

Special Issue!

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outword



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and
Weddings*

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Acknowledging Black History Month

Black History Month (February) is a time to honor the lives, creativity, and resilience of Black people—past and present—whose contributions have shaped every part of American culture, often without proper recognition. It is also a moment to pause and consider how history is remembered, and who is still fighting to be seen and heard.

For LGBTQ+ communities, Black history is woven throughout queer history. From the origins of modern Pride movements to art, activism, music, fashion, and political organizing, Black queer voices have played a vital role and should not be sidelined or erased. Many of the freedoms celebrated today were advanced through the courage of Black activists who understood that justice is never singular, and that liberation is collective.

At the same time, Black History Month asks us to look honestly at the present. Black Americans continue to face systemic inequities in housing, healthcare, education, employment, and public safety. Black LGBTQ+ people, particularly trans women, remain disproportionately impacted by violence and discrimination. Celebration



without context risks flattening the very history we claim to honor.

For publications like Outword, acknowledgment means more than a calendar note. It means committing to

inclusive storytelling year-round, examining whose voices are amplified, and remaining attentive to the ways racism and bias can persist.

Black History Month is not only about honoring icons and milestones, but about acknowledging the many ways Black lives, voices, and contributions continue to shape the present and the future.

As we mark this month, we do so with respect and gratitude—and with an understanding that acknowledgment is only a starting point. The real work continues long after February ends, in the choices we make, the stories we tell, and the communities we build together.

Outword stands in recognition of Black history, Black voices, and Black lives—this month, and always.

Run, Gavin, Run!

by Chris Narloch

Gavin Newsom gets criticized constantly and not only by Republicans. I don't agree with everything our governor says and does, but I am in awe of his determination to stand up to Donald Trump - and mock our sad excuse for a president - at every opportunity.

Later this month, you can be in the same

room as Mr. Newsom, when he appears in San Francisco to discuss his new book, "Young Man in a Hurry: A Memoir of Discovery." Don't miss this one-night-only event, as Newsom traces the forces that have defined who he is today.

From adapting to his dyslexia, to starting his own small business, growing up in the spotlight as a young mayor, becoming a father and fighting major national political battles, Governor Newsom reflects on the long personal journey that ultimately shaped him into

one of the most recognizable elected officials in America.

Filled with intimate family history and written with candor and remarkable personal insight, here is a deeply resilient California story of identity, belonging, and the defining moments that inspired a life in politics.

Unscripted: An Evening with Gavin Newsom is scheduled for Saturday evening, Feb. 28, 2026, at San Francisco's Golden Gate Theatre. An unsigned copy of "Young Man in a Hurry" is included in your ticket price.

[Click here](#) to get your tickets.

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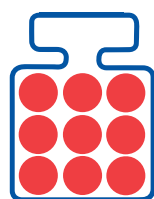
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Team LGBTQ Makes History at the 2026 Winter Olympics

As competition unfolds at the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, one thing is already clear: these Winter Games are making LGBTQ history.

At least 41 openly LGBTQ athletes are competing in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, marking the largest number of out athletes ever at a Winter Olympics. That figure continues to evolve as teams finalize rosters and athletes take to the ice, slopes, and tracks, but it already represents a significant milestone for visibility in winter sports.

This growth has been closely tracked by Outsports, which for more than a decade has documented out Olympians and Paralympians through its Team LGBTQ database. The project has become the most comprehensive public record of openly LGBTQ athletes at the Games, offering both historical context and real-time updates as competition progresses.

Winter sports have traditionally lagged behind the Summer Olympics in LGBTQ representation, often shaped by conservative federations, gendered expectations, and limited visibility. The expanded presence of Team LGBTQ at Milan-Cortina reflects gradual but meaningful shifts in elite athletics—where more athletes are choosing to compete openly, even as risks and pressures remain.

Athletes who are out and competing in

these Games span a wide range of disciplines, including figure skating, ice hockey, alpine and freestyle skiing, speed skating, and snowboarding. They represent multiple countries and identities, underscoring that LGBTQ athletes are not confined to a single nation, sport, or storyline. Some are returning Olympians; others are making their Olympic debuts on one of the world's most visible stages.

Their visibility carries weight beyond medal counts. For LGBTQ youth—and especially for those who have felt excluded from sports spaces—seeing openly queer athletes competing at the highest level sends a powerful message: there is no single way to look, love, or live as an athlete.

As the Milan-Cortina Games continue, Team LGBTQ's presence serves as both a celebration and a reminder. Progress has been made, but visibility still matters—particularly in arenas where silence was once the norm.

These Winter Olympics are not only about records broken and podiums claimed. They are also about who gets to be seen, who gets to belong, and whose stories are finally part of the Games themselves.

Grindr Limits Location Features in Italy's Olympic Village to Protect LGBTQ+ Athletes

As athletes from around the world gather in Italy's Alpine Olympic Village, one of the most widely used LGBTQ+ social platforms is taking a proactive step to protect privacy and safety. Grindr has temporarily restricted precise location-based features within and around the Olympic Village, located in the Italian Alps, as competitors prepare for the Winter Games.

Grindr typically displays how close users are to one another, sometimes down to just a few feet. In a tightly controlled, high-security environment like the Olympic Village—where thousands of athletes, staff, and media are housed in close quarters—that level of precision can create real risks. For LGBTQ+ athletes who are not publicly out, particularly those representing countries where being queer remains criminalized or dangerous, exact proximity data could potentially lead to unwanted identification, surveillance, or forced outing.

