

outWord

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homes
and
gardens

annual special issue



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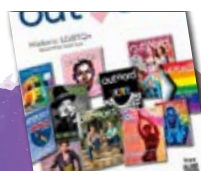


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Supreme Court Reframes Conversion Therapy as "Speech," Not Harm

The U.S. Supreme Court delivered a major—and deeply unsettling—decision this week, striking down a Colorado law that banned conversion therapy for minors. In an 8–1 ruling, the Court framed conversations between therapist and patient as protected speech.

That framing is exactly what has LGBTQ+ advocates concerned. Conversion therapy is not recognized as legitimate care by any major medical or psychological association, and has long been linked to increased risks of depression, anxiety, and suicide among LGBTQ+ youth. Yet the Court's majority treated the issue less as one of patient safety and more as one of viewpoint discrimination—suggesting that restricting certain types of counseling amounts to

unconstitutional censorship.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson stood alone in dissent, warning that states have a responsibility to regulate licensed professionals and protect vulnerable patients from harmful practices. Her opinion underscores what many in the medical community have said for years: when someone seeks care, especially a young person, they are not entering a debate—they are trusting a professional.

While the ruling does not automatically erase conversion therapy bans across the country, it casts serious doubt on laws already in place in more than half the states. Legal challenges are expected to follow.

For LGBTQ+ communities—and especially for young people—this decision lands as a stark reminder: rights and protections that once seemed settled can shift quickly. And the gap between being seen and being safe is still very real.

Senator Wiener on Supreme Court Striking Down Youth Conversion Therapy Bans

The Supreme Court struck down state bans on youth conversion therapy – a form of psychological torture.

Conversion therapy – the made up notion that you can convert a gay or trans person into being not gay or trans – was debunked long ago, and is now condemned by every major medical association as dangerous and ineffective. Survivors of conversion therapy often experience

profound feelings of shame and trauma, which research shows leads to depression and suicidality. Processing and healing from the trauma of conversion therapy is a deeply personal journey that often takes survivors years and years to complete.

"Make no mistake: Conversion therapy is psychological torture, and California will always stand strong with LGBTQ youth to protect them from the extremist movement to harm them," said Senator Wiener. "In light of the Supreme Court's

horrific ruling invalidating bans on youth conversion therapy, we must create new strategies to protect LGBTQ youth. All major medical associations agree that no 'therapy' can change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. Attempting to do so only provokes profound feelings of shame and trauma and leads to depression and suicidality. Stripping away the safeguards that protect these young people from trauma is profoundly cruel and inhumane.

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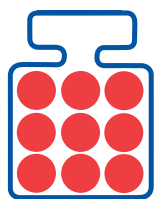


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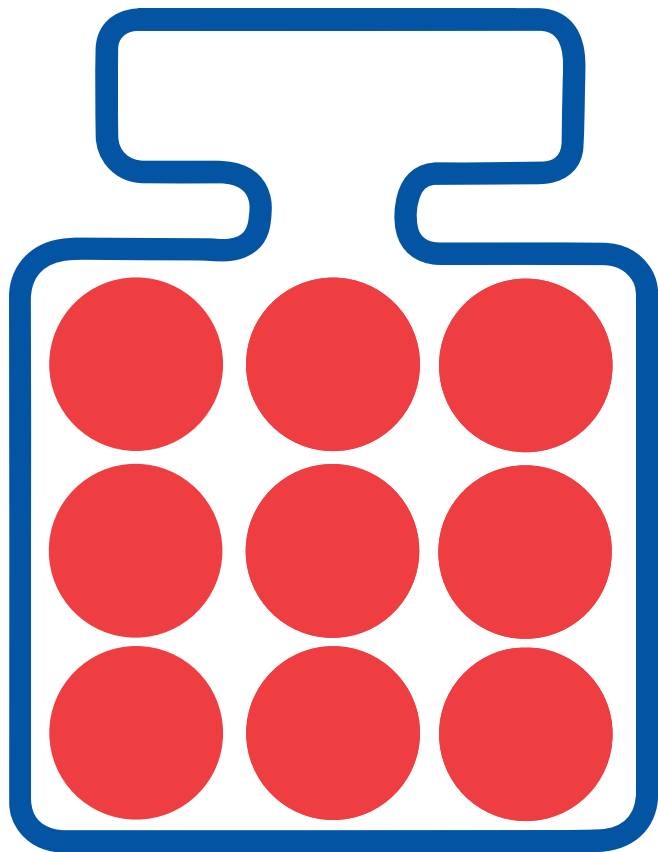


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NCAA Elite Hoops Come to Sac

words and photos by Chris Allan

From March 27 to 30, Golden 1 Center hosted the Sacramento Regionals 2 and 4 of the NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament for the first time. The "Sweet 16" and "Elite 8" event brought the nation's top programs to the city, showcasing the queer visibility that has come to define the modern women's game.



MiLaysia Fulwiley, LSU



Lauren Betts, UCLA

That identity was on full display with some of the most prominent out athletes in the country:

- MiLaysia Fulwiley (LSU, Guard): An explosive scorer, two-time SEC Sixth Player of the Year and part of one of sport's most prominent same-sex couples alongside USA Track & Field star JaMeisia Ford.
- Olivia Miles (TCU, Guard): A versatile All-American among the nation's leaders in career assists. Miles is one-half of a high-profile basketball couple, dating Chicago Sky's Maddy Westbeld.
- (Honorable Mention) Lauren Betts (UCLA, Center): A 6'7" defensive anchor and 2026 Wade Trophy finalist, Betts is a top WNBA draft pick and was celebrated by the queer community following her appearance on RuPaul's Drag Race 2025 "Hoop Queens" episode.

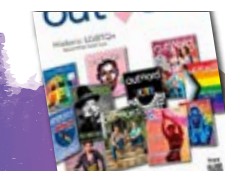
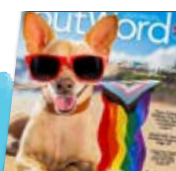
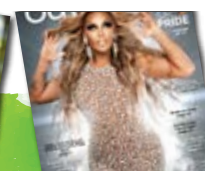
These athletes represent a growing collegiate queer vanguard - in the WNBA where they are headed, approximately 38% of players identify as LGBTQ+.

However, their visibility comes at a fraught moment. The day before the tournament opened, the International Olympic Committee reinstated gender testing, preventing any transgender or intersex women from competing in future Games.

And domestically, Miles' private, Christian university announced in fall 2025 that it would close its Women and Gender Studies department and Office of Diversity and Inclusion, citing low enrollment amid pressure from conservative donors.

Nevertheless, the TCU phenom spoke about her decision to transfer to the school at the Sweet 16 media availability: "TCU has allowed me to find Olivia again, find her joy, find her spirit and her love for the game," she said. "... I'm very glad I made that decision."

