

Special Issue!

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# outWord



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# California Hate Crimes Decline Overall, but Anti-Transgender Incidents Rise

resource: Attorney General Bonta  
press release

California saw a slight decline in reported hate crimes in 2025, but new state data shows troubling increases in crimes targeting several communities, including transgender Californians.

According to the California Department of Justice's 2025 Hate Crime in California report, reported hate crime events decreased 3.4%, from 2,023 in 2024 to 1,955 in 2025. The number of reported victims also fell 3.6%, to 2,402.

The overall decline, however, masks significant increases in several categories.

Anti-transgender bias events increased 23.3%, from 73 in 2024 to 90 in 2025. That increase accounted for most of the overall 23.8% rise in gender-bias hate crime events.

At the same time, hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation bias dropped significantly, falling 35.2% from 455

incidents in 2024 to 295 in 2025.

Racial and ethnic bias remained a major concern. Anti-Hispanic or Latino hate crime events jumped 30.3%, from 198 to 258, while anti-Black hate crimes increased slightly to 508 incidents.

Anti-citizenship status bias events more than doubled, rising from 16 to 40.

"There is absolutely no place for hate in California," Attorney General Rob Bonta said, noting that while overall numbers declined, too many Californians continue to be targeted because of who they are, where they come from, whom they love or how they identify.

DOJ cautions that hate crimes remain historically underreported and that some law enforcement agencies did not submit a full year of data for 2025, making year-to-year comparisons imperfect.

Californians who believe they have experienced a hate crime should contact local law enforcement. Hate incidents that may not rise to the level of a crime can also be reported or addressed through community resources by calling 211.

More information and resources are available through the California Attorney General's [Hate Crimes program](#).

## A Big Step Forward for HIV in California!

by Paul Curtis - Sunburst Projects

Governor Newsom and the California State Legislature have committed to a big investment in ending the HIV Epidemic by investing over \$500 million over 4 years. At a time when funding for HIV has been in jeopardy at the Federal level, California moves in the opposite direction with a historic and transformational plan that was included in the State Budget that was just approved. This big win was the result of tireless advocacy by the member organizations of End The Epidemics (ETE). ETE is a statewide coalition that advocates for funding to eliminate health inequities and end the HIV, STI, viral hepatitis, and overdose syndemic in California.

Many thanks goes out to the advocates, activists and community members who spoke up and shared their stories as ETE pressed for California to invest in these important HIV safety net services.

The funding for this investment came through the California AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP) Rebate Fund, which is a special fund in the CA State Treasury created to manage rebates collected from drug manufacturers on medications purchased through ADAP. The ADAP Rebate Fund is a dedicated, continuously appropriated source of funding that ensures rebates from drug manufacturers directly support HIV treatment, prevention, and related services across California, with recent allocations also addressing workforce capacity and public health infrastructure needs.

This funding over 4 years will support:

- PrEP and PEP

- Condom Distribution
- HIV Testing in Emergency Departments in Hospitals
- Housing Services for people living with HIV and experiencing homelessness
- Aging Services for older adults living with HIV
- Substance use services that prevent HIV, Hepatitis C, and overdose

While most of the services listed above have been in place for some time, a new one is the Housing Services for people living with HIV. The is a critical effort to help address the homelessness crisis within the HIV community. \$50 million has been approved for the 2026-27 fiscal year and will be administered by the Office of AIDS in a matter similar to the federal Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA). The unique focus of HOPWA is to help people with HIV stay housed instead of

waiting till they are unhoused.

Sunburst Projects is proud to be a part of this effort and serves on the Organizing Committee for End The Epidemics through the Director of Community Engagement – Paul Curtis, along with the following organizations: APLA Health, LA LGBT Center, Access Support Network, Ene HEP C San Francisco, Equality California, Glide, Hep B Free, National Harm Reduction Coalition and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

"Sunburst Projects is proud to be a member of the End The Epidemics coalition and is thankful for the ADAP Rebate Fund investments to meet the needs of those living with and/or affected by HIV/AIDS. This will allow agencies like Sunburst Projects and others across the state to scale programming to meet community needs," states Jake Bradley-Rowe, CEO of [Sunburst Projects](#).

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The upcoming Slate Electric Pickup Truck.  
Photo courtest of [Slate.Auto](#) press kit

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## Community Opinion

# If Not You, Who? If Not Now, When?

by Neil Pople

President, Stonewall Democratic Club of Greater Sacramento

Six years ago, in the middle of a global pandemic, I did something that scared me. I put my name on the ballot. I ran for Roseville City Council in 2020 knowing full well that I was an openly gay Democrat running in one of the more conservative corners of the Sacramento region. I didn't win. I came in second. A loss is still a loss, but it was one of the great experiences of my life.

Running for office taught me that democracy isn't something that just happens TO us. It's something we choose to participate IN. That's why I'm paying attention to the calendar this month.

Candidate filing opened in California on July 13 and runs through August 7. This isn't as flashy an election as the House of Representatives or the State Legislature: those races are largely set and are expected to be Battles of Titans in some cases. This is the season for local government, where city councils, school boards, and special districts are looking for the next generation of leaders.

It may not sound glamorous, but please don't underestimate the impact these offices have. School boards make decisions that affect LGBTQ+ students every day. City councils shape housing, public safety, parks, and the character of our communities. Water districts, park districts, and other local boards oversee services that touch our lives in ways we rarely think about.



This is where true leadership begins.

Very few people successfully launch their public service careers by running for Congress. Most start exactly here by filing for a race where they can make an immediate impact. They run because they care about their neighborhoods. They see a problem that needs solving. They believe they have something to contribute.

Our LGBTQ+ community has never waited for permission to lead. Every right we've secured and every seat we've earned came because someone decided to step forward, often before they felt completely "ready".

We spend a lot of time asking why there aren't more queer elected officials, especially here in the capitol region. I don't think the answer is that our community lacks talent. I think too many talented people convince themselves that someone else is more qualified.

The truth is, every elected official you admire once stood where you are now, looking at candidate paperwork and wondering if they were making a mistake.

They weren't.

They were choosing to serve.

