

outword

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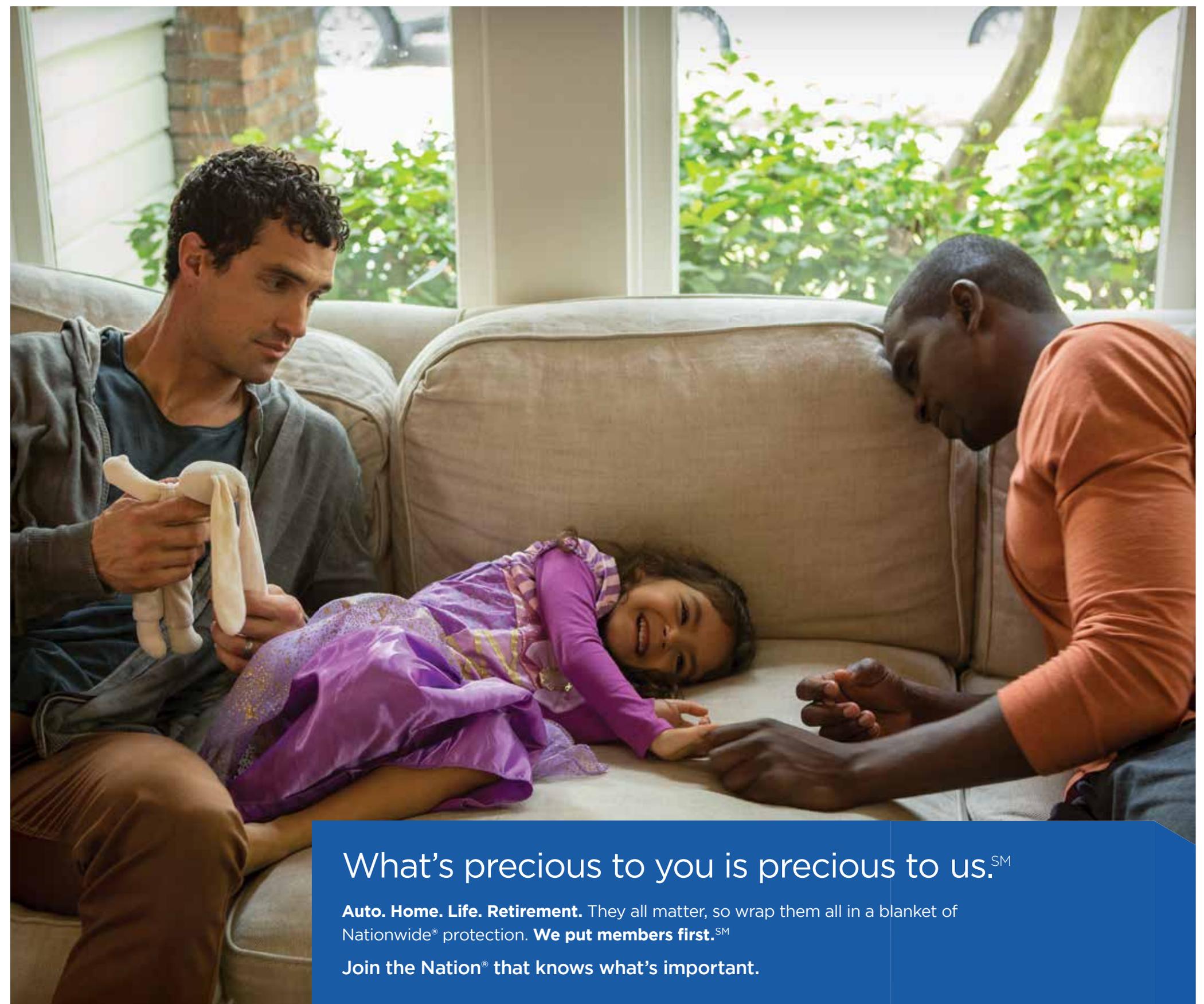
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Believe That You Are Worth the Journey

by Nicola Simmersbach PsyD LMFT LPCC

You know good therapists go to therapy, right? It helps us clear away our own debris so that we don't end up distorting our work. It also feels so very nice to be listened to intently, to have another's full attention; so therapy is self-care and self-love.

My therapist was arranging herself in her chair, moving the little tiger statue on the shelf next to her in the absent minded way she does sometimes. "You know there's no lack of love in this world," she said.

In a flash I could feel that truth melt through me. Of course I knew it to be true, but somehow I hadn't felt it in my body until she said it at just the right moment.

There really is enough. And yet, we sometimes behave as though love and passion and connection are rare commodities, something to be hunted or captured and then curated in a cage. We compete and scramble and lunge for it, certain that if we don't, someone else will grab it before we can and then there we shall be: empty handed, lacking, without.

Of course this version of love comes from outside of us. It's what others give to us – and can take away on a whim. There is another version

though; one where we become the source for what we want.

I've had clients shrink from me when I say that. "I don't want to be alone forever" they tell me, as though I had suggested that. Nothing could be further from the truth because as humans, we are interdependent and need connection with others as much as we need air, food and water to survive.

Opening to the plenty of love out there requires us to develop a connection to ourselves first. A physical, emotional and spiritual connection that some folks call happiness and looks, perhaps like this: sitting and writing in a journal and suddenly being aware of feeling so good in your own skin.

It can look like allowing people to see you and know you in ways you haven't been able to before because shame kept you from it. It's being

mindfully aware of your body and the sensations that flow through it as you navigate your life. It's caring for yourself in a way that honors your whole self, not just the parts that everyone else approves of.

What stands between the scarcity perspective and the open flow is often past trauma. Most of us have surely had the experience of being dropped, literally or figuratively, in our lives. Trauma damages our sense of self and our ability to be comfortable in our bodies, often resulting in shame.

Connecting with the body, befriending it via healthy food, exercise, yoga, meditation or massage are great first steps. With it comes a process of developing a greater and greater capacity for vulnerability, which I have come to respect as a super power.

Believing you're worth this journey is the first step.

Nicola Simmersbach PsyD LMFT LPCC is a therapist in Sacramento specializing in helping people heal their pasts so they can enjoy the present and anticipate the future. Her web site is www.DrNicola.net.