By tournament's end, Betts had moved on to the Final Four in Phoenix, while Miles fell to South Carolina in the Elite Eight and Fulwiley's LSU bowed out on the final buzzer. We'll be watching all three hoop queens as they continue to redefine the game's culture on a national stage.



Senator Wiener introduces Malpractice Bill to Protect Survivors of Conversion Therapy

resource: Office of Senator Wiener

As legal battles over conversion therapy continue to unfold nationwide, California lawmakers are making it clear they're not stepping back. In fact, they're sharpening the tools.

Enter SB 934, introduced by Scott Wiener, a measure designed to give survivors of conversion therapy something long denied: a real path to accountability.

Conversion therapy—the widely discredited practice that attempts to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity—has already been banned for minors in California. But bans alone don't undo the damage. Survivors often carry lasting emotional and psychological harm, and until now, many have had limited legal options to seek justice.

SB 934 aims to change that.

The legislation expands the ability for survivors to file malpractice lawsuits against practitioners who subjected them to these harmful practices. Crucially, it recognizes that trauma doesn't operate on a neat timeline. Many people take years—sometimes decades—to fully process what happened to them. By allowing claims to be brought forward long after the abuse occurred, the bill acknowledges that reality in a meaningful way.

It's a shift from simply prohibiting bad behavior to holding it accountable.

Supporters say the bill sends a clear message: conversion therapy isn't just outdated—it's dangerous, and those who practice it should face consequences. It also reframes the issue in practical terms, treating these actions as professional misconduct rather than ideological debate.

Critics, as expected, are raising concerns about religious freedom and free speech. But proponents counter that SB 934 is focused on protecting patients from harm, not policing belief.

At its core, the bill is about giving survivors agency—something conversion therapy was designed to take away.

If passed, SB 934 would position California once again at the forefront of LGBTQ+ protections, not just by banning harmful practices, but by ensuring those harmed have a path toward justice.



Earth Day, Every Day (Well, Almost)

April 22 rolls around each year with a familiar reminder: this planet is the only one we've got, and it deserves a little attention. Earth Day isn't new—it's been around since 1970—but it still manages to feel urgent, especially now.

What started as a grassroots environmental movement has grown into a global moment. Millions of people show up in different ways, from neighborhood cleanups to policy pushes, all with the same idea in mind: take better care of the place we call home.

But Earth Day isn't just about the heavy stuff. It can be as simple as getting outside, planting something, supporting local farmers, or cutting back on waste where you can. Small shifts add up, especially when enough people are paying attention.



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When Homes Become Portfolios

Across the country, and especially here in California, more single-family homes and duplexes are being purchased by private equity firms and large corporate investors. Not to live in, but to hold, bundle, and rent. For many would-be buyers, it's starting to feel like they're not just competing with their neighbors, but they're up against a financial powerhouse.

The frustration is easy to understand. These companies often arrive with cash offers, fewer contingencies, and the ability to move quickly. In a tight market, that kind of firepower can edge out first-time buyers or anyone relying on traditional financing. The result? Homes that might have gone to a local family instead become part of a growing rental portfolio.

And once that shift happens, the character of a neighborhood can start to change. Owner-occupied homes give way to rentals. Turnover can increase. Rents may climb. The sense of long-term investment—people putting down roots, knowing their neighbors—can feel less certain.



Still, it's not entirely one-sided. Institutional investors argue they're helping meet demand, especially in places where rental housing is scarce. Some properties they purchase are in rough shape, and the capital to renovate them isn't always readily available to individual buyers. In that sense, they see themselves as part of the solution, not the problem.

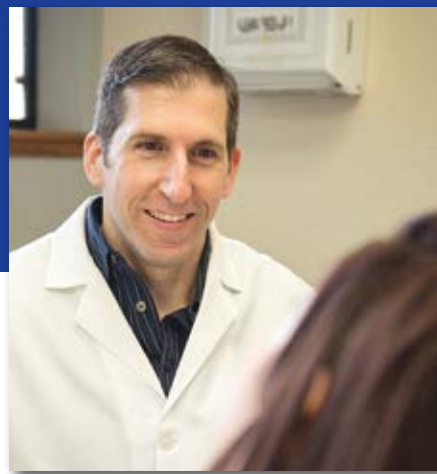
But the bigger question lingers: what is housing supposed to be?

For most people, a home is stability. It's where life happens. For investors, it's an asset—something to generate returns. Those two perspectives don't always sit comfortably together, particularly in markets already struggling with affordability.

Lawmakers are beginning to pay attention. Ideas range from limiting how many homes large investors can own, to taxing vacant properties, to creating more opportunities for first-time buyers to compete (like Kamala wanted to do). None of these approaches are simple, and each comes with its own complications, and massive, well-financed resistance.

What's clear is that conversations are starting to happen. As more homes move from individual ownership into institutional hands, people are asking tougher questions about who gets to buy, who gets to stay, and what kind of communities do we want to build.

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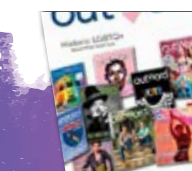
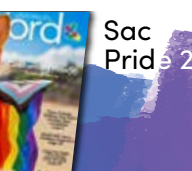


Coming Soon...

Pure Pride 2026 Special Issues

[click here to email Fred](#)

Senior



KitchenAid's Icon Gets a Glow-Up

It's not every day an icon gets reinvented, but after decades of holding steady, KitchenAid has carefully given its beloved stand mixer a modern refresh. Enter the new Artisan Plus.

At a glance, it's the same sculptural countertop staple we all recognize. But look a little closer, and you'll see where things have shifted. This redesign is a thoughtful upgrade, aimed at how people cook—and how the mixer can make that process even better.

The biggest change? Control. The Artisan Plus introduces a more refined speed system, with a fabulous redesigned knob that includes a soft-start feature to keep flour from ending up all over you and the countertop. There's also a new "half-fold" setting for delicate, slower mixing.



photos courtesy of KitchenAid.com

KitchenAid has been paying attention all these years.

Then there's the small detail that might be the real star: a built-in bowl light. It sounds simple, but once you can actually see what's happening—whether you're whipping cream or coaxing dough into shape—it's hard to imagine not having one.

KitchenAid has also expanded the color lineup, with a few new shades that feel richer and more current. There are deep tones and warm metallics that fit the mood of today's kitchens. The silhouette, the heft, the presence remain—and it's still very much that mixer.

The original Artisan was a classic showpiece, something like jewelry for your kitchen counter. The Artisan Plus is its slightly more evolved sibling—still looking amazing on your counter, but quietly and efficiently making the things you do in the kitchen just a little more joyous. For more information visit [KitchenAid's web site](#).



