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Another Reported Anti-LGBTQ+ Attack Shakes Lavender Heights

Sacramento's Lavender Heights neighborhood is again confronting concerns about safety after a man reported being attacked by a group of men who allegedly shouted anti-LGBTQ+ and racist slurs before beating him early morning of Aug. 30.

According to KCRA 3, Joseph Sais said he and a friend were walking home after a night out when they encountered four men near 20th and L streets. Sais said the group began directing slurs at them before chasing and attacking them. He suffered injuries to his face, including his forehead and lip, and his glasses were broken during the assault.

Sacramento police confirmed that officers responded to an assault near 20th and L shortly before 1 a.m. The suspects had left the area before officers arrived. Police took a felony assault bias report and are investigating. No arrests had been announced at the time of KCRA's report.

The location makes the incident particularly troubling for Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community. Lavender Heights has long been home to LGBTQ+ bars, businesses and gathering places – a neighborhood where many people expect to feel comfortable being themselves.

The reported attack also comes less than a year after the assault of longtime community member Alvin Prasad in the same area. Prasad was attacked on Halloween 2025 and suffered devastating injuries that left him in a coma. He died in December.

For Sais, the latest attack has not changed his determination to live openly. He told KCRA that while he worries violence could make others afraid to visit Lavender Heights, he does not intend to allow the actions of his attackers to make him live in fear.

Sacramento Police also operates programs specifically aimed at hate and bias crimes. Its Safe Place Program, established in 2015, works with local businesses to provide places where victims of hate or bias crimes can seek help and safely report an incident. Participating businesses are instructed to call 911 immediately and allow victims to remain on the premises until police arrive.

Anyone with information about the attack can contact Sacramento Police Investigations at (916) 808-0650. The department also provides an LGBTQ+ community contact at LGBTQ@sacpd.org or (916) 808-0750.

Words Don't Stay in Washington

We are told, repeatedly, that words are just words. Political rhetoric is dismissed as campaigning. Attacks on transgender people are called policy debates. LGBTQ+ people are portrayed as threats to children, schools, sports, the military and some vaguely defined notion of American values – and then everyone is expected to be shocked when hostility toward our community follows us out of the political arena and into the places where we live, work and gather.

No, a politician making an anti-LGBTQ+ statement does not pull the trigger in a hate crime or throw the punch in an assault. Responsibility for violence belongs to the person who commits it.

But rhetoric matters. Very recently, two men were killed outside Venture-N, a longtime gay bar in Tucson. Police are investigating the shooting as a possible hate crime after discovering that the suspected gunman was carrying a note listing several LGBTQ+-associated businesses.

And here at home, a Sacramento man says he and a friend were targeted by four men in Lavender Heights who shouted anti-LGBTQ+ and racist slurs before chasing and beating him. Sacramento police are investigating the assault as a

commentary

felony with a possible bias motive. These incidents are still being investigated, and we cannot claim that political rhetoric caused either one. But we can recognize the environment in which they occurred.

GLAAD documented more than 1,000 anti-LGBTQ incidents nationwide in 2025, with more than half specifically targeting transgender and gender-nonconforming people. At the same time, transgender Americans have increasingly become political targets – discussed not as neighbors, coworkers, family members and fellow citizens, but as problems to be solved, dangers to be contained or people whose very existence requires government intervention.

Words have consequences. They give people permission. They normalize contempt.

We can disagree about policy. We can argue about legislation. But when people with enormous platforms continually tell Americans that a small minority among them should be feared, we cannot pretend that message disappears when the microphone is turned off.

Words don't stay in Washington. Eventually, they come home.

Words have consequences. They give people permission. They normalize contempt.

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Help Us Make Lavender Heights Safer!



I spoke with Councilmember Pluckebaum this evening about the recent uptick in assaults. We can quickly take action by creating a volunteer-led Lavender Heights Community Patrol—and we could be trained and ready as early as this Friday.

We need at least 12 volunteers to commit to only one shift per month for one year. If you can help, please message me today!

Together, we can help keep Lavender Heights safe and welcoming for everyone.

Zachary Basler

For more info contact Zacharysbasler@gmail.com

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California Makes Historic \$500 Million Investment to Fight HIV

California has approved more than \$500 million in funding over four years to expand HIV prevention, treatment and support services across the state — the largest one-time state investment in fighting HIV/AIDS in U.S. history.

The HIV-Free Future Plan, championed by the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus and signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom, comes as federal funding for HIV prevention and care programs faces significant cuts. California currently has more than 140,000 people living with HIV, with nearly 5,000 new diagnoses each year.

Rather than drawing from California's General Fund, the plan will largely use rebates generated through purchases of HIV medications and other prescription drugs through the state's AIDS Drug Assistance Program, or ADAP. Those rebates will be redirected into HIV-related health programs.

The money will support a broad range of services, including access to PrEP and PEP, HIV testing, condom distribution, housing assistance for people living with HIV who are experiencing homelessness, and programs designed for older adults living with HIV. Hundreds of millions of dollars will also go directly to local public health departments, allowing communities to determine how the funding can best address their needs.

The plan extends beyond HIV, with funding aimed at sexually transmitted infections, viral hepatitis and drug overdose prevention, including programs involving doxyPEP and at-home testing.

Assemblymember Chris Ward, chair of the California Legislative LGBTQ Caucus, said the investment comes at a critical time as federal support for HIV programs is being reduced.

The new funding, he said, will expand access to prevention and treatment while moving California closer to its longtime goal of ending the HIV epidemic.

Two Killed Outside Tucson Gay Bar in Suspected Hate Crime

Tucson's LGBTQ+ community is mourning after two men were shot and killed outside a longtime gay bar recently in what police are investigating as a possible hate crime.

The shooting occurred around 12:30 a.m. Aug. 31 in the parking lot of Venture-N, a neighborhood gay bar near Sixth Avenue and Speedway Boulevard. Both victims died at the scene.

Police say the suspected gunman, a 44-year-old man, confronted the two men in the parking lot before shooting them. The suspect was also found with gunshot wounds and later died at a hospital. Authorities are investigating the incident as a possible double murder-suicide.

Of particular concern, police said the suspected shooter was carrying a note containing the names of several LGBTQIA+-associated businesses, prompting the hate-crime investigation. Police have increased their presence around LGBTQ+ establishments in Tucson and said there is currently no indication of an ongoing threat to the public.

Venture-N has long served as a gathering place for Tucson's LGBTQ+ community, where friends and community members began leaving flowers and other memorials following the shooting.



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Where Did Sacramento's Farm-to-Fork Festival Go?

If September has you wondering when Sacramento's big Farm-to-Fork Festival is taking over downtown, you can stop checking the calendar. It isn't happening this year.



