

Harley Davis, *Love's Embrace*
(oil portrait of the artist's
son and grandson)
See more artworks on pages 11-14



May 2022 | PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois Newsletter

opendoors@pflagillinois.org

Monthly Open Doors

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TO THE BRIDGE BUILDER IN EACH OF US

As PFLAGers, our attentions are focused on extending support to others, making connections, telling stories and sharing experience and resources. We advocate for respect and for human rights, for change where it needs to happen. We educate an ill-informed public, create a path for understanding and a vision for hope. In all these respects, I submit, we are bridge builders.

When we provide information or a welcoming space or some helpful perspective to a new meeting attendee, we build a bridge from a place of darkness or fear or uncertainty toward a place of confidence and strength and peace. An outstretched hand, a warm embrace, a listening ear is the first step we often take in building a bridge of Support.

When we Educate or enlighten, or share resources, we build a bridge for others to walk from ignorance or misunderstanding to acceptance and love. And when we invest in educating ourselves, we strengthen the underpinnings of those bridges.

When we Advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and respect, we create a bridge, a clear path, to a better tomorrow for others. And in our relentless commitment to advocate against discrimination and discredit of the LGBTQ+ community, in the words of Simon and Garfunkel, “like a bridge over troubled



waters”, we ease the minds of those for whom we fight.

It takes a lot of love, compassion, energy and commitment to build and maintain these important bridges. As PFLAGers, we know how important they are and how precious the footprints that cross them.

Thank you all for being builders of bridges!

And a special thanks to all of our PFLAG chapter leaders who have helped to maintain bridges over the last two challenging years, being there, relentlessly living PFLAG’s mission, for those that seek our embrace.

With gratitude,

Don Donahue

President,
PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois



From PFLAG National

TAKE ACTION

Fight back against anti-LGBTQ+ censorship! Join PFLAG National and Red, Wine & Blue for a PFLAG National-exclusive session of RWB's *Troublemaker Training: Book Ban Edition* on [May 3rd](#) and [May 7th](#). Hear from those on the ground already doing the work, learn effective organizing practices, and discover new ideas to make your voice heard in your community. PFLAG National and Red Wine & Blue are partnering for this great opportunity so you can show up for your local school board meetings and advocate for accurate and inclusive education.

Register now for the session that works best for your schedule; both sessions will have the same content:

[Tuesday, May 3rd, 7:30pm CT](#)

[Saturday, May 7th, noon CT](#)

FEDERAL

[Senators will introduce LGBTQ+ business protection act.](#) Senators Alex Padilla and Kirstin Gillibrand introduced the House-passed [LGBTQ+ Business Equal Credit Enforcement and Investment Act](#), which would help enforce fair lending practices in accord with SCOTUS's 2020 Bostock decision by requiring financial institutions to collect data on the self-identified sexual orientation and gender identity of business owners.

[DOJ warns states' Attorneys General that anti-trans bills might violate federal law.](#) The Justice Department sent a letter to all state attorneys general stating that blocking transgender minors from receiving gender-affirming healthcare might violate federal law. The letter also signaled that the DOJ is prepared to support existing lawsuits against states and to seek legal action against this kind of legislation.

[Poll indicates that most U.S. adults oppose anti-LGBTQ+ education policies.](#) New polling data from a Trevor Project/Morning Consult poll indicates that the majority of U.S. adults oppose banning LGBTQ+ books and classroom discussions on sexual orientation and gender identity, and blocking students from accessing LGBTQ+ resources. It also found that most U.S. adults think that transgender youth should have access to gender-affirming healthcare.

STATE

In the last year, we've seen a marked rise in anti-LGBTQ+ action in state and local governments. Many states are introducing legislation targeting trans youth, and local schools and libraries are being pressured into censoring LGBTQ+ history and stories. Visit pflag.org/protecttranskids to **take action** against anti-trans bills.

[Florida - LGBTQ+ groups in Florida file lawsuit over "Don't Say Gay" law.](#) The lawsuit, which states that the law violates the right to free speech, was filed on behalf of Equality Florida against Governor Ron DeSantis.

[Iowa Supreme Court finds the state discriminated against transgender employee.](#) The state denied healthcare coverage for medically necessary gender-affirming surgery and banned the employee from using the restrooms and locker room that match his gender identity. The Court found that this violates the Iowa Civil Rights Act, which was amended in 2007 to protect trans people from workplace discrimination.

GLOBAL

[LGBTQ+ Ukrainians hold rally in front of White House.](#) Arranged by the group LGBTQ+ Ukrainians in America founded by PFLAG friend Bogdan Globa, the protesters--including his mother and PFLAG friend Helen Globa--called for the Biden administration to grant LGBTQ+ Ukrainians Temporary Protected Status. The bond with LGBTQ+ Ukrainian people began with a PFLAG National delegation visiting Ukraine in 2015 for the first post-revolution LGBTQ+ parents' conference.