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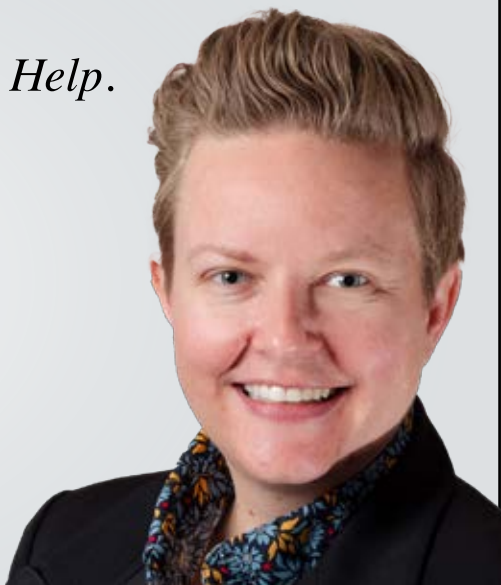
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Sacramento LGBT Community Center Breaks Ground on Historic Renovation

by the Sac LGBT Center photo by Fred

The Sacramento LGBT Community Center today marked the start of construction on the renovation of its Lavender Heights headquarters, celebrating a major milestone in its long-term effort to create a permanent home for the region's LGBTQ+ community.



Sacramento LGBT Community Center

Lobby & Reception



The event brought together civic leaders, major donors, and community partners to recognize the transformation of the Center's 100+ year-old building into a modern, fully accessible space designed to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Once complete, the renovation will expand confidential service space for mental health and sexual health services, improve accessibility throughout the building, create new community gathering areas, and modernize critical building systems. The project will also enhance safety features for clients, staff, and visitors.

"This is more than a renovation. It is a declaration of permanence," said David Heitstuman, CEO of the Sacramento LGBT Community Center.

"People come to the Center every day looking for care, connection, and a place where they feel safe being who they are. This project ensures that space is not temporary. It is a permanent home. At a time when LGBTQ+ communities across the country are being attacked and denied access to everyday life—healthcare, housing, employment, school sports—this building stands as a promise that care will continue and that this community will always have a place to access services and feel like they belong."

The groundbreaking marks the final phase of the Center's Welcome Home capital project, a multi-year effort that raised \$6 million to purchase the building and fund

most of the renovation. The Center also announced the launch of a \$1.5 million Renovation and Resiliency Fund to cover remaining costs and strengthen long-term sustainability.

"MarketOne Builders is honored to be the general contractor for the LGBT Community Center Renovations," said James Fitzgerald, Director of Project Development, MarketOne Builders.

"For more than 28 years we have been involved in building the Sacramento community and we look forward to our partnership with the LGBT Center. An iconic facility built with purpose and pride."

"We knew this project was more than just about a building, it's about creating a welcoming space where people feel seen, supported, and connected," said Patti Harmon, Board Treasurer of Sacramento Progressive Communities, Inc.

As one of the largest LGBTQ+ service providers in Northern California, the Sacramento LGBT Community Center serves tens of thousands of people each year through mental health services, sexual health programs, youth services, housing support, workforce development, advocacy, and community events such as Sacramento Pride.

This renovation reinforces the Center's role as both a critical service provider and a cultural hub for the region, ensuring that LGBTQ+ individuals have access to affirming care and community for years to come.



The IKEA Upgrade You Didn't Know You Needed

There's something almost universal about IKEA furniture. It's affordable, functional, and—let's be honest—everywhere. But what happens when you want something a little less “catalog” and a little more you?

That's where Bemz quietly comes in.

Founded in 2005, Bemz is a Swedish design company built around a simple but clever idea: instead of replacing your furniture, reinvent it. Their specialty is tailor-made covers designed specifically for IKEA pieces—everything from sofas and armchairs to bed frames and even long-discontinued models.

In other words, that basic couch you've had for years? It's not stuck looking that way.

What sets Bemz apart is the level of customization in its slipcovers. Customers can choose from a wide range of fabrics—linen, velvet, cotton—and a huge selection of colors. Goodbye, all-white. Those fabrics and colors are paired with different fits and styles, from clean and modern, like the original IKEA look, to something softer and more relaxed.

The result can feel less like a cover and more like a full redesign. Suddenly, a mass-produced piece reads as something intentional, even high-end.

It should be noted that those high-end fabrics can come with a high-end price tag—but isn't that usually the case? That said, Bemz offers a range of price points, and it's worth keeping an eye on their “scratch and dent” section. There are some genuinely good deals to be found there.



photo courtesy of Bemz.com

Designers have taken notice, too. Bemz has collaborated with textile houses and interior designers, and its covers have become something of an insider trick for elevating a space without a full overhaul. When it works, it really works. Many customers describe the transformation as giving their furniture a second life, or even making it feel brand new again.

There's also a practical side to all of this. While the covers are made to order, they're machine washable, which means they're built for real life—pets, spills, and all. Just as important, the concept embraces sustainability: extending the life of existing furniture instead of sending it to the curb.

And that's really the magic here. Bemz doesn't ask you to start over—it just invites you to rethink what you already have.

Sometimes, all it takes is a new slipcover. For more inspiration check out there [web site](#). [click here.](#)

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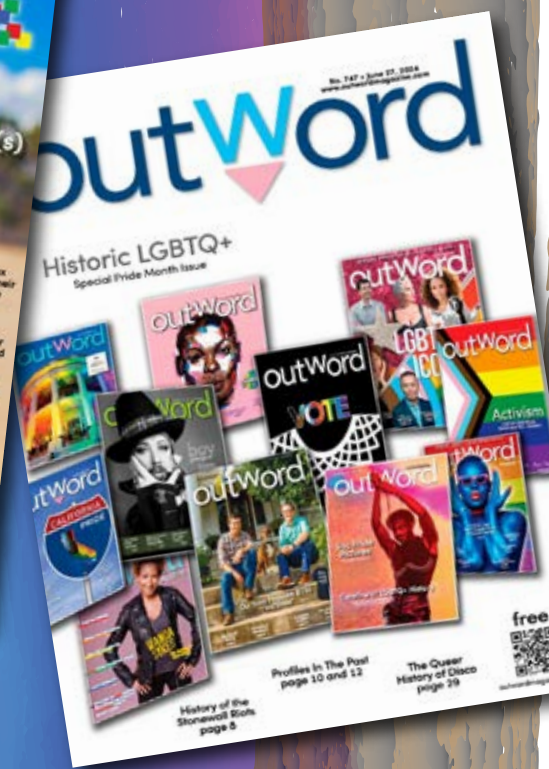
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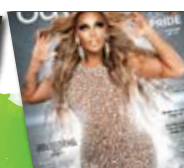
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Drag Your Balls for Sunburst Projects

Spring has officially arrived and with it comes one of Sacramento's most anticipated (and fabulous) events of the season. Get ready to tee up, sip up, and show up for a day of fun, flair, and philanthropy at the 5th Annual Drag Your Balls Golf Tournament and Drag Brunch on the Green, happening Saturday, May 9, 2026, at the Haggin Oaks Golf Complex.



photos courtesy of Sunburst Projects



Presented by Gilead and hosted by Sunburst Projects, this one-of-a-kind celebration brings together golf, glamour, and giving back; all in support of individuals and families impacted by HIV/AIDS. Whether you're a seasoned golfer or just in it for the laughs, this event is all about having a good time for a great cause.

