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Attorney General Bonta Launches Civil Rights Investigation into Chino Valley Unified's Policy of Forced Gender Status Disclosure

California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced opening a civil rights investigation into potential legal violations by the Chino Valley Unified School District (CVUSD), which adopted a policy that forces schools to “out” students whose gender identities may be changing. Enacted in July, the “Parental Notification Policy” requires schools to inform parents, with minimal exceptions, whenever a student requests to use a name or pronoun different from that on their birth certificate or official records, even if such disclosure is against the student’s wishes or could expose a student to parental abuse or increase their risk of self-harm or suicide.

The policy also requires notification if a student accesses facilities or participates in programs that don’t align with their sex on official records. Attorney General Bonta last month sent a letter to Superintendent Norman Enfield and the Board of Education, emphasizing the potential infringements on students’ civil and privacy rights and educational opportunities.

“Students should never fear going to school for simply being who they are,” said Attorney General Bonta. “Chino Valley Unified’s forced outing policy

threatens the safety and well-being of LGBTQ+ students vulnerable to harassment and potential abuse from peers and family members unaccepting of their gender identity. Today’s announcement stresses our commitment to challenging school policies that target and seek to discriminate against California’s most vulnerable communities. California will not stand for violations of our students’ civil rights.”

The Attorney General has a substantial interest in protecting the legal rights, physical safety, and mental health of children in California schools, and in protecting them

from trauma, harassment, bullying, and exposure to violence and threats of violence. Prior to its enactment, Attorney General Bonta sent a letter urging CVUSD not to adopt the forced outing policy and to fulfill its obligation to create an inclusive and safe environment for all students. Community members opposing the policy included current and former CVUSD LGBTQ+ students, parents, teachers, mental health professionals, and advocates who expressed fear that the policy would endanger transgender and gender non-conforming students.

Attorney General Bonta Joins Multistate Coalition Against Idaho Anti-Abortion Law

California Attorney General Rob Bonta joined a coalition of 20 states in support of a legal challenge to Idaho’s latest attack on reproductive rights, which would punish medical providers and residents of states outside Idaho for giving information and assistance to minors who access lawful abortion in those states. The plaintiffs in *Matsumoto v. Labrador* are suing in the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho to block a newly enacted law. In today’s amicus brief, the coalition of attorneys general wrote in support of plaintiffs, arguing that the law not only puts pregnant Idahoans at risk, but also threatens the freedom of people beyond Idaho’s borders, who are acting lawfully and abiding by the reproductive rules of their own state.

“California is proud to fight for the reproductive rights of all people who seek, provide, and assist with access to abortion care here – whether they’re from the Golden State or not,” said Attorney General Bonta. “Idaho’s law not only threatens to criminalize Californians for exercising their rights, it also endangers the health and lives of its own minors by restricting their access to vital, lifesaving health care. I stand with my fellow reproductive freedom states in opposing this dangerous law. My office will continue to ensure California remains a safe haven for reproductive freedom, fundamental rights, and safety.”

Since the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, anti-abortion states across the United States have passed an array of laws that criminalize abortion and threaten the safety and legal freedom of those seeking or providing reproductive care. These laws have sown terror and confusion among patients, providers, and others who may fear legal and criminal repercussions for seeking, performing, or assisting with reproductive services.

The coalition of states believes that Idaho Code § 18-623 is one such law. The law, enacted in May 2023, makes it a felony for any adult to help a pregnant minor access abortion care or obtain medication for an

abortion if that help is deemed to have been provided with an intent to conceal the abortion from a parent or guardian. Idaho has interpreted the vague and unspecific language in the law to open up the possibility that any adult in any state providing any kind of abortion help to a minor in Idaho – even in the form of information, links, or resources – might be in violation of the law.

In their amicus brief, the attorneys general asserted that the legislation will create a climate of fear and uncertainty among healthcare providers, reproductive health organizations, and other adults in their own states, and inhibit them from providing appropriate care, information, and counseling to their patients, clients, relatives, and friends in Idaho. This not only impinges on the reproductive liberties and rights constitutionally guaranteed under coalition states’ own laws and constitutions, but also endangers the health, safety, and lives of pregnant minors in Idaho by creating barriers or causing delays in their ability to access critical healthcare. While abortion is safe at virtually any stage – and, without question, far safer than carrying a pregnancy to term – delays in receiving abortion care make treatment more intensive, increasing risks to the patient and costs.

The coalition thus urged the Idaho district court to block enforcement of Idaho Code § 18-623.

The amicus brief was led by Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, who was joined by Attorney General Bonta as well as the attorneys general of Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island and the District of Columbia.

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Evidence Surfaces That 303 Creative Owner Misled SCOTUS

by Chris Walker, TRUTHOUT

A petitioner in the recent U.S. Supreme Court case that overturned anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ people in Colorado appears to have misled the Court regarding key facts in the case.

Lorie Smith, who owns the website production company 303 Creative, was represented in the case by the far right legal organization Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). In their filing to the Court, Smith and ADF claimed that a Colorado law barring businesses from discriminating against LGBTQ residents had rendered her unable to perform certain functions within her business, particularly creating wedding websites, as she didn't want to make websites for same-sex couples.

But reporting from The New Republic shows that Smith did create a wedding site in at least one instance.

Columbia University legal historian Kate Redburn discovered the evidence while doing research on right-wing disinformation and alerted The New Republic, which has been closely monitoring the case. Using the Wayback Machine, an internet archival service, Redburn found that Smith had produced a wedding site in 2015, and had included it as an example of the kind of work she could provide to potential clients on her own website.

Redburn said they were taken aback by the finding. "The idea that she hadn't made any wedding websites for anyone was so baked into the narrative around this case," Redburn said.

After being confronted with the evidence, ADF admitted that Smith had made the site for a family member and had removed it from her portfolio before the Supreme Court had heard the case, The New Republic reported. ADF denied that this changed aspects of Smith's chilled speech claims.

After The New Republic reached out to ADF for comment, the organization wrote on its Twitter account that Smith didn't "advertise or offer to create WEDDING WEBSITES for the general public."

"Yet the wedding website appeared on a page advertising Smith's web design services, for anyone, and was undifferentiated from what Smith says is her commercial work," The New Republic's Melissa Gira Grant reported. "Whether or not Smith charged the bride for her services, the wedding website was, apparently for much of 2015, being used to advertise her services. A reasonable conclusion to draw is that designing wedding websites is one of them."

This isn't the first time Smith and ADF have been caught lying in their complaint to the Court.

Prior to the Supreme Court's ruling in late June, The New Republic discovered that Smith had used the name of a man in her legal filing, alleging that he and his partner had requested a wedding website, purportedly showcasing the real possibility that, had she offered wedding websites,

same-sex couples would have requested her services.

In fact, Smith and ADF appear to have made the whole thing up. The man, who went by the name Stewart in the filing, does exist, but he has been married to a woman for several years, and is himself a website creator, a point that makes his supposed request for a website dubious at best.

"I'm married, I have a child – I'm not really sure where that came from? But somebody's using false information in a Supreme Court filing document," Stewart told The New Republic.

In spite of the false claims made in the case, the conservative majority in the Supreme Court sided with Smith, ruling that the Colorado anti-discrimination law was too burdensome for businesses and violated their speech rights. "The First Amendment envisions the United States as a rich and complex place where all persons are free to think and speak as they wish, not as the government demands," Justice Neil Gorsuch



wrote in the Court's majority opinion. Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented to the ruling, writing:

Five years ago, this Court recognized the 'general rule' that religious and philosophical objections to gay marriage 'do not allow business owners...[to] deny protected persons equal access to goods and services under a neutral and generally applicable public accommodations law. Today, the Court, for the first time in its history, grants a business open to the public a constitutional right to refuse to serve members of a protected class.