MEDIA

[Apple lobbies against anti-LGBTQ+ laws.](#) The company has sent lobbyists to oppose legislation in Iowa, Florida, Texas, and at least six other states. They have also encouraged other large companies to publicly push back against the wave of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

These articles are excerpted from *Policy Matters*, an email publication of PFLAG National. Become a PFLAG member to receive the full newsletter:
<https://pflagil.org/membership-and-donation/>



News from PFLAG Deerfield

by Jodi

This month, our speaker was our very own Jacquiline Anne Perry (Jackie to us!). Jackie shared her personal journey as a trans female and advocate. She discussed her advocacy work, the Chicago Gender Society, the Human Rights Campaign, the impact of current events on the Trans community and the role of allies. And she was just getting started! Jackie has been a leader and role model for so many. She has seen it all! We all benefit from listening and learning from those who have gone before us; those who continue to walk alongside us; and those who lead us to where we need to be. Jackie is all this and more! Her story teaches us that although much has changed, there is still so much to be done. Pay attention! Build on the work of Jackie and her peers. Love, support, education, and advocacy is the key. Thank you, Jackie!

We plan on returning to in person meetings with a hybrid option in May! In June, Cynthia Drey will once again award the Jean Paul Ohadi Scholarship to three well deserving, amazing students. It will be quite the celebration!

Happy Spring!

PFLAG Deerfield plans to begin meeting both in person and on Zoom, therefore hybrid, beginning at our May meeting.

We'll be once again gathering at BJBE Synagogue, 1201 Lake Cook Road, Deerfield at 7:15 PM. We are asking those who have had NO vaccinations, please join us on Zoom. Those who wish to join in person, please wear your masks, as they are required in common spaces in the synagogue.

News from PFLAG Tinley Park

by Diane Kaffka

Hello from Tinley Park! We met at Zion Lutheran Church on April 10th. We have been meeting every month now for over five years. There were a few months when we met by Zoom, but then we switched to outdoor meetings and/or indoors in the large gym where we can sit with space between us.

Our speakers this month were two ladies who run the "Hayride of Horror" in Lockport, IL every October www.lockportpark.org/HayrideOfHorror. They spoke to the inclusion of all types, genders, and sexualities in their haunted hayride. People who work on the haunt are all trained and encouraged to treat everyone respectfully and use preferred pronouns, etc. They also spoke about their work with "Haunters Against Hate" www.hauntersagainsthate.com, another great organization, who raises money to benefit LGBTQ youth organizations across the U.S.



We also discussed possible future speakers and a possible drag show event we could run later this year.

“We all benefit from listening and learning from those who have gone before us; those who continue to walk alongside us; and those who lead us to where we need to be.”



News from PFLAG

Homer Glen / Lockport

by Michelle Eckmayer (she, her)

PFLAG Homer Glen Lockport has teamed up with Joliet Pride Network and the Spanish Community Center in Joliet, IL to open a new drop-in center for area youth. We are super excited to be bringing resources to Will County. We had our Opening Day on April 19th and it was a wonderful evening celebrating with the youth and the volunteers.



News from PFLAG

Homer Glen / Lockport, continued

We are also busy planning our 2nd annual **Pride in the Parking Lot** event. Music, food, fun for everyone! Saturday, June 25th 1-5pm. Miss Foozie will be back!!! We hope you can join us!



News from PFLAG Hinsdale

by Barb Medley

Our March speaker was the daughter of one of our members who talked about the Trevor Project, which provides 24/7 crisis support services to LGBTQ young people. It's free and confidential. The Trevor Project has taken on new importance with the current political atmosphere and stressors on the rise. Anti-LGBTQ legislation skyrocketed in 2021 and 2022. We need to do better advocating for this population and community.

The Trevor Project runs a suicide hotline for at-risk LGBTQ people. That's well known, but this organization does so much more to support LGBTQ youth and provide up to date information. Socialization occurs from childhood on (as in girl and boy specific toys). So, we need to be easy on ourselves and keep informed. We talked about the importance of health equity and what that means. Our speaker gave a great analogy – equality gives everyone a shoe. Equity gives everyone a shoe that fits. LGBTQ youth and that population in general need more health care resources. Also, youth mental health in the trans- and nonbinary population was negatively impacted during Covid. Stats in 2021 comparing trans and cisgender suicidal behaviors bear this out – 52% compared to 32% for cisgender youth.

The Trevor Project is an amazing resource. They have created a global home on TrevorSpace – an affirming, online community for LGBTQ young people between the ages of 13-24. TrevorSpace helps these young people explore their identities, get advice, find support, and make friends in a moderated community intentionally designed for them. The Trevor Project offers opportunities to chat, call and text using the same number (**866-488-7366**). Their online resource center is easy to navigate and listed by topic.

The Trevor Project is always looking for volunteers. And of course, you can support them through your donations. The website is <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>.

Our May 1st meeting will be via Zoom, but back to our usual 2 PM meeting time. Our speaker will be Andrew Fishman, a social worker employed by the Juniper Center. The Center works mainly with LGBTQ clients, some of whom are on the autism spectrum. **On June 5th we'll have our first hybrid meeting at 2 PM at the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale. It will also be available on Zoom.**

“Equality gives everyone a shoe.

Equity gives everyone a shoe that fits”



News from PFLAG DuPage

by Bonnie Clemens

Remembering Paul Hanson



PFLAG DuPage is developing a very important initiative in memory of Paul Hanson. As you may remember Paul passed away suddenly a year ago. Paul served the PFLAG DuPage Chapter for over 17 years and was special to us for his kindness, humor, and most importantly, for his dedication to bettering the lives of individuals in the LGBTQ+ community.