Rainbow Flags to Fly at Kings Equality Night

The Sacramento Kings are working overtime in advance of the opening of its new downtown arena, Golden 1 Center, this fall to win new fans from a broad range of communities – and Sacramento's LGBT community is no exception.

In partnership with several local LGBT organizations, the Kings have designated Thursday, Jan. 21, "Equality Night" as the team takes on the Atlanta Hawks. Participating organizations include the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce, Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus, Sacramento LGBT Community Center and Project MORE Foundation.

For Equality Night group ticket holders, the night will begin at 6 p.m. with VIP access to the Kings' pre-game warmup, followed by the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus performing our National Anthem at tip-off. Immediately following the game, LGBT guests will be invited to the stadium floor for an on-court group photo.

The Kings began the Equality Night tradition in 2015, inviting the Gay Men's

Chorus to sing the National Anthem and partnering with the LGBT Center for group ticket sales. With more organizations involved, this year's turnout promises to be bigger.

The Kings organization also has included the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber in its outreach program to provide contracting opportunities for small and local businesses during the construction of Golden 1 Center. Rainbow Chamber President Paul Weubbe said he hopes to fill a block of 500 seats with LGBT fans and allies at Kings Equality Night.

Group tickets for Kings Equality Night are \$19 for upper level, \$60 for lower level.



Equality Night

Come Support the Community and Raise Awareness

- Come watch your Sacramento Kings take on the Atlanta Hawks!
- The first 200 lower level ticket purchasers will receive a Kings Equality T-Shirt!
- Special early access to watch the players warm up!
- Stay after for a group postgame photo on the court!
- See the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus perform the National Anthem!



Lower-level ticket holders also will receive a complimentary branded Equality Night scarf. To buy tickets online, visit www.kingsgrouptickets.com/Equality. Click on the pull-down menu for "How did you hear about Kings Equality Night?" to select the LGBT organization of your choice – a portion of the ticket cost will benefit the selected organization.



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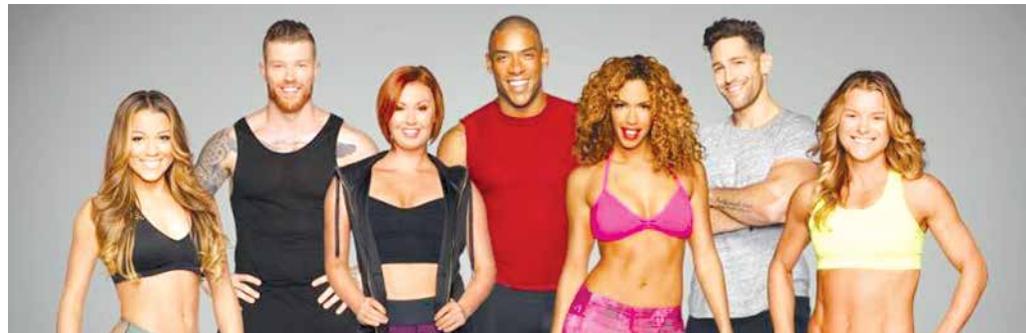
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Fitness Is Reality for Bravo-TV's Top Stud Courtney Paul

by Rich Klefsky

For over a decade, Courtney Paul's passion in life has been helping people become healthier, faster and stronger. and through his CPXperience, a specially branded fitness program, Courtney has motivated clients far beyond their physical limits.



The cast of *Work Out New York*

Now Bravo is doing the same for Courtney, transporting the unapologetically bawdy, rebellious, electrifying and hilarious personality from his Big Apple gym into living rooms across the country.

Courtney Paul is the star of Bravo's newest reality TV show, *Work Out New York*, a series that chronicles seven of Manhattan's elite personal trainers.

"I was made for reality television," asserts the out trainer whose confidence is as hefty as his brawn. It's his unique brand of no-nonsense tough talk that has helped propel him into one of Manhattan's most sought-after trainers. It's also one of the reasons he was selected to star in the series.

Courtney is a fixture at high-end New York sports clubs like David Barton Gym, and Barry's Bootcamp, where he is a master instructor. His roster of celebrity clients includes Katie Holmes, Dylan McDermott, Elizabeth Olson, Olympic gold medalist Tara Lipinski and Tony Award winners Alan Cumming and Jane Krakowski.

Courtney was the first trainer booked for the show and he is using the platform to introduce his CPXperience workout to a national audience. A name coined by Paul, CPXperience is a thoughtfully curated mix of strength and cardio-intensive interval training specifically designed to build muscle, lean and tone.

A particular focus is placed on the legs

and glutes because Courtney believes a perfect physique starts with a strong foundation. A fortunate side effect to his program (and likely why it has become so popular) is it builds that perfect POW booty.

Courtney is also using the show to launch his next endeavor: fitness vacations. Clients are offered combination workout-vacation-retreats to exotic destinations. Days are started with Courtney's signature workouts (think bicep curls on the beaches of Turks and Caicos or running the streets of Barcelona) followed by travel adventures and, of course, rest.

Says Courtney, "When you take a fitness vacation, there's no need to come home feeling like you need to go on a diet because you ate too much. And why worry about having that extra drink at dinner? You know I'll make you sweat it out in the morning!"

The vacations also encourage yearlong fitness, a belief Courtney strongly adheres to. One of his favorite things to say is "the body of the summer is made in the winter."

"People always rush to lose weight three weeks before they have to get into a swimsuit," he says. "When you stay ready, you don't have to get ready - because you never know when you're going to have to strip down and show it off"

Work Out New York is airing now on Bravo. Visit: CPXperience.com

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To Our Health!

by Diana Kienle

Still remember the slide show presented by the cardiologist that night. He compared the impact of beer, white wine and red wine on blood lipids. His slide depicted a clear advantage for red wine.

That was over 25 years ago and that information still resonates for me to this day. It opened the door for greater reading and seeking to understand the effects of drinking red wine – both positive and negative.

Disclaimer: I'm not a doctor and not making any recommendations here, just sharing what I've read!

Today there is a growing body of medical information with regard to the health benefits of wine consumption, predominately red wine, on health and well-being. More and more research is being done and the findings are interesting to say the least.

The list includes reducing the risk of depression, preventing some cancers, providing anti-aging properties, preventing dementia, and other beneficial effects. Other possible health benefits include raising levels of omega-3 fatty acids and possible benefits in reducing prostate cancer.

