

# outwoc

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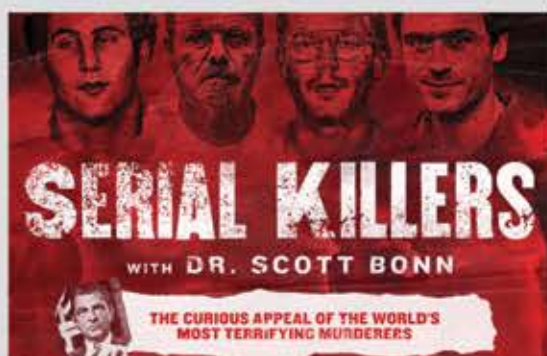
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ISSN # 1084-7618 United States Library of Congress

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# Governor Honors World AIDS Day With Red State Capitol – Forever More!

by Joyce Mitchell

**W**orld AIDS Day 2024 marks history in the making at California's State Capitol. At 5pm Sunday, December 1st on the West Steps of the State Capitol, Capital City AIDS Fund (CCAF) welcomes Assemblymember-elect Maggy Krell (D-Sacramento) to honor historic legislation recently signed into law requiring the Governor to declare December 1st of each year World AIDS Day.

A bill authored by Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz) moved through both houses of the State Senate and Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom. It goes into effect January 2025. However, this year – the Capitol Dome will be illuminated in RED to recognize this monumental occasion.

CCAF has been fighting for years to have the Dome illuminated RED to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and acknowledge the people infected, affected, and who have died from the pandemic. A short public ceremony, including music from the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus will commemorate the historic moment.



Photo by Ted Ross

# The List

- |                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Dickens Street Faire | Hana Tsubaki                  |
| Pet Portraits        | Stage Nine                    |
| World AIDS Day       | Friendsgiving                 |
| Lilly Wyatt          | RSE                           |
| Black Friday         | Illumination Holiday Festival |
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# World AIDS Day: Reflecting on the Past, Taking Action for the Future

**W**orld AIDS Day, observed every year on December 1, is a day dedicated to raising awareness about the AIDS pandemic, mourning those who have lost their lives to AIDS-related illnesses, and uniting communities worldwide in the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS. First established by the World Health Organization in 1988, World AIDS Day holds a powerful place on the global calendar as a day of remembrance, education, and hope.

Since the early 1980s, HIV/AIDS has impacted millions of lives around the globe. During the initial outbreak, the virus caused widespread fear and misunderstanding, resulting in stigma and discrimination against those affected. Early on, HIV/AIDS was often associated with marginalized groups, particularly within the LGBTQ+ community, which led to significant social prejudice. Yet, over the decades, medical advances and tireless advocacy have shed light on the reality of the disease, helping to reduce stigma, improve understanding, and, importantly, bring forth effective treatments.

Today, HIV is no longer the death sentence it once was. Thanks to antiretroviral therapy (ART), people living with HIV can lead healthy lives and, with early diagnosis and proper treatment, maintain viral suppression to the point where they cannot transmit the virus to others—often referred to as being “undetectable.” This medical breakthrough is captured in the “U=U” message, meaning “Undetectable equals Untransmittable,” which has become a powerful tool in raising awareness and hope.

However, despite these advances, challenges persist. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is far from over, with an estimated 38 million

people living with HIV worldwide. In many regions, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, access to testing, treatment, and preventive measures is limited. Social stigma and misinformation continue to prevent many from seeking the help they need, and in some areas, HIV rates are rising. This emphasizes the importance of continued education, community support, and robust health infrastructure to combat HIV/AIDS.

Each year, World AIDS Day carries a theme, aiming to focus global efforts on specific aspects of the epidemic. Past themes have included “Know Your Status,” “End Inequalities,” and “Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility.” This year’s theme, which is announced by UNAIDS, urges us to come together to “End Inequalities. End AIDS.” The theme emphasizes the need for equal access to health care, the importance of reducing stigma, and the role of governments, organizations, and individuals in creating inclusive, supportive environments for all.

Observing World AIDS Day can take many forms, from participating in local events, such as candlelight vigils and educational panels, to sharing resources online to increase awareness. Many choose to wear a red ribbon, an international symbol of support



for people living with HIV/AIDS. Organizations and individuals around the globe are encouraged to reflect on the progress made, remember the lives lost, and commit to the work still needed.

World AIDS Day reminds us of the power of solidarity and the importance of empathy. The journey toward an AIDS-free generation

is not yet complete, but with continued awareness, education, and support, the dream of ending the epidemic is within reach. As we honor the lives affected and lost to HIV/AIDS, we also recognize the resilience of those living with the virus and reaffirm our commitment to a future free from HIV/AIDS.