Picture this: cruising the course in your golf cart, drink in hand, while fabulous drag queens entertain you at every tee. No clubs? No problem. We've got you covered with rentals, guidance, and plenty of encouragement along the way. This isn't your typical day on the green, it's a party on every hole, complete with music, performances, and yes... even a little ball washing if you need it. Mimosas, Absolut cocktails, and plenty of surprises keep the energy high from start to finish.

Not into golf? We've got you. Join us for the wildly popular Drag Brunch on the Green immediately following the tournament in the Arcade Creek tent. This high-energy, sell-out experience features a delicious brunch buffet, refreshing cocktails, an exciting silent auction, and show-stopping performances by some of Northern California's most talented drag entertainers.

More than just a fabulous day out, Drag Your Balls raises critical funds for Sunburst Projects, supporting life-saving programs like mental health services, medical case management, and the Sunburst Clinic providing free, confidential HIV/STI testing and prevention services across our community.

Come for the fun. Stay for the impact. Be part of something that truly makes a difference.

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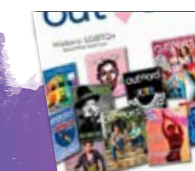
Senior



Sac
Pride



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Pride 2

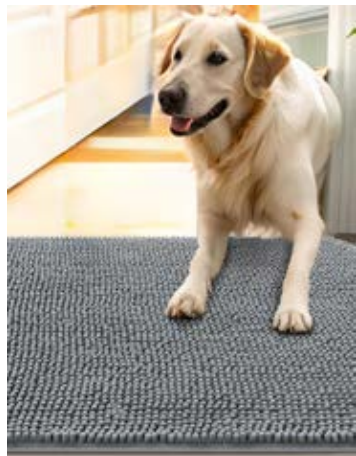


Pride
History

Odds and Ends for Around the House

Outword Staff Favorites

There's a reason wind chimes have stuck around. That soft, gentle sound drifting through the air just makes everything feel calmer—like your backyard has exhaled. Hang a set where it can catch the breeze and suddenly your space has a soundtrack, one that doesn't require charging, syncing, or updating.



If you've ever watched muddy paws (or stray cat litter) make their grand entrance across your floors, you already know the struggle. A good absorbent door mat is the unsung hero here—soft enough to catch the mess, sturdy enough to stick around, and washable when things get a little too real. Tuck one by the door or near the litter box and suddenly you're winning a battle you didn't realize you were fighting.



Sometimes your backyard doesn't need a full makeover—it just needs a little flair. A colorful patio umbrella can do exactly that, adding shade, style, and a hint of “yes, I meant for it to look this good.” It's a quick fix that makes everything feel more pulled together, like you've been planning it all along.

Gardening is relaxing... until you try to stand back up. That's where a kneeler that doubles as a seat earns its keep. A little extra cushion for your knees and a place to perch when you need a break can turn yard work back into something you actually enjoy. It's practical, sure—but also one of those “why didn't I get this sooner?” upgrades.



Outdoor seating looking a little... uninspired? New throw pillows can wake it right up. Go for something that can handle sun and the occasional surprise splash, then have a little fun with color or pattern. It's a low-effort switch that makes it look like you gave the whole space a refresh, even if you didn't touch anything else.



And if you're ready to take things up a notch, a pair of classic outdoor lounge chairs can anchor the whole scene. The kind you sink into with a drink in hand and nowhere urgent to be. Durable, comfortable, and just structured enough to say “this is where we sit now,” they turn a patch of backyard into an actual destination.



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Out & About

The most recent “No Kings” protests, held on March 28, 2026, brought millions of people into the streets across the United States—including multiple gatherings in Sacramento at the California State Capitol and local neighborhoods. The demonstrations were part of a nationwide, largely peaceful movement opposing what organizers describe as authoritarian leadership and policies under President Donald Trump, with participants advocating for democracy, immigration rights, LGBTQ+ protections, and economic justice. In Sacramento, protesters joined thousands across California to rally, hear speakers, and stand in solidarity with a broader national turnout that exceeded 8 million people, making it one of the largest single-day protest mobilizations in U.S. history.

all photos by Jayne Moore

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Up Next

Shelby Means | May 13-14

Mohanad Elshieky | May 29-30

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Platt Vineyard: A Remarkable Expression

words by Diana Kienle, Certified Specialist of Wine, photo by Cathy Schwamberger

Sometime last year, I received an offer for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Platt Vineyard. It was not connected to any winery that I was familiar with - just Platt Vineyard. I was surprised and very curious, since I was aware of the popularity of the grapes from that vineyard, well sought after by winemakers. I was not aware of it being its "own" winery.



Reviews of the reserve wines from Galloni's Vinous

100	<small>From Wine Spectator Magazine, 2023 & 2022 Consumer Advisor - (last updated Jan 2023)</small>
Drinking Window: 2023 - 2025	The 2023 Chardonnay Estate Reserve is magnificent. Tangy green apple, peach, apricot, baked apple tart and pastry are some of the many nuances that come in the glass. The Reserve offers a captivating mix of vibrancy and textual nuance. Creamy, elegant contours wrap up the glass. There's striking resonance and mouth-kissing small balance to match a long finish that sweetens for an eternity. The Reserve is a blend of softness and firm backbone on the palate, joined with a richness of color. Mouth sensations that are distinguished by longer lingers. It is one of several wines I have tasted from the past of the West. Someone could that suggests Chardonnay may ultimately hold more potential than Pinot Noir. What a treat!
98	<small>From Wine Spectator Magazine, 2023 & 2022 Consumer Advisor - (last updated Jan 2023)</small>
Drinking Window: 2023 - 2025	The 2023 Pinot Noir Estate Reserve shows the palate with an exotic mélange of blood orange, pomegranate, wine, rose leather and cedar. A Pinot of remarkable density and sheer power, the 2023 Platt will need to shed some of its body fat. This is a quotational wine from one of the very greatest sites in the United States.

My first response was to open up Anthony Galloni's app "Vinous" to see what reviews might be available. To my surprise, the ratings and comments about Platt Vineyard wines were remarkable. I was amazed that the '23 Platt Vineyard Estate Reserve Chardonnay had been awarded 100 points! A perfect score for Chardonnay? This was curious for me; and since I was able to purchase, I did. The newly released Pinot Noir was awarded 98 points. These are remarkable scores for what would be considered a new winery.