One thing that is clear in all the literature is that the amount matters. The cited effects are related only to moderate drinking.

According to "Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010," published by the US Department of Agriculture: "If alcohol is consumed, it should be consumed in moderation – up to one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men."

So what is moderate wine consumption? That is an important point for us all. The National Health Services, UK, writes, "Men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units of alcohol a day. Women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day."

One unit equals 10 ml of pure alcohol. A 250 ml (large) glass of 12 percent red wine has about three units of alcohol. This is approximately 8½ ounces. A 175 ml

(medium) glass of 12 percent red wine has about two units, which translates to about six ounces. Check the label; because as the alcohol goes up, the volume should be decreased.

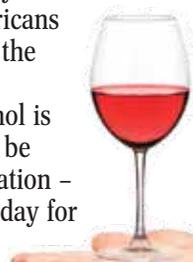
It is also good to recognize that how much wine you can drink in one sitting before the health benefits turn into negatives depends on many factors. Those include a person's size, age, sex, body stature and general health.

It also matters whether you are consuming with a meal or on an empty stomach. Just a note as well, women absorb alcohol at a faster rate than men based on body mass and have less of an enzyme that breaks down alcohol. (Advantage men)

As we start the New Year and put those resolutions in place, it is good to keep in mind that old adage that rings true here: All good things in moderation!

Happy New Year!

Diana Kienle is a freelance writer and blogs about wine at www.dianaswineblog.com. She can be reached at diana@dianaswineblog.com.



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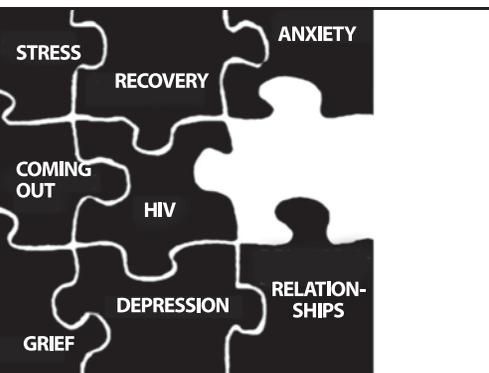


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Briefly Put

LGBTQ Groups File Amicus Brief in Supreme Court Challenge to Texas Abortion Restrictions

The National LGBTQ Task Force has joined a coalition of LGBTQ, racial justice, and health equity organizations in filing an amicus brief in *Whole Woman's Health v. Cole* asking the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down draconian restrictions on abortion providers enacted by the State of Texas in 2013.

If the restrictions are upheld, they would lead to the closing of all but 10 abortion clinics in the state. The brief urges the Court to carefully scrutinize the state's asserted justification for the law, just as the Court has done with other laws that infringe upon fundamental freedoms.

"The movements for reproductive health, rights and justice are indispensable for LGBTQ people. Our work, as repro and LGBTQ advocates, is inseparable as we are working for the right to live our lives fully and the right to choose how we use our bodies," said Rea Carey, National LGBTQ Task Force Executive Director. Visit www.thetaskforce.org

SPLC Files New Information in Ethics Complaint Against Chief Justice Roy Moore

Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore should be removed from the bench for advising state probate judges to enforce Alabama's same-sex marriage ban, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) said in a new supplement filed in January in its ongoing ethics complaint against Moore.

"Chief Justice Roy Moore is once again demonstrating that he is unfit to hold office," SPLC President Richard Cohen said. "Despite the fact that Alabama probate judges are under a federal court order that bars them from discriminating against same-sex couples seeking marriage licenses, Justice Moore has irresponsibly advised them to do the opposite. You would think after being removed from the bench once before that the chief justice would know better."

The SPLC complaint describes how Moore's administrative order violates the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics, which instruct judges to "respect and comply with the law" and promote "public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary."

Santa Clara County Hires Staff for Office of LGBTQ Affairs

Santa Clara County has filled two full-time positions for its newly-created Office of LGBTQ Affairs. The county is only the third local government agency – and the first county in the nation – to have an office exclusively dedicated to serving the LGBTQ community.

The new staff include Maribel Martinez for the position of Manager and Ashley Scarborough for the position of Management Analyst. Both will assume their new roles on January 19.

"The establishment of the Office of LGBTQ Affairs marks another important step on the road to full equality," said Supervisor Ken Yeager, who led the effort behind the office's creation. "I am thrilled to see it open soon, and I am proud of Santa Clara County for continuing to be a leader for LGBTQ rights and services."

The only other similar offices in the United States are the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs in the city of Philadelphia and the Office of LGBT Affairs in Washington, D.C.

Stanford Introduces Executive Program for LGBT Leaders

Stanford Graduate School of Business is offering the only program of its kind by a leading business school, Stanford LGBT Executive Leadership Program, that will address the significant gap in LGBT leadership in the C-suite.

Qualified LGBT candidates will experience a tailored and highly specialized one-week program that combines personal leadership assessments and insights with design thinking innovations.

To be held July 31 through August 5, at the state-of-the-art Knight Management Center, home of Stanford GSB, the executive program features interactive classroom sessions, hands-on experiential workshops, small group discussions, roundtable forums, and prominent guest speakers. Apply by June 24, 2016.

HRC Releases LGBT Equality Scores of CA Companies

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC) has released the 2016 Corporate Equality Index, an annual report assessing LGBT inclusion in major companies and law firms across the nation, including 100 in California.

Corporate America, propelled by HRC and its foundation's annual Corporate Equality Index (CEI), has led the way on LGBT inclusion for more than a decade.

As the national benchmarking tool on corporate policies and practices related to LGBT workplace equality, the 2016 CEI unveiled that a record 407 businesses – spanning nearly every industry and geography – earned a top score of 100 percent and the coveted distinction of "Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality."

The full report, including a searchable employer database is available online at www.hrc.org/cei.

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Half of Those With Glaucoma Don't Know It

Approximately 2.7 million Americans have the potentially blinding eye disease glaucoma, but only half are aware of it, and glaucoma incidence is on the rise with researchers predicting that glaucoma will affect as many as 6.3 million Americans by 2050.



diagnosis and treatment, sight can be preserved. However, glaucoma has no noticeable symptoms in its early stages, so it is imperative that people know the risk factors.

Certain factors can increase an individual's risk of developing glaucoma, including: Family History; Older Age; African, Hispanic or Asian Heritage; Nearsightedness; and Type 2 Diabetes.