Many donations were made in Paul's memory to the PFLAG DuPage Chapter. Under the guidance of Paul's wife Gail, we have elected to use these funds as financial aid program for those in our LGBTQ+ community who need a name change. This will be a living program with several awards given annually, and we have plans to solicit and provide ongoing donations to the fund. Our leadership committee anticipates adjusting the program as we learn. We recently identified and approved our first recipient and will be awarding that gift soon. We are so pleased to be honoring Paul in this way!

To Be or Not To Be?

To be or not to be? In person that is. Chapter member Susan Neufelder met with the pastors of St Paul's Lutheran where we meet to find out our options for in-person and/or hybrid meetings. The church has a current protocol for in-person meetings as well as the technology to allow us to do virtual meetings. Meanwhile we've been watching the county COVID number which have increased by 98% over the last two weeks!! So, while we have viable options for in-person or hybrid meetings **we plan to stick with virtual-only** for little while longer. Over the summer we will be participating in several outdoor Pride events (festivals, parades, picnics, etc.) which will give us the opportunity for some face-to-face time. Thank goodness for that!

Easter Sunday

Our April meeting fell on Easter Sunday. We meet the third Sunday of each month and NEVER reschedule a meeting. We had no specific program and dedicated the time to sharing and caring. While attendance was down due to the holiday, we were pleased to have two brand new attendees and enjoyed our time together.

PFLAG DuPage has instituted a financial aid program for those in the LGBTQ+ community who need a name change.



News from PFLAG Ottawa

by Ken Brown

PFLAG Ottawa has some very exciting news! This June, the inaugural Ottawa Family Pride Festival will take place in historic downtown Ottawa. The Pride Fest will be held on Saturday, June 11, from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. **SAVE THE DATE** -- come to visit with us and celebrate in Ottawa!!

PFLAG Ottawa will be well represented at the Fest. We will have a booth with flyers, wristbands, pins, flags, and more in support of PFLAG and the LGBTQIA+ community. In addition, PFLAG Ottawa is planning a bike parade and/or walk around downtown, with colorful decorations.

Youth Outlook, Equality Illinois, and Open Table Church will also be represented at the Fest. Youth Outlook and Equality Illinois will each have information booths. Open Table Church will display two panels of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt in its sanctuary. And Open Table Church has

gathered singers to perform in a PRIDE CHOIR (myself included).

The event will begin with a “Pets for Pride” Pet Parade around Washington Square Park. The rest of the day will include live music, vendors, crafts, food trucks, activities for adults and kids, performers, and drag story time at Prairie Fox Books.

Recently, on April 5, Windy City Times published an article about the first-ever Ottawa Pride Fest. The author of the article interviewed Dylan Conmy, the special events manager at Prairie Fox Books in downtown Ottawa. Dylan has been the lead organizer of this event, and he has been doing a magnificent job. A link to the article is below.

Again, the Ottawa Pride Fest will take place on Saturday, June 11. Save the Date and join us!

<https://www.windycitytimes.com/lgbt/First-ever-Ottawa-Illinois-Pride-Fest-set-to-take-place-this-June/72845.html>



News from PFLAG McHenry

by Mary Genzler (she, her)

First of all, we give a heartfelt thank you to Toni Weaver for her 18 years leading PFLAG McHenry. Toni works tirelessly to educate others about the lives and issues of LGBTQ+ people. She is a fierce advocate. Toni's dedication and leadership skills have kept PFLAG McHenry a thriving chapter for all these years. Toni is a past President of PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois.




While Toni takes a back seat to chapter leadership, we will appreciate her continuing participation in chapter meetings and activities.




Following Toni's announcement of her intention to step down as chapter president, the board of PFLAG McHenry met to nominate candidates for the new leadership team. As a result of elections the new board voted in are Co-presidents: Mary Genzler and Cate Becker, Vice-president: Carolann Dunn, Secretary: Julie Shoen, Treasurer: Raina Hodgson, and Member-at-large: Toni Weaver.


Also, a reminder that PTI McHenry has joined PFLAG McHenry and as combined, is known as PFLAG McHenry.


Meetings will be held in-person on the second Tuesday of the month, beginning May 10th, from 7-9 pm at the Tree of Life Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 5603 Bull Valley Rd, McHenry.

ACTION CAMP APPLICATIONS ARE LIVE!!

This year we are planning for our (now, keep your fingers crossed here) triumphant return to  **IN-PERSON CAMP!!** So, if you are or know a rad LGBTQ+ student leader who will be entering **8th through 12th grade for the 22-23 school year**, let them know  about this awesome opportunity! Camper applications are live at <https://bit.ly/AC22app> and will close on **Saturday, April 30.** 

For those new to the scene, **Action Camp is a 5-day sleepaway camp for rising 8th-12th grade LGBTQ+ students** who want to build their leadership skills in order to impact change  in their home  and school  communities.

This year camp will run **August 1-5** at our brand-new camp home  - the location of which will be shared with campers and their families after they've been invited to join us at camp.