The story unfolds as the new owner of the Platt Vineyard - a renowned source of grapes for multiple wineries - is AXA Millésimes, which is a subsidiary of the French insurance giant AXA. They manage a large portfolio of wine estates across Europe including Bordeaux, Burgundy, Portugal, and Hungary. Their first entry into California was the purchase of Outpost Wines in 2018. Outpost is a wonderful winery that sits high atop Howell Mountain. As I learned, both wineries (Platt and Outpost) are locally managed by the individual who previously owned Outpost; so there is successful management in place for both wineries.

Platt Vineyard is located in the hills of Sonoma. It was planted in 2003 to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. It is a high-altitude property with a maritime influence situated approximately six miles from the ocean. The vines grow in sandy loams with excellent drainage. It is highly regarded by winemakers. Prior to the sale of the vineyard, 20 different producers pulled grapes from Platt Vineyard. Such wineries as Littorai, Ramey Cellars, Failla, and Rivers-Marie made lovely wine from these grapes. Following the sale of the vineyard, Thomas Rivers Brown (who is the principal and winemaker for Rivers-Marie) will oversee the production of wine from Platt and remains the only winery to have access to the fruit for his own label. (Read my post on Rivers-Marie here.)

The main reason to even be interested in all this history is the wine that is being produced from this vineyard. The first estate release from the 2023 growing season is being met with rave reviews. They have opened a tasting room just off the square in downtown Sonoma. Just recently we had the pleasure to taste this first release of the wines. We tasted all four wines, and I have to say it was truly lovely. The Chardonnays, of which there are two, are smooth and full of bright citrus and very refreshing.

The tasting room is hosted by a very gracious and educated individual, Chris Schreiner (Platt's Director of Hospitality). It was a pleasure to sit and chat with him, enjoy the pleasant space, and luxuriate in the beauty of the wines. Platt Vineyard's tasting room is one of the high points for tastings in the Sonoma Square. Visit their [web site - click here](#).

Enjoy!



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Traditional Ratatouille (Vegetarian)
With savory pomodoro sauce & parmesan Cheese

Bangers & Mash
Two English-style sausages, roasted garlic mashed potatoes, with onion gravy & buttered peas

Coronation Chicken Salad Sandwich
Roasted chicken breast, Major Greys chutney, cranberries, walnuts, crisp lettuce, dutch crunch bread



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Frida Kahlo Lets Her Hair Down at Crocker

by Chris Narloch

You have until May 3, 2026, to witness the first time an original Frida Kahlo painting is publicly displayed at Sacramento's flagship museum.

Crocker Art Museum has the rare good fortune of exhibiting Kahlo's "Self-Portrait with Loose Hair," a 1947 oil painting, as part of the museum's stunning current exhibition, "Making Moves: A Collection of Feminisms."

After I entered the small gallery where Kahlo's work hangs, I noticed two things: that security stands guard next to the painting at all times, for obvious reasons, and Frida's gorgeous head of hair is indeed loose, rather than up as it is in most of her self-portraits.

The Crocker is also letting its hair down with this wonderful show, which gathers a wide variety of artists – most, but not all, women – and different mediums of art to explore the breadth of materials and approaches artists have employed to represent women's experiences.

Ranging from figurative depictions to more abstract expressions, the exhibition examines the evolving complexities of femininity and feminism that have inspired generations of visual artists.

Organized thematically, "Making Moves" explores ideas of self-representation, care, sentimentality, the erotic, and memory. The artworks featured are drawn from the Crocker's permanent collection, alongside loans and gifts from private collections.

Kahlo's powerful painting is by no means the only iconic piece in the show, which includes ceramic art by the great Ruth Rippon, photography by Jacob Schloss, plus works by Diego Rivera, Mary Cassatt, Judy Chicago, Joan Brown, Raven Halfmoon, Faith Ringgold, Betye Saar, Lezley Saar, Carrie Mae Weems, Maryam Yousif, Young Joon Kwak, and more.

If you have not already seen "Making Moves," do not miss it. For more information about this and other Crocker exhibits, please visit www.crockerart.org



Frida Kahlo's "Self-Portrait with Loose Hair" image courtesy of Dallas Museum of Art. Photo by Brad Flowers.

April Is Michael Jackson Month

by Chris Narloch

On April 24 of this year, the new Michael Jackson biopic, "Michael," will sing and dance into theaters throughout Sacramento and around the globe, starring Jaafar Jackson, who is Michael's nephew (and the son of Jermaine Jackson).



Castmembers from "MJ The Musical" Photo by Matthew Murphy

Before then, Sacramento can enjoy the Tony Award-winning, hit Broadway musical "MJ," courtesy of Broadway Sacramento, performing April 8 - 19 at the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center.

Renowned as the King of Pop, Michael Jackson was one of the greatest entertainers of all time. Now, fans of MJ can enjoy his many hits, those singular dance moves, and a rare look at his creative mind and collaborative spirit.

Created by Tony Award-winning director/choreographer Christopher Wheeldon and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Lynn Nottage, "MJ" is centered around the making of Jackson's 1992 Dangerous World Tour.

To purchase tickets, go to www.broadwaysacramento.com

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DavisPride.org





“Hacks” & “Beef” are Back Plus, New Films Reviewed

by Chris Narloch

This critic is looking forward to the fifth (and, sadly, final) season of “Hacks,” just out on Max, and I am also excited for a second season of “Beef” on Netflix, this time starring Oscar Isaac, Carey Mulligan, Charles Melton, and Cailee Spaeny, premiering this April 16th.

I still prefer the big screen experience, however, and here are my latest reviews of new movies in theaters, plus a terrific documentary you can see for free on YouTube.



The Drama

I had thought that the recent, botched, big-screen adaptation of “Wuthering Heights,” with Jacob Elordi and Margot Robbie, might end up being the worst date movie of 2026, until I saw this dreadful dud about a wedding from hell, starring Zendaya and Robert Pattinson.

The A-list stars play an engaged couple whose marital plans take a very dark turn after a shocking secret that Zendaya’s character has kept from her husband-to-be (Pattinson) is divulged.

The problem for the film is that the big reveal involves a depressing, hot-button issue that immediately casts a pall over the rest of the movie and causes a viewer to question the mental health of both main characters.

“The Drama” becomes increasingly far-fetched as it proceeds, and although the final sequence is very well-acted and directed, for me it was too little too late.

“The Drama” is currently in wide theatrical release.



Hoppers

This new animated sci-fi comedy from Disney/Pixar is a hit with reviewers and regular folks, thanks to a sweet story involving protecting animals and the environment.

