

WINDY CITY TIMES' LGBTQ WEDDING & SPECIAL EVENTS GUIDE

EIGHTH EDITION
February 2018



Posters For Change
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Local couples wed
Pages 8 & 10



Oak Park
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PLUS:
Tips on hiring a
planner

A marriage-
equality timeline

Gay marriage by
the numbers

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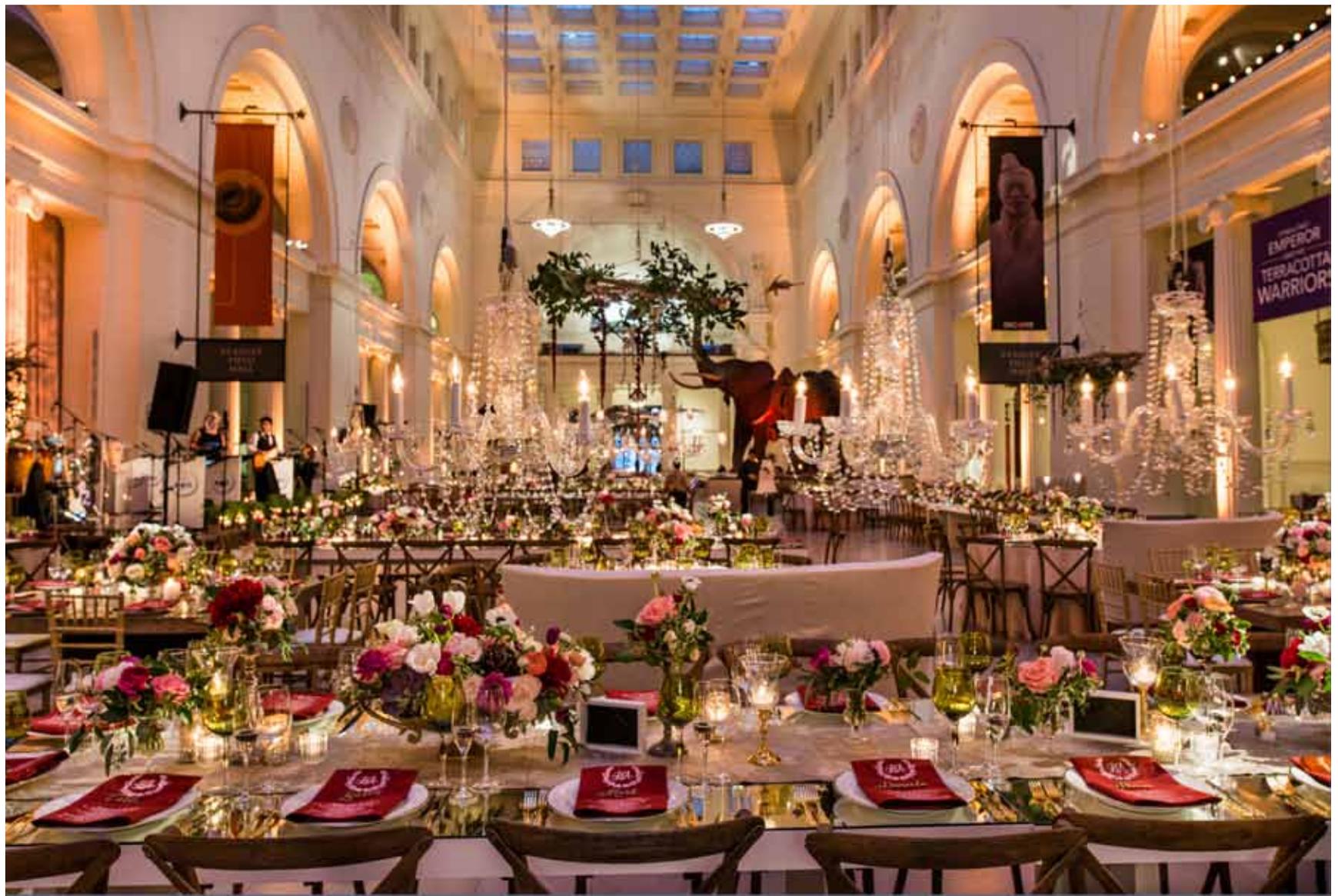
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EIGHTH EDITION • February 2018

PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR Tracy Baim
ASSISTANT PUBLISHER Terri Klinsky
MANAGING EDITOR Kirk Williamson
WINDY CITY TIMES MANAGING EDITOR Andrew Davis
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Matt Simonette
BUSINESS MANAGER Ripley Caine
DIRECTOR OF NEW MEDIA Jean Albright
ART DIRECTOR Kirk Williamson
SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES Terri Klinsky, Kirk Williamson, Amy Matheny, Scott Duff, David Strzepak, Kathy Breit, Andrew Kain Miller, Theresa Santos-Volpe
NATIONAL SALES Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863
WEBSITE LISTINGS VOLUNTEER Gene Naden
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR Jean Albright
DISTRIBUTION Ashina, Allan, Dan, John, Sue and Victor
WEB HOSTING LoveYourWebsite.com (lead programmer: Martie Marro)

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e-mail: editor@windycitymediagroup.com or Andrew@windycitymediagroup.com

www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com
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WINDY CITY MEDIA GROUP,
 5315 N. Clark St. #192, Chicago, IL, 60640 U.S.A.
 (MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

Windy City Times Deadline every Wednesday.
OUT! Chicago's LGBTQ Visitor's Guide Online
www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com



COVER CREDITS

Photo of Doug Engel and Trey Gehrt by Markham Jenkins Images

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Photo of Laura and Patti's wedding at Pleasant Home, courtesy of Visit Oak Park

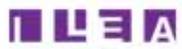


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HIRING A WEDDING CONSULTANT/COORDINATOR/PLANNER: HOW IT ALL WORKS

BY FRANK J. ANDONOPLAS, MWP, FRANK EVENT DESIGN

Many couples know that hiring a wedding consultant is the right thing for them from the very start. Other couples think this is an unnecessary expense and that they can do it all on their own. My philosophy is that if you trust your taxes to a professional, and your health to a professional, why would you not want to trust this once-in-a-lifetime event to a professional? Each planner does things their way, but here is how I have been providing services for my clients for 25 years.

Full Service Planning: I will plan and design the details of the wedding from start to finish.

Additionally, myself and my team are there at the wedding to direct the day's events and coordinate everything that needs to happen and keep things on time.

Partial Planning: This level of service is pretty much the same as full-service, but this is if a couple should have their venue selected and then get to the point of "OK, now what are we do?"

"Day of "Coordination: This is the common term for wedding-day directions services. I am not a fan of calling it "day of "because it is so much more than just what it sounds like. I review all your contracts, meet with a couple before the wedding and put together the timeline. Then I pretty much take over all the final confirmations and last-minute details. I am there with a staff to direct the day's events and take the stress away from the couple, their friends and family, making sure everything they have planned and selected happens correctly and on time. I also assist with any unexpected occurrences.

Hourly Consultations: I offer this service for couples who really want to do this on their own or cannot afford full or partial planning services. I am hired on an hourly basis to review your plans, give you advice on etiquette, guidance on what will work—and more importantly, what won't work—as well as vendor recommendations. This is a great way to tap into my knowledge and expertise at a very minimal investment.

Once I know I am available for their date, I set up an initial interview and discuss their expectations. We talk about the event in detail. You will need to have an estimated guest count and wedding budget. From here, I know if their expectations are realistic. If they are not, one of two things must be done: either increase your budget or decrease your guest list so that you have more money to spend on the details that are a priority. This is where my expertise comes into play in assisting them on deciding on what's most important and how to make the best of their wedding budget. This also gives us a chance to meet and interact and lets us both know if this is going to be a productive and enjoyable relationship.

It's at this initial interview that I can come up with a cost for my services. Every wedding consultant charges a different way. Some charge by the hour, some charge a percentage of your budget. I charge a flat fee based on the amount of detail to your wedding. Since our weddings are different, the fee structure varies.