"Many of my patients are surprised to learn that one or more of these factors put them at an increased risk," said Andrew Iwach, M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the AAO and a glaucoma specialist. "Being aware of your personal risk of glaucoma is the first step to saving your sight."

People age 65 or older and concerned about their eye disease risk may be eligible for a medical eye exam at no out-of-pocket cost through EyeCare America, a program of the Foundation of the AAO. To see if you, your friends or family members are eligible, visit www.eyecareamerica.org.

To learn more about glaucoma, its risk factors and its treatment, visit www.geteyesmart.org.

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month and the California Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons (CAEPS) and the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) are sharing a list of risk factors that can lead to the disease.

"It is imperative that people understand the precursors to this debilitating disease," said Troy R. Elander, MD, CAEPS President. "If you are at risk, then getting an exam from an ophthalmologist as soon as possible can help protect you from vision loss."

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, which links the eyes to the brain. It is most commonly associated with elevated pressure inside the eye, known as intraocular pressure, or IOP.

Without treatment, glaucoma can cause irreversible vision loss in a person's side vision, then in his or her central vision. With early

Drug Resistant Gonorrhea Shows Need for Treatment

A drug-resistant strain of gonorrhea first discovered in the United Kingdom last spring could potentially threaten public health in the U.S. and is being called by the CDC an "urgent threat."

As reported by CBS News on December 28th, Dame Davies and Britain's chief pharmaceutical officer Dr. Keith Ridge sent a letter to the country's physicians and pharmacists alerting of a "super-gonorrhea" and the need for health professionals to consistently prescribe both antibiotics – injectable ceftriaxone and azithromycin – used to properly treat the sexually transmitted infection.



In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has called gonorrhea an "urgent threat" and reported in 2013 that about one-third of all gonorrhea cases were resistant to at least one antibiotic. The CDC estimates that more than 800,000 cases of gonorrhea occur annually in the United States.

"According to the CDC, gonorrhea is the second most commonly reported notifiable disease in the United States and the majority of these infections are among young people ages 15-24 years," said Michael Weinstein, President of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF). "This is also the age group that is most likely to use mobile dating apps such as Tinder and Grindr to meet new sexual partners. As one increases their number of sexual partners,

the risk for contracting a sexually transmitted disease also increases. It's imperative that we continue to warn sexually active young people about the risks of dating apps and keep driving home the message that practicing safer sex through consistent condom usage helps prevent STDs."

"The threat of these drug-resistant strains is getting worse," said Dr. Parveen Kaur, Director of AHF's Infection Prevention and Control

Committee. "If the last recommended treatment stops working, countries could face dire health problems that recall other bacterial diseases of public importance. We cannot let this happen and must continually stress to medical providers and infected patients the necessity of completing all the required doses of antibiotic treatment to prevent the development of drug-resistant bacteria. In fact, to maximize adherence, on-site and directly observed treatment is highly encouraged, as is the prevention of reinfection with expedited partner therapy."

AHF's Wellness Centers provide free testing for sexually transmitted diseases, including chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV. To find the nearest location for STD screening and treatment, visit www.freestdcheck.org.

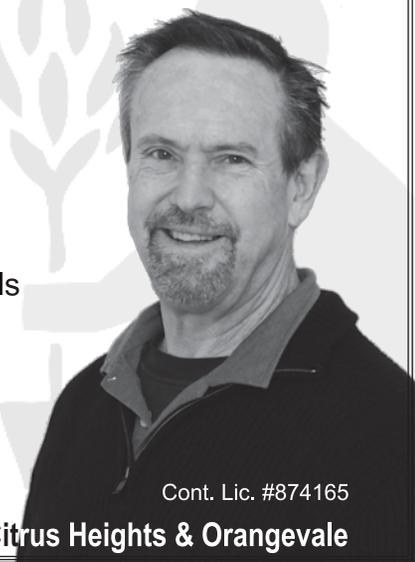
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Kinky People Are Mentally and Emotionally Healthy

If you've been hiding your "kinky" side, that part of you that fantasizes about sexual practices that go a bit beyond the missionary position, a new study shows that rather than hide your kinkiness, you should embrace it.



Kinky people have a myriad of fetishes and ways to explore them.

University of Alabama and University of Central Florida researchers surveyed over 800 kinky people recruited by the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF) and found they were mentally and emotionally healthy.

"I was curious about the stereotypes from a mental health standpoint and we found that these kinky people are well functioning, with little mental health concerns," says Tess M. Gemberling, M.A., Co-Principal Investigator, University of Alabama. "They also have healthy romantic relationships."

The study, "Psychological Functioning and Violence Victimization and Perpetration in BDSM Practitioners from the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom," also investigated people's preferences for BDSM activities and fantasies, and explored whether violence is perpetuated against kinky people.

The study joins a growing body of research that refutes the stereotype that people who are kinky are inherently dangerous to themselves and others, which is at the root of the discrimination and persecution that kinky people experience.

"I wanted to explore more about how the stereotypes interface with reality," says Matt R. Nobles, Ph.D., Co-Principal Investigator, University of Central Florida. "Although more than half of the people in this study have been victims of violence or aggression,

extremely few had perpetrated such themselves."

In the study, 77 percent of participants reported they had been victims of a BDSM-based hate crime, while 10.2 percent of participants reported they had been victims of an LGBT-based hate crime.

"Parallel to my work with sexual minorities, my interest is in looking at the nature of identity and mental health in a vulnerable group of people," says Robert J. Cramer, Ph.D., Co-Principal Investigator, University of Alabama. "Contrary to popular perceptions, our study shows kinky persons are largely mentally healthy when it comes to conditions such as depression, anxiety and suicide."

The study also confirms that for these kinksters it's primarily about consensual power exchange, with 98 percent preferring to take a specific power exchange role during BDSM. The most commonly reported practices were spanking, slapping and biting, and the use of sexual toys and equipment.

"Lawmakers can help by legally recognizing informed consent as the basis of healthy BDSM behavior," says Susan Wright, spokesperson for NCSF. "BDSM is intended to be a mutually beneficial experience that is done by consenting adults."

To read the full report, visit www.ncsfreedom.org.