Last year, Sacramento's longtime Farm-to-Fork Festival became part of Terra Madre Americas, a much larger culinary event created in partnership with the international Slow Food movement. The inaugural event brought food, wine, chef demonstrations, workshops, vendors and live music to downtown Sacramento, while incorporating many of the familiar elements of the Farm-to-Fork Festival.

The catch? Terra Madre Americas is an every-other-year affair.

The Sacramento event, which debuted in 2025, alternates with Slow Food's Terra Madre Salone del Gusto in Turin, Italy. That means there will be no Terra Madre Americas — and no traditional Farm-to-Fork street festival — in Sacramento in 2026. Terra Madre Americas is scheduled to return in 2027.

Sacramento's Farm-to-Fork celebration isn't completely taking the year off, however.

On Friday, Sept. 11, Visit Sacramento will debut The California Grand Tasting at the SAFE Credit Union Convention Center. The new event combines two previous favorites, Legends of Wine and The Grand Tasting, into one evening featuring unlimited tastings from more than 30 restaurants, wines from 25 to 30 regional wineries, craft beverages, mocktails and live entertainment. General admission runs from 6 to 9 p.m., with an earlier VIP hour beginning at 5 p.m. The event is 21 and over.

So, while Capitol Mall may be a little quieter this September, Sacramento hasn't surrendered its Farm-to-Fork crown. Consider 2026 the amuse-bouche.

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The Davis Phoenix Coalition Appoints New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the Davis Phoenix Coalition is thrilled to announce the appointment of **Sandr  Henriquez Nelson** as executive director, effective September 1, 2026.



Sandr  Henriquez Nelson speaking at the Davis Phoenix Coalition's annual LGBTQ+ Davis PrideFest event this past spring. Photo by MOOTENS Productions

Henriquez Nelson (he/him) brings more than 25 years of nonprofit leadership experience in various community service spaces throughout the Sacramento Valley. Most recently, Henriquez Nelson has served as a board member for the Davis Phoenix Coalition (DPC) where he was the long-serving Pride events director.

"I am honored to accept this new position with DPC and to attain a significant professional milestone," Henriquez Nelson states. "While I am enthusiastic about assuming the role of executive director, I acknowledge the responsibility of succeeding Gloria [Partida], who has provided exemplary leadership over the past decade."

"What drew the board to Sandr  was not only his extensive knowledge in nonprofit business operations but his deep alignment with our core mission of promoting a world where all people are safe, respected and free of hate-motivated violence," said Board Chair of the Davis Phoenix Coalition Anoosh Jorjorian

The board members are confident that Henriquez Nelson's vision will continue to guide the organization into its next chapter as they continue to fight and provide an amplified voice for Yolo County's marginalized communities.

In the upcoming weeks, Henriquez Nelson will host a series of listening sessions to engage directly with community members served by the organization. In addition to advancing the coalition's core mission, his tenure will prioritize enhancing fundraising capabilities, expanding the board of directors, and strengthening the volunteer base.

"On behalf of the DPC Board, I want to extend our deepest gratitude to Gloria for her dedicated leadership and instrumental role in expanding the organization," stated Jorjorian. Partida will remain on the board of directors, providing guidance and mentorship to Henriquez Nelson as he transitions into the position.

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Fred Palmer to Retire as Executive Director of the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce

by Traci Rockefeller Cusack

The Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce announced that Fred Palmer, a founding member of the Chamber in 2001, will retire as executive director effective December 31, 2026. Palmer has served as executive director since 2018 and previously held several terms as president of both the Chamber's board and the affiliated Rainbow Chamber Foundation. The Chamber's mission is to support LGBTQ+-owned businesses by connecting small businesses, corporations, community partners, and allies.



"Fred Palmer is a lion of Sacramento's LGBTQ+ business community and an inspiration to generations of leaders. During his long career, he has made vital, lasting contributions to both the region's economic success and to the advancement of LGBTQ+ equality," said Thomas Kane, Board President of the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce and Senior Vice President, Director of Marketing, Digital and Product Management at Tri Counties Bank.

With support from a small staff and volunteer teams, the Chamber hosts monthly member mixers, networking

Fred Palmer to retire from Rainbow Chamber

lunches, and virtual business development workshops, along with several high-profile community events. One signature event is the region's longest running Drag Queen Bingo, launched by Outword Magazine in 2009 and transferred to the Chamber after reaching a milestone of \$100,000 in donations to community organizations. Under the Chamber's leadership, the event has raised more than \$600,000 for local nonprofits. Other major events include the annual Boas & Bow Ties Gala, next scheduled for October 22, 2026; a Health & Wellness Expo; Pride Day at the California State Fair; and Dashin' Down the Delta, a fun run/walk that debuted in August 2026. The affiliated 501(c)(3) Rainbow Chamber Foundation also raises scholarship funds, which are awarded each fall at the Boas & Bow Ties Gala.

"Few individuals leave a legacy as impactful as Fred Palmer's. Fred has dedicated decades to advancing the LGBTQ+ community through leadership, partnership, and unwavering advocacy. His vision has helped establish opportunities and educational scholarships that will continue to empower and support future leaders and community members for generations to come. We are profoundly grateful for Fred's service, leadership, and the enduring foundation he leaves for those who follow," said Annie Caruso, Board President of the Rainbow Chamber Foundation and Chief Administrative Officer of the Office of Health Equity by Design for Inclusive Excellence at UC Davis Health in Sacramento.

Throughout much of his career, Palmer has held two high-profile roles. He is also the founder and publisher of Outword Digital Media, now in its 31st year. The company publishes 24 digital issues of Outword Magazine each year, with new editions released on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Outword serves the LGBTQ+ community with news and entertainment while offering clients image consulting, logo design, fundraising support, and alternative distribution services. After retiring from the Chamber, Palmer will devote his full attention to the publication's long-term success.

"Without question, it has been an honor of a lifetime to serve the region's LGBTQ+ community by helping to found and lead the Rainbow Chamber and Foundation," said Fred Palmer. "By stepping down from a leadership role with the organization, I can focus my attention on amplifying and elevating our voices and stories through my Outword Digital Media company. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to every community member and every business leader who has helped me - and us all - in this journey. Of course, I am not going anywhere and will continue to serve the community for which I have dedicated my entire career to, loudly and proudly as always."