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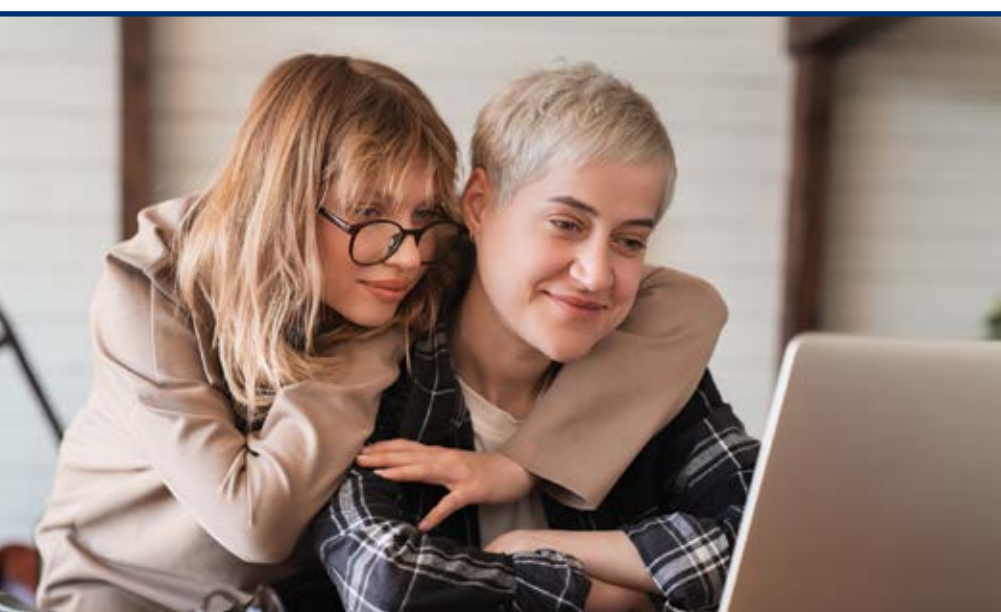
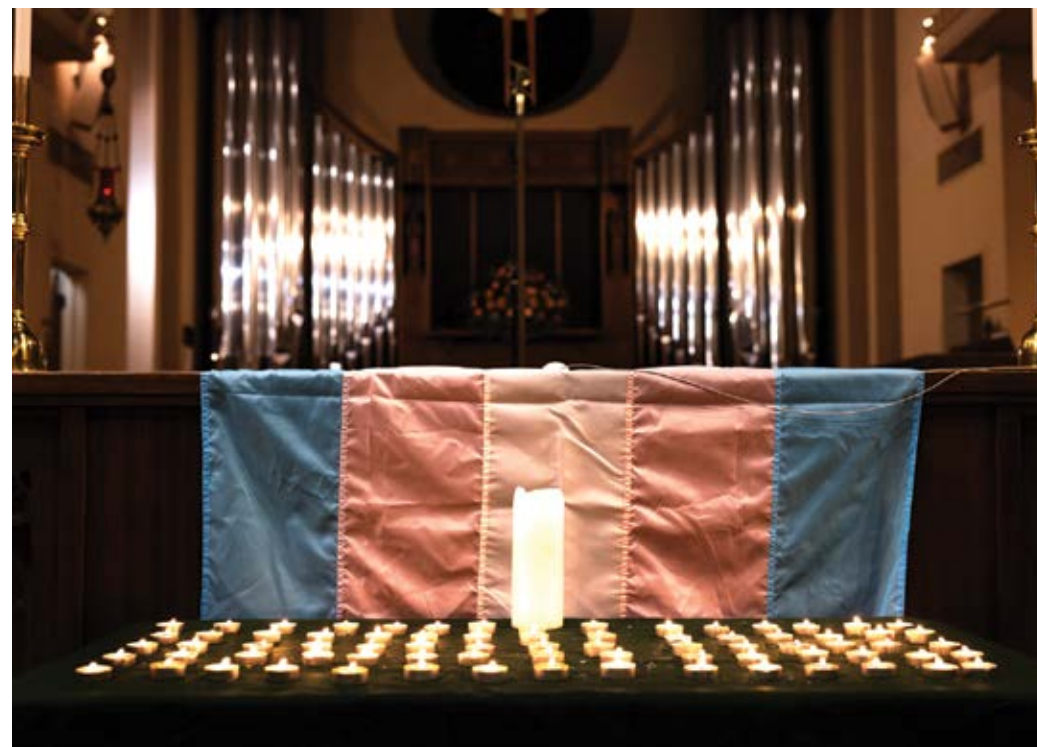
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## Transgender Day of Remembrance Candlelight Vigil

*photos by Kayla Davis*

On Saturday, November 16th, Sacramento gathered in solemn reflection at Trinity Cathedral in Midtown for the 26th Annual International Transgender Day of Remembrance Candlelight Vigil. Together, we honored the 69 lives lost in the U.S. and 411 worldwide this past year to anti-trans violence. With powerful speeches from local advocates, stirring musical tributes, and the warm glow of candles held in unity, we paid tribute to those taken far too soon. Since 2021, over one thousand trans lives have been stolen—a staggering and heartbreaking toll that likely underrepresents the full scope of this violence, as many incidents go unreported or are misreported.

This vigil stands as both a remembrance and a call to action. It reminds us of the resilience of our community and the urgent need for justice, safety, and equality. Transgender people deserve to live free from violence, harassment, and discrimination. We cannot let their lives or their stories fade into silence. Together, we must commit to building a world where every trans life is valued, protected, and celebrated, ensuring their memories remain a beacon of hope and a call for lasting change.



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## Little Activisms *by Judy Saint* Shoelaces Walk the Talk

Let's focus on "Little" this time. Let's talk shoelaces. Bold shoelaces. Speak out as you step through your day. Whether an ally or in the family, it's a quiet way of saying we aren't part of the judgment cult. We know who we are and we're OK with that.

Splash your steps with full-lace rainbows. Tons of shopping links pop up on any search for rainbow shoelaces. Try it. I particularly like the smooth blended effect rather than contrast-y stripes, but maybe each has its own place in our closet. Even leather business shoes can use some colorful confidence in the boardroom.

Or consider rainbow beads to place along your laces, available at <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1684548382/rainbow-shoe-ornaments-super-laces>.

