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outword



Cleo Pockalipps Is To Die For

page 14

Bobby Berk Helps
Turn Junk into
Jackpot
page 9

Ralph Fiennes &
Josh O'Connor Movies
page 10

“Sunday in the
Park” in Berkeley
page 12

“Moulin Rouge!”
Arrives In Sacramento
page 12

The 2026 Rescue
Me Calendar
page 15

Activating Taste
Buds
page 16

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February 3, 2026



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California State Fair Announces New Fall Dates Beginning in 2027

The California Exposition & State Fair Board has voted to change the time of year for the California State Fair beginning with the 2027 season. The Fair will move from its traditional mid-summer schedule to new dates from September 17 through October 3, 2027.

California STATE FAIR

The decision follows several years of analysis and planning by California State Fair staff. The change is designed to improve the guest experience, reduce the impact of extreme summer temperatures, and support better overall operating conditions for vendors, partners, and stakeholders.

"For years, our team has been

evaluating the best way to provide a more comfortable and enjoyable Fair for everyone," said Tom Martinez, CEO of California Exposition and State Fair. "With rising summer temperatures, shifting to the fall season allows us to create a more pleasant environment while maintaining the traditions Californians love."

"We've spoken extensively with our

vendors, community partners, concessionaires, and key stakeholders and everyone understands the need for the date shift," said Martinez. "The move also aligns with several other State Fairs that operate during the fall."

The upcoming 2026 California State Fair will proceed as scheduled, running July 17 through August 2, 2026.

PHILADELPHIA GAY NEWS

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Philadelphia Gay News marks its 50th anniversary this year, recognizing five decades of reporting on LGBTQ+ life in Philadelphia. Over the years, the publication has served as a consistent source of news and community information during times of significant change—work that resonates with us here at Outword, as we continue similar efforts in our own communities. Reaching this milestone reflects both longevity and an ongoing commitment to documenting local LGBTQ+ experiences. Congratulations to Philadelphia Gay News on 50 years of publication and service to its readership. You can see more about them on their [web site](#).

The List

Vic's Ice Cream Reopening
Safe Place Program
Elk Grove Butterfly Ball
Black History Month
CSD Firefighter Crab Feed
Monique Limon
Malpaso Dance Company

Sac Horror Film Festival
Gallery at 48 Natom
Scribner Bend Winery
Soil Born Farms
Sierra Youth Orchestra Festival
Sacramento Chocolate Salon
Onigiri Burgers

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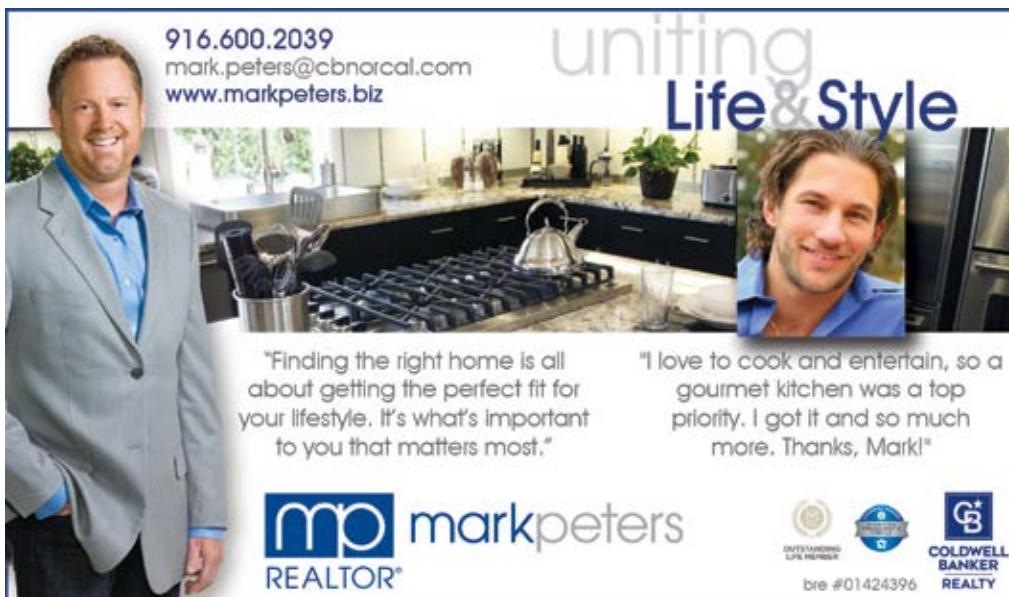
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Wyoming Supreme Court Upholds Abortion Access, Blocks State Bans

In a major ruling with significant implications for reproductive rights in the Mountain West, the Wyoming Supreme Court has struck down two state abortion bans, ensuring that abortion will remain legal in the state. In a 4-1 decision issued January 6, the court held that the contested laws violated the Wyoming Constitution's protection of individuals' health care decisions.