The organization's boards will begin searching for Palmer's replacement in the coming weeks. www.RainbowChamber.com



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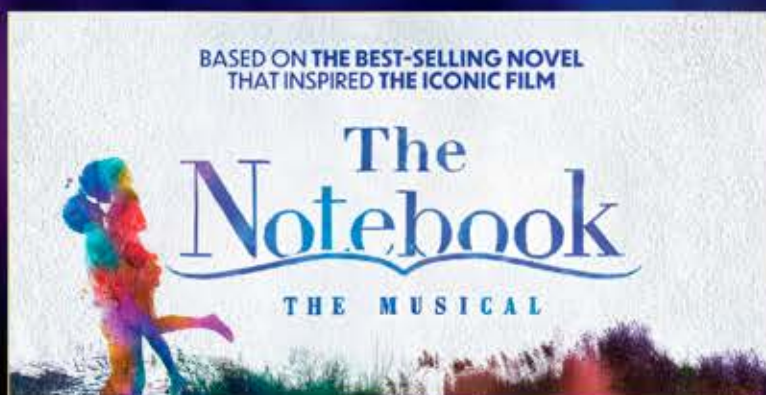
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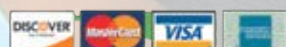
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Second Annual Folsom Family Pride Festival Off To A Fabulous Start

by Sarah Perrin, President and Founder

Have you ever wanted to make a difference in your community but didn't know how? Have you ever tried to find a supportive space as a queer or trans person or as an ally? I was feeling that way in 2024 when I noticed that my suburban town of Folsom, CA didn't have a pride festival or any supportive spaces for the LGBTQ+ community that I knew of at the time. I had volunteered with other local pride events like Placer Pride in Roseville and the larger Sac Pride event, but I was looking for something closer to home that would provide an inclusive and supportive space.



That led me to gain the courage to make a post on Facebook in "Folsom Chat," a Facebook group dedicated to residents of the Folsom community. My post was a request to others in Folsom for leads on local LGBTQ+ inclusive businesses or organizations that may be interested in collaborating with me on a pride event in Folsom. The responses were a mixture of rude, really rude, and supportive. I was mostly focused on the outpour of supportive responses that I received. So many people said, "we need this in Folsom!" I received an overwhelming number of direct messages after my post from those who wanted to help out in any way possible. Those responses gave me hope that this wild idea could possibly gain some traction.

At that point, I gathered everyone's contact information and sent out a meeting invite to gauge interest in putting a pride event together. I didn't have very high expectations but I was pleasantly surprised when the community room at my local market filled with about 40 or so community members who were all desperate for the same thing as myself: to find a place of belonging, a place of support, and a place to be themselves. There were parents of trans and queer kids, folks who used to live in Folsom but moved to Sacramento or other areas that felt safer, local politicians, activists, and young people who had so much enthusiasm and energy to make a difference locally in Folsom.

So that first meeting turned into multiple meetings of shared energy, innovative ideas, and bonding over our collective craving for community. This was grassroots organizing and collective resistance at its core and we were making history! What we all created was our first annual pride event in 2025 that we call Folsom Family Pride, which is a free, family-friendly pride celebration at Folsom City Lions Park. We also started our own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization out of this first event, which we hope to expand in the future and provide other services and programs for our local LGBTQ+ community and allies. Our second annual pride festival will take place on Sunday, October 11 from 10am to 3pm and will feature over 80 vendors and community sponsors, entertainment consisting of musical acts, drag performers, and family-friendly burlesque. Folsom Family Pride will also showcase children's activities, food trucks, and a welcoming space to celebrate the LGBTQ+ individuals and families that make our city an amazing place to live and visit. For more information, please visit us at <https://folsomfamilypride.org>. Please join us and make a difference in Folsom!



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Hard Rock Celebrates Farm-to-Fork Wagyu Beef Partner and Neighbor, Yuba River Ranch

Yuba River Ranch has served as the exclusive partner providing Wagyu beef to Council Oak Steaks & Seafood at the nearby [Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento](#) at Fire Mountain for the past couple of years. This farm-to-fork partnership gives restaurant guests the opportunity to enjoy premium, locally raised beef while supporting regional agriculture and a ranching operation just a short distance from the resort.



Ronda Applegarth, owner of Yuba River Ranch (YRR), and Jerrett Davis, executive Chef of Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain, celebrate YRR's new retail shop with a Wagyu burger BBQ.

"We are so proud to be a farm-to-fork partner of Hard Rock Sacramento's Council Oak to showcase locally raised Wagyu beef at one of the region's premier restaurants," said Ronda Applegarth, owner of Yuba River Ranch. "We recently celebrated the opening of our small retail store with a daylong open house to introduce the community to the ranch, share our vision for its future, and thank everyone who supports local agriculture." It also included a free Wagyu ranch burger BBQ by Hard Rock Sacramento's Executive Chef, Jerrett Davis.

Davis fell in love with Yuba River Ranch, given their focus on honoring ranching traditions while embracing practices that support a strong and sustainable future. The moment he stepped onto the property after just a quick five-minute drive across Highway 65, he knew that this was going to be a special relationship, not just with a supplier, but a neighbor.

"We are grateful for Yuba River Ranch's continued partnership with our steakhouse, and we are so happy for them to finally be able to share their Wagyu directly with the community who want to enjoy different cuts at home," explained Jerrett Davis, Executive Chef for all restaurants at Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain.

Yuba River Ranch is featured on the menu year-round at the Wine Spectator award-winning Council Oak Steaks and Seafood inside Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Sacramento at Fire Mountain. The steakhouse will be rolling out an updated menu soon, just in time for its annual Pinktober fundraising campaign throughout the property, which supports breast cancer treatments at Sutter Health Foundation.



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Celebration Arts stages “us & the rest of ‘em”

by Chris Narloch

Sacramento's Celebration Arts, a multicultural performing arts organization dedicated to exploring the African-American experience, has been on a roll lately, with hit play after hit play.



I am looking forward to seeing the theatre's latest production, “us & the rest of ‘em” by the local writer/director Anthony D'Juan. Here's the synopsis:

When a kitchen fire leaves Deidra Westwood and her twelve-year-old son Dante without a place to stay, they move back into the Sacramento home where Deidra grew up – her mother Gloria's house.

What is meant to be a temporary landing gets complicated fast; bringing three generations under one roof for a single and eventful weekend.

As Deidra juggles work, school, a son testing her limits, and her brother with his own troubles, this family comes face to face with a question: how far will you go to protect your own?

Described as a “deeply human portrait of a family doing its best to hold together,” the play will perform at Celebration Arts this Sept. 11-27. To purchase tickets, go to celebrationarts.net

Sac Open Studios Returns

The countdown to the region's favorite fall art tradition is officially on, and Sacramento's largest self-guided art tour is gearing up for its biggest season yet.

The countdown to the region's favorite fall art tradition is officially on, and Sacramento's largest self-guided art tour is gearing up for its biggest season yet.

Sac Open Studios is presented free to the public by Verge Center for the Arts every September and includes two full weekends of open studio access in and around Sacramento.

The mission of Sac Open Studios is to spotlight the diverse range of artists who fill our region with art and culture.

The self-guided artist studio tour spans all of Sacramento County, West Sacramento, Davis, and Woodland and takes place during the middle two weekends of September, beginning Sept. 12.

