everyone.”

Curation is key here; it’s what sets MUBI GO apart from other services of its kind. “It’s really the quality of the movie that dictates what we pick, at the end of the day,” says Wells. “That’s the unifying thing, because if that curation ever stops working, people will stop being interested in it.”

“I don’t think there’s anything else quite like MUBI GO out there, which I find exciting,” he says later in our conversation. “There are other services that’ll buy you a certain number of tickets a week or something; this is all about pointing you toward something new, à la a book club or something of that ilk, where one thing is selected and it takes the guesswork out of it for you.”

MUBI GO currently costs \$10.99 per month and includes full access to MUBI’s Film of the Day selection and streaming library. If you’re currently a MUBI member, you already have access to MUBI GO—just download the app and sign in using your MUBI login. 

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RR *Anonymous Club*

How much sharing is too much? Do you deserve to feel sad or confused when on the surface everything is going great? If you're Courtney Barnett, one of the most talented and sensitive songwriters to hit the music scene in the past decade, these are the kind of questions that will keep you up at night.

Filmmaker Danny Cohen gave Barnett a Dictaphone and asked her to talk into it as she traversed the world on tours over three years, in support of her celebrated second album in 2018, and onward. There's plenty of concert footage, as one would expect from any self-respecting music doc, but what makes up the vast majority of this intimate and affectionate portrait of a young creative person wrestling with success and with herself is a series of set pieces in hotel rooms and rented houses. Narrated asynchronously by Barnett's taped recordings, these scenes form a kind of audiovisual diary in which the places she stays—none a permanent residence—illustrate her quest to find some kind of peace while continuing to grow creatively.

In an era when the most minor celebrity tells a lot more about themselves than anyone needs to know, it's refreshing to hear a true artist doubt her right to complain about anything and be so reticent to reveal much of her private life. Barnett shares her innermost thoughts in her songs as precisely and humorously as anyone who's reached her level of fame. What this quiet little movie does is let us hang on the couch with her for a bit before and after she hits the stage. Feels just right. —**DMITRY SAMAROV** 83 min. *Special screening August 17 at the Music Box Theatre, post-film Q&A with Courtney Barnett*

RR *Vengeance*

Here's a bit of local amusement park trivia that surfaces during *Vengeance*, director/writer/star B.J. Novak's (mostly) Texas-set, unclassifiable drama/comedy/thriller/murder mystery/philosophical rumination. The Six Flags amusement park franchise takes its name from the six nations that have claimed Texas: France, Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, U.S., and Dixie. Who knew the Gurnee home of the world's oldest wooden roller coaster has a shout-out to secessionism in its very name? Or so we're told in Novak's directorial debut.

Vengeance continually upends expectations, sometimes with a pistol shot, sometimes with a quiet look,

sometimes with a bit of dialogue that sounds like an aside at first but becomes more and more significant as the film continues.

Novak plays Ben Manalowitz, an insufferable New York writer who uses the emoji-phrase "100 percent" the way some people use "like." Ben doesn't want to be a writer, he wants to be a "voice." He is certain he has a podcast idea that will have a cultural impact bigger than the combined content of Ira Glass.

Ben's podcast idea exploits the overdose death of a woman he hooked up with a few times. Before she OD'd on Oxy, Abilene (Lio Tipton) told her family Ben was the love of her life. Her brother Ty (Boyd Holbrook) insists Ben come to Texas for the funeral. Ben agrees when he realizes he can turn Abilene into *Dead White Girl*, a podcast commentary on mythmaking—both the myths we create about ourselves as individuals and as a nation.

It's a familiar plot device—city slicker finds there is more than stereotypes to small-town living. But Novak's measured telling and plot twists elevate that story to a level that's compelling and unique. Ty is certain "Mexican cartels" killed his sister, whose body shows up on a dirt road surrounded by the crunch of oil derricks and a scrum of empty red Solo cups. Ty wants to start murdering people, but Ben sells the podcast as a better mode of vengeance. Or, at least he sells Ty on that.

Novak is believable—though often annoying in a pretentious bro-y sort of way—as Ben makes the journey from insufferable elitist to slightly less so. But what's really fascinating is how Abilene's story eventually, brutally forces Ben to question the veracity of his own bedrock beliefs about himself. The supporting cast is terrific: Issa Rae is a sharp, funny editor and utterly convincing as the head of a podcast empire. As local record producer Quentin Sellers, Ashton Kutcher delivers a cryptic, self-styled philosopher with a smooth undercurrent of malevolence. As Abilene's mother Sharon, J. Smith-Cameron depicts a woman whose shrewd assessments of human nature always make her the smartest person in the room, even if not everybody there realizes it yet. And as Abilene's grieving, overlooked, gun-loving, ten-year-old brother Mason, Eli Bickel steals every scene he's in, often without saying a word.

Vengeance gets almost dizzyingly meta at times. It's a story about a storyteller who is creating a story about how mythology (stories) are created. It is also an acute reminder of how easy it can be to hide secrets in plain sight. —**CATEY SULLIVAN** R, 107 min. *Wide release in theaters.* 

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Black Chicago dance culture shines at Art on the Mart



Art on the Mart

Half a dozen participants in the short film *Billiken* talk about the famous south-side parade that shaped their lives.

By LEOR GALIL

Members of the dance company Silent Threat (right) see themselves projected on the side of the Merchandise Mart during the premiere of *Billiken*.  KYLE FLUBACKER



On the evening of Thursday, June 30, dozens of young Black dancers gathered on the Chicago Riverwalk across from the Merchandise Mart. At 9 PM that night, Art on the Mart, which bills itself as the world's largest permanent art projection, would debut two new pieces, including *Billiken*, an homage to the biggest Black parade in the country. As the

sky grew dark enough for the videos to be projected, some of the dancers showed off their moves during a DJ set from footwork pioneer RP Boo.

The Bud Billiken Parade travels mostly along a two-mile stretch of South King Drive, and plenty of the people who'd come to see the debut of *Billiken* had been in the parade themselves. As *Billiken* lit up the Merchandise

Mart's southern facade with a lively, impressionistic montage of dancers, the kids on the Riverwalk screamed in joy and surprise whenever they recognized someone among its larger-than-life figures.

The directors of *Billiken*, Shkunna Stewart and Wills Glasspiegel, had spent six months making the eight-minute video. They sourced some footage from the archives of the *Chicago*

Defender, whose founder, Robert S. Abbott, launched the Bud in 1929; the parade began as a way to celebrate the city's Black children just before their annual return to school.

Stewart and Glasspiegel also handpicked several dance crews—including the Empiire, Geek Squad, Goon Squad, Silent Threat, Dance Force, the Jesse White Tumblers, and Bringing Out Talent—to film in front of a green

BUD BILLIKEN PARADE

Sat 8/13, 10 AM-4 PM, step-off at King Dr. and Oakwood, route runs down King and into Washington Park via Ellsworth, free, all ages

screen. Brandon K. Calhoun adapted some of the footage into fuzzy animations, a style he'd previously employed for *Footnotes*, a 2021 Art on the Mart projection he'd produced with Glasspiegel. *Footnotes* and *Billiken* also have in common the prominent use of music: RP Boo produced an original track for the latter using recordings of the Rich Township Mighty Marching Machine.

Billiken builds on work that Stewart and Glasspiegel have already been doing for years. Glasspiegel is a nondancing member of footwork crew the Era (he mostly documents their activities and helps connect them with resources), and in 2017 he cofounded a racial-justice-focused arts nonprofit called Open the Circle. Open the Circle runs a free summer footwork camp, and in 2018 Stewart began cohosting it in her capacity as president of dance company Bringing Out Talent.

Bringing Out Talent is the fourth-generation version of a group founded by Stewart's great-grandmother Louise Hubbard. It was part of the Bud Billiken Parade too. "She used to make our uniforms," Stewart says. "She'd have all of us in this big backyard, and we was practicing, getting ready for the big day. All the kids in the neighborhood would be so excited."

Everyone featured in *Billiken* has an emotional connection to the Bud—I could feel it in every cheer of joy or shout of recognition that night on the Riverwalk. I wanted to know more about peoples' histories with the Bud, and Glasspiegel helped put me in touch with several folks who appear in *Billiken*; he's gotten to know plenty of players in the scene during his research into Chicago footwork history for his PhD in African American Studies and American Studies at Yale. For this oral history, I spoke to Glasspiegel, Stewart, RP Boo, Goon Squad leader and Era cofounder Jemal "P-Top" DeLa Cruz, Silent Threat leader LaToya Stats, and U-Phi-U founder Darnell Payne, whose group ushered a new wave of grassroots dance collectives into the Bud in the early 1980s.

First memories of the Bud

SHKUNNA STEWART My mom, when she was pregnant with me, she walked in the Bud. It's like I really never miss one—I was inside the womb going down King Drive. From the time

Dance company Bringing Out Talent, aka BOT, in the Bud Billiken Parade
© TIVIER WILCOXSON



I was one years old all the way up. I'm 46 years old now.

DARNELL PAYNE My first parade was 1981—I was in third grade, and I marched with a barbershop that was located on 64th and Cottage Grove. It felt like Hollywood to have that many people looking at you. We were just walking down, holding up the signs and all that. Man, that was my first experience, and I was hooked.

RP BOO My first official Bud Billiken Parade—it was 1991. A group that I was in called Mega Moves, the president was like, "We're gonna enter into the Bud Billiken Parade." We had a shopping cart with a little portable radio in it and a speaker up under it, so we were able to walk down—everything worked out. That was the time where I first seen House-O-Matics.

LATOYA STATS My first ever Bud experience was with my brother [Verndell Smith II]; he was the founder of Ultimate Threat dance organization, and he'd been doing the Bud Billiken Parade since he was about 13. This particular year he was performing with another team, and their float didn't work. I had to come help drive, and that was the first time I had ever been to a Bud Billiken Parade. I was just amazed, and I've been going ever since.

P-TOP My first Bud Billiken Parade was in 2006, I believe. I was walking with my sister and her dance group—and I believe it was raining that day. I think Full Effect, Total Domination, and Infamous Bang did the Bud together.

WILLS GLASSPIEGEL It was about 2014; I was a photographer in the world of Chicago footwork, and I ended up working with DJ Earl, who was a DJ on the float for Empiire, which is one of the groups featured in *Billiken*. But I'd heard about the Bud earlier just from researching the history of Chicago footwork and house music in the city.

DARNELL PAYNE To be surrounded by so much African American energy, and Black people dancing, and music and culture: I was hooked. Every year—from '81 till now—I'm at every Bud Billiken Parade.

LATOYA STATS The proudness and camaraderie of the Black community coming together for the kids to put on such an amazing event where they got to see people who looked just like them, outside, performing—it was just amazing.

P-TOP It opened my eyes up. I used to think there wasn't nothing bigger than a dance

down, but when I first went to the Bud, it is, because you see more than one group marching down King Drive. It's a long walk, but it's worth it. It's showcasing they moves and choreography for the world to see.

Growing with the Bud

DARNELL PAYNE My dance group, U-Phi-U—one of the founding dance groups in the city—we did the parade from '85 to 2015. We're a direct product of the breakdancing era. I was one of the premier dancers in a breakdance crew called ChiTown Rockers—they were one of the big groups from here. Music began to change, with the house-music movement happening. My brother was a security guard at a place called the Muzic Box. I was very young, but I looked older—I had a mustache at, like, 11 or 12—so one day, I went down to the club with my brother. The party started, and I was kind of stuck there, 'cause he couldn't take me back home. I got used to a whole 'nother level of music: jackin'.

From there we organized. It was six of us, and we started doing talent shows all over the city. It seemed like every talent show we went to, we would run into five or six other kids, like, "Hey, how can I join in with you all?" We swelled—our numbers went over 100. Every

ART ON THE MART DANCE DOWN

Includes a footwork dance workshop, a youth dance down, the marching band from *Billiken*, and projections of *Billiken* and *Footnotes*. Sun 8/21, 6-9 PM, Riverwalk: West End (near Lake Street bridge), free, all ages



Left: Dancers from Legacy 2.0 appear in *Billiken* and in this collage from the film. Right: Members of footwork crew Goon Squad (top) and artist-filmmaker Wills Glasspiegel (bottom).