Chase Strangio, a lawyer and transgender activist, has said that the ruling will have detrimental effects on LGBTQ people going forward.

"So many people already hold the anxiety of being turned away. From stores. From hotels. From hospitals. It becomes ingrained and shapes the contours of life," Strangio said. "Validating it reinforces the most insidious forces at play in the supremacies that have defined this country."

Chris Walker is a news writer at Truthout, and is based out of Madison, Wisconsin. Focusing on both national and local topics since the early 2000s, he has produced thousands of articles analyzing the issues of the day and their impact on the American people. He can be found on Twitter: @thatchriswalker

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Electric Tricycle Pilot Program Launches at Colonial Heights Library

Having a library card has its perks. In addition to having free access to books, audiobooks, and streaming video, you can now check out an e-trike at the Colonial Heights Library.



The small fleet of e-trikes are now available thanks to a partnership with the City of Sacramento and funding from a California Energy Commission grant.

"People are always surprised about what they'll find at the library," said Cathy Crosthwaite, Sacramento Public Library Deputy Director. "The library is ever-evolving to meet the community's changing needs. We love to surprise and delight people every time they visit."

The three-wheeled electric tricycles are perfect for running errands around the neighborhood or cruising short distances. They also feature a large rear cargo basket to stow your gear and groceries when you're on the go.

Library cardholders who are at least 18 years old and in good standing can check out an e-trike for up to three weeks. The electric vehicles are part of the Lucky Day collection

and cannot be reserved in advance.

Currently, there are five e-trikes available for use at Colonial Heights Library. Staff will explore expanding the program to other library's and the addition of more e-trikes in the coming months.

"We're so excited to partner with the Sacramento Public Library to provide this alternative mode of transportation for the community," said Rachel Patten, City Sustainability Analyst. "Launching this pilot program is one step in helping people access sustainable choices wherever possible."

E-trikes join a growing list of big ticket items that you might want to try before you buy. Beyond books, library users can check out household tools, video games, kitchen equipment, seeds and even Chromebooks for free with their library card.

Learn more about e-trikes at www.saclibrary.org/etrike.



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American Airline's New Nonstop to Miami from Sacramento International Airport

by SMF Staff

Sun-soaked beaches, vibrant culture, lively nightlife, and a welcoming atmosphere have long made Miami a hot destination for travelers. This winter, getting to South Florida from Sacramento will be easier than ever thanks to a new nonstop flight from American Airlines.



Miami Skyline

Miami offers a mosaic of cultures that visitors can experience through art, music, and food. The city's diverse population creates a rich cultural environment with influences from an array of ethnic backgrounds, making it an exciting and dynamic city to explore. One of the oldest neighborhoods, Historic Overtown, was long known as the "Harlem of the South" and a place where visitors can check out colorful murals by black artists, comfort food at Michelin-recognized restaurants or hole-in-the-wall spots with incredible dishes or take in a comedy or jazz show. In Little Havana, the Cuban influence can be found in its shops, historical monuments, and restaurants. Colorful Little Haiti is a great place to see Caribbean arts and artisan goods (Haitian Heritage Month is every May). Those communities just scratch the surface of the people who call Miami home.

It's no surprise that Miami is home to some of the world's most beautiful beaches. The city's warm, year-round climate attracts people who seek outdoor activities (think kayaking, sailing, exploring the Everglades) as well as those

who want to sunbathe, swim, and join a beach party or two. Speaking of parties, Miami's nightlife is legendary, attracting visitors looking for lively bars, nightclubs, and a high-energy party atmosphere.

Miami, and South Beach in particular, is known for its gay-friendly atmosphere, with numerous LGBTQ-owned businesses, bars, clubs, and festivals. The Miami Beach Gay Pride Parade draws around 170,000 partiers for parades, pool parties, film screenings, drag competitions, comedy shows and more. Beyond June's Pride, the Winter Party Festival is an annual celebration of music, dance and community with dance parties, beach parties and exciting performances. It's a great way to shake off the winter chill!

Last but not least – shopping! From luxury boutiques to open air markets, to Cuban cigar stores to vintage shops you're sure to find a one-of-a-kind gift or souvenir to bring home to commemorate your visit.

It's not too soon to start thinking about your getaway. Winter is high season in Miami so now is the time to start planning. Tickets for the new flight are on sale now at www.aa.com. For more information, visit sacramento.aero.



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DeSantis Says He Will “Start Slitting Throats on Day One” as President

by Chris Walker, TRUTHOUT

Over the weekend, Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis – who has been waging a fledgling 2024 presidential campaign – used violent rhetoric to suggest that he’d go after federal employees he felt were disloyal to him should he become president.

“We’re going to have all these deep state people, you know we’re going to start slitting throats on day one,” DeSantis said during a New Hampshire Public Radio interview on Sunday with former Republican senator Scott Brown.

DeSantis’s reference to the “deep state” is rooted in the baseless conspiracy theory, widely shared among the far right, that government employees, who remain in their positions, worked against former President Donald Trump during his time in office – a theory that is not based on any factual evidence whatsoever, experts say.

DeSantis’s comments likely aren’t meant to be taken literally. However, they do demonstrate the candidate’s willingness to use threatening and divisive language to court a base of GOP voters who have increasingly embraced the possibility of violence to achieve their political ends.

Late last month, in an interview published on right-wing site Real America’s Voice, DeSantis used similar rhetoric when referring to his choice for the Department of Defense, saying:

“I think the idea that you take a flag [officer] or general officer who recently retired and put them as [secretary of Defense], I think it is a mistake. ... You know, they may have to slit some throats. And it’s a lot harder to do that if these are people that you’ve trained with in the past or that you know.”

DeSantis’s comments come as he has attempted a “reboot” of his campaign in recent weeks after failing to garner enough support from GOP-leaning voters to present a real challenge to former President Donald Trump, who is also running to be the party’s 2024 nominee. Polling published by The New York Times this week shows the Florida governor lagging far behind Trump – while he still comes in second place among a field of other choices, DeSantis only receives the support of 17 percent of Republican voters in the primaries, the poll found, while Trump receives 54 percent support.

Even if the two candidates are polled head-to-head without any other opposition, Trump polls at a two-to-one margin versus DeSantis, garnering 62 percent support in the survey versus DeSantis’s 31 percent support.

It’s possible that DeSantis is trying to “out-Trump” the former president, imitating Trump’s violent rhetoric during his 2016 and

2020 presidential campaigns to make himself a more viable candidate in the primaries.

“You can’t out-Trump Trump, right? And that’s what he’s really been trying to do,” Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D) said last month on MSNBC. “His attacks on teachers, on schools, on LGBTQ+ Americans, I think, go way too far in the state of Florida. And I think that they are a profound political miscalculation and an overcompensation.”

Like Trump, DeSantis’s words and actions echo those of noted fascists. This past spring, DeSantis met with fascist leaders of Hungary, including Hungarian President Katalin Novak, an ally to far right Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Henry A. Giroux, a member of Truthout’s board of directors and the current McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest in the English and Cultural Studies Department, denounced DeSantis’s fascist politics in a December op-ed.