The laws at issue, passed by the Republican-controlled legislature in 2023, included a near-total ban on abortion as well as the nation's first explicit ban on abortion medication. Both were designed to severely restrict or eliminate access to abortion following the U.S. Supreme Court's 2022 decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization that returned abortion regulation to the states.

But Wyoming's highest court concluded that these restrictions clashed with a state constitutional amendment passed by voters in 2012, which guarantees that "each competent adult shall have the right to make his or her own health care decisions." Under that provision – originally enacted in response to federal health-care reform

– the justices determined that the bans unconstitutionally infringed on the right to decide whether to continue or end a pregnancy.

The court's ruling means that abortion remains legal in Wyoming up to the point of fetal viability. The decision also struck down the prohibition on mifepristone and other medication abortions, which had faced legal challenges ever since the law was enacted.

Supporters of abortion access hailed the decision as a major victory for reproductive health care in a deeply conservative state, while opponents, including the governor, expressed disappointment and signaled plans to pursue a constitutional amendment to overturn the court's interpretation.

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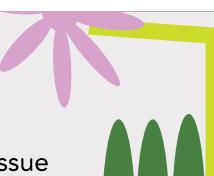
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On January 6, 2026, the leaders of seven European nations issued a Joint Statement on Greenland, underscoring the region's strategic importance and reaffirming their shared commitment to Arctic security and international law. Together, they emphasized that Greenland belongs to its people and that decisions about its future rest solely with Denmark and Greenland.

6 January 2026

Joint Statement on Greenland

Statement by President Macron of France, Chancellor Merz of Germany, Prime Minister Meloni of Italy, Prime Minister Tusk of Poland, Prime Minister Sánchez of Spain, Prime Minister Starmer of the United Kingdom and Prime Minister Frederiksen of Denmark on Greenland.

Arctic security remains a key priority for Europe and it is critical for international and transatlantic security.

NATO has made clear that the Arctic region is a priority and European Allies are stepping up. We and many other Allies have increased our presence, activities and investments, to keep the Arctic safe and to deter adversaries. The Kingdom of Denmark – including Greenland – is part of NATO.

Security in the Arctic must therefore be achieved collectively, in conjunction with NATO allies including the United States, by upholding the principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders. These are universal principles, and we will not stop defending them.

The United States is an essential partner in this endeavour, as a NATO ally and through the defence agreement between the Kingdom of Denmark and the United States of 1951.

Greenland belongs to its people. It is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland.



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California Launches New Tool to Help Residents Reclaim Their Online Privacy

Californians now have a powerful new way to take control of their personal information online, thanks to the launch of the Delete Request and Opt-out Platform, known as DROP. The state-run website allows residents to submit a single request that requires registered data brokers to delete their personal data and stop selling it.

Delete Request and Opt-out Platform (DROP)
DROP. Delete. Done.



The program was created as part of the California Delete Act, signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom in 2023, and officially went live on New Year's Day 2026. It is overseen by the California Privacy Protection Agency and designed to make what was once a complicated, time-consuming process much simpler for everyday users.

Data brokers are companies that collect, package, and sell personal information—often without people realizing how widely their data is being shared. This information can be

used for marketing, research, or even government purposes, with few limits on who can purchase it or how it is applied.

DROP currently applies only to data brokers registered in California, and deletion requests will begin processing in August 2026. While the new tool is a major step forward for privacy rights, residents are still encouraged to be mindful about what personal information they share online.

To get started, Californians can visit the [DROP website](#) and submit their request in just a few clicks.

Stonewall Democratic Club of Greater Sacramento Condemns the Murder of Renee Nicole Good and Calls for an End to Unlawful Operations in Our Cities

press release by Zachary Basler,
Stonewall Democrats of Greater Sacramento

The Stonewall Democratic Club of Greater Sacramento mourns the tragic and unnecessary death of Renee Nicole Good, a 37-year-old mother, poet, writer, and beloved member of the LGBTQ+ community who was murdered by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer in Minneapolis on January 7, 2026. Good's death has sent shockwaves through cities across the country and underscores the urgent need for federal accountability, justice, and respect for human life.

Renee Good was reportedly unarmed and had not been charged with a crime. Multiple angles of released footage shows no harm to the ICE agent while Renee was trying to depart the scene. Friends and family describe her as compassionate, kind, and devoted to her children and community. Her loss is a profound tragedy for her family, particularly for her young children who now face the world without one of their mothers.

We join the many voices of local & national leaders who demand that federal enforcement organizations and their specific agents be held accountable when their actions lead to the death of a U.S. citizen. As Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey powerfully stated in response to this killing:

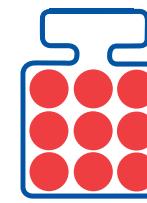
"I have a message for ICE. To ICE: Get the fuck out of Minneapolis. We do not want you here."

We echo that sentiment now for every

American city: federal force operations that bring fear, not safety, must end. Fuck ICE.