And if you are or know an awesome adult ally/accomplice/advocate who might love the opportunity to support  Action Camp as a counselor, please share the counselor application link with them: <https://bit.ly/AC22counselorapp>! As you'll see in the application, adult supports are welcome to join us for the whole week, or for part of the week as a relief counselor.

We are so so excited to bring camp back to the woods and hope you and all your friends will join us! Please feel free to spread the attached flier far and wide. If folks have any questions, those can be directed to actioncamp@phimc.org.

Hope to see y'all in August!

**Do you have
OLD PHOTOGRAPHS
from past Pride Parades
(the older – the better)?
Share them with OpenDoors:
opendoors@pflagillinois.org**



PFLAG History in Illinois

The PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois: A 2022 Update

by Toni Weaver

In November of 2012 Char and the late John Cepek wrote this brief history of the PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois (PCNI) for publication in Open Doors. Char was the 2nd president of PCNI, and John was later to become president of PFLAG National.

The council was established over 20 years ago as a way of bringing a unified PFLAG voice to the entire Chicagoland area, the idea being that we could do more together than we could do as separate, independent chapters. Working together we could give PFLAG a stronger voice and presence in Northern Illinois.

The council was never intended to be a governing body having jurisdiction over its member chapters. What it does do, however, is provide a forum for chapters to bounce ideas off one another, to gain from others' experience, to feel that camaraderie that epitomizes PFLAG, and to promote PFLAG's presence and cooperation with other LGBTQ+ organizations.

Just by way of history, here's a list of past (and present) leaders of PCNI in order of appearance:

- John Larson (Aurora)
- Char Cepek (Hinsdale)
- Jeff Wedig (Deerfield)*
- Peter Ji (Chicago)
- Barbara Schon-Lundberg (Deerfield)*
- Toni Weaver (McHenry)
- John Hickey (DuPage)
- Don Donahue (DuPage)

* PFLAG Deerfield was originally PFLAG Glenview

The council has grown as more chapters have sprung up throughout the area. What a powerful presence we make as we strive to Move Equality Forward!

The PFLAG Council of Northern Illinois: A (Very) Brief History

by John and Char Cepek, written in 2012

For those of you who are relatively new to a PFLAG chapter in the Chicago area, we thought it might be useful to give you a little background on the what, when, who, where, and why of the Council. Many moons ago—probably nearly 20 years—there were only a few chapters in the area: the mother chapter in Chicago, and then two break-away chapters, one out west, in Hinsdale, and another north, in Glenview. As time passed, more and more chapters came into being, and a group of members from the various chapters eventually met to discuss more effective ways to 1) communicate with all members, the result of which is our wonderful newsletter, Open Doors; 2) pool resources, especially regarding the purchase of materials from the national office; and 3) arrange for a trolley for the annual Pride Parade. It was decided that a portion of each local membership would be used to grow a Council treasury, and that the funds in that treasury would be used to buy materials, which would then be distributed to Council member chapters on an as-needed basis, and to pay for the parade trolley.

As time passed, the Council decided to undertake a variety of other activities, from fundraising events to local conferences. The Council has sponsored workshops, such as the diversity training it hosted a couple years back, and has collaborated with other organizations, particularly Equality Illinois, in activities that would further both organizations' goals. The Council was instrumental in the pilot program that led to the hiring of Caroline Staerk as a field organizer for Equality Illinois; the Council was also very involved in providing volunteers to throw out illegal petition signatures when right-wing groups tried to roll back LGBT provisions in Illinois' human rights ordinance. Finally, the Council has given start-up grants to new chapters to aid them in getting up and running.

We encourage all members to attend a Council meeting when they have a chance, or, better yet, to become a Council member. As we always say, when you no longer need PFLAG, that's when PFLAG needs you the most!