COLLAGE BY BRANDON K. CALHOUN AND WILLS GLASSPIEGEL; PHOTOS BY WILLS GLASSPIEGEL (TOP RIGHT) AND MICHAEL MAGITMAN (BOTTOM RIGHT)

continued from 31

year, for the Bud Billiken Parade, we'd dance with—the minimum was 100.

SHKUNNA STEWART Bringing Out Talent was formed off of my mom's group, which is SSF: Silver Star Fires. I changed the name, changed the style a little bit, changed the swag. I've actually been running BOT for 13 years straight on my own.

LATOYA STATS Silent Threat actually started off as a vision in my brother's mind. He was 18 at the time, and told me he wanted to pursue opening up his own dance studio. I was like, "You're too young—you can't do that right now."

He actually started with about three people in an apartment, practicing. He grew from doing it in an apartment, to a church, to a day care. After years of hard work, he actually opened up his own studio on 75th and Eberhart. We've had over 5,000 kids come to our program over the years, and we just continue trying to grow and continue that legacy.

DARNELL PAYNE Every year I aspired to make

things bigger, to make things better, to make it over-the-top but do it with excellence. We always marched in straight lines—military formed lines—even with 100 kids. Nobody out of spot. We used to go to the Dan Ryan Woods and practice all these military cadences and moves. We wanted our shoulders to be broad, we wanted our backs to be straight, we wanted to look so clean to represent our culture in the best way that we could.

SHKUNNA STEWART I wanted to step it up a little bit. My mom, she was not really into custom-made uniforms and stuff like that. And I said, "Man, they look really cool—I wanna look like that!" So I took it and worked on it.

DARNELL PAYNE I'm basically speaking of my other family—House-O-Matics, Phase 2, and all the other teams that came up with me. We began to be the spotlight of the Bud Billiken Parade; we became the energy of the Bud Billiken Parade.

It was so many military groups, the fire department, the police department, this, that, and the other, and people just walking, waving

flags. Then us coming down with massive walls of music and people dancing. You danced till you fell out. There were multiple times where my kids were taken out of the parade route and had to go to Provident Hospital when we got to 51st Street, 'cause they had danced so hard.

LATOYA STATS A lot of these children and young adults, they don't have a positive person in their life. So it starts there—making sure that I'm always a positive role model for them, and giving them the tools they need to not only be successful dancers but to be successful people in life. As far as it goes towards the Bud Billiken Parade is making sure we're practicing, ordering uniforms, making sure that everybody looks good and we're well represented when we come down King Drive.

DARNELL PAYNE [The Bud] gave us a national spotlight. People were calling us to do shows—it wasn't like, "Come to this backyard party." We did shows at the Field Museum, we did things at the DuSable Museum—and guess what, we were getting paid! It wasn't just, "Come and do this for free." There were City of Chicago checks coming to our group,

which helped us get equipment, speakers, and uniforms and stuff like that. It actually turned us from being a group of kids who love to do things on the corner into an incorporation and a business.

We were known by U-Phi-U, but once we became incorporated, we became the Untouchable Unity Dance Troupe. We actually had a not-for-profit. These people helped us—they helped us be able to get into the Park District, because now we had paperwork and documentation that was behind us, that we represent well enough that we were able to now do this thing on a professional level.

SHKUNNA STEWART During the summer, we normally have a peak; I have maybe 100 kids. But a lot of the kids that used to come, they're older now—in college and stuff. I have, like, 55 this year.

LATOYA STATS My brother was killed last year, so I took over his dance organization. Now that I am in charge of the dance studio, I'm right there, front and center, with planning and preparing for our organization to be a part of the Bud every year.

The Bud's influence on music and dance

DARNELL PAYNE Back then it was more of an R&B feel—it was more of a New Edition or any R&B artist that had a faster song, we would dance to that music. But then we had the pleasure of having DJ Gant-Man and DJ Puncho—they actually dance. They were footworkers with U-Phi-U. They started making our mixes, which had the house music and the footwork music that we were dancing off of. So a transition happened in the early 90s—the street DJs started recording their music on audio cassette, and we were able to play that music in the parade. And the whole game changed.

RP BOO I don't think I did any parades with House-O-Matics after I started producing. I started doing floats for other people—every year I was DJing for different groups. I used to come past everyone's float that had turntables set up, and I would play my tracks for them. And they would be like, "Hey, where'd this track come from?" I would have one to three new tracks every parade day that I would make just for that day. And to see the groups being able to now finally hear this track that I've been producing that I made especially just for that day—it was like, "RP is up to something."

The dance groups that I perform for, I might make a track for them, and they wouldn't even know that I made the track for them until the day of. If they listened to it—"We wanna run that, we wanna dance off that." I can mix my tracks with other tracks that people produced over the years. It was like nobody could do it better than RP. No one.

WILLS GLASSPIEGEL Footwork started to sprout out on its own trail. Then you've got the birth of battle cliques—footwork groups that were essentially a B side of the Chicago dance industry.

P-TOP Towards the end of the Bud, everybody gets to that point by the tennis courts, a lot of footworkers—even some dancers—will battle at the tennis courts just to make a name for yourself, or just to say you was there. It was needed. It was an initiation type of thing. It's almost going to another footworking event, but outside, during the Bud. It's big. Getting involved with the Bud—it's, how shall I say it, it's almost joining the football team. You get on there, you get to showcase what you do, earn respect.

RP BOO One day, I say, "Hey, I've been going down King Drive for so long, let me make a King Drive track." So actually, "Bang'n on King Dr." is the third edition, because I made two King Drive tracks for the parade years prior. And those who was there at the parade got to hear them, and so when I did "Bang'n on King Dr.," it was the same as the first two.

WILLS GLASSPIEGEL We made a short film or music video called "Bang'n on King Drive." That was really my first major project that took place at the Bud Billiken Parade. That is one of my proudest works.

The Billiken projection

SHKUNNA STEWART Last year, I saw *Footnotes*—that was the first film. That one was awesome. We wanted to take that and make it better.

WILLS GLASSPIEGEL Merchandise Mart is so public and site specific. It's not a blank slate; there's a lot of texture. I thrive with an improvisational relationship to the surface of the building and that space at the confluence of the river and the Riverwalk. *Footnotes* was a big success. I thought, "How can I do more?"

SHKUNNA STEWART I'm just one of the partners of OTC, and we've been strategizing about doing this film on Art on the Mart, and it finally came true.

WILLS GLASSPIEGEL In some ways it goes back to hearing RP Boo tell me about the parade. He told me a story about how he used to walk the parade route in the early morning before the actual parade. That's a spark for me, in terms of what ended up becoming *Billiken*.

SHKUNNA STEWART Me and Wills decided [on which teams to include] as one. You have a lot of teams that just have well-known names. Also we wanted to bring out a few of the teams who don't have a well-known name to try to give them a well-known name.

LATOYA STATS I saw it last year when they featured the footworkers on there. I said to myself, "Ooh, we want to do that." When we received the call, it was so exciting.

P-TOP Working with kids, I had to get another generation under Goon Squad. Doing so many things with them, teaching them, and getting



them opportunities to dance and do certain things is major, because we didn't have that growing up.

SHKUNNA STEWART It was so much going on that day—the opening. It was just cameras everywhere; we had friends and family everywhere. It was exciting just to see everyone come on down there and see it. I'm still stoked.

LATOYA STATS It's really an amazing experience to have an African American child from the inner city of Chicago drive downtown and see yourself on a big building.

P-TOP When Goon Squad was on the projection, it was a milestone for me. Goon Squad's name—our name—is getting out there. Goon Squad's name, in battling, it's been out there. But what these kids are doing—and with us pushing them and giving them the drive and ambition and the tools to utilize in this dance culture—it just shows they're putting the work in. They're dedicated, and they're inspiring other people to want to dance, but also to make a change when it comes to doing something together. It's very big and needed for the city.

LATOYA STATS There's a picture of my kids on Wills's page where they're actually looking at themselves, and they were amazed about see-

ing themselves up there.

WILLS GLASSPIEGEL When those kids saw themselves on the building, and they screamed and felt like they were larger-than-life—and they *are* larger-than-life—that's the point.

DARNELL PAYNE To come from a kid who organized dance groups in broken glass in vacant lots, where nobody wanted us, where we couldn't be seen on TV, where it was too controversial—because they wanted to label us, at one point, as gangs—and to go and be in downtown Chicago, at the Merchandise Mart, with our images being broadcasted that large in the downtown area, it was overwhelming for me. I almost broke into tears. I sat there and I thought about all the times that we just wanted to be included in the conversation. We just wanted to sit at the table. And now it's our table.

LATOYA STATS It's all bittersweet. These are things I know for a fact my brother wanted to accomplish. People can drive by and see Silent Threat on a downtown building; it lets me know that all of his hard work, and the sweat and the tears, and all of the energy that he put in his organization is worth it. It makes me feel good that I am able to continue to do those things for him as well as the kids. 📺

🐦 @imLeor



📍 RACHEL WINSLOW

CHICAGOANS OF NOTE

Jessica Risker, licensed counselor, singer-songwriter, and host of *Music Therapy*

“Part of the podcast’s goal is to get a peek inside what the working of an artist actually looks like, including the struggles and the messiness.”

As told to JAMIE LUDWIG

Jessica Risker is an experimental singer-songwriter and a licensed clinical counselor. After the COVID-19 pandemic sent Chicago into lockdown in March 2020, Risker merged those pursuits for a podcast called Music Therapy, where she speaks to artists, industry professionals, and fellow therapists about their work, creativity, and mental health. She initially imagined the podcast as a community resource during a difficult time, and as COVID restrictions have loosened, she’s expanded it into the offline world with Music Therapy: Group Session, a series of loose variety shows

at Cafe Mustache that includes interviews with full bands in front of live audiences. Risker is approaching her 100th episode of Music Therapy and fleshing out the songs for her next record, which features material written during and inspired by her pandemic experiences. She and her band head into the studio this fall.

You can find more info about Music Therapy at musictherapypodcast.com, and on Wednesday, August 10, Cafe Mustache hosts a Group Session featuring Chicago punk weirdos Spread Joy.

Music was something I wanted to do ever since I was in college, but I wasn’t really sure how to make a career out of it, financially speaking. I moved to Chicago [from Missouri] to go to graduate school at Northwestern in their master’s in counseling psychology program, but I was always very wistful about wanting to do music and trying to figure out how that would fit into my life. Over the years, I found a way to have my day job and also do a lot of open mikes, work on music at night, and develop bands. So I’ve pursued these two paths side by side. They

probably informed each other, in that my personality is geared towards being introspective—my majors in college were psychology and philosophy.

A lot of therapists are drawn to the field because they do a lot of work on themselves or maybe they have their own things they’ve gone through. I’ve never, for example, written a song about a client, but I think my tendency towards introspection and using music as a way to cathartically release melancholy—or sadness or joy or whatever kind of emotion—has been very effective and satisfying. I personally find music therapeutic in that way.

At the start of the pandemic, I was living my life as usual and things were kinda stable. I have a little boy who was about two at the time. So I have a family now, and by extension, life tends to be pretty routine: Getting up at the same time, taking care of each other, and all of that. And I had shows scheduled, and I was working on music with the band.

When the pandemic happened, it was a scramble for therapists, and it was impressive how quickly everyone pivoted and figured out how to do the telehealth thing. It was weird at first, but now everybody wants it, which is great.

Musicians were caught up with the pandemic as well. I talked to so many, especially at the beginning, who were like, “We were about to go down to South by Southwest” or “I just had this album release and all my shows were canceled.” So many things got disrupted, and people were turning to social media—specifically Instagram in my community—to do live performances or to just connect and share. I felt that I wanted to be part of that conversation.

One night I had the idea, “What if I combined my music and my therapy, and did my best to offer some sort of experience that I have as a therapist to help people get through this really stressful time?” So I started doing live guided meditations. I did tips on how to structure your day or how to be careful about substance use, all that kind of stuff. It quickly turned into interviewing other musicians about their experiences. At first, it wasn’t meant to be a podcast. It was just something I was doing, but I kept [all the recordings]. After a while I

realized, “Oh, this is basically a podcast,” and I started thinking of it that way.

I don’t have any formal experience in journalism or broadcasting, but I sit and I talk with people that I don’t know that well all week long. So it’s not a big leap for me to have a conversation with a musician, whether it’s a friend or someone I’ve never met before, and ask them questions and sort of pull at threads if they say something interesting. Over time I’ve tried to evolve it in a way that I’m very much keeping the audience in mind, and thinking of what would be useful to listeners. Like the recent one we did on imposter syndrome. We also did one on performance anxiety.