Headlining Comic Hari Kondabolu Coming to Comedy Spot

Hari Kondabolu is a Brooklyn-based, Queens-raised comic who the *New York Times* has called "one of the most exciting political comedians in stand-up today." Hari was a writer and correspondent on the Chris Rock show, *Totally Biased on FX*. He has also performed standup on *Late Show with David Letterman*, *Conan*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, and *John Oliver's New York Stand-Up Show*. You can catch him live on Saturday, January 23, at 8 and 10 p.m. at the Comedy Spot. www.saccomedyspot.com/hari-kondabolu/



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J. Scott Coatsworth Pens *The River City Chronicles*

by Matt Burlingame

A gay man, a widow, and a homeless youth walk into an Italian restaurant. While it may sound like the set up to a joke, it is actually the framework of an online serial novel by Sacramento author J. Scott Coatsworth.



Author J. Scott Coatsworth with his partner Mark.

The River City Chronicles is a fictional telling of a handful of people living in Sacramento, each doing their best to cope with the obstacles life has given them.

From Carmelina a middle-aged woman struggling with the death of her husband and Marissa a homeless teenager who was thrown out of her family home after they discovered her kissing another girl, to Marcos a gay man dealing with the emotional scars of losing his first love to cancer and Diego a young Italian immigrant trying to fulfill his dream of having a successful restaurant, the characters are as diverse as the the city the story takes place in.

That city, Sacramento, is as much a character in Coatsworth's tale as any of the others.

Each scene is peppered with references to real places, streets and atmosphere well known to Sacramentans. For those outside the valley it provides a good insight to our hometown. For those native to the area, it adds a flavor that helps the reader more quickly connect with the story Coatsworth is trying to tell.

Coatsworth, along with his partner Mark, moved to the Sacramento area in 2003 and during that time, they have fallen in love with the city. So it was only fitting he encapsulate that love within his writing.

"There's so much beneath the surface that people who don't live here never see," says Coatsworth. "I never considered using a fictional city, because I wanted to share the Sacramento I've come to love."

While *The River City Chronicles* began fairly recently, Coatsworth has been writing since he was still in grade school.

"My mom had a subscription to the Science Fiction Book Club, so I worked my way through Isaac Asimov, Anne McCaffrey and Arthur C. Clarke and I thought 'I have to do this.' I should note that I wanted to be an astronaut and an astronomer, as well, but writing seemed more achievable."

"In fifth grade," the author recalls, "the University of Arizona in Tucson had a contest for young writers. I entered with a fully crayon-illustrated story about a guy who flies his spaceship to Pluto every day for work."

The story won the contest, and Coatsworth continued writing until his mid twenties when after being unable to professionally publish his first novel he took a break from being a writer. Almost two decades later, he again took up the torch, writing a number of short stories for various anthologies.

"My first stand-alone print novella *The Autumn Lands* (Mischievous Corner Books) will be out January 27 and another called *Through the Veil* (Wild City Press) will be out this spring," he comments. "I'm also

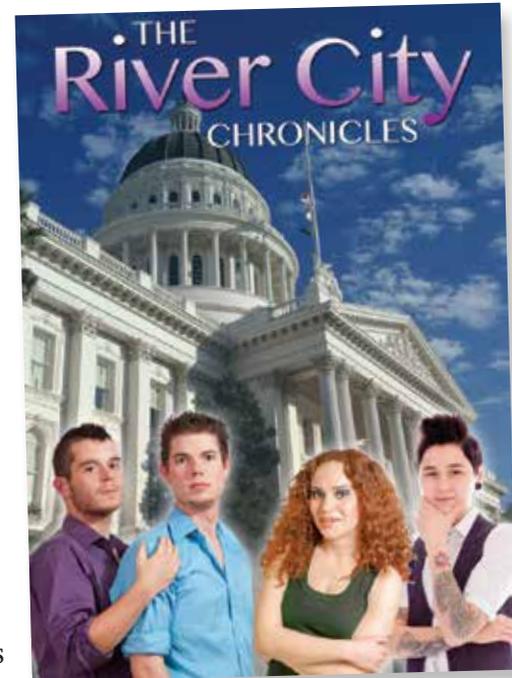
wrapping up the first novel of a new sci-fi trilogy entitled *Oberon*, and the prequel to that long-ago novel that I never published," says Coatsworth.

In the meantime, *The River City Chronicles* is free to readers and available on the web. There are currently twelve installments of the serial, all of which are also translated into Italian, a language and culture Coatsworth is passionate about.

"My plan is to wrap up the first arc with its various plot lines and secrets in 2017, and submit it for publication as a book."

Coatsworth also runs the queer sci-fi website queerscifi.com, which is a support group for writers of gay science fiction, fantasy, and supernatural fiction.

To read *The River City Chronicles*, or learn more about Coatsworth visit jsscotcoatsworth.com



Remembering Major Adrianna Vorderbruggen

by Ariana Bostian-Kentes, Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC)

We lost a member of our military family yesterday (December 21, 2015). Our friend, Air Force Major Adrianna Vorderbruggen, was killed while serving in Afghanistan.



Air Force Major Adrianna Vorderbruggen (right) leaves behind a wife, Heather, and a young son, Jacob.

All military families understand that part of serving means the potential of sending their loved one into harms way, but no amount of understanding can reduce the pain of loss when they do not return.

Major Vorderbruggen leaves behind her wife, Heather, and four year-old son, Jacob. As we try to find comfort in our community during this time we also extend our love and compassion to the five other U.S. military families who lost a loved one yesterday.

Major Vorderbruggen was a person who lived for her family and for her country. She was one of the most friendly and laid-back people you could ever hope to meet

and was an accomplished airman, a great athlete, and most of all, a wonderful mom. She leaves an indelible legacy of strength and selflessness to all those touched by her life.

As today marks five years since the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was signed, we honor the anniversary with somber hearts and the knowledge that families like Major Vorderbruggen's no longer serve in the shadows. We can take small comfort in the fact that they will be extended the same rights and protections due any American military family as they move through this incredibly difficult period in their lives.

Adrianna, Heather, and Jacob were part of our MPFC family nearly from the start and took great pride in being members of the military community. When their marriage was finally legally recognized, they celebrated by signing up Heather and Jacob as Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) dependents, taking a shopping trip to the commissary with the dependent ID card, and scheduling their first doctor's appointment on base for Jacob.