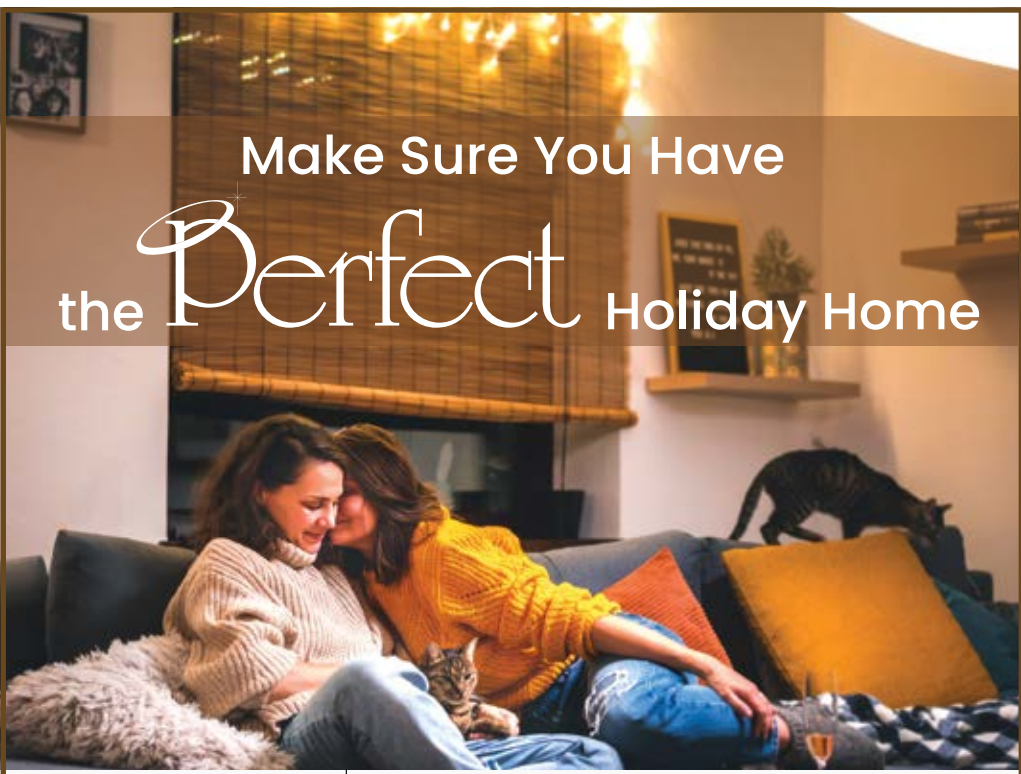
Maybe you prefer a subtle, professional statement just across the straight strand of your laces at the toe of your shoe, available at Walmart. Search for "Rainbow Shoelace Runner Charm."



Another subtle option would be clipping on some little rainbow metal caps for just the ends of your laces, called aglets, available at PandaHall.com.

There are so many different looks and styles. These make great gifts. You can't have too many!

One foot in front of the other, dear friends! Onward!  
*Little Activisms encourages readers to consider small changes we can make to help social causes, and to feel good about ourselves for taking small risks. Judy Saint is President of the Greater Sacramento Chapter of Freedom From Religion Foundation and author of The Pleasant Atheist Adult Coloring Book available on Amazon. She and her wife live in*



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# Speaker Implemented A Policy Barring Transgender Women From Using Women's Restrooms

On Transgender Day of Remembrance, House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) implemented a policy barring transgender women from using women's restrooms on the House side of the U.S. Capitol and associated office buildings. Johnson justified the decision by stating that single-sex facilities, including restrooms and locker rooms, are designated for individuals based on their biological sex. He added that unisex restrooms are available and that member offices have private facilities. However, he declined to specify how this policy would be enforced, stating only that it is "enforceable" like other House policies.

The announcement coincided with U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace's (R-S.C.) introduction of a similar proposal to bar transgender women from women's restrooms on Capitol Hill. Mace admitted the measure targeted Sarah McBride, the incoming congresswoman from Delaware, who will be the first openly transgender member of Congress. During discussions of the policy, Mace and other Republicans, including U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.), used transphobic language and misgendered McBride, drawing criticism for their rhetoric.

McBride responded to the policy on X (formerly Twitter), calling it a distraction from Congress's responsibility to address more significant national issues. Her remarks highlighted her commitment to focusing on substantive legislative priorities despite the hostility.

House Democrats, including members of

the Congressional Equality Caucus and leaders like Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), denounced the policy and rhetoric as discriminatory and cruel. Ocasio-Cortez and Jeffries described the move as "bullying," emphasizing the harm caused by such targeted policies, particularly on a day meant to honor transgender lives lost to violence.

The policy has sparked intense debate about inclusivity, equality, and the misuse of legislative time to further divisive cultural battles. Critics argue that targeting an incoming congresswoman highlights broader efforts to marginalize transgender individuals in political spaces. Conversely, supporters of the policy claim it protects women's spaces, aligning with broader Republican efforts to legislate restrictions on transgender rights nationwide.

# Trump Poised To Reinstate & Expand Ban on Transgender Military Service

source: Human Rights Campaign

Reports suggest that Donald Trump is planning an executive order to reinstate and expand his previous ban on transgender individuals serving in the military. This potential policy could affect an estimated 15,000 transgender service members, labeling them "unfit to serve" despite their qualifications. The U.S. military, which struggles with recruitment targets, is the largest employer of transgender individuals, who are twice as likely to serve compared to the general population.

As reported in *The Times of London*, this proposed ban would be disastrous for military readiness and the country's safety:

"These people will be forced out at a time when the military can't recruit enough people," a source familiar with Trump's plans said. "Only the Marine Corps is hitting its numbers for recruitment and some people who will be affected are in very senior positions."

Kelley Robinson, President of the Human Rights Campaign, criticized the move as discriminatory and harmful to military readiness, calling it "transphobia masquerading as policy." Robinson emphasized that transgender service members

are skilled patriots who contribute to national defense and deserve the right to serve openly without discrimination. Critics warn that such a ban would undermine the military's strength, global reputation, and commitment to diversity.