I want this to be helpful for people. Some-

times it’s this sort of direct psychoeducational material, where I talk with another therapist. Or as a musician myself, I’ve struggled with things like “Songwriting is hard—how do other people do this and have an amazing finished product? How do they balance having a baby with going on tour?”

I’ve always found resources that talk to me about how other artists do their day-to-day so inspiring. They normalize everything—the frustrations and the journey. Part of the podcast’s goal is to get a peek inside what the working of an artist actually looks like, including the struggles and the messiness.

[The local focus] developed really organically. It made total sense to just reach out to

my community, and most of my community is made of musicians in Chicago. Chicago is a big city and there’s lots of pockets of musical communities, but I think everyone is really friendly and willing to work with each other and support each other. We could hear each other’s stories while we were all feeling so isolated.

We have expanded it a little bit and gone outside of Chicago. There are so many artists to choose from, and I’ll probably try to keep a Chicago focus but also reach out to others to see if they are willing to talk to me. There’s so many stories, and levels of outwardly what you might think of as success for an artist—even though an artist’s success can really

depend on how they define it for themselves. So it’s kind of finding where people are in their different steps of their journey as an artist, and that could be in Chicago or beyond.

When I invite someone to be on the podcast, I have them fill out a form, which helps me stay organized. One of the questions is “What do you want to talk about?” I definitely suggest we keep it to mental health, creativity, and music careers. There’s a lot you could talk about in there, but really, I’m open. With the therapist episodes, I’m more intentional—like, if I want to talk about performance anxiety, I’ll find a therapist who specializes in that. But the artist episodes tend to be more about what the interviewees want to share and what ➔

Tips to take the edge off pandemic burnout

Whether we recognize it or not, we’ve all experienced prolonged stress over the past few years. For some, it started with the pandemic; for others, COVID just added to the challenges they were already facing. All the sources of stress in our lives—personal traumas or loss, racial injustice, climate change, threats to bodily autonomy, ascendant fascism—can really stack up, which harms our minds and bodies.

Jessica Risker shares some of her favorite tips for coping with and powering through periods of prolonged stress:

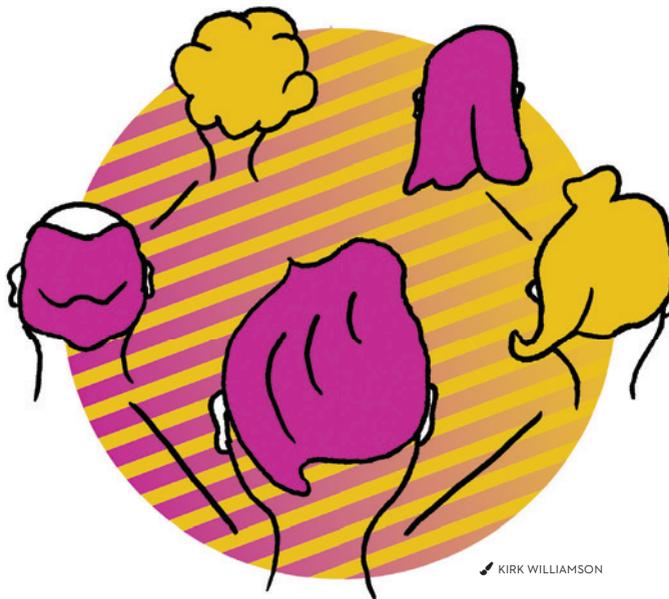
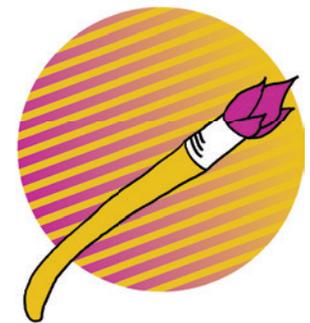
1. TUNE INTO YOUR BASELINE Think about how you feel when you’re in a healthy place. Now think about how you feel when your stress level goes up. For example, do you feel less focused and energized? Self-assessing your emotions allows you to tell the difference between tolerable, manageable, and difficult, so that you can begin to face them before they stack up.



2. REMOVE STRESS THROUGH EMOTIONAL HYGIENE If you clear emotional residue, you can get back to baseline, or as close to it as possible. Pinpoint some small things you can do that have a great payoff for your mental health, such as spending time outside, taking a shower, or doing something creative. Build those activities into your existing routine so that you’re able to prioritize them without willpower—relying on force of will is a short-term strategy that isn’t helpful in times of stress.

3. FOCUS ON WHAT’S WITHIN YOUR CONTROL Create structure and routine, such as waking up at the same time each morning, but be flexible with yourself rather than seek perfection.

4. GET CREATIVE Whether you like to draw, sing, or write, creative expression can benefit your mental health. However, stress can impact executive function, which can make it hard to get started. So lower the bar and just promise yourself two minutes. If you want to keep going, keep going. If not, you’ve already hit your goal.



✦ KIRK WILLIAMSON

5. GET PHYSICAL Move your body and spend time outside. Physical movement sends a signal to the brain that says “I am not stuck,” which is especially important for people experiencing trauma. Adding intention can boost the benefits of your activity. For example, go on a mindfulness walk while taking note of beautiful things around you.

6. RECOGNIZE AND VALIDATE YOUR STRUGGLES We often feel like we have to choose between “this is really hard” and “I can do hard things,” or “this is hard” and “others have it harder.” But we can recognize our challenges without invalidating our feelings about them. As soon as we name an emotion, we’re able to start working through it.

7. BUILD SOCIAL SUPPORT, BUT ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES Connect with family, friends, or a qualified therapist, but be mindful that you don’t overcommit yourself while your energy reserves are low.

8. MAINTAIN YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR Laughter creates connection and releases positive chemicals in your body. When was the last time you had a great belly laugh?

MUSIC

continued from 35

they're comfortable talking about.

Joshua Wentz, who's my longtime friend and bandmate, engineers all the shows. He really trims up the *ums* and *ahs* and all of that. But the content of the conversation is intact. There was one time where someone reached out and they were like, "Hey, I realized that was maybe a little further than I wanted to share publicly." I was like, "No problem at all."

Certainly people have revealed things on the show that are pretty personal, whether it's regarding their own mental-health journey or substance use. Adam Schubert of Ulna was incredibly candid about his addiction issues and all the recovery programs he's been in. I think most people understand the show's purpose, and tend to go in knowing they're going to share something, hoping it will be helpful for a listener. People have shared deeply personal and heavy things, but it's not always heavy. By and large people are happy to share. They want people to know they're not alone.

I always touch base with people after we talk, and I frequently hear things like "That

was so therapeutic." On the whole, the reception to the podcast has been overwhelmingly positive. Obviously mental health has always been important, but I feel like culturally we're really recognizing how important it is, and maybe people aren't keeping things to themselves as much. Musicians often don't have access to health insurance or therapy, and this is not a substitute for therapy, but if it can be a resource that helps people and supplements their mental health or helps them learn more about themselves, then that's what I want to do.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the podcast gave me structure and something to do. It gave me a reason to take a shower so I could look decent in front of the camera, whereas I could see how that could be really easy to skip when you're just at home all the time. So even though this is meant to be helpful for listeners, all these questions are questions that I have too. "How do people become a musician? How do you keep going? How do you fold regular life into it? How do you come to terms with where your career is at versus where you

might want it to go?"

I've learned so many things from people in all points of their careers, and how they think about it. It's just really given me a more rounded view of what it means to be a musician, rather than just an interview with somebody who just put out a really great record. I'm always like, "But how did you do that?"

The demographic that [a therapist] might work with is often just geographically determined. Before the pandemic it was always "Where is your office located?" And then there's the issues that you might treat—I work a lot with anxiety, and a lot of musicians have anxiety. But as far as working with musicians or creative people in general, I have, even before making the podcast, been very interested in that, because I can relate so much to it and I can bring something to it. I'd say that's definitely been enriched after hearing all these artists on their different journeys and what it looks like for them, and bringing that kind of knowledge back to working with other creatives.

Sullivan Davis, who produces the podcast,

used to be the talent buyer for the Hideout, and now he has his own production company [Local Universe]. I brought the idea for *Group Session* to him right when he was starting his production company, and the timing worked out perfectly. We wanted to stay true to the show and touch on mental health, but we also wanted it to be a live experience that's entertaining and maybe more intentionally keep it fun and light.

We will "go there" with bands, but we also have a lot of fun too. We'll also show music videos, and local comedian Mike Knish has a segment where he plays a character called Leslie Tanner, who is also a therapist type, which is my favorite part of the show, honestly. And then the band has a live performance. So we definitely try to keep the show more upbeat and not like this heavier thing, even though sometimes we do touch on band dynamics—and sometimes bands fight, or sometimes there's tension. But usually they're willing to talk about it. 

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8.8

THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS



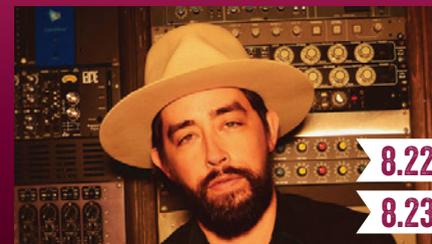
8.19

NEW ORLEANS SUSPECTS



8.21

TAJ MAHAL 5PM & 8PM SHOWS



8.22

8.23

JACKIE GREEN WITH LILLY WINWOOD

DON'T MISS...

- 8.5 ERIC NEUMANN
- 8.7 GREAT MOMENTS IN VINYL
THE MUSIC OF WOODSTOCK 12PM
- 8.7 GORAN IVANOVIC &
FAREED HAQUE
- 8.9 ZO! AND TALL BLACK GUY
- 8.10 RAUL MIDÓN

- 8.11-8.12 DAVE HOLLISTER
- 8.15-8.16 GLENN JONES
- 8.17 SKERRYVORE
- 8.18 SUSAN WERNER
- 8.25-8.28 ERIC ROBERSON

COMING SOON...

- 8.29 AL JARDINE
(OF THE BEACH BOYS)
- 8.30 CHRISSY METZ
- 8.31 JEFF BRADSHAW
& FRIENDS FEAT.
ALGEBRA BLESSETT
- 9.1 THE BAYLOR
PROJECT
- 9.2 TORTURED SOUL
- 9.5-9.6 INCOGNITO
FEAT. MAYSА
- 9.7 DUANE BETTS
- 9.8 WILLIAM
FITZSIMMONS
WITH STUART SMITH
- 9.9 AL DI MEOLA
- 9.10 J. HOWELL
- 9.12 DAVID BROMBERG
QUINTET
- 9.15 JUDITH HILL

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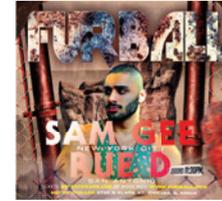
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SLEIGH BELLS



FRI AUG 05
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FURBALL: MARKET DAYS
with DJ Sam Gee (NYC)
Rue D (San Antonio)



SAT AUG 06
RED FANG
+ Bell Witch & Aerial Ruin:
Stygian Bough / HELP



SAT AUG 27
CARPENTER BRUT
+ SIERRA



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RESIDENTS: Michael Serafini / Garrett David

GUESTS: Eddie Matos / Ron Carroll
David Harness / Ilana Ariella

HOSTED BY: Lucy Stoole / Jojo Baby / Nico

GUEST HOSTS: Sasha Love / Miss Toto

SATURDAY AUG 13 / 11PM / 18+

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NOCTURNA DANCE UNTIL DAWN

with Scary Lady Sarah

SUNDAY AUGUST 21 / 9PM / 18+

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PEACHES

+ Sophie Powers

THURSDAY AUG 25 / 7PM / ALL AGES

IDKHOW / JOYWAVE

The Welcome to Hellvetica Tour
+ Savannah Conley

FRIDAY AUG 26 / 9PM / 18+

1833 + EAT PRESENT

THE BIG PAYBACK

A Drug War Reparations Concert + Fundraiser
ft. Twista / Do or Die / Crucial Conflict
Shawna + Special Guests

AUG 28 HEAR IN HEAVEN: CELEBRATING
THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF
JOE CASSIDY

SEPT 09 TINARIWEN

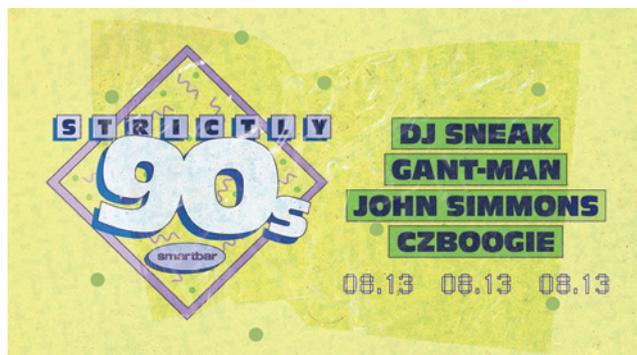
SEPT 10 THE AFGHAN WHIGS

SEPT 11 BORIS

SEPT 22 TR/ST

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FRIDAY AUG 05

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SHAUN J. WRIGHT

SATURDAY AUG 06

VIOLET

MISS TWINK USA

MILLIA

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JUSTIN AULIS LONG

SEVRON

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PICK OF THE WEEK

Lifeguard grow into their next underground rock vision on *Crowd Can Talk*

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LIFEGUARD, FRUIT LEATHER, DOMINO

Sat 8/6, 7:30 PM, Color Club, 4146 N. Elston, \$17, \$15 in advance.