During the Games, Grindr replaced exact distance indicators with more generalized location labels tied to the broader Olympic Village area, while keeping messaging and connections available. Users can still communicate and connect, but the app removed the ability to pinpoint someone's precise location. The change is temporary and will automatically be lifted once the event concludes.

This approach isn't new. Grindr has implemented similar safety measures during past Olympics, World Cups, and large

international events, especially in regions with restrictive or hostile LGBTQ+ laws. Advocacy organizations have long warned that location-based apps can unintentionally expose vulnerable users, and Grindr's response has often been cited as a practical example of harm reduction.

While some headlines have leaned into playful nods about the Olympic Village's famously social reputation, the underlying concern is serious. Athletes may compete on a global stage, but their identities and personal lives are not part of the competition.



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Do Women Care About Valentine's Day?

by Julie Ebe

I was asked one day, do women really care about Valentine's Day? And like most questions that seem simple on the surface, it stuck with me longer than I expected.

Do we care? Yes. No. Maybe. It depends on what you think "care" means. I don't think most women are lying awake at night dreaming of heart-shaped boxes of chocolate or overpriced roses that will wilt by Tuesday. Those things feel tired now—predictable, almost obligatory. They're symbols we've seen so many times that they've lost their meaning. The consumerism, the pressure, the performative romance—it's easy to roll our eyes at all of it.

But acknowledgment? That's different.

What I think many of us actually want is for the day to register. For it to land somewhere. For it to be noticed.

My partner has never believed in Valentine's Day. To them, it's always been a manufactured holiday—something invented to sell cards, dinners, and diamonds. A made-up day telling people when and how to love, instead of letting love show up naturally, all year long. And honestly? I don't entirely disagree. Love shouldn't need a calendar reminder.

And yet... every year, I feel it. A little internal nudge when February rolls around. A quiet awareness that the day exists. And without fail, there are a few extra "I love yous." A slightly longer hug. A pause. Nothing dramatic. Nothing staged. Just a soft leaning-in.

That, to me, is the point.

Valentine's Day doesn't need to be loud. It doesn't need to be expensive. It doesn't need to look like a movie montage or an Instagram post. What it can be—what it should be—is a moment of intention. A brief interruption in the chaos of daily life to remember why you chose this person. Why, in a world full of distractions, stress, and endless to-do lists, you keep choosing each other.

Life moves fast. Partnerships can slip into logistics. Love can become assumed instead of spoken. Valentine's Day, at its best, is a small checkpoint. A reminder to stop, look across the table, and say, I still see you. I still choose you. I'm still in this.

So, do women care about Valentine's Day?

Not for the chocolate. Not for the flowers.

We care because sometimes, one intentional day is enough to remind us why we decided to do this beautiful, messy thing called life—together.



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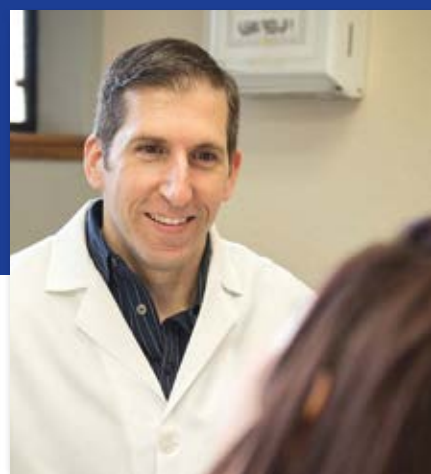
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DIY Valentine's Gifts on a Budget

Valentine's Day doesn't have to center on places where you're wondering whether you're welcome. Keeping things simple — and choosing spots that feel familiar and comfortable — can make the day feel more relaxed.

Try starting with something personal at home, like a handwritten note, a small handmade gift, or a card that recounts your shared joy with your special one or chosen family. Then step into the fresh air and out into the neighborhood. Grabbing a coffee at Peet's Coffee or splitting a slice from Marilyn's Pizza keeps things casual and affordable, with no white-tablecloth pressure and no performative romance tied to a \$300 dinner bill.

From there, let the moment breathe. Take your coffee or pizza on a walk through Capitol Park or the McKinley Rose Garden, where diversity is already part of the everyday scenery. It's romantic without being precious, public without feeling exposed.

If you want to add something tangible, local markets — like the Saturday Market on 20th Street, in the hood — are great places to find small, pride-forward gifts from queer or queer-friendly makers. It could be anything thoughtful that, hopefully, carries some real meaning.

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Another fun idea is to create simple "love coupons." Just a promise to do something special. It doesn't need to be expensive or complicated. Sometimes a good car wash is very much appreciated, or maybe a promise to make dinner sometime next week. Your options are only limited by your imagination. (But wait! There's more!)

If you have time, try curating a playlist of special love songs on Pandora or Spotify. Sure, it may play other stuff, but a little variety is never a bad thing — and you can both enjoy the tunes later. On Pandora, I recommend starting by creating a Sade radio station, then using thumbs up and thumbs down from there.

Of course, flowers are always welcome. This option can range from inexpensive to oh-my-gosh. Trader Joe's has wonderful pre-made bouquets. For a step up, Relles Florist has been wooing lovers for many, many years, and for a very special delivery, give Flower Fiesta a ring.

