

outword

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Letters

Seeking Friends and Family Picnic Day Planners

The Sacramento LGBT Community Center ends each summer with its Friends & Family Picnic Day: a day to celebrate community, family, and enjoy an afternoon barbeque complete with sports and activities for kids and adults as well as an information and resource fair!

This year's event is scheduled for September 6, and the Center is currently seeking applicants who are interested in helping to plan the 2014 Friends & Family Picnic Day.

If you are interested in helping put on this event, please fill out a volunteer application on the Center's website SacCenter.org or email our Operations Manager at felicia@saccenter.org.

Get Ready to be Social at PFLAG's Ice Cream Social

With four years of experience under their belts, the PFLAG volunteers know how to make a scrumptious banana split. But did you know they can also make a root beer float disappear?



Some of the fun at PFLAG's Ice Cream Social 2013.

How do you make a root beer float disappear? You serve it up to one of the thirsty patrons at the Fifth Annual PFLAG Ice Cream Social on Sunday, **June 8 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Taylor's Kitchen**, next door to Taylor's Market, located at 2900 Freeport Blvd.

The main attraction at this year's social will be the best ice cream you may have ever tasted, made by the artisans of Petaluma based Clover Stornetta Farms, where their 17 flavors of ice cream are churned with pure, wholesome rBST and antibiotic-free milk and cream sourced from their local family farms.

You gotta have toppings though – and of course bananas – and those will be coming directly from the farm fresh produce section of Taylor's Market, as well as from their wide selection of ice cream toppings and syrups. Yum!

Now, about those disappearing root beer floats, the reason they disappear so fast is that they are made with Sacramento's River City Root Beer. Specifically made by Janet

Volunteer at Sacramento Pride 2014—Our 30th Anniversary of Capital Pride

Sacramento Pride depends on a small army of volunteers to make a successful event year after year.

The Pride Parade & Festival is produced by and supports the programs and services of the Sacramento LGBT Community Center year-round.

Volunteering is a great way for you to give back to your community and make new friends. This year's event will take place June 14, and roughly 500 volunteer positions need to be filled.

Volunteers get FREE admission to the Pride Festival and a free T-shirt.

It's a great way to give back to your community. To learn how you can help, visit www.sacramentopride.org.



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Real Poets Lets At-Risk Youth Write it Out *by Jovi Radtke*

Fresh off the end of National Poetry Month, Real Poets has just started their fourth term of helping at risk youth in this one-on-one poetry project that pairs trained volunteer poet mentors with young people who have the desire to write about the challenges in their lives.

The young people in this fourth term have gone through more than the average teenage existential crisis. They have survived a multitude of traumatic events and the ultimate hope of Real Poets is that they'll feel comfortable enough to write it out with the end result being a body of work they can be proud of.

Alex Russell, a Seattle transplant who moved to Sacramento to attend the Graduate Creative Writing Program at UC Davis in 2010, formed Real Poets in January 2013. While in Seattle, Alex spent a year working with Seattle Juvenile Detention with the Pongo Teen Writing Project, where he learned the writing methods now used for Real Poets.

"The majority of kids in Detention have experienced major traumas in their lives, and the process we use is incredibly effective at giving them a tool to express them, often for the first time," says Russell. "In the process, I became a better poet and I think a better person for doing the work."

Since starting the program in Sacramento, Real Poets has worked with about 40 kids, producing more than 300 original poems. Each poet mentor works almost exclusively one-on-one with a youth to help guide him or her through the writing process, while also letting each kid know that what he or she has to say is important.

The youth poets range in age from seven to 22, with an expected 20 kids in attendance for the current term. Each young writer is presented with the opportunity to have his or her works published in an anthology at the end of every term, with another opportunity to share their poems out loud during each anthology's book release party.

As the founder of Real Poets, Russell is

fully invested in both working with the kids and ensuring that each poet mentor receives the proper training before being paired with their young writer. "Our primary goal is to help as many kids as possible express the kind of hurt and other negative emotions that can do more damage the longer they remain unexpressed," says Russell. "We teach them a skill they take with them."

"Our primary goal is to help as many kids as possible..."

- Alex Russell

Katie McCleary from 916 Ink, Bob Stanley from the Sacramento Poetry Center and Diana White, the Director at Turning Point, were all pivotal to the inception of Real Poets, and helped to bring Alex's vision to fruition. Real Poets is hosted by the non-profit mental health organization, Turning Point Community Programs and is co-sponsored by 916 Ink and the Sacramento Poetry Center, and continues to be mentored by Pongo Teen Writing Project founder, Richard Gold.

Real Poets is always looking for help and input from the community. Check out RealPoets.org for more information on how to get involved, to read some of the youth poets' poems, and to check out the published anthologies.

Jovi Radtke is herself a real poet and spoken word artist and the newest member of the Outword team. She can be reached at jovi.radtke@gmail.com.

Sobelman & Hollinbeck Team Up for New CD



Sacramentans Graham Sobelman and Maggie Hollinbeck have recorded *Another Shade of Blue*, covering the entirety of Joni Mitchell's 1971 *Blue*. They are hosting a CD release party and concert on May 11 at the New Helvetia Theatre with live performances by Hollinbeck and special guests. Visit Grahamarama.com.

Briefly Put

Massachusetts Passes LGBT-Inclusive Anti-Bullying Law

Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick has signed into law a measure that will strengthen anti-bullying protections for LGBT students by requiring every school district to include specific protections in their bullying prevention plan recognizing frequently targeted groups, including LGBT youth.

The legislation will implement two key methods of tracking incidences of bullying: a student survey to be conducted every four years gathering information about school safety and climate, and a data collection and reporting mechanism allowing officials to better measure and evaluate the impact of anti-bullying efforts.

Massachusetts is the 17th state plus Washington, D.C. to enact an LGBT-inclusive anti-bullying law. The signing in Massachusetts comes just two weeks after Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton signed a similar anti-bullying measure into law.

Alaska Supreme Court Rules That State Tax Law Treats Same-Sex Families Unfairly

The Alaska Supreme Court has ruled that the state unconstitutionally discriminates against same-sex couples by denying them equal access to a property tax exemption for senior citizens and disabled veterans.

The rules were challenged by the ACLU of Alaska on behalf of three couples who were denied full access to a \$150,000 property tax exemption that Alaska makes available to opposite-sex married couples.

The lead plaintiffs, Julie Schmidt, 71, and Gayle Schuh, 66, have been partners for 36 years, and moved to Alaska from Illinois after retiring from careers in education.

Today, the 2014 Gay Games is announcing that Lance Bass, Broadway actress Andrea McArdle and the Pointer Sisters will headline the Games' Opening Ceremony on Aug. 9 at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland.

Gay Games Opening Ceremony Performers Announced

The 2014 Gay Games have announced that Lance Bass, Broadway actress Andrea McArdle and the Pointer Sisters will headline the Games' Opening Ceremony on Aug. 9 at Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland.