A COUPLE WEEKS BEFORE LIFEGUARD played Horsegirl's record-release show at Thalia Hall in June, I ran into drummer Isaac Lowenstein and bassist Asher Case while walking through the Logan Square Farmers Market with my family. My parents asked what kind of music they make, and we all had a little trouble coming up with a concise answer—Lifeguard move through lots of styles, and that's what drew me to them when I heard their 2020 debut album, *Dive*. They're loud in a smart, subversive way, and their varied approaches to melody and heaviness telegraph their knowledge of postpunk, garage, indie rock, and hardcore without being too showy about it. They also play well together: Lowenstein, Case, and guitarist-vocalist Kai Slater give their music a communal euphoria that drives it as surely as Case's propulsive bass or Lowenstein's keyed-up drumming. That energy has been key to Lifeguard's evolution. The loose, smoldering sound of *Dive* gave way to a tighter but more melancholy feel on seven-inches issued by Chunklet in March 2021 ("Receiver" b/w "Sun Ra Jane") and March 2022 ("Taking Radar" b/w "Loose Cricket"). On the new EP *Crowd Can Talk*, released via righteous Chicago rock label Born Yesterday, Lifeguard seem to have figured out who they are as a band—even though they might take a left turn tomorrow. Slater is a magnetic front man whose dry holler and taut riffs tie together his bandmates' animated, occasionally contorted rhythms and bring out the subtle sweetness in the trio's work. *Crowd Can Talk* demonstrates Lifeguard's underground rock bona fides, and rambunctious opener "New Age (I've Got A)" bursts with charming hooks. —LEOR GALIL

CONCERT PREVIEW
FRIDAY⁵MARISSA NADLER *Squirrel Flower* opens.
10 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$15, 21+

As the world literally burns, it's a comfort to see performers we hold dear come back through town to offer musical relief. Singer-songwriter Marissa Nadler debuted in 2004 with the album *Ballads of Living and Dying*, establishing the template for her delicately ominous, reverb-shrouded fables of loss and mortality. She's since come out of the shadows a bit (and dialed back the reverb), and her latest LP, *The Path of the Clouds* (released on long-time label Sacred Bones last October), displays the persistence of her vision alongside her hard-won musical evolution. Nadler recorded the basic tracks at home and then sent them to some heavy contributors, including experimental harpist Mary Lattimore, bassist Simon Raymonde (formerly of beyond-legendary dream weavers the Cocteau Twins and currently head of the Bella Union label), Black Mountain vocalist Amber Webber, and multi-instrumentalist Milky Burgess.

Nadler is playing songs off the record on this tour, and I especially hope to hear the psychedelic shoegaze of the title track. The murder ballad "Bessie, Did You Make It?" colors her luscious, double-tracked voice with subtle flourishes of piano and other adornments, and she empowers the female character—an all-too-rare thing in that songwriting tradition. Also on my dream set list would be the bewitching gothic Americana of "From Vapor to Stardust," which shares the distinctive melancholy of Townes Van Zandt (Nadler is a huge fan, and covered him this year on the Neurot Recordings compilation album *Songs of Townes Van Zandt Vol. III*).

At the Empty Bottle, Nadler will be accompanied by Burgess and another multi-instrumentalist, Don McGreevy, who's also played with doom-drone trailblazers Earth. When I reached out to her about this show, she also promised to include tunes from 2014's *July* and 2018's *For My Crimes* as well as a few surprise covers. "It's going to be surreal to perform again at all after so long," she said—and I for one vote for more of that kind of surrealism in 2022, rather than the freakish and horrifying variety we've been getting. I'll be at this gig front and center, escaping into Nadler's beautiful darkness while rockin' a black KN95—'cause that's how this closet goth safely rolls. —STEVE KRAKOW

SATURDAY⁶MELODY ANGEL BAND 9 PM, Rosa's Lounge,
3420 W. Armitage, \$20, 21+

Chicago guitarist and vocalist Melody Angel combines fiery celebrations of life with equally fearless and uncompromising demands for social justice. Her style of blues-rock mixes genres and influences as freely and as pointedly as her lyrics assault the boundaries between the personal and the political. Angel counts Hendrix and Prince among her idols, and though she's less flashy, her harmonic sense is



Marissa Nadler © NICK FANCHER

dazzlingly sophisticated. She also writes music that reflects and enhances the emotional atmospheres of her lyrics: On “In This America,” her mournful, seething ode to young Black men killed by police, she lays carefully constructed leads over folk-like strummed accompaniment. “In the Fire,” from her 2017 release of the same name, uses Celtic-sounding violin to create an almost pastoral setting, which the song’s story line renders ironic: a young girl faces down her mother’s abuser and then incinerates the scene of the crime, an image that’s equally searing whether the fire is real or metaphorical. Angel explodes ferociously on “Outside Our Radius,” “American Dream,” and “Nobody Gets Away,” where power chords propel leads that circle, probe, home in, and hit their marks with unerring accuracy.

On *Foxy*, released this spring, Angel’s protagonists continue to demand respect and satisfaction, but they also celebrate life by embracing the hard-bitten irony of the blues. “Bad Bad Seed” portrays a female protagonist determined to salvage a broken heart by cruising for a one-night stand, claiming ownership of a scenario traditionally portrayed as demeaning if not dangerous for women—she could be the same partyer in the turbocharged “Dance With Me,” which features some of Angel’s fleetest, most aggressive playing yet. The title song frames sexiness and fly-girl sass as mechanisms of empowerment and insists that this empowerment be uncompromising (“You must defend your temple with a quick mind / ‘Cause you’re gonna be beautiful till the day you die”). In the ironically singsong “Free,” Angel revisits a theme she’s addressed in the past—the soul-killing claustrophobia of feeling trapped in a prisonlike fishbowl by systemic racism.

The music on *Foxy* shows off Angel’s favorite influences, including Chicago blues (the raw rock remake of Howlin’ Wolf’s “Spoonful”), old-school funk and R&B (the disco-tinged “Too Much”), Latin-flavored pop-folk (the anguished, yoked-by-yearning anthem “Waltz of Love”), and a synth-embellished fusion of pop and hip-hop (“Money”). Through it all, bluesy emotional honesty and rock ‘n’ roll fire remain her trademarks. —DAVID WHITEIS

BACK ALLEY JAZZ *This free neighborhood festival features four outdoor stages, participatory art activities such as button making and screen printing, and an indoor afterparty. For more details visit hydeparkjazzfestival.org/backalleyjazz.*

S. Paxton and 74th, 12:30-5:45 PM, in order of performance: the Tommy Bradford Band, the Jazz Institute of Chicago Jazz Links Ensemble, Rashada Dawan & the Soul Collective, and Sam Thousand & the Soul Vortex. S. Paxton and 72nd, 1:15-5 PM, in order of performance: the Jazz Hooping Quartet, Sa-Rah, and the Junta Ensemble. Black United Fund lot, 1809 E. 71st, 3-7 PM: Universal Alley Jazz Jam. S. Oglesby and 74th, 6-7 PM: Dee Alexander & John McLean. The Quarry, 2423 E. 75th, 7 PM: afterparty. FREE

In 2018, Back Alley Jazz, an offshoot of the Hyde Park Jazz Festival, thrummed the heartstrings of nostalgic south-siders when it resuscitated the popular neighborhood-alley jams that took place in the community from the mid-1960s into the ‘70s. Since then, this riff on tradition has become a tradition itself, turning unassuming corridors and street corners into bandstands. In the spirit of the original (and of the HPJF), the event is free to all. As in previous years, the performances will take place around South Shore on a single day. The main “stages,” so to speak (in past years, some performances have been at street level, while others have been on risers), will be located on South Paxton Avenue at East 72nd and East 74th, and between them they’ll host music from noon till 6 PM. The lot next to the Black United Fund on 71st will host the Universal Alley Jazz Jam—a sprawling jam sesh directly in the lineage of the original alleyway jazz tradition—from 3 to 7 PM. While the Hyde Park Jazz Festival showcases artists from around the globe, Back Alley is a more intimate showcase for local acts. The talent includes tap king Jumaane Taylor and his Jazz Hooping Quartet (1:15 PM at 72nd and Paxton), smooth-singing and -trumpeting phenom Sam Thousand, formerly Sam Trump, with his band the Soul



Back Alley Jazz © MARC MONAGHAN

Vortex (5 PM at 74th and Paxton), and inimitable veterans Dee Alexander and John McLean in a vocals-and-guitar duo (6 PM at 74th and Oglesby). Bring your kids and your appetite: food vendors and arts-and-crafts stations will be set up along Paxton. And if you aren’t too sun-beat, save some dance moves for the afterparty at the Quarry. —HANNAH EDGAR

LATINXT *See also Sun 8/7. Hosted by MC Logan Lu. Beer Garden, 2-11:30 PM, in order of performance: Future Rootz, Quinto Imperio, Nino Augustine, Reyna Tropical, Doctor Nativo, and Mamicana Gyrate. Wave Wall Staircase, 2-9 PM, in order of performance: Xochi G, La Gata Clandestina, La Colocha, and Jenniferfauxpez. Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand. FREE*

LatiNxt is the kind of festival I enjoy the most. This free, two-day fest on Navy Pier is geared toward the pulse of the current scene and allows concertgoers to make new musical discoveries. For its fifth year, LatiNxt features 17 performances on two stages per day, curated by local Latinx collective Future Rootz. They’ve created a lineup that showcases musical identities informed by a tricultural mestizo heritage—African, European, Indigenous—as well as the vanguard of contemporary culture. Among the highlights is Colombian five-piece electro-rock band Meridian Brothers, led by multi-instrumentalist and composer Eblis Alvarez, who perform on Sunday. The band’s brand-new album, *Metamorfosis*, imagines the political salsa dura of a fictional 1970s band called El Grupo Renacimiento, whose music touches on themes such as police brutality, social marginalization, and addiction, distorting these elements with quirky retro psychedelic touches. The festival also offers Chicagoans a rare opportunity to experience live music from Guatemala’s rich scene: Saturday includes Doctor Nativo, born Juan Martinez, who folds Mayan beats and traditional folk instruments into his shamanic, percussive music, and Sunday’s lineup features fierce ecofeminist hip-hop singer Rebeca Lane. The U.S. side of the Latine dias-

pora will also be well-represented: west-coast duo Reyna Tropical (Saturday) create textured Caribbean pop rock; Chicago-based Rudy de Anda (Sunday) reimagines old-school Latin ballads from the 60s to the 80s as delicate, trippy tropicalia; Nino Augustine (Saturday) slings beats that hark back to his melodic Panamanian proto-reggaeton roots but emerge tinged with Atlanta hip-hop. Mexican songwriter Silvana Estrada, who plays late on Sunday, rounds out this forward-thinking lineup with her jazz bolero ballads, informed by Latin American folkloristas and the son jarocho traditions of her hometown of Veracruz. The small but potent LatiNxt offers one of the most compelling lineups of any of the city’s summer festivals. —CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