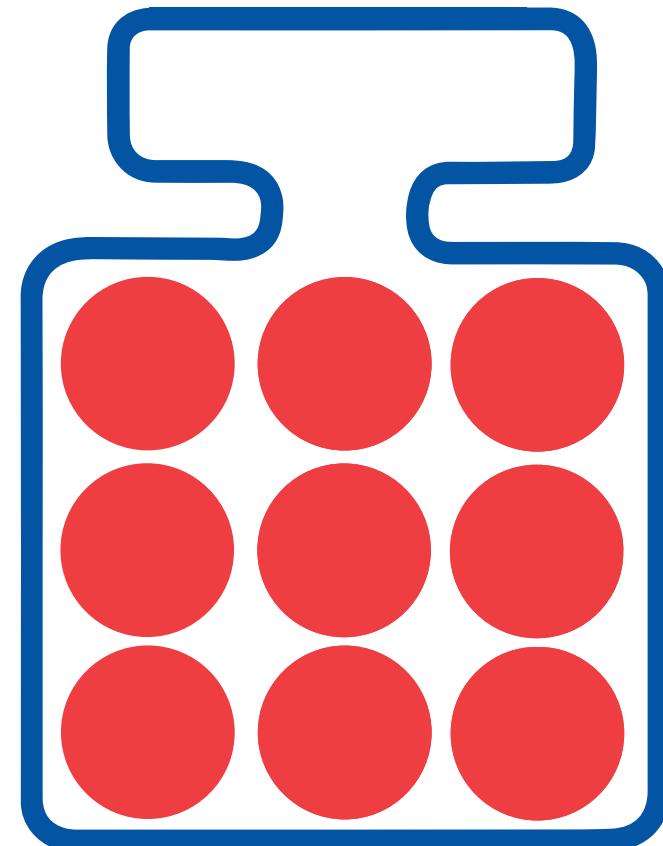
No city should tolerate federal actions that lead to the loss of innocent life, derail community trust, or threaten the safety of everyday residents. Good's death demands accountability, transparency, and meaningful reform of immigration enforcement practices.

The Stonewall Democratic Club stands in solidarity with Renee Good's family, all who mourn her, and all communities calling for justice. We affirm that every person regardless of their immigration status, race, identity, or political beliefs deserves to live without fear of lethal force from law enforcement. We call on our elected leaders at all levels to demand answers, protect civil liberties, and ensure that tragedies like this never happen again in Minneapolis, Sacramento, or anywhere in the United States.



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X Games Return to Sac with a New Twist

Action sports fans, get ready — the X Games are officially coming to Sacramento, marking a major win for the region's summer events lineup. After earlier plans were put on hold, organizers have confirmed that Sacramento will host the opening stop of the newly launched X Games League from June 26–28, 2026, at Cal Expo.

This won't be a traditional X Games weekend. The Sacramento event will debut the X Games League, a reimagined format that brings a season-long, team-based competition to the world of action sports. Elite athletes will compete in skateboarding, BMX, and motocross disciplines as part of organized teams, earning points toward an overall league championship that will unfold across multiple international locations.

For Sacramento, the event represents more than just high-flying tricks and adrenaline-fueled competition. Organizers are positioning the weekend as a full festival experience, blending sports with live music, interactive exhibits, and cultural activations designed to draw both dedicated fans and curious newcomers. City leaders and tourism officials anticipate tens of thousands of attendees, giving a significant boost to local hotels, restaurants, and small businesses.

Hosting the first stop of the X Games League also places Sacramento firmly on the global stage, showcasing the city as a destination capable of supporting large-scale, high-profile events. It's a notable moment for the region's skate, bike, and motorsports communities, many of which have grown steadily over the years but rarely see international spotlights land this close to home.

As summer 2026 approaches, Sacramento can expect a weekend filled with speed, style, and spectacle — and a reminder that the city continues to evolve as a hub for culture, creativity, and world-class events.

Check out [their web site here](#).



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Bobby Berk Helps Turn Junk into Jackpot on HGTV

What happens when a lifetime of collecting starts crowding out the rest of your life? That's the playful—and surprisingly heartfelt—question at the center of *Junk or Jackpot?*, HGTV's newest renovation series. Hosted by Bobby Berk (yes, that Bobby from *Queer Eye*), the show blends design, appraisal, and emotional storytelling into something that feels both fresh and familiar.



photo courtesy of HGTV.com

Each episode introduces homeowners whose passions—think vintage toys, pop-culture memorabilia, or decades-deep collections—have completely taken over their homes. Bobby steps in with a gentle nudge and a sharp design eye, helping them sort through what's meaningful, what's marketable, and what might secretly be worth a small fortune. With help from expert appraisers, the show reveals whether those stacks of "junk" are actually a hidden jackpot.

The twist? Proceeds from selling select items help fund much-needed renovations, transforming cramped, cluttered spaces into homes that finally breathe again. Along the way, there are laughs, tough decisions, and the occasional gasp when a dusty object turns out to be surprisingly valuable.