Art by Harley Davis

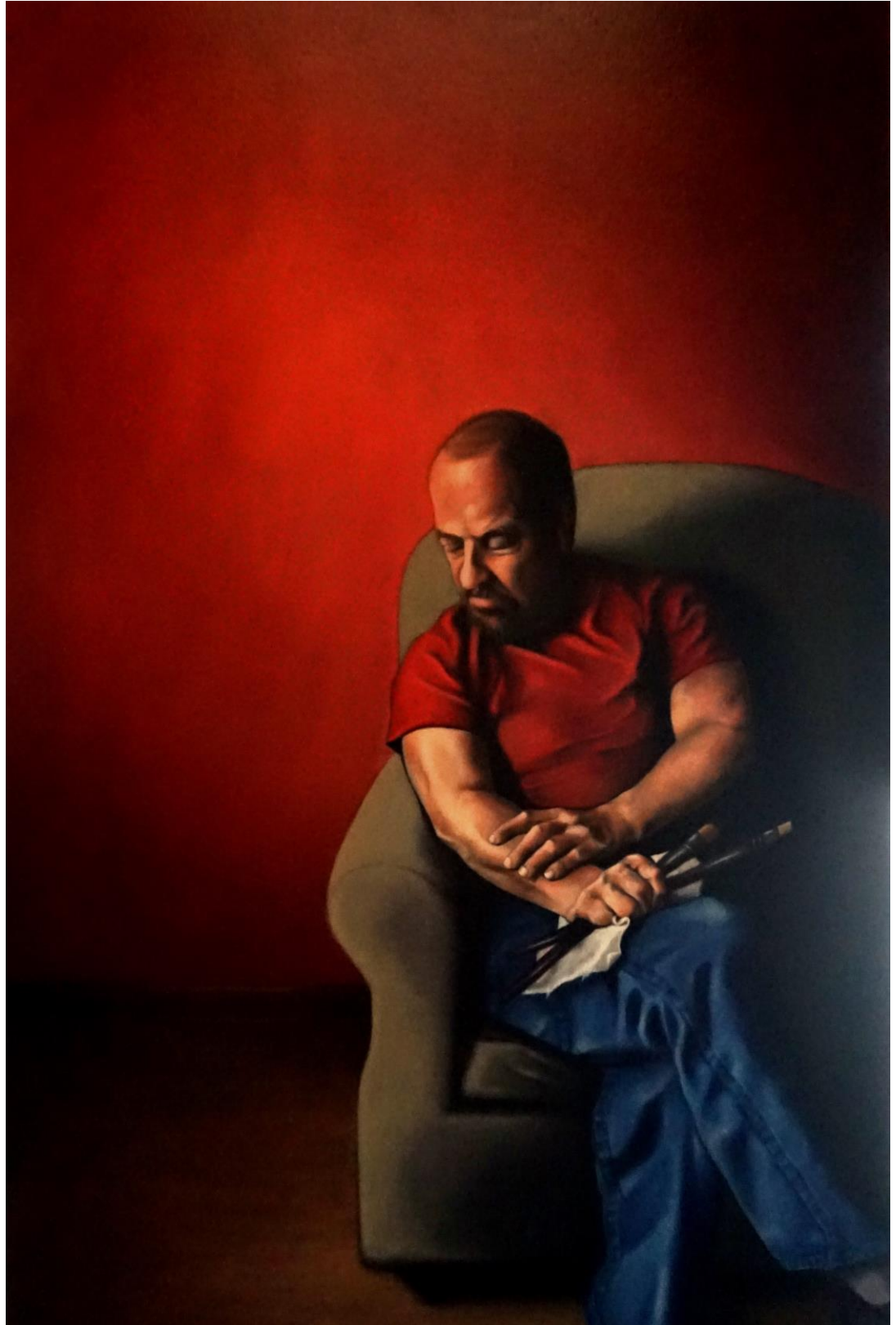
ABOUT THE ARTIST

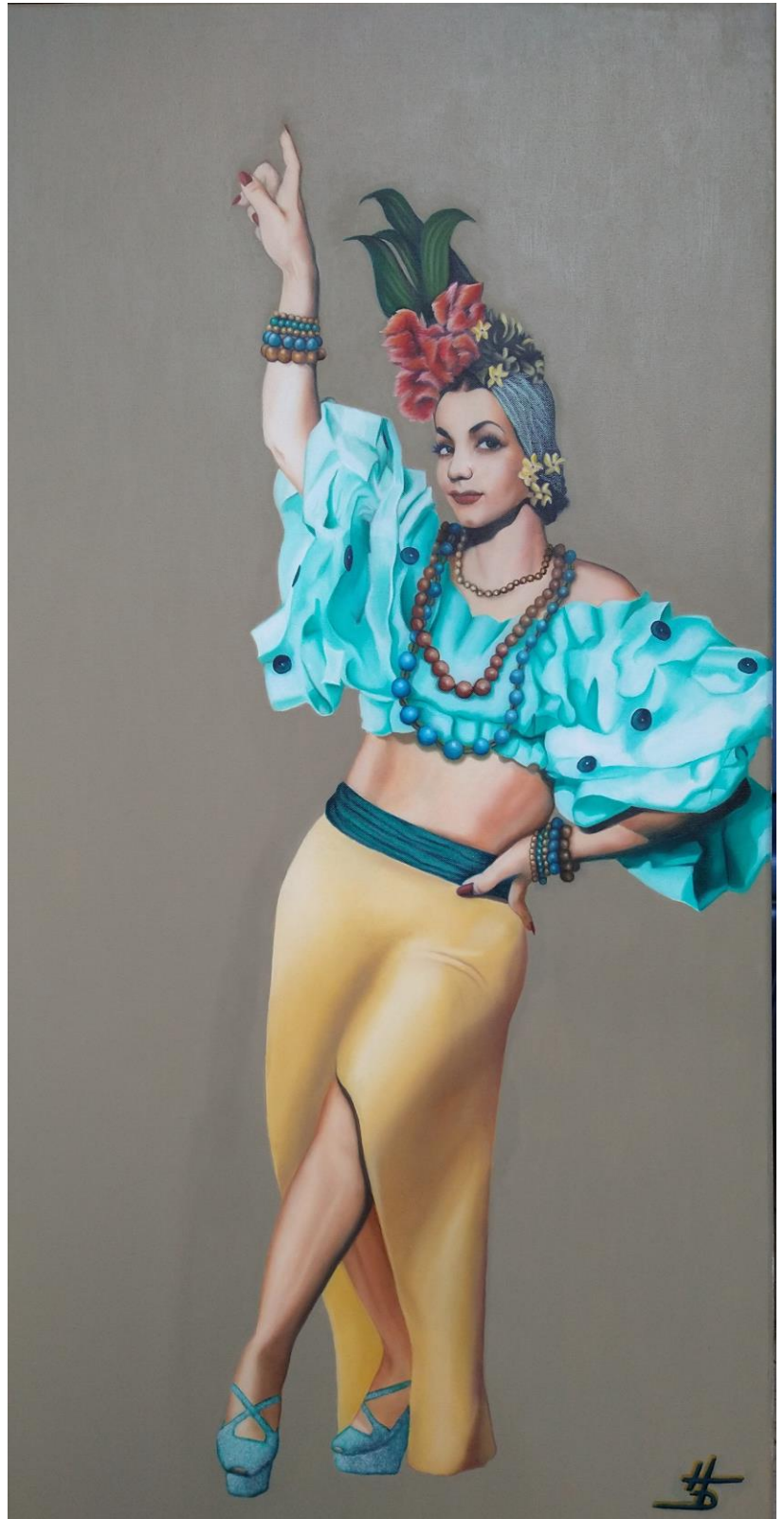
Harley Davis was born in 1956 in the Bridgeport area of Chicago and is currently a suburban resident. Five years ago, he returned to his earlier passion of oil painting, something he did for a couple of years in the mid 1980's. Harley is mostly self-taught. He attempts to challenge himself, in some way, with every painting, choosing a variety of subjects, and forcing himself to learn and grow as an artist. He finds subject matter best by drawing on his life experiences and imagination, often using no reference material. He says that pursuit of his art has made him much more observant of the beauty of the world around him. With an open mind and imagination, art is an unlimited adventure!