This family is the reason that the anniversary of repeal matters. The upswell in support and prayers offered by military families everywhere to Major Vorderbruggen's is unique to those who know what it means to serve. This is what community is about and this is why your MPFC family is unfailingly here for you."

Ariana Bostian-Kentes is the President & Co-founder of Military Partners and Families Coalition (MPFC), a leading national organization providing support, resources, education, and advocacy for LGBT military families. For more information, go to www.milpfc.org or www.facebook.com/milpfc.

Amtrak Promotion Features Lesbian Couple



Aisha and Danielle Moodie-Mills made a huge splash a few years ago when their wedding became the first same-sex couple marriage to be featured on *Essence.com*. Since then, the two have joined forces to fight for LGBT marriage rights all over the USA and specifically have made a huge impact on LGBT rights in their home state of Washington, D.C. The couple sat down with Amtrak (Amtrak.com) for a documentary style video to talk about their influence in the LGBT community as a team as well as their individual accolades. Check out their journey at youtu.be/6cU7GygeQJ8.

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Love Is at the Heart of Sacramento Author's Works

by Matt Burlingame

Raw. Real. Radical. Racy. All words that adequately describe the new release *M.*, a collection of untitled poetry, prose and short fiction by Sacramento author Christian St. Croix.

"I held him the night that he drove his fist into my face. Took his head right into my lap. He curled his knees into my hip, brought my waist into his arms. His tears left a stain on my jeans, but I didn't mind much. I held him. Because we both knew that it would be the last time I'd ever."

Born in Illinois, but raised in Sacramento, St. Croix, has worn many hats over the years, from singer to actor to LGBT and black rights activist and now author. While many of his writings comment on society's ills and human injustices, *M.* is about love.

"All aspects of love," St. Croix explains. "First love, new love, love on the verge of ending, love after it's completely over, and love that is lost."

"There are pieces that are based on real-life lovers and crushes, but some pieces are pure imagination," he continues. "I don't tell the reader which is which. I also don't divide the pieces by happy and sad. Sometimes you'll think a poem is going in one direction, and it'll suddenly make a sharp turn in the other. That's love to me. It's

beautiful and personal, but the slightest hesitation or the most selfish of decisions can change the course in the most devastating of ways. I wanted *M.* to reflect that dynamic."

And the title? "*M.* is your quintessential lover. Your man above all men. The only man who can break your heart and the only man you can love without pause. The idea is for the reader to imagine his or her own *M.*"

Though close friends and family had encouraged him to publish his writings, the inspiration for putting together the collection came from a comment left on St. Croix's Tumblr blog. The comment was a simple encouragement from a young woman who didn't know him, but was so moved by his work that she found inspiration to begin posting her own writing. It was the spark needed to turn *M.* into a reality.

St. Croix originally wanted to be an actor, and spent some time on Sacramento stages, including being the first man of color to play the leading role of Claude Hooper Bukowski in Sacramento's premiere of the 60's musical

Hair. But seeing a glaring omission of people of color in plays that didn't somehow center around race issues made the young actor try his hand at writing.

"I began writing my own plays and my first was produced by Sacramento's Tower of Youth in 1997," says St. Croix.

While his plays contained the diversity he found lacking, it wouldn't be until he saw a production by the now defunct Lambda Players, called *Written On The Hill* that he began to reflect his sexuality in his work.

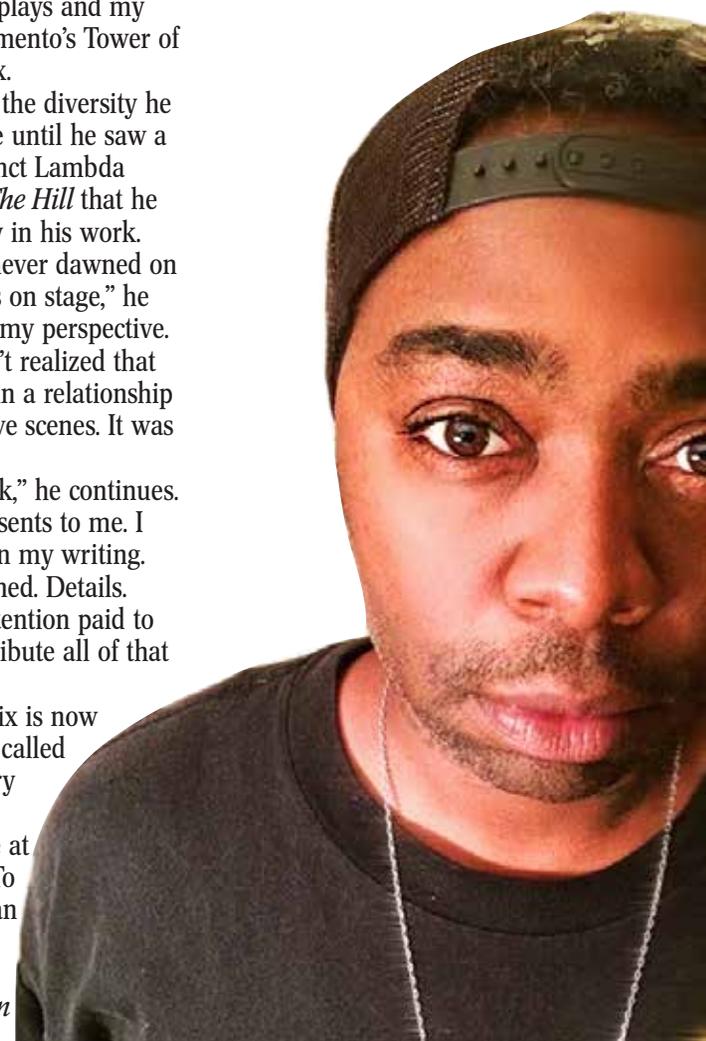
"Creating gay characters never dawned on me until I saw two men kiss on stage," he explains. "It totally changed my perspective. Before then, I honestly hadn't realized that two men could be depicted in a relationship in a play, much less have love scenes. It was an awakening."

"I love being gay and black," he continues. "I love the perspective it presents to me. I love using that perspective in my writing. There are skills that I've gained. Details. Shifts in tone and special attention paid to motivation. I completely attribute all of that to being a man of color."

With *M.* in release, St. Croix is now working on an online serial called *Smirks*, an ongoing love story told through prose and dialogue. *Smirks* is available at mymansmirks.tumblr.com. To find out more about Christian St. Croix and *M.* go to saintsriot.com.