While these may not be earth-shattering ideas, sometimes the simplest ones are overlooked — and they can end up having the biggest impact. Happy Valentine's Day, and beyond.

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Love Doesn't Follow Rules - And Neither Should Your Wedding

Granite Bay Golf Club invites newly engaged LGBTQ+ couples to its 2026 Wedding Sip & See on Friday, February 20th from 5:30–7:30 PM. This relaxed, open-house style evening is designed for couples who want inspiration without pressure and a planning experience rooted in authenticity.

Sip something sparkling as you explore beautifully styled ceremony and reception spaces, connect with inclusive, LGBTQ+ affirming wedding professionals, and imagine a celebration that reflects your love story—on your terms. Whether your vision is modern, timeless, or boldly unconventional, this event is about what feels right to you.

Granite Bay Golf Club is proud to be a welcoming space where love in all its forms is celebrated, supported, and seen. The Wedding Sip & See offers a chance to feel confident, inspired, and excited as you begin planning a day that's deeply personal and unapologetically yours.

RSVP now and join us on February 20th from 5:30–7:30 PM to experience what inclusive, intentional wedding planning can look like.

Cheers to love—exactly as you are.

by Kelle Collier
Granite Bay Golf Event Director



Planning a Queer Wedding in 2026: What's Changed—and What Hasn't

Marriage equality may be firmly established in California, but planning a wedding as an LGBTQ+ couple in 2026 still involves navigating an industry that hasn't fully caught up to the diversity of the couples it now serves. While progress is real, it isn't universal—and many queer couples find themselves doing quiet advocacy long before the big day arrives.

On the plus side, more vendors are openly inclusive, many ceremonies are gender-neutral by default, and conversations around chosen family are increasingly normalized. Couples today are more empowered to design celebrations that reflect who they are, rather than squeezing into outdated templates. Pronouns are discussed up front. Wedding parties aren't divided by gender. Traditions can be remixed, or skipped entirely.

Still, old assumptions linger. Intake forms that default to "bride and groom," contracts written without inclusive language, and vendors who claim to be welcoming but lack experience can create unnecessary friction. There are quite a few venues in and around Sacramento that openly welcome an LGBTQ+ ceremony. For some couples, there's also the added layer of navigating family dynamics—deciding how much to explain, how much to protect, and how to center the people who have truly shown up for them. A good wedding planner can help navigate you through this. Also, be sure to check out the 2026 Wedding Sip & See article just to the left of this.



Granite Bay Golf Course.
Photo courtesy of Granite Bay



Scott's on the River.
Photo courtesy of Scott's

For LGBTQ+ couples, planning a wedding is often less about perfection and more about intention. It's about choosing partners—venues, planners, photographers—who don't just tolerate queer love, but understand it. The goal isn't a flawless production. It's a celebration where everyone in the room knows exactly why they're there: to witness a love that deserves ease and respect, without need for explanation.

That's when asking questions up front, trusting your instincts, and prioritizing spaces that feel genuinely welcoming can make all the difference. Several venues in the Sacramento region have demonstrated a real commitment to inclusive celebrations, including Scott's on the River and Granite Bay Golf Club, both of which offer flexible spaces and experienced teams familiar with diverse ceremonies.

Ultimately, a queer wedding in 2026 isn't about proving legitimacy or fitting a mold. It's about creating a moment that reflects the life you've already built—and the one you're choosing to continue together. Progress has made more of this possible, but intention is what gives it weight. When the planning is done and the day arrives, what matters most isn't how closely it follows tradition, but how truthfully it conveys the love being celebrated.



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Not Getting Married? Still in Love? You're Not Alone.

Wedding season can be joyful—and quietly isolating—for LGBTQ+ couples who have chosen not to marry. In a culture that often treats marriage as the ultimate marker of commitment, opting out can feel like swimming against the current, even within queer spaces that fought hard for the right to say “I do.”



For many couples, the decision isn't about a lack of love. It's about autonomy. Some carry historical mistrust of institutions that once excluded them. Others are navigating financial realities, caregiving responsibilities, or blended families where marriage doesn't make sense. Some simply don't feel the need for legal validation to define a partnership they already live every day.

Long-term queer relationships have always existed outside traditional frameworks. Before marriage equality, commitment often meant shared homes without recognition, hospital visits without paperwork, and chosen families stepping in where systems failed. For some couples, those histories still shape how they define love and security today.

This isn't a rejection of romance. It's an expansion of it. Love shows up in shared routines, mutual care as well as hard conversations. Showing up—again and again—without needing a ceremony makes it real.

As friends exchange save-the-dates and social feeds fill with engagement photos, it's worth remembering that marriage is one path, not the destination. Queer love has never been one-size-fits-all. And for couples who are deeply committed without a wedding license, their relationships aren't unfinished—they're complete, on their own terms.

Forever Single (And Doing Just Fine, Thanks)

by Singel George

At a certain point in a gay man's life, the question shifts. It's no longer “Are you seeing anyone?” but “So... what's your situation?” That gentle pause afterward is doing a lot of work. It suggests concern. Or curiosity. Or the quiet assumption that something has gone terribly wrong.

Let's clear this up: some of us are not “still single.” We are professionally single.