Visit the Art Gallery at Center on Halsted (3656 N. Halsted, Chicago) to see Harley's exhibit through June 3rd.

<https://www.centeronhalsted.org/art-gallery.html>

Harley Davis, self-portrait, oils, 2020, 24 x 36 →





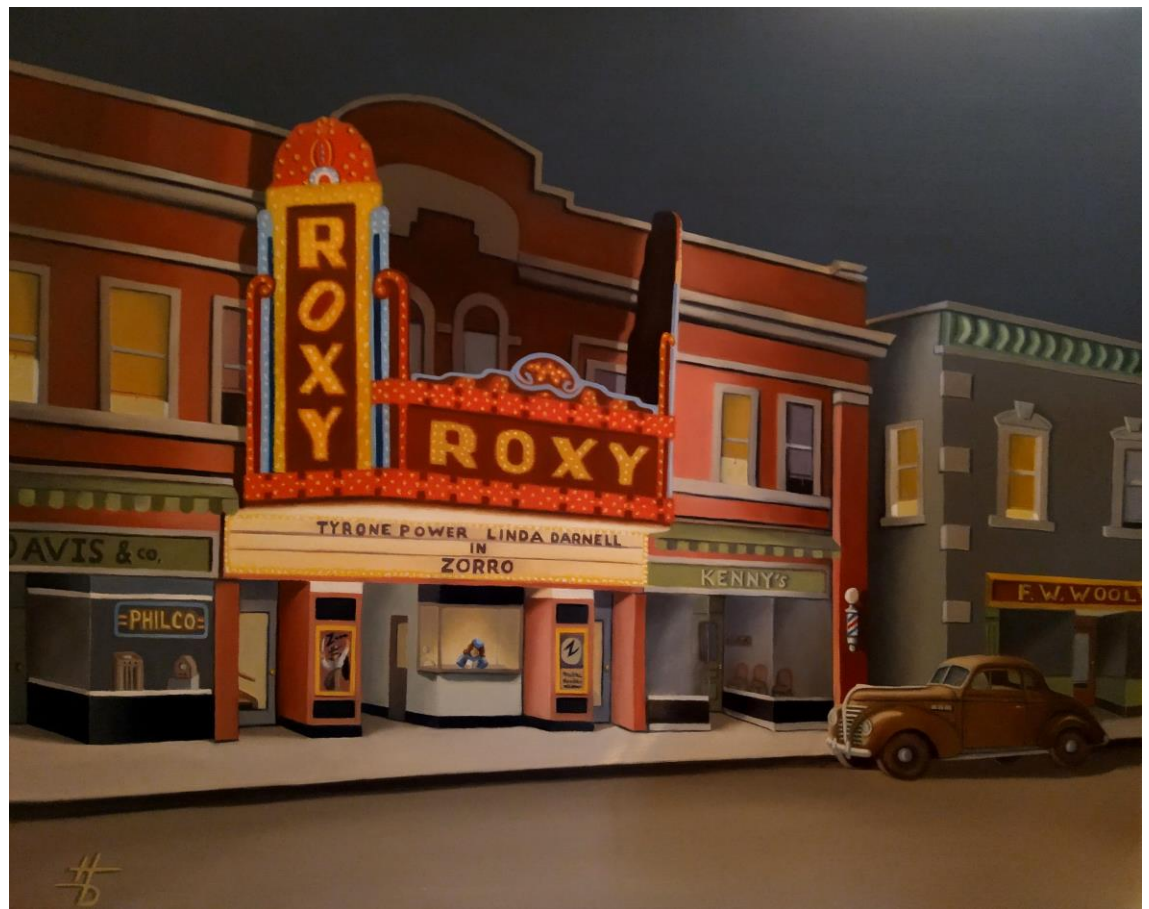
↖ *Upper left: **Portrait and Figure Study**, 16 x 20, 2021, self portrait from 1985 photo*