The movie’s main character, Mabel, is a college student and an animal lover, who discovers that she can transfer her mind into a lifelike robotic beaver to communicate with animals and save their habitat from human destruction.

The film’s plot might be a little complicated for younger children, but the very colorful animation and the script’s sense of humor will hold their attention.

“Hoppers” has a first-rate voice cast that includes Jon Hamm, Dave Franco, Ego Nwodim, Kathy Najimy, and Meryl Streep. The movie is currently in wide theatrical release.



Fantasy Life

This funny and poignant family dramedy costars Amanda Peet and Matthew Shear, and Shear does double duty as director. Peet plays an unhappily married mom who has an emotional affair with her children’s “manny.”

Shear plays the neurotic babysitter, who falls in love with the mother of three girls he is hired to help with, which (not surprisingly) causes the rift between the parents to get even wider.

Shear is very funny as the male nanny, and Amanda Peet is superb as the former actress and now wife and mother, who is overwhelmed and underappreciated.

Featuring an excellent supporting cast that includes Andrea Martin, Judd Hirsch, Holland Taylor, Zosia Mamet, and Alessandro Nivola, “Fantasy Life” was still playing at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre when this edition of *Outword* came out.



Disney Handcrafted

This dynamite documentary was directed by Leslie Iwerks, whose father and grandfather both worked for Disney, and it chronicles the chaotic, 12-month construction of Disneyland in 1954 and 1955, using rare archival 16mm film footage and audio.

Watching the park come together in just one year feels like a miracle considering that an amusement venture of its scale had never been attempted before.

Walt Disney is, of course, the movie’s main human character, and the documentary shows that his occasional moments of self-doubt were no match for his determination and his vision for Disneyland.

“Disney Handcrafted” clocks in at a brisk 80 minutes and is available to watch on YouTube.



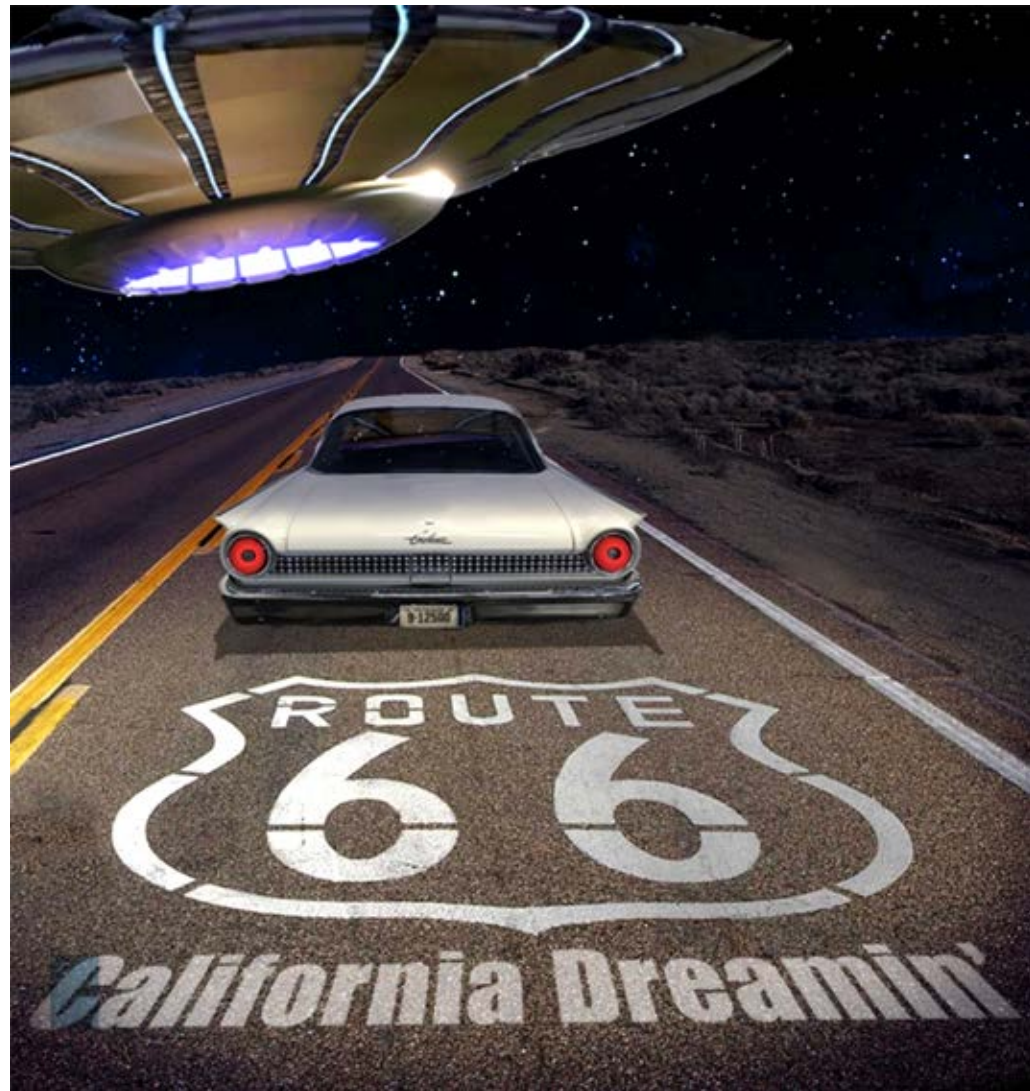
Hunky Easter

photos by Fred

Sunshine, satire, and just the right amount of sacrilege—San Francisco’s annual Hunky Jesus Contest returned with its signature blend of camp and slightly irreverent creativity. Held, unofficially, as part of the city’s Easter celebrations, the crowd showed up in full force, cheering on a parade of would-be messiahs with divine abs. Equal parts costume contest and cultural wink, the event once again proved that, in true San Francisco fashion, nothing is too sacred to have a little fun with.

CA Auto Museum Celebrates 100 Years of Route 66

The 100th anniversary (Centennial) of Route 66 occurs in 2026, marking a century since the iconic highway’s establishment on November 11, 1926.



Celebrations span the entire year, with major events, festivals, and commemorations scheduled along the historic route from Chicago to Los Angeles, including a national kickoff in Springfield, Missouri, on April 30, 2026.

Not to be outdone, Sacramento’s California Automobile Museum is taking a trip down the Mother Road of memory lanes with the museum’s current exhibit, “Route 66: California Dreamin’”

The exhibit is a celebration of all things Route 66, rolling through the many decades of history on the Main Street of America, and arriving just in time for the 100th anniversary of the route.

