

Aging Well

Spring 2024

FALL PREVENTION EXERCISE GROUP

Otago is a FREE 8-week fall prevention exercise program developed in New Zealand and approved by the CDC. It has been shown to reduce falls by 35%-40% and reduce injury from falls by 28%.

Otago meets for 30 minutes and includes 17 low-impact strength and balance exercises.

JOIN US

Fridays

12 – 1 P.M.

Virtual (via zoom)
RSVP required to obtain
zoom log in information

for more information, please email
agingservices@howardbrown.org



RISING PHOENIX

An in-person support group for adults 50+ living with HIV.

JOIN US

every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month

6:30 – 8P.M.

Howard Brown Health Clark St.
6500 N Clark St. Chicago, IL 60626
2nd Floor Conference Room

for more information, please email
agingservices@howardbrown.org



THRIVE WITH PRIDE CAFÉ CHICAGO

Join the Howard Brown Health Thrive with Pride Café for a virtual discussion space where you can share & receive support, learn more about local services & resources, and discuss topics that matter to you.

Thrive with Pride Cafés provide safe & affirming spaces for all older adults, centering the experiences of LGBTQ adults 50+.

JOIN US

1st Wednesday of the month

6:30 – 7:30 P.M.

3rd Wednesday of the month

NOON – 1P.M.

Virtual (via zoom)
RSVP required to obtain
zoom log in information

for more information, please email
agingservices@howardbrown.org



TRANSCENDENCE

An in-person support group for trans* adults 50+.

JOIN US

2nd Wednesday of the month

6:30 – 8 P.M.

4th Wednesday of the month

10:30 A.M. – NOON

Howard Brown Health Clark St.
6500 N Clark St. Chicago, IL 60626
2nd Floor Conference Room

for more information, please email
agingservices@howardbrown.org



SAY IT WITH FLOWERS



How the language of flowers has been used by the LGBTQ community



According to the Smithsonian Gardens, flowers were the language of love in Victorian culture. Learning the special symbolism of flowers became a popular pastime during the 1800s when each flower was assigned a particular meaning. Nearly all Victorian homes would own at least one guidebook dedicated to the language of flowers and feelings that could not be proclaimed publicly could be expressed through floral arrangements. LGBTQ communities have long been attracted to this secret language as an expression of their own often stigmatized attractions. Here are four historical examples of LGBTQ floral expression.

VIOLETS

“You put on many wreaths of violets and roses ... together by my side, and round your tender neck you put many woven garlands made from flowers.” - Sappho

Violets have a vivid place in the woman-loving poetry of the great ancient Greek poet Sappho from the Isle of Lesbos. Modern lesbian liberation movements that have wanted to honor Sappho have at times taken up violets as a symbol of her spirit.

**LAVENDER NIGHTS OUR
GREATEST TREASURE,
WHERE WE CAN BE JUST
WHO WE WANT TO BE.**

-JINKX MONSOON

In 1926, a play by Edouard Bourdet made a public link between violets and lesbian lovers. The story of “The Captive” features a woman, engaged to a man, who is secretly in a relationship with another woman. In the play, her lover gives her several gifts of violets. The connection made the flower unfashionable among parts of the theater-going public, but gay men and women and their allies attended the play and pinned violets to their outfits in a show of support.

GREEN CARNATIONS

Another queer floral tradition was created in the theater by Oscar Wilde when he told his gay friends to wear green carnations on their lapels to the 1892 opening of his stage comedy *Lady Windermere's Fan*. Two years later, an anonymous writer published *The Green Carnation*, a novel full of scandalous characters based on Wilde and his associates. Content from the novel was used in Wilde's indecency trial and contributed to his conviction by portraying homosexuality as unnatural as green flowers. But there actually are many green flowers in nature, as the famed horticulturalist and White House Rose Garden designer Bunny Mellon has pointed out, which she described as "A mystery like true love that wants to hide but is betrayed by its own joy." And that is how I experience my own LGBTQ+ identity – as a mystery betrayed by its own joy.



LAVENDER

Purple hues have been associated with LGBTQ communities since the time of Sappho, but lavender fully entered the gay lexicon at the end of the 19th century. Lavender was a fashionable color in Europe at the time, and wearing lavender eventually became synonymous with an appreciation for art and beauty.

The adjective "lavender" has become a catch-all signifier for the full rainbow of LGBTQ+ identities, organizations, and events, such as "lavender" graduation celebrations and the annual Lavender Law Conference of the LGBT Bar Association. Gay women or men who commit to marriages of convenience to appear to be heterosexual are sometimes referred to as having a "lavender wedding." The historian Carl Sandburg, in his famed 1926 biography of Abraham Lincoln, wrote "A streak of lavender ran through him; he had spots soft as May violets," thereby launching a little cottage industry of researchers trying to determine just how queer our 16th president was or was not.