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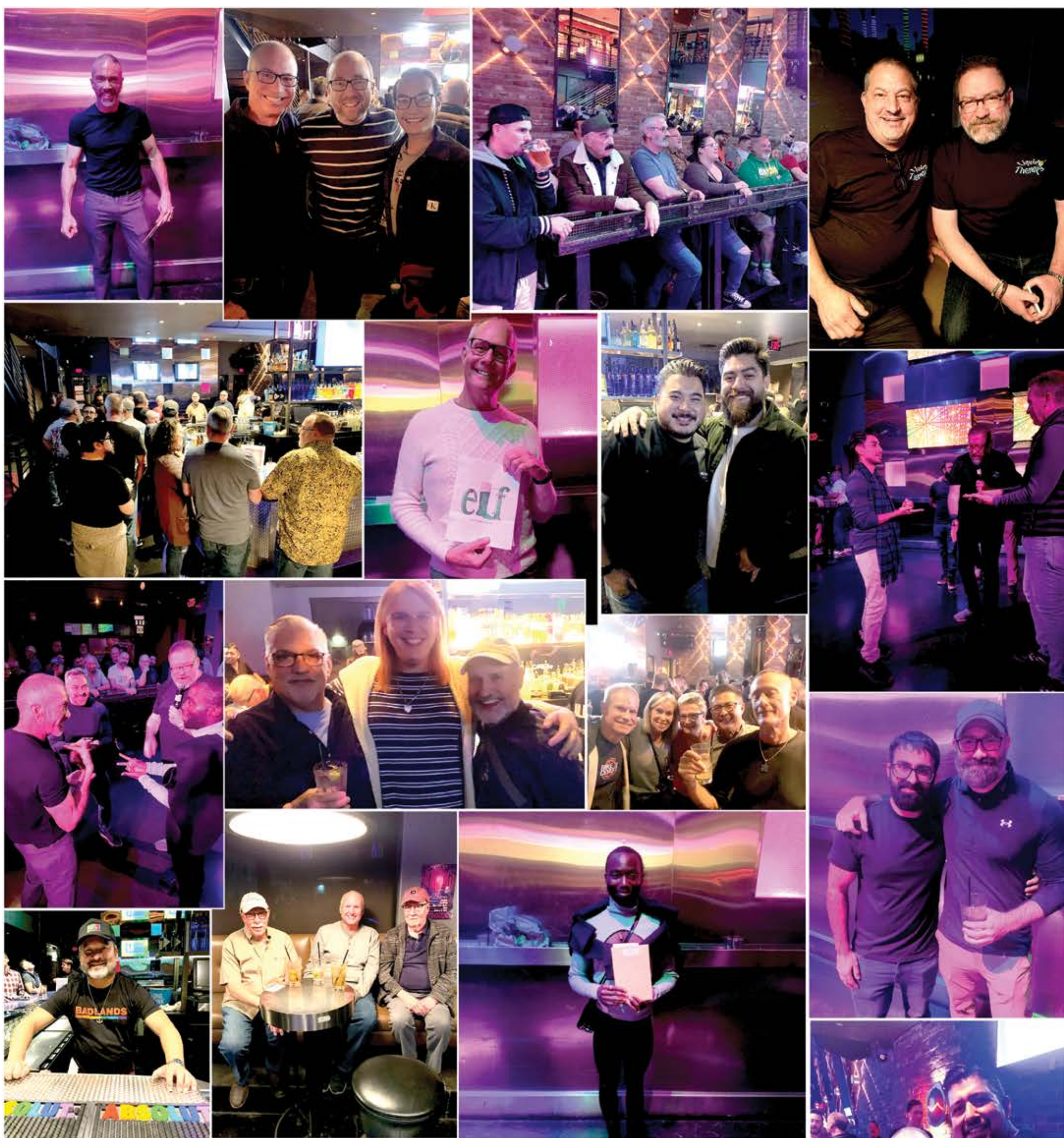


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# Out & About

Outword Magazine's November Happy Hour at Badlands was a much-needed opportunity to connect and recharge following the emotional rollercoaster of election week. It was a reminder of the strength and support our community provides. Join us every second Friday of the month at 5:30 PM for some Liquid Therapy—no charge, and everyone is welcome! Next month, we're hosting our annual toy drive for WEAVE, so bring a new, unwrapped toy and help us spread holiday cheer. See you there!





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## Brand New Disney on Ice Debuts in February

by Heather Atherton

Northern California Disney fans will be able to chart a course through the night sky to Disney On Ice presents Magic in the Stars where every story begins with a wish. Featuring 56 Disney characters, the most in one show, this all-new production brings the brightest Disney stars to life through cutting-edge figure skating, high-flying acrobatics, unexpected stunts, innovative lighting, thrilling special effects, eye-catching costumes, and stunning set designs. Experience the dynamic moments on the ice and in the air when Disney On Ice presents Magic in the Stars visits Stockton's Adventist Health Arena from February 6-9 followed by Sacramento's Golden 1 Center from February 13-17, 2025. Find more information and tickets at: [www.disneyonice.com](http://www.disneyonice.com).



Join Disney On Ice presents Magic in the Stars for a magical journey with Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, Donald, and Daisy through timeless tales and today's favorites. The adventure begins when the North Star shines brightly and descends upon Jiminy Cricket as he welcomes and reminds the audience that the most fantastic, magical things can happen, and it all starts with a wish.

Journey to Rosas, the kingdom of wishes, to meet optimistic and sharp-witted Asha from the newest Walt Disney Animated Studios' musical adventure Wish. She makes an impassioned plea to the stars, which is answered by a cosmic force, a little ball of boundless energy named Star. Together they face the most formidable of foes to save her community and prove that when the will of one courageous human connects with the magic of the stars, wondrous things can happen. Asha and her friend Star will dazzle audiences as they skate to "This Wish," performed by Academy Award®-winning actress Ariana DeBose.

Watch as Raya from Raya and the Last Dragon debuts live on ice and ascends into the air, lifting the show to higher heights as the strong warrior performs an aerial acro-pole routine.

For the first time on ice, escape "Into the Unknown" with Elsa and Anna from Frozen 2, hit the road with Disney and Pixar's Lightning McQueen and Tow Mater as they cruise on the ice to "Life Is A Highway," and reconnect with Toy Story's Buzz Lightyear, Woody, Jessie, Rex, and Hamm. Travel to the mountains of Colombia where the Madrigal family lives, unlock the magic in the family's casita, and discover why "We Don't Talk About Bruno." Set sail with Moana on her canoe into the open ocean, to witness her encourage Te Kā to "Know Who You Are" and transform into Te Fiti.

Pursue your dreams with Tiana, from The Princess and the Frog, as she strives to make her wish of opening a restaurant come true. Discover the power of three wishes with Aladdin when he finds a magic lamp in the Cave of Wonders. Reminisce with Cinderella, Snow White, Belle, and Rapunzel as they remind us to never stop wishing and dreaming.