Whether you live in West Sacramento, Davis, Woodland, Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, Folsom, Citrus Heights, Elk Grove, Galt, or one of the many communities throughout our region holding local elections this year, your community deserves leaders who understand the value of inclusion, fairness, and public service.

Maybe you've never thought of yourself as "someone who runs for office."

Neither did a lot of the people serving today.

Candidate filing closes August 7. If public service has ever crossed your mind, even for a moment, don't let self-doubt make the decision for you.

Our community needs people willing to step forward.

If not you, who? If not now, when?

Neil Pople is president of the Stonewall Democratic Club of Greater Sacramento ([sacstewall.org](http://sacstewall.org)) and has spent more than 25 years working on political campaigns and civic engagement throughout the Sacramento region.



## In the Military Over 30? The Pentagon Wants to Check Your Testosterone

The U.S. military is adding a new item to the annual health checklist for service members over the age of 30: testosterone screening.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced this week that all active-duty personnel age 30 and older will receive yearly testing for testosterone deficiency as part of their routine medical evaluations. Service members under 30 will be able to request the screening voluntarily. Those found to have low testosterone levels may be offered testosterone replacement therapy, though treatment itself will remain optional.

Hegseth said the move is designed to improve readiness, resilience, recovery, and long-term health among troops serving under often demanding conditions that include disrupted sleep, chronic stress, and physically intensive work. In announcing the initiative, he said the goal is to ensure service members have the hormone levels necessary to perform at their “absolute best.” The policy was introduced in a social media video titled High-T Department of War.

Supporters argue that military life can place unique strain on the body and that low testosterone can contribute to fatigue, depression, loss of muscle mass, and reduced performance. They see the screenings as no different than monitoring blood pressure, vision, or cardiovascular health.

### The High-T Department of War? Pentagon Launches New Screening Program

Not everyone is convinced. Medical experts note that testosterone deficiency is typically diagnosed only after symptoms are identified and multiple blood tests confirm persistently low hormone levels. Some physicians worry that broad screening programs could lead to overdiagnosis or unnecessary treatment.

The announcement has also sparked political discussion. Critics point out that the Pentagon has spent much of the past year restricting access to gender-affirming hormone treatment for transgender service members while simultaneously expanding access to testosterone therapy for cisgender troops. That contrast has not gone unnoticed by LGBTQ+ advocates and veterans groups.

Whether the program becomes a model for preventive military medicine or simply another chapter in America’s ongoing culture wars remains to be seen.

## Attorney General Bonta Files Lawsuit Challenging Trump Administration’s Latest Attack on California’s Clean Air

*resource Bonta press release*

California Attorney General Rob Bonta, Governor Gavin Newsom, and the California Air Resources Board have filed a new lawsuit against the Trump Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over what they describe as an unlawful attempt to weaken California’s clean air protections.

At the center of the dispute are four long-standing Clean Air Act waivers that allow California to set vehicle emissions standards stricter than federal rules. The waivers cover greenhouse gas limits for passenger vehicles, California’s Advanced Clean Cars I program, and emissions standards for small off-road engines such as generators, lawn equipment, and other gas-powered machinery.

For more than 50 years, these waivers have been treated as administrative “orders,” not federal “rules.” That distinction matters because rules can be challenged through the Congressional Review Act, while orders cannot. The EPA recently reclassified the waivers as rules and submitted them to Congress for possible reversal, marking the first time any administration has taken such a step.

California argues the move violates the Administrative Procedure Act and exceeds the EPA’s legal authority. State officials say the action threatens decades of progress in reducing air pollution and creates uncertainty for automakers and consumers alike.

“California will continue to fight against the Trump Administration’s lawless overreach and vigorously defend our authority to protect the health and well-being of our communities and the environment,” Bonta said in announcing the lawsuit.

California has received more than 75 Clean Air Act waivers since the law was enacted in 1970, allowing the state to tackle severe smog problems and often setting emissions standards later adopted elsewhere in the country.

## The List



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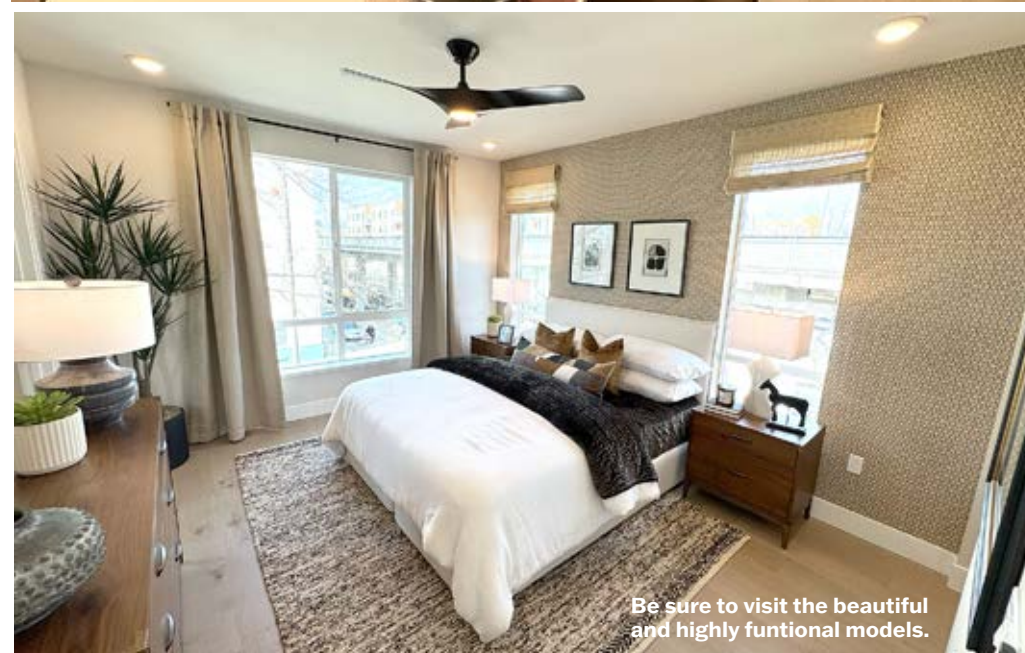
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*courtesy of Star Adair - Beazer Homes*

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"We're always looking for ways to deliver more value to our homeowners," said Luke Wissmann, Sacramento Division President for Beazer Homes. "Advanced Home Performance is one more way we're helping buyers get more from their home every day."