The color lavender soon became both a mark of positive identity on the one hand and a derogatory euphemism for categorizing people to be excluded and abused on the other.



This resulted in such horrors as the 1950s “Lavender Scare” – an organized witch hunt for ousting homosexuals from federal employment. The closeted FBI director Edgar J. Hoover even recruited gay federal employees to spy on and report on each other under threat of exposure if they did not comply.

And in a classic case of reclaiming a negative label, Betty Friedan of the National Organization for Women attempted to disassociate the movement from gay women by describing lesbians as a “lavender menace” to the success of a feminist political agenda. In response, Rita Mae Brown and other lesbian feminist activists disrupted a prominent women’s event on May 1, 1970 by showing up wearing T-shirts that bore the words “Lavender Menace.” They earned the crowd’s support, and the moment is remembered as a turning point in the Women’s Liberation movement.

PANSIES

The pansy has long been referenced in literature. In Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, it is the juice of a pansy that the mischievous Puck squeezes onto the eyelids of the fairy queen Titania to magically “make a man or woman madly dote upon the next live creature that it sees,” and in *Hamlet*, among the flowers that Ophelia is obsessing over in her mad scene, are “pansies, that’s for thoughts.” The heroine of Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* was originally named Pansy O’Hara until Ms. Mitchell changed the character’s name to Scarlett O’Hara just before the novel went to print.

In the Victorian Language of Flowers, the pansy represented forbidden love, and was given as a gift to secret lovers. Marcel Proust added another dimension to the language of flowers by referring to male-male courtship as being comparable to the process of flower fertilization. He referred to a man who loved other men as being “an evening botanist,” or a “horticultural lad.” And in the early 20th century, as Christopher Looby notes in *Flowers of Manhood*, the terms “daisy,” “buttercup,” but especially “pansy,” became commonly used as slang for a flamboyant gay man.

From the late 1920s through the mid 1930s, there emerged in urban cities in the United States, England, France, and Germany a period of radically increased LGBTQ visibility though the popularity of underground clubs featuring drag performers and a sexually diverse clientele, in what gay historian George Chauncey has dubbed the “Pansy Craze.” (Check out this issue’s LGBTQ History Corner for more about Chicago’s Pansy Craze!)

This cultural phenomenon is widely considered to be the beginning of contemporary LGBTQ nightlife and is vividly represented in the 2023 film *Eldorado: Everything the Nazis Hate*. Some clubs even used “Pansy” in their name as a way of reclaiming that slur as a badge of honor. That same reclaiming tradition has been sustained by the Pansy Project <https://thepansyproject.com/about/> created by LGBTQ activist Paul Harfleet, in which pansy flowers are planted at sites of homophobic and transphobic abuse.

In 1869, what is now considered the first drag ball in the United States was held at the Rockland Palace Banquet Hall & Casino in Harlem. The balls continued on as an honored New York tradition until 1938, when anti-LGBTQ policies in the US and the rise of the Nazi party in Europe resulted in the closing down of LGBTQ institutions and businesses internationally. The Pansy Craze scene had emerged within the context of shifting attitudes in large urban cultural centers toward all of sexuality, promoted by such popular performers as the witty and caustic Jean Malin, the sexually suggestive and beloved Josephine Baker, and the cross-dressing blues artist Gladys Bentley, who flirted with women in the audience while headlining at Harlem’s Ubangi Club, backed up by a chorus line of drag queens.



Arnold Aprill
Aging Services Case Manager
Howard Brown Health

SOURCES

[The Secret Queer History of Flowers](#) by AJ Willingham for CNN

[Four Flowering Plants That Have Been Decidedly Queered](#) by Sarah Prager for JSTOR Daily

[Four Flowers That Have Become Queer Symbols](#) by Eddie Johnston for Kew Royal Botanic Gardens

[Six Flowers That Define the LGBTQ+ Movement in History](#) by Jill Brooke for Flower Power Daily

[Flower Power: Flower Symbolism in LGBTQ+ History](#) by Emily Ellis for The Royal Parks UK

OTAGO EXERCISE PROGRAM

EVIDENCE-BASED FALL PREVENTION



Among older adults over 65 years old, 30% have fallen and 15% have fallen many times ([NIH.gov](https://www.nih.gov)). The obvious consequences of falls include bone fracture, but falls can also indirectly cause cognitive decline, sedentary behavior, social exclusion, and even death.

The Otago Exercise Program (OEP) is an evidence-based fall prevention exercise plan that consists of 17 strength and balance exercises. This program was developed at the Otago Medical School in Dunedin, New Zealand. Studies show that OEP participants experience a 35%-40% reduction in falls.