Once we have contracted, I set up an initial meeting. Here I determine the couple's style by asking a series of interpersonal questions to each member of the couple. We also then talk about each facet of the wedding and the vendors that will be involved. With my 25 years of experience, I can easily fit vendors whose price and style work best with the couple's budget and expectations. I check those vendors availability, then forward the information to the couple for their review. From here, we set up meetings with vendors they like the most. Keep in mind that every vendor that they choose, the couple contracts with each vendor directly. I, unlike other planners, do not subcontract any vendors.

This planning process can take several weeks or even months depending upon how much time we have before the big day. Many clients do not live in the Chicagoland area, so we arrange Facetime meetings and conference calls on a regular basis. I then guide the couple through each intricate detail, use my creative flair to add unique and personal touches and manage the whole event. When the big day arrives, my team and I are there to manage all the details of the day and keep things flowing according to the agenda.

There are now dozens and dozens of wedding consultants out there. I highly recommend you research consultants fully before hiring and going into a contract. Make sure that you ask for references and check online reviews. See what professional credentials and affiliations they have. But most importantly, hire a consultant that you trust and feel comfortable with. This is vital. Beware of anything that seems too good to be true regarding price. I always recommend the old saying, "You get what you pay for."

Just as every planner does things differently, each planner charges in a different way. The most common are hourly, percentage of budget or flat fee. I charge a flat fee so the client knows exactly the amount of the investment they are making, as well as the freedom call, email and meet with me as much as they need to.

Hiring a wedding consultant/coordinator/planner is not for everyone, but the benefits of having one involved in some capacity of your wedding planning is an insurance policy for you. It is such an immense benefit to the couples, giving them peace of mind and less stress during this very emotional time in their lives. This way, you can be a guest at your own wedding.



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photo: Dustin Halleck



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Cally Raddatz (in suit) and **Amanda Vevers** wed in August 2017 at the Irish American Heritage Center. They did their best to source their vendors from within the LGBTQ community or those that had a mission that lined up with their values.

Aaron Ehinger Photography



Doug Engel (left in cake-cutting photo) and **Trey Gehrt** tied the knot in front of friends and family (and their dog, Yoshi) September 16, 2017, at Jerry's in Andersonville.

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ADAM BEHM &
BOBBY MEYER

July 15, 2017
Greenhouse Loft
Photography by Thomas Slack

THE COUPLE Adam Behm and Bobby Meyer don't shy away from the spotlight: They met when they were both performing with the Chicago Men's Chorus. Bobby spent a year planning a surprise birthday party for Adam, gathering loved ones from Chicago and beyond, and then he proposed. "It's one of the proudest moments of my life."

THE DETAILS For the ceremony and reception, the couple chose Greenhouse Loft, which is "a mix of modernism, and settled-in white decor with a touch of color," says P. who...



Lisa Hanlon (left) and **Carmen Cuellar** got married in the Rainbow Room at the Hotel Baker in St. Charles, Ill.
Ruben Ramos Photography



Nancy Simonsen (in pants) and **Irene Balogh** got hitched February 15, 2017, at the Skokie courthouse, followed by a small reception at Wildfire in Glenview. The couple are both in their early 60s.
Photos courtesy of Simonsen



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TRENDS AND SPENDS

As marriage equality more and more becomes part of the fabric of society, certain trends are beginning to emerge. A 2017 survey conducted by theknot.com and Q.Digital LGBTQ Weddings Study presented the following numbers, showing spending habits and more of today's same-gender couples tying the knot.



AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT RING SPEND



Women: **\$3,185**

Men: **\$2,226**



PERCENTAGE OF DESTINATION WEDDINGS



Women: **29%**

Men: **35%**



AVERAGE MARRYING AGE



Women: **36**

Men: **46**

MORE NUMBERS ...