The tour attracts over 200 participating artists and around 30,000 attendees annually. For more information, go to sacopenstudios.com



“Lay Your Burdens on Me” by Serena Cole



Dinosaurs & Looney Tunes Plus, a Tony Bourdain biopic

by Chris Narloch

I don't have time to watch many streaming series, but friends I trust raved about "Widow's Bay," and they were right-on because I enjoyed every second of that scary-funny show, on Apple TV.

The purpose of this column, however, is to promote movies (and movie theaters!) so here are my latest attempts to encourage you to support your local cinemas.



Coyote vs. Acme

I don't know if kids still watch Looney Tunes, but I grew up loving Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and especially Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner. This movie is a thrilling throwback to the glory days of those Warner Bros. cartoon shorts, and I was blown away by the very entertaining "Coyote vs. Acme."

Will Forte perfectly plays the down-on-his-luck lawyer hired by Mr. Coyote to sue Acme, the fictional company that makes the rocket skates and giant magnets that always seem to fail when Wile E. tries to use them to catch the Road Runner. This is a terrific premise that pays off hilariously, especially in the clever courtroom scenes.

All the funniest Looney Tunes characters get cameos, and the movie's onscreen human cast includes Lana Condor and John Cena, who aid Mr. Forte in making "Coyote vs. Acme" the finest hybrid of live action and animation since "Who Framed Roger Rabbit." This movie is currently in wide theatrical release.



The End of Oak Street

Where do I begin with this deranged dinosaur debacle? Think "Jurassic Park" meets "The 'Burbs," and you'll have some idea of the so-bad-it's-good appeal of this creature feature about a troubled family brought closer by a fight to the death with enormous (and very hungry) rampaging reptiles that mysteriously appear overnight in their suburban neighborhood.

The film stars Ewan McGregor as dad and Anne Hathaway – who seems to be in a movie a month these days – as mom. Throw in a hint of teenaged lesbian love, time travel, and a silly sci-fi conclusion, and you have the perfect end of summer, dumb-fun film. This movie is currently in wide theatrical release.



Tony

If you can find a theater that is still playing this marvelous movie, I highly recommend that you see it on the big screen. If not, add it to the top of your streaming wish list. Dominic Sessa, who was so good in "The Holdovers" three years ago, returns to star in this beautifully made biopic about a young Anthony Bourdain.

I knew next to nothing about the late, great celebrity chef, and you don't need to. "Tony" takes place over one summer, when a 19-year-old Anthony follows a crush to Provincetown, Massachusetts with dreams of getting the girl and becoming a writer.

Matt Johnson, who made the wonderfully wacky web series, TV show and recent movie version of "Nirvana the Band the Show," gets serious this time, cowriting and directing a fascinating film about a formative period in the life of a future writer and culinary star. Bourdain is depicted as a cocky con man, at least during this phase of his life, but the film and Mr. Sessa are both superb.



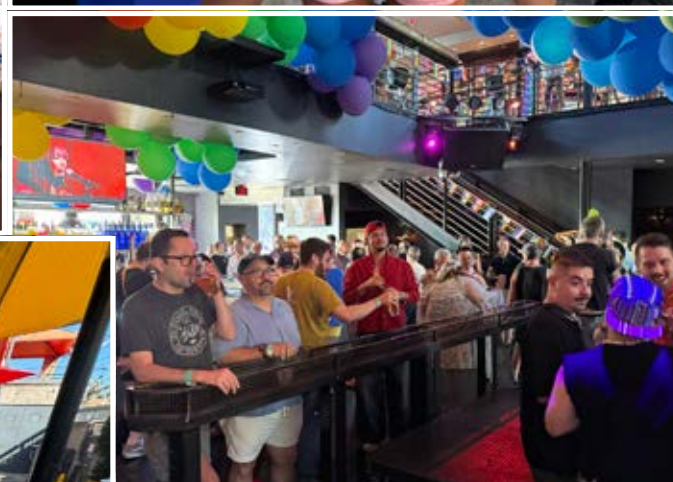
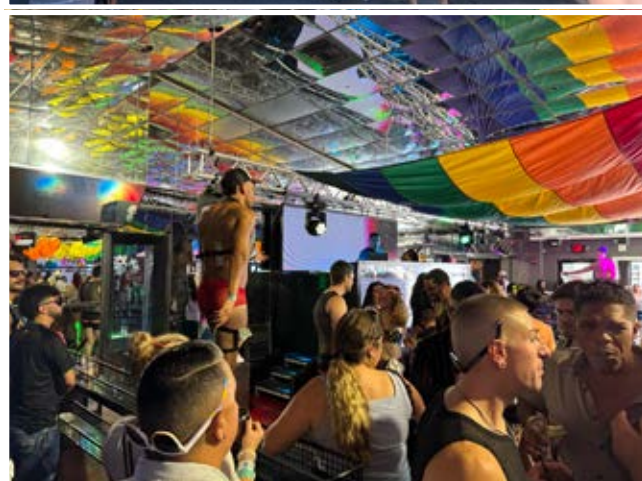
Olmo

This sweet, coming-of-age movie has a 96% positive rating from critics on Rotten Tomatoes and deservedly so. Aivan Uttapa stars as 14-year-old Olmo, who would rather pursue the girl-next-door than help take care of his bedridden father.

The time is 1979, and the place is New Mexico, which provides a culturally specific backdrop to a familiar story of a working-class, Mexican American family whose son idolizes Tony Manero, the main character from "Saturday Night Fever."

Of course, initially selfish Olmo learns his lesson about the importance of family by the end of the film, which is funny and very moving without being cloying.

"Olmo" is currently available to rent online via Apple TV or Fandango.



Sacramento's Lavender Heights came alive this past weekend for the annual Sacramento Rainbow Festival! Celebrating more than 40 years of Pride, community and giving back, this year's "Retro Rainbow" theme brought plenty of color, music and nostalgia to 20th & K Streets. From live entertainment and DJs to local performers, vendors and thousands of community members, it was a beautiful reminder of the history, energy and heart of Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community.



Out & About

photos by Rahn



Do not let “Come From Away” get away

by Chris Narloch

Very appropriately, Broadway At Music Circus is debuting its production of “Come From Away” on the 25th Anniversary of one of the darkest days in U.S. history – September 11, 2001.

Despite the potentially heavy subject matter, “Come From Away” is anything but dark and depressing.

A Tony winner for Best Direction of a Musical, this uplifting true tale follows 7,000 stranded passengers whose planes were grounded and spotlights the small town in Newfoundland that welcomed them with warm beds and hot food during a time of international crisis.

Cultures clashed and nerves ran high in Gander, but uneasiness turned into trust, music soared into the night, and gratitude grew into enduring friendships.

Given the often uncivil, partisan times we are living through in these Divided States of America, it is incredibly refreshing to see a musical that is not based on a movie but on a very moving true story about kindness and selflessness.