To help homeshoppers better understand what makes these homes different, Beazer Homes recently introduced its new Advanced Home Performance Showroom at R21. Designed as an educational experience, the showroom allows visitors to explore the construction practices and cost of homeownership savings built into every home.

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To learn more about Beazer Homes and the opportunities available in the greater Sacramento area, visit [BEAZER.COM](http://BEAZER.COM)



# Polestar Forced to Exit U.S. New-Car Market Beginning in 2027

Electric vehicle maker Polestar is being forced to pull back from the U.S. new-car market after the Department of Commerce denied the company authorization to sell vehicles beginning with the 2027 model year.

The decision stems from the federal Connected Vehicle Rule, adopted in early 2025 amid national-security concerns over automotive technology linked to China and Russia. Modern vehicles collect and transmit enormous amounts of information through cellular connections, GPS, cameras, microphones, Bluetooth and other connected systems. Federal officials argue that foreign access to those systems could pose security and privacy risks.

Polestar, although headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden, has significant ownership ties to China through automotive giant Geely. Those ties brought the company under scrutiny despite Polestar's increasingly global manufacturing footprint.

That includes the Polestar 3, which is assembled in South Carolina by American workers. The decision therefore has implications beyond whether consumers can buy a particular EV. If Polestar can no longer sell new models here, reduced or discontinued U.S. production could ultimately affect American manufacturing jobs, suppliers and other businesses connected to the South Carolina operation.

For now, Polestar can continue selling existing inventory of 2026-model-year

authorized



Polestar 4  
Photo courtesy of [Polestar.com](https://www.polestar.com)

vehicles. Current owners can continue driving their cars, and the company says it will provide ongoing vehicle support, service and software updates according to existing product and service plans.

Still, the decision raises understandable questions about long-term servicing, warranties, parts availability and resale values.

Polestar has said it will not appeal the Commerce Department's decision and will instead increase its focus on Europe, which represents the vast majority of its sales.

The situation also illustrates how dramatically the definition of an "imported car" is changing. Where a vehicle is actually built may no longer be the deciding factor. Software, connectivity and corporate ownership can now determine whether a vehicle is allowed to be sold in the United States.

That creates an unusual outcome: a policy designed to protect U.S. interests could restrict the sale of an American-built vehicle and potentially put American jobs connected to its production at risk.

For Polestar, unless federal policy or the company's circumstances change, the 2026 model year may mark the end of its brief run selling new vehicles in America.

[Polestar.com](https://www.polestar.com)



EX60 image courtesy of VolvoCars.com

If you're looking for a similar aesthetic but with a bit more usable cargo space, you should really check out the brand-new Volvo EX60. The all-electric midsize SUV is already generating plenty of attention in Europe and looks poised to make a splash here in the U.S.

With up to an estimated 400 miles of range and ultra-fast charging capabilities of up to 400 kW, the EX60 brings some seriously impressive numbers to the table. With pricing expected to start near \$60,000, it could shake things up in the premium electric SUV market.

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## The Slate Truck Wants to Make EVs Simple, and Affordable

As electric vehicles have become more sophisticated, they've also become more expensive, packed with giant touchscreens, complicated software and features many drivers never knew they needed. Slate Auto is taking a very different approach.

Meet the Slate Truck, a compact electric pickup expected to begin reaching customers in late 2026 with a starting price of \$24,950 before destination charges.

The basic idea is right there in the name: start with a "Blank Slate."

Rather than loading every truck with expensive technology and luxury features, Slate gives buyers the essentials and lets them decide what comes next. The standard truck is a simple two-seat, rear-wheel-drive electric pickup with a refreshingly old-school approach to transportation. Want more? Slate plans an extensive catalog of more than 200 accessories, with the company saying more than 80 percent will cost less than \$500.

And customization goes well beyond floor mats and fancy wheels.

Owners can transform the pickup into a five-seat SUV or Fastback-style vehicle, add exterior wraps instead of traditional paint, upgrade the interior, install additional storage and personalize the truck over time. The idea is almost more IKEA than traditional automaker: start simple, then build the vehicle that works for you.

Slate recently announced that the production truck will offer an estimated 205 miles of range – an increase from earlier plans – while keeping the base MSRP at \$24,950. The compact EV is also expected to offer up to about 1,550 pounds of payload capacity and 2,000 pounds of towing capability.

Perhaps most interesting is what Slate deliberately leaves out. The basic truck skips the giant dashboard touchscreen that has become almost mandatory in modern vehicles. Instead, drivers can use their own smartphone for navigation, entertainment and other connected functions. It's a clever way to reduce cost and avoid saddling the vehicle with technology that may feel outdated long before the truck itself does.

Slate is betting there are plenty of buyers who simply want an affordable EV that is practical, distinctive and fun – without spending \$50,000 or more to get one.

If the company can deliver on that promise, the little Slate could fill a surprisingly large hole in America's EV market.

Sometimes less really might be more.

More information and customization options are available from [Slate Auto](https://slateauto.com).

## California's MyFirstEV Program Takes Shape, Offering Up to \$3,500 Toward an EV

For Californians who have been thinking about making the switch to an electric vehicle, the state's new MyFirstEV program could soon make that decision a little easier – as long as this truly is your first time going electric.

The program will provide an instant \$3,500 discount on eligible new zero-emission vehicles, while qualifying used EVs will be eligible for \$1,750 off. New vehicles generally must have an MSRP of \$50,000 or less, while used vehicles must sell for no more than \$25,000.

California is investing \$135.5 million in MyFirstEV, with participating automakers matching state funding dollar-for-dollar, creating approximately \$270 million in potential savings for consumers. Unlike a traditional tax credit, the incentive is designed to be applied at the point of sale.

So far, 13 automakers have agreed to participate, including Ford, General Motors, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Lucid, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Rivian, Subaru, Tesla, Toyota and Volvo.

One important eligibility question has now been clarified. The California Air Resources Board says participants will be required to certify that this is their first purchase or lease of an electric vehicle. That means Californians who have previously owned or leased an EV will not qualify – even if a leased EV was later purchased through a lease buyout.