LIFEGUARD *See Pick of the Week at left. Fruit Leather and Domino open. 7:30 PM, Color Club, 4146 N. Elston, \$17, \$15 in advance. FREE*

SUNDAY7

LATINXT *See Sat 8/6. Hosted by MC Logan Lu and Melissa Dupre. Beer Garden, 2-8 PM, in order of performance: the Ponderers, Adan Diaz, Rudy de Anda, Meridian Brothers, and DJ Iggy. Lake Stage in Polk Bros Park, 5:15-7:45 PM, in order of performance: Rebeca Lane and Silvana Estrada. Navy Pier, 600 E. Grand. FREE*

MONDAY8

SUMAC, BIGBRAVE, TASHI DORJI *Sumac headlines; Big Brave and Tashi Dorji open. 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 2424 N. Lincoln, \$20, \$18 in advance. 18+*

The title track of *Sumac*’s latest album, 2020’s *May You Be Held* (Thrill Jockey), is a tough-love affirma-



Sumac © REID HAITHCOCK

continued from 39

tion built for trying times, when soothing sounds just don't cut it anymore and you need self-care that's more like the cathartic group therapy you might find in a Klingon gladiatorial arena. The post-metal power trio use punky, chopped-off riffs to kick off a blood-spattered journey through light and shadow. The dynamics shift dramatically as they fight their way through a tightly controlled conflagration that feels like it's about to burst into a supernova for a good chunk of its nearly 20-minute running time; meanwhile front man Aaron Turner (formerly of postmetal cult legends Isis, currently of Mammiffer, Old Man Gloom, and other projects) gazes unflinchingly into an apocalyptic horrorscape that has not yet come to pass. The song culminates in the sort of prayer that can ring hollow when it doesn't feel earned but raises goose bumps when it does: "May your limbs move through gleaming waves / Your body rest upon the earth to embrace, part, return." Along with Turner, the band includes bassist Brian Cook (Russian Circles, These Arms Are Snakes) and drummer Nick Yacyshyn (Baptists). Sumac have also collaborated with fellow heavyweights, including Japanese psych master Keiji Haino, with whom they've released 2018's *American Dollar Bill—Keep Facing Sideways*, *You're Too Hideous to Look at Face On* and 2019's *Even for Just the Briefest Moment Keep Charging This "Expiation" Plug in to Making It Slightly Better*.

Montreal-based avant-garde metal trio **BigBrave** released their fifth album, *Vital* (Southern Lord), last year; it's heavy and wild and meticulously constructed. Their sound is focused but variegated, and front woman Robin Wattie is a commanding presence throughout—she's alight with righteous rage and adept with soulful, folksy melody. There's a time to be loud and a time to be quiet, and BigBrave command those extremes and all the space in between. This magnificent bill is rounded out by Bhutan-born,

Asheville-based guitar improviser **Tashi Dorji** (who's also collaborated with Aaron Turner). Come prepared for a show that will require and reward your full attention. —**MONICA KENDRICK**

FRIDAY12

CONJUNTO PRIMITIVO *Jenniferfauxpez, Don Crescendo, and Otra Dek open. 10 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$10. 21+*

In March 2020, when I wrote about underground industrial label Chicago Research and the tight-knit community that surrounded it, I heard that local duo Conjunto Primitivo planned to release their debut full-length through the label. Considering how that month ended, I'm not surprised to see that album coming out only now—and I can't argue with what Ana Belén García-Higgins and Cesar Robles Santacruz came up with. On the new *Morir y Renacer*, the duo superimpose the inextinguishable syncopated stomp of reggaeton onto foreboding industrial synths. That combo of genres is peanut-butter-and-banana-level ingenious, and I wish more musicians were exploring it—though I'm not sure how many could build an atmosphere and an identity as successfully as Conjunto Primitivo. García-Higgins sings in Spanish, delivering cryptic lyrics about heartache, misery, and the netherworld in a cool, borderline aloof style that sometimes feels like a chant. Her vocals intensify the thrilling sense of dread that courses through the band's darker melodies, so that it's hard to tell if they're cheering on the end of the world or offering a balm for our interesting times. When I listen to the dramatic "Vagando," which combines tense, groaning synths and minimal percussion that slices the air like a creaky floorboard in a haunted house, I don't especially want to decide—I'm fine



Conjunto Primitivo © COURTESY THE ARTIST

reveling in whatever I can cling to in the moment. *Morir y Renacer* is the final album from Chicago Research, but the community that grew up around the label will surely build new paths into whatever we've got left of a future. —**LEOR GALIL**

ALBUM REVIEWS

CLAMM, CARE
Chapter Music
clammxo.bandcamp.com/album/care

Trying to make sense of the times can feel like an exercise in futility, but it can also be a powerful tool of self-expression. That's the modus operandi of Clamm, a young Melbourne three-piece founded in 2019 by two childhood friends—guitarist and vocalist Jack Summers and drummer Miles Harding—and soon rounded out by bassist Maisie Everett. The band play hard-driving, punk- and garage-fueled heavy rock, and while their 2021 debut full-length, *Beseech Me*, had some sharp edges, their new record, *Care*, cuts like razor wire. It stopped me dead in my tracks on first listen—it's as smart as it is unbridled, and if you can't relate, you're either part of the problem or you're not living on the same planet as the rest of us. The driving "Bit Much" alternates anxiety and catharsis as it addresses the struggle to maintain mental balance in the face of endless bad news, while the plodding "Fearmonger" builds foreboding atmospheres as mercilessly as (though less cynically than) the late-night cable-news anchor types it takes to task.

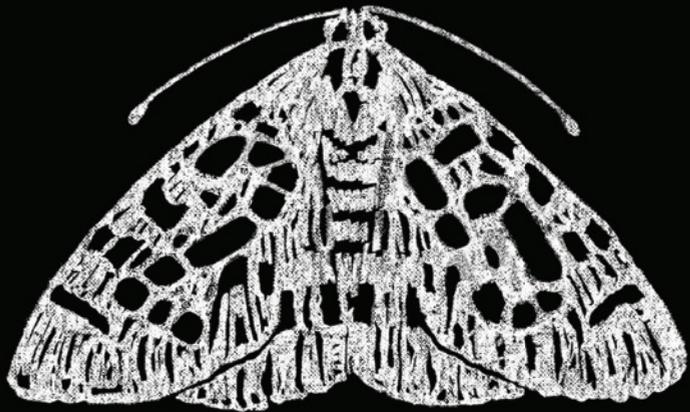
Punk is often nihilistic, but Clamm's concern feels earnest—their generation will be left to bear the consequences of political and economic decisions made today by people who'll shuffle off this mortal coil long before their bills come due. The yearning

single "Something New" searches for meaning and answers to life's questions, with the knowledge that there isn't much time—Summers sings so urgently that the clock he's watching must be attached to a ticking bomb, while guest saxophone from Anna Gordon makes the track feel like an outtake from the Stooges' *Fun House*. That Motor City flavor rears its head here and there throughout the rest of the record, notably on my favorite track, "Incompetence," a searing tour de force that recalls the rhythm and raw magnetism of "I Wanna Be Your Dog" as it indicts ineffectual political leaders and systemic rot. Thankfully, Clamm also know how to have fun: "NRG" closes the album with a wave of sax- and effects-laden chaos that feels like a party at the bottom of a giant bowl of spiked punch. It's too early to call *Care* a punk record for the ages, but I'll be in the first row to hear these songs live when Clamm play my town—and if they never do, I'm going to listen to them straight through the apocalypse. —**JAMIE LUDWIG**

CLAUDE, A LOT'S GONNA CHANGE
American Dreams
girlclaude.bandcamp.com/album/a-lots-gonna-change

"I'm a twentysomething / Don't you think it's about time?" Chicago singer-songwriter Claudia Ferme, aka Claude, sighs on "Twenty Something," which opens her debut full-length, *A Lot's Gonna Change* (American Dreams). The track breathes and pulses through dream-pop heaven with swirling, chiming guitars and distant, mellow horns. It's meant to be redolent of a certain time of life—the yearning and molting of the 20s. But the album also feels like a retro excursion into 80s and 90s British indie rock; the music is on par with classics by the Sundays, Lush, and Mazzy Star in the way it sways and

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MUSIC



Susie Ibarra (left) and Tashi Dorji JAKE LANDAU

continued from 40

emotes. Slow-dissolving the present into the past isn't a contradiction of dream pop so much as the whole point: What is dream pop if it's not hazy vibes and longing for a moment you never had? If you answered, "It's sweet hooks and winsome lyrics"—well, Claude's got those too. The should-be-a-hit-single "What're You on Tonight" patters through twee bliss with an indelible melody as Claude sings with heartfelt disconnection, "I've got a good outfit on / We could go to our favorite spot / Run into people we'd rather not." It's the bored pose of kids who've heard all the songs with the bored poses and are thrilled to devise their own. A *Lot's Gonna Change* sounds familiar, but that just means that it's an album for twentysomethings of every age. —NOAH BERLATSKY

SUSIE IBARRA & TASHI DORJI, *MASTER OF TIME*

Astral Spirits
ibarradorji.bandcamp.com/album/master-of-time

In 2019, the Tang Museum at Skidmore College presented *The Second Buddha: Master of Time*, an exhibition concerning Padmasambhava, the guru credited with bringing Buddhism to Tibet during the eighth century. Along with lectures and exhibits both visual and virtual, the museum commissioned a concert—conceived as a “musical bardo exploration”—by Susie Ibarra, a Philippine American percussionist, and Tashi Dorji, a Bhutan-raised guitarist who's been based in Asheville, North Carolina, since 2000. Buddhism does not figure strongly in the work of either musician, but rhythm does. Following early experiences with Philippine kulintang music and free jazz, Ibarra has used sound art as a means of addressing concerns about cultural and environmental survival and renewal. Dorji came to free improvisation from punk rock, and he's never forsaken his early commitments to social engagement and musical intensity. The bardo is the transitional state between death and rebirth, and on the album of the duo's performance, also called *Master of*

Time, the disparities between the musicians' styles introduce one layer of in-betweenness; the give-and-take of their grooves going in and out of sync with each other provides a second. The LP comprises two side-length excerpts from the concert (the download adds two shorter tracks) that explore the juxtaposition and disruption of rhythms. During “Confluence,” Dorji's jagged, distorted tone cleaves Ibarra's rushes of pure sound and rustling textures like the chop of a rusty guillotine blade. “The Way of the Clouds,” on the other hand, morphs from a face-off between gradually evolving grooves to an exchange of stark gestures in mostly empty space.