Matthew Burlingame is an

author (*Sorry Charley!*), playwright (*Paperclip Messiah*), prodigious podcaster and freelance writer in Sacramento. He can be reached at matthew.burlingame@gmail.com.



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The hilarious Reese Witherspoon film is now the smash hit musical comedy that turned Broadway and MTV hot pink. Sorority star Elle Woods is an underestimated blonde who doesn't take "no" for an answer. When her boyfriend dumps her for someone more "serious," she hits the books and, with her dog Bruiser, sets out to go where no Delta Nu has gone before: Harvard Law. Along the way, Elle proves that being true to yourself never goes out of style. With "Omigod You Guys," "So Much Better."

**HELLO,
DOLLY!**

HELLO, DOLLY! · JUNE 28-JULY 3

This ebullient and irresistible musical theatre classic glitters with happy songs, high-energy choreography and elaborate costumes. The indomitable matchmaker Dolly Levi rediscovers love for herself as she introduces romance into the lives of wealthy shopkeeper Horace Vandergelder, his niece and two sheltered clerks. Features "It Only Takes a Moment," "Put on Your Sunday Clothes" and the title number, one of the most beloved songs in American musical comedy.

Seussical

SEUSSICAL · JULY 12-17

Explore the witty, wild and whimsical world of Dr. Seuss as you've never seen it before. Travel back to your childhood to the land of the Whos and the Jungle of Nool, and rediscover the delightfully zany characters imagined by one of the most beloved storytellers of all time. Created by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty (*Ragtime*, *Once on This Island*), this is one visit to the doctor that neither kids nor parents will mind, a delightful musical where anything's possible.

CABARET

CABARET · JULY 26-31

Welcome to Berlin's infamous Kit Kat Klub, where the Emcee, Sally Bowles and a raucous ensemble take the stage nightly to tantalize the crowd into leaving their troubles outside. But as life in pre-WWII Germany grows more and more troubled, how long can the show and the decadence surrounding it go on? This Tony®-winning Kander and Ebb classic has some of the most memorable songs in theatre history, including "Cabaret" and "Willkommen."

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A smash hit on Broadway in 2012, the song-and-dance spectacular features the music of George and Ira Gershwin in a sparkling, spirited, high-stepping musical comedy. To a songbook of the greatest American standards ever sung, a cast of bootleggers, chorus girls, playboys and politicians creates hilarity in a glorious Long Island mansion in the rip-roaring 1920s. With "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "I've Got a Crush on You" and "Someone to Watch Over Me."

**The Hunchback
of Notre
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THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME · AUGUST 23-28

OPTION TO THE SEASON: This brand new musical is the only stage collaboration from two masters of American musical theatre, Alan Menken (Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*) and Stephen Schwartz (*Wicked*, *Pippin*). With a lush, emotionally rich score and beautiful choral arrangements, it's a dramatic retelling of the epic but tragic Victor Hugo novel. Darker than the Disney film, closer in plot to the novel, the musical showcases the film's Oscar®-nominated score and introduces stunning new songs.

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The Latest From B Street, Broadway Sac & Green Valley Theatre

by Chris Narloch

Sacramento stages kick off 2016 with two familiar and beloved musicals, *The Little Mermaid* and *Into the Woods*, plus the latest quirky comedy from Will Eno, *The Realistic Joneses*.



Norm Lewis and Sierra Boggess starred in the Broadway production of *The Little Mermaid*.

The Little Mermaid

Unsatisfied with her life at sea, free-spirited young mermaid princess Ariel longs to experience the human world above the water. With Flounder and Sebastian at her side, she embarks on the adventure of a lifetime in this classic love story from the team behind Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

Plays Feb. 2-7 at the Community Center Theater as part of Broadway Sacramento.

Visit www.BroadwaySacramento.com.

Into the Woods

After a dynamite 2015 season that included terrific productions of *Shockheaded Peter*, *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Striking 12*, Green Valley Theatre Company is pleased to present the first show in their 2016 season - "*Into the Woods*," by Stephen Sondheim

and James Lapine.

This popular musical mash-up of fractured fairy tales runs through January 31 at Green Valley Theatre Company, in the Grange Performing Arts Center at 3823 V Street in Sacramento.

Visit www.greenvalleytheatre.org.

The Realistic Joneses

If you're not in the mood for a musical, check out this strange dark comedy. Two couples, both named Jones, become neighbors in a small town. As their lives begin to intertwine, they discover they share more in common than just a name.

In this clever and funny show, playwright Will Eno tests morality, marriage, and the way people deal with the unexpected randomness of life. Plays through Feb. 6 at B Street Theatre.

Visit www.bstreettheatre.org.



Brianne Hidden-Wise, Elio Gutierrez and Madison Bales (*Baker's Wife*, *Baker* and *Little Red*) costar in *Into the Woods*.

Vanessa Goes To The Doctor Aims to Help Doctors Work with Transgender Patients



The National LGBT Cancer Network has released the training film *Vanessa Goes To The Doctor*, a scripted eight-minute film about a transwoman of color visiting a new primary care doctor that contrasts LGBT-affirming and unwelcoming practices. The style cleverly imitates 1950's instructional videos, making the content lessons easy for healthcare providers to absorb in a funny, unthreatening, but powerful style, and can be watched at www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3eDKf3PFRo

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The Force Awakens at the Esquire IMAX

by Chris Narloch

So many people have asked me what I think of the new *Star Wars* flick that I decided to chime in with my two cents in print, even though I know that blockbusters like *The Force Awakens* are entirely critic-proof and most folks don't give a rat's ass what we think.

I prefer to review smaller indie and foreign films that don't get the promotional push that they deserve and often disappear from the Tower or the Varsity Theatre in Davis after a few weeks.

The other thing I rarely do is put together a top ten list of the best movies of the past year, since there is so much subjectivity involved in comparing different kinds of films.

One of my New Year's resolutions is to step outside my comfort zone and do the unexpected more often, however, so in that spirit I present below my review of the new *Star Wars* movie as well as a top ten list of the finest films from 2015.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

I vividly remember the first time I saw the first *Star Wars* movie, the first weekend it was released in May of 1977. I was 13 years old, and my next-door neighbor and I went to see it at the Century "domes" at Arden and Ethan.