At its heart, *Junk or Jackpot?* isn't about shaming collections—it's about making room for what matters now. And if that means trading a few boxes for better lighting and a working kitchen, well... jackpot.

Check it out on [HGTV's web site](#).

Inaugural Davis Flash Film Challenge Launches

Everywhere Science, an education and communications non-profit, has announced the launch of the first-ever Davis Flash Film Challenge, a community-focused filmmaking competition designed to showcase and celebrate local creative talent. The inaugural program begins January 28, 2026 and culminates with the Davis Flash Film Festival on February 28, 2026 at Sudwerk Brewing in Davis.

Open to filmmakers of all ages and experience levels, the challenge invites participants to create an original short film in just one month. A creative prompt—such as a line of dialogue, prop, character, or location—will be revealed at a kickoff event on January 28 at the Everywhere Science studio. Films must be under seven minutes and appropriate for a PG-13 audience.

"We're excited to highlight the creative energy in our community and inspire future storytellers," said Craig Musburger, President of Everywhere Science and an Emmy Award-winning cameraman. "This challenge is meant to be welcoming, collaborative, and fun."

Completed films will screen at the February 28 festival, where a panel of judges will present awards and attendees will vote for an audience favorite. Participation and admission are free, and workshops will be offered throughout the month to support filmmakers.

The challenge is supported in part by a grant from the City of Davis Arts & Cultural Affairs program. For details or to sign up, visit [everywhere-science.org/davis-flash-film-challenge](#).

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DISCOVER



Ralph Fiennes & Josh O'Connor Plus, The Return of Gus Van Sant

by Chris Narloch

January used to be the graveyard for films that weren't good enough to be released for the holiday box office or during the lucrative summer months. This year, however, several of the post-New Year's movies are better than many of the year-end titles from 2025. Read on for my reviews.



Dead Man's Wire

Gus Van Sant, the great queer director of "My Own Private Idaho," "Even Cowgirls Get The Blues," and "Milk" fame, makes a stunning comeback with this so-bizarre-it-has-to-be-true story about an "Average Joe" named Tony Kirsits, who wired a shot-gun to the neck of a mortgage broker he felt had cheated him and proceeded to hold the man hostage until his demands were met.

Some of what followed played out on live television in 1977, and "Dead Man's Wire" depicts the wild outcome. Thankfully, Van Sant does not go in for overkill – the tale is inherently suspenseful – and Bill Skarsgård and Dacre Montgomery are terrific as hostage-taker and hostage, respectively.

Al Pacino and Colman Domingo provide superb support as the heartless father of the hostage, and a Black DJ who gets caught up in the craziness. In limited theatrical release.



The Testament of Ann Lee

Amanda Seyfried stars in what may be her toughest role yet, as the 18th-century founder of the Shakers, who preached gender equality, celibacy, and communal living. Ann Lee led her fervent followers from England to America to build a utopian society but suffered religious persecution and the loss of her children along the way.

Seyfried delivers a gutsy performance in a physically demanding role that requires her to sing, dance, chant, writhe, and pray. The direction, by Norway's Mona Fastvold, is equally ambitious.

It helps to have stamina, however, and an interest in religious history, because "The Testament of Ann Lee" gets off to a slow start, and the musical sequences are somewhat repetitive. This movie opened at Sacramento's Tower Theatre on Jan. 16.



Rebuilding

My latest movie crush is on Josh O'Connor, a British actor who costarred in the most recent "Knives Out" movie, as well as "Challengers" and two terrific queer films, "The History of Sound" and "God's Own Country."

This time out, O'Connor convincingly plays a Colorado cowboy in a contemporary tale about a divorced father trying to re-connect with his young daughter after he loses his house in a devastating wildfire.

O'Connor has a low-key, hangdog quality that I find very sexy, and "Rebuilding" is a lovely, quiet drama about a good man trying to heal every aspect of his life. "Rebuilding" is now available to rent at home.

28 Years Later: The Bone Temple

If you saw the third film in this popular UK-set horror franchise last year, then you know that Ralph Fiennes was the best thing in it, playing a doctor who has erected an enormous monument out of cleaned human bones – as a tribute to the victims of an apocalyptic virus that turns people into rage-filled killers.

Fiennes is even better in this superb (but very gory) sequel, and he takes center stage with a scene-stealing performance that is a must-see for horror fans.

Fiennes' character likes to listen to Duran Duran and Iron Maiden, and he has a bromance with a nude, hunky savage that he tames with morphine. The director, Nia DaCosta, hits it out of the park. In wide theatrical release.

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"Sunday in the Park" in Berkeley

If you act fast, there might still be tickets left for the highly acclaimed Berkeley production of a musical masterpiece by James Lapine and the late, great Stephen Sondheim.



Inspired by French painter Georges Seurat and his iconic 1884 painting "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte," the groundbreaking musical "Sunday in the Park with George" brings the artist's world to life, as the figures of Seurat's park step out of the canvas and into the theater.