- **Average Number of Guests:**

Women, 87; Men, 84

- **Average Length of Engagement:**

Women, 13 months; Men, 12 months

- **Most Popular Month to Get Married:**

Women, October, 15%; Men, October, 15%

- 17% of female couples and 11% of males couples both proposed to one another

- Women are more traditional when proposing, with 43% proposing on bended knee compared to 28% of men doing the same

- Women (86%) are also more likely than men (60%) to exchange engagement rings during the proposal

- Of the women and men who exchanged engagement rings, one in four created a custom designed ring (26% of women; 23% of men)

- According to the study, female (30%) and male (11%) couples admitted that they were turned away from vendors or left feeling uncomfortable due to their LGBTQ identity

- An overwhelming majority of LGBTQ couples (88% of males and 91% of females) agree that vendors should clearly communicate that they are LGBTQ-friendly.

- 91% of males and 92% of females are more likely to book a vendor that caters to the LGBTQ community.

WIN A WEDDING!

GayWeddingChicagoSite.com to raffle off full wedding ceremony

Win a full wedding ceremony, valued at over \$2,500 for 30 guests, courtesy of www.GayWeddingChicagoSite.com, at this year's 10th annual **Chicago LGBTQ Wedding Expo**, Sunday, March 18 at The Hotel Chicago, 333 N. Dearborn St.

Pine Manor's Rev. Pam Magnuson and her wedding partners will be offering this exquisite grand prize giveaway, which will include the beautiful garden venue Pine Manor Chicago, wedding officiation by Rev. Pam Magnuson, wedding day coordination by Wedding Day Ninja, wedding cake for 30 by Central Continental Bakery with an LGBT-specific cake topper courtesy of IL Nut & Candy, a House Wine toast with custom engraved glasses, live violin music by Emily Ruth, still wedding photography by I Do Photo and overnight accommodations with a jacuzzi suite and breakfast room service courtesy of the Holiday Inn Elk Grove.

To see details of this amazing wedding giveaway, go to www.weddingofficiantchicago.com/win-a-lgbt-wedding.html



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Photos by Kat Fitzgerald (www.MysticImagesPhotography.com).
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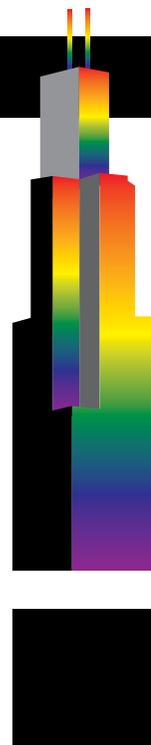
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MARRIAGE EQUALITY TIMELINE



1953

August: ONE homosexual magazine cover story headline reads "Homosexual Marriage."

1961

During a legislative vote on a new state criminal code, Illinois becomes the first U.S. state to remove its sodomy law from the statutes.

1970

May 18: Jack Baker and James Michael McConnell apply for a marriage license in Minneapolis. Hennepin County denies the request, and subsequent court challenges lead to U.S. Supreme Court dismissal of the case, based on "want of a substantial federal question."



1990 ACT-UP protest.
Photo by Lisa Howe-Ebright

1980s

With the AIDS crisis striking, activists are fighting for their lives and the lives of those they love; there is not yet a big focus on marriage. However, there is a push in some countries, including Denmark and the Netherlands, for registered partnerships and similar laws.

1996

February: In a response to a questionnaire by Chicago's Outlines newspaper (now Windy City Times), Illinois state Senate candidate Barack Obama says he supports same-sex marriage and would fight laws that try to ban it.

1959

Illinois passes law that permits legal adoption of an adult provided the adult had lived in the petitioner's home for two consecutive years. John Gregg Allerton's oral history states that Robert Allerton was the first to adopt under the new law, when he adopted John under a decree issued by Judge Henry T. Dighton of Monticello, Piatt County.

1968

December: The Reverend Troy Perry, two months after founding the gay Metropolitan Community Churches, performs what is believed to be the first public same-sex wedding ceremony in the U.S.

1975

March 27: The first same-sex marriage license is issued in Boulder, Colorado. Five more would follow before the courts shut them down.
October 20: Two Chicago women are arrested applying for a marriage license in Cook County.