We had no idea that *Star Wars* would go on to become a phenomenon and play for over a year at that same theater. I had seen the trailer for the film and thought it looked cool, and there was nothing else playing that

looked good.

The Force Awakens trades heavily on nostalgia for the original film and, in fact, seems more like a remake of *Star Wars* than a sequel. That turns out to be a good thing, since the original film and *The Empire Strikes Back* are really the only movies in the franchise that still hold up.

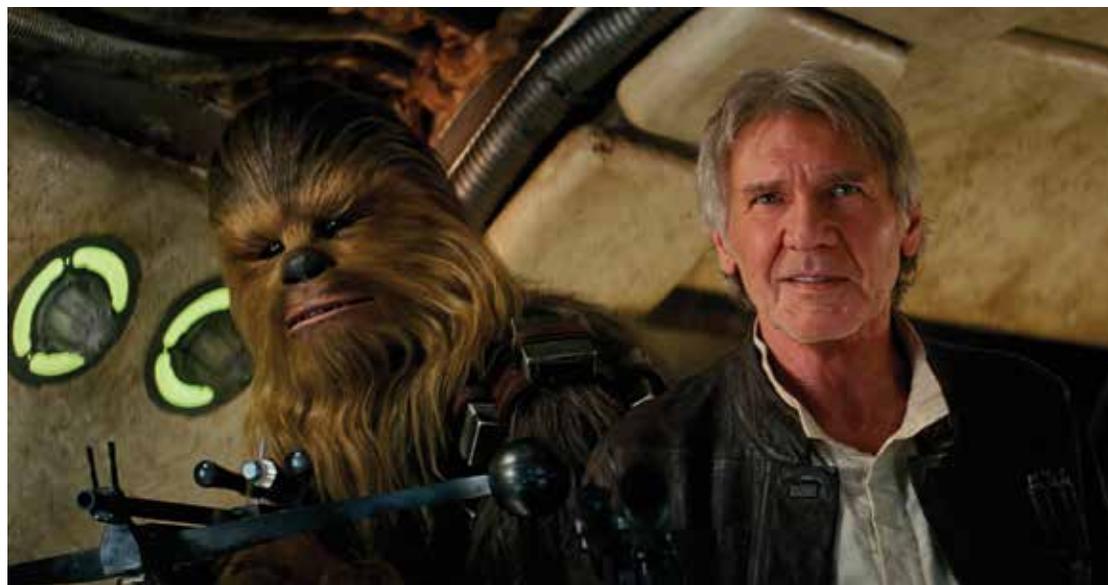
Director J.J. Abrams is clearly a huge fan of the series, and he successfully recreates both the thrills and the goofy charm of that first film. Bringing back Han Solo, Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker was a major gamble, since the actors who play them are now middle-aged and look it.

That risky move actually pays off in terms of the plot of the film, however, so that it's not just a sentimental stunt. Abrams also brings back Chewbacca, the Millennium Falcon, R2D2, and C-3PO, and as a result *The Force Awakens* at times feels like the greatest hits from *Star Wars*.

The whole thing is so much fun though that I can forgive Abrams for

freely borrowing from the original *Star Wars*. The new film is such a kick for middle-aged movie fans like me precisely because we can take our kids and grandkids (if I had any) and enjoy passing on the pleasure of "the force" to a whole new generation.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens is playing at the Esquire IMAX on K Street in Sacramento at least through January 28.



Chewbacca and Han Solo from *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

The Finest Films of 2015

- 1) "Mad Max: Fury Road"
- 2) "Spotlight"
- 3) "Carol"
- 4) "The Martian"
- 5) "The Big Short"
- 6) "Ex Machina"
- 7) "Sicario"
- 8) "Bridge of Spies"
- 9) "Creed"
- 10) "Star Wars: The Force Awakens"

Honorable mention goes to *The Revenant*, the new movie from Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (*Birdman*), as well as *Inside Out*, the finest animated film of 2015, and *Amy*, my favorite documentary from last year.

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Transgender Activist Joins Trevor Board

Michaela Mendelsohn has become the first transgender board member of the Trevor Project, where she will work on three standing committees: Finance, Programing and Board Development, and is also part of the Southern Initiative which is studying ways to introduce Trevor in the South. She was also the first transgender contestant in the Ms. Senior California Pageant and a consultant to Jenji Kohan in the development of Laverne Cox's character on *Orange is the New Black* and has been working with the California Trans Workplace Project. Visit www.thetrevorproject.org



Three to See at the Harris Center in Folsom – Los Lobos, Stomp & Bullets Over Broadway

by Chris Narloch

This January, three not-to-be-missed shows grace the stage of the Harris Center. Whether you are into musical comedy straight from Broadway, Mexican-American rock, percussion, or dance, you'll find it all on stage in Folsom.



Los Lobos

Fiesta Mexico-Americana

The Mexican-American Experience is celebrated through song, dance, music, and film highlighting the many notable achievements and contributions of Mexican-Americans throughout U.S. history in this brand-new multi-media production, featuring multiple Grammy Award-winners Los Lobos and dancers from Ballet Folklórico Mexicano.

One night only, on January 20 at 7:30 p.m.

STOMP

The international percussion sensation has garnered armfuls of awards and rave reviews and has appeared on numerous national television shows.

The eight-member troupe uses everything but conventional percussion instruments – matchboxes, wooden poles, brooms, garbage cans, Zippo lighters, hubcaps and more – to fill the stage with magnificent rhythms.

Year after year, audiences worldwide keep coming back for more of this pulse pounding, electrifying show. Plays January 21 – 23.

Bullets Over Broadway, The Musical

Based on the screenplay of the acclaimed 1994 film by Woody Allen and Douglas McGrath, *Bullets Over Broadway* is the hilarious musical comedy about the making of a Broadway show.

It's the story of a young playwright who, in desperate need of financial backing for his next show, accepts an offer he can't refuse from a mobster looking to please his showgirl girlfriend.

The original Broadway production received six Tony-Award nominations, including Best Book of a Musical and Best Choreography.

Loaded with big laughs, colorful characters, and the songs that made the '20s roar, *Bullets Over Broadway* is bringing musical comedy back with a bang this January 29 – 31.

Visit www.harriscenter.net for more information about these and other shows.



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