In the end, audiences will learn that everyone has dreams they want to come true. Find more information and tickets at <https://www.disneyonice.com>.



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## Be Sure to Check out the Crocker Holiday Artisan Market

This Thanksgiving weekend, the Crocker Art Museum is hosting a special event at the Scottish Rite Center, located at 6151 H Street in Sacramento, CA. From Friday, November 29, through Sunday, December 1, 2024, the event promises a blend of art, culture, and community spirit.

Visitors can expect a vibrant lineup of activities, including curated exhibitions, live performances, and opportunities to shop for unique handmade crafts from local artisans. It's the perfect setting to kick off the holiday season while supporting Sacramento's thriving creative community.

In addition to art, the event will feature family-friendly programming such as interactive workshops and live demonstrations. Food and beverage vendors will also be on-site, offering seasonal treats and beverages to enjoy while taking in the festivities.

Whether you're an art enthusiast, a supporter of local talent, or simply looking for a memorable way to spend the weekend, this event is not to be missed. Mark your calendars and celebrate the spirit of creativity and connection this Thanksgiving weekend with the Crocker Art Museum.

For more information, visit the Crocker Art Museum's website or follow their social media channels for updates. [crockerholidayartisanmarket.com](http://crockerholidayartisanmarket.com)



## Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink Reopens

The Downtown Sacramento Ice Rink, presented by Dignity Health, is now open for its 32nd season, at 7th and K streets. Make your plans now to enjoy the seasonal fun.



photo courtesy of Downtown Sacramento

Michael Ault, Executive Director of the Downtown Sacramento Partnership, highlighted the rink's role as a cherished community space for over 30 years. Situated near key landmarks like Ali Youssefi Square, the Golden 1 Center, and local businesses, the rink offers a festive addition to holiday activities downtown. Open Tuesdays through Sundays until January 20, 2025, it will also host various special events and activations to enhance the seasonal experience.

## Discover a force to be reckoned with.

**Sasha Velour** | February 7  
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## The Ultimate Guide to Gay Gift Giving – 2024 Edition *by Mikey Rox*

The Holidays are an excellent distraction after an election cycle – makes ya wonder if it was planned like that, huh? – and this year is no exception. Instead of churning out endless political memes on social media (really, give it a rest), turn your attention to making memories and exchanging gifts, like these carefully curated selections that’ll lighten the mood, facilitate festiveness, and bring joy to those on your Nice List (because we not givin’ Naughty List-ers nothin’ this year).



### Pasturebird Chicken/“Hot Ones” Season 25 10-pack

Read the reviews for Pasturebird free-range chicken products (five stars across the board, including its holiday-ready party wings), and you’ll be an instant convert – especially after you light ‘em up with Heatonist’s “Hot Ones” Season 25 10-pack, featuring flavors like Little Dick’s Ghost Pepper Pear, Pepper North’s Jerk & Scotch Bonnet, and Hot Ones’ own The Last Dab: Xperience, an apropos name for the Pepper X-based sauce with a Scoville Heat Unit rating of over 2.6 million. (For reference, a classic buffalo clocks in at a mere 1,800 SHU.) Santa might be S.O.L. on milk this year. \$10-25, Pasturebird.com; \$120, Heatonist.com

### Le Creuset Bread Oven

Honed your sourdough skills during Covid? Level ‘em up in Le Creuset’s handsome enameled cast-iron bread oven, available in seven of the French manufacturer’s signature ombré hues, for stunning artisan loaves ideal for gifting or your own private gluttony. Make it a meal with Julia Turshen’s Fastest Chicken Noodle Soup recipe from the queer cook’s latest book, “What Goes with What.” \$300, Food52.com; \$26, Amazon.com



### Imogene + Willie Tees/Accessories

Streetwear takes the sophisticated track via imogene + willie’s audacious selection of graphic tees and accessories, like its popular “bolt” in black and increasingly prescient “burn it all” tees, along with accessories that include the standout “bronco” trucker and “dead wrong” knit watch cap. For queers of a certain age (you know who you are), these style-forward mix-ins give edge without looking desperately trendy or – God forbid – completely out of touch (you know who you are, too). \$38-\$68, imogeneandwillie.com



### Pepper Pong Game

Make room, table tennis – there’s a new player in the game. Pepper Pong – a 2023 Best New Game winner – is ping pong’s “go-anywhere, do-anything, challenge-anyone cousin... with a mean mullet and pickleball-infused DNA,” according to its website, and that translates to a whole lotta fun for the whole family... if you’re into that sorta thing. \$70, PepperPong.com

### Beekman 1802 Advent Calendar

There’s no place like home when you’ve got Beekman 1802’s luxurious storybook-inspired advent calendar to see you through the holidays, each door revealing one of 24 cult-fave face and beauty products, including 16 full-size bestsellers. Bring the somewhere-over-the-rainbow sentiment 360 with a few selections from the boys’ “Wicked”-branded lineup, like the Glamorous Gal Bodycare Gift Set or Make Your Own Magic 3-Pack Bar Soap Set, for all the good witches (and bad bitches) in your life. \$179, Beekman1802.com

### Cedar Ridge The QuintEssential

You’re gonna need a buffer that packs a punch – so none are thrown – this holiday season, and Cedar Ridge The QuintEssential is the American single-malt whiskey up to the task with its notes of caramel and vanilla combined with a persistent pepperiness that’s H-O-T-T-O-G-O. \$60, CedarRidgeDistillery.com



### Tom of Finland Duffel

Henry Cavill is a prime candidate for the anatomical embodiment of a Tom of Finland illustration, and it’s hard not to fantasize about the oversized actor decked out in head-to-toe leather, especially after you cop Loqi’s Tom of Finland Day & Night Recycled Weekender, featuring all-over printed ToF artwork that looks suspiciously like the Super Man that lives rent free in our collective spank banks. \$40, Loqi.com