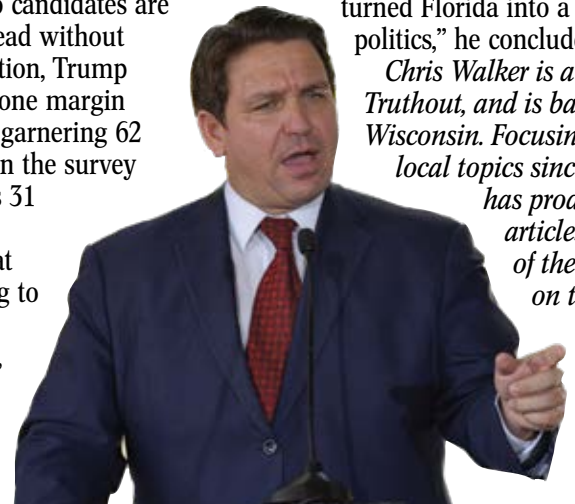
“DeSantis’s lies, policies and embrace of historical revisionism cannot be separated from either an egregious fascist history or the current attempts by the GOP to erase migrants and Black and Brown people from history in order to prop up a white nationalist agenda,” Giroux wrote.

Giroux added:

“Ron DeSantis has made clear in both his statements and policies that fascist politics is alive and well in the United States. ... DeSantis has waged a war on immigrants, targeted gay and transgender youth, purged voters, banned books in Florida schools, limited what teachers can say about racism and other critical elements of American history, and used state power to punish businesses, evident in his ruthless and vindictive attack on Disney. He has also used policing to punish Black voters who disagree with his policies, courted Christian nationalists, supported a white nationalist agenda and waged a war on higher education.”

“There is little doubt that DeSantis has turned Florida into a laboratory of fascist politics,” he concluded.

Chris Walker is a news writer at Truthout, and is based out of Madison, Wisconsin. Focusing on both national and local topics since the early 2000s, he has produced thousands of articles analyzing the issues of the day and their impact on the American people. He can be found on Twitter: @thatchriswalker



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Little Activisms *by Judy Saint* How To Get Through To Closed Minds

Conspiracy theories incite distrust and fear of LGBT+ and other minorities, as you know. Pedophiles, trafficking, grooming, chemical sprays, secret agenda, pizza parlor basements, all sorts of rabbit holes and potholes, deeper and deeper they go. Sounding crazy is a badge of honor.

How do you talk with people caught in these traps? It seems impossible, even at family gatherings with BBQ and ice-cold watermelon.

Only one method has ever struck me as viable to talk with deluded followers. It has two steps.

ONE, first establish a common bond. Maybe you live on the same street, shop at the same store, have kids in the same school, take the same fitness course or evening college class, walk the same trail or maybe you spot a familiar book being read in a waiting room. Establish and build on anything you have in common. Show interest. This step cannot be skipped.

TWO, at the right time, present a challenging question and do not answer it. It's crucial that you do not answer your question. No hints, no lecturing, no facts, no science, no charts, nothing. Just leave the question open and don't say a word. If it's from you, and dropped at the right time, they will think about it later.

Change has to happen from inside. We've all tried telling them the truth about their conspiracies. We've tried reasoning, facts, and leading them through logic, but it only

backfires. Being challenged from the outside sends them running all the harder back to their fold for reassurance. In-group acceptance is more important than facts, even if people die.

They have to be presented with a good question from a trusted insider, someone with common ground, then left alone to think for themselves.

Let's look at my two best examples embellished from my past.

On a train going across the country (highly recommend this adventure, btw), several people were getting to know each other in the observation car. Pleasantries soon turned to a political discussion, each side claiming different attributes to then-president Trump. We were all friendly since our conversation began with a love of train travel, our children, destinations, and other subjects (STEP ONE). A farmer said Trump's policies ended his sales to China. I commiserated with the farmer, saying, "Yeah, China is now buying from Russian farmers. Why is it always Russia that benefits?" (STEP TWO) My question stopped the conversation. One person finally said, "Yeah, everything does seem to always benefit Russia." I offered no answer or opinion. My question was heard by both sides. That's the

point: I was heard by some seemingly close-minded people.

Another example, attending a local high school play, conversations before the show were easy. The audience bonded wherever hellos were said (STEP ONE). In one exchange with a fellow patron, the conversation turned to his insistence that being gay is a choice. With a smile, I asked my challenging question. "If it's a choice, then could you choose to be gay for, say, a weekend?" (STEP TWO) His quick response was, "No" but he had no words after that. He fell silent. I felt sure he would rethink his position later.

Two steps: Establish a bond, then pose a question with no answer. We can only hope they find logic on their own. It's the only way I've seen that can work.

Thanks for considering it. Happy BBQ and watermelon to you.

Little Activisms encourages readers to consider small changes we can make to help social causes, and to feel good about ourselves for taking small risks. Judy Saint is President of the Greater Sacramento Chapter of Freedom From Religion Foundation and author of The Pleasant Atheist Adult Coloring Book available on Amazon.

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LGBTQ Sacramento Sports

by Matt Burlingame

Throughout our community's history, LGBTQ sports have provided a safe space to foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Sacramento boasts an array of amazing sports groups that welcome and encourage participation at all levels. Regardless of the sport, or if one is a spectator or participant, these organizations inspire a sense of achievement and empowerment that members of our community are often cheated out of. Here is a list of groups you can join if you are interested in getting involved in your community.

BOWLING

The River City Bowlers league has a long and rich history. Established in 1977-78, this thriving group initially bowled at Alhambra Bowl in downtown Sacramento. Starting with less than 20 teams, participation soared to 44 teams in the 2nd season, prompting a move to AMF Land Park Bowl, where they continue to play a full winter schedule and a shortened summer season. Catering to bowlers of all skill levels, the league proudly supports the Gay Games event and has produced numerous medal winners since 1982. A friendly venue for the LGBT community, River City Bowlers also holds the distinction of being a member of the International Gay Bowling Organization (IGBO). The group bowls Sundays 6 p.m. at the AMF Land Park Lanes, 5850 Freeport Blvd. rivercitybowlers.com

Join the fun at Game On Bowling Organization (GO-BO), a vibrant bowling league and tournament in Sacramento, California. Founded in 2013 by bowling enthusiasts, GO-BO welcomes adults of all types to enjoy entertaining and fabulous bowling experiences. Find out more about their events and schedules by looking them up on Facebook.

The OutLoud Sacramento Bowling league is an 8-week recreational bowling league that takes place at Bowlero North Sacramento, 4800 Madison Ave. Teams of 4 compete in 3 games per week. Worried about your bowling skills? No problem! Everyone gets a handicap to help improve their scores. All players, regardless of age, experience, or sexuality, are welcome to join in on the fun. The Summer registration is now closed, but there are seasonal signups, so keep checking in! (outloudsports.com)

CHEERLEADING

Established in 1999, Cheer Sacramento serves as a creative outlet for adult individuals while raising funds for local nonprofits. The organization values diversity and fosters an empowering environment that celebrates individuals of all genders, gender expressions, identities, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and body shapes. Cheer Sacramento welcomes individuals to join either as Performing Members or as part of the Event Support Team. Cheer Sacramento's Season 24 registration for tryouts opens on Feb. 1, 2024. The season runs from May to April, with a focus on their largest NorCal Pride Tour to date during the summer. (cheersacramento.org)

KICKBALL

Sacramento Kickball is gearing up for an exciting Fall 2023 season, and registration will be opening soon for kickball enthusiasts of all skill levels. Participants can choose from two divisions: Beginner/Intermediate League or Intermediate/Advanced League. The league welcomes individuals of all sexualities, genders, and personalities. Whether you're a free agent seeking a team or part of a small group or existing team, Sacramento Kickball invites you

to join the fun. Registration is open until Aug. 16. Late registration will be open until Aug. 27. The season runs from Sept. 9 to Nov. 11 at Tahoe Park, with Roscoe's Bar and Grill sponsoring the league. (outloudsports.com)