“Route 66: California Dreamin’” is ongoing. For more information, go to www.calautomuseum.org

Inaugural San Francisco Circus Festival Takes Over Club Fugazi



This spring, North Beach’s Club Fugazi transforms into a vibrant hub of high-flying artistry and community connection with the inaugural San Francisco Circus Festival—a multi-day celebration honoring San Francisco’s rich legacy as a global epicenter for contemporary circus—taking place April 14–19, 2026. It will feature an exciting lineup of beloved Bay Area circus artists and companies, youth performers, and special community activations. San Francisco Circus Festival places local artists center stage while honoring a legacy of innovation, athleticism, artistry, and risk-taking. Tickets for all San Francisco Circus Week performances are available at clubfugazisf.com/circus-festival.

Out & About





Activating Taste Buds by Jules the Mixologist

The Drink: The “Just One” Spritz

(Serves one person who absolutely said they'd only stay for one)

Ingredients

- 3 oz prosecco
- 2 oz Aperol
- 1 oz soda water
- Orange slice

Directions

Fill a wine glass with ice.
Add Aperol, then prosecco, then a splash of soda.
Stir gently.
Garnish with an orange slice.
Take a sip.
Tell yourself you're leaving soon.

Why This Works

It's light.
It's easy.
It doesn't ask for commitment.
Which is exactly how the night started.

Pair With:

- A text that changed your plans
- Sitting outside longer than expected
- That one friend who always says “stay”
- Realizing not every good night is planned

Because sometimes the best evenings... are the ones you didn't intend to have.
Clocked out.
Poured up.
See you next issue.



Outword Afterwork

“I Wasn't Going Out Tonight”

I wasn't going out tonight.

That was the plan. A good plan. A responsible plan.

I was going to go home. Sit down. Maybe cook something ambitious like pasta. Maybe even answer a few emails. Light a candle. Become the kind of person who has a nighttime routine.

That version of me existed briefly. For about seven minutes.

Then a text came in.

“Are you around?”

A dangerous question. Casual. Low commitment. The kind of message that has ruined many perfectly reasonable evenings.

I said, “I could stop by for one.”

Which, historically, has never been true.

Because “one” turns into standing outside. Then sitting. Then laughing. Then someone orders something bright and orange and suddenly the night feels like it has potential.

That's the thing about a Spritz (see above).

It's not a serious drink. It doesn't demand your full attention. It doesn't rush you. It just kind of... opens the door.

One sip in and the day feels further away.

Two sips and you're telling a story you didn't plan to tell.

Three sips and suddenly it's golden hour and you're exactly where you're supposed to be.

You weren't going out tonight.

But you're glad you did.

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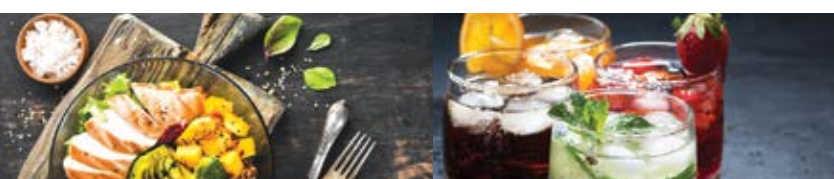
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Palm Springs Pride Says "Be Included" — and Means It

Palm Springs Pride is turning 40, and the message for 2026 is simple, pointed, and very on-brand: Be Included. Set for November 6–8, Greater Palm Springs Pride is dialing up what the desert does best—big energy, big crowds, and a reminder that LGBTQ+ spaces still matter. A lot.

This isn't just a feel-good tagline. "Be Included" lands at a moment when inclusion is still being debated, legislated, and, in some places, chipped away. Pride organizers are framing this year as both celebration and stance—showing up as you are, and making space for everyone else to do the same.

Executive Director Jasmine Sullivan Waits puts it plainly: inclusion isn't passive. It's something you build, protect, and live out loud. And in Palm Springs, that means a weekend where the party and the purpose share the same stage.

And yes, it's a big stage.

Pride Week regularly pulls in more than 200,000 people, filling hotels, restaurants, and dance floors across the city. The economic impact is expected to hit around \$38 million, making Pride not just a cultural moment, but a major engine for the region. Visibility matters—and so does showing up with your wallet.

The weekend unfolds across downtown and the Arenas District, with multiple stages, an exhibitor marketplace, and the kind of block parties Palm Springs has perfected. The Pride Parade commences Sunday the 8th at 10, moving down Palm Canyon Drive in a joyous and colorful reminder of how far things have come—and how far there is to go.

Forty years in, Palm Springs Pride isn't slowing down. If anything, it's getting sharper about what it stands for. For more information [click here](#).



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Out & About

with Matthew Burlingame

Spring is doing its usual Sacramento thing—sunshine one minute, mood swings the next. But that just means it's the perfect time to get out and live a little. Come hang with the Outword crew at happy hour, reconnect with old friends and make new ones at events across the city. From queer theater to dance floors and everything in between, let's play hard, love harder and embrace every unpredictable moment together.



April 18

Benise brings Spanish Nights by Candlelight to Harris Center for the Arts, 10 College Parkway, Folsom, on Saturday, April 18, at 7 p.m. The Emmy-award-winning "Prince of Spanish Guitar" combines fiery flamenco, world rhythms and elegant guitar classics like "Moonlight Sonata" and "Hotel California" with dance and lush staging for an unforgettable evening. www.benise.com



April 18

SSPCA Doggy Dash

Come out to the Sacramento SPCA Doggy Dash, 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. Spca.org

Step into the wild at the Sacramento Reptile Show from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 18–19 at 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento. Featuring more than 3,000 reptiles, hands-on education and a thrilling live alligator encounter, this massive event brings together fans and experts for an unforgettable, scale-filled adventure into the fascinating world of reptiles. Sacreptileshow.com

April 19

Book lovers, mark your calendars: the Sacramento Book Festival returns from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, April 19, at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 6151 H St., Sacramento. The free, family-friendly event features 200-plus authors, lively panels, kids' activities and book signings plus food trucks for a full day celebrating stories, creativity and community. Sacramentobookfestival.com



April 21

Dancing With the Stars: Live! waltzes into the SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center, 1301 L St. in Sacramento, on Tuesday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. Straight from Hollywood, this dazzling live tour showcases the show's beloved pros—including Alan Bersten, Emma Slater, Val Chmerkovskiy, and more—in an unforgettable evening of glitz, glam, and breathtaking ballroom magic. Safecreditunionconventioncenter.com

Ongoing

Love, courage and consequence collide in Stop Kiss by Diana Son, playing through April 25 at Spectrum Stage, 2424 Castro Way, Sacramento. This powerful contemporary drama follows two women whose growing connection is shattered by violence, weaving past and present to explore intimacy, identity and the resilience of queer love in a world that doesn't always make space for it. Spectrumstage.org

April 10

Therapy can wait because cocktails are calling! *Outword* Happy Hour returns from 5:30-7 p.m. Friday, April 10, at Badlands Sacramento. Hosted by Outword Magazine, this cheeky, high-energy mixer invites you to sip, mingle and "network" (wink) while enjoying strong drinks, great company and just the right amount of oversharing. Visit their Facebook [event page, click here](#).