1990

December: Three same-sex couples try to apply for a marriage license in Hawaii, sparking the modern U.S. movement for marriage equality.

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Some major steps through history, leading to marriage equality in Illinois and the US. Expanded timeline and images from the book *The Fight for Marriage Equality In the Land of Lincoln* by Kate Sosin and Tracy Baim

2001

April: The Netherlands becomes the first country in the world to legalize marriage between two people of the same sex (Belgium follows in 2003).

2005

July: Spain and Canada become the third and fourth countries in the world to legalize same-sex marriage legislatively.

2008

June 16: California begins issuing licenses to gay couples after the ruling in the case *In re Marriage Cases*, but they are halted November 4 after passage of Proposition 8, a voter initiative banning such marriages.



2011

June 1: The civil-union law takes effect in Illinois.



2013

Jan 2: Sponsors begin the first push to pass marriage equality during the Illinois Legislature's lame-duck veto session.
Feb. 14: Illinois Senate passes the bill.
July 13: LGBTs march in downtown Chicago for marriage equality to coincide with the annual Taste of Chicago.
Oct. 22: The March on Springfield for Marriage Equality is held.
Nov. 4: The steering committee of Illinois Unites for Marriage meets with Harris to determine the fate of the bill.
Nov. 5: The House passes the bill.
Nov. 20: Governor Quinn signs the bill into law.



2015

Marriage equality becomes the law of the land across the U.S.

2004

Feb. 12: San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom orders the county clerk's office to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, something that continues through March 11, when he is forced to stop under court order; by this time about 4,000 licenses have been issued.

2006

Nov. 30: The South African Constitutional Court legalizes same-sex marriages.

2010

Dec. 1: The Illinois Senate passes a bill creating civil unions with all the state-level rights and obligations of marriage.

2012

Jan. 9: State Rep. Greg Harris announces he has been in talks with LGBT organizations and other lawmakers about introducing a marriage-equality bill in Illinois.
Dec. 20: LGBT groups announce formation of the Illinois Unites for Marriage coalition, dedicated to passing the marriage-equality bill.

2014

June 1: All 102 Illinois counties start implementation of the marriage equality law.



2011 image: John Pennycuff (left) and Robert Castillo watch as judge Pat Logue signs their legal paperwork.
2013 image: Activists protesting in downtown Chicago.
Theresa and Mercedes Santos-Volpe and family, getting their marriage license.
Photos by Tracy Baim



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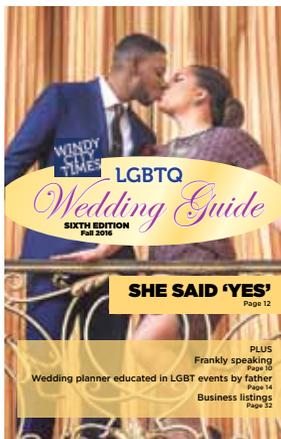
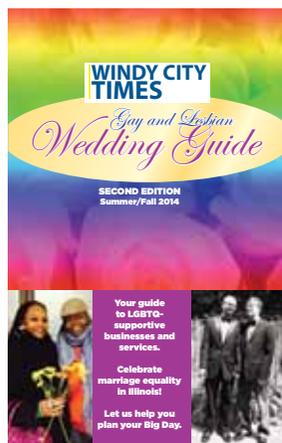
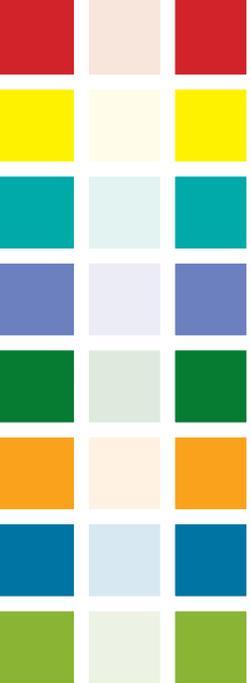
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FOLLOWING MARRIAGE

Take a look back at the covers of the Windy City Times LGBTQ Wedding & Special Events Guide since its first inception, all the way back in 2014.