RUNNING/WALKING/HIKING

FrontRunners/FrontWalkers Sacramento was founded in 1992 and is still going strong. The group offers year-round activities, including weekly runs and walks on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. from McKinley Park and Saturdays at 8 a.m. from Guy West Bridge. There are also monthly BBQs, picnics, brunches, and more. All fitness levels are welcome to participate. Don't miss out on the fun—join their vibrant community today! (frontrunners.org)

Discover the camaraderie and adventure with Gay & Lesbian Sierrans (GLS) Mother Lode chapter! Established in 1996, this friendly group of around 130 lesbians and gay men is passionate about outdoor activities and environmental conservation. Join them for day hikes, weekend camping trips, and more while making new friends in a comfortable atmosphere. All are welcome to participate, no Sierra Club membership required. (sierraclub.org/mother-lode/gay-lesbian-sierrans)

SOFTBALL

The Sacramento Valley Gay & Lesbian Softball League (SVGLS) offers the opportunity to play softball while providing an inclusive space for individuals to learn new skills, make new friends, and, above all, have a great time. Whether you're a new player or a returning one, there's a place for you. New players can register as Free Agents and receive guidance on which division best suits their skills. Sports play a vital role in bringing people together, building connections, and fostering a sense of community. SVGLS recognizes the importance of these values and encourages individuals to be part of this fantastic league! Registration is now open for players of all skill levels. (svgl.org/registration)

TENNIS

The Sacramento Gay & Lesbian Tennis (SGLT) was founded in July of 2011. Our organization provides opportunities for adults in the Sacramento and surrounding communities to come play tennis and socialize in an enjoyable environment. (sglttennis.org)

There have been many LGBTQ sports in Sacramento that have come and gone, and more just waiting for you to discover them, or perhaps even start your own team. Check out the following websites to keep up to date with more sports leagues in the area: United States Gay Sports Network: usgsn.com/sacramento and OutLoud Sports Sacramento: Outloudsports.com/sacramento

Sacramento's Theaters Hit Hard By Declining Audiences, Face Serious Challenges Ahead

by Patti Roberts

The news that iconic theaters across the country are closing has recently sent shockwaves through the American arts community. Mark Taper Forum, a groundbreaking Los Angeles theater since 1967, announced in June that it was pausing its productions, joining other regional theaters around the nation who are ceasing or postponing productions, laying off staff and cutting production costs.

Many theaters have seen a decline in attendance after the COVID shutdowns and haven't solved the problem of bringing audiences back to live productions. They are also facing the challenges of aging theater patrons, a lack of regular local media coverage and having to compete against myriad streaming platforms.

Here in Sacramento, a heartbreaking reality is setting in as one of the city's beloved and the longest-running theater companies is reportedly facing an uncertain future. The Sacramento Theatre Company, STC, which officially opened in 1945 and has provided continuous productions over the years, could see its stage go dark in the near future, according to individuals familiar with the situation.

Two months ago, the majority of STCs staff was reportedly let go, Executive Director Michael Laun resigned as of June 30, as did a number of STC board members. And there are no announcements of an upcoming season, which usually starts in September — their website page simply states "no events," although STC may be continuing its schools programs and special events. Also, there appears to be no current search for a new executive director to replace Laun while Board President Betsy Wood is listed as "Interim Executive Director." (STC did not reply directly to a request for comment about Laun's replacement.)

According to sources in the theater community who spoke on background, the STC ended its last season in debt and there is an interest in Broadway Sacramento absorbing the H Street stage facilities.

After a number of requests were sent to STC for a statement or further information, STC has declined to comment, replying in an email that "our interim Executive Director has chosen not to respond at this time." And Broadway Sacramento has chosen not to comment regarding the possible takeover of STC theater buildings.

While STC is facing a questionable future, two other main theater companies in town — B Street Theatre and CapStage — survived COVID lockdowns and are seeing some return of audiences. However, though they are currently steady on their feet, they also see challenges ahead for regional theaters.

First, they're facing the economic fallout of COVID disruptions and the end of government assistance that kept them afloat at the height of the pandemic. Second, they are actively working to woo back their regular subscribers and patrons. And third, they are aware of the need to outreach to more diverse theatergoers.

"We had to shut down production from March 2020 until August 2021, which of course led to the layoffs of much of our staff," said CapStage Managing Director Keith Riedell. "And many actors, technicians and theater artists left the field during the closures. But the shutdown gave us time to think about the company we wanted to

be when we opened back up."

For B Street, the closing of in-person productions "resulted in layoffs, canceled artist contracts and what was essentially an elimination of all earned revenue," said B Street Artistic Director Lyndsay Burch.

Both theaters received Paycheck Protection Program and other grants to help them through the closures. The theaters used the downtime to restructure and look at long-term goals. After 35 years, B Street founder and Artistic Director Buck Busfield retired, and Burch took over the helm. And CapStage promoted Riedell as managing director to work alongside Artistic Director Michael Stevenson.

"The company needed a comprehensive strategic plan to look forward into the next five years, which we've implemented as a way to focus on developing a growth trajectory for the organization," said Riedell. "We also have spent a great deal of time looking at diversity, equity and inclusion and how we incorporate that into everything we do."

Riedell cites some of the challenges ahead include an aging theater population, people using in-home entertainment platforms who aren't going out to theater anymore, and the rise in inflation and general living costs that keeps folks from spending on entertainment.

"Our audiences are enthusiastic, supportive, engaged, and getting younger and more diverse, though still dominantly older, a majority being 65 years and above," he said. "However, I think we sell our older audiences short. For the most part, our older patrons are on the ride we take them on each season, and embrace the socially conscious, conversation-generating theater we produce."

While CapStage is trying to rope in a younger audience, Riedell acknowledges that "they have a larger menu of social options to choose from and we may not be high on their list."

B street is also looking at the overall decline in theater audiences. "Theater was sustained by a generation who saw their support of the arts almost like a civic duty," Burch said. "Well, now that base has dwindled for many reasons."

One aspect Burch sees as a plus is offering a variety of options, with the acknowledgement that in a season, "audiences may not like every single choice, but they appreciate a range of topics. I believe theater is supposed to shine a light on the universal and the things that bring us together."

This story is part of the Solving Sacramento journalism collaborative. Solving Sacramento is supported by funding from the James Irvine Foundation and Solutions Journalism Network. Our partners include California Groundbreakers, Capital Public Radio, Outword, Russian America Media, Sacramento Business Journal, Sacramento News & Review, Sacramento Observer and Univision 19.

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Pee Wee Forever!

by Chris Narloch

At the ripe old age of 59, my extended adolescence is officially over, now that Pee Wee Herman has passed. The immortal man-child character created by the brilliant actor Paul Reubens turned out to be mortal after all.

Reubens, who died recently at age 70 after a private battle with cancer, may be gone, but Pee Wee Herman will live on in our hearts forever.

Previous generations of children had the super-sweet but much more sedate Mr. Rogers. Pee Wee was the hip alternative – a character who appealed to children of all ages with his sunny disposition and a healthy dose of sarcastic sass. (“I know you are, but what am I?” was a favorite catch phrase.) Reubens’ hilarious hit movie from 1985, “Pee Wee’s Big Adventure,” is inarguably one of director Tim Burton’s finest films, and his long-running Saturday morning children’s show, “Pee Wee’s Playhouse,” won 22 Emmy Awards over the course of its run.