We've attended the weddings. We've bought the registry gifts. We've smiled through speeches that include the phrase “when I least expected it.” We've nodded politely while couples explain how they met during Mercury retrograde at a dog park neither of them actually liked. We are happy for them—truly. And then we go home to our peaceful, beautifully curated lives where the thermostat remains untouched and the throw pillows stay exactly where we put them.

Being forever single isn't a failure to launch; it's a lifestyle with benefits. There's no negotiating over vacation destinations, no shared streaming profiles cluttered with algorithm crimes, no argument about why this lamp absolutely needs to stay. Dinner can be cereal, reservations, or nothing at all. Freedom tastes great and requires zero compromise.

Of course, there's the myth that single equals lonely. That we're spending Friday nights refreshing apps and questioning our worth. In reality, many of us are booked, busy, and selective. We have friends who feel like family, chosen rituals, and the quiet confidence that comes from knowing ourselves really well. We've dated enough to recognize red flags before they finish saying “my ex was crazy.”

And let's be honest: gay history didn't exactly sell us a guaranteed fairy tale. Marriage equality arrived late to the party, and some of us had already built full lives without waiting for permission. Not everyone wants the white pantsuit moment. Some of us want autonomy, a good martini, and a calendar that belongs only to us.

So yes, I may be forever single. Not tragically. Not terminally. Just... intentionally. And if that makes people uncomfortable, that's fine. Discomfort builds character.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have plans. With myself. And they're excellent.

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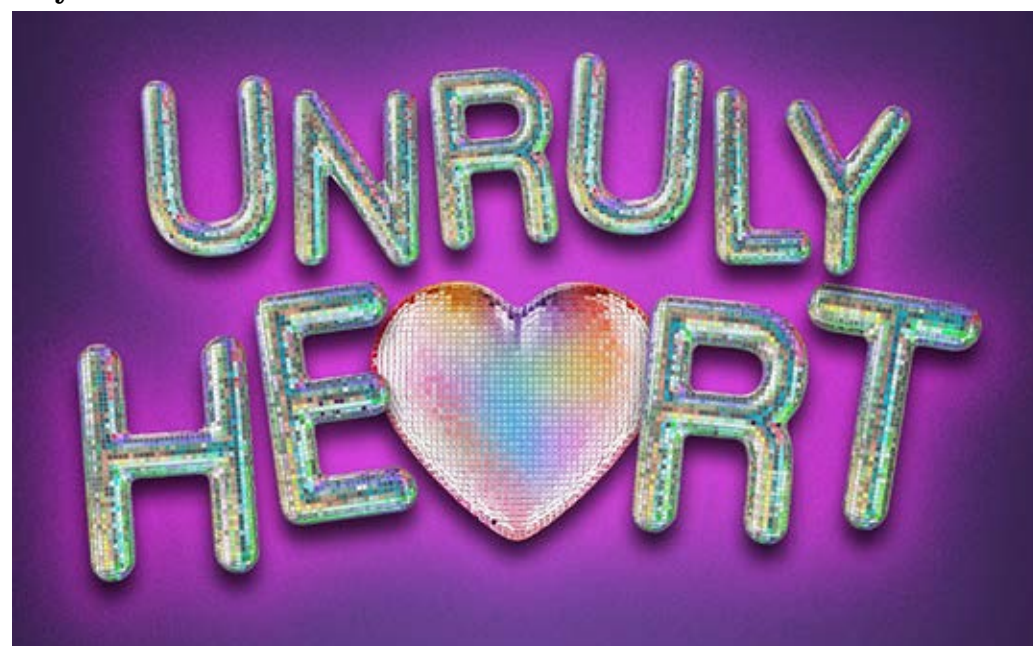
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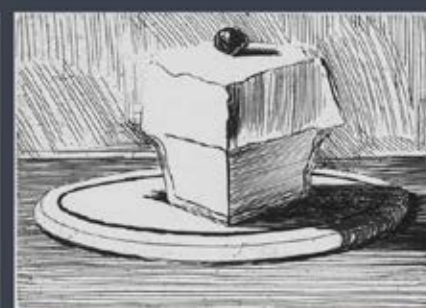
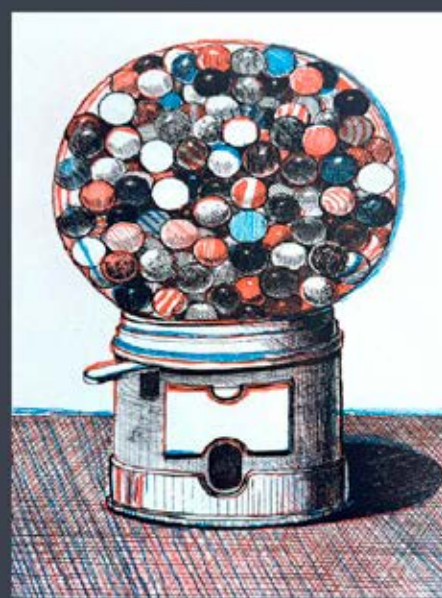
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Alexander Skarsgard Gets Kinky Plus, Rose Byrne & “Send Help”

by Chris Narloch

This January 30, moviegoers were treated to not one but two historic documentaries, released on the same day in theaters: “Melania” and Paris Hilton’s “Infinite Icon: A Visual Memoir.” I was so stressed trying to decide which of those narcissistic vanity projects to review that I finally decided to skip them both and write about these movies instead.