The timing creates an unfortunate wrinkle. Many consumers entered the EV market through heavily promoted leases during the final years of generous federal incentives. Those same drivers may now find that their decision to lease – a choice encouraged by the incentive structure at the time – makes them ineligible for California's new first-time EV program.

That distinction could be especially frustrating for drivers who leased their first EV and later bought it, or who now want to replace that vehicle with another EV. They helped California move toward electric transportation, but won't benefit from this particular round of incentives.

Still, for Californians who have yet to make the jump to electric – including younger buyers, working families and members of the LGBTQ+ community who may have found EV prices just out of reach – MyFirstEV could provide a significant helping hand.

Additional details, including the official launch date and participating dealerships, are expected as the program moves toward implementation.

For the latest information, visit [DriveClean.ca.gov](https://DriveClean.ca.gov) or the California Air Resources Board at [arb.ca.gov](https://arb.ca.gov).



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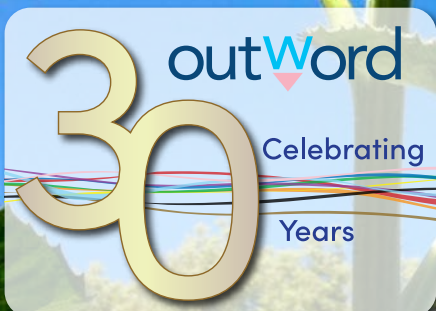
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## Saturday - July 25, 2026



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**11:30 AM Sacramento Gay Mens Chorus Performance**



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**2:00 PM Drag Queen Bingo ❄️ Air Conditioned Room**



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**JULY 29 - AUGUST 9**

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## “Little Shop of Horrors” Turns 40

by Chris Narloch

“Little Shop of Horrors” is one of my favorite stage musicals, and its 1986 film adaptation is one of the finest movie musicals of the last 50 years.



Frank Oz directed the movie, and it has a killer cast that includes Rick Moranis, Steve Martin, Bill Murray, John Candy, Christopher Guest, Jim Belushi, Vincent Gardenia, Miriam Margolyes, Tichina Arnold, Tisha Campbell, Levi Stubbs as the voice of Audrey II, and the great Ellen Greene as the real Audrey.

The film is currently celebrating its 40th Anniversary with a series of screenings hosted by Ms. Greene, who originated the role of Audrey in the stage musical and then continued on to star in the beloved film adaptation.

In case you have never seen the show, “Little Shop of Horrors” is the cult-classic, sci-fi musical comedy about a nerdy florist, Seymour Krelborn, who cultivates a man-eating, blood-thirsty plant named Audrey II. As the plant brings fame to his Skid Row shop, it demands an increasing number of human sacrifices, forcing Seymour to balance his love for coworker Audrey with the plant’s deadly appetite.

Ms. Greene will make a rare Northern California appearance when she hosts the film in person on Sunday evening, August 16, at ATG San Francisco’s Curran Theatre.

To purchase tickets, go to [us.atgtickets.com/whats-on/san-francisco/](http://us.atgtickets.com/whats-on/san-francisco/)

## Cole Escola set to film “Oh, Mary!”

by Chris Narloch

Some fans have called “Oh, Mary!” the funniest play ever written, but I have not seen it yet so I cannot confirm that lofty praise just yet.

However, you will be able to see for yourself what all the fuss is about after the live-captured film of the smash hit play gets a yet-to-be announced theatrical release in cinemas.

The even-better news is that Cole Escola, the writer and original star of the play, will join most of the original cast for the live capture, which is scheduled to be filmed this July 28 at the Trafalgar Theatre in London’s West End.

Escola will reprise their Tony-winning performance from July 20 to August 15 in London, for the first time since leaving the show, after more than six months playing the lead on Broadway.

In New York City, “Oh, Mary!” transferred from a sold-out run off-Broadway to the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway, where half a dozen stars have taken over the lead after multiple extensions, including Betty Gilpin, Tituss Burgess, Jinx Monsoon, Jane Krakowski, John Cameron Mitchell and Maya Rudolph.

In other “Oh, Mary!” news, the current North American tour of the play will stop in the Bay Area this fall for a brief run at San Francisco’s Curran Theatre, from Oct. 13–Nov. 1. (The cast has not yet been announced for this production.)

For those unfamiliar with the show, “Oh, Mary!” is an extremely fictionalized spoof of the final days of Abraham Lincoln, with the focus on Mary Todd Lincoln, who is portrayed as a very temperamental alcoholic, desperate to leave her unhappy marriage to a deeply closeted President Lincoln and return to her glory days as a cabaret star.

Tickets for the San Francisco engagement of “Oh, Mary!” are going fast and can be purchased at <https://us.atgtickets.com/events/oh-mary>



Broadway cast members of “Oh, Mary!”

HOSTED BY: DOME MOORE

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AFSP invests over \$35 million per year in research, making us the largest private funder of Suicide Prevention research in the world. Most of what we know about suicide comes from our research. We provide free in-person or virtual educational programs backed by our research findings, raise awareness through our Out of the Darkness Walks, support for those who have experienced a suicide related loss, and advocate for smart, research based public policy around suicide and mental health. Our mission is simple, Save Lives and Bring Hope to Those Affected by Suicide.