Top row, left to right:
First edition, Winter/Spring 2014;
Second edition, Summer/Fall 2014;
Third edition, Winter/Spring 2015;
Fourth edition, Summer/Fall 2015
Fifth edition, Winter/Spring 2016.

Bottom row, left to right:
Sixth edition, Summer/Fall 2016;
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Oak Park, the charming and progressive village that hugging Chicago to the west, offers the best of both worlds: Only 8 miles from Chicago's Loop, it effortlessly blends the liveliness of urban settings with the welcoming sense of suburban communities. As the first village in Illinois to roll out a domestic partnership registry—serving as a model for other communities to develop their own—Oak Park has a proud history of inclusiveness. Plus, its marvelous architecture, historic spaces, and tree-lined brick roads offer a picture-perfect backdrop for your biggest day yet.

Oak Park Conservatory.

All photos courtesy of Visit Oak Park



Venues

Home to Oak Park's largest ballroom, the **Nineteenth Century Club** exudes unique charm, history, and character. An assortment of lounge and dining rooms on the first floor are perfect for smaller weddings, while the 280-capacity ballroom's sprawling stage graciously accommodates bands for larger ceremonies or receptions.

Take your wedding to the rolling countryside without straying far from the city at the **Cheney Mansion**. Designed to resemble an English country home, this 12,000-square-foot jewel boasts spacious reception rooms and is surrounded by a 2.5-acre garden with tranquil ponds, colorful flowers and towering trees.

Let the intoxicating fragrance of tropical plants, towering palms and rich flora wash over your guests at the **Oak Park Conservatory**. Considered one of the area's top historical sites, this hidden oasis has both indoor and outdoor gardens available for smaller weddings or cocktail receptions.

A wedding at Unity Temple.



Considered one of the nation's most distinguished examples of Prairie Style architecture, the **Pleasant Home** is a striking 30-room mansion that showcases 19th century craftsmanship with its ornate woodwork and vibrant art glass. Ceremony options include the elegant banquet hall, large front porch and library, while outdoor tents can be pitched in neighboring Mills Park.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple is a landmark structure that seats up to 350 people in its storied sanctuary, 175 for seated dinner and 225 for a cocktail party. This National Historic Landmark is fresh on the heels of a \$25 million dollar restoration project, ensuring guests will be intoxicated by the renewed grandeur of its skylights, woodwork and art glass.

Whether it's an event with 200 people or an intimate gathering with 20, the **Carleton Hotel** of Oak Park fuses classic elegance and contemporary style. Its cozy fireplaces, stained glass, crown moldings and red-wine drapery ooze romance, and the string lights stretching across the street outside are the glittering setting you always envisioned for wedding day photos.

Oak Park Jewelers.



Nestled in 245 acres of woodlands in the Forest Preserves of Cook County, the **Thatcher Woods Pavilion** is a historic stone building hugging the Des Plaines River. The recently renovated facility, anchored by a traditional gas-lit fireplace, offers two meeting rooms and a prep-type kitchen.

Steps from the Metra train line in the heart of Riverside's historic downtown is the **Riverside Arts Center**, a non-profit arts organization hosting unique exhibitions for more than 20 years. Its Freeark Gallery and outdoor Sculpture Garden can accommodate 100 guests, making it a popular spot for smaller wedding receptions and private community events.

Accommodations

The Write Inn, fittingly situated in the Frank Lloyd Wright Historic District, is a treasured landmark that fuses old world charm with modern features for a comfortable and memorable stay. Special antiques from the 1920s are showcased throughout, while visitors will relish its proximity both to Downtown Oak Park and the CTA line connected to Chicago's downtown.

Gifts & Jewelry

A large selection of diamonds, colorful gemstones, gold, silver, and pearls can be found at **Oak Park Jewelers**. Since 1984, this family-operated mainstay has been providing fine jewelry, expert craftsmanship and unparalleled customer service. Custom designs are also offered, ensuring all personal needs and budgets will be satisfied.



Q-BBQ.