As the tributes poured in after Reubens’ death, I saw on TV that a clever fan had placed a pair of white platform shoes on Pee Wee’s sidewalk star in Hollywood.

I smiled through my tears as I pictured Pee Wee up in heaven doing his classic Tequila dance on the bar, for all of eternity.



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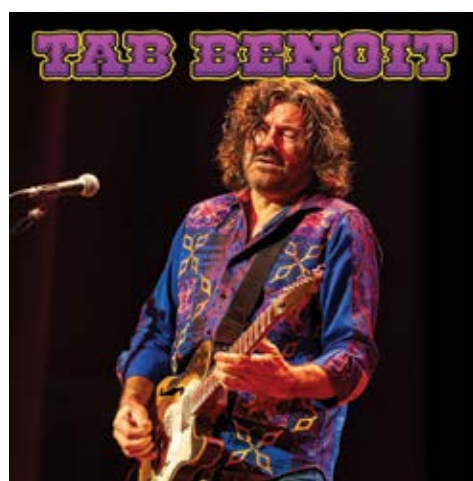


THURSDAY | AUG 17



WILLIE
BARCENA

SATURDAY | AUG 19



MONDAY | AUG 21

Crest CLASSIC MOVIES



SCARFACE
(1983)

THURSDAY, AUG 10, 7:00PM



CADE THE TORTURED
CROSSING
(2023)
A NEIL BREEN FILM

FRIDAY, AUG 11, 7:00PM



ROCKY
(1976)

SATURDAY, AUG 12, 7:00PM



ROCKY II
(1979)

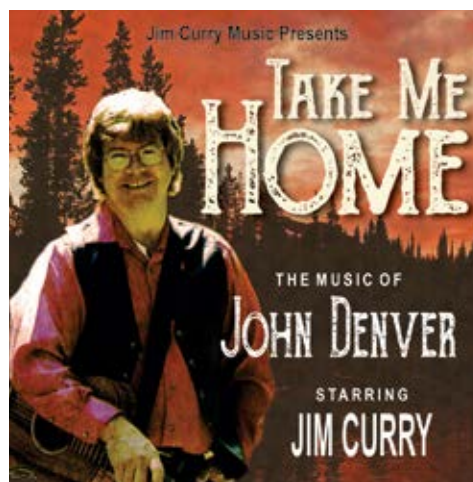
SUNDAY, AUG 13, 3:00PM



SATURDAY | SEP 02



SUNDAY | SEP 03



SUNDAY | SEP 10



MUSICAL MONDAYS
MARY POPPINS
(1964)

MONDAY, AUG 14, 6:00PM



FRIDAY | SEP 15



SATURDAY | SEP 16



SUNDAY | SEP 17



SUMMER SCREENTIME
LYLE, LYLE,
CROCODILE
(2022)

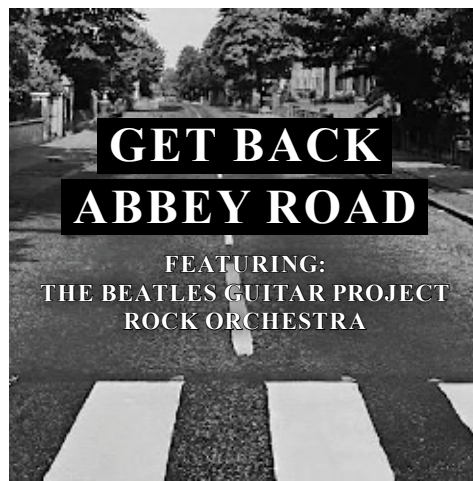
WEDNESDAY, AUG 16, 3:00PM



WEDNESDAY | SEP 20



FRIDAY | SEP 22



GET BACK
ABBEY ROAD

FEATURING:
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ROCK ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY | SEP 23



ROAD HOUSE
(1989)

FRIDAY, AUG 18, 7:00PM



SUMMER SCREENTIME
MATILDA
(1996)

WEDNESDAY, AUG 23, 3:00PM



ROCKY III
(1982)

FRIDAY, AUG 25, 7:00PM

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Do Not Miss Music Circus This August
Ragtime The Musical Plus Richard Lewis

by Chris Narloch

Broadway At Music Circus is the place to be this August for the last two shows of this summer's season, plus an all-star celebration of the amazing career of Mr. Broadway Sacramento himself, Richard Lewis.



Ragtime

With music by Stephen Flaherty, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, and a book by Terrence McNally, and based on the acclaimed 1975 novel of the same name, this sweeping musical portrait of early twentieth century America tells the story of three families in pursuit of the American Dream.

An award-winning creative team brought E.L. Doctorow's distinguished novel to life on Broadway, winning universal acclaim, including four 1998 Tony Awards and five Drama Desk Awards.

Race and class collide in this very timely classic musical drama, performing through Sunday, August 13, at UC Davis Health Pavilion in Sacramento. Go to: www.broadwaysacramento.com/broadway-at-music-circus

An All-Star Concert Celebration

After devoting his entire career to Broadway Sacramento, President & CEO Richard Lewis has decided to retire. To honor his extraordinary tenure of service, ten Broadway and Broadway At Music Circus stars have been invited to perform at this one night only benefit concert.

You don't want to miss this unique opportunity to experience Tony, Drama Desk and Olivier Award-winning actors, performing songs from some of your favorite musicals in the intimate UC Davis Health Pavilion.

This very special event, which benefits Broadway Sacramento's musical theatre productions and arts education programs, will also feature an array of delicious food and Northern California wines and beers—and it's all included in the ticket price.

You are cordially invited to join Zonya Love, Jason Graae, James T. Lane, Lesli Margherita, Ken Page, Faith Prince, James Snyder, Max Von Essen, and Teal Wicks, on Thursday, August 31, 2023. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for food and beverage service, and the concert begins at 7:00 p.m.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit: www.broadwaysacramento.com/support/all-star-concert



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Country Queen CD Reviews

by Chris Narloch

The slick country-pop sound of female artists like Carrie Underwood has recently taken a back seat to less commercial but more adventurous women in country, including several of the fabulous females reviewed below.

Lainey Wilson Bell Bottom Country

This 31-year-old native of Louisiana is the real deal, and she has gained millions of country fans in just the last couple years with huge hits like “Things a Man Oughta Know” and “Heart Like a Truck,” the latter included on “Bell Bottom Country.”

I usually don’t care for country songs about trucks, but “Heart Like a Truck” is so well-written and soulfully sung that it totally won me over. Elsewhere on this dynamite disc, Wilson scores with killer cuts like “Smell Like Smoke,” “Grease,” and “Watermelon Moonshine.”



Elle King Come Get Your Wife

This rebel rocker, who scored a monster hit song in 2015 with Ex’s & Oh’s, recently relocated to country music which suits her raspy voice and ballsy attitude just fine.

She immediately scored another monster hit, in the form of a delicious duet with Miranda Lambert entitled “Drunk (And I Don’t Wanna Go Home),” which is included here.

King fully immerses herself in rebel rock country on “Come Get Your Wife” with memorable tracks including “Worth a Shot” with Dierks Bentley, “Try Jesus,” “Bonafide,” and “Blacked Out.”



Tanya Tucker Sweet Western Sound

We can thank Brandi Carlile for many things – like her own amazing music – and we can also be grateful to her for resurrecting the career of Tanya Tucker, one of the original outlaw country queens, who contributed such classics as “Delta Dawn,” “The Jamestown Ferry,” and “What’s Your Mama’s Name” to country music history in the ‘70s and ‘80s.