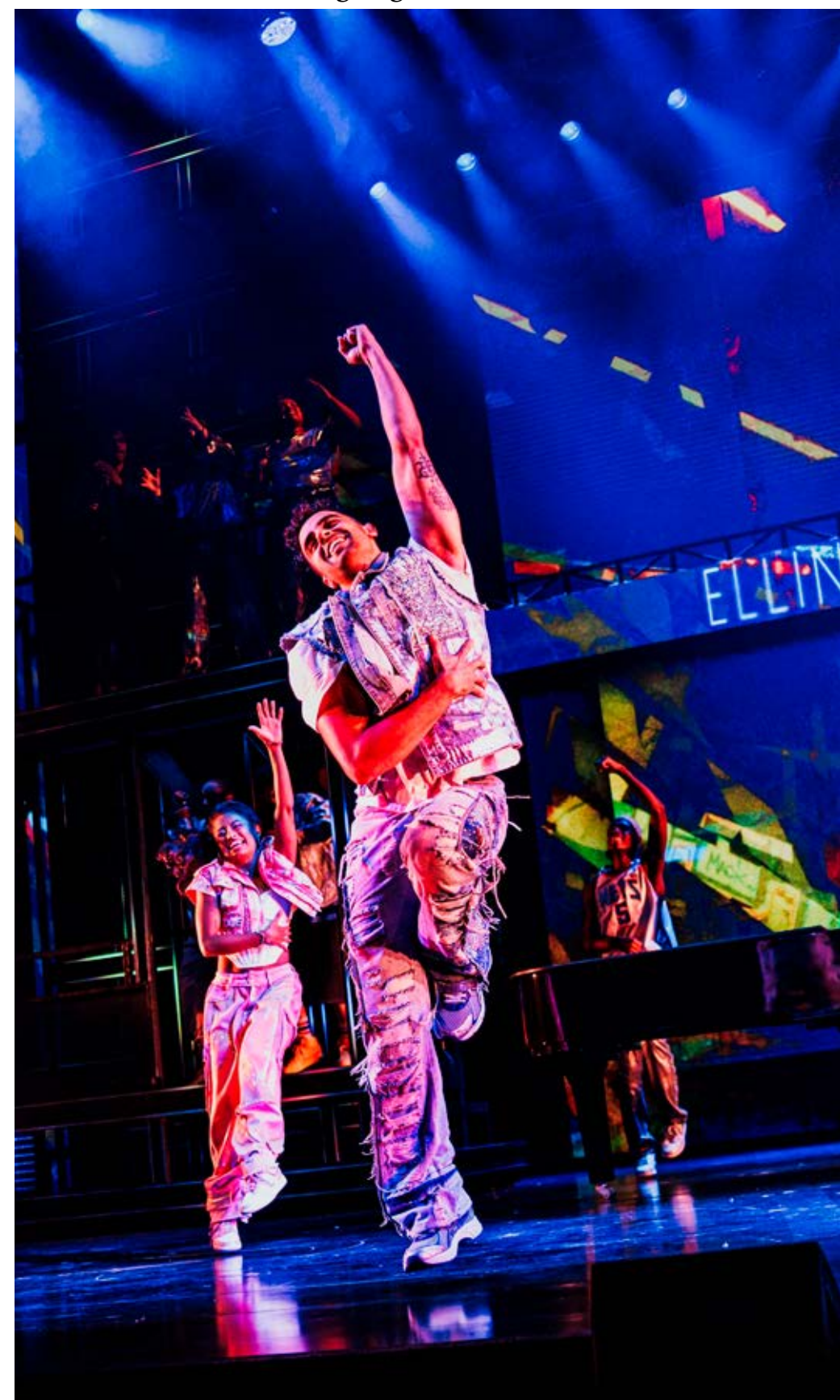


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# Alicia Keys' "Hell's Kitchen" Arrives

**"H**ell's Kitchen," the hit Broadway musical from Alicia Keys, will blast into Sacramento at the end of July, and tickets are going fast.



In "Hell's Kitchen," Ali is a 17-year-old girl full of fire and searching for freedom, passion and her place in the world. How she finds them is a New York City coming-of-age story unlike any you've ever seen or heard.

The new musical from the 17-time Grammy Award-winner features new songs and Keys' greatest hits, including "Girl on Fire," "Fallin'," "If I Ain't Got You," "No One" and "Empire State of Mind."

This is music that was made for Broadway, and the show won two awards (after being nominated for 13) at the 77th Tony Awards.

"Hell's Kitchen" will perform at Sacramento's SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center this July 29 - Aug. 9. To purchase tickets, please visit

[www.broadwaysacramento.com](http://www.broadwaysacramento.com)

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**Dashin' Down the Delta**  
*5k Fun Run/Walk*

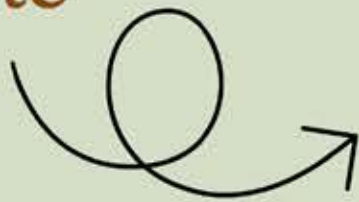
**August 16, 2026**

**Race Kicks off at 8:00AM**

*Run it, walk it, vibe through it—Dashin' Down the Delta is a waterfront 5K for everyone. Join us for movement, community, and a post-run celebration.*

**Registration is OPEN!**

Learn all  
about it on our  
website



*Thank You Presenting Partners & Sponsors*





# *Let's Build a team!*

Something is stirring along the Delta...

At first, it's just a whisper.

A flash of leopard print. A suspiciously familiar red wig. Someone in a caftan asking where the mimosas are. A group of runners debating whether dressing as their favorite TV character counts as athletic wear.

Then suddenly... it's happening.

Dashin' Down the Delta is taking over on August 16, and this is not your average fun run. There are no stopwatches to impress. No personal records to break. No pressure. Just a morning packed with laughter, costumes, community, and a healthy dose of delightful nonsense.

Want to walk it? Perfect.

Want to run it? Amazing.

Want to strut down the course like you're accepting an Emmy Award? We fully support that. Want to gather your friends and show up as the entire cast of your favorite TV show? Even better. And let's not forget the newest sensation sweeping the Delta... the Ms. Roper Romper Dash. Grab your brightest caftan, biggest jewelry, and most fabulous wig and join the growing crowd of Helen Ropers ready to make history one dramatic stride at a time.

Not a runner? No problem. Sponsor it. Cheer people on. Bring the family. Sign up the kids for the Delta Dashers Kids Run. Make a morning of it and stay for brunch afterward.

This event is about fun. Pure, unapologetic fun.

So start planning your outfit. Start recruiting your team. Start practicing your power walk.

Because on August 16, the Delta won't know what hit it.

Walk it. Run it. Strut it. Sponsor it.

Everything you need to know can be found at [DashinDowntheDelta.com](http://DashinDowntheDelta.com). Registration is open now.

The only question is...

Who are you showing up as?

*\*Make sure you add in that you are joining in the group on registration form.*



# Olivia Wilde Month at the Movies Plus, Someone Named Chris Nolan?

by Chris Narloch

Just a reminder that Sacramento's Tower Theatre has two sensational cinematic series that are wrapping up this summer.