Arco

This sweet, science fantasy film from France was recently nominated for Best Animated Feature by Oscar voters, and it played briefly in local theaters. Look for it to stream soon, hopefully before the big ceremony on March 15.

The eco-positive story follows a 10-year-old boy from an idyllic, distant future who accidentally crashes into the year 2075. He partners with a lonely girl named Iris and her robot caretaker to find a way home, while helping to restore an environmentally ravaged Earth.

The animation in “Arco” is deliberately basic, but the story is deep enough to appeal to adults - perhaps even more than children - and the movie’s rainbow imagery feels queer-friendly, whether intentional or not.



Pillion

The 6’ 4” Swedish actor Alexander Skarsgard is 49 now and still hotter than hell, and he has done excellent work in a wide variety of projects, including “Big Little Lies,” “Murderbot,” “True Blood,” “The Northman,” and “The Legend of Tarzan.”

None of that prepared me for his wild new movie, “Pillion,” a dark and twisted descent into a BDSM relationship between a timid and submissive younger man (perfectly played by Harry Melling) and an extremely dominant biker (brought to kinky life by Skarsgard).

Both actors commit to the movie’s intense sex scenes, which are not for the prudish or the faint of heart, and the first-time feature film director, England’s Harry Lighton, does not water down the risky material in the slightest.

The power dynamic between the two main characters is at times disturbing, but the film does have a surprisingly happy ending that I won’t spoil. Last time I checked, the film still had 100% approval from critics on Rotten Tomatoes, and I would agree with that.

“Pillion” is scheduled to open at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre on February 20, but I recommend checking the website for confirmation, at <https://angelikafilmcenter.com/tower>



Send Help

This new film from Sam Raimi (“The Evil Dead,” “Spider-Man”) has a great premise and a wonderful central performance from Rachel McAdams, as a frumpy, passed-over employee with a boss from hell.

Of course, the pair get shipwrecked on a deserted island together, and the tables are turned when the injured, evil bossman needs the victim of his former abuse to help him survive in the wild.

The plane crash that sets the plot in motion and the entire first half of the film are sensational, until the horror tropes and twists kick in and the movie descends into a routine fight to the death.

Still, “Send Help” is worth seeing for McAdams, even though I didn’t like what the screenwriters did with her character in the second half of the script. In wide theatrical release.



If I Had Legs I’d Kick You

Rose Byrne has done terrific work on the big screen for more than thirty years, and I am happy to report that the Aussie actress is finally getting recognition, with a well-deserved Oscar nomination for her performance in this film, as a stressed-out wife and mother who endures one calamity after another.

With an ill daughter and a mostly absent, workaholic husband, Byrne’s character suffers spectacularly, as writer/director Mary Bronstein ratchets up the tension in the movie, culminating in a shocking climax followed by a somewhat ambiguous but hopeful ending.

“If I Had Legs I’d Kick You,” which is hard to watch but easy to admire, is now available to stream after a brief theatrical run.

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Out & About

with Matthew Burlingame

Spring is starting to flirt with Sacramento, and love is clearly in the air. As the days grow brighter and the nights invite a little magic, our city is coming alive with music, dance, theater and film that celebrate connection in all its forms. From sweeping romances and nostalgic favorites to bold, high-energy parties and family-friendly fun, these seasonal events offer the perfect excuse to get out, gather close and savor Sacramento's vibrant culture during this season of love.

February is Black History Month, a time to honor the achievements, resilience and cultural contributions of Black, and LGBTQ Black Americans, that have shaped our community's past and continue to influence its future.

Feb. 13

Gem Faire brings Sacramento's Gem & Jewelry Extravaganza to the Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 6151 H St., Feb. 13-15. Shop fine jewelry, crystals, gems, beads, pearls, gold and silver at manufacturer prices from global wholesalers. Hours are noon-6 p.m. with on-site repair, cleaning and ring sizing. Gemfaire.com

Harlow's and GBH Events present Heated: Heated Rivalry Dance Party at the Starlet Room inside Harlow's, 2708 J St., on Friday, Feb. 13. Doors open at 9 p.m. for this 21-and-over night featuring floor-ready remixes inspired by the show, plus timeless gay anthems guaranteed to keep the rivalry and the dance floor blazing. Harlows.com

Feb. 13



Sacramento Ballet presents Sleeping Beauty at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 13, at the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, 1301 L St. The timeless fairy tale comes alive through sumptuous choreography, lavish costumes and Prokofiev's sweeping score, offering an elegant evening of classical ballet that celebrates romance, magic and the enduring power of true love. Safecreditunionperformingartscenter.com

Feb. 14

Black History Heritage Month comes alive from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at Florin Square, 2251 Florin Road. This family-friendly celebration features youth service projects, literacy activities, a reading circle and author meet-and-greet with Angel Boone, mental health resources, community vendors, entertainment and wellness-focused programming honoring culture, history and collective healing.