← *Lower left: **Jazzman Django**, 16 x 20, 2021*

↑ *Right: **Carmen Miranda**, 24 x 48, 2021*

ART BY
HARLEY DAVIS,
continued

Midnight Movie
24 x 30, 2022 →



At the Bar
16 x 20, 2021 ↓



**“With an open
mind and
imagination,
art is an
unlimited
adventure!”**
-- Harley Davis



↑ **Time Away**, 24 x 36, 2022

← **Private Beach**, 2022, 18 x 24

↓ **Hopper Takes a Vacation**, 2021, 15 x 30

For more art by Harley Davis visit

<https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/harley-davis>

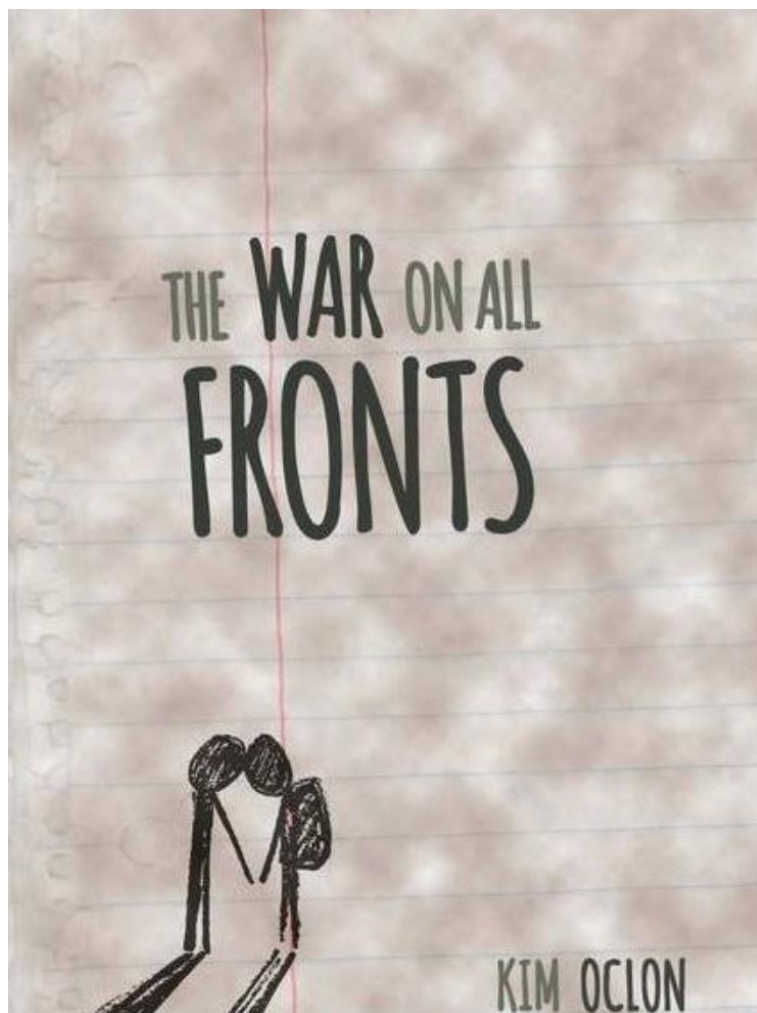
and attend the exhibit at Center on Halsted between now and June 3rd:

<https://www.centeronhalsted.org/art-gallery.html>





Kim Oclon



The War on All Fronts
a new book by **Kim Oclon**,
the author of **MAN UP**

Publisher: Trism Books
Publication date: **May 7, 2022**

ISBN Paperback: 978-1-7363474-0-9
ISBN Ebook: 978-1-7363474-1-6
Category: Young Adult, Historical Fiction,
Age range : 14-18, LGBTQ Price : \$12.95

Order at your favorite local bookstore!

[Indie Bound](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), [Amazon](#)

**An LGBTQ coming of age story about
fighting for someone you love, brought to
life in this Vietnam War era historical
fiction.**

It seemed as though Anthony and Sam had just found each other, and now they were already being torn apart. Sam to college in Wisconsin; Anthony across the world fighting in the Vietnam War. Through their separate journeys, they discover themselves, and rely on the one way to share their secret together. Corresponding with secret messages, scary truths, and fears about the war, readers will follow Anthony and Sam's path to friendship, love, and survival.

*If you have missed it, read an excerpt from **THE WAR ON ALL FRONTS**
in the [April 2022 issue of Open Doors](#), pages 10-11*

THEATER, MOVIES



Pride Arts
pridearts.org

PrideArts has announced a series of four Monday night cabaret performances by Chicago area musical theater and cabaret artists at the Pride Arts Center, 4139 N. Broadway.

Each performance will be preceded by a reprise screening of one of the short LGBTQIA films that were audience favorites in past PrideArts Film Fests.

Tickets to each cabaret performance are \$20.00 and will be available soon at www.pridearts.org.