I highly recommend this show, whether you have seen it before or not. It restores your faith in humanity with a shot of positivity and love.

The Broadway At Music Circus premiere of “Come From Away” continues through Sunday, September 20, 2026 at the UC Davis Health Pavilion in Sacramento.

To purchase tickets, visit. broadwaysacramento.com/broadway-at-music-circus



Handsome Men Make Music Harry, Nick & Bruno Reviews

by Chris Narloch

There is no denying that Harry Styles, Nick Jonas, and Bruno Mars are talented artists, but their good looks haven't exactly hurt their careers. All three men released new albums earlier this year, with varying degrees of success. Read on for my reviews.

Nick Jonas – Sunday Best

One third of the Jonas Brothers, Nick has probably been the most successful when it comes to the brothers' solo projects, with a movie career, and past hit songs that include “Jealous,” “Chains” and “Close” (with Tove Lo). “Sunday Best” is not his best solo record, but his vocals are very smooth and unforced here.

“Sweet to Me” gets the record off to a nice start, but I wish there were fewer songs about his devotion for his beautiful and talented wife, Priyanka Chopra.

Jonas is clearly madly in love, so we can't really expect a bunch of songs about heartbreak, but “Sunday Best” could have used more edginess. Even the album's single (“Gut Punch”) sounds less like a deep confession and more like narcissistic navel-gazing.



Bruno Mars – The Romantic

After half a dozen hit albums, if you include his side projects with Anderson .Paak and others, Bruno Mars can do no wrong. Like Taylor Swift, he is a hit-making machine with an innate ability to craft addictive, hook-filled songs.

“The Romantic” continues his string of successful records, with terrific tracks like “I Just Might,” “Cha Cha Cha,” “Risk It All” and “On My Soul.”

The album is very appropriately titled, and Mars' long-standing musical philosophy can be summed up by two lines from this album's “Why You Wanna Fight?”: ‘Why you wanna fight with me, baby? / Wouldn't you rather make love?’



Harry Styles – Kiss All The Time. Disco, Occasionally

Disco often gets a bad rap, and so I admire Harry Styles for inserting that often-maligned genre into the title and sound of his latest album. As a fan of dance music, I wish I loved the results, but “Kiss All The Time...” is a mixed bag, in my opinion.

There is a reason that many of the finest disco singers are Black women – because you need a big voice to avoid getting swallowed up by the synths. So it may be that Styles' lovely, understated croon just isn't a good fit with beat-heavy production.

“American Girls” is a fun song (although I wonder how Styles' British fans feel about it). The dance-friendly cuts on this record will probably sound great live, but my favorite song by far is the gorgeous ballad “Coming Up Roses” which is perfectly sung and outclasses everything else on the album.



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We are ready to start collecting entries for our annual Pet Photo Contest! Scan the QR code over there to be swept away to our Jotform, where we'll collect your information, your precious photo and, if you'd like, a short paragraph about why your little hooligan is the best in the world. Remember, you must have the rights to any images you submit. They cannot be generated by AI or be purchased or stock photos. Other than that, feel free to send us one or two photos of your pet being its most adorable. Entries will be accepted until 5 p.m. on October 12. The winning photo will grace the front cover of our Pet Issue, hitting the streets October 22. And the lucky human who sends in the winning image will receive \$100 cash! So, if you think you have the star of the century lying next to you on the couch snoring, snap a pic or two and send them our way. Just scan the QR code and you're on your way. Your little hooligan could be our next cover star!



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Out & About with Matthew Burlingame

The first promise of the coming autumn has been carried into Sacramento on the breezes blowing the falling leaves off the trees. Thoughts of Halloween costumes, October fests and trips to Apple Hill are beginning to stir in the back of our minds. But summer still demands its due, and here are some amazing events to do just that!

Sept. 13

Bring your appetite and plenty of attitude to Makeup & Mimosas: Drag Brunch with a Punch on Sunday, Sept. 13 at noon at Punch Line Sacramento, 2100 Arden Way, Suite 225. This lively daytime celebration combines fabulous drag performances, comedy and brunch-time fun for an afternoon filled with glamour, laughter and plenty of personality. Guests ages 13-17 must attend with a parent or guardian. Punchlinesac.com

Sept. 18

Wine tasting meets stand-up comedy at An Idiot's Guide to Wine on Friday, Sept. 18 at 6 p.m. at The Center at Twenty-Three Hundred, 2300 Sierra Blvd. Sip your way through a curated tasting of six different wines while comedians serve up plenty of laughs. Whether you're a wine novice, enthusiast or simply looking for a different kind of night out, expect equal parts tasting, learning and hilarity.



Step right up for Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey: The Greatest Show On Earth, arriving at Golden 1 Center, 500 David J Stern Walk, beginning Friday, Sept. 18 at 7 p.m. The reimagined circus delivers jaw-dropping acts, daring athletic feats, comedy and larger-than-life entertainment in a fast-paced spectacle designed for the entire family. Expect thrills, laughter and plenty of unforgettable moments under the big top without the tent Golden1center.com

Sept. 19

Spend an evening under the stars and among Sacramento history at Movie Night in the Cemetery on Saturday, Sept. 19 from 7 to 10 p.m. at Sacramento Historic City Cemetery, 1000 Broadway. Bring a chair or picnic blanket and settle in for the Marx Brothers' hilarious 1930 comedy Animal Crackers. Proceeds support restoration and preservation of the cemetery's historic monuments and headstones. Historicoldcitycemetery.org



Cluck your way to one of Sacramento County's quirkiest traditions at the 21st Annual Fair Oaks Chicken Festival on Saturday, Sept. 19 from noon to 6 p.m. at 11549 Fair Oaks Blvd. Enjoy live music, food trucks, craft vendors, kids activities, inflatables and contests ranging from chicken decorating to clucking and crowing. Admission and parking are free, making this feather-filled celebration fun for the whole family FORPD.org/chickenfest

Sept. 21

Explore a little queer magic at Queer Magic Monday on Monday, Sept. 21 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Lavender Library, 1414 21st St. Queer witch and oracle reader Nicky leads an inclusive discussion of tarot and oracle cards, including interpretation, divination, self-reflection and healing. Beginners and experienced readers are welcome, with Q&A and hands-on practice. Bring your favorite deck and discover some magic! Lavenderlibrary.com



Sept. 23

What happens when a comedian follows hate straight to its source? Alex Edelman's Just For Us arrives at Capital Stage, 2215 J St., from Sept. 23 through Oct. 25 with a sharp, funny and deeply personal story inspired by real events. The 2024 Special Tony Award-winning play follows Edelman's journey from an antisemitic tweet to a meeting with white nationalists, exploring identity, empathy and belonging with humor and surprising heart. Capstage.org