“Sweet Western Sound” is Tucker’s and Carlile’s second album together, and while it isn’t as great as 2021’s “While I’m Livin’,” Tucker’s whiskey-soaked voice can still break your heart, which she did on my favorite track from this disc, a beautiful tribute to Linda Ronstadt entitled “Letter To Linda.”



Shania Twain Queen of Me

On her first album in six years, Shania Twain is relentlessly upbeat and positive, which sounds great in theory, except she is ostensibly a country artist which usually means several cryin’-in-your-beer songs.

After years of personal turmoil including health problems and a failed marriage, Twain sounds happier than ever on “Queen of Me” which exudes uplift and girl power on practically every track, such as the terrific “Giddy Up!”

I hate to say it, but too much happiness can be bad for a country artist, and Twain’s current charmed life makes for some rather dull songs,

including the peppy and pop-y title track, plus “Waking Up Dreaming” and “Best Friend.” I would like to think of this disc as a transition record, where Twain is shaking the dust off and getting back on the bike, so to speak. We all know she can make a great record, and, hopefully, next time out that will be the case.

Gays For Days Now Streaming

by Chris Narloch

I have not seen either of these titles just yet but will be eagerly devouring both as soon as I am done with this issue of Outword. Read on for details and then watch them on Prime Video and Netflix, respectively.

Red, White & Royal Blue

Alex Claremont-Diaz (Taylor Zakhar Perez), the son of the President of the United States (Uma Thurman), and Britain’s Prince Henry (Nicholas Galitzine) have a lot in common: stunning good looks, undeniable charisma, international popularity – and a total disdain for each other.

Separated by an ocean, their long-running feud hasn’t really been an issue, until a disastrous (and very public) altercation at a royal event becomes tabloid fodder, driving a potential wedge in U.S./British relations at the worst possible time.

Going into damage-control mode, their families and handlers force the two rivals into a staged “truce.” But as Alex and Henry’s icy relationship unexpectedly begins to thaw into a tentative friendship, the friction that existed between them sparks something deeper than they ever expected.

Based on Casey McQuiston’s critically acclaimed New York Times best seller, “Red, White & Royal Blue” marks the feature film writing and directing debut of Tony Award-winning playwright Matthew López (“The Inheritance”).



Red, White & Royal Blue

Heartstopper Season 2

In a direct continuation from the Season 1 finale, which saw Nick Nelson (Kit Connor) coming out to his mom, Season 2 of the series – adapted from Alice Oseman’s graphic novels – focuses on his budding relationship with Charlie Spring (Joe Locke) and his coming out journey, along with Charlie’s past (and present). If this second season is half as charming as the first season was, “Heartstopper” Season 2 should be a home run hit.

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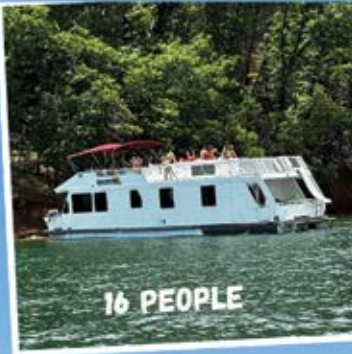
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The Dog Days of Summer at the Movies *by Chris Narloch*

August is a notorious dumping ground for bad movies, since families are busy wrapping up last-minute vacations and getting kids back to school. True to form, only one or two of the theatrical films reviewed below are worth your time and money. With everyone going to see “Barbie” and/or “Oppenheimer,” it may seem pointless to review any other movies, but here goes.



Haunted Mansion

If you have older, grade school-aged children in your life, they might get a kick out of this sort-of-spooky comedy based on the classic Disneyland ride, which also inspired a very bad 2003 movie starring Eddie Murphy.

This iteration is considerably better than that disaster but that’s not saying much. “Haunted Mansion” is over two hours, which is simply too long for a slight family film aimed at kids, and a subplot involving the main character’s dead wife is too heavy given the target audience.

On the plus side, LaKeith Stanfield is as sexy as ever as the lead ghost hunter, and he is well-supported by a talented, eclectic cast that includes Tiffany Haddish, Danny DeVito, Rosario Dawson, Jamie Lee Curtis, Dan Levy, Hasan Minhaj, Winona Ryder, and Owen Wilson. In wide release.



Talk to Me

Hardcore horror fans might enjoy this violent flick about a mysterious severed, embalmed hand that is a conduit to the spirit world. The hand becomes a viral sensation and a popular pastime at teen parties, where things predictably get out of hand.

What could have been an intelligent, scary commentary on the pitfalls of peer pressure unfortunately becomes a muddled mess about a bunch of dimwits who keep shaking the hand long after any sane person would have gotten a clue.

Bottom line, I did not care whether the possessed young people in the film lived or died since most of them were annoying and stupid to begin with. Currently in theaters.



Passages

I am a big fan of Ira Sachs, the talented gay director who made “The Delta,” “Love Is Strange,” and “Keep the Lights On,” but his latest movie left me cold, despite powerful performances and an intriguing premise.

Is it better or worse or irrelevant if the person that your same-sex partner cheats on you with is someone of the opposite sex? That is just one of the intriguing questions posed by “Passages.”

In the film, a gay male couple’s marriage is thrown into crisis when one of them impulsively begins a passionate affair with a young woman.

Unfortunately, Sachs and his cowriters make the guy who strays so off-putting even before he cheats, that we have no sympathy for him at all – or at least, I did not.

The cheater, an arrogant, fucked-up director, does not need a boyfriend or a girlfriend – he needs a psychiatrist. If Sachs’ intent was to demonstrate that gay guys can be self-involved pricks, just like anybody else, then he has succeeded magnificently.

“Passages” is tentatively scheduled to open on August 11 at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre.



Shortcomings

This quirky dramedy was directed by the sitcom star Randall Park, and his debut feature is an entertaining, original effort based on a graphic novel of the same name about a struggling California filmmaker forced to contemplate his future after his girlfriend moves to New York for an internship.

An attempt at dating a coworker fails miserably, and the lead character (well-played by Justin H. Min) eventually realizes that his defensiveness and abrasiveness may have something to do with his unhappiness.

“Shortcomings” is my favorite of the four films reviewed here, and it boasts a terrific performance by the hilarious Sherry Cola, as the hero’s queer best friend. This movie was still playing at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre as we went to press.

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RAGTIME

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For 27 years, we have been Sacramento's resource for LGBTQ+ information, politics, entertainment and we have helped connect and maintain our community.

Because of the continuing trauma being caused by COVID, many of our advertisers are doing everything they can to stay afloat - that includes Outword Magazine. At the onset of the pandemic we changed our distribution model to an online-only affair. That helped us weather the storm, but we have since returned to both online as well traditional, printed copies. Thankfully, the response we have received after returning to print has been fantastic!

However, we are continuing to ask that you, our readers and advertisers help us with a contribution that will be used to keep the presses rolling. This money will assist with publishing costs, both in print and online, and help pay our production staff, staff writers and distribution costs among other things.

Should you wish to support us please click on this ad and go to: OutwordRainbowFund.com.

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If you have any questions, or comments, please feel free to drop us an email: sales@outwordmagazine.com

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and continued support.

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OutwordRainbowFund.com

Out & About with Matthew Burlingame

So many amazing things are happening in August I hardly know where to begin! And I'm not just talking about seeing the Barbie movie or snatching tickets to "Once Upon a One More Time." Right here in our own backyard is a plethora of events to round out this summer's festivities!

Escape the heat and come to *Outword's* Liquid Therapy Happy Hour at Badlands Sacramento, 2003 K St. Discover the perfect blend of drink specials, energizing music videos, exciting giveaways, and a vibrant community of friends. Don't miss out!