In Act I, George revolutionizes painting with an avant-garde technique, using dots of paint, that came to be known as Pointillism. Act II finds Seurat's great-grandson attempting to push his art into the age of technology.

Across a century, both artists wrestle with creation, connection, and what we leave behind when everything else changes. Epic in scale, daring, and abstract, this Sondheim classic is an unflinching and deeply human look at the art of making art.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and nominated for 10 Tony Awards, "Sunday in the Park with George" redefined what a musical can be. With this production's onstage seating and an immersive design, you might even find yourself a part of the painting.

"Sunday in the Park with George" has been extended through Feb. 15 at Berkeley's Ashby Stage, courtesy of Shotgun Players. For more information, visit shotgunplayers.org

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"Moulin Rouge!" Arrives In Sacramento

by Chris Narloch

Make sure you are in Sacramento between Feb. 3 & 7 – and get your tickets before they are gone – because "Moulin Rouge! The Musical" is headed to the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, courtesy of Broadway Sacramento.



Baz Luhrmann's revolutionary 2001 film comes to life on stage in this stunning, sexy and hit-filled show which won 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical.

Directed by Tony winner Alex Timbers, "Moulin Rouge! The Musical" is a theatrical celebration of Truth, Beauty, Freedom, and – above all – Love.

Although it is not an opera, "Moulin Rouge!" borrows themes and plot elements from two famous operas: Verdi's "La Traviata" and Puccini's "La bohème."

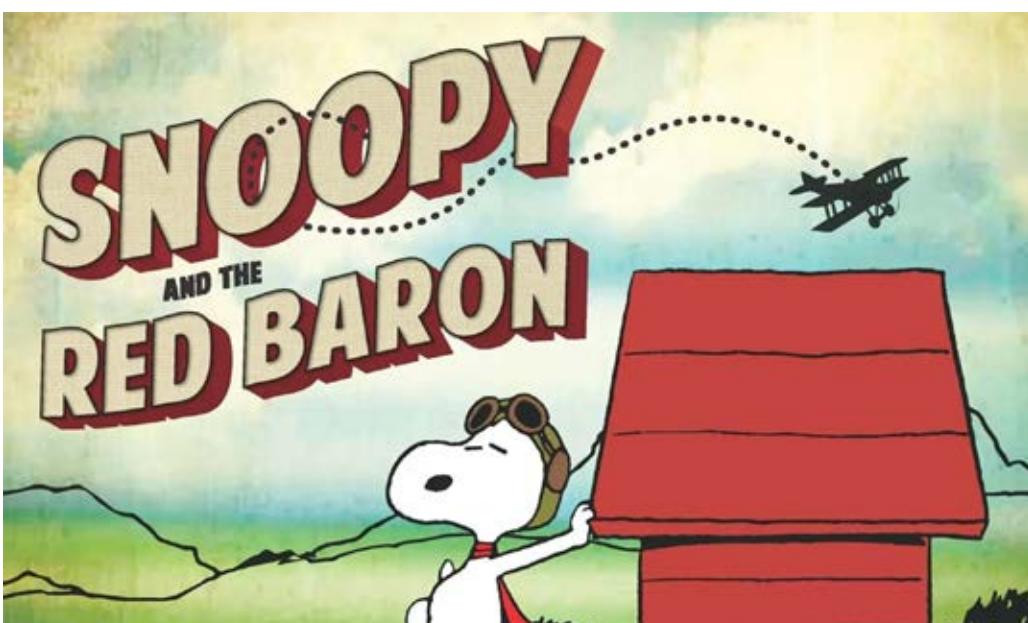
Featuring spectacular design and costumes, the musical is set in Belle Époque Paris and is about a passionate, forbidden romance between an American writer, Christian, and Satine, the star courtesan of the Moulin Rouge cabaret.

With a book by Tony Award winner John Logan and smash hit pop songs such as "Chandelier," "Firework," "Your Song," and many more, this blockbuster musical really rocks.

To purchase tickets, visit: www.broadwaysacramento.com

"Snoopy and the Red Baron" in Sacramento

On loan from the Charles M. Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa, the national traveling exhibit "Snoopy and the Red Baron" brings the full story of the World War I Flying Ace to life.



Featuring original comic strips, vintage toys, and rare memorabilia, it's a fun, family-friendly look at one of the Peanuts comic strip's most iconic storylines.

The exhibit will delight fans who grew up with Snoopy the Flying Ace and introduce new audiences to Snoopy's adventures in the sky.

The temporary exhibition is on view at the Aerospace Museum of California, at McClellan Park on the grounds of the former McClellan Air Force Base, through Feb. 15, 2026.