Bass, a versatile entertainer who rose to fame as a member of 'N Sync and is now a high-profile advocate in the gay community, *New York Times* bestselling author and Human Rights Campaign Visibility Role award winner, will be a celebrity guest in the 2.5-hour spectacular.

The ceremony will also feature a cast of more than 400 performers and a Parade of Athletes who are participating in the Games. www.gg9cle.com.

G&L Victory Fund Endorses 18 Out LGBT Political Candidates

The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund – the nation's largest resource for out LGBT individuals in politics – endorsed 18 candidates for public office, including two candidates from California.

"Victory is proud to announce another diverse slate of candidates for public office this month," said Chuck Wolfe, chief operating officer at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund. "These 18 candidates represent each region of the United States and will better increase LGBT public official representation. For the 2014 cycle, Victory has endorsed 110 out LGBT candidates and we expect to endorse more than 200 out LGBT candidates this year."

Endorsed California candidates are David Campos, Candidate for State Assembly; and Susan Guinn, Candidate for County Assessor of San Diego County. www.VictoryFund.org.

CEA Announces Support for Log Cabin Republicans

The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) has announced its financial support of Log Cabin Republicans, becoming the first trade association to formally support the country's original and largest organization representing gay conservatives and allies who support fairness, freedom and equality for all Americans.

"I'm very proud of CEA's groundbreaking financial support for the Log Cabin Republicans, a decision welcomed by both our Executive Board and members of our staff," said Gary Shapiro, president and CEO, CEA. "Our visible announcement proves that trade associations want lawmakers and policies that recognize the economic value of hiring the best and brightest minds, regardless of sexual orientation."

CEA offers equal opportunity in all aspects of employment without consideration as to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation.

DOE Issues Guidance Clarifying Title IX Protections for Transgender Students

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in the U.S. Department of Education has issued official guidance which makes clear that transgender students are protected from discrimination under Title IX.

"Title IX's sex discrimination prohibition extends to claims of discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity and OCR accepts such complaints for investigation."

The statement is part of broader guidance on sexual violence and the responsibility that schools have to protect all students. The Department has brought enforcement actions against school districts in the past on behalf of transgender students, but had not previously made such a proactive public statement about their commitment.

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Community Profile

by Bonnie Osborn

New SMUD CEO Arlen Orchard Tasked with Making Utility "Future-Ready"

After 24 years with SMUD and 13 years as general counsel, Arlen Orchard recently took the helm as CEO of the nation's sixth largest customer-owned utility. Succeeding John DiStassio, and Jan Schori before him, Orchard is the third CEO in a row to come up from within SMUD ranks, and the first openly gay man to hold the CEO position.

Just four days into his new job, Orchard talked to *Outword* about preparing for technology-driven changes in the utility industry, and about SMUD's inclusive work environment.

"I don't want to be viewed as the gay CEO, but as the CEO who happens to be gay," Orchard says. "I am very proud of being a gay man. It defines me, and it defines my relationship with my partner of 18 years.

"I am cognizant of the fact there are not a lot of gay CEOs in the Sacramento region. I'm cognizant of the fact that this is a very visible role for a gay man in this community, but at the same time I am CEO of an organization that serves the entire community."

He recalls his early days working at SMUD. "I didn't tell many people I was gay, but I had a great set of colleagues in the legal department who were going to hook me up with a nice woman. Finally I said, I can't do this anymore, I can't keep coming up with excuses. When I finally told my colleagues I was gay, they were incredibly supportive, and that started my journey being out at the organization. I have never had any negative reactions. I am sure there was gossip about it early on, but I have never found it to be an impediment to my career here."

Orchard, who grew up in Reno, after a stint working in Nevada politics, wound up in the Sacramento area as a UC Davis graduate student, where he attended the MBA program for a year and earned his law degree. "By the time I got through law school I had friends here and had really just come to love this community so much. Sacramento has such potential." He worked as a lawyer at Downey Brand in Sacramento before joining the SMUD legal department in April 1990.

Orchard sees the impending development of the downtown arena project as a realization of the region's potential in which SMUD will play an important role. As both one of the region's largest employers and a community-owned, not-for-profit organization, "SMUD kind of sits in a unique situation," Orchard says.

"Our entire focus is to ensure we deliver value to the customers and the community we serve.

"The new arena is an example of that. We



Arlen Orchard

have a whole SWAT team devoted to the arena project that is working with the city, the Kings, the arena design team and the construction company. We want to make sure there is not a Super Bowl-type event," Orchard says, referring to the 30-minute blackout that interrupted Super Bowl XLVII at the New Orleans Superdome. "We have to figure out how to make the power supply very, very reliable, with redundancy built-in, but still keep in mind we have to build an arena that is cost-effective, energy-efficient and sustainable."

Among the challenges SMUD will face in coming years is the necessity of becoming "future-ready," and adapting its business model to the changes brought about by new technologies like solar and other alternative energy sources, distributed power generation, "smart" grids and the data explosion.

SMUD has long had a goal of being a leader in "public power" – the term for community-owned utilities – and has been known for having the lowest rates in the state, and its environmental responsibility, innovative customer programs and inclusion of small businesses in its contracting process.

"But what has made us successful in the

ORCHARD

continues on page 18

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Rainbow Chamber Membership Is a Smart Investment in Your Business Success

by Bonnie Osborn

If you are a small business owner or professional, or are simply interested in expanding your business and professional network, the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce has a deal for you!

Between now and July 31, everyone who joins as a new member, renews their existing membership, or refers a new Chamber member will be entered for a chance to win one of several luxury prizes, including a Las Vegas vacation.

The Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce is a regional chamber providing networking, educational programs, advocacy and support for LGBT business owners and professionals and allies. Members have access to a variety of resources, from free monthly networking mixers, held at a different member venue on the third Tuesday of each month, to professional development workshops and events cohosted with other area business organizations; to local and national contracting opportunities – all focused on helping our members succeed.

Aligned with the Chamber, the non-partisan RainbowPAC gives members a voice in the political leadership and policies of the regional and state, and the non-profit Rainbow Chamber Foundation provides youth scholarships and philanthropic support to non-profit organizations serving LGBT and supportive youth.

State Farm Insurance agent Stephanie Slagel, a long-time Chamber member and 2013 Chamber Business Leader of the Year, says her membership in Rainbow Chamber has benefited her both personally and professionally. "The monthly mixers and the additional business seminars have provided

perfect opportunities to meet with other business owners and learn new ideas to grow my business," Slagel says. "I have made so many friends as well as new clients, which would not have happened if it had not been for my membership with the Rainbow Chamber."

Photo Artist Monica Neumann Lunardi says Chamber membership has been a boost to her business. "I have received many calls from same-sex couples to be their photographer for their weddings," she says. "My business is booming!"