The David Lynch retrospective concludes at the end of July with one of the late, great director's weirdest and finest films, "Mulholland Drive."

The Tower's Studio Ghibli series also rolls on throughout July, with "Princess Mononoke," "Ponyo" and "Whisper of the Heart," finishing up in mid-August.

For showtimes, go to <https://angelikafilmcenter.com/tower> and then check out these other movie, now playing at a theater near you (or coming soon).

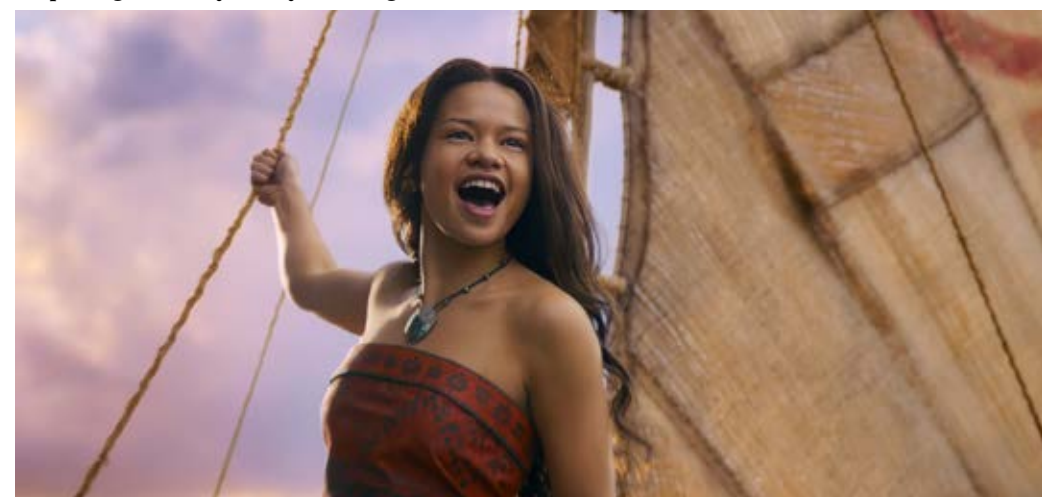


## The Invite

The talented actress Olivia Wilde has released her third directorial effort, and it is an unqualified success. Wilde's second feature film behind the camera ("Don't Worry Darling") was a disappointment, but she has her groove back with this very adult comedy, which is as good or better than her wonderful debut film, "Booksmart."

Wilde costars in "The Invite," along with Seth Rogen, Penelope Cruz and Edward Norton. Wilde and Rogen are the unhappy hosts of a dinner party in their characters' San Francisco apartment, and the new neighbors upstairs – a much more sexually liberated couple played by Norton and Cruz – are the invitees.

Will the four neighbors end up having a foursome, or swapping partners? Well, you will just have to see for yourself, and I highly recommend you do so, before this very sexy, very surprising and very funny film is gone from theaters.



## Moana

This totally unnecessary live-action version comes less than two years after the disappointing sequel to Disney's original animated hit – which I liked. The live-action remake of "Moana" is even more disappointing than the sequel, although it contains a poised performance from Catherine Laga'aia, who plays the title character this time out.

Internet trolls have already voiced their disdain for Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's curly wig, so I will concentrate on the positive: Laga'aia is a lovely singer and a beautiful young woman, and Rena Owen is very touching as Gramma Tala, as is John Tui as Moana's father.

On the negative side, there is so much CGI in the movie, including several annoyingly cutesy critters, that the new film looks almost as artificial as the animated versions. (If you want to see a terrific family film, check out "Minions & Monsters" instead.)

"Moana" is currently in wide theatrical release.



## I Want Your Sex

Olivia Wilde also costars in (but does not direct) this other new sex comedy, and I wish she had gotten behind the camera because the results probably would have been much better. Instead, Gregg Araki directs "I Want Your Sex," which costars Cooper Hoffman, Johnny Knoxville, Margaret Cho, Charli XCX, Mason Gooding, Daveed Diggs and Chase Sui Wonders.

Wilde gives an energetic, committed performance, but there is only so much she can do with her cliched character – a demanding and pretentious artist and sexual provocateur. The only real reason to see the movie is for Cooper Hoffman, who is emotionally and physically naked as Wilde's gofer and sub.

"I Want Your Sex" does have its moments, but Araki's sexy cinema from the '90s (including "The Living End," "The Doom Generation," and "Nowhere") now looks almost tame, and this film isn't nearly as edgy as recent queer titles by other directors, like "Blue Film" and "Pillion." "I Want Your Sex" is scheduled to open at Sacramento's Tower Theatre on July 31st.



## The Odyssey

What can I say about the blockbuster of the summer (and perhaps the year) that hasn't already been said? Truth be told, I am not a huge Chris Nolan fan, but I really like six or seven of his 13 feature films.

He's hit-and-miss for me, but "The Odyssey" is definitely a hit, and it reminded me of the classic, all-star epics I grew up watching as a kid, like "The Ten Commandments," "Spartacus," and "Ben-Hur."

Yet "The Odyssey" feels more modern than those famous Hollywood films of yesteryear, despite its stunning old-world locations. I could quibble about a few things: I wish the movie had an intermission, I would have liked even more of the supernatural stuff from Homer's epic poem, and I think one of the major roles was miscast. Those are very minor criticisms, however, given how successful the film is overall.

This movie could have gone wrong in so many ways, given the complexity of a production this size, but the director and his cast and crew hit it out of the park in scene after scene. It goes without saying that you should fork over the extra money to see the film at Sacramento's [Esquire IMAX](#) Theatre on K Street, one of only 25 true IMAX screens in the U.S. showing the movie as it was intended to be seen, in 70mm. (There are only 41 theaters worldwide showing it in that format.)

Sacramento is very lucky to have one of those locations, and after you watch the film there, I urge you to walk upstairs and peek in to the windows of the projection room so you can see the enormous reels that run the film – which is actual film and not digital.

Finally, I want to thank Christopher Nolan for bringing movie fans back to theaters, and I hope the surge at the box office translates into profits for other IMAX films, and films in general.