The classic fairy-tale adventure "The Princess Bride" lights up the screen at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Crest Theatre, 1013 K St. Romance, swordplay and endlessly quotable humor collide in this beloved film, perfect for date night or nostalgic fun celebrating true love, daring deeds and unforgettable characters. Cresttheater.com

Feb. 16

Mickey and friends hit the turntables at Disney On Ice presents Let's Dance! at noon Monday, Feb. 16, at the Golden 1 Center, 500 David J. Stern Walk. The high-energy show remixes Disney favorites with appearances by Asha, Simba, Ariel, Elsa, Moana and a show-stealing DJ Stitch. Costumes are not permitted for guests 14 and older. Disneyonice.com



The wildly irreverent "Beetlejuice" touring musical haunts the stage Feb. 17-21 at the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, 1301 L St. Based on Tim Burton's cult film, the high-octane Broadway hit blends outrageous comedy, jaw-dropping visuals and showstopping songs in a gleefully twisted story about life, death and letting your freak flag fly. safecreditunionperformingartscenter.com

Feb 17

Feb. 25

The internationally acclaimed Ndlovu Youth Choir performs at Mondavi Center - Jackson Hall, 1 Shields Ave., at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25. Hailing from South Africa, the choir blends powerhouse vocals, vibrant choreography and global hits with traditional rhythms, bringing hope, love and infectious energy to the stage in a captivating world-music experience. Mondaviarts.org



The fifth annual City of Trees Parade & Mardi Gras Festival lights up Capitol Mall, 700 Capitol Mall, at 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28. The nonprofit celebration features live performances, food trucks, vendors and a dazzling evening parade with illuminated art cars, culminating in a high-energy dance party through 9 p.m. Kids enter free with RSVP. Cityoftreesparade.org



Feb. 28/Mar.1

PAW Patrol Live! "A Mighty Adventure" makes its Sacramento debut at Memorial Auditorium with three family-friendly performances: Saturday, February 28 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., and Sunday, March 1 at 11 a.m. The live stage show features an all-new storyline, energetic music, and interactive moments with the PAW Patrol pups, plus optional VIP Meet & Greet experiences after the show. Tickets and details are available at www.pawpatrollive.com.

Ongoing

Making Moves: A Collection of Feminisms opens at Crocker Art Museum, 216 O Street, on view now through May 3. The thematic exhibition features more than 70 works exploring self-representation, care, sentimentality and memory while presenting the first Frida Kahlo painting ever shown at the museum. Contemporary and historical pieces reflect diverse experiences that inform feminist art. Crockerart.org

The Sacramento premiere of The Sound Inside by Adam Rapp, directed by Michael Stevenson, runs through Mar. 1 at Capital Stage, 2215 J St. A New York Times Critics Pick, the suspenseful drama explores mentorship, power and the dangerous intimacy of storytelling. Capstage.org



Upcoming

Early bird registration is open for the Sacramento SPCA Doggy Dash, set for April 18 at William Land Park, 3800 W. Land Park Dr. The 33rd annual event brings together dogs, families and animal lovers for a festive walk featuring music, vendors, contests and adoptable pets, all supporting the Sacramento SPCA's lifesaving work. Sspca.org

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

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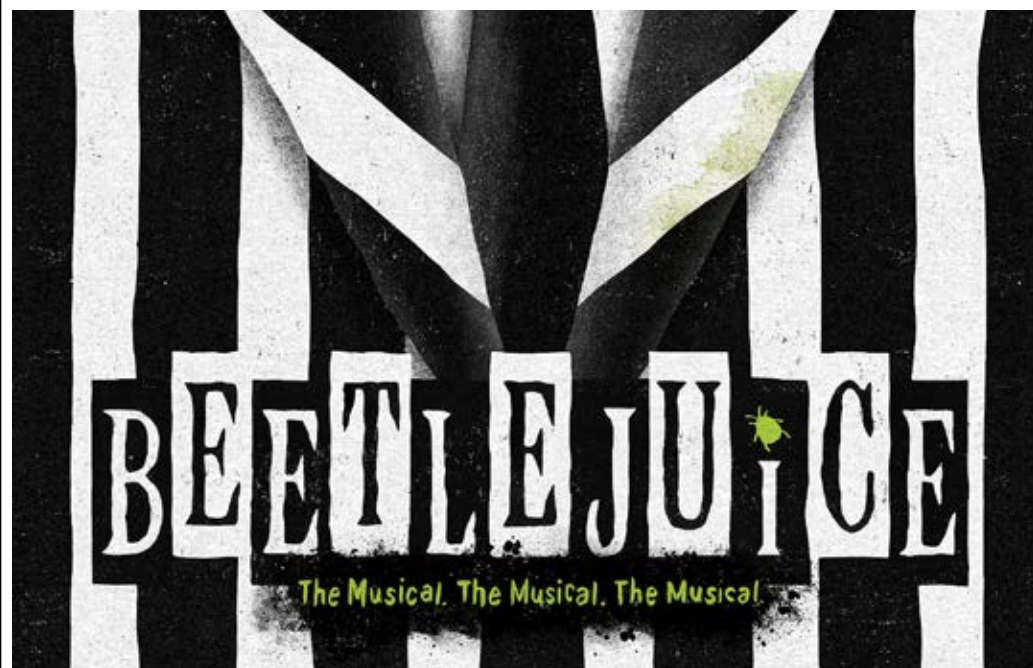
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Beetlejuice Beetlejuice Beetlejuice

He earned his stripes on Broadway, and now the ghost-with-the-most is headed to the stage in Sacramento. It's showtime!



Based on Tim Burton's dearly beloved film, this hilarious musical tells the story of Lydia Deetz, an unusual teenager whose whole life changes when she meets a recently deceased couple and a demon with a thing for stripes.