For more information about OEP, read about the program on the [National Council on Aging website](https://www.ncoa.org/).

**JOIN
OTAGO**

**FRIDAYS 12P
via Zoom**

To RSVP, email

**AgeingServices
@howardbrown.org**

Center on Halsted Room 203

INCLUSIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Facilitated by Arnold Aprill
of Howard Brown Health
and Randy Gresham



2ND AND 4TH TUESDAYS / 2:30 – 4:00 PM
3/13/2024 – 6/25/2024

All participants are welcomed and supported in sharing works in progress, using a respectful and uplifting feedback process that advances self-expression for writers (and would-be writers) at all levels of experience.

To sign up contact Todd Williams: 773-472-6169 X 426
or toddwilliams@centeronhalsted.org

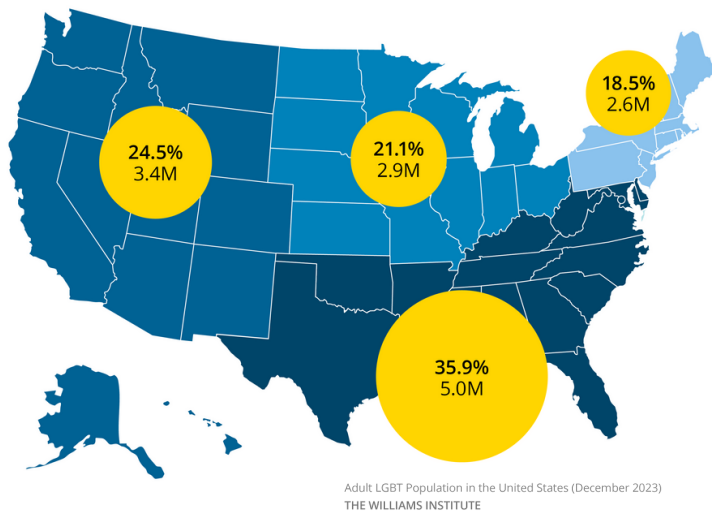
WHERE DO WE LIVE?

A United States of LGBTQ

One may have the impression that LGBTQ populations are concentrated in specific regions of the country. In fact we are everywhere and always have been, even when closeted and invisible.

In December 2023, UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute published the report Adult LGBT Population in the United States, using data from the 2020-2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to estimate the number of adults who identify as LGBT at the national, state, and regional levels in the United States. Of course, the number of people who identify as LGBT masks the number of other people who are LGBT but do not experience enough safety to claim this identity. The study reported finding 13.9 million adults in the U.S as having an LGBT identity, that this population was spread across the country, and that a significantly larger percentage of LGBT adults live in the South than in any other region.

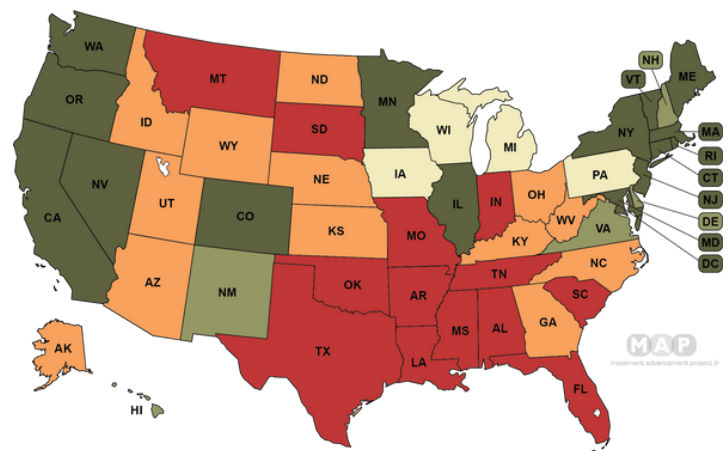
Figure 2. Percent and population of LGBT adults in the US by region, 2020-2021



One might hope that a larger presence of LGBT folks in a region (approximately one in three LGBT U.S. residents live in the American South) would lead to greater LGBT acceptance and inclusion. But when we compare the outsized density of our presence with the outsized level of anti-LGBT legislation in the region, what we find is the exact opposite of that hope.



Founded in 2006, the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) is an independent, nonprofit think tank that does research and presents data to help speed access to opportunity for all. Here is their most recent map tracking which states have passed the most and least positive LGBT legislation, and this map is already outdated because of the recent acceleration of hostile policies being passed by an increasing number of states. Illinois is notable for its positive LGBT policy record.