# Out & About with Matthew Burlingame

Summer is in full swing, bringing with it long days, warm nights and endless opportunities to try something new. Whether you're exploring local art, launching a new career, laughing with friends or setting off on an unexpected adventure the region is buzzing with an abundance of activity this month! So grab your favorite people and make your next great memory.

## July 25

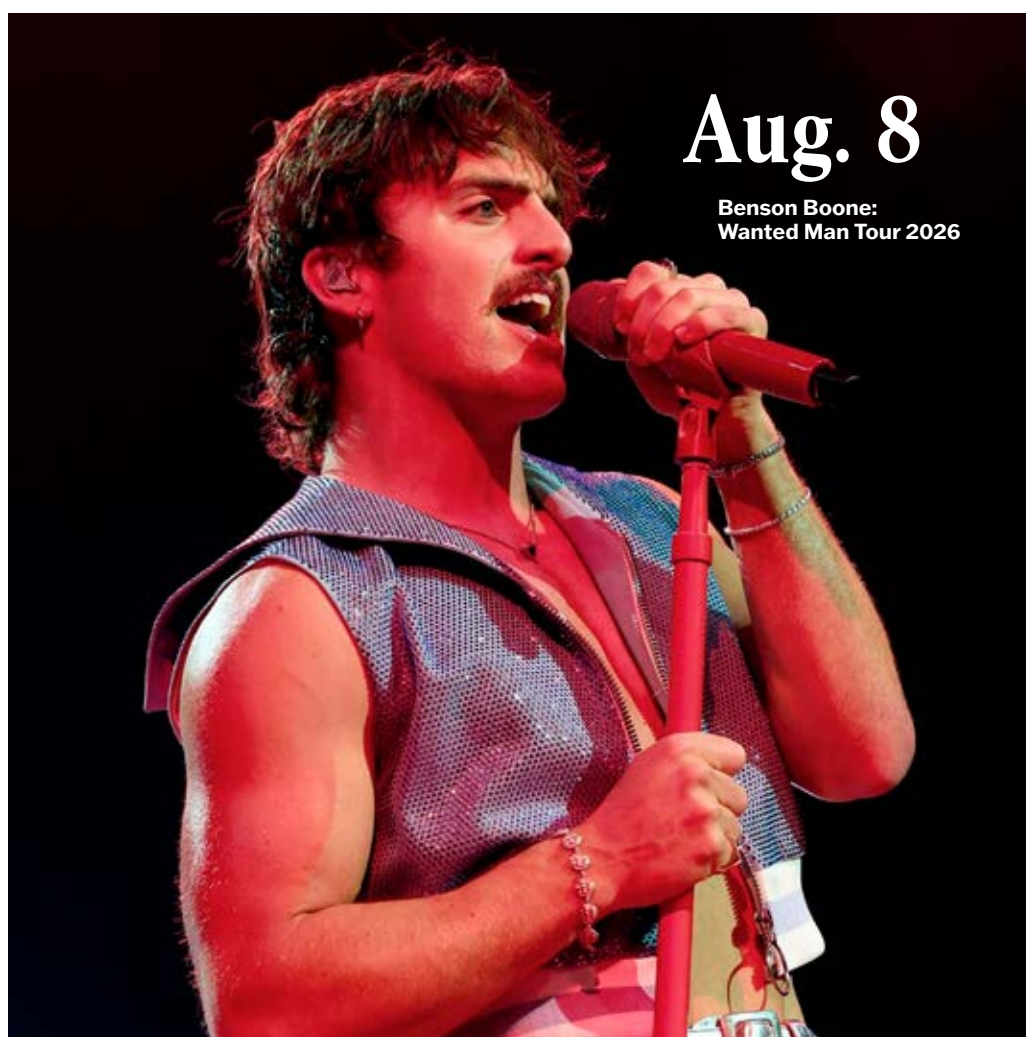
There's Still Time to Celebrate Pride at the California State Fair! **Grab your tickets by Thursday July, 23**, for the Rainbow Chamber of Commerce's State Fair Pride Day, which is Saturday, July 25!

Enjoy special performances, Drag Queen Bingo (winners will get a pair of tickets to the Broadway on Tour's production of Alicia Keys' "Hells Kitchen"), a disco tea dance party and more — including plenty of fun in the air conditioning!

Important: Regular State Fair admission does not include these special Pride Day events. You must purchase the specific \$35 Pride Day ticket, which includes Fair admission, parking and all the Pride Day activities listed above.

[Click here](#) to get your tickets. Go out, stay cool and celebrate Pride at the Fair!

Get ready to dance, sing and unleash your inner idol at K-Pop Takeover on Saturday, July 25 from noon to 3:30 p.m. at The Rink Studios, 1031 Del Paso Blvd. Sacramento's biggest K-pop party promises high-energy performers, DJs, fan chants and wall-to-wall hits from the world's hottest groups. With immersive production, club vibes and nonstop excitement, this is where fandom meets the dance floor. [Likeit-loveit.com](#)



Aug. 8

Benson Boone:  
Wanted Man Tour 2026

## Upcoming

Step into the moment that ignited the modern transgender rights movement with The Compton's Cafeteria Riot continuing throughout August at the Tenderloin Museum, 835 Larkin St. in San Francisco. This acclaimed immersive production transports audiences to the historic 1966 uprising where transgender women and drag queens stood up to police harassment in the Tenderloin. Special anniversary performances celebrating the riot's 60th anniversary include appearances by community leaders and drag icon Peaches Christ on Aug. 21. [ComptonsCafeteriaRiot.com](#)



## Aug. 6

Bring your lucky charm and your loudest bingo voice to Drag Queen Bingo on Thursday, Aug. 6 from 7 to 9 p.m. at Mango's, 1930 K St. Hosted by the fabulous DoMe Moore and presented by the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber the evening serves up outrageous fun, spirited competition and plenty of community cheer. Doors open at 6 p.m. and proceeds benefiting the Greater Sacramento American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. [Rainbowchamber.com](#)

Ready for a new opportunity? The SacJobs Summer Career Fair returns Thursday, Aug. 6 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H St. Job seekers can meet top Sacramento employers, connect with networking opportunities, giveaways and employers hiring now, this free event could be the start of your next big move. [SacJobs.com](#)