With an irreverent book, an eye-popping set, and a score that's out of this netherworld, the "Beetlejuice" musical is "screamingly good fun" (Variety).

Under its uproarious surface - six feet under, to be exact - it's also a remarkably touching show about family, love, and making the most of every Day-O.

"Beetlejuice" will raise the roof (and raise the dead) this Feb. 17-22, at Sacramento's SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center. Please visit www.broadwaysacramento.com

CapStage Does It Again *by Chris Narloch*

Adam Rapp's "The Sound Inside" is the latest production at Capital Stage, and it's another winner for the ambitious and successful Sacramento theatre.



Jacob Flekier and Dana Brooke costar in "The Sound Inside."

The two-person play stars Dana Brooke and Jacob Flekier as professor and student in the creative writing department at Yale, who verbally spar during office hours before bonding emotionally and (sometimes) intellectually.

The characters' complex relationship nearly crosses the line into romance and ventures into matters of life and death that lead to a haunting and enigmatic ending.

Ms. Brooke has the larger, more difficult role, and she is on stage for the duration of the play, often addressing the audience directly, even during exchanges with Mr. Flekier, who is also wonderful as her mysterious mentee.

I would have enjoyed additional scenes between the two characters, only because the student is so mercurial, but his disappearances do turn him into more of a puzzle, which was obviously the playwright's intent.

If you like stories that are wrapped up neatly, with everything explained, then "The Sound Inside" might not be for you. If, however, you enjoy going for a thought-provoking ride that ends in a fascinating riddle, this play is a must-see.

"The Sound Inside" continues through March 1st. Visit <https://capstage.org>

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Activating Taste Buds by Jules the Mixologist

**“When Your Boss Gives You Lemons, Clock Out and Make It
Everyone's Problem”**

By 5:17 p.m., I did not need personal growth.
I needed relief.

The emails had been aggressive. The meetings could've been an email. The world was on fire, my patience was on simmer, and somehow—somehow—I had acquired an irresponsible number of lemons. Like, enough lemons to suggest either a wellness cleanse or a mild curse.

I chose neither.

Instead, I chose a drink.

Because if life insists on handing you citrus with no instructions, the least you can do is add alcohol and reclaim your dignity.

This is the moment after work was invented for: when the bra comes off, the shoes get kicked somewhere unsafe, and you make something tart, cold, and just dramatic enough to feel like a personality reset.

This drink doesn't fix your problems.

It acknowledges them.



The Drink: The Bitter Response

(Serves one emotionally exhausted adult)

Ingredients

- 2 oz vodka (or gin, if you've accepted your fate)
- 1 oz fresh lemon juice (obviously)
- ½ oz simple syrup (or honey, if you're pretending this is balanced)
- A splash of soda water
- Lemon peel, aggressively twisted

Directions

Shake vodka, lemon juice, and sweetener with ice like you're shaking off the day.

Strain into a glass.

Top with soda.

Stare into the middle distance for a second.

Garnish with lemon peel and unresolved feelings.

Why This Works

It's sour.

It's sharp.

It wakes you up just enough to remember you're still funny, still here, still capable of joy—even if today tried you.

Much like life, it starts off harsh... then softens.

Pair with:

- One petty text you don't send
- One work email you schedule for tomorrow
- One quiet reminder that surviving the day is an accomplishment

Drink responsibly.

Feel irresponsibly good about it.



Wheel of Adventure

by the Task Master

People love to imagine that an adventurous sex life is all leather and bravado, like everyone involved arrived with a checklist and a personal soundtrack. The truth is far less intimidating—and a lot more fun. Sometimes, adventure just needs a prop. Enter: the wheel.

Yes, an actual wheel. Round. Colorful. Slightly ridiculous. It looks like it should be giving away a vacation or a blender, not setting the tone for an evening of playful experimentation. Which is exactly why it works.

I bring it out early, before nerves have time to spiral. I explain that the wheel isn't a dictator—it's more like a friendly emcee. It doesn't decide the whole night. It just picks the opening act. Think of it as "Where shall we begin?" with a drumroll.

There's always that moment after the spin—everyone leaning in, listening to the click-click-click like it's the finale of a game show. It's absurd in the best way. People laugh. Someone usually makes a joke. The tension melts just enough to remind us we're here to enjoy ourselves, not audition for anything.

The wheel does something magical: it removes the pressure to perform confidence on command. No long negotiations, no overthinking, no awkward throat-clearing. Just a shared moment of chance, consent, and curiosity—served with a side of camp. Sometimes the wheel barely influences what happens next. Sometimes it sets the vibe perfectly. Either way, it's already done its real job. It's turned the room from "So... what now?" into "Well, this should be interesting."

Because adventure doesn't have to be serious to be sincere. And honestly? Anything that starts with laughter is already heading in the right direction.