For more information, please visit www.aerospaceca.org



Out & About

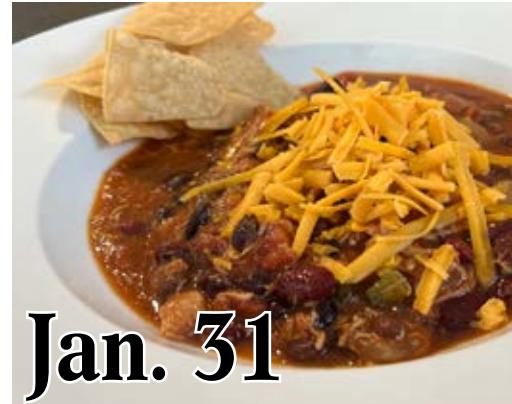
with Matthew Burlingame

In times that can feel overwhelming our local arts and events do their best to remind us why community matters. Gathering for music, theater, laughter and shared experiences helps us stay grounded, resilient and connected. As you explore these upcoming Sacramento events remember to care for yourself, check in on one another and make time for the people who bring you comfort and joy. Even small moments together can restore hope and remind us we're not alone.

Jan. 31

The Sacramento Horror Film Festival returns Saturday, Jan. 31, at Historic Colonial Theatre, 3522 Stockton Blvd., with an all-day showcase of razor-sharp horror shorts from 12:30 p.m. until late. Expect dark humor, gut-tightening suspense and big scares, plus an after-party performance by Aurelio Voltaire. SacHorrorFilmFest.com

Club Necromancy unleashes a high-voltage dance floor showdown when Club Coven collides with New Wave Society on Saturday, Jan. 31 inside Old Ironsides, 1901 10th St. Expect goth classics, darkwave, industrial and new wave beats, spun by DJ Keyz with special guests Glen and Miss Kystina, for a \$10, 21-and-over night that invites you to arrive early and dance late. Theoldironides.com



Jan. 31

Spice lovers are invited to a Chili Cook-Off at Fountainhead Brewing Company, 4621 24th St., on Saturday, Jan. 31. Judging begins at 3 p.m. The public event features bold chili creations, cold beer and friendly competition, with attendees tasting, voting and cheering as local cooks compete for bragging rights. Fountainheadbrewingco.com

Feb. 3

The Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce hosts its Health & Wellness Expo on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026, from 3 to 5:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Sacramento, 1209 L St. Held in partnership with community health leaders, the event highlights wellness resources, inclusive care and supportive services for the LGBTQ+ and allied community. Rainbowchamber.com

Feb. 6

Celebration Arts, 2727 B St. opens its 40th season with The Colored Museum, running Feb. 6-22. Written by George C. Wolfe and directed by Erinn Anova, the satirical play brings 11 vivid "exhibits" to life, exploring Black identity, stereotypes and history in a bold, timely production. Celebrationarts.vbotickets.com

Feb. 7

Fans of Bridgerton are invited to a Regency-inspired watch party from 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7, at Bear & Crown, 1022 Second St. Expect themed décor, refreshments, gossip and swoon-worthy moments. Regency attire is encouraged but not required for this social, scandal-filled afternoon. Bearandcrown.com

Feb. 12

ArtMix: Island of Enchantment heats up the Crocker Art Museum on Thursday, Feb. 12, from 6 to 9 p.m. at 216 O St. This 18+ after-hours party features DJed music, live performances, salsa and bomba lessons, island-inspired bites, and art activities. Admission is free for members, \$25 for nonmembers. Crockerart.org



Feb. 12

Rising jazz vocalist Ekep Nkwelle performs Feb. 12-14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Vanderhoef Studio Theatre, UC Davis, One Shields Ave., Davis. A recent featured singer with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Nkwelle brings soulful storytelling and expressive swing to an intimate concert presented by the Mondavi Center. Mondaviarts.org

Feb. 13

Iconic singer-songwriter Alanis Morissette performs Friday, Feb. 13, at 8 p.m. at The Venue at Thunder Valley Casino Resort, 1200 Athens Ave. in Lincoln. Best known for the era-defining Jagged Little Pill, Morissette delivers a powerhouse set spanning Grammy-winning hits, later chart-toppers, and fan favorites from her influential, multi-decade career. Thundervalleyresort.com



Feb. 14

Get ready to laugh out loud! On Saturday, Feb. 14 at 8 p.m. comedian Ali Wong comes to the stage at Cache Creek Casino Resort, 14455 Highway 16 in Brooks. Known for her bold, razor-sharp humor and hit Netflix specials, Ali's live show promises high energy and hilarious insights—perfect for a memorable night out in the Capay Valley region.

Upcoming

Mark your calendars for an extraordinary evening! On Friday, Feb. 20 at 8 p.m., join renowned astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson for "Cosmic Collisions" at Hard Rock Live Sacramento, 3317 Forty Mile Rd. in Wheatland. Expect an engaging journey through space, time and the cosmos for anyone curious about the universe. Casino.hardrock.com



Calum Scott

U.K. singer-songwriter Calum Scott is bringing The Avenir Tour to Sacramento at 7 p.m. Friday, March 27, at Ace of Spades, 1417 R St. Known for his global hit "You Are the Reason," Scott delivers soaring vocals, emotional pop ballads and new music from his evolving, platinum-certified catalog. Aceofspadesac.com

Multi-platinum rock legends Journey bring their "Final Frontier Tour (An Evening With)" to Golden 1 Center, 500 David J Stern Walk on Tuesday, April 21, at 7:30 p.m. Here's a chance to see the San Francisco-born band belt out arena-rock classics including "Don't Stop Believin'," "Open Arms," and many more. Golden1center.com

Do you have events, birthdays, or announcements to share? Feel free to send them to matthewburlingame@gmail.com.