### Dwayne Chestnut Sunglasses

Did Vontelle sleep on the opp to name its Dwayne Chestnuts flip-up transitioning glasses the Dwayne Waynes, paying homage to the iconic spectacle-shades popularized by Kadeem Hardison on “A Different World”? Perhaps. But slap on a pair of these bad boys and you’ll bring all the early-’90s vibes (and maybe a few Whitleys or Ron Johnsons) to the yard. \$189, Vontelle.com

### Danish Creamery UCS

Danish Creamery – renowned for its fresh-churned European-style butter – keeps you and your sticks rizzed up and ready to spread this holiday season with its branded ugly Christmas sweater that includes a tiny additional sweater to dress up your serving dish, in a twofer that’s both salty and sweet. \$80, UglyChristmasSweater.com



### Andy Warhol x Absolut Vodka

Art imitates life imitating art in Absolut Vodka’s full-circle Andy Warhol collab featuring elements of the pop icon’s overlooked 1985 blue bottle painting, rediscovered in 2020. With colors extracted directly from the original work and made with multi-layer screen printing to create an authentic sensory experience to touch, the spirited 2024 collector’s item also includes a QR code that opens a portal into the world of Warhol and the story behind both brands’ historic and enduring connection, this limited-edition release now among them. \$26, ReserveBar.com



*Mikey Rox is an award-winning journalist and LGBTQ+ lifestyle expert whose work has appeared in more than 100 publications around the world. Connect with Mikey on Instagram @ mikeyroxtravels.*

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# New Holiday Music For 2024

by Chris Narloch

Last year we had Cher's first Christmas album. This year we have Jimmy Fallon. Some years are better than others when it comes to holiday music, and 2024 is not the best. Still, I managed to find several winners among the new crop of seasonal sounds.

## Jennifer Hudson – The Gift of Love

Hudson's first collection of Christmas music gets off to a bad start with a cover of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," a great song that has been sung and recorded too many times over the last several decades. Hudson's performance of that Cohen classic is fine, but it's not a holiday song. Luckily, the singer recovers quickly with a soulful set of gospel-based performances on Christmas classics such as "O Holy Night," "The Christmas Song," and "Carol of The Bells," plus a roof-raising rendition of "Auld Lang Syne."



## Vince Gill & Amy Grant – When I Think of Christmas

This lovely album contains remastered versions of nine of the couple's holiday favorites, plus two new recordings. Grant's "Tennessee Christmas" and "Breath of Heaven" are standouts, as are her husband Gill's "O Holy Night" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas." The two new recordings are Grant's version of the album's title track and "Til the Season Comes Round Again," a duet from the couple.



## Brandy – Christmas with Brandy

I wish I could report that Brandy was back in the business of making great music, but her new holiday disc left me completely cold, thanks to underwhelming versions of musical chestnuts that have been done to death, including "Santa Baby," "Jingle Bells," and "Deck the Halls." It is possible to make those songs sound fresh again, but Brandy overworks her feathery vibrato so much that I had a hard time making it all the way through this disc.



## Brett Eldredge – Merry Christmas (Welcome to the Family)

This eight-song album is a short and sweet holiday collection from a country crooner who is fast becoming the King of Christmas, after this, his third collection of seasonal songs in eight years. Eldredge has a sexy, slightly raspy big voice that is perfect for tracks like his duet with Kelly Clarkson on "Sweet December" and with Idarose on "Who Will You Be Kissing on New Year's Eve?"



## Jimmy Fallon – Holiday Seasoning

My vote for worst holiday album of the year (or any year, really) is this unfunny set of "comedy" songs featuring Jimmy Fallon's unremarkable voice. Wacky tracks like "Weird Cousin," "Chipmunks and Chestnuts," and "Merry Happy Christmas" mostly fall flat so that the only worthwhile cuts are the ones where real singers such as Dolly Parton ("Almost Too Early for Christmas") or Meghan Trainor ("Wrap Me Up") duet with Fallon. Nobody asked you to sing, Jimmy. Please, just stop.

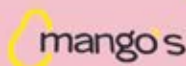
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# “Wicked-Good” Holiday Movies *by Chris Narloch*

I wasn't able to screen “Moana 2” before our print deadline, but I have reviews of two other “tentpole” holiday releases that are raking in the dough, plus an unusual but beautifully made buddy film that is fighting for survival amidst all the blockbusters currently clogging theaters.

## Wicked Part One

I must preface this review by admitting that “The Wizard of Oz” is my favorite film and “Wicked” is one of this theatre queen’s most beloved Broadway musicals of the 21st century. Whether that means I am inclined to cut the “Wicked” movie some slack or be tougher on it, I am not sure. What I do know is that Jon M. Chu’s first film in his “Wicked” franchise is my favorite movie so far this year.

To start with, the big-screen version’s topline cast, including Michelle Yeoh’s steely Madame Morrible, Jeff Goldblum’s two-faced Wizard, and Jonathan Bailey’s super-cute Fiyero, is perfection. For his part, Jon M. Chu (“Crazy Rich Asians,” “In the Heights”) does a fantastic job of showcasing the heart of the show, which is the relationship between Galinda and Elphaba.

What about the women who play those iconic characters, you ask? Well, I had the good fortune to see the original stars of “Wicked” on stage, twice and can report that Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo more than fill the shoes made famous by Kristin Chenoweth and Idina Menzel. (Grande displays impeccable comic timing, and Erivo possesses an angelic voice.)

Additionally, the film’s \$145 million budget is all on the screen, with colossal (and mostly practical) sets that immerse the cast and the audience in the world of Oz. I was never bored for a moment, despite a run time of more than two-and-a-half hours. “Wicked” is currently in wide theatrical release and kicking butt at the box office.



Wicked



Gladiator II

## Gladiator II

I do love a man in a short, leather skirt, and the handsome and talented Irish actor Paul Mescal rocks his gladiator-style “mini” in this long-delayed sequel to Ridley Scott’s original “Gladiator” movie from 2000, which starred an intense Russell Crowe. Scott is again behind the camera, Mr. Mescal plays the vengeful son of Crowe’s character, and you can file “Gladiator II” under “guilty pleasures.”