"The Sacramento Rainbow Chamber has connected my business to the LGBTQ world in ways I never imagined," says former board member Jason Russell of Fritz Russell, CPAs. "Not only am I a proud member, my business and personal lives have been enriched through connections made at and within the Chamber."

Outword Magazine Publisher Fred Palmer, a founding Chamber member and former board president, said joining the Chamber helps businesses access the LGBT market. "The gay dollar is strong, representing some \$8.5 billion in buying power nationwide," Palmer says. "Becoming a Rainbow Chamber member creates opportunities to be a part of a strong network of business leaders and decision-makers."

For more information about how the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber can benefit your business, visit www.rainbowchamber.com.

Sacramento's Pacific Rim Festival Turns 22

In 1993, the first Pacific Rim Street Fest was presented in Old Sacramento by the restaurateur, Frank Fat, and community groups. With his ever-optimistic spirit, Fat was able to create a coalition of community leaders and succeed in seeing his dream of a street festival come to pass.

Since then, the festival has displayed the richness and diversity of many Pacific Rim cultures through entertainment, art, food and cultural programs.

The event enhances the community's knowledge of Asian/Pacific Island cultures amid a fun and positive environment.

The 22nd Annual Pacific Rim Street Fest is scheduled for Sunday, May 18, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. in Old Sacramento and Sacramento Downtown Plaza. Please visit www.pacificrimstreetfest.com.



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Marriage Equality Brings Changes in Taxes *by Pamela Jones*

Did you get married this year? Or were you married in 2008 and your marriage has only been recognized since June 26, 2013? Congratulations! Wedded bliss, with the same rights and responsibilities as all other married persons in this county is yours.

The good news for California married same-sex couples is that filing federal and state tax returns became a lot easier. We no longer have to file two single federal returns and a dummy joint federal return in order to prepare our joint state return. Other than the obvious economies of scale with filing only one federal return, how did filing jointly affect you and your partner?

The joy of your right to be married may have been dampened a bit when you filed your joint federal income tax return for the 2013 tax year if you and your partner were subjected to the "marriage penalty." A couple suffers a "marriage penalty" if its partners pay more income tax as a married couple than they would have as two single individuals. This generally occurs when both spouses are high earners. One Treasury official estimated that approximately half of married same-sex couples would benefit from filing as married, and half would not.

The marriage penalty arises from the differences in threshold levels and floors that are not uniformly applied to all filing statuses. Several tax benefits depend on floor levels of adjusted gross income, including the medical expense deduction, the casualty loss deduction and miscellaneous itemized

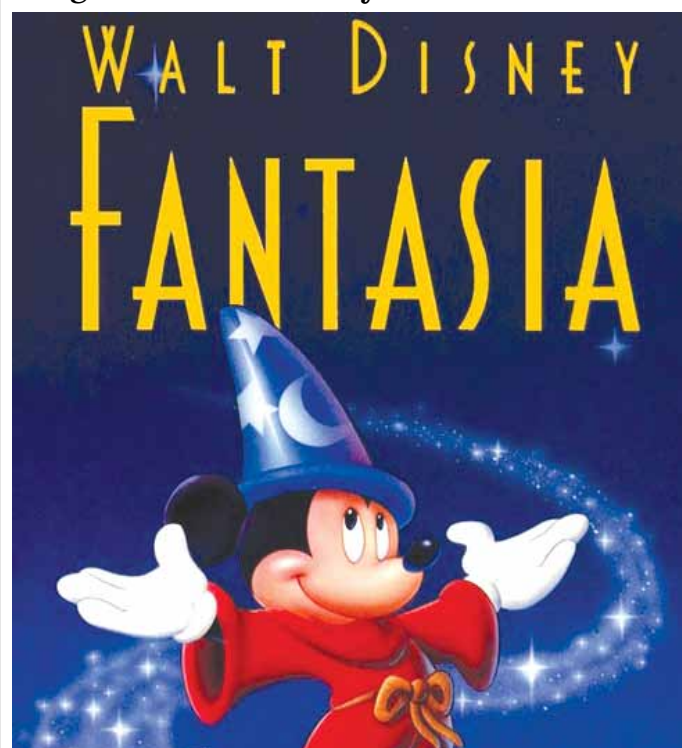
deductions. The use of capitol losses to offset ordinary income is limited to \$3,000 per return, regardless of whether the return is single or married. For some taxpayers, an adjusted gross income above certain thresholds reduces tax benefits. Reductions in itemized deductions and personal exemptions are most common in higher-income individuals. Things could be worse.

This article continues online with a look at **Taxes and the Decision to Marry; What About Registered Domestic Partners; and What are Some Other Financial Benefits of Marriage** at www.OutwordMagazine.com. You can also find a set of fact sheets published by a prominent group of LGBT organizations following the fall of DOMA at the National Center for Lesbian Rights website, www.nclrights.org.

Pamela Jones is a Sacramento attorney with a law office that specializes in estate planning, probate, trust and estate litigation, tax disputes and nonprofits and small businesses. She is Treasurer of the Sacramento Lawyers for the Equality of Gays and Lesbians (SacLEGAL). Pam can be reached at 916-261-0628, pam@pamjoneslaw.com or www.pamjoneslaw.com.

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KAZAKY, dubbed “Boys In Heels” by *The New York Times* because of their androgynous look and signature stiletto heels, is a Ukrainian synthpop boy band, with three studio albums and nine singles to their credit. This year they will be hitting the U.S. Pride circuit, sadly not Sacramento, sharing their music and message. Give them a listen at youtube.com/kazakyofficial.

White Party Palm Springs Draws 30,000 Sun Worshippers



With an influx of more than 30,000 attendees over the course of the weekend, Jeffrey Sanker’s annual White Party in Palm Springs celebrated its 25th anniversary with pool parties, events and performances: eight parties in 72 hours! This year’s talent included Ariana Grande, Deborah Cox, G.R.L., Che’Nelle and Bleona, along with a Sunday T-Dance fireworks display choreographed to music. WPPS 2015 will take place April 24 -27, so start working on that tan. For more information and to see more photos, visit JeffreySanker.com.





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Travel

The Presidio Inn Offers a Calm Retreat Amid the Hustle of San Francisco

story and photos by Adrian Sanchez

These days we are all trying to do more staycations (stay + vacation = staycation), and this weekend my partner and I ventured to do one at the historic Presidio in San Francisco.

The recently renovated Inn at the Presidio (innatthepresidio.com), was built in 1903 as the Bachelor Officer's Quarters, providing housing for single men and those separated from their families. It was later christened in honor of General John Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Force during World War I.

A book on my night table with pictures of the Presidio dating back to 1876 gave a glimpse of what the base looked like then, and throughout its history as a U.S. military

and top level of the Inn, and it was extremely well appointed, with a sit-down area as you walk in (which later in the evening helped to entertain six people) and a connecting room where a king-size bed invited us.