Cleo Pockalipps Is To Die For Drag Diva At Celebration Arts

by Chris Narloch

One of L.A.'s favorite drag queens, Cleo Pockalipps, will grace the stage at Sacramento's Celebration Arts this February as part of the cast in a local production of "The Colored Museum," a classic play from 1986 by theatre genius George C. Wolfe.

Wolfe's highly acclaimed play is comprised of 11 different scenes – "exhibits" in a museum that come to life and explore prominent themes of Black identity, history, and culture. Cleo Pockalipps appears in three of the play's vignettes.

Cleo is the alter ego of Armand Fields, an accomplished actor who hails from Oklahoma City and now calls Los Angeles home. Together they have conquered the stage (including Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company), as well as movies (with the queer rom com, "The Thing About Harry") and TV ("Chicago Fire" and the recent "Queer as Folk" reboot).

Outword caught up with Cleo/Armand recently to discuss their versatile career in show business and their upcoming appearance at Celebration Arts.

Hello, Armand. How are you, and how is Ms. Cleo today?

We are great. I am already here in midtown in rehearsals. I got here on January 1st. Fantastic. So how are rehearsals going, and who do you play in the show?

I play several characters. One is Miss Roj who is a trans woman, and she is a frequent patron at this bar called The Bottomless Pit. I also play a fashion model in another scene called The Photo Session, and the third character I play is a wig stand that comes to life in The Woman & The Wigs.

Are all your characters in the play queer?

No. The trans woman is clearly queer, and the wig stand is technically a woman, but the model I play in The Photo Session is a man.

Were you familiar with "The Colored Museum"? Have you done it before?

No, not the entire show, but I participated in a monologue showcase once, where they did several of the pieces from the play.

You also lived and did theatre in Chicago for a while, correct?



Armand Fields
Photo by David Muller

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Yes. I did "Trouble in Mind" by Alice Childress there, and Lanford Wilson's "Balm in Gilead," plus several newer plays. Chicago has such a great theatre scene, and there is always something new being put up. I also got a lot of theatre experience in Milwaukee.

Did you enjoy working on the "Queer as Folk" reboot?

Definitely. You know both the British version and the original American version had almost zero people of color so what was great about our show was that it wasn't a continuation of those versions or a remake. It was updated. It was something new. We had non-binary people. We had disabled people. The cast was very diverse. We filmed in New Orleans, so I got to be there for five months, and then I stayed for another six months because I had such a good time.

Who did you play on "Chicago Fire"?

I played the friend of a salon owner whose salon had burned down. I got to break up a fight between Taylor Kinney and someone else, so that was fun. It was my first big TV credit. I was also on "The L Word: Generation Q," and I was in a very funny series called "Work in Progress" that you should check out.

You also were in one of my favorite queer rom coms, the Freeform film "The Thing About Harry," which still has a 100% critic's score on Rotten Tomatoes.

Yes! That was awesome because Peter Paige, who was in the first American version of "Queer as Folk," directed it. Very full circle. I was only in one scene – I play a drag queen – but I made it into the trailer which was cool.

How did you come up with the clever drag name of Cleo Pockalipps?

Yeah, so I was attending this psychic school for clairvoyance training in Chicago, and I told one of my teachers that I was dabbling in drag, and he said, "What if you were a psychic drag queen, like Miss Cleo?" So I used to paint this third eye on my face when I was first doing drag. Cleo was also the name of Queen Latifah's character in "Set It Off," where she played the lesbian bank robber.

Well, I am sure that you are going to set it off – in a good way – at Celebration Arts, so break a leg, and thank you for doing this interview.

Thank you, and please come see the play.

Note: The 40th Anniversary season of Celebration Arts opens with a 40th Anniversary production of "The Colored Museum," which plays Feb. 6–22. To purchase tickets, go to: www.celebrationarts.net



The 2026 Rescue Me Calendar Features Hunks & Hounds

This year marks the 12th anniversary of celebrity photographer Mike Ruiz's calendar, Rescue Me, which has raised funds for several animal rescues throughout the years.

Once again, the calendar benefits an incredible organization called Louie's Legacy Animal Rescue, and this year's calendar features famous folks from the worlds of music, film, television, sports and fashion, including Morgan Fairchild, Darlene Love, Broadway's Orfeh, Lion Babe, Zienna Sonne, and many more.

The new calendar also includes several high-profile athletes such as Anton Antipov, Bartley Weaver, Lukas Lakutsin, Ruben Demosthene, Matthew Carmona, and Victor Ramirez showing off their fantastic physiques, and it once again combines Mike's passion for animal advocacy and his love of photography.