If you are a fan of the first movie, then you will probably enjoy this spectacular sequel, which is slightly shorter but feels a little longer than the original, despite Oscar-worthy production design and a scene-stealing supporting performance from Denzel Washington. My only real complaint with “Gladiator II” is its over-the-top CGI which includes two wacky scenes in the Colosseum featuring sharks and ships, and blood-thirsty hairless baboons. Currently in wide theatrical release.

## A Real Pain

Jesse Eisenberg directs and costars in this bittersweet new dramedy, opposite the always-intriguing Kieran Culkin (“Succession”), as cousins who struggle to get along while on a Holocaust tour in Poland. Culkin’s character is bipolar and reeling from the death of his beloved grandmother, while Eisenberg’s reaction to his cousin’s emotional outbursts ranges from sympathy to exasperation.

Both actors are terrific, and the movie’s unpredictable plot never feels contrived. Culkin is especially memorable as a broken man who is equally adept at drawing people to him and pushing them away. “A Real Pain” is funny and sad in equal measure, and the potential Oscar buzz surrounding the film is no joke. Currently in wide theatrical release.



A Real Pain



Muscat

## Muscat

The folks behind this short, 16-minute film could find themselves with an Oscar nomination next year, and I would be okay with that. “Muscat” has a wind-swept, seaside setting that provides the perfect backdrop for a story of lust and longing between a closeted, teenaged fisherman and a handsome tourist traveling Morocco with his wife.

When an accident happens, the young man must decide whether to do the right thing or keep his attraction to the older man a secret. This short could probably be fleshed out and turned into a fascinating feature. You can watch “Muscat” for free at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp4jFLy-rtg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp4jFLy-rtg)



# Good For You Two!

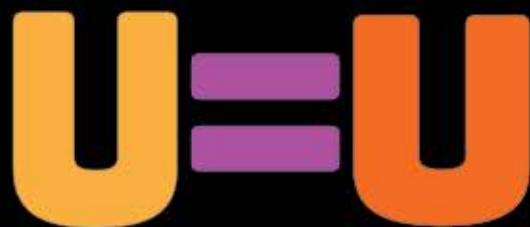


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# Berkeley Rep Hits Another Home Run

by Chris Narloch

"Jaja's African Hair Braiding," a great new play by Jocelyn Bioh currently receiving its West Coast premiere at Berkeley Rep, is not to be missed.



The cast of "Jaja's African Hair Braiding" Photo credit: Ben Krantz Studio/Berkeley Rep

The story involves a group of African hair braiders working at a bustling Harlem salon who take great pride in their elaborate designs, creating one extraordinary hairdo after another, right in front of our eyes.

The play's funniest moments include an unbelievably demanding customer who knows exactly what she does and does not want done to her hair, and an intense series of exchanges between two of the workers, one of whom accuses the other of stealing her customers away.

Alternately sassy and stealth, the play only reveals itself fully during its devastating final moments, when something very wrong happens to Jaja, the owner of the shop, who has been out of sight for most of the play.

I won't spoil that twist, except to say that it couldn't be more topical or sad, given recent political headlines and the results of our country's presidential election. The play has it all: great acting, a superb script, wonderfully wild costumes and hairdos, lots of laughs, and an incredibly moving conclusion.

"Jaja's African Hair Braiding" performs through this Dec. 15 in Berkeley. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to: [www.berkeleyrep.org](http://www.berkeleyrep.org)

# Don't Miss This Free Holiday Concert

So many events to choose from this holiday season, but there is nothing like a free concert to get one in a festive mood. Luckily, Symphony d'Oro returns this December with their annual seasonal symphonic celebration.



Join the Symphony on Sunday, Dec. 15 at 4:00 p.m. for a gratis gathering featuring beautiful symphonic music celebrating the holiday season, a magical toy shop, the most famous Christmas Concerto in the world, and a sing along of your favorite Christmas carols.

Symphony d'Oro's free "Holiday Magic" concert will be performed at the Cordova High Performing Arts Center in Rancho Cordova. Doors open at 3:30 p.m. for open seating. Visit: [www.symphonydoro.org](http://www.symphonydoro.org)



# Out & About

with Matthew Burlingame

We're full steam ahead into the holiday season and this year be sure to share your time with those who mean the most to you. Also this year consider supporting the small community charities that need our support the most this Giving Tuesday, Dec. 3. It's a meaningful way to make the season brighter for everyone. And while you're spreading goodwill, don't forget to take a break and enjoy the holiday spirit with friends and family by attending these festive events. From music and laughter to opportunities to connect, there's plenty of holiday cheer to go around—don't miss out!

The Sacramento Santa Parade returns Saturday, Dec. 14 at 10 a.m., circling Capitol Park in downtown Sacramento. This festive, family-friendly tradition features marching bands, floats, clowns, youth groups, horses, antique vehicles, and, of course, Santa Claus himself. Admission is free, offering a cheerful holiday celebration for the community. Don't miss this beloved annual event!

Join the fun at Rainbow Chamber Drag Queen Bingo, on Thursday, Dec. 5, from 7-9

miss this seasonal celebration! [Rainbowchamber.com](http://Rainbowchamber.com)

The Tony-winning musical "Hadestown" comes to the Harris Center for the Arts in Folsom from Dec. 12-15. Winner of eight 2019 Tony Awards and the 2020 Grammy for Best Musical Theater Album, Hadestown weaves the mythic love stories of Orpheus and Eurydice, and Hades and Persephone. Performances will be held at 10 College Pkwy. Tickets available now.



"Hadestown" at the Harris Center

p.m. at Mangos, 1930 K St. This month's beneficiary is the WEAVE toy drive. Bring a donation of an unwrapped toy with you! All seating is first come, first served, with the game starting at 7 p.m. A \$20 cash donation to play. Don't miss this exciting and charitable event! [Rainbowchamber.com](http://Rainbowchamber.com)

Experience the magic of some of the finest Christmas songs in Americana, roots, folk and alt-country, from female-led musical group Americana Women. "Americana Christmas" IS an enchanting musical journey running Dec. 5-22 at the East Sonora Theatre, 13891 Mono Way, Sonora. [Sierrarep.org](http://Sierrarep.org).