Sept 27

Enter a world where every story has teeth at the Sinister Book Fair 2026 on Sunday, Sept. 27 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Center, 6151 H St. Meet horror authors, occult scholars, comic creators, artists and publishers while browsing dark fiction, rare editions, unsettling artwork and sinister collectibles. Created by the team behind Sinister Creature Con, this eerie literary gathering is made for those who like their books with a little bite. Lovehorrevents.com

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

Upcoming

Blast off for a stellar evening at Galactic Tails on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Sacramento SPCA, 6201 Florin Perkins Road. The Sacramento SPCA's annual fall fundraiser transforms into an out-of-this-world gala featuring food, beverages, entertainment, auctions and shelter tours, all benefiting lifesaving programs for local animals. Guests are encouraged to embrace the cosmic theme with celestial attire for a night among the stars in support of pets in need. SSPCA.org

Step into the decadent world of 1890s San Francisco when The Soiled Dove continues its acclaimed run through Saturday, Nov. 7 under the Tortona Big Top at Radium Runway in Alameda Point. Legendary singer and activist Joan Baez joins world-class circus artists, dancers and musicians for an immersive evening blending breathtaking aerial acts, live music, theatrical storytelling and a three-course dinner. Friday and Saturday performances offer a wildly imaginative escape into the Barbary Coast. Thesoiled dove.com

The List

Body Kneads

Mindy's Kitchen of California

CrockerCon

Sac Open Studios

Judy Knott

Der Biergarten

Uncorked & Uncapped

Mills Station Arts

Global Feast Fest

Sacramento Historic Home Tour

Lucky's Drive-In

First Day of Fall

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When the Gays Found It First (The Gays! They Like It!) *by Ron Tackitt*

I recently came across an old Outword restaurant directory from 2006 (see sidebar). There were names I hadn't thought about in years: Sweetwater, Lucca, Dragonfly, The Broiler, Hamburger Mary's, Hangar 17 and a lot more. Some on the list are still around, but many are long gone. However, just reading through the list was enough to send me down a rather delicious memory lane.

And it got me thinking about something that went back even further.

There was a time when opening a new restaurant came with an unofficial marketing strategy: get the gays in the door.

Nobody necessarily put it quite that bluntly, of course. But through the 1990s and into the early 2000s, plenty of restaurants made a point of letting the LGBTQ+ community, and maybe even more specifically, the gays, know they were welcome. They advertised in gay publications, hosted events, sponsored community organizations and made sure word got around.

And word did get around.

A new restaurant would open. Somebody would hear about it and want to be the first to try it. A few more friends would give it a try, and if the food was good, the drinks were generous and the place had the right, comfortable vibe, suddenly everybody you knew had been there, or wanted to go.

For a while, at least, it was ours. And we loved it.

Restaurants understood something important about the gay community back then. We went out on dates. We brought friends. We celebrated birthdays over dinner, met for cocktails after work and told everybody when we found someplace we liked. Winning over that crowd could give a new restaurant the kind of buzz that would jump-start it into the mainstream.

Then something funny would happen.

Everyone else would discover it.

The tables got harder to get. The crowd changed. The little place we'd been telling everyone about wasn't our little secret discovery anymore.

And, being the fickle creatures we were, we'd start looking around again.

There was always another restaurant opening, another bar pouring something interesting and another patio waiting to be discovered at brunch time.

Of course, times have changed. And so has the LGBTQ+ community. Gay-friendly isn't nearly as novel a selling point as it once was - and that's mostly a very good thing. We don't necessarily need to scout every new restaurant wondering whether we'll feel comfortable walking through the door with a date.

But that doesn't mean the relationship between restaurants and the LGBTQ+ community has stopped mattering. If anything, in a world of endless social media posts, algorithms and online reviews, there may still be something wonderfully effective about simply letting a community know, "We'd like you to come see us."

It worked remarkably well before.

Maybe it still could.

Somebody has to be the first to check it out...



The patio at Lucca

Eatin' Out Restaurant Directory circa 2006	Hukilau Sacramento
2223 San Francisco	ICON Sacramento
Barbary Coast BBQ Sacramento	Ink Eats and Drinks Sacramento
Blue San Francisco	Jack's Urban Eats Sacramento
Butch N Nellie's Sacramento	Lucca Restaurant & Bar Sacramento
Cafe Bernardo Sacramento	Nine Doors Sacramento
Chops Steakhouse Sacramento	Paesanos Sacramento
Dragonfly Sacramento	Roxy Sacramento
El Patron Sacramento	Sofia Restaurant Sacramento
Ernesto's Sacramento	Sweetwater Sacramento
Esquire Grill Sacramento	Taco Loco Sacramento
Easy on I Sacramento	Taylor's Kitchen Sacramento
GigaBite Cafe Sacramento	The Broiler Sacramento
Hamburger Patties Sacramento	The Coffee Garden Sacramento
Hangar 17 Sacramento	The Melting Pot Sacramento
Head Hunters Sacramento	The Supper Club Sacramento
Hot Rod's Sacramento	Zocalo Sacramento



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The Ferrari Fishermen

submitted by Fred Palmer

Looking for some great wild, sustainably caught fish? Ferrari Fisheries, located in West Sacramento, is a little secret that should not be kept a secret.



You can be a part of the not-so-secret club of those in the know by signing up for their text notifications on their website. The husband-and-wife team has a nice roadside stand with iced bins full of freshly caught fish that you can choose from. Selections include black cod, lingcod and rockfish. Sometimes they have crab, and a couple of months ago, they had fresh, wild-caught salmon.

The fish are longline-caught off Fort Bragg. (No, the fish are not from the Sacramento River; their farm stand just happens to be along the riverbank in West Sac.) You must purchase the whole fish, but they clean, gut and fillet it for you right at the farm stand as a courtesy.

Prices are great and typically run about \$8–\$11 per pound. If you like, you can keep the head, as some folks do, to make fish stock. You can keep the guts, too, if you'd like to take those separately—they are great for gardening.

Also on their website is the story of the family business, how they started, and some great photos of the father and son. Plus, their website has some wonderful recipes, too.

Once you sign up, you will receive a text the day prior to fish being available, sometimes on weekdays and often on weekends. Be sure to arrive early, as there is usually a line, especially on weekends, and they do sell out.

Also, they will not ship or deliver. For more information, check out their website by [clicking here](#).



Wine Clubs Are So Last Season - Try an Olive Oil Club

California loves a good club. Wine clubs, cheese clubs, coffee clubs — apparently we enjoy our food and drink even more when someone periodically puts it in a box and leaves it on our doorstep. So why not olive oil?



California produces some terrific extra virgin olive oils, and several of the state's growers and producers have created clubs that make it remarkably easy to keep the good stuff flowing. Think wine club, only instead of swirling, sniffing and sipping, you'll be drizzling, dipping and wondering why you ever bought that enormous anonymous jug at the supermarket.