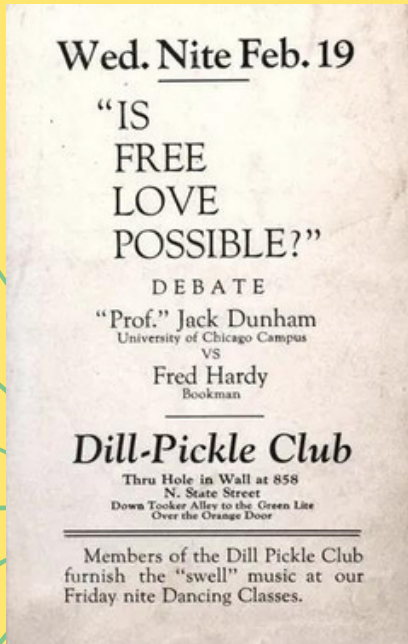
What these two maps together indicate is that our presence itself is not sufficient for being recognized and valued for who we are, but that we are indeed many, and we are everywhere.



LGBTQ HISTORY CORNER:

Towertown and Chicago's Pansy Craze

Arnold Aprill
Aging Services Case Manager



Dill Pickle Club flyer, 1919.



Winter in Towertown, 1917.

Early LGBTQ neighborhoods, or “gayborhoods”, emerged from bohemian enclaves where fledgling gay culture could thrive away from a homophobic mainstream society. These gayborhoods initially provided a degree of protection from police harassment through safety in numbers. Studies show that LGBTQ people who reside in these areas have lower rates of depression and higher level of self-esteem ([Weinke et al. 2021](#)).

Chicago's first gayborhood was a bohemian area called Towertown. Lacking precise boundaries, the district took its name from the Water Tower that stood to its north and east on Michigan Avenue. An art colony took root in the area when Anna and Lambert Tree built Tree Studios to tempt artists to stay in Chicago after the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition ([ChicagoHistory.org](#)). The concentration of artists, writers, and poets attracted bookshops and coffeehouses, the most famous of which was the Dill Pickle Club. Soapbox orators gathered in Bughouse Square to debate the issues of the day. Gays, lesbians, and experimenters in free love took refuge among Towertown's radicals. By the mid-1920s, rising property values driven by the luxury shopping district on nearby Michigan Avenue were pricing out many of the artists. Towertown became a tourist attraction, further alienating its bohemian denizens. By the Great Depression, the art colony had dispersed. However, the Pansy Craze of the early 1930's continued to draw queer Chicagoans to the nightlife of Towertown where there were reportedly 35 “pansy clubs” by 1930 and Diamond Lil's at 909 N. Rush St. was “packed so tightly with partying gays that people were turned away” ([Chicago Magazine](#)).

Towertown and the Pansy Craze were thoroughly documented by Ernest W. Burgess, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago and an early researcher of homosexuality. Burgess, who pioneered the “Chicago school” of urban sociology, instructed dozens of students to take notes at nightclubs, interview gay men and women, and write term papers on their findings. The results of their work are catalogued in the Special Collections vaults at UC's Regenstein Library. Thanks in part to Burgess and his students, Chicago has been at the forefront of research into gay history ([Chicago Magazine](#)).

Green Veggie Bowl with Chicken & Lemon-Tahini Dressing

DIABETES FRIENDLY

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup tahini
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 sliced garlic cloves
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt
- 1 cup green beans
- 1 small broccoli crown
- 1/4 cup cold water plus 2 tbsp, divided
- 4 (4 oz) chicken cutlets, trimmed
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1/2 large red onion, sliced
- 4 cups thinly sliced kale
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro



Nutrition Facts:

Calories = 452
Fat = 18g
Carbs = 42g
Protein = 35g

Source: [EatingWell.com](https://www.eatingwell.com)



Green Veggie Bowl with Chicken & Lemon-Tahini Dressing

DIABETES FRIENDLY

Directions:

1. Whisk tahini and 1/4 cup water in a small bowl until smooth. Add lemon juice, minced garlic, cumin and 1/4 tsp salt and whisk to combine.
2. Trim green beans and cut in half. Break broccoli into florets. Measure 1 cup (reserve the rest for another use).
3. Season chicken with the remaining 1/4 tsp salt and pepper. Heat 1 tsp oil in a large skillet or pan over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook until an instant-read thermometer registers 160 degrees F, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer to a clean cutting board and tent with foil to keep warm.
4. Wipe out the pan and add the remaining 1 tbsp oil. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Add sliced garlic and cook for 30 seconds, then add the broccoli and green beans. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Stir in kale and add the remaining 2 tbsp water. Cover and steam until the vegetables are tender-crisp, 1 to 2 minutes.
5. Slice the chicken.
6. To serve, divide rice and the vegetables along 4 bowls and top with the chicken. Drizzle with the reserved dressing and sprinkle with cilantro.