[outwordmagazine.com](#)

## Aug. 8

Comedy fans can expect a night of big laughs when Charlie Mac takes the stage at Crest Theatre, 1013 K St., on Saturday, Aug. 8 at 8 p.m. The internationally touring comedian and writer is known for his fearless storytelling, quick wit and high-energy performances. Joining him are comedians J.J. Alexander, Tony Scar and Ernest Evans Sr. for an evening packed with sharp punchlines and unforgettable moments. [Cresttheater.com](#)

One of pop music's fastest-rising stars rides into Sacramento when Benson Boone: Wanted Man Tour 2026 stops at Golden 1 Center, 500 David J. Stern Walk, on Saturday, Aug. 8 at 8 p.m. Boone is known for his unforgettable powerhouse performances as one of music's hottest young artists. [Golden1Center.com](#)



Aug. 16

## Aug. 16

Lace up your running shoes for Dashin' Down the Delta, a scenic 5K fun run and walk taking place Sunday, Aug. 16, along the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Presented by the Rainbow Chamber in partnership with Scott's Seafood Grill & Bar, the event welcomes runners for a morning of community, waterfront views and celebration. Register in advance! [Dashindownthedelta.com](#).

Calling all dancing queens! The ABBA Concert Experience brings the music, costumes and disco magic of one of pop music's most beloved groups to Harris Center for the Arts, 10 College Pkwy. in Folsom, on Saturday, Aug. 22. Audiences can sing along to their favorite ABBA tunes in a dazzling tribute to the timeless supergroup. [HarrisCenter.net](#)



## Ongoing

Crank up the piano and get ready to shake, rattle and roll when Great Balls of Fire roars into East Sonora Theatre, 13891 Mono Way in Sonora through Aug. 9. Featuring powerhouse pianist Jason Cohen and The Shakedown Shuffle, this electrifying concert celebrates the music of Jerry Lee Lewis and the birth of rock 'n' roll. [Sierrarep.org](#).

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



# Liquid Therapy

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Shake aggressively. This is not the drink for gentle energy.  
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- Making friends in the restroom
- Taking photos you'll post three days later
- A playlist that somehow keeps getting louder

Because sometimes happiness is complicated.

A Lemon Drop isn't. Pro Tip: Chill the martini glass in the freezer for 15 minutes beforehand. It makes the drink feel expensive, even if your weekend plans are not.

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|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



**No engine. No fuel system. No exhaust.**

No pistons, valves, spark plugs, fuel injectors, catalytic converter, transmission (multiple speeds), or engine oil system.

While these images illustrate the basic differences between EV and hybrid powertrains, they are not meant to be exact component-for-component comparisons. Individual vehicles vary considerably, and many components shown separately here may be combined into larger assemblies or configured differently depending on the manufacturer and model. The basic takeaway, however, is accurate: a pure EV eliminates much of the mechanical complexity of an internal-combustion vehicle, while a hybrid retains many traditional engine, fuel and exhaust components while also adding an electric propulsion system.

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# More Control, No Monthly Fees

by Ron Tackitt

Portable CD players were all the rage back in the day. They didn't make a lot of sense to carry around, since they would quite easily skip. However, even cheap CD players sounded pretty good simply because of the source material.



image courtesy of Fosi Audio website

MP3s and iPods eventually broke through as a replacement, even while Sony was trying to get MiniDiscs off the ground. MD solved the skipping problem, and the compression they used was much better sonically than early MP3s, but alas, Sony wanted too much for licensing and the end products were just too expensive.

Now we have true convenience with mostly OK sound, but trying to play a whole album from an MP3 player or jump drive can still be surprisingly challenging. Too bad you can't just put in a CD and listen all the way through like in the old days.

Well, now you can.

Fosi Audio has introduced the Merak CD Player, a stylish, compact portable player that can do just that. It's attractive in an Apple-product kind of way, with front-facing, easy-to-use buttons for playback and a large window so you can see the disc spinning away. On the side, there's even a huge orange slider for volume.

While it has both a headphone jack and a line-level output on the back, it doesn't have Bluetooth for wireless earbuds. That seems like a missed opportunity.

The thing that makes the Merak cool, though, is that it is also set up to be your home system's CD player, giving you access to all those old CDs collecting dust—or the used ones you just picked up at the neighbor's yard sale.

Either way, you have more control over what you're listening to, and you're not being hit up every month for a subscription—to not own the music.

That is becoming an increasingly motivating idea with both CDs and DVDs. Not having to flip through discs on a Friday night is certainly convenient, but being increasingly nickel-and-dimed for access to everything is getting old.

I applaud Fosi Audio. The Merak is cute, not terribly expensive at \$140, and for some people it makes perfect sense. Besides, CDs are easy to deal with, they sound fresh every time—unlike vinyl—and you can put one in, sit back and listen to the whole album in one sitting.

Imagine that.

If you want to read more about the Merak player, or buy it from them directly, check out their website at [this very specific link](#).

And then there's Tiny Vinyl, because apparently what the world was waiting for was a record with less music on it. The new format shrinks vinyl down to just four inches, with roughly four minutes of music per side—usually enough for one song—and requires a turntable capable of playing 33 RPM records with a manual tonearm. Yes, they're cute. Yes, they're collectible. But at around \$15 each, the novelty starts to wear a little thin. Part of the resurgence of vinyl has been about slowing down, putting on an album and actually listening to the whole thing. Tiny Vinyl takes that experience and somehow turns it into something you have to flip over after four minutes. For \$15. At that point, I'm not sure we've reinvented vinyl so much as created a very expensive and elaborate way to play a single. Me thinks I'll pass.

Available at, of all places, [Target](#).



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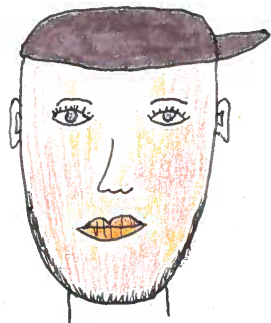
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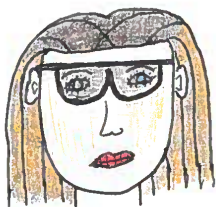
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