Sacramento's unofficial holiday season launch, Holiday Hits with a Splash of Sass! by the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus, celebrates its 40th season at the Sacramento Memorial Auditorium, 1515 J St., combining festive music, humor, and diversity. Shows are Friday, Dec. 6, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 7, at 3 p.m. Tickets are selling fast! [Sacgaymenschorus.com](http://Sacgaymenschorus.com)

The Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce hosts its Naughty or Nice Holiday Mixer on Dec. 11 at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Arden West, 2200 Harvard St. The event is free for members and \$10 for nonmembers, offering networking opportunities and holiday cheer in a festive atmosphere. Don't

ArtMix: Office Holiday Party brings the festive spirit to the Crocker Art Museum on Thursday, Dec. 12, from 6-9 p.m. This 18+ event promises raucous holiday carols, DJed music, live art experiences, and a lively dance floor. Free for members, \$25 for nonmembers. Celebrate the holidays in style—this is the office party you've been dreaming of! [Crockerart.org](http://Crockerart.org)

Get your tickets now for "RAIN—A Tribute to The Beatles" performing at Harris Center, 10 College Pkwy. in Folsom on April 25-26. This live show captures the spirit of the iconic band with electrifying renditions of Beatles hits. Known for precision and vibrant visuals, RAIN promises a nostalgic concert experience that delights fans of all ages! [Harriscenter.net](http://Harriscenter.net)

Gregorian Pure Chant will bring an evening of serene music to the Crest Theatre, 1013 K St., Sacramento, on Tuesday, Dec. 10, from 8-10 p.m. Experience a night of timeless melodies and a relaxed atmosphere. Bring your friends and enjoy this enchanting performance. Tickets and details are available at the venue. [Crestsacramento.com](http://Crestsacramento.com)

Happy anniversary to Jimmy Short & Markcurtis Otani on Dec. 4

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



## Upcoming events. 2024/25

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DEC  
04

### MONDAVI CENTER - PINK MARTINI

Pink Martini is renowned for a repertoire featuring songs in 25 languages, so expect a multilingual musical journey as the much-loved 'little orchestra' performs classic holiday songs. More information can be found online: <https://www.mondaviarts.org/whats-on/pink-martini-featuring-china-forbes/>

DEC  
06

### BROADWAY SACRAMENTO

Elf - Don't miss this modern day Christmas classic based on the beloved 2003 film, the hilarious tale of Buddy, an orphan baby who mistakenly crawls into Santa's bag of gifts and winds up being raised at the North Pole.  
Tickets: <https://www.broadwaysacramento.com/production/elf/>

DEC  
13

### BADLANDS

Fridays are a Drag - hosted by Apple Adams and Diana Hole  
Show time is at 8PM

DEC  
13

### HAPPY HOUR- LIQUID THERAPY WITH OUTWORD

Please bring a new unwrapped toy for WEAVE's Holiday Toy Shoppe!



DEC  
14

### MATTEO LANE

Coming to Crest Sacramento, 7 - 8:30 and 9:30 - 11:30pm. Matteo Lane is a New York-based comedian whose stand-up special can be seen on Netflix's The Comedy Lineup.  
more information online: <https://crestssacramento.com/events/>

DEC  
16

### PRIMETIMERS

Lunch & Dessert @ Estelle's - 11:30am.  
For more events and information visit: <https://chapters.theprimetimersww.com/sacramento/>

DEC  
31

### FACES- NEW YEARS EVE PARTY

Doors open @ 7pm- full buffet. Midnight cash and prize balloon drop. visit [www.faces.net](http://www.faces.net) for more information.

MAR  
04

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## Oh, The Holidays! Our Favorite Recipe

by Fred and George

There's something magical about digging through old family recipe collections, isn't there? The faded index cards, the handwritten notes in the margins, the occasional spill stains - each one a little time capsule from holidays past. I was recently doing just that, combing through my mom's stash of recipes, expecting the usual lineup of pies, casseroles, and secret family sauces, when I stumbled upon something that stopped me in my tracks.

I had to read it twice, maybe three times, just to make sure I wasn't hallucinating. There it was, written in my mother's unmistakable cursive, right between her famous green bean casserole and some notes on gravy consistency. A recipe with a curse word. My mom, who never cursed, had somehow allowed "blowing the ass off" to grace her carefully curated holiday files.

The recipe itself? Oh, it's real. The instructions are just as wild as they sound: pack your turkey with popcorn kernels, roast it, and wait for the inevitable moment when the heat does its thing, causing an eruption of popped corn to come flying out of your holiday centerpiece. I can't decide if it's genius, insanity, or a bit of both.

Of course, there's no way I'd actually make this turkey (the mental image of my mother trying it herself has me in stitches), but it's exactly the kind of quirky find that reminds me why I love the holidays. Beyond the perfectly plated meals, there's a little room for chaos, and discovering that even the most polished family traditions might have a curse-laden surprise hiding in the mix.

So here's to digging through old recipes and finding the unexpected, the hilarious, and the downright weird. After all, a little humor is exactly what we need to make it through the holiday season. And who knows? Maybe this year, I'll surprise everyone with a turkey that really pops.



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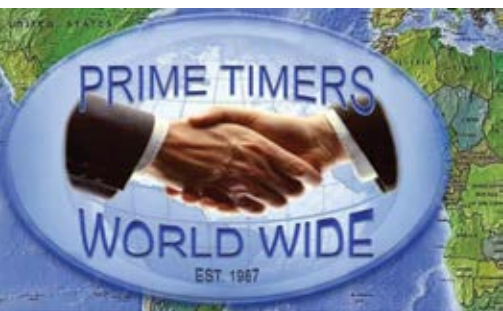
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