Both sides of the suite have large windows and from our living area we could glimpse the Golden Gate bridge, while from the other side we had views of the majestic trees in the back of the property.

Saturday was the day to explore the many

saw a different angle of the bridge, along with the Palace of Fine Arts, Crissy Field, and the Bay itself, filled with sailboats, fishing boats and large cargo vessels.

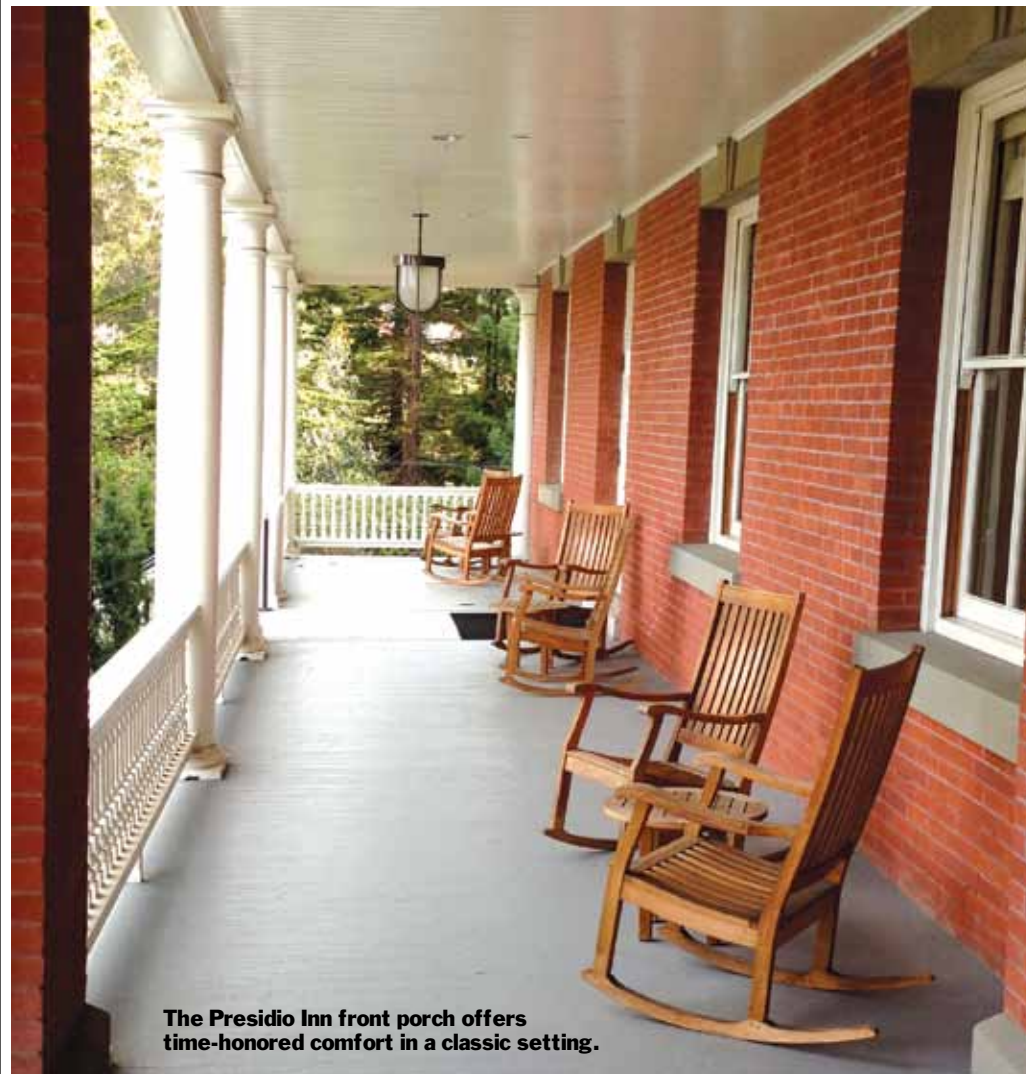
There are so many things to do at The Presidio and what I like the best about it is how the present mingles with past. There is



so much history here, chronicling so many of our nation's wars, but also serving as a remembrance of what a great country we live in and the many brave men and women that have made this a wonderful place to live in.

So next time you plan a trip to the city, check out The Inn at The Presidio, its Social Club Restaurant and Walt Disney Family Museum. Most of all, walk and hike around the area. It was a true "staycation" where we felt like tourists for a weekend in our own city.

Adrian Sanchez is a passionate travel blogger that spends most of his trips in Northern California, U.S., Mexico and Europe. For more about him, visit his blog triponmesf.blogspot.com. He can be reached at adsanchez77@gmail.com.



The Presidio Inn front porch offers time-honored comfort in a classic setting.

base. Things have certainly changed.

As soon as we checked in we felt away from home, nestled in the middle of the Presidio with tall trees surrounding the property and views of the Bay and Alcatraz. This didn't feel like a hotel to us, but more like staying at someone's house on a beautiful piece of land.

The simple front desk was right in front of the building's very cozy lobby. There are beautiful hardwood floors throughout the building, including many of the rooms and hallways. It felt very personal, no bellboys, no help, just a receptionist.

Then we went to our suite on the third

historic buildings lined up and down the street, many of them in the process of being revamped. With hiking trails going in different directions, we felt we were in the countryside, miles from the city.

There are many attractions located in the Park, including the Walt Disney Family Museum, historic buildings with art exhibits and shops and the offices of LucasFilms in the newly developed Letterman District.

There are just a few restaurant options in the area, but they are very good.

Did I mention that the Presidio Park has 100+ views of the Golden Gate Bridge? Seriously! Every time we turned around we

Neon Hitch to Headline Sacramento Pride

Fresh from playing Austin-based South-by-Southwest (SXSW) Music and Film Festival, the British-born bohemian Neon Hitch will be swinging her way west to perform on the main stage of this year's Sacramento Pride.



This whiskey-drinking (from a teacup), Cadillac-loving singer and songwriter, is not your typical pop recording artist. Her (real) name alone hints at the direction of her

destiny. With unique, jazz-infected vocals and gypsy-pop swag fused with an urban edge, it's hard not to stop and take notice of her bold, brash persona and singing.

Once flat mates with Amy Winehouse, Hitch cites Marilyn Monroe, Ray Charles, Carmen Miranda and Billie Holiday as her influences. Lyrically, the theme of worldly wanderings weighs heavily on her songwriting and she infuses it passionately into her writing. "Home is where I lay my headscarf," she says.

Hitch began her recording career in 2010 with singles "Get Over U," "Silly Girl," "Bad Dog" and "Poisoned with Love," which was featured in the film *Teen Wolf* and the compilation album *Now That's What I call Music! 40*.