—BILL MEYER

LOCRIAN, *NEW CATASTROPHISM*

Profound Lore
locrian.bandcamp.com/album/new-catastrophism

Experimental metal trio Locrian have spent the past 17 years branching out into unknown realms, but lately they've been reexamining their roots. Formed in Chicago in 2005 by guitarist André Foisy and keyboardist Terence Hannum, Locrian started out mining darkness from their bleak soundscapes by layering grimy, pitch-black, doomy ambient noise with swaths of sounds and textures. In 2010 the duo linked up with drummer Steven Hess, who brought along pseudo-tribal percussion and blastbeats, driving the band in a new direction. Locrian's 2015 LP, *Infinite Dissolution*, plays like a perfect summation of the group up to that point—it's an icy tome of spacey, psychedelic black metal with electronic drones. But Locrian went quiet soon after that. Hannum and Foisy moved to Baltimore and Albany, New York, respectively, and all three members have worked on other music, sometimes solo and sometimes collaboratively—Hess is part of instrumental rock trio Rlyr and experimental project Cleared, for instance, and Hannum has played in dark pop group the Holy Circle. This month, Locrian break their seven-year silence with a new full-length, *New Catastrophism* (Profound Lore), a beautiful, heady record that strips their aesthetic back to

straightforward postmetal-flavored ambience and electronics. Opener “Mortichnia” is ten minutes of glitchy, fried synth drone, while “Incomplete Map of Voids” sounds like Darkthrone's Fenriz howling over dreamy Sonic Youth guitar arpeggios and space-age keyboards. And on the album's first single, “The Glare Is Everywhere and Nowhere Our Shadow,” the trio fire on all cylinders, with slamming drums punctuating oppressive, crushing layers of tones. *New Catastrophism* proves once again that whether Locrian are operating with a minimalist or maximalist palette, they're hard to top when it comes to conjuring dark, moving sounds. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

PGF NUK, *SWITCH MUSIC*

Self-released
pgfnuk.lnk.to/switchmusic

Most rappers can only dream of making a song as powerful as PGF Nuk's breakout single, “Waddup.” Superficially it sounds like a pretty standard drill track—terse verses in a wrought-iron flow, lean percussion, a sparse synth melody as chilly as a dusty pipe organ—but Nuk puts it over the top with his style. The Englewood native's subtle yet pugilistic performance has just enough swing to feel unpredictable. He might lag just behind the beat or jump ahead of it ever so slightly to drive home his menacing, unsettling lyrics. Like all the best drill, “Waddup” channels its sense of threat into adrenalized fun concisely enough to slide right onto rap-radio playlists. It could carry an entire album, and it's so good it could appear on that album more than once—which it does. Nuk's new self-released *Switch Music* includes a version of “Waddup” that features star Chicago rapper Polo G (Nuk's cousin by marriage) and closes with a “Waddup” remix that includes a guest spot by fellow Chicago hip-hop heavyweight G Herbo (who also drops in on opener “Hot Summer”). *Switch Music* feels a little long and suffers from some odd pacing, but when Nuk shines—as he does against the raw, blown-out bass of “Five Guys”—he sounds like he can make mincemeat of anything in his way. —LEOR GALIL



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

WOLF BY KEITH HERZIK

SINGER AND GUITARIST Fernando de Buen López moved to Chicago from Mexico City in 2012 with his band **El Mañana**, who released one more album of jangly, psychedelic indie rock in 2014 before dissolving. In 2018 de Buen López resurrected the group as **Así Así**, and in summer 2020 they dropped two singles whose subtler grooves were tinged with melancholy electronic elements. Their current lineup—with drummer **Ben Geisel**, keyboardist **Celeen Rusk**, and bassist **Sam Coplin**—has been in place since last year, and over the past few months they've been on a furious hot streak. They've played a slew of shows and steadily released singles from their new album, **Mal de Otros**, which has been in the works since the pandemic began. Among its many standout tracks is the newest single, "Nómada," which brings back a bit of the scrappy jangle from the band's Mexico City origins. On Thursday, August 18, Así Así play a record-release show at the **Hideout** with support from the Roof Dogs and Troigo, and the next day they self-release *Mal de Otros*.

On Saturday, August 6, **Liar's Club** hosts a benefit show for the **Chicago Abortion Fund**, and the lineup is stacked with exciting local bands: new punk four-piece **Boybrain**, scuzzy punk trio **Aweful**, gutter-rock two-piece **Heet Deth**, and larger-than-life noise-rock duo **Djunah!** The Chicago Abortion Fund gets 100 percent of the proceeds; tickets are \$16, and the show kicks off at 9:30 PM.

Synth-heavy, psychedelic-tinged rock four-piece **8-Bit Creeps** have been kicking around Chicago for six years, but only now—on Friday, August 5—are they finally dropping their debut full-length, a collection of enthralling, gently whimsical pop-rock melodies called **Dress for the Future**. That night, they headline a show at **Reed's Local** with opener the Daisy Heaves and Safety Town; the music starts at 8 PM. —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

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

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Alex G © CHRIS MAGGIO

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Aluminum Group 9/2, 9 PM, Hideout

Trey Anastasio Band 10/28-10/29, 7:30 PM, Chicago Theatre

Arab Blues 9/2, 9 PM, Hungry Brain

Así Así, Roof Dogs, Troigo 8/18, 9:30 PM, Hideout

Badcandy, Model Stranger, Valentiger 8/26, 8 PM, Golden Dagger

The Baylor Project 9/1, 8 PM, City Winery

Beignets & Brass featuring Tovi Khali & the Potliquor Band 9/27, 8 PM, the Promontory

Berwyn Blues Festival featuring Ruthie Foster, JD McPherson, Cedric Burnside, Larry McCray, Carolyn Wonderland, Jontavious Willis, Mud Morganfield, Toronzo Cannon, Dom Flemons, and more 9/23-9/25, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys 9/29, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Blk Odyssey, Eimara Sol 8/27, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Blvck Svm, Ajani Jones, Ausar, Freddie Old Soul 8/18, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Boris, Nothing 9/11, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Debbie-Marie Brown, North Lodge, Oux, Sw33t 8/18, 8 PM, Golden Dagger

Cardiel, Mengers 8/20, 10 PM, Cobra Lounge, 18+

Central Cee 10/12, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge

Andrés Cepeda 11/2, 7:30 PM, the Vic

Cheap Trick 9/10, 7 PM, Genesee Theatre, Waukegan

Stanley Clarke Band 9/16, 7 and 9:30 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Compulsive Gamblers, CB Radio Gorgeous 8/26, 10 PM, Empty Bottle

Currency, Starlito 8/26, 8 PM, Patio Theater

DJ Cymba, Love Day 8/30, 9 PM, Punch House

DakhaBrakha 2/26/2023, 7:30 PM, Patio Theater

Daughtry 9/11, 7:30 PM, Genesee Theatre, Waukegan

Dawes 8/28, 9 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Death & Memphis, Dead Rest, Acton's Dictum 9/3, 8 PM, Burlington

Cole DeGenova 8/18, 9 PM, Tack Room

Delicate Charms 8/18, 9 PM, Hungry Brain

Dessert First tour featuring Annie Blackman, Alex Dupree, S. Raekwon 10/1, 8 PM, Hideout

Diamond Formation featuring Bored Lord, Ariel Zetina, Faj 8/19, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Kevan Eftekhari 8/20, 9 PM, Tack Room

El Ten Eleven 8/18, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Elle King 9/18, 7 PM, Genesee Theatre, Waukegan

Everyday Everyday 8/24, 8 PM, Golden Dagger

Flavour 8/26, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Forever Came Calling, Home-safe, Nominee, Pollyanna 9/24, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Frankie Knuckles Day celebration featuring Braxton Holmes and more 8/28, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Fuzzbucket, Vulgar Commons, Takeover, Baby Ace 8/20, 8 PM, Burlington

A Giant Dog 8/18, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Ginger Root, King Pari 9/15, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall

Glow: The People's Fete featuring Klassik Frescobar, DJ Qmajor, DJ Shotta, and more 8/21, 10 PM, the Promontory

Golden Horse Ranch Band 8/19, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Jonathan Hannau, Pinson Chamber Band 8/18, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

DJ Hanzel 9/10, 10 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Haru Nemuri 10/4, 8 PM, Metro

Hate Dept, Bellhead, Won't Stay Dead 11/4, 9 PM, Liar's Club

Hear in Heaven: Celebrating the Life and Music of Joe Cassidy, From Belfast to Chicago 8/28, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Erwin Helfer 8/19, 8 PM, Hungry Brain

Matt Hires 8/19, 8:30 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Hooveriii, Mark Tester 8/20, 9:30 PM, Hideout

Incognito with Maysa 9/5, 8 PM; 9/6, 6:30 and 9:30 PM, City Winery

Josh Levi 8/29, 8:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Kamikaze Palm Tree, Lipschitz, Glyders 8/28, 8 PM, Hideout

Ken Carson 8/23, 7:30 PM, Patio Theater

Leo Kottke 8/28, 7 PM, Maurer Concert Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Laughing Hearts, Wilde, Charlie Otto & His Gear 8/25, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Manwolves 10/1, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Mars Volta, Teri Gender Bender 10/8, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+

Conor Maynard 9/20, 7 PM, Bottom Lounge

DJ Jeremiah Meece 8/19, 9 PM; 9/16, 9 PM, Punch House

Motel Breakfast, Friko 8/20, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Mr. Meaner, Run Rabbit Run, Pour Choices 11/10, 8 PM, Reggies Music Joint

Mylo 9/16, 8 PM, Golden Dagger

Nascar Aloe, Dirtybutt, Oddy Shrugs, Sounds by 270, Axelbloodaxel, GrIm, Mazerot, Kbach 8/21, 7:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Lewis Ofman 9/13, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Joan Osborne 9/25, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Patricia, DJ Baby Berlin 8/18, 8 PM, Sleeping Village

Joe Purdy 9/23, 8 PM, Maurer Concert Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Raining Bananas featuring DJ Fanita Banana 8/18, 9 PM; 9/15, 9 PM, Punch House

Raven, Riot Act 10/11, 8 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 17+

Marc Rebillet 10/26, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+

Reggies 15th anniversary featuring Ready Freddie, Tony Cazeau's New Black Renaissance 9/8, 8 PM, BanAnna's Comedy Shack at Reggies

Jason Roebke Quartet 9/9, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Rolo Tomassi, Cryptodira 9/7, 7 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Josh Rouse 9/10, 8 PM, Szold Music & Dance Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Santigold, Sho Madjozi 10/24, 9 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 18+

Shame, They Hate Change 8/31, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Silverio 8/21, 10 PM, Cobra Lounge, 18+

Todd Snider 11/3, 8 PM, Park West, 18+

Snozberries 10/15, 9 PM, Reggies Music Joint

Snuffed on Sight, Carrion Throne, Through N Through 8/25, 6:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Solar Fake, Whorticulture, I Ya Toyah, Machines With Human Skin 8/27, 8 PM, Burlington

Son Rompe Pera, Malafacha 10/7, 9 PM, Reggies Rock Club, 18+

Spiritualized 9/15, 8 PM, the Vic, 18+

Steve 'n' Seagulls, Volk 9/12, 8 PM, Subterranean

Superjane 25th year anniversary featuring Colette, DJ Heather, DJ Lady D, Dayhota 10/22, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Tedious & Brief 9/30, 7:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Thalia Hall Block Party featuring Thee Sacred Souls, E. Woods, and more 8/27, 2 PM, Thalia Hall

Rachel Sarah Thomas 8/19, 9 PM, Tack Room

Tomblands, Olive Avenue 8/27, 9 PM; 9/16, 9 PM, Punch House

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9 PM, Schubas

Lawrence Tome, Patrick Jasper, Goose Harrington, World Energy Corporation 8/19, 8 PM, Chop Shop

Trentemøller 9/27, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Veldt, Astrobrute, Panda Riot 8/23, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge, 17+

Verivery 9/26, 6 PM, Concord Music Hall

Vilma Palma e Vampiros 9/22, 10 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Viper Crew, Rich da Pitt, Sonny Trill, Ju Jilla, Easy O'Hare, lamgawd 8/24, 8 PM, the Promontory

V.V. Lightbody, Rose Hotel 9/12, 8 PM, Hideout

Susan Werner 8/18, 8 PM, City Winery

White Denim 8/27, 11 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Tommy Wright III, Club Music 9/1, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Gili Yalo, Juan Pastor's Chinchano 10/3, 7 PM, Constellation, 18+

Yola, Jac Ross 9/13, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

UPDATED

Avalanches 10/1, 6:30 and 10:30 PM, Metro, 6:30 show sold out, 10:30 show added, 18+

Lykke Li 10/4, 7:30 PM, the Vic, canceled

UPCOMING

Ava Cherry in conversation with Aaron Cohen in celebration of All That Glitters: The Ava Cherry Story 8/18, 7:30 PM, Gman Tavern

Chicago Jazz Festival featuring Henry Threadgill Zooid, Bill Frisell, William Parker Quintet, Donald Harrison, and more 9/1-9/4, Chicago Cultural Center and Millennium Park

Daddy Yankee 9/4, 7 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont

Florence & the Machine 9/7, 8 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion

Franz Ferdinand 8/19, 8 PM, Riviera Theatre

Korn, Evanesence 8/20, 5:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park

Lumineers, Caamp, James Bay 9/3, 6:30 PM, Wrigley Field

Rammstein 9/3, 7 PM, Soldier Field

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PROFESSIONALS & SERVICES

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RESEARCH

LEGAL NOTICE

MARKET-PLACE

FOR SALE

JOBS

Law Clerk, Chicago, IL: Remain current on issues of corporate, energy, & infrastructure law; draft memoranda, legal opinions & client-related documents; conduct legal research regarding corporate projects; advise on cross-border corporate projects mainly between the USA, Spain & Latin America. Must have JD or LLM or foreign equivalent & 5 yrs of exp managing transactions encompassing jurisdictions with civil law & common law, advising on major project finance energy & infrastructure cross border transactions including in M&A both in the US & Latin America, & representing utilities & energy companies & lenders. Exp. may be gained concurrently. Apply to Baker McKenzie online at www.bakermckenzie.com/careers.