April 11

Bed By 10 turns back the clock with a daytime dance party for the 30-plus crowd from 3 to 8 p.m. Saturday, April 11, at The Rink Studios, 1031 Del Paso Blvd. Expect nonstop '80s, '90s and early-2000s club hits, high-energy vibes and zero next-day regret. The last entry is 5 p.m.—home and in bed by 10. Therinkstudiossac.com

April 12

Sashay your way to a fierce night of drag when Sam Star performs live at Faces Nightclub at 9 p.m. Sunday, April 12. Fresh from RuPaul's Drag Race Season 17, the stunning Southern queen brings style, charisma and high-energy performances to the stage. FACES.net



Virtuoso pianist Yuja Wang joins the Mahler Chamber Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 27, at Jackson Hall, One Shields Ave., Davis. Presented by the Mondavi Center, the performance showcases masterful interpretations and world-class artistry in a rare, unforgettable evening of classical music. Mondaviarts.org

Make your lunch hour count at Let's Do Lunch & Network from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, at Bear & Crown. Hosted by the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce, this upbeat midday meetup blends connection, conversation and community with lunch included. For professionals looking to grow their network with purpose. Rainbowchamber.net

Get ready to laugh out loud when Up in Smoke hits the big screen at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 21, at Crest Theatre, 1013 K St., Sacramento. Starring comedy legends Cheech and Chong, this cult classic follows a hilariously chaotic cross-border adventure fueled by mishaps, mischief and plenty of smoky antics. Cresttheatre.com

Pop powerhouse Meghan Trainor brings The Get In Girl Tour to Golden 1 Center, 500 David J Stern Walk, at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 7. Joined by Icona Pop, the high-energy show delivers chart-topping hits, feel-good anthems and unstoppable pop vibes. Livenation.com

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



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www.steelefinancial.org

HEALTH SERVICES

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info@house-2-om.com

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CrockerArt.org

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DrCameronYee@aol.com

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Safe Credit Union Performing Arts Center
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BroadwaySacramento.com

MONDAVI CENTER
UC Davis
mondaviarts.org

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EARTH GUARD PEST SERVICES
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contact@earthguardpest.com

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Beazer.com

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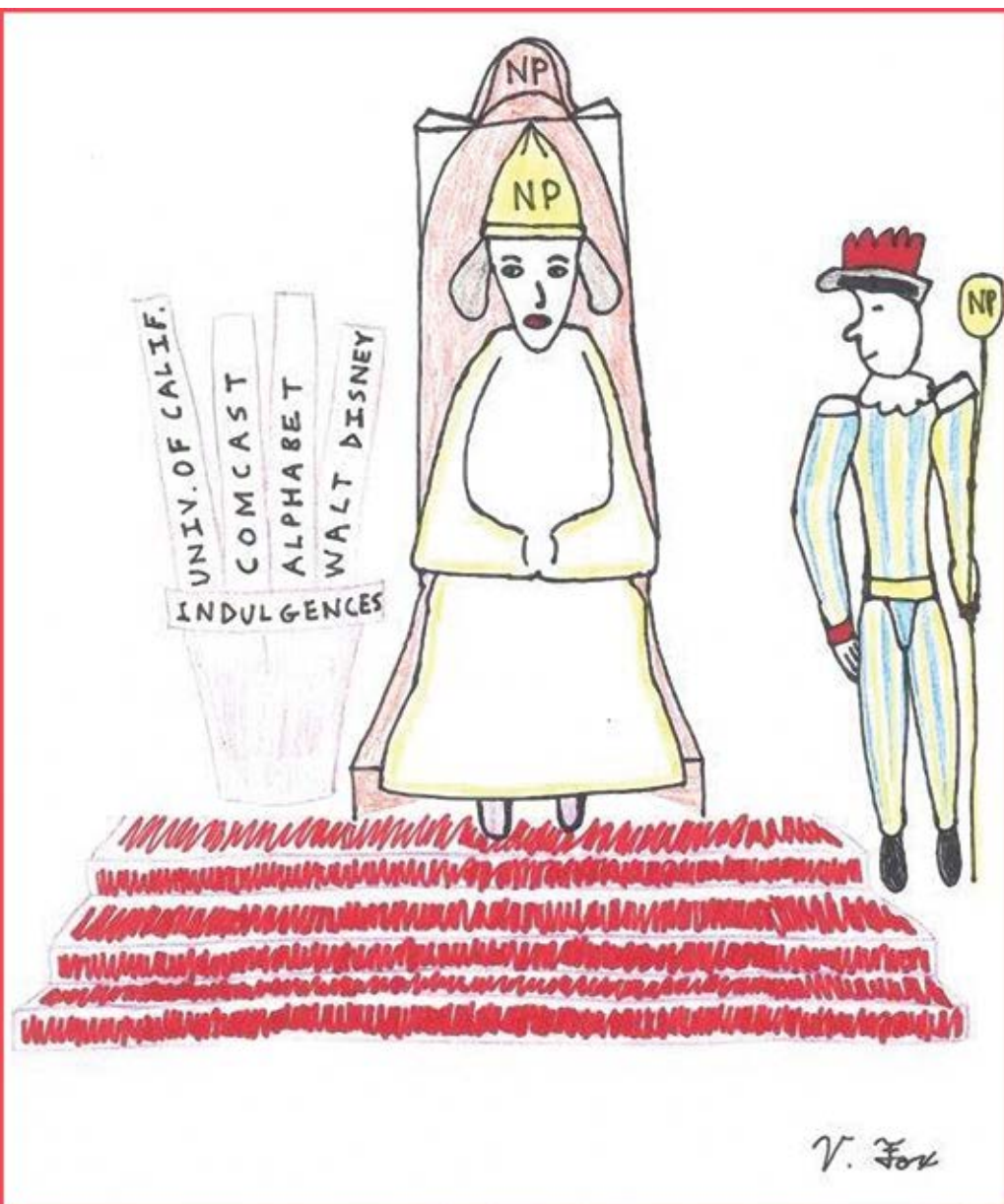
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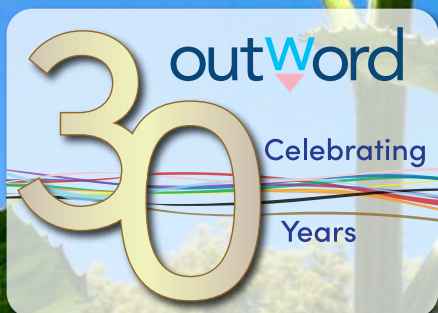
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