Hitch's newest work, *Happy Neon EP*, is a collaboration with Grammy-nominated producer Happy Perez, and is turning heads on dance floors across Europe and the U.S.

She also has a new mixtape, *301 to Paradise*, that is an audio-movie collaboration with Grammy-nominated production duo Kinetics & One Love (Eminem, Nicki Minaj, B.O.B). You can download it at NeonHitch.net/splash.

Early this year, she announced the long-awaited release of her yet unnamed debut album in 2014 – maybe if we are lucky we can get a preview of some of the upcoming songs at Pride.

To get the latest updates on Sacramento Pride and Parade, visit SacramentoPride.org. To keep up with Neon Hitch, visit her page at Facebook.com/NeonHitchMusic.

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Entertainment

Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? Not SacImpulse

by Chris Narloch

Three off-beat local productions aim to give Sacramento theater fans a taste of the off-Broadway experience with their non-traditional takes on comedy, drama and the musical.

Orlando

SacImpulse opens its second season with Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, in an adaption by Sarah Ruhl.

Orlando is your typical Elizabethan Man: a favorite of the Queen, madly in love with a Russian Princess, fleeing an Archduchess and waking up one day in Constantinople to find he has become, of all things, a woman.

She survives the 19th and 20th centuries grappling with what it means to live fully in the present, in our own skin, in our own gender, and in our own time.

Don't miss this classic work, which has been called "the longest love letter in the history of the English language."

Directed by Gail Darte, *Orlando* stars the

and epiphanies.

Gordo worries that he may not live to complete his life's work. Finn wrote many of the songs soon after his own release from the hospital during a serious illness, and the show is a paean to the healing power of art.

A New Brain plays through May 18 at The Grange Performing Arts Center on V Street in Sacramento. For more information, please visit www.GreenValleyTheatre.com.

Scapino!

They should have called it "Scapino! Night Fever" - then again, maybe not - as the fine folks at Sacramento City College give their current offering, *Scapino!* a disco-infused spin.

That's an inspired idea, given that Frank



Melinda Parrett
stars in the
SacImpulse
production of
Orlando.

multi-talented Melinda Parrett as Orlando, with Kayla Berghoff, Eason Donner, Benjamin T. Ismail and Sean Nill.

Orlando runs May 8-17 at the New Helvetia Theatre in Sacramento. Please visit www.sacimpulse.com.

A New Brain

Another adventurous local theater troupe, Green Valley Theatre Company, is currently offering a production of a rarely seen musical by William Finn (*Falsettos*) and James Lapine (*Into The Woods*).

Gordo Schwinn is a struggling composer with a big problem: his brain. When he passes out during a lunch meeting with his agent, Rhoda, his life is turned into a running fever dream of imaginings, visions

Dunlop and Jim Dale's liberal adaptation of a work by Moliere is already pretty wacky. Add disco music, and we're talking "off the charts" wacky.

I haven't seen their production yet, but I can't wait to check out this take on the tried and true tale of a sly servant who attempts to cheat two old men out of their money, all in the name of love.

Slapstick and burlesque reign in this work, which is not technically a musical but contains songs that may or may not have much to do with the plot.

Scapino! plays through May 18 at the Art Court Theatre, on the campus of Sacramento City College. Call (916) 558-2111.

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Entertainment

Spider-Man, The Railway Man and The Other Woman

by Chris Narloch

“The Amazing Spider-Man 2” isn’t the only movie currently in theaters although given the hype surrounding that blockbuster you might think so.

If superheroes in spandex aren’t your cup of tea, check out one of the smaller films reviewed below, which if you’re lucky might be playing on a screen not occupied by Peter Parker.

The Amazing Spider-Man 2

There’s a shocking twist at the end of the new *Spider-Man* movie, but I am forbidden to disclose it or

– but the film is funny, romantic and action-packed.

Real-life lovers Andrew Garfield (Spidey) and Emma Stone (Gwen) bring the necessary romantic heat – not surprisingly, they have incredible chemistry – and Jamie Foxx and Dane DeHaan acquit themselves well as the villains.

The Railway Man

If this fact-based drama is still playing at the Tower (or anywhere else) by the time you read this, go see it.

Colin Firth gives an excellent performance as Eric Lomax, a former British Army officer who is tormented by his past as a prisoner of war at a Japanese labor camp during World War II.

Decades later, Lomax discovers that the Japanese interpreter who he blames for his suffering is still alive, and he realizes he must track down the man and confront him.



the movie studio will use its “spidey” venom to terminate me.

(If you have access to the inter-net, you probably already know what I’m talking about since the movie opened in Europe two weeks before its U.S. opening.)

I’m not sure why other countries got to see this movie before the home audience, but it undoubtedly has something to do with box office strategy and maximizing profits.

Anyway, I don’t personally think the twist was a good idea – it attempts to turn a popcorn movie into a tragedy – but other than that revelation, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* is a successful sequel to the recent reboot of this seemingly indestructible film franchise.

Director Marc Webb keeps things rolling along – even though the movie, like the recent *Captain America* sequel, is a tad too long

The Other Woman

Elsewhere at the multiplex, things are looking pretty grim with this half-baked revenge comedy that finds three women getting even with their philandering man.

Leslie Mann overacts shamelessly, Kate Upton is bland, and Cameron Diaz is not remotely believable as a high-powered lawyer. In fact, all three of them irritated me to the extent that I started rooting for their rotten boyfriend/husband, which was definitely not the idea.

Leave it to the combustible Nicki Minaj to steal every one of her scenes as Diaz’s tart-tongued assistant. If Minaj had played one of the wronged women, then *The Other Woman* might have really set off some fireworks.

I won’t spoil what happens next, but the movie is an unusually effective and stirring true tale. A lovely Nicole Kidman is also outstanding as Lomax’s patient, supportive wife.

Le Week-End

Jim Broadbent and Lindsay Duncan are very funny in this English film about an older British couple on holiday in Paris trying to save their crumbling marriage.

The movie is halfway between *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and those *Before Sunrise/Sunset/Midnight* movies that starred the wonderful pair of Julie Delpy and Ethan Hawke.

In real life, watching couples fight can be cringe inducing, but at the movies, when the dialogue is sharp and the actors are terrific – as they are here – family feuds can be a great guilty pleasure. At the Tower.

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Orange Is The New Black on DVD - Plus Stranger By The Lake Shocks

If Disney movies and *Downton Abbey* are more your cup of tea, you'll want to steer clear of the DVD recommendations in this article. If you want to take a walk on the wild side, then read on and check out these two terrifically twisted tales.

Orange Is The New Black

If you're not watching *Orange Is The New Black*, you should be. Or rather, you should rent or buy the Season One DVD (which comes out on May 13) so that you'll be ready when Season Two begins on June 6.

One of the coolest new shows around, *Orange* is a Netflix original series that premiered in July of 2013. A comic drama created by Jenji Kohan (*Weeds*), the show is based on Piper Kerman's memoir, *Orange Is The New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison*.