The message of the calendar is clear: to educate and encourage the public to adopt animals as opposed to buying from a breeder or pet store.

Each year, Louie's Legacy, one of the largest foster-based rescues in the nation, saves as many animals as it can, as efficiently as possible. This is made possible by hundreds of volunteer foster homes which care for the rescue animals until they are adopted.

Louie's Legacy was able to add thousands of animals to its program and has currently saved over 25,000 animals since its founding in 2009. 100% of the sales of the calendar go directly to Louie's Legacy, for various services benefitting the health and welfare of the dogs.

Mike Ruiz, too, is an animal rescuer. In fact, it was his beloved Oliver, a black Pitbull type dog, that won his heart and the hearts of thousands on social media, a legacy that is kept alive by Ruiz's beloved Julia, also a Pitbull type dog whom Mike rescued in 2018. They were the catalyst for Mike's animal advocacy, which led to the creation of the annual calendar.

"The calendar makes the perfect gift and also brings awareness to these special animals," says Mike Ruiz. "Every discarded, neglected and abused dog deserves to be free of suffering."

To order your 2026 Rescue Me calendar, go to: louieslegacy.org/calendar



Portraits of Courage: LGBTQ+ Voices in Ukraine's Fight for Freedom

The Queer Face of War is a powerful visual and oral history that places LGBTQ+ lives at the center of Ukraine's ongoing fight for survival. Expanded from an acclaimed New York Times essay by award-winning journalist J. Lester Feder, the book draws on more than a decade of reporting to present intimate portraits and firsthand stories from queer Ukrainians living through wartime. Soldiers, medics, activists, refugees, and survivors speak candidly about love, identity, and resilience as they confront Russia's assault not only on their country, but on democratic values and human rights themselves.

Since 2022, Feder documents, queer Ukrainians have come out in unprecedented numbers—refusing invisibility even amid violence and displacement. His photographs and interviews reveal how rhetoric about "traditional values," promoted by Vladimir Putin, has been weaponized to justify oppression, and how LGBTQ+ Ukrainians have answered by asserting their place in the nation's future. Urgent and deeply human, *The Queer Face of War* reminds readers that LGBTQ+ visibility is inseparable from democracy—and that telling these stories, in images and in words, is itself an act of resistance.



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Activating Taste Buds

Camden Spit and Larder

submitted by Matt G. and Patrick H. photos by Matt G.

We were trying to decide on a nice place to eat dinner, something we hadn't tried before, and someone suggested Camden Spit & Larder on the ground floor of the 555 Capitol Mall high rise. We checked and they had two reservations left for the night, so we took one. While parking around the building is not plentiful, the restaurant does partially validate parking in their garage. What immediately surprised us is how beautiful the entire restaurant is. It's both comfortable and very nice at the same time. I'd like to also say the service we received was definitely top-tier.

We started with the soup of the day, French Onion, which was delicious, followed by their Camden Caesar salad which was also very good – and the egg split in half placed on the side was a fancy touch. Next, we shared their Cauliflower Tikka Masala, which was amazing, and since we were splitting the meal to maximize our sampling, we ordered the King Salmon and the English Meat Pie. Although the portions are not huge, they were certainly appropriate, and every plate was a small work of art – both visually and in flavor.

For a special date night or celebration, Camden is an A-list candidate and is more than worth the time and money. You can check out their accommodations and menus online by [clicking here](#). Highly, highly recommended.



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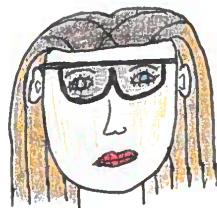


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– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

It actually takes more time
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to forgive them!

If you spend your time
judging people, now you
have to make up some
story about why they're not
worthy of your forgiveness.

It would take less time
to just forgive the bastards.

–Gary Renard –



Put 400 people in a room.

- 85 are illiterate.
- 48 live in poverty.
- 40 have untreated mental illness.
- 36 don't have health insurance.
- 2 are transgender.

If your highest priority is making the
lives of those 2 people miserable,
you've lost the plot completely.

“

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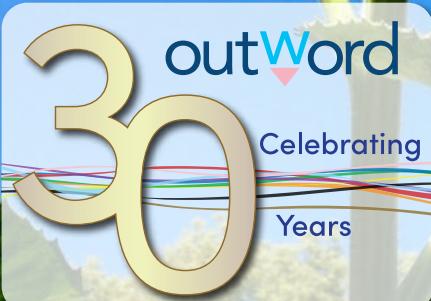
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We invite you to consider making a contribution in whatever amount feels right for you through our relaunched Outword Rainbow Fund. Every gift helps. With a simple and secure process, your support directly sustains the work we do and the voices we amplify.

We're proud of the role Outword has played in Sacramento for three decades, and we're committed to being here for many more. Together, we can make sure our stories continue to be told and our voices continue to be heard.

Thank you,
The Outword Team

For more information please email us or give us a call:
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