Sierra Repertory Theatre presents "Jersey Boys: The Story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons" at the Fallon House Theatre, 11175 Washington St. in Columbia. Running through August 27, this electrifying musical is a journey from New Jersey's streets to stardom, with chart-topping hits and captivating storytelling. Directed by Jerry Lee, choreographed by Ben Bogen and music directed by Patrick Burns. SierraRep.org

Don't miss the Broadway At Music Circus premiere of the iconic musical stage play "Rent" from Aug. 22-27. Set in the vibrant East Village of NYC, this Pulitzer Prize-winning production explores love, self-expression, and seizing the moment. With its unforgettable rock songs and timeless story Rent has become a cultural phenomenon.

Valley Casino Resort, 1200 Athens Ave. in Lincoln, on Saturday Aug. 19 at 7 p.m. Enjoy live performances by The Whispers, Midnight Star, Bloodstone, The Emotions, and The Legendary Blue Notes. Old-school music extravaganza awaits!

Thundervalleyresort.com

On Saturday, Aug. 26 at William Land Park, William Land Park Dr. (across from Sacramento Zoo) come out for the Race for the Arts 5K Run/Walk. Registration is at 7 a.m. for the 8:35 a.m. event. Celebrate 24 years of supporting California arts programs with a fun-filled event including a free arts festival, entertainment, and food.

Raceforthearts.com

After two seasons as Artistic Director, Christian Bohm bids farewell to the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus (SGMC). The community is thankful for his dedication and revival of SGMC post-pandemic and is happy to see the SGMC left stronger than ever. Thank you, Christian, for the enduring musical legacy. You will be missed, but your



Sierra Repertory Theatre presents "Jersey Boys: The Story of Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons."

Join the audience at UC Davis Health Pavilion, 1419 H St. for an unforgettable night. Broadwaysacramento.com

Capital Stage, 2215 J St. presents the Sacramento premiere of Lynn Nottage's "Clyde's" directed by Tony D'Juan and running from Aug. 23 - Sept. 24. This Tony Award-nominated play explores redemption and second chances as formerly incarcerated kitchen staff at a truck stop sandwich shop strive to create the perfect sandwich amidst adversity. Capstage.org

Experience the captivating exhibition "Legacy in the American West" at the California Museum, 1020 O St. through October 1. Discover the diverse occupations and achievements of Black pioneers through a timeline of original pictorial quilts, dispelling myths and showcasing their rich contributions to society, education, and the arts. Curated by Dr. Carolyn Mazloomi, this exhibition, created by the Women of Color Quilters Network, sheds light on African American history in the Western Frontier. Visit the California Museum at 1020 O St. in Sacramento. Californiamuseum.org

Don't miss Soul Fest 2023 at Thunder

impact lives on.

The Chorus welcomes its new Artistic Director, Alex Heetland. He is a choral musician, music director, and pianist who has a passion for creating queer community through singing. Alex was the Artistic Director for the Quire of Eastern Iowa, a queer chorus in Iowa City. We look forward to seeing all that he brings to SGMC! Sagaymenschorus.org

Come to a tropical paradise featuring live performances, DJed music, art activities, and more on Thursday, Aug. 10 at 6 p.m. for ArtMix: Grotto, a thrilling evening at Crocker Art Museum, 216 O St. This month's theme takes you to a world of pirates, mermaids, and aerial artistry. Crockerart.org

Experience the timeless magic of The Eagles at Starbright Entertainment's "One of These Nights" on Friday, Aug. 25 at 7:30 p.m. at the Harris Center for the Arts in Folsom. Let the harmonies and iconic tunes like "Hotel California" transport you to an unforgettable musical journey. Harriscenter.net

For events, birthdays, and announcements, send them to matthew@hengemedia.com.

Thank You Outword Supporters!

Current as of July 27, 2023

Once again we would like to thank those that have become sponsors of Outword Magazine! Your contribution will help us keep the lights on and the closet doors wide open. Here are a list of our Sponsors at the level they participated, so far. We will continue to run this page, with any updates, for the next several issues.