The series revolves around Piper Chapman (Taylor Schilling), a bisexual woman living in New York City who is sentenced to 15 months in a women's federal prison for transporting a suitcase full of drug money to her former girlfriend, Alex Vause (Laura Prepon), who is an international drug smuggler.

While in prison, Piper is reunited with Alex, and they re-examine their relationship and deal with their fellow inmates, who

include a transgender woman actually played by a transgendered, African-American actress, Laverne Cox.

Adding to the show's cool credentials, the newly-"out" Jodie Foster directed the third episode of the first season, and the series has a theme song performed by the indie rock songstress, Regina Spektor.

The offbeat show also features an eclectic cast that includes Jason Biggs as Piper's boyfriend and Kate Mulgrew as a prison chef with ties to the Russian mob.

Stranger By The Lake

If you have a taste for the bizarre, check out this beyond-edgy French film about a murder that occurs at a gay cruising spot. It's one of the wildest foreign films to come down the pike in ages.

Directed by Alain Guiraudie, the critically acclaimed drama centers on a picturesque lakeside cruising area in the French countryside where gay men go to lose their clothes and their inhibitions.

More than one character loses his life



there as well, and the killer turns out to be one of our own. Imagine the Al Pacino thriller *Cruising* set entirely in nature, and you'll have some idea of the shocks in store for you in *Stranger By The Lake*.

Only this movie is not a thriller or an exploitation film, although it does contain graphic gay sex that was not simulated. Rather, the movie is a fascinating depiction

of public sexual addiction, obsession and self-destruction that is sure to divide viewers.

Some people are going to be appalled by the movie's eye-popping sex scenes, and others will be in awe of its ambition and daring.

I'm still not sure exactly how I feel about *Stranger By The Lake*, but I'm glad that somebody had the balls to make it.

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Seek and Find by Jeremy Sanders

Director Eric Henry's debut film, *Seek*, centers on Evan, a young, gay newspaper writer who attempts to shake off a lost love by taking on an assignment profiling Hunter, an alluring gay club promoter.

Around the guys are a host of other twenty-something urbanites, all longing for the same thing – approval. Whether it's by the in-crowd, the hottie across the bar or in the industry they work, all strive for something greater, failing to appreciate what they already have.

The film is currently touring the LGBT film festival circuit and has been gaining attention for being different from the usual gay fare. *Seek* doesn't portray gays as victims, nor does it rely on hard-bodied men in thongs to get attention.

I recently was able to talk with the film's director, Eric Henry, about his honest look at life in the modern gay ghetto and our natural desire to be movin' on up.

Gawinski (Evan), I discovered through his work in various stage plays all over Toronto. With Matthew Ludwinski, I saw him in the movie, *Going Down in La La Land*. I knew it would be valuable to have at least one actor that most audiences already knew and I thought he would be perfect to play Jordan in the film.

Was it challenging to make a film centered around gay nightlife?

Surprisingly, no. Most nightclubs are only open on weekends or at night. So going in and shooting on a Tuesday morning is easy. All we had to have was someone unlock the door and turn on the club lights. We were also very lucky to have the support of local clubs and businesses. Toronto is a friendly city for film making, so we had no trouble



Evan (Adrian Shepherd-Gawinski) and Hunter (Ryan Fisher) meet at the docks in a scene from *Seek*.

What is it about gay nightlife that fascinates you?

I find it fascinating how some creative people can tap into what crowds want and create these parties and events that make a lot of money. Trying to figure out how and why one bar or club fails while another succeeds is a conversation I like having with friends.

***Seek* takes place in Toronto's gay village. Are all the world's gayborhoods essentially the same?**

If you pick up *Outword*, or any local gay magazine, you are going to see similar pictures of men in underwear, partying twinks, and drag queen divas, but the flavor of every city is different. Local talent, food, music, art and humor combine to shape the community. It is those differences that make visiting different cities enjoyable.

How did you cast the actors?

I first saw Ryan Fisher at a bar in Toronto but I was too nervous to talk to him. I wrote the character of Hunter with him in mind without ever meeting him. Adrian Shepherd-

shooting on the streets.

Do you worry straight viewers may not be able to connect with the film?

The characters of *Seek* all want to be a part of something and loved. They want to be accepted by the people around them. I think everyone from every walk of life can relate to that.

Do you worry about being pigeonholed as a gay director?

Not really. As I grow and develop in my film career, I have to trust that any style or artistry I demonstrate will be considered first before my sexual orientation.

What topics would you like to explore in future films?

I would really like to explore how the different sub groups of gay culture manage to co-exist with one another. I would also like to explore a gay relationship between two men who are together not because they want to be with one another, but because they want to be one another.

You can see the trailer for *Seek* at www.seekthefilm.com.

The Normal Heart Beats on HBO

by Chris Narloch

I don't know about you, but I will be glued to my television set on Sunday, May 25, when the long-awaited – and I mean really long-awaited – film version of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* debuts on HBO.

Along with Tony Kushner's masterpiece *Angels In America* (which was also made into an HBO film), *The Normal Heart* is one of a handful of great plays on the subject of HIV/AIDS crafted from a gay perspective.

The largely autobiographical 1985 drama was written by the activist/playwright Larry Kramer in response to the incompetence displayed by many politicians, drug companies, and some members of the medical community during the early days of the epidemic.

The openly gay writer/director Ryan Murphy (*Glee*, *American Horror Story*) has finally brought the play to the screen after numerous previous attempts to produce the work, by Barbra Streisand and others, fell through.

Murphy has assembled a starry cast for the new movie, and actor Matt Bomer reportedly lost some 40 pounds in order to show the ravages of AIDS on his character.

After seeing a friend succumb to a new disease killing gay men at the offices of Dr. Emma Brookner (Julia Roberts), Ned Weeks (Mark Ruffalo) seeks to organize more action to combat it, even as his bluntness threatens to alienate people around him, including his brother Ben (Alfred Molina), his lover Felix (Matt Bomer), and Bruce Niles (Taylor Kitsch), a closeted investment banker.

Jim Parsons, Jonathan Groff, and Joel Grey round out the impressive cast.

HBO has had a great run with gay material lately, including the award-winning biopic of Liberace (*Behind the Candelabra*) and the first season of its terrific San Francisco-set gay series, *Looking*.

I have not seen it yet, but my fingers are crossed in hopes of another HBO home run with *The Normal Heart*. Don't miss it.