Close to home, Lodestar Farms in Oroville carries on an olive-growing tradition that stretches back more than a century. Its Olive Oil Club sends four shipments a year at approximately \$50 each, shipping included. Members get early access to limited-release oils, recipes and a 10% discount on future shipments. Best of all, this one really puts the “farm” in Farm-to-Fork: Lodestar owner and farmer Jamie Johansson has been growing olives there since 1993.

Over in Sonoma, The Olive Press offers several ways to keep your pantry well lubricated. Its Press Club delivers approximately three bottles quarterly, averaging \$75 plus shipping, with selections that can be customized. Members also receive discounts and complimentary olive oil tastings. For commitment-phobes, its Daily Dose subscription lets you choose your bottles and have them delivered every one, two or four months.

Down the coast in Paso Robles, Pasolivo gives the olive-oil-club idea a decidedly wine-country spin. Its Press Club offers seasonal shipments in March, June and September, with an optional December shipment. Members choose their own products with a \$95 minimum, receive a 10% discount, discounted shipping, complimentary tastings and access to limited club-only products and private events. Pasolivo's sustainably farmed olives are handpicked and pressed within hours at its on-site mill.

And in Southern California, Temecula Olive Oil Company sends members two bottles of limited-release California extra virgin olive oil every quarter. The current price is \$51.30 per shipment, and members receive a 10% discount after their first club order, along with access to recipes and complimentary tours of Olive View Ranch.

So, yes, you could simply buy another bottle at the grocery store.

But where's the fun in that?

This is California. Apparently even our olive oil deserves a club membership.

[Lodestar Farms](#) · [The Olive Press](#) · [Pasolivo](#) · [Temecula Olive Oil Company](#)



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CA State Fair's two-page spread



Sunburst Projects' center spread

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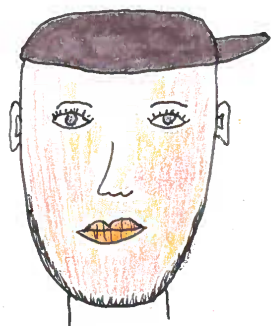
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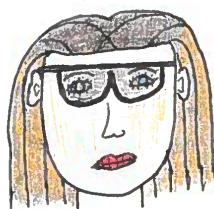
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Mememes from Facebook

As I get older I realize:

1. I talk to myself, because sometimes I need expert advice.
2. Sometimes I roll my eyes outloud.
3. I don't need anger management, I need people to stop pissing me off.
4. My people skills are just fine. It's my tolerance of idiots that needs work.
5. The biggest lie I tell myself is, "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."
6. When I was a child I thought naptime was punishment. Now it's like a mini-vacation.
7. The day the world runs out of wine is just too terrible to think about.
8. Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it can muffle the sound.
9. Wouldn't it be great if we could put ourselves in the dryer for 10 minutes; come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller?
10. "Getting Lucky" means walking into a room and remembering why I'm there.

"SAME S*X MARRIAGE ISN'T GAY PRIVILEGE, IT'S EQUAL RIGHTS. PRIVILEGE WOULD BE SOMETHING LIKE GAY PEOPLE NOT PAYING TAXES. LIKE CHURCHES DON'T"

RICKY GERVAIS

 @fre

Frozen ass moose fu*kers. Your 'bacon' is ham and not even that good. Curling is boring.

 Doubles Connoisseur @sfergs_

Our healthcare is free. We don't have \$50,000 student loans at age 18. Medicine is free for youth under 25. Marijuana is legal. Abortions are free. Our drinking age is 19. Your president is a racist orange cheeto & your police kill black people for sport. Sit this one out, love.

MANHATTAN JUST MADE HISTORY BY OFFICIALLY DECLARING SEPTEMBER 25 AS DOLLY PARTON APPRECIATION DAY, A PERMANENT TRIBUTE HONORING HER LEGACY THAT WILL BE CELEBRATED EVERY SINGLE YEAR FOREVER

 Josh Rincon @joshrinconn

I don't want to be rich for the aesthetic. I want to be rich for FREEDOM.

Going to the gym at 11 AM on a Tuesday. Taking a vacation without asking anyone for permission.

Drinking coffee on a random rainy afternoon with nowhere to be.

Having every bill paid months ahead. Helping my family without checking my bank account first.

I don't want to LOOK rich on Instagram. I want to own my time.

That's what being rich means to me.

REPUBLICANS timed the MEDICAID CUTS to not hit until 2027, After the midterms! REMEMBER that when you vote!

 Shawn threads.com/@notezbngnr71

Me standing in checkout lane at Costco and the woman behind me is wearing a "Gulf of America" shirt. She notices my smirk and asks me:

Her: You don't like my shirt?

Me: Before I answer, may I ask your name?

Her: My name is Janet

Me: I don't like that name, I'm gonna call you Margaret.

Her: But that's not my name!