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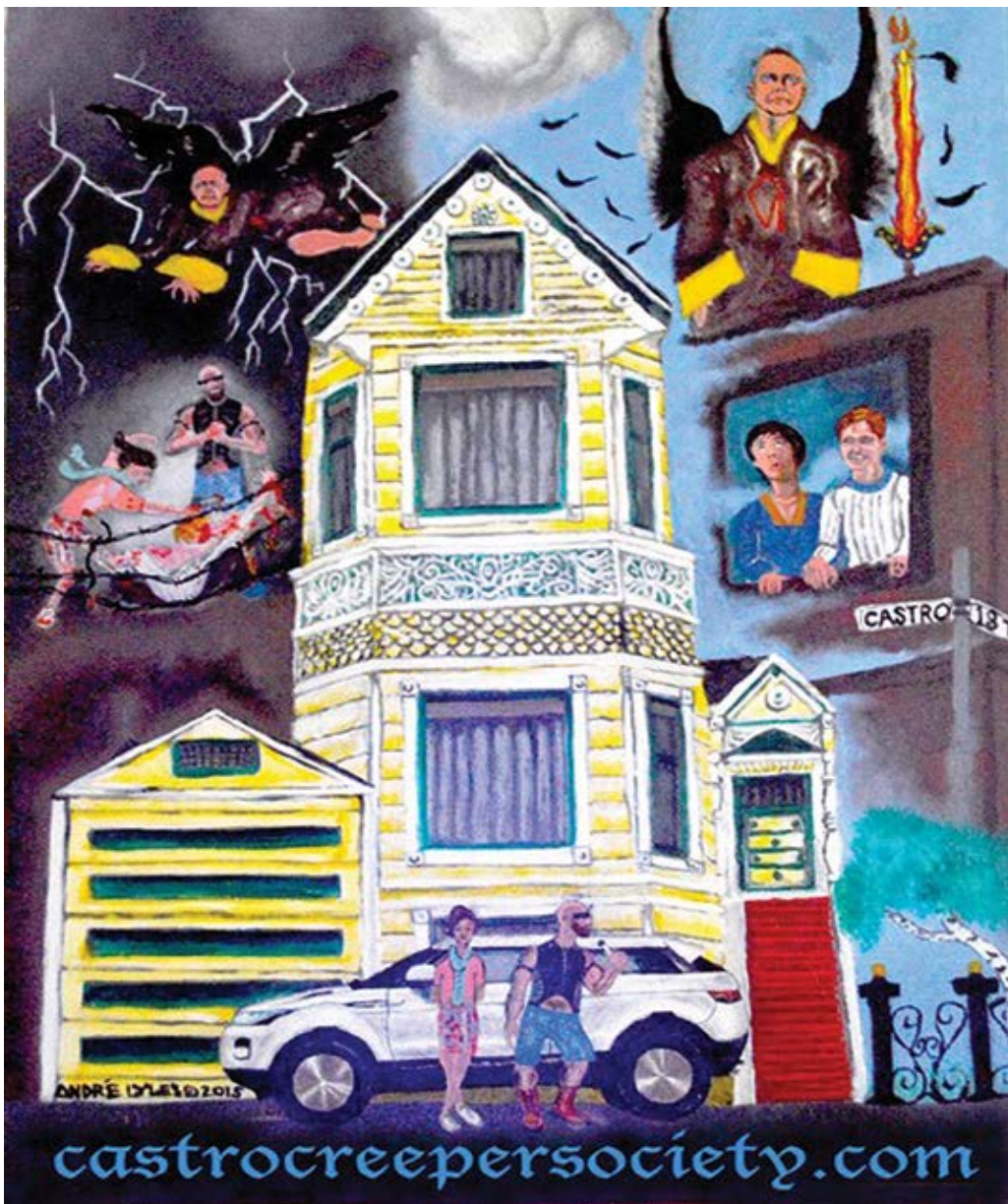
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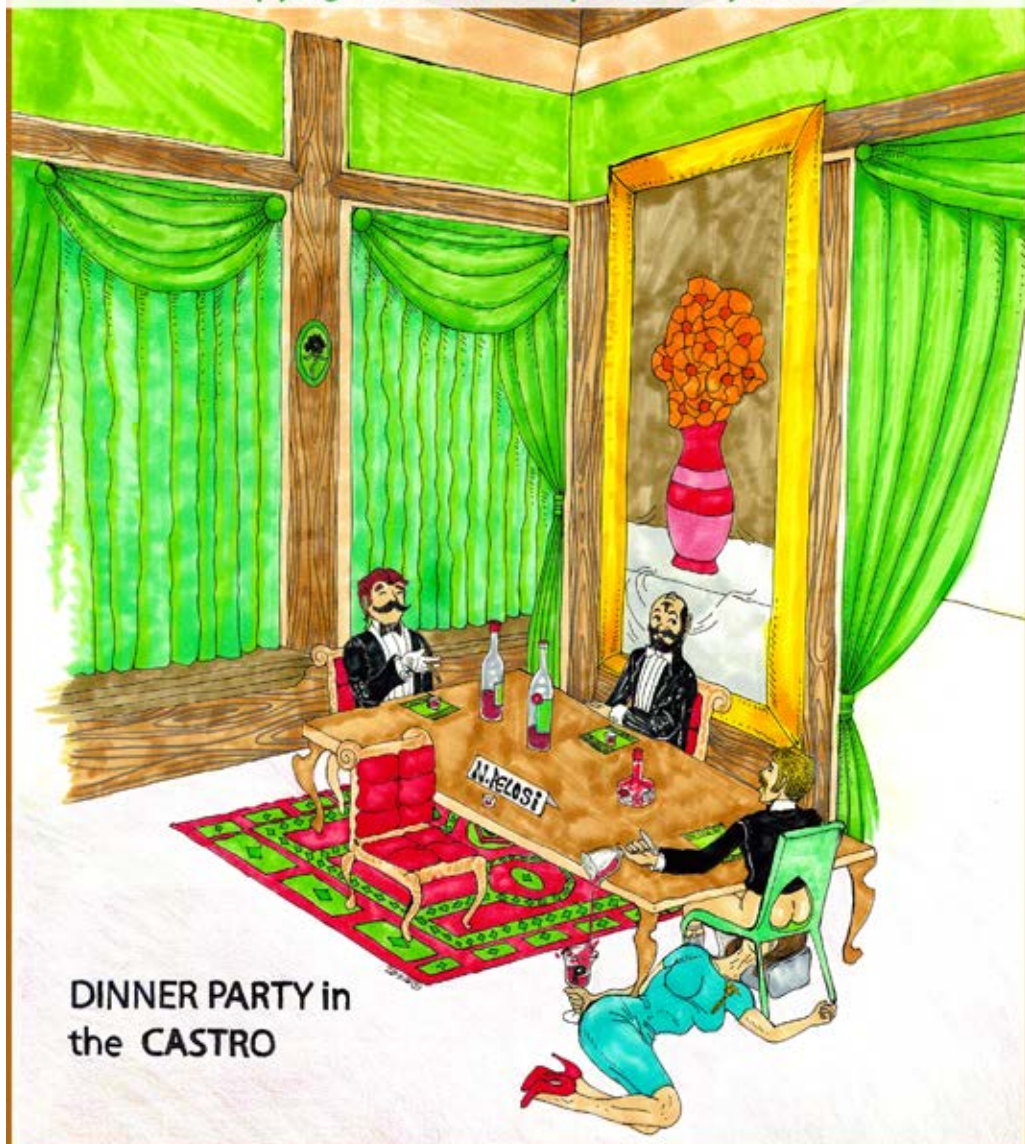
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DINNER PARTY in the CASTRO

Don't Miss the "Glamour Road"

The California Automobile Museum is proud to announce the opening of our new exhibit titled "Glamour Road" on Saturday, August 5th. This new exhibit, spearhead by our new exhibits coordinator ShaVolla Rodriguez, will focus on the art, fashion, and automobiles that defined what we now refer to as the "midcentury."

CALIFORNIA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM



In collaboration with Tom Dolle, author of the eponymous book, the exhibit will invite viewers to join us on a walk at the intersection of fashion and cars and "explore the seldom told story of how glamour, fashion, design and styling became the main focus of automotive marketing from the postwar 1940s through the 1960s." The exhibit will close in late October.

The California Automobile Museum is located at 2200 Front Street in Sacramento, CA. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with last admission at 4 p.m. and closed on Tuesdays. The cost of admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for vintage (65 & over), \$10 for military & students, \$6 for youth (6-17), and free for children (5 & under).

The mission of the California Automobile Museum is to preserve, exhibit and teach the story of the automobile and its influence on our lives.

The California Automobile Museum is governed by the California Vehicle Foundation, an IRS designated, tax exempt 501 (c)3 non-profit corporation, Federal Tax ID #94-2902791. All contributions to the Museum are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable.

www.calautomuseum.org

More Train Rides on Historic Turntable

After a hugely successful first-time experience offering public train rides on the historic turntable for one day during California State Parks Week in June, the California State Railroad Museum & Foundation are proud to announce more turntable rides are available on select Fridays and Saturdays during August and September.



photo by Kelly B Huston

Train departures start at 10 a.m. and leave every half hour with the last departing at 2 p.m. The small but mighty No. 2 locomotive will pull an open-air gondola for 15-minute train rides that include a few spins on the turntable. The historic turntable is located just outside the Roundhouse at the west end of the museum.

When the Railroad Museum & Foundation offered this new experience for one day during Parks Week in mid-June, more than 600 people showed up to take a spin on the historic turntable. Originally built in 1911 by the American Bridge Company for use by Union Pacific in Yakima, Washington, the turntable was installed in Old Sacramento State Historic Park in 1980 as part of a feature of the Roundhouse portion of the California State Railroad Museum. These fun new train rides are designed to connect the importance of railroad turntables and roundhouses with railroad history and operation.

Same day tickets for train rides on the historic turntable are available at the Central Pacific Passenger Station located at Front & J Streets in Old Sacramento State Historic Park. Train ride tickets cost \$5 for adults, \$3 for youth ages 6-17, and are free for members and children five and younger.

For more information about the California State Railroad Museum or Foundation, please visit www.californiarailroad.museum.



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SFF Exposes Cruelty of Conversion Therapy

On Saturday evening, August 19, at the California Railroad Museum, the Sacramento International Film Festival will present "Unfix," a provocative drama directed by Graham Streeter detailing the cruelty of conversion therapy.



A still from "Unfix"

That same afternoon, at the Stanford Gallery in Old Sacramento, a symposium is scheduled to include representatives from The Trevor Project, Born Perfect, and the Conversion Therapy Dropout Network, who will share suicide statistics, support groups and other information for those impacted by conversion therapy.

"Unfix" delves into the sensitive and profound issues surrounding conversion therapy and the lasting effects it can have on an individual's identity. The film explores themes of self-acceptance, the search for truth, and the courage to challenge societal norms.

For more information about these important events, please visit: <https://californiafilm.net>

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