What began as a little-known jeweler 12 years ago has evolved into **Gem: A Jewelry Boutique**, a widely respected, upscale shop in the heart of Oak Park. Aiming to inspire their customers, Gem pursues independent jewelers with a style all their own to curate its thoughtful and unique mix of jewelry and personal accessories.

Catering

As the catering arm of Cucina Paradiso, a modern Italian eatery in Oak Park, **TwoM-ayToz Catering** emphasizes putting the host's mind at ease. The wide spectrum of services, professional service staff and delectable flavors served guarantee your guests will enjoy the perfect meal.

America's original comfort food gets a

distinct culinary stamp at **Q-BBQ**. Drawing inspiration from barbeque traditions across the country, this fast-casual joint offers authentic slow-cooked meats and made-from-scratch sides. Up to 1,000 guests can enjoy anything from the signature pulled pork to the infamous mac-Q-roni, topped with crumbled Cheez-It crackers.

Serving Italian-American favorites in bustling, industrial-chic spaces in Berwyn and Brookfield, **Paisans Pizzeria** offers catering services for events of all sizes and budgets. Popular entrees such as mango chicken and Nonna's meatballs can be mixed and matched with the eatery's acclaimed pizza, salads and appetizers for an entirely customized experience.

THROWBACK: Chicago Tribune's first gay wedding announcement

On March 4, 2004, the Chicago Tribune published its very first same-sex wedding announcement for couple Lee Neubecker (right) and David Greer. They traveled to San Francisco to get married on February 19 of that year.

Photo and news of the announcement from the archives of www.WindyCityTimes.com



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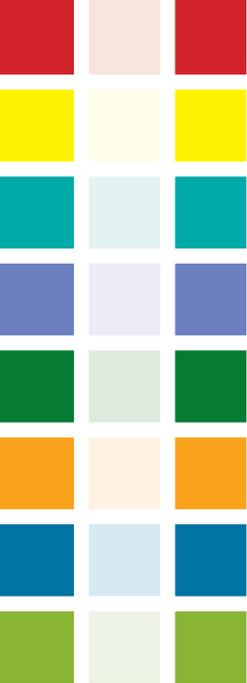
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Last summer, more than 300 artists and designers from around the world answered a call to create Posters for Change: Tear, Paste, Protest: 50 Removable Posters, a collection of 50 tear-out posters for people who want to make their voices heard in a time of unprecedented uncertainty and apprehension.

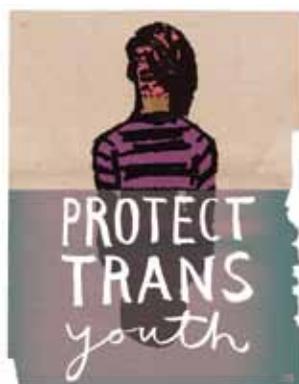
Princeton Architectural Press selected posters that, in addition to being adjudged the best of those submitted, provide a representative sample of the entries received in terms of country of origin, area of concern, and graphic style. Subjects covered in the collection include animal rights, child labor, civil rights, the environment, gun control, healthcare, immigration, LGBTQ rights, mass incarceration, public arts, voting rights, and women's rights.

Shepard Fairey, designer of the Barack Obama "Hope" poster, said of Posters for Change, "This collection of protest posters showcases bold and impactful graphic design with a message, which is always something I can stand behind."

The book is available in March.



POSTERS FOR CHANGE: TEAR, PASTE, PROTEST: 50 REMOVABLE POSTERS



Blue for a boy.
Pink for a girl.
Green for a boy.
Purple for a girl.
Yellow for a boy.
Red for a girl.
Orange for a boy.
Turquoise for a girl.
White for a boy.
Black for a girl.
Pink for a boy.
Blue for a girl.



Above: Curtis Dickie, *Love Wins*.

Three images, from left:

- Lauren Simkin Berke, *Trans*.

- Ian Perkins, *Green For A Boy...*

- *Silence Equals Death*.

All photos from Posters for Change (c) 2018 Princeton Architectural Press, reprinted with permission of the publisher. *Silence Equals Death* image (c) 1987 AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power

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