NPV Staffing, LLC (Chicago, IL) seeks Big Data Developer. Develop, create, & modify general computer applications software or specialized utility programs. Involvement in story-driven agile development methodology & actively participate in daily scrum meetings. Req: MS in Comp Sci or rel/equiv. Knowledge of HDFS, Map Reduce, Pig, HBase, Flume, Sqoop, SQL Server, Java, Python, Unix Shell, Scala, & PySpark req. Travel or relocation to various unanticipated worksites throughout US req. Send resumes: hr@npvstaffing.com

Engineering Manager for FourKites, Inc. in Chicago, IL resolve business problems & dvp technical strategies; coordinate requirements gathering; establish & streamline metrics, development, engineering, testing & operational excellence best practices Bachelor's in Information Technology + 2 yrs exp in job off'd req'd Respond DK/FoukKites PO Bx 4241 NYC 10163

QA Engnr/Tstr: Dvlp & execute test cases, pcrdrs, and exptd results to itdfy pbllms, causes, solutions in aplctns in E-Commerce Dpt. Anzyc biz and techclde documts, conduct funct regression and systm integration tstng. Maintain logs, trk and vrfy reslution stfwr and defts and comunicat tst results to Proj Mngrs and Web Applicat'n Dvlpers. Req'd: Bachelors Deg in Comp Sci, Comp Engg, or rel fld. Resumes to: Americaneagle.com, Attn: R, 2600 S. River Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60018.

Caregiver Responsibilities: Assisting with personal care. Following a prescribed healthcare plan, Ensuring my Mother home is organized according to her needs. Providing mobility assistance may be required, for example helping my Mother with her motorized wheelchair, appointments, grocery. Meal and watch over. Work Schedule is 5 days a week and 5 hours per day. Salary is \$26/hr. Contact by email Daniel (dajcahh@gmail.com) for more details.

Business Analyst: research, gather, analyze, document, develop and validate functional requirements for web solutions with project stakeholders to support and develop custom web applicat'ns. Translate user requirements into system requirements, process flows, wireframes, and mockups, etc. Facilitate requirement review and approval with stakeholders and act as a liaison between business experts and dvlpmnt teams. Req'd: Bachelors Deg in Comp Sci, Comp Engg, or rel fld. Resumes to: Americaneagle.com, Attn: HR, 2600 S. River Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60018.

Bitsio, Inc. has multiple openings at multiple levels for the following positions: Master's+1yr exp/equiv. **Splunk Engineer (BSE22):** Splunk, Github, Agile, Linux, Unix, Java, SQL, Oracle and LDAP. Master's+2yrs/ Bachelor's+5yrs exp/equiv. **Splunk Engineer I (BSE122):** C#, VB.NET, C/C++, VB Scripting, and Splunk. Mail resume with job ID # to HR: 920 South Spring St., Suite 1200, Springfield, IL 62704. Unanticipated work site locations throughout U.S. Foreign equiv. accepted

Salesforce Administrator: Ensrse all dta systms run crctly: tst databases, crct errors, mke necessary chnges. Cmplete rguir intnal systm audits and ppre for upgrds. Act as liaison btwn users and dvlpmnt teams. Cordinate the evaltion, scope and cmlptin of new dvlpmnt rqtst with prjt team. Offer gidence and trning and assist in decision mking based on fetures and functionality availibility in the Salesforce platform. Req'd: Bachelors Deg in Comp Sci, Comp Engg, or rel fld. Resumes to: Americaneagle.com, Attn: HR, 2600 S. River Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60018.

Financial Accountant - Complete financial statement close process. Reconcile accounting records. Review A/R. Ensure fixed assets are recorded accurately. Review A/P. Allocate sales & costs. Prepare financial reporting. Perform control & compliance procedures. Maintain financial models. Prepare reports & develop forecasts. Assist with financial statement reviews. Assist with the annual tax return preparation. Work is at Employer's Office (at 2700 S River Rd, Suite 303, Des Plaines, Cook County, Illinois 60018, USA) with no travel involved. Minimum Requirements: Master's Degree in Accounting, or closely related field + 1 year of progressively responsible exp in occupations related to Accounting. Must have 1 year of exp preparing income statements, balance sheets, & statements of cash flow; 1 year of exp preparing & examining accounting & financial records to ensure accuracy, completeness & conformance to reporting & procedural standards; 1 year of exp preparing & examining accounting & financial records to ensure compliance with laws & regulations; 1 year of exp analyzing financial data; 1 year of exp in developing integrated financial models, financial forecasting, & breakeven analysis; 1 year of exp conducting historical sales, costs, & cash flow analysis; 1 year of exp performing variance analysis in a standard cost environment; 1 year of exp reconciling multiple accounts including assets, liabilities, & equity accounts; 1 year of exp in coordinating annual financial statement audit with external accounting firm. 1 year of exp utilizing Microsoft Excel to work with large data sets & model financial scenarios. Please send resume to icebergenterprises, LLC at recruitment@icebergenterprises.com.

Marketing Specialist in Chicago IL. Must have Master Degree in mkt. research, mktg. analytics, or mktg. & 1 yr exp. as Marketing Specialist. Conduct mktg. events both online & offline to attract potential customers; Collect & analyze industry data to understand current mkt., trends, competition, promising sales & mktg. strategies; Build & manage company's website, prepare company's promotional materials; Provide analysis, information & insights to ensure better decision-making by company. Send resume to: RDI Inc., 4101 42nd Pl., Chicago, IL 60632.

Marketing Specialist in Chicago IL. Must have Master Degree in mkt. research, mktg. analytics, or mktg. & 1 yr exp. as Marketing Specialist. Conduct mktg. events both online & offline to attract potential customers; Collect & analyze industry data to understand current mkt., trends, competition, promising sales & mktg. strategies; Build & manage company's website, prepare company's promotional materials; Provide analysis, information & insights to ensure better decision-making by company. Send resume to: RDI Inc., 4101 42nd Pl., Chicago, IL 60632.

Salesforce Architect: Cndt funtional discusons with clnts using Salesforce stfwr to ensure biz reqirmts of client are implmntd. Prfrm tcnicle architecture of Salesforce prdcts, detrmn and implmnt how to integrate with compny offerings, Salesforce stfwr incds, but not limtd to Salesforce Commerce Cloud, Salesforce marketing Cloud, Tableau, MuleSoft, etc. Lead complex functional discusons with clnts, clearly articulating optons, bnfits, and recmdatins. Translate biz reqirmts into well architected slutions that best leverage Salesforce platfrm. Serv as subjt matter expert/point of cntct on content, processes, procedures, and functionally ass. with assigned applictions for projects and applications support. Req'd: Salesforce Application Architect or Salesforce System Architect Crtfiction & Bachelors Deg in Comp Sci, Comp Engg, or rel fld. Or 24 months experience in Comp Sci, Comp Engg, or rel fld. Resumes to: Americaneagle.com, Attn: HR, 2600 S. River Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60018.

Gelber Group, LLC seeks a Quantitative Analyst in Chicago, IL to manage financial risk & dvlp mathematical & quantitative analysis. Reqs. Master's degree or foreign equivalent in Financial Mathematics, Applied Mathematics or related field. Coursework must include Mathematical Market Microstructure, Financial Income Derivatives, and Machine Learning in Finance. E-mail resume: recruiting@gelberggroup.com.

TransUnion, LLC seeks Sr. Advisors for Chicago, IL to dev, automate, & operate sw apps. Master's in Comp Sci/Comp Eng/any Eng field +2yrs exp OR Bachelor's in Comp Sci/Comp Eng/any Eng field +5yrs exp req'd. Req'd Skills: Hands on sw dev exp w/ Java (Springboot); extensive exp w/ Cloud tech (AWS, GCP), Python, Ruby, Groovy, DevOps methodology, CI/CD concepts (Cloudbees/Jenkins, Artifactory, SonarQube, Git, BlackDuck); containerization (Docker), Kubernetes; MySQL, DynamoDB, RDS; Ansible, Chef, Terraform; automating test cases using Mockito, Robot, Cucumber; Agile. 40% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: Marvin Carter, REF: KHK, 555 W Adams St., Chicago, IL 60661.

LG Electronics USA Inc. seeks a Sales Engineering Director. Mail resume to 2000 Millbrook Drive Lincolnshire, IL.

Sr. Process Control & Automation Engineer (Nouryon Chemicals, LLC) (Chicago, IL) Dsgn, test & implmnt instrmntn & ctrl systms for batch & cont mfg ops of multn'l chem & coatings mfg ops, incl surfactant, orgnc peroxide, & metl alkyl mfg; Prep funcnl specs for imprvd batch prcs; Prep user req specs for safty syts; Progr batch & safty syts apps; Prfrm progrbl log ctrl dsgn & app eng; Prticipate in HAZOP & safty sys studs & prfrm Safty Intgty Lvl ("SIL") anlysis & valdtn; Inft mfg ctrl systs w/ ERP systs; Prep instr specs & procrmnt; Rev the instr & electrl ("I&E") dsgn plns for captl prjcs & asst w/ piping & instr diagram ("P&ID") prep; & Initi rsrch & prjcs to imprve use of apps to spprt bus prcs. Exp w/ flwg to cmlpt abv-mntnd tsk: Exp dsgnng & plnng automn systs for chem & coatings mfg plnts; Exp w/ Siemens PCS7 DCS & S7(300, 200) PLC, Emerson DeltaV DCS, ABB Freelance DCS, Omron PLC & HIMA safty sys; Exp w/ progrbl log confignt, ntwrk comun, OPC inft; Exp w/ SIL classfctn & vrfctn; Exp instl & commis automn systs (Siemens, Emerson, ABB) for chem & coating plnts; & Exp dsgng autotmtn sys reqs for surfactant mfg, Greenfield, revmp & migrtn prjcs, incl functl specs & inftng ctrl systs w/ ERP systs. Reqs: Bachelors or frgrn equiv in Ctrl Eng, Electrl Eng or rtd fld, & 2yrs exp as Prcss Ctrl Engr or rtd ocm. Opt wrk from home. Trvl req - 30% domestic & intnrlly. ltrnt Emplmnt - may wrk at unanticipated loctns throughout U.S. Current worksite: Houston, TX. Send C.V. to sunnsunn.hallikeri@nouryon.com

Lextegrity, Inc. seeks Chief Technology Officer in Chicago, IL to align tech drcton w/ ovrrll co goals as st frth w/ members of co mngmnt. Reqs BS in Electrl Engrng or rtd fld + 2 yrs exp rtd ocpn + 24 mnths exp in: Prjct plning & mnitornng to ensre timely & quality dlrvy of srvc; Sprvsng client comms; Cnductng reg prfrmnce assessmnts for tech team; Claboratng w/ sbjct mattx perts to cnduct trnngs for tech team. Option to work remotely available. Mail resumes to Praveen Chennareddy 20 North Wacker Dr, Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60606.

LG Electronics USA Inc. seeks a Sales Engineering Director. Mail resume to 2000 Millbrook Drive Lincolnshire, IL.

Trade Compliance Analyst sought by Legal & General Investment Management America in Chicago, IL to liaise w/ Enterprise Trade Compliance Project Mgmt team & Guideline Mgmt & Control teams based out of the UK to ensure execution of project deliverables. Reqs a US Bachelor's deg or foreign deg equiv in Finance or a related field, & 3 yrs exp in: Overseeing guideline coding & monitoring w/in Charles River Investment Mgmt System (CRIM); Investigating post trade breaches/ potential violations pertaining to Investment Trust, Pension Funds, ICVC's & GPR funds; Advising portfolio mgmt team regarding compliance reqs regarding investment & trading issues; Global project implementation to span all asset classes & all client portfolios w/ a particular focus on passive equity & active fixed income monitoring. Tech Skills: Bloomberg; Charles River, JPM Access, Work bench, FMC, Portia, FTS, Liquidity Tool, Incursion tool. Send resumes to LGIA at katie.edeus@lgima.com.

Roland Berger LP in Chicago, IL seeks Sr. Consultant. Masters or foreign equiv. in Econ., Fin., Mgmt., or closely rel field + 4 yrs. exp. req'd. Leverage deep Chemicals industry knowledge & exp to provide leadership, support & original solutions for client projects in Chemicals industry through effective presentation docs. App 10%-15% domestic & app 5% int'l travel req'd to various unanticipated client sites. Send resume: careers.us@rolandberger.com & ref. job title & job code "SCIL2022" in subject line.