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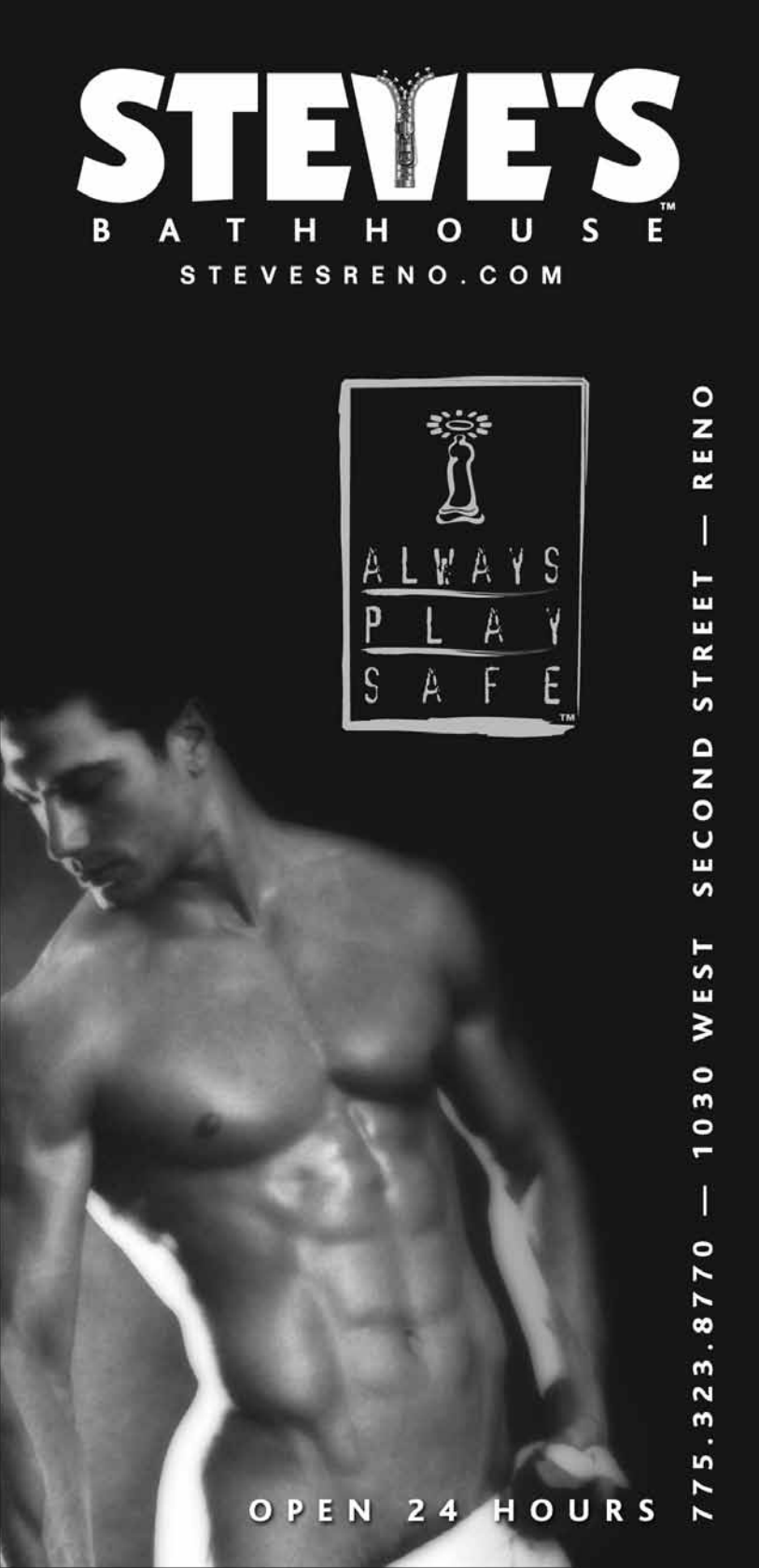
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Addicted To Summer

by Devon Myers

Addicted has always been a bit friskier than ES Collection, its older and more highbrow designer cousin. The brand's meant for guys who want a little edge infused in their swimwear at more affordable prices.

But this summer, Addicted is taking risqué to a whole new level with its latest campaign featuring the boys of Bel Ami.

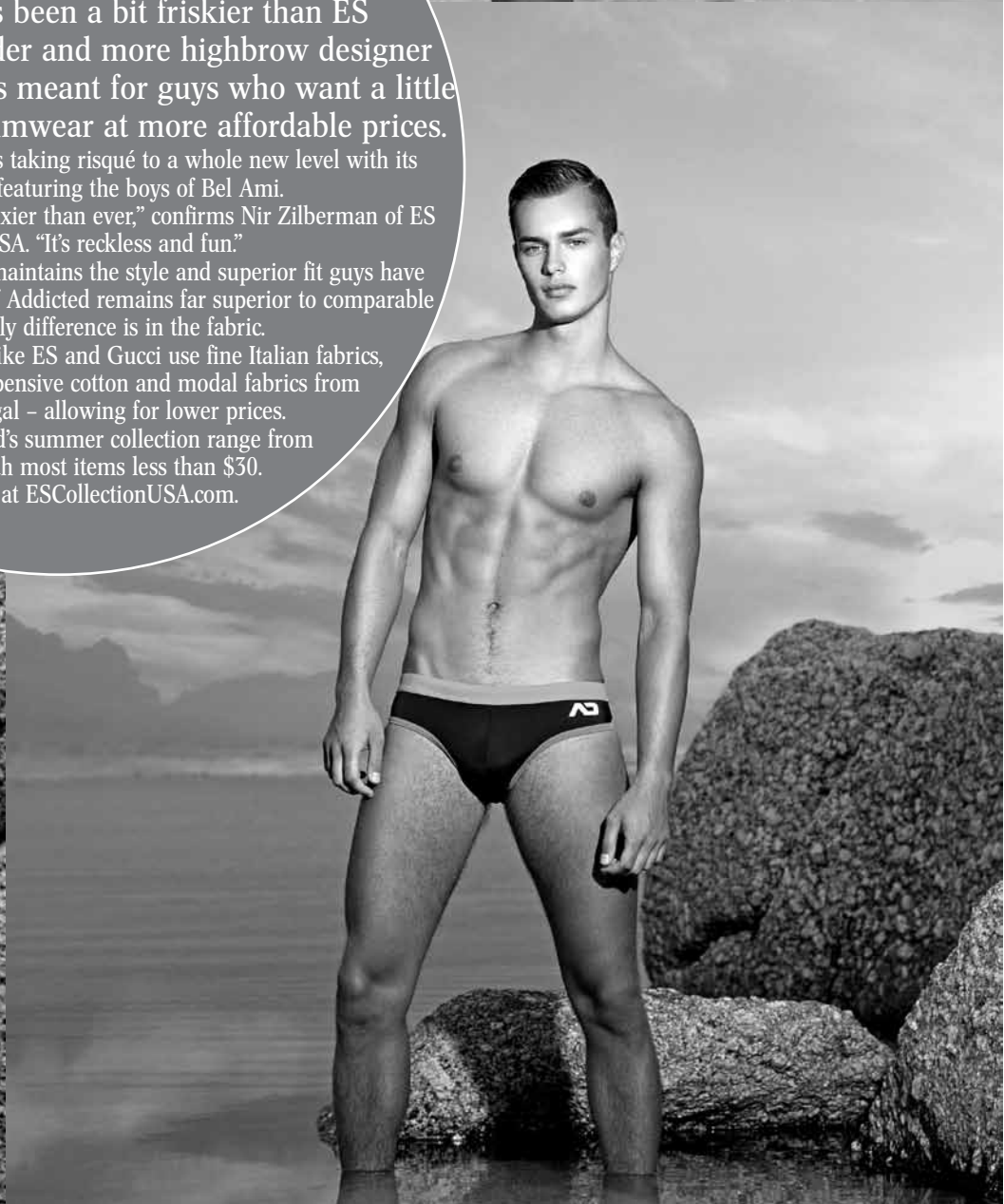
"This summer's collection is sexier than ever," confirms Nir Zilberman of ES Collection USA. "It's reckless and fun."