PRIDEARTS
PRESENTS

SONGS THAT KEPT ME SANE WHEN THE WORLD MET THE PANDEMIC

CABARET + FILM SERIES



MAY

9

CARL HERZOG ACCOMPANIED BY BRYAN MCCAFFREY

EAT THE RAINBOW
directed by Brian Benson
THE WASHING MACHINE
directed by Diane Malherbe



MAY

16

KORINNE YONAN + JOE LEWIS ACCOMPANIED BY BRYAN MCCAFFREY

PERFECT FIRST DATE
directed by Kyle Hamlin
THE WASHING MACHINE
directed by Diane Malherbe



JUNE

13

SCOTT GRYDER + NICK SULA

EAT THE RAINBOW
directed by Brian Benson
THE WASHING MACHINE
directed by Diane Malherbe



JUNE

20

KYRA LEIGH

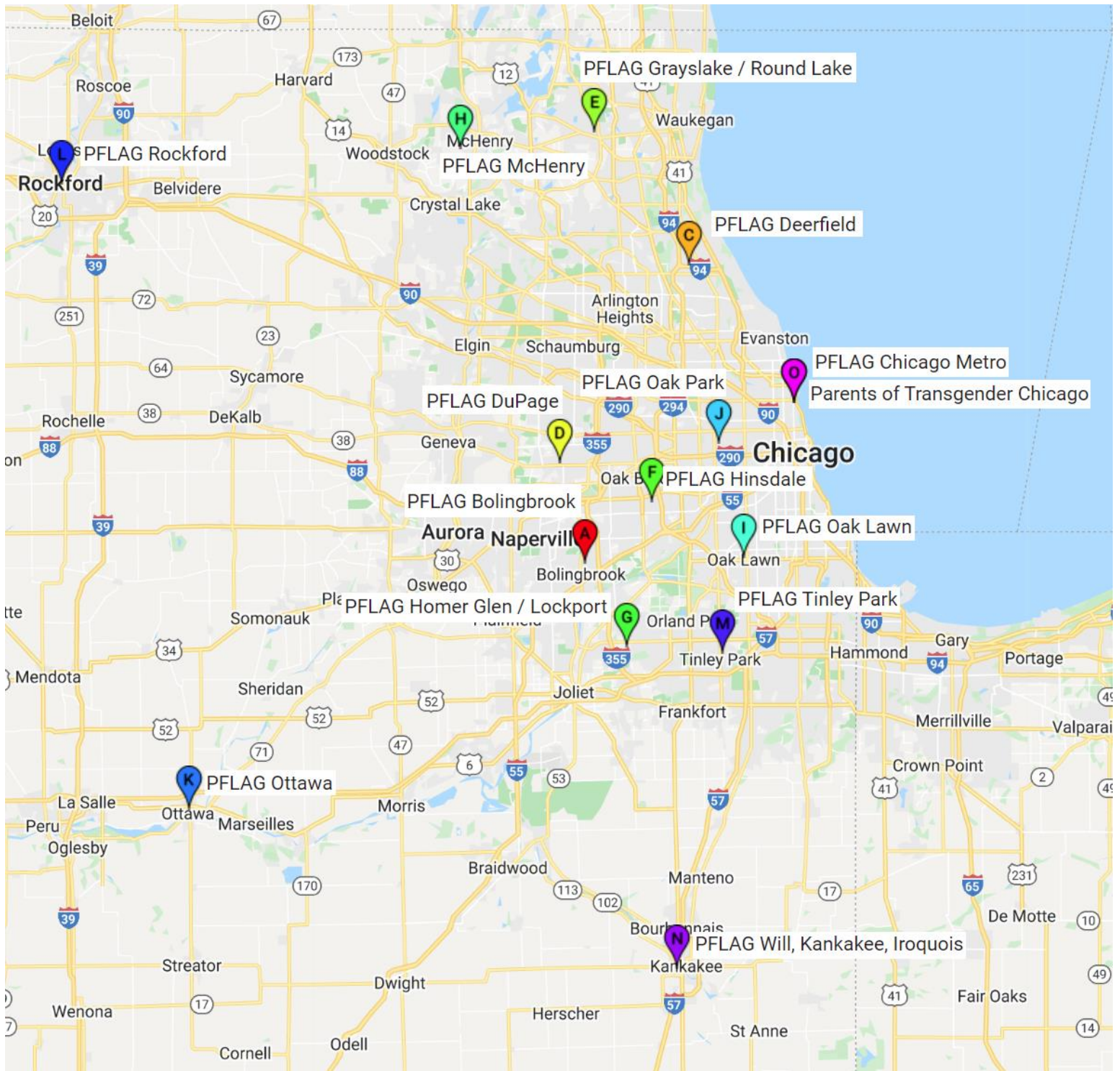
GOD'S DAUGHTER DANCE
directed by Sungbin Byun
THE WASHING MACHINE
directed by Diane Malherbe

VISIT WWW.PRIDEARTS.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION



@PRIDEARTSCHICAGO

PFLAG Northern Illinois Chapters



Click/tap anywhere on the map to open it online and find meeting dates/times/locations. Some chapters are meeting online on Zoom, and some are returning to in-person meetings. Contact the chapter for details before your very first meeting and watch for chapter announcements if you are a member.