Capitol Strategies Consulting, Inc in Springfield, IL seeks Sr. Storage Administrators to ovrrse, admin & mng storage ops. No trvl. No telecomm. Job duties proj-based @ unanticipated sites w/in U.S. Relo may be req'd @ proj end. Send resume to: david.lanterman@cap-strategies.com

Groupon, Inc. is seeking multiple Software Development Engineers (SDE), SDE IIs, SDE IIIs and SDE IVs in Chicago, IL to: develop, construct and implement the next generation of company products and features for Groupon's web and mobile applications. Send resumes to apply@groupon.com and reference SDECH.

Business Development Manager: analyze corporate clients' fundamentals & assess their plans. Masters in business administration/business/ rel. fld. req. Apply: Taos Global Group Inc, 2167B S. China Pl, Chicago, IL60616

Muller & Muller Ltd. seeks a Architectural Designer. Mail resume to 700 N. Sangamon St Chicago, IL.

Slalom's Chicago, IL office has multiple openings for TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANTS (various types/levels): Identify & develop technology solutions for clients. Must be available to work on projects at various, unanticipated sites w/n commuting distance of Slalom office. Some telecommuting may be permitted. TO APPLY: Go to www.jobpostingtoday.com, search for job code 61738 & submit resume.

Sr. Engineer (Chicago, IL): use AutoCAD 2D & 3D design & calculation software to prepare design solutions for formwork and scaffolding used in building & civil/infrastructure projects. BS in civil engg, mechanical engg or related engg field + 5 yrs exp. OR 7 yrs exp. Apply to recruiter@perusa.com. PERI Formwork Systems, Inc.

TransUnion, LLC seeks Specialists for various & unanticipated worksites throughout the US (HQ: Chicago, IL) to architect, automate, & optimize sw apps over a large infrastructure. Master's in Comp Sci/ Comp Networking/related field+2yrs exp OR Bachelor's in Comp Sci/ Comp Networking/related field+5yrs exp req'd. Req'd skills: Amazon Web Services (EKS, EC2, IAM, Cloud Formation, Cloud Watch, VPC, Route53, S3, ELB); Python; HTML; Power Shell; Shell Scripting; Bash; Jenkins; Git; Red Hat Linux; Unix; Docker; Terraform. 100% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: M. Carter, REF: VB, 555 W Adams, Chicago, IL 60661

MWBE Supplier Opportunity RethinkEd is bidding on RFP#22-110 for Chicago Public Schools. We are looking for possible M/WBE suppliers to provide professional development for Special Education, SEL, Mental Health and MTSS. If you are interested in this opportunity, contact us via email at rpf@rethinkd.com

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RSM US LLP is seeking the following position in Chicago, IL:

Salesforce Technical Architect Manager – Provide technical and architectural leadership on client projects (may work remotely from anywhere in the US). **Reqs:** Bachelor's degree (or foreign equivalent) in Computer Science or related; 5 years of experience as a Technical Architect, Systems Analyst, or a related position. Ref #2582

Financial Institutions Tax Manager - Prepare and provide detailed review and analysis of accounting records, complex tax returns and financial statements to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations. **Reqs:** Bachelor's degree (or foreign equivalent) in Computer Science, Software Engineering, Computer Information Systems, or related; 5 years of experience as a Full stack developer, technical consultant or a related position. Must hold current CPA or EA license. Ref #2481
Email resumes to: Attn: C Volkening with reference number, claudine.volkening@rsmus.com

Engagement Manager positions available with McKinsey & Company, Inc. US in Chicago, IL. Lead teams of consultants to resolve complex business problems for a variety of clients in a variety of industries. Direct, plan & implement the approach & objectives for the entire engagement/study & d/vlp communication strategy for clients. Confer with clients to set strategic direction of consulting engagement. Min req's are a Master's in Bus Admin, Fin, Econ, or non-business advanced degree. Applicants must have 1 yr exp as an Associate-level management consultant with a major top-tier int'l management consulting firm. Domestic & international travel typically required. Destination & frequency impossible to predict. Email your resume to CO@mckinsey.com and refer to **CTR0720**. Multiple positions. No phone calls please. An EOE.

Aquatic Group is seeking a Quantitative Researcher in Chicago, IL. Create and improve proprietary trading models and strategies while working closely with engineers and senior leaders. May work from home 1 - 2 days per week. Must live within commuting distance of office. Email resume to HR@Aquatic.com and reference code 032992 in subject line.

Medical Home Network seeks Healthcare Data Analyst in Chicago, IL to analyze healthcare data using SAS to develop organizational efficiencies & report findings. Requires master's in data analytics, economics statistics, public health or rtd & knowledge based on education, training or experience of working with healthcare & insurance data & using SAS, R, Python, SQL. Send CV to careers@mhnchicago.org. Use job code HRA1.

TransUnion, LLC seeks Sr. Analysts for Chicago, IL to dev & implement end-to-end test strategies covering all aspects of sw quality. Master's in Comp Sci/related field +2yrs exp OR Bachelor's in Comp Sci/related field +5yrs exp req'd. Req'd Skills: Java, Springboot, Web Services, SOAP, Rest API, CI/CD, Automation testing, BDD, Log4j, WebSphere RAD, IntelliJ, SQL Developer, JIRA, Rally, REMEDY, Oracle. Send resume to: M. Carter, REF: VVB, 555 W Adams St., Chicago, IL 60661.

TransUnion, LLC seeks Sr. Managers for Chicago, IL to lead efforts to adopt Global AWS platform. Master's in Comp Sci/Sw/Comp Eng/related field +2yrs exp OR Bachelor's in Comp Sci/Sw/Comp Eng/related field +5yrs exp req'd. Req'd Skills: Apache; Python; shell scripting; Layer7; site-minder; Zenoss; Splunk; Tomcat; JBoss, Docker Containers; Ansible; Jenkins; Gitops; Vault; Agile; Bash, Websphere, Websphere JMS. 60% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: Marvin Carter, REF: ASD, 555 W Adams St, Chicago, IL.

Sr. Capabilities & Insights Analyst position available w/ MCKINSEY & COMPANY, INC. US (Chicago, IL). Perform qualitative & quantitative analyses using diff s/w such as Alteryx, Tableau, & similar proprietary s/w. Problem-solve w/ McKinsey Client team on the individual client problem they are solving & use knowledge of Finalta benchmarks & data sets to identify the right data points, analysis or insights that supports the engagement.

Min Bachelor's degree in Biz Admin, Stats, Biz Analytics, or rel field or foreign degree equiv & 2 yrs of data analytics or consulting exp. Exp must incl: working w/ clients in the banking industry; using technical tools: Microsoft Office tools: Excel, Word, PowerPoint;

R; Alteryx; Tableau; & conducting data analysis on various client data sets to create banking industry benchmark & strategic insights. Email your resume to CO@mckinsey.com and refer to Job # 5739563. No phone calls please. An EOE

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 4 of the Self-Storage Facility Act, State of Illinois, that Chicago Northside Storage - Lakeview / Western Ave Storage LLC will conduct sale(s) at www.storage treasures.com by competitive bidding starting on August 10th and end on August 17th @ 12:00pm on the premises where property has been stored, which are located at Chicago Northside Storage 2946 N Western Ave. Chicago, IL 60618. 773-305-4000. In the matter of the personal property for the individual listed below, Chicago Northside Storage - Lakeview. H05 Cian Omahony, M13 Brian A Doherty, o06 Greg Parker, P01 Lisa Edgerton, P26 Cian Omahony, P34 Tyrann Greer, Z61 Paul Odoom, CC45 David Christian. Purchases must be made with cash only and paid at the time of sale's redemption. All goods are sold as is and must be removed at the time of purchase. Sale is subject to adjournment.

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Authentic German Bar-Restaurant for Sale. Established 30 years in beautiful Dubuque, Iowa. \$294K Call Joe at 563-588-0361. Hate to give it up, it's been good to me. Includes the building with living quarters above. Come out and see it.

Remodeled 1Bed/1Bath garden apt, West Rogers Park
New Bathroom, Kitchen, Floors, Appliances, Laundry Room on Premises, Heat Included. Near LSD and Edens/Kennedy. 5845 N. Maplewood. 847-293-2639.

Spacious 2 bedroom, brand new stainless steel appliances, new hardwood floors, newly installed stacked washer and dryer, minutes from soon to open Amazon and boys and girls club. \$1,400. Rent. 4321 W. Cortez. Contact Mr. Henry 773 620-1241.

MARKET PLACE

AKC Purebred Siberian Husky pup, female, male, blue eyes, white coat. 8 weeks old, 1st puppy shots, health guarantee. \$1000. More info & pics contact 312-778-2342

RESEARCH

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What does it mean to be a cuckquean?

Many words describe letting your partner have sex with other people.

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: I'm a 36-year-old married woman who fantasizes about her husband of ten years being intimate with other women. I've fantasized about this for years, but we've never acted on it. He is intrigued but afraid that it might somehow damage our relationship. I've found sometimes conflicting definitions of what it means to be a "cuckquean." I'm interested in watching my husband pleasure and be pleased by another woman in a purely physical way. I'm not interested in being "cheated on." I would rather my husband not even know the name of the other woman. And he would only be able to sleep with her with my consent and I would want to be "in control" of the situation. So, what does that make me? —**WHAT THE CUCK AM I?**

A: "The scenario WTCAL describes sounds more like hotwifing with the gender roles reversed than cuckolding," said Venus, host of *The Venus Cuckoldress Podcast*. "She's interested in hothusbanding!"

Let's quickly define terms: a man into hotwifing enjoys "sharing" his wife with other men, WTCAL, and a woman into hot husbanding enjoys "sharing" her husband with other women. Cuckolds, on the other hand, aren't sharing their wives. They're being "cheated on" by their wives. And cuckqueans aren't sharing their husbands. They're being "cheated on" by their husbands. Cuckolds and cuckqueans, by definition, don't *just* wanna see their spouses fucking another

person, they *also* want their partners to humiliate and degrade them. (I put "cheated on" in quotes because the "cheating" is consensual and symbolic; likewise, "sharing" is in quotes above because spouses aren't property.)

"But cuckolding and hotwifing have a really wide spectrum of practices and dynamics," said Venus. "Some cucks are submissive and get into degradation and some cucks really aren't subs or into degradation at all. I don't see why hothusbanding/cuckqueaning can't be just as varied. Humiliation, submission, and degradation don't have to be involved!"

Venus is right: there are guys out there who call themselves cuckolds but aren't subs and don't wanna be humiliated or degraded. But I would argue that these guys aren't cuckolds, WTCAL, just as I would argue that you aren't a cuckquean. We have lots of words to describe letting your partner fuck other people—open, monogamish, swinging, mate-swapping, hotwifing, hothusbanding, stag and vixen, CNM—but we only have one word to describe letting your partner fuck other people while getting off on being humiliated and degraded: *cuckolding*. And since most people understand cuckolding to involve humiliation and degradation, telling someone you're a cuckold when you're not into those things is like telling someone you're a power bottom when you don't like anal. What's worse, tell someone you're a cuckold/cuckquean and they might start degrading you while they're fucking your

partner, which would ruin everything for everybody.

As for setting up a sex date for your husband with an anonymous woman, Venus had a practical suggestion.

"There are a lot more men out there looking for casual sex than there are women," said Venus, "which makes WTCAL's fantasy difficult to pull off. But I know a woman whose wife wanted to be blindfolded and then have a group of women come in—all strangers to her—and go down on her. Not an easy fantasy to pull off either! So, they hired a sex worker to facilitate things and it was *amazing*. Perhaps this would be an ideal solution—hiring a sex worker—because then WTCAL would be in total control."

It sounds to me like what you really wanna do is whore your husband out. It's an expression I've heard gay men use to describe setting up an anonymous encounter for their boyfriends or husbands. You find someone you wanna see fuck your husband—taking care to find someone your husband would wanna get fucked by—and all your husband needs to know is when and where. Cuckolds and cuckqueans are subs and a sub can "top from below," as the saying goes, but at least officially a cuck doesn't have the power. Someone who's whoring his husband out has all the power. That's what you want, right? 

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