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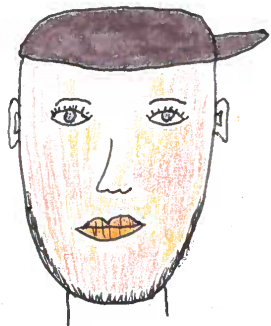
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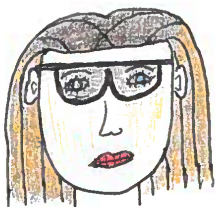


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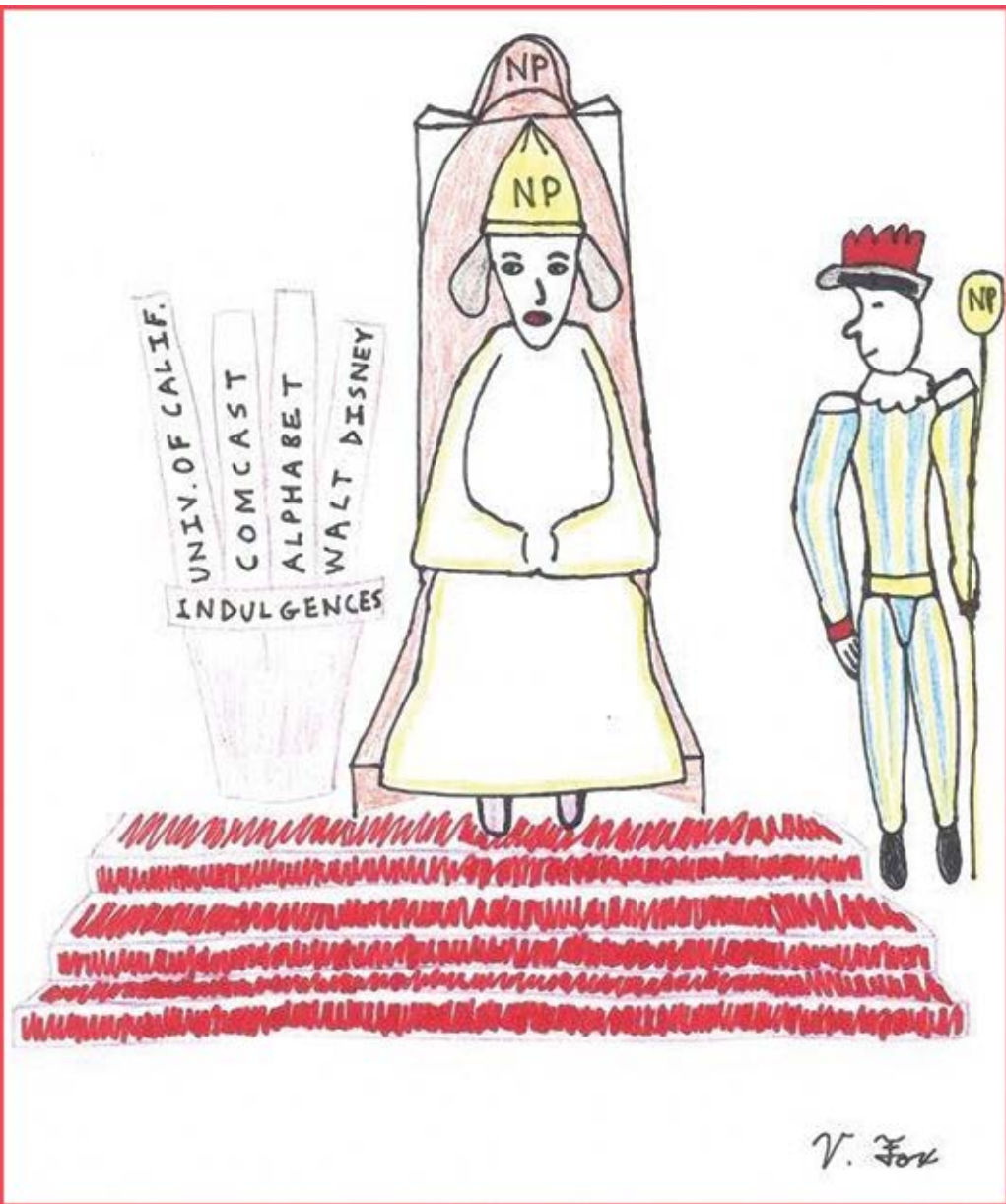
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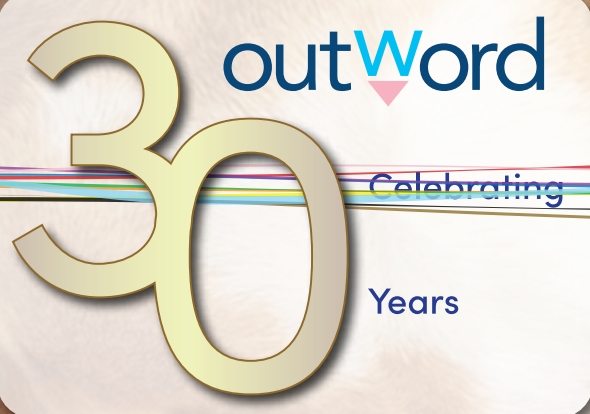
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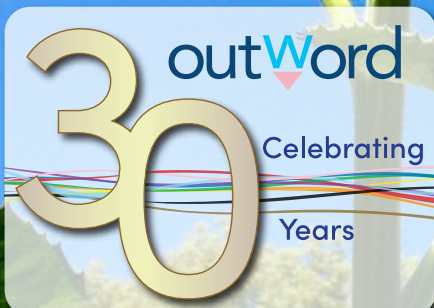
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We're proud of the role Outword has played in Sacramento for three decades, and we're committed to being here for many more. Together, we can make sure our stories continue to be told and our voices continue to be heard.

Thank you,
The Outword Team

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