Still, the summer collection maintains the style and superior fit guys have come to love. Also, the quality of Addicted remains far superior to comparable brands. The only difference is in the fabric.

Where designer brands like ES and Gucci use fine Italian fabrics, Addicted exports less expensive cotton and modal fabrics from Spain and Portugal – allowing for lower prices.

Pieces in Addicted's summer collection range from \$18 to \$70, with most items less than \$30.

Available at ESCollectionUSA.com.



Ingenious *Speakeasy* Quietly Plays to Sold-Out SF Crowds

by Kevin M. Thomas

Every now and then, a unique theatrical experience comes to San Francisco, and it's usually from the creative mind of Nick A. Olivero. His talents are matchless as he has continued to think outside of the box in a city known for big Broadway shows on tour as well as alternative productions catering to a very gay audience.

Olivero's unorthodox staging of shows has gotten national attention. *His Little Shop of Horrors* was shut down because he strayed too far from what was permitted by the licensing company. Pity, as his production at the small Boxcar Theatre was superior to even the Broadway revival with a much higher ticket price.

His *Little Shop* literally took the show to the streets, as cast members would simply leave the theatre, taking the audience with them as they danced and performed among real street people in San Francisco's Tenderloin District.

Then it was Olivero who decided that *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* should have 8-12 people play the lead role, all being a fragment of the lead character which in its original form is almost a one person show. His *Hedwig* had been done cabaret style as well, in which the audience can order drinks and bar food while the show is happening around them.

Actors and performers came and went from *Hedwig* in the many months it played in San Francisco, among the talent was *The X Factor* finalist Jason Brock, who actually was in the show long before anyone on TV knew his name.

Both of those amazing productions are a mere taste of what was to come from Olivero. Presently, he is the creative force behind *The Speakeasy*, an original production whose title is exactly what you're getting.

With no advertising or promotions, *The Speakeasy* has been selling out for months. And, like a true speakeasy, the information is reaching its audience via word of mouth.

Almost every aspect of *The Speakeasy* takes you back to the late 1920s, where gangsters and gin were both on the DL. Taking full advantage of the prohibition era, buying online tickets to *The Speakeasy* will be one of your last touches with modern technology involving this show. Here's how it works. You order your tickets online and agree to show up at one of five designated times. Where is the theatre? Well, you won't find out until 5 p.m. the day before when you receive a text telling you where to meet a mysterious stranger to get further information. That's your last connection to modern times.

When you meet the stranger (perhaps with a yellow umbrella or maybe even a red hat), you are taken back to the 1920s in which period attire is desired. You are given a handwritten



The *Speakeasy*. Photo by Peter Liu.

note with directions to the speakeasy itself and who to see at the door and what password to utter.

Once inside, depending on interval time you pick, you might be put in a more vaudevillian setting to see some stage acts of song, dance and comedy. You may have friends that arrive at a different time and right now they may not be with you. But don't worry – at some point in the three hour event (which seems like 30 minutes) you are free to walk around the speakeasy seeing different shows, perhaps peaking into a dressing room in which two women are having a catfight or to go into the casino and gamble.

Yes, like a speakeasy, there is gambling going on. For a modest amount, you can buy lots of chips and play 21, poker, craps – but it's all in fun and part of the show (as gambling is not legal in San Francisco).

Sometimes, you might relax in the lounge and hear some piano playing, then, in a flash, there's a spotlight on the person next to you who starts to act out a scene. In the speakeasy, performers walk among us and you never know when someone might have a scene to act out.

The Speakeasy is the most original and thoroughly entertaining evening at the theatre. The sets, costumes and performers are all completely authentic and even if you're not

dressed the part, you feel transported back.

Like a real speakeasy, you're able to order cocktails throughout the show, many of them are specials for the era and the creative team has also concocted a clever way to keep track of you and your drinks as you roam from room to room.

The show is running indefinitely in San Francisco and blocks of tickets become available every few weeks so you can book perhaps up to six weeks in advance.

The Speakeasy plays Thursday through Saturday, with entry times starting at 7:30 p.m. The show sells out quickly so best to book as soon as block of tickets go on sale (or sometimes Thursdays have a few left overs).

Since they do take theatre seriously, they do ask for you to speak easy when walking through the many sections of the underground Speakeasy and don't be surprised if you are removed from the theatre if you use your cell phone.

Get more information at www.thespeakeasysf.com.

Kevin M. Thomas is a new contributor to *Outword* and is more popularly known as the GLBT arts blogger for *examiner.com*. Read his regular blog at: <http://www.examiner.com/glb-arts-in-san-francisco/kevin-m-thomas>.



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Orchard

continued from page 6

past is not going to make us successful in the future," Orchard says.

As is true of all utilities, he continues, "SMUD has always had the luxury of being a monopoly, it could take its time making decisions." But in the Internet age, customer expectations have changed. "Our customers don't compare us with PG&E or Roseville Electric; it's how does SMUD compare with Amazon, AT&T or Google?"

"Of course, I don't believe the best ideas are going to come from me. We have got real brain power among our employees, so my job is figuring out how to leverage that, so that the best ideas are surfacing in the organization. The Board has embraced this idea of change. We do a lot to educate and solicit their input on new strategies, but ultimately they own the vision. My job is to take their vision and operationalize it."

The robust collaboration between SMUD's

management team and a stable, experienced board of directors, many of whom have served for several terms, has been a source of strength in the company, Orchard says. In addition to its willingness to embrace technological change, the SMUD board also has been the source of progressive policies regarding green development, supplier diversity and an inclusive work environment.

"For me that has always been one of the more fulfilling things about working at SMUD," Orchard says. "It's not often you have the opportunity to work where your own values are so closely aligned with the organization's values. It's really easy to come to work and be proud that you're doing something you truly believe in."

"I think I have the best job in public power," he says. "I think some of my industry colleagues would agree."

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