Me: Exactly

I finish paying for my purchases and walk away. I wonder if she got my point? 🤔🤔

Give That KitchenAid a Little Love

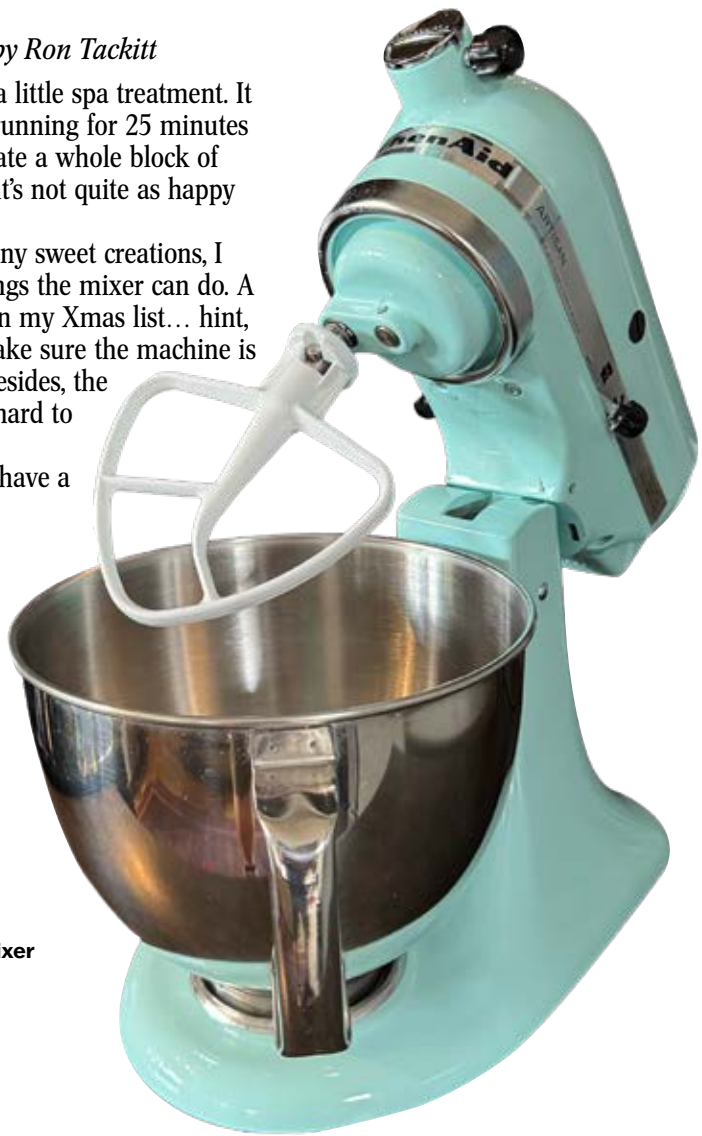
by Ron Tackitt

That KitchenAid stand mixer sitting on your counter may have mixed hundreds of batches of cookies, whipped countless bowls of cream for topping and survived at least one ill-advised attempt at bread dough. But when was the last time anyone looked under the hood?

That's where Mr. Mixer comes in. Based in Douglass, Kansas, [Mr. Mixer](#) has made a business out of keeping KitchenAid stand mixers mixing. The company repairs, rebuilds and upgrades machines shipped in from across the country, while also offering parts, custom accessories and even online repair tutorials for adventurous do-it-yourselfers. The founder of the business has posted a lot of videos online showing just how he takes care of old, tired mixers. Even if you are not mechanically inclined—and I'm not—it is fascinating to watch him bring a mixer back to life. For the rest of us—the people who see the words “disassemble your KitchenAid” and immediately reach for a credit card—Mr. Mixer offers mail-in service. According to their website, a basic regreasing and general maintenance service starts at \$125, plus shipping, with additional charges for any needed replacement parts. The mixer is inspected and disassembled, the old grease is removed, fresh food-grade grease is added, and everything is reassembled and tuned. [Mr. Mixer](#) recommends this sort of service about every

five to eight years, depending on how much you use your machine. And they go considerably further. For those looking to hang onto an old kitchen baking and mixing friend, a tired mixer can receive a complete rebuild. [Mr. Mixer](#) can even repaint—or, more precisely, powder coat—the mixer in a new custom color. Their website is pretty upfront about pricing for each situation, so while it's not cheap, there shouldn't be any big surprises. Mr. Mixer says it has repaired thousands of machines, and serviced mixers come with a six-month warranty, with some exceptions for vintage models. Why not just buy a new machine? First, they're expensive. But secondly, there's something appealing and nostalgic about refurbishing something old-fashioned and classic. Rather than tossing out that heavy, well-built appliance because it sounds funny or isn't running quite like it used to, fix it. Save that small piece of yesterday that has been there for you, looking fabulous in the corner of your countertop, for all those years. As for the KitchenAid stand mixer sitting in my kitchen? I'm seriously considering

sending mine off for a little spa treatment. It still works, but after running for 25 minutes to churn butter, or grate a whole block of cheese, it shows that it's not quite as happy as it used to be. Since I don't do many sweet creations, I like finding other things the mixer can do. A pasta attachment is on my Xmas list... hint, hint. But I need to make sure the machine is up to the task. And besides, the color I have is really hard to find (used). Hello, [Mr. Mixer](#)? I have a KitchenAid...



My beautiful but “Getting Tired” mixer

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The Cost of Parking in Midtown Is Bullshit

by Ron Tackitt

Sacramento talks a lot about supporting local businesses, creating vibrant neighborhoods and encouraging people to enjoy the restaurants, bars and entertainment that make Midtown worth visiting.

Parking in parts of the Midtown neighborhood that was once free for two hours—and free altogether after 6 p.m.—has been converted to paid parking. Sacramento's base meter rate is now \$3 an hour, with enforcement generally continuing until 10 p.m., seven days a week. Stay beyond the initial time allowed at some meters and the hourly rate can climb even higher.

Recently, I stopped by The Depot for a cocktail. The drink was \$5. Parking for my visit was \$6.

There is something seriously wrong with that equation.

This isn't about expecting free parking everywhere. Cities have legitimate reasons for managing limited curb space, and Sacramento says metered parking is intended to encourage turnover and support residents, visitors and businesses. But there is a point at which parking costs become yet another surcharge on simply going out.

For LGBTQ+ businesses in Lavender Heights—and for restaurants, bars and small businesses throughout Midtown—that matters. A \$6 parking charge, for a safe two hours, may not sound enormous in isolation.

Add it to dinner, drinks, a tip and everything else that has become more expensive, and an ordinary night out simply becomes less affordable.

And that is the larger issue.

At a time when people are already complaining about the cost of practically everything, Sacramento should be looking for ways to encourage people to patronize local businesses, not adding another reason to stay home.

Parking policy may help fill city coffers. But if it also empties restaurant tables and bar stools, perhaps the city should reconsider what that parking space is really costing us.



The Divine Miss M Gets a Woody

Bette Midler is adding another honor to an already very crowded trophy shelf. The legendary singer, actress, entertainer and activist has been named the recipient of the 2026 Woody Guthrie Prize, recognizing artists who use their work and their voices to help make the world a little better.

The Woody Guthrie Center will honor Midler Oct. 16 at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma, celebrating both her extraordinary entertainment career and her decades of advocacy for environmental conservation, LGBTQ+ rights, public health and other humanitarian causes.

"I am so honored to have been chosen to receive the Woody Guthrie Prize this year," Midler said, praising Guthrie for using his music to champion fairness and justice and to speak for people too often ignored.

The Divine Miss M certainly knows something about using a spotlight. During a career spanning more than five decades, she has earned four Grammys, three Emmys, two Tonys and two Academy Award nominations, while starring in favorites including "The Rose," "Beaches," "The First Wives Club" and, of course, "Hocus Pocus."

Past Woody Guthrie Prize recipients include Joan Baez, Bruce Springsteen, Pete Seeger, Mavis Staples, John Mellencamp and U2.

Not bad company for a Divine Miss.
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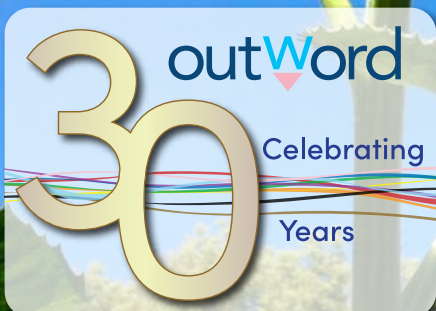
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We invite you to consider making a contribution in whatever amount feels right for you through our relaunched Outword Rainbow Fund. Every gift helps. With a simple and secure process, your support directly sustains the work we do and the voices we amplify.

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

Thank you,
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