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# outword



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# Idaho Signs a Wave of Anti-LGBTQ+ Legislation Into Law

In a significant legislative development, Idaho has enacted HB668, signed into law by Governor Brad Little, marking a controversial move amidst a wave of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation across the United States. This law stands out due to its sweeping restrictions on gender-affirming care for transgender individuals of all ages, making it a pioneering act of 2024 with potentially profound implications.

At the core of the law's controversy is its direct opposition to the established consensus within the medical community regarding gender-affirming care. Despite unanimous recognition from major medical organizations nationwide that such care is not only beneficial but necessary, the new Idaho law asserts that gender-affirming treatments are "never medically necessary." This stance not only challenges established scientific understanding but also poses a significant barrier to accessing essential medical services for transgender individuals. Under this legislation, medical providers and facilities accepting public funds are prohibited from offering gender-affirming care, significantly limiting access for transgender people.

This restriction extends to university hospitals and affects the availability of health insurance coverage for gender-affirming procedures for public employees and Medicaid beneficiaries. Moreover, the law uniquely targets transgender individuals by allowing hormone therapy and other treatments for non-transgender people, highlighting a discriminatory policy framework. The implications of deeming gender-affirming care as "non-medical" are far-reaching, potentially affecting medical providers' ability to secure malpractice insurance and impacting private insurance

coverage decisions.

Additionally, there's concern about the law's effect on professional licensing, forcing healthcare providers into a dilemma between following medical best practices and adhering to the law. Critics, including Brandon Wolf of the Human Rights Campaign, condemn the legislation as a dangerous politicization of healthcare, jeopardizing the health and well-being of thousands.

The law's enactment is seen as an egregious example of governmental overreach into medical decision-making, setting a worrying precedent for further encroachments on medical freedom and reproductive rights. The American Medical Association, representing over 270,000 medical professionals, has voiced its opposition to such government interference in medicine, affirming gender-affirming care as medically necessary and evidence-based.

This law represents not just an attack on transgender individuals' rights but also a fundamental challenge to medical autonomy and the principle of care based on scientific evidence. As this legal development unfolds, it underscores the escalating conflict between political actions and medical ethics, highlighting a critical battleground for human rights and medical freedom in the United States.

## Equality California Stands Against Recall of Transgender Calexico Councilmember Raul Ureña

“By an incredibly slim margin, a group of far-right extremists has qualified a recall election against Calexico’s first out transgender public official Raúl Ureña. Ureña is one of only a handful of out transgender elected officials in California and, at a time when trans Californians are facing unprecedented political attacks, trans representation in elected office is more important than ever. As councilmember and mayor, Ureña has a proven track record of delivering for the people of Calexico,” said Equality California Executive Director Tony Hoang. “We must name this for what it is – an anti-LGBTQ+ attack against Councilmember Ureña. It will not be tolerated. We strongly urge Calexico voters to reject the recall.”

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# HRC Responds to the Oklahoma Medical Examiner's Report Regarding Nex Benedict

**K**elley Robinson, president of the Human Rights Campaign, released the following statement in response to the full release of the Oklahoma Medical Examiner's report on the death of Nex Benedict, a 16 year-old non-binary student of Choctaw heritage:

"The full report does little to fill in the gaps in information about that day or the more than a year of bullying and harassment that led up to it. It does not answer the questions of so many in Oklahoma and across the country. We continue to support the calls from Nex's family for an independent investigation.

"Young people in Oklahoma and across the country deserve to be safe and respected in school. This includes young people who may dress differently, speak differently, or identify differently from you. What's clear from Nex's death, and from what we've heard from so many students and parents in Owasso and across the state, is that this is not the case. Instead, we have seen the very adults who should be working to protect Oklahoma's kids actively foster the hostile environment that makes students unsafe.

"The release of today's report does not change the fact that LGTBQ+ students in Oklahoma are not safe at school. And it does not change our continued calls for justice and accountability. We reiterate our call for a full and complete investigation into the district, state superintendent Ryan Walters, the Oklahoma State Department of Education, and into their response after Nex was attacked."

## Was Nex Benedict's Death Suicide?

**T**he situation surrounding Nex Benedict's death has brought to light significant concerns and a push for accountability from their family. Nex, a 16-year-old non-binary student of Choctaw descent, faced a tragic end following a period of reported bullying and an assault at Owasso High School in Oklahoma. The initial medical examiner's report hastily classified Nex's death as suicide, without detailing the contributing factors or the physical trauma Nex experienced.

The Benedict family, dissatisfied with the preliminary findings, highlighted the severe injuries Nex suffered, which were evident from the trauma to their head, neck, scalp lacerations, and bruises on their torso and extremities. This contradicts the narrative that the assault Nex endured the day before

their death was minor or inconsequential.

These revelations came as part of the family's effort to correct the incomplete accounts that emerged early on, urging for a comprehensive understanding of the events leading to Nex's death. The family's statement not only sheds light on the overlooked

aspects of the medical examiner's report but also calls for systemic changes within schools and the broader community to address bullying, promote inclusiveness, and prevent similar tragedies. They advocate for the implementation of measures that foster respect, inclusion, and a safe environment for all students, highlighting the urgent need for reform to protect vulnerable individuals within the education system.

As the full medical examiner's report is awaited, the Benedict family's proactive stance serves as a catalyst for dialogue and action against school bullying and discrimination. It underscores the critical importance of taking allegations of bullying seriously, providing adequate support to victims, and ensuring that schools are safe spaces for all students, irrespective of their identity.

The family's efforts to bring to light the circumstances surrounding Nex's death exemplify the need for transparency, accountability, and a commitment to justice and change in the aftermath of such a profound loss.

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## Little Activisms by Judy Saint Are Lawn Signs Risky Today?

No. Yes. Maybe. ... Wrong question.  
Is it worth it to put up yard signs?  
Yes

Clearly yes. It might not convince someone of your position, but it makes them think about it, lets them know your view is more prevalent than they thought, encourages them to take action (like voting), and helps role model your activism to others who might be timid about speaking up. Plus, your favored organizations profit from each sign sale, so there's that.

Actual vandalism is less than you might think. YouTube has tons of local news reports about a yard sign being spray painted, stolen or torn - but the fact that it's making the news tells you how rare it is. In fact, a local TV reporter videotaped my response when someone walked onto someone else's property to place their own 'Jesus Is Born' sign directly blocking the homeowner's 'Happy Solstice' yard sign. My response, which they played on air, was that trespassing is always a crime. (They couldn't bait me into starting a fight about beliefs.) Anyway, that shows you how rare actual vandalism is, that this actually made the news.

Over the years, we have twice had our own lawn signs stolen when we used to place them at streetside. According to our security camera, the first time was three teens on bicycles riding the trail next to our house. The two boys held back, but the female jumped onto our yard, stole our sign, then threw it over the side fence into our back yard. OK, we just put it back in place. They didn't bother it further. The second episode of losing our sign was, oddly, a mature couple in a very hot little top-down convertible sports car. (Loved the car!) They removed our sign and drove off with it. However, upon going to the grocery store not long after, we spotted our sign thrown onto the side of the road. We retrieved it and put it back.

So, yes, sometimes kids of all ages will think they are doing their vital work by ripping out a lawn sign. However, we learned a few tricks and have not had this happen since:

- Place the sign away from the street, nearer to your door.
- If stolen, drive around your neighborhood. You might find it.
- Place only one or two signs. Clutter promotes theft.
- Buy several up front to have ready replacements.
- Trespassing is illegal and should be reported to officers and to news reporters.
- If you have cameras, print a photo of the theft and place the photo in the ground next to your replacement sign ("We see you!")
- Stay sociable with all your neighbors, so they'll watch out for you and support you.



It can be more dangerous to the vandal than to the homeowner. There are some eye-opening YouTube videos about that. Some involve electric shock, paint ball traps, mouse traps, and police arrests. Someone suggested applying stink bait heavily. If you do that, wear gloves!

Are lawn signs worth it? Yes. We're all doing what we can. The risk is not always as feared, though you have to gauge your own risk in your neighborhood, of course.

Remember. There are more of us than them. (More caring people trying to help others than those who want to bully and destroy.) We're here. We really are. You're not alone.

Buy some signs. Be a role model. Help your good cause.

*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. She and her wife live in Roseville, CA.*





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# What are Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and Why are they Forcing Independent Pharmacies to Close?

by Dr. Clint Hopkins, CEO, Owner of Pucci's Pharmacy

Independent pharmacies have long been pillars of community well-being, providing personalized care and essential services to neighborhoods across the nation. However, their existence is under threat, and the culprit is PBMs.

PBMs work in shadows of healthcare, while you may never have heard of a PBM, they play a huge role in our healthcare system. PBMs control what medications you have access to, how much you will pay out of pocket for those medications and how much your community pharmacist will be reimbursed when they dispense those medications.

It is an intentionally complicated and opaque business . . . a business that makes

Pharmacies purchase medications from wholesalers or manufacturers at a certain price, and if the reimbursement from PBMs does not cover these costs, pharmacies face financial losses with each prescription filled. Over time, this will threaten the financial viability of the pharmacy.

Patient Steering - Patient steering is a practice employed by PBMs that channels prescriptions to their own wholly owned retail, mail order or specialty pharmacies.



tens of billions of dollars in profit while claiming "PBMs are your advocates in the health care system, working to lower prescription drug costs for patients and payers."

Collectively, PBM profits increased 438%, from \$6.3 billion in 2012 to \$27.6 billion in 2022.

Three of the largest PBMs Caremark/CVS, Optum and Express Scripts control almost 80% of the market. Just so happens, they also own pharmacies. Sounds like a conflict of interest and maybe why they are trying to squeeze independent community pharmacies.

PBMs use several tactics to increase their profits while making it almost impossible for community pharmacies to remain in business:

Clawbacks - One of the most egregious tactics employed by PBMs is their use of "clawbacks." Historically, clawbacks occurred when a pharmacy would collect a copayment from a patient for a prescription drug, but the amount collected exceeds the pharmacy's reimbursement from the insurance company or pharmacy benefit manager (PBM). However, PBMs are now routinely clawing back tens of thousands of dollars with no explanation as to why.

Inadequate Reimbursement - PBMs are reimbursing pharmacies far below their cost of acquisition which has severe and multifaceted negative impacts on pharmacies and their patients. For example, pharmacies are being reimbursed \$360.70 below their acquisition cost for HIV medication and more than \$1,323.62 below acquisition cost for drugs such as Humira which is used to treat arthritis. Nobody would expect any business to lose money on products they sell, yet independent pharmacies are doing just that, every day. That is not sustainable.

Thereby diverting business away from independent pharmacies, depriving them of crucial revenue and patient volume. Not to mention, denying patients the right to receive their care from the community pharmacy of their choice.

The consequences of these practices extend far beyond the pharmacy counter, reverberating throughout the communities they serve. As independent pharmacies are forced to close their doors, access to vital healthcare services diminishes, particularly in underserved rural and urban areas where independent pharmacies are often the only source of care.

Ultimately, the survival of independent pharmacies is not just a matter of economics but a question of public health and community well-being. By confronting the predatory practices of PBMs and fighting to save independent pharmacies, we can work towards a future where access to quality care is a reality for all, not just a privilege for the few.

California is lagging in addressing this crucial issue, every other state in the nation has taken action and it is time for California to act.

Senator Scott Wiener is fighting this powerful conglomerate, he is carrying a bill to end these unfair business practices (SB 966) but we need to fight as well.

You can help by calling Senator Angelique Ashby today and urge her to support SB 966. She is the chair of the Senate Business & Professions Committee which will hear the bill in early April.

The multi-billion-dollar corporations who are fighting Senator Wiener's bill are in her ear, our voice needs to be louder. They have the money; we have the people.

Call Senator Ashby today at (916) 651-4008 and tell her that her constituents need her to stand up for us and support SB 966!

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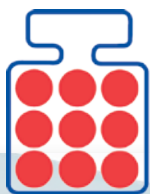
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## Sacramento Declares Itself A Sanctuary City For Transgender Individuals

In recent years, the city of Sacramento has made headlines by declaring itself a sanctuary city for transgender individuals, a significant step towards inclusivity and protection for a community often facing discrimination and violence. This declaration is more than a symbolic gesture; it's a commitment to the safety, rights, and well-being of transgender people, reflecting a broader movement towards acceptance and support for the LGBTQ+ community at a municipal level.

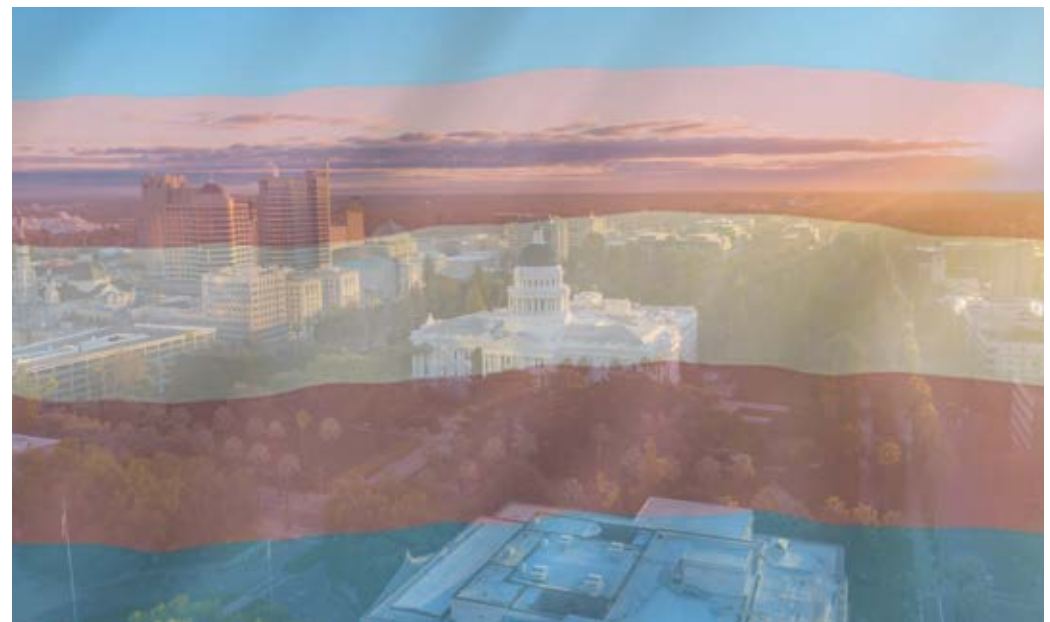
Sacramento's designation as a sanctuary city for transgender people means that the city actively works to ensure it is a safe and welcoming place for transgender residents and visitors. This involves a series of policies and practices aimed at protecting and supporting transgender individuals, from healthcare and housing to employment and education.

The city's approach includes law enforcement training to better understand and address the needs of the transgender community, ensuring that interactions are respectful and supportive.

One of the most critical aspects of Sacramento's sanctuary status is the provision of healthcare services tailored to the needs of transgender individuals. This includes access to gender-affirming care,

The city has policies in place to prevent discrimination based on gender identity in the workplace, ensuring that transgender individuals can work without fear of harassment or job loss. These protections are vital in a society where transgender people often face significant barriers to employment, including outright discrimination and systemic biases.

Education is another area where Sacramento's sanctuary status makes a tangible difference. Schools in the city are encouraged to create inclusive environments for transgender students, including the use of preferred names and pronouns, access to facilities that align with their gender identity, and the integration of LGBTQ+ history and issues into the curriculum. These measures are crucial for supporting transgender youth,



such as hormone therapy and surgical procedures, which are essential for many in the transgender community. The city also works to ensure that mental health services are accessible and sensitive to the specific needs of transgender people, recognizing the high rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide within this community.

Housing is another crucial area of focus. Discrimination in housing against transgender individuals is a significant issue nationwide, with many facing eviction or denial of housing based on their gender identity. Sacramento's sanctuary city status involves efforts to prevent such discrimination, ensuring that transgender people have equal access to safe and affordable housing. This includes training for landlords and housing providers on the rights of transgender tenants and legal protections against discrimination.

Employment protection is also a key component of Sacramento's sanctuary status.

who often face bullying and isolation in educational settings.

In essence, Sacramento's commitment to being a sanctuary city for transgender individuals is an acknowledgment of the rights and dignity of the transgender community. It's an effort to create a society where everyone, regardless of gender identity, can live safely and freely. While challenges remain, and no policy can instantly change societal attitudes, Sacramento's approach represents a hopeful step forward. It's a model that other cities can look to as they seek to create more inclusive and supportive environments for all their residents.

*This resource is supported in whole or in part by funding provided by the State of California, administered by the [California State Library](#) in partnership with the [California Department of Social Services](#) and the [California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs](#) as part of the [Stop the Hate](#) program. To report a hate incident or hate crime and get support, go to [CA vs Hate](#).*



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## Fiona Ma's Green Initiative: California's Home Energy Financing Hits 100 Million Milestone

State Treasurer Fiona Ma recently announced a significant achievement for California's GoGreen Home Energy Financing Program, marking a \$100 million milestone in financed home energy efficiency improvements. This program, which began as a pilot in July 2016 and became permanent in April 2020, has supported over 6,000 households in making energy efficiency upgrades. These upgrades include the installation of high-efficiency heating and air conditioning systems, insulation, Energy Star appliances, and efficient windows

Administered by the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority (CAEATFA), which Ma chairs, the GoGreen Home program facilitates lenders offering low interest rates, extended loan terms for manageable monthly payments, and broader eligibility criteria, including for borrowers with lower credit scores. Notably, the program provides up to 90 percent reimbursement to lenders in the event of a borrower's default, without requiring a property lien for the financing.

Highlighting the importance of this milestone, Treasurer Ma emphasized the program's role in making energy efficiency upgrades more affordable and accessible, thereby contributing to California's climate goals. She also pointed out the program's potential for expansion to enable even more Californians to undertake energy-saving projects.

Among the successful projects funded through GoGreen Home is a homeowner in rural Yuba County who installed a "cool roof"



with a loan featuring a fixed interest rate of 4.99% over a 15-year term. This upgrade is expected to save over 1000 kWh per year by reducing the need for air conditioning through solar radiation reflection.

GoGreen Home not only offers standard loans for significant purchases but also provides marketplace microloans for buying energy-efficient appliances. The \$100 million in projects were supported with \$15.7 million in credit enhancement funds from utility ratepayers, with a revolving loan fund mechanism that has already begun to recycle repaid loan funds into new energy upgrades.

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## Will the National Association of Realtors' Settlement Improve Transparency, Fairness and Competition?

In a landmark decision, the National Association of Realtors (NAR) reached a settlement that has significant implications for consumers navigating the real estate market. This settlement, coming on the heels of allegations of anticompetitive practices particularly around real estate listings and commission structures, promises to reshape the landscape in ways that prioritize transparency, fairness, and competition.



For starters, the settlement heralds a new era of transparency in real estate transactions. Traditionally, the intricacies of commission rates and listing information were often shrouded in complexity, leaving consumers in the dark about the true costs of buying or selling a home.

Now, with the NAR's commitment to making commission rates more transparent, buyers will have a clear understanding of the fees that listing brokers are offering to buyer brokers. This visibility empowers consumers to make informed decisions when selecting a broker, fostering a more transparent dialogue about the value derived from commission fees.

For sellers, this newfound clarity around commissions could lead to more strategic choices in selecting listing agents, possibly even negotiating more favorable rates or services.

Furthermore, the settlement takes aim at the traditional commission structure where sellers bear the cost of both the buyer's and seller's agents' commissions. This practice has long been critiqued for potentially inflating home prices, as sellers incorporate these costs into their listing prices.

The settlement opens the door to more flexible commission models, where buyers could have a say in negotiating their agent's fees, possibly lowering the overall cost of purchasing a home. While the settlement doesn't prescribe specific models, its push for transparency and fairness could spur the adoption of innovative, consumer-friendly pricing strategies in real estate services.

Perhaps one of the most consequential outcomes of the settlement is the boost it gives to market competitiveness. By dismantling barriers deemed anticompetitive, the settlement enables a broader access to MLS listings for both new and existing real estate platforms.

This not only allows for a wider dissemination of listing information but also stokes competition among real estate platforms and agents, which could lead to enhanced services and reduced costs for consumers. Moreover, the environment fostered by the settlement is ripe for the emergence of new market entrants, including tech-driven real estate firms, which might leverage the greater transparency and flexibility to offer lower rates and innovative services.

In essence, the NAR settlement represents a pivotal moment in the real estate industry, with the potential to significantly benefit consumers. By championing transparency, encouraging innovation in commission structures, and fostering a competitive marketplace, the settlement opens up new pathways for consumers to engage with the real estate market.

As these changes take hold, consumers stand to gain more control, enjoy a broader array of options, and possibly incur lower costs in their real estate transactions. As the industry evolves in response to this settlement, staying informed and open to new opportunities will be key for consumers looking to navigate the changing landscape.

# Coming Soon

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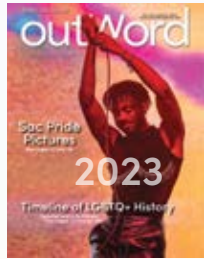
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# Springtime Is The Perfect Time To Make Sure Your Air Conditioner Is Ready For Summer

by Jennifer Kennedy, Perfection Home Systems Inc. CSLB# 464658

Now that spring has sprung, it is time to start thinking about your home's air conditioner. Here are some tips and tasks you can do yourself as well as the benefits of a professional maintenance check-up.

## Filter

When was the last time it was changed? The single most important thing you can do to prepare for the hot Sacramento summer will always be replacing the filter. This protects the equipment from premature failure as well as ensuring best performance and efficiency. It also helps keep your family healthy by removing the pollens and other allergens that seem to be most prevalent this time of year. Depending on the type of filtration system you have, most filters should be replaced every 2-3 months. Set a reminder on your phone!

## Outdoor Unit

Are there any obstructions around the unit that sits on the ground? Make sure there are no bushes blocking airflow or vines that are getting too close and could grow up into the unit. This can cause major damage to the outdoor coil.

## Thermostat

If it requires batteries, when were they last replaced? We recommend you replace them once a year. The metal terminals can become corroded, so gently wipe with a paper towel or cloth before installing fresh batteries. Have a WiFi Smart Thermostat? There are no batteries to replace.

## Turn It On

The best advice I give my own friends and family is to turn your a/c on before you need it. Once it reaches about 80° outside, set your thermostat to about 3° lower than the current indoor temperature and make sure it turns on and cool air is coming out the vents. The last thing you want to do is wait until a really hot day and find out it isn't working!

## Maintenance

When was the last time you had your a/c tuned-up? Most manufacturers recommend annual maintenance on their equipment, especially to keep your warranty valid. Preventing inopportune breakdowns and extending the lifespan of your system are some of the benefits of an air conditioning tune-up. While there are a lot of tasks you can do yourself, others may be best left to the professionals. When we come out for a maintenance visit we are making sure the condensate is free of clogs; outdoor coils are clear of pollen, dirt, and dog fur; capacitors and other components are functioning; and the overall system is operating at peak performance.

Want some more DIY tips? Download our free A/C Troubleshooting & Tips here to help you in the peak of summer! Need to schedule a tune-up? Call us at 916-481-0658.



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# Earth Day is April 22, 2024

Earth Day is a global event celebrated annually on April 22, dedicated to acknowledging the Earth's environmental challenges and promoting awareness and action for its protection. Initiated in 1970, Earth Day marks the birth of the modern environmental movement, encouraging people worldwide to appreciate our planet and work towards sustainable living to ensure its health for future generations.

The inception of Earth Day came at a time when industrialization was booming, largely unchecked by environmental regulations, leading to rampant air and water pollution. Inspired by the energy of the anti-war protests of the 1960s, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson sought to infuse the emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution with the force of student anti-war activism. He envisioned a national day of observance that would bring environmental concerns to the forefront of political agendas. Thus, on April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. This unprecedented event led to the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the passage of landmark environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

The significance of Earth Day has only grown over the decades, evolving into a global phenomenon that mobilizes billions of people across the world in more than 193 countries. The day serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to foster a sustainable and environmentally friendly world. It's a time to reflect on our lifestyle choices and their impact on

the planet, to engage in activities that promote environmental sustainability, and to advocate for policies that protect the Earth. Celebrating Earth Day involves a wide range of activities, including planting trees, cleaning up litter, advocating for policy changes, and educating others about the importance of environmental stewardship. These acts, both big and small, contribute to the ongoing effort to mitigate environmental degradation, promote biodiversity, and support sustainable development goals. Earth Day underscores the idea that individual and collective action can make a profound impact on the global environmental crisis. It encourages people to think globally and act locally, understanding that their actions are part of a larger effort to protect the planet. This day also serves as a call to action, urging individuals, communities, and governments to work together to tackle environmental issues such as climate change, pollution, and deforestation. In essence, Earth Day embodies the ongoing struggle to preserve and protect our planet for future generations. It is a day of hope, action, and reflection, reminding us of the power of unity in the face of environmental challenges. Celebrating Earth Day means recognizing our responsibility towards the Earth and committing to making sustainable choices



Earth Day Artwork by Dana Gray

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# Searching for the Perfect Bed, Still

words and photo by Ron Tackitt

Over the years I have been the recipient of an enormous amount of ridicule because of my ongoing search for the perfect bed and mattress combination. I have to say, some was justified, but most was not. I want to be comfortable when I sleep. What can I say? Recently, this search required me to look for a new bed frame. What I found was the Silk and Snow platform bed with headboard. As nice as this wood bed frame is, it is not perfect, nor does it really live up to its promise - a silent existence.

My prior bed frame was a simple metal ensemble with a cloth wrap to hide the inner workings of the frame. Since it was a standard King size frame, it had a center brace. About six months in, the brace bent. I will admit that I am not a feather weight but I should not be stressing the frame to that great of a degree. And no, no jumping or bouncing on the bed. Of any kind... the result of the bend was squeaking. Just a little at first but it soon grew much more imposing. Simply turning in bed would wake me up from the noise.

So, I did a magic Google search for a modern frame and - poof! My Facebook feed was filled with various bed frames. Funny how that works, huh? Anyhow, the Silk and Snow bed was one of the ads that popped up. It was clean and modern but had natural woods and a unique assembly system borrowed from Japanese culture. It is sustainably built and because of the design of the joinery, needed no tools to assemble. (A rubber mallet does come in handy).

Assembly was really simple. However, I was concerned that the joinery was sliding into place just a little too easy. It is designed with two center braces and both of them were downright loose. Their legs would not stay in place so attaching them was harder than it should have been.

There is so much that is right about this bed frame that it makes little things stand out. An example would be some rough edges that could use a very light sanding. This is easy to forgive, but one promise they made was no squeaking, and technically, it doesn't squeak. Wood on wood creaks. Although this sound is more natural than metal on metal, it is noise nonetheless. It creaks when getting in, but once laying down, it is pretty silent. I have noticed that walking to the other side of the bed and pressing up against the frame causes more creaking. (Like when making the bed)

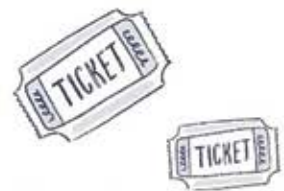
I really like the look and feel of this frame though. I'm not ready to start my look again, but I have been thinking about ways to



modify this one to make it more silent. The look is modern and the quality of materials is absolutely first rate. However, and \$1300 for the King bed, I would probably hesitate to recommend this as the perfect bed frame. SilkandSnow.com

*Author's Note: S&S also offer high quality sheet sets. After buying the frame, I saw that*

*the sheets were on sale, so I bought a set. They are, in a word, wonderful! I bought the cotton percale set and I absolutely love them. They are crisp, but not too, and the weight is perfect. These sheets were easily the best I have experienced in a long time. And compared to rivals, they are a great value. (Not cheap, but definitely a good deal.)*



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## What's New On HBO?

by Chris Narloch

I recently “renegotiated” my ever-increasing cable bill, dropping a bunch of channels that I never watch, to save money. I made sure to keep HBO Max, however, because I find myself returning to their quality programming again and again.

Here are two new must-see shows to watch if you have HBO. If not, find a friend who does and invite yourself over.



### Ripley

I can't stop gushing about the sexy and talented actor Andrew Scott (“All of Us Strangers,” “Fleabag”), who stars as Tom Ripley in the latest adaptation of Patricia Highsmith’s enduring novels about a gay-ish grifter turned murderer.

HBO recently released all eight episodes of the limited series, but I only had time to watch the first one before my deadline. “Ripley” has a very different look and feel than Anthony Minghella’s 1999 movie (“The Talented Mr. Ripley”), but I am already hooked on the new version.

Although moody and measured rather than action-packed, I thoroughly enjoyed the initial episode’s beautiful black-and-white cinematography and the noir-like characterization and performance of Ripley by Mr. Scott, who turns me on even when he is playing a calculating killer.



### Alex Edelman: Just For Us

If you missed this superb solo show in the Bay Area recently, where it played following a highly acclaimed Broadway run last year, you can now see it for free if you have HBO. Alex Edelman’s comedy is both timely and terrific.

Expertly crafted by one of comedy’s most distinctive voices, “Just For Us” is an exploration of identity and our collective capacity for empathy – and it’s also very, very funny.

In the wake of a string of anti-Semitic threats pointed in his direction online, Edelman, a standup comic, decided to go straight to the source -- specifically, Queens, where he covertly attended a meeting of White Nationalists and came face-to-face with the people behind the keyboards.

What happened next forms the backbone of the shockingly relevant and utterly hilarious “Just For Us,” which is brave and brilliant.

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# Dev Patel Goes Rogue in “Monkey Man” Plus, Three More New Movies Reviewed

by Chris Narloch

**M**ovies in theaters come and go so quickly nowadays that you blink and they’re streaming already. With that theatrical window shrinking more and more, I occasionally review films that are not playing locally.

With indie titles and foreign flicks, it’s especially difficult to ensure that a movie is around since those smaller films frequently get rescheduled or even bumped entirely.

I can safely say that the four films below were playing in Sacramento when this Outword came out. Whether they will all still be here by the time you read this is another story.



## Monkey Man

Dev Patel is the new Keanu Reeves? I would never have predicted that development, but the actor’s latest is indeed a sort of East Indian “John Wick,” with Patel’s character slaughtering the villains responsible for his mother’s death.

Patel also directed “Monkey Man,” and it’s a slick, ultra-violent revenge flick that also pulls at your heartstrings. The movie is far from original, but the actor goes for broke with his physical performance and the kinetic direction, and fans of movies like “Kill Bill” and “John Wick” can get their action fix. Currently in wide theatrical release.



## Wicked Little Letters

This strange-but-true tale follows two feuding neighbors in 1920s small town England who may hold the key to a local mystery: who is sending anonymous, scandalously filthy, and insulting letters to residents?

Two great actresses, Olivia Colman and Jessie Buckley, appear to be having a blast here, and they are supported by a dream British cast that includes Timothy Spall, Gemma Jones, and Eileen Atkins. “Wicked Little Letters” opened at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre on April 5th.



## The First Omen

There must be a lot of lapsed Catholics – like me – with an axe to grind against The Church. How else to explain the surfeit of horror films released recently that feature nasty nuns and/or pathological priests?

“The First Omen” is a so-so prequel to the very good original film in this franchise, 1976’s “The Omen,” which featured an A-list cast and director and was followed by several inferior sequels and an unnecessary remake in 2006.

The new film looks expensive and eerie, and the cast is first-rate, but I figured out the script’s big twist halfway through, so I can only give the movie a half-hearted recommendation. Currently in wide theatrical release.



## Veselka

As the second-generation owner of New York City’s beloved Ukrainian restaurant reluctantly retires after 54 years, his son Jason faces the pressure of stepping into his father’s shoes, while the war in Ukraine impacts his family and staff.

I was unable to see this highly acclaimed documentary before my deadline, but the film had an unheard of 100% Rotten Tomatoes rating from both critics and audiences, last time I checked. “Veselka” was still playing at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre as *Outword* went to press.



## Please Support the Outword Rainbow Fund

*For 28 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.*

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**OutwordRainbowFund.com**

## Out & About with Matthew Burlingame

The year is zipping along and the events are coming in fast and furious! As the days start to warm and the outside is calling, be sure to catch a few of the offerings below in the coming weeks!

Tuesday, Apr. 18 is National Transgender HIV Testing Day (NTHTD) and addresses the elevated HIV risk among transgender women, particularly women of color. Despite significant data gaps for transgender men, the event underscores the ongoing importance of HIV prevention and treatment efforts within the transgender community.

Front Street hosts the region's top breweries like Lazy Dog Brewing, Nitty's Cider, and Urban Roots on Apr. 13. Enjoy unlimited tastings, live music, and outdoor games while supporting animals in need. Show your love for our furry friends at Front Street Animal Shelter, 2127 Front St. from 1-4 p.m. for an unforgettable block party! [FrontStreetBrewfest.com](http://FrontStreetBrewfest.com)

topping hits to life. Don't miss this unforgettable night of music and energy. General Admission Standing Room available with limited seating. [Theuctheatre.org](http://Theuctheatre.org)

8th Annual Senior Pride Fair is creating community connections for LGBTQ seniors. Sponsored by *Outword* and SMUD among others at the E.M. Hart Senior Center, 915 27th St. on Thursday, Apr. 25 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The event will feature new exhibitors, as well as social groups and resources that strive to keep seniors engaged and independent. [Servant-hearts.org](http://Servant-hearts.org)

Feed your appetite for entertainment at The Historic Fallon House Theatre, 11175 Washington St. in Columbia through Apr. 28



Falcon's Eye Theatre presents the Broadway hit "Cabaret" at Harris Center for the Arts, 10 College Pkwy. in Folsom, through Apr. 14. Set in a Berlin nightclub as the 1920s end, the musical delves into the darkening political landscape of the era. Winner of multiple Tony Awards. Reserve your Cabaret table seats for an immersive experience. [Harriscenter.net](http://Harriscenter.net)

You're bound (see what I did there?) to have a great time at the Mr. Bolt Leather 2025 Contest Weekend, Apr. 19-21 at The Bolt Bar, 2560 Boxwood St. Sacramento's premier Leather-Cowboy-Bear Bar invites you to witness the crowning of the next titleholder. Enjoy a weekend of celebration, community, and authenticity as contestants embrace the spirit of Mr. Bolt Leather who will become our representative at the 2025 International Mr. Leather contest in Chicago. [Sacbolt.com](http://Sacbolt.com)

Catch the electrifying performance of Romanian sensation, INNA, at The UC Theatre, 2036 University Ave. in Berkeley, on Apr. 20 at 8 p.m. Known for her dynamic stage presence, INNA brings her chart-

with "Little Shop of Horrors." This Broadway and Hollywood smash hit is a deviously delicious sci-fi musical that has captivated audiences for over 30 years. [SierraRep.org](http://SierraRep.org)

Experience the unstoppable force of Cher's legacy at "The Cher Show," a Tony Award-winning musical chronicling six decades of her unparalleled career. With 35 smash hits and Tony Award-winning Bob Mackie gowns, this production promises an unabashedly fabulous experience. Catch it from May 9-12 at Harris Center for the Arts, 10 College Pkwy. in Folsom. [Harriscenter.net](http://Harriscenter.net)

Sacramento Pride is back on Capitol Mall on June 8 & 9! Vendor & March registration is now open. Early bird tickets are available for the weekend, or volunteer and enjoy free access. Visit the website for info on how to nominate outstanding individuals or organizations for Grand Marshal, download a performer application, and more. [Saccenter.org](http://Saccenter.org)

*Do you have events, birthdays, or announcements to share? Feel free to send them to [matthew@hengemedia.com](mailto:matthew@hengemedia.com).*

# Thank You Outword Supporters!

Current as of December 14, 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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## The Sun Will Come Out in Sacramento

If ever the world needed some hope, that time is now, and the theatrical comfort food known as “Annie” has hope in spades.



Holding onto your hope when times are tough can take an awful lot of determination, and sometimes, an awful lot of determination comes in a surprisingly small package.

Little Orphan Annie and her dog Sandy have reminded generations of theatergoers that sunshine is always right around the corner, and now the beloved musical returns in a new production – just as you remember it and just when we need it most.

This celebration of family, optimism and the American spirit remains the ultimate cure for all the hard knocks life throws your way.

Directed by Jenn Thompson, the feel-good musical features an iconic book and score written by Tony Award®-winners Thomas Meehan, Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin. “Tomorrow,” “Maybe,” and “It’s the Hard Knock Life” are just three of the famous songs from the show.

“Annie” performs this April 16-21 at the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, courtesy of Broadway Sacramento. Visit [www.broadwaysacramento.com](http://www.broadwaysacramento.com)

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## Don't Miss Season 1 Of "Wednesday"

Season 2 of Tim Burton's “Wednesday,” the hit Addams Family spinoff on Netflix, is scheduled to begin filming in Ireland this month, with star Jenna Ortega back in black as the macabre title character, and I can't wait to see the finished product.

Season 1 was a lot of fun, and it was recently released on DVD and Blu-ray for people like me who still like to add the occasional essential addition to their physical home entertainment library.

The 8-episode show, which is still Netflix's most popular English TV series of all time, was executive produced by Burton, who also directed half of Season 1, including Episode 4, which showcased Wednesday's delicious viral dance moves.

Following in the footsteps of Jamie Lee Curtis (the undisputed Scream Queen of the 20th Century), Ortega has appeared in several recent horror movies, including Ti West's “X” and the last two “Scream” films.

“Wednesday” is more dark comedy than horror, but Ortega may yet become the 21st Century Scream Queen. In addition to Ortega, the series features Catherine Zeta-Jones as Morticia Addams, Luis Guzman as Gomez Addams, and Fred Armisen as Uncle Fester.

Season 1 of “Wednesday” is now available from Warner Bros. Discovery Home Entertainment.







# Formerly of SNL & Funny as Hell

by Chris Narloch

Saturday Night Live has been a breeding ground (and a training ground) for so many funny women over its almost half a century that I would be hard-pressed to name them all.

SNL's last decade has been especially fertile, with funny women like Kate McKinnon, Cecily Strong, Ego Nwodim, Aidy Bryant, Chloe Fineman, and Leslie Jones taking the show to hilarious new heights.

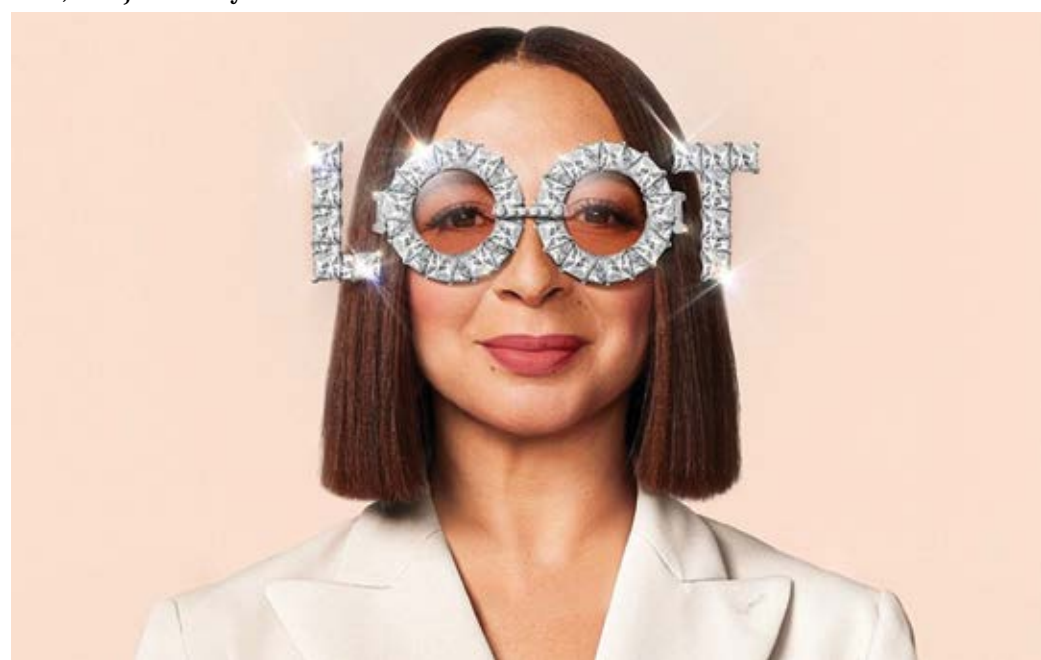
Some super-dumb bitch on TikTok recently went viral with a clip that claimed SNL has never hired a "hot" woman. To that I say, look at the two Apple TV+ series below and tell me that Kristen Wiig and Maya Rudolph are not funny and beautiful.



## Palm Royale

I have been savoring each delicious episode of this soap opera satire set in 1969 and starring Kristen Wiig as Maxine Simmons, a woman who will do anything to be accepted into Palm Beach high society. For her, the pinnacle is becoming a member of an exclusive club called Palm Royale.

Granted, there isn't much depth to the show and probably not enough substance to justify 10 almost-hour-long episodes, but the candy-colored costumes and production design are lovely to look at, and the cast is to die for. Wiig, Carol Burnett, and Ricky Martin are standouts, and they are ably supported by Laura Dern, Allison Janney, Bruce Dern, Leslie Bibb, and Julia Duffy.



## Loot Season 2

Maya Rudolph and company are back with another heaping helping of hilarity in this wacky series about a woman (Rudolph) who finds her mojo (and an \$87 billion divorce settlement) after splitting with her husband of 20 years.

Rudolph's Molly Novak decides to reengage with her charitable foundation and reconnect with the real world, finding herself along the way. Rudolph is as funny as ever, and she has superb support that includes Adam Scott, Nat Faxon, Ron Funches, and queer actors Joel Kim Booster and Michela Jae Rodriguez.

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\* New California law for 2022, requires all insurance to cover the cost of at-home STD testing.





# UPCOMING EVENTS



Contact Julie Ebe to get your event on the Upcoming Calendar- Julie@OutwordMagazine.com

## April

- \*12 Happy Hour @ Badlands with Outword
- 5-14 Harris Center - "Cabaret"
- 14 Brunch @ Mimi's 11:30 am with Prime Timers
- 16-21 Broadway Sacramento - "Annie"
- 18 River City Bewing Co. Dinner -5:30 pm- With Prime Timers
- 25 Senior Pride Fair
- \*27 CGNIE - 51st annual Gala and Coronation
- 30 Happy Hour at Bennett's -2:30 pm- With Prime Timers

## 2024 Pride Events

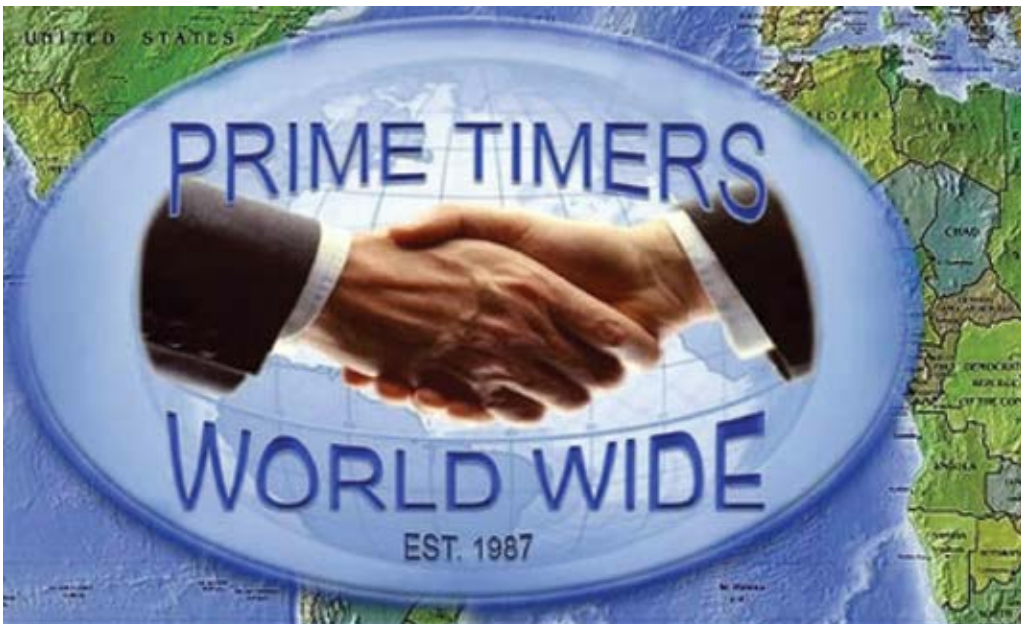
- 5/18 Roseville Pride
- 5/18 Placer Pride
- 6/1 Sonoma County Pride
- 6/1 Davis Pride
- 6/8-9 LA Pride
- \*6/8 Sacramento Pride
- 6/22 Elk Grove Pride
- 6/29 San Francisco Pride
- 6/31-7/2 WEHO Pride
- 7/20 San Diego Pride
- 9/8 Oakland Pride



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## MAY

- \*2 Drag Queen Bingo -Big Day of Giving- Sacramento Rainbow Chamber
- 9-12 Harris Center - "The Cher Show"
- 11 Mondavi Center - The San Francisco Symphony



Prime Timers of Sacramento is a group of mature men (21+) who enjoy the social community that is thriving here in Sacramento.

All details can be found on our website, Facebook, or Meetup.com

[www.PrimeTimersofSacramento.org](http://www.PrimeTimersofSacramento.org)

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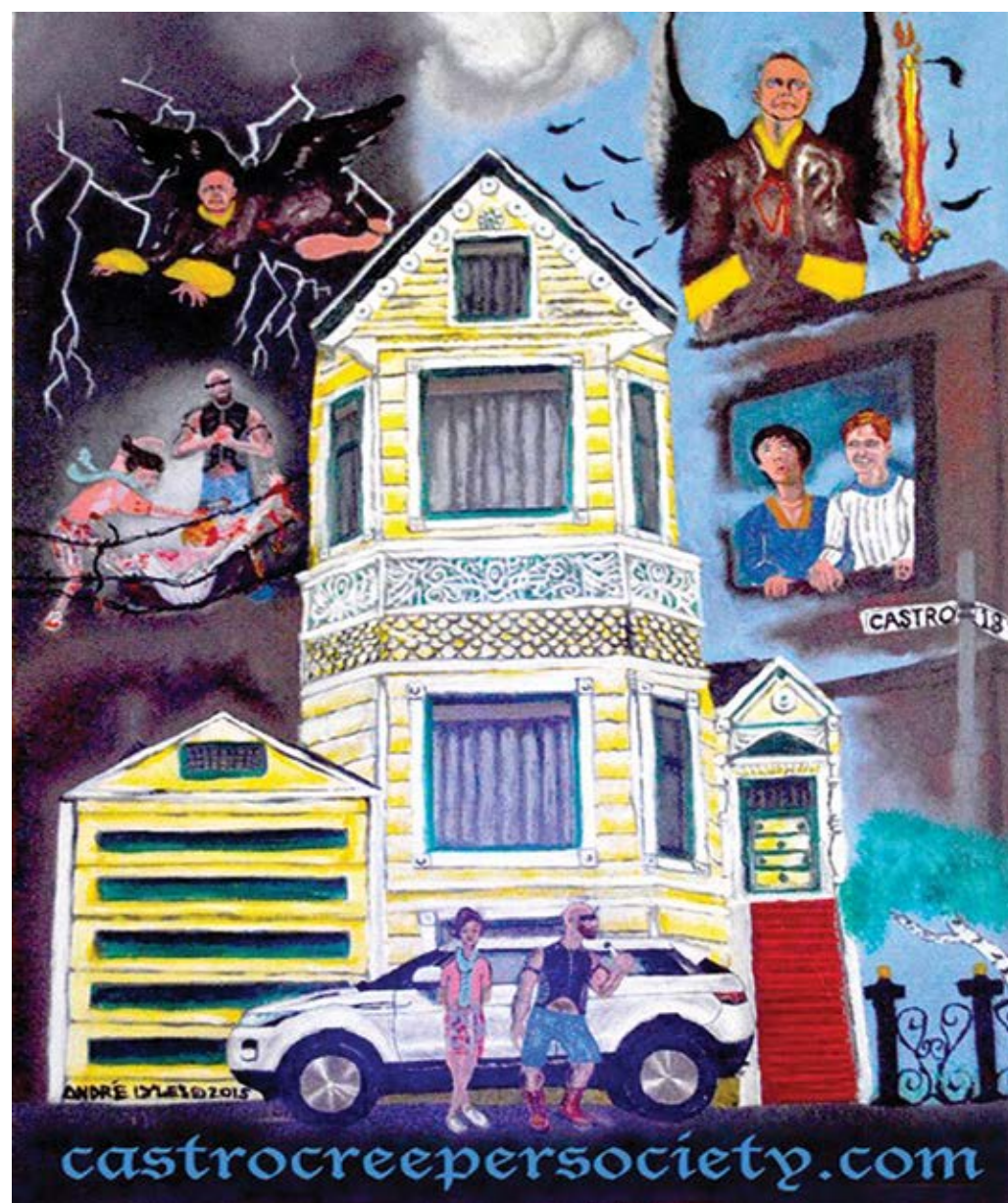
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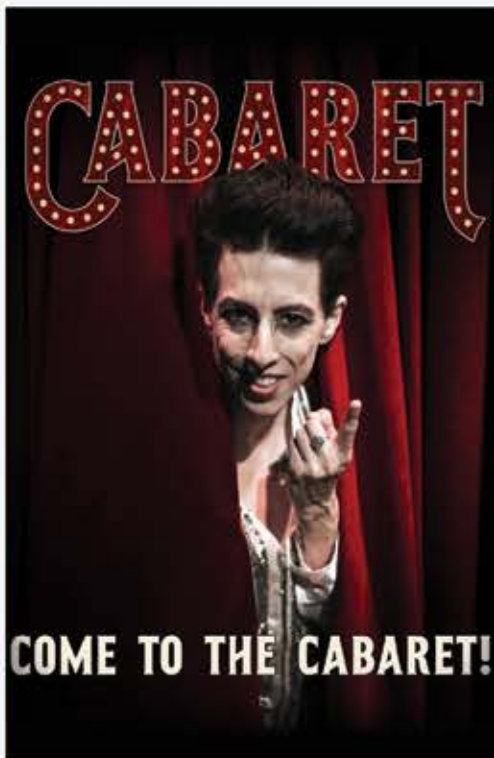


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**DINNER PARTY in the CASTRO**



# UPCOMING EVENTS



Falcon's Eye Theatre at Folsom Lake College presents

## Cabaret

APRIL 5-14, 2024

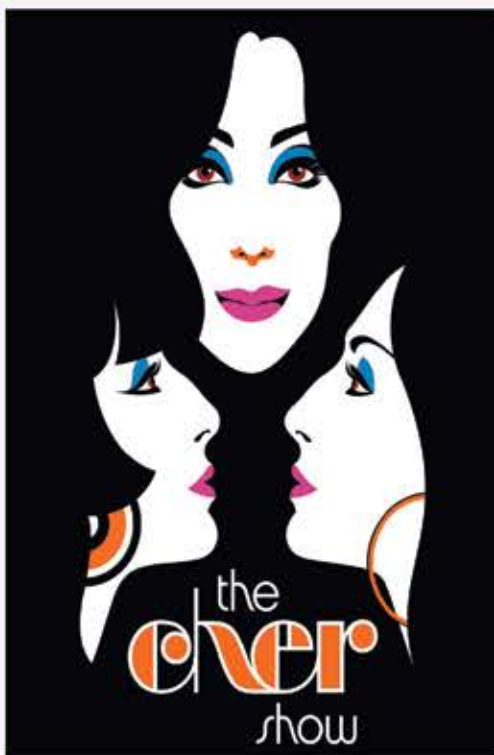
In a Berlin nightclub, as the 1920's draw to a close, a Master of Ceremonies welcomes the audience and assures them they will forget all their troubles at the Cabaret. With the Emcee's bawdy songs as wry commentary, Cabaret explores the dark, heady, and tumultuous life in Berlin as Germany slowly yields to the emerging threat of the Nazis.



## TISRA: Zakir Hussain, Sabir Khan, and Debopriya Chatterjee

APRIL 24, 2024

Tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain is proud to present TISRA (three) with two of India's finest young musicians, Sabir Khan and Debopriya Chatterjee, showcasing the rich folk and classical traditions of the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab.



## The Cher Show— A New Musical

MAY 9-12, 2024

35 smash hits, six decades of stardom, two rock-star husbands, a Grammy, an Oscar, an Emmy... The Cher Show is the Tony Award-winning musical of her story, and it's packed with so much Cher that it takes three women to play her.



## Nick Carter – Who I Am World Tour 2024

OCTOBER 19, 2024

Nick Carter quickly became an international pop superstar as the youngest member of the iconic boy band, Backstreet Boys. Since taking the world by storm in 1995, the band has sold over 130 million records. In 2002, Carter ventured into a solo career with his debut album, Now or Never, marking the beginning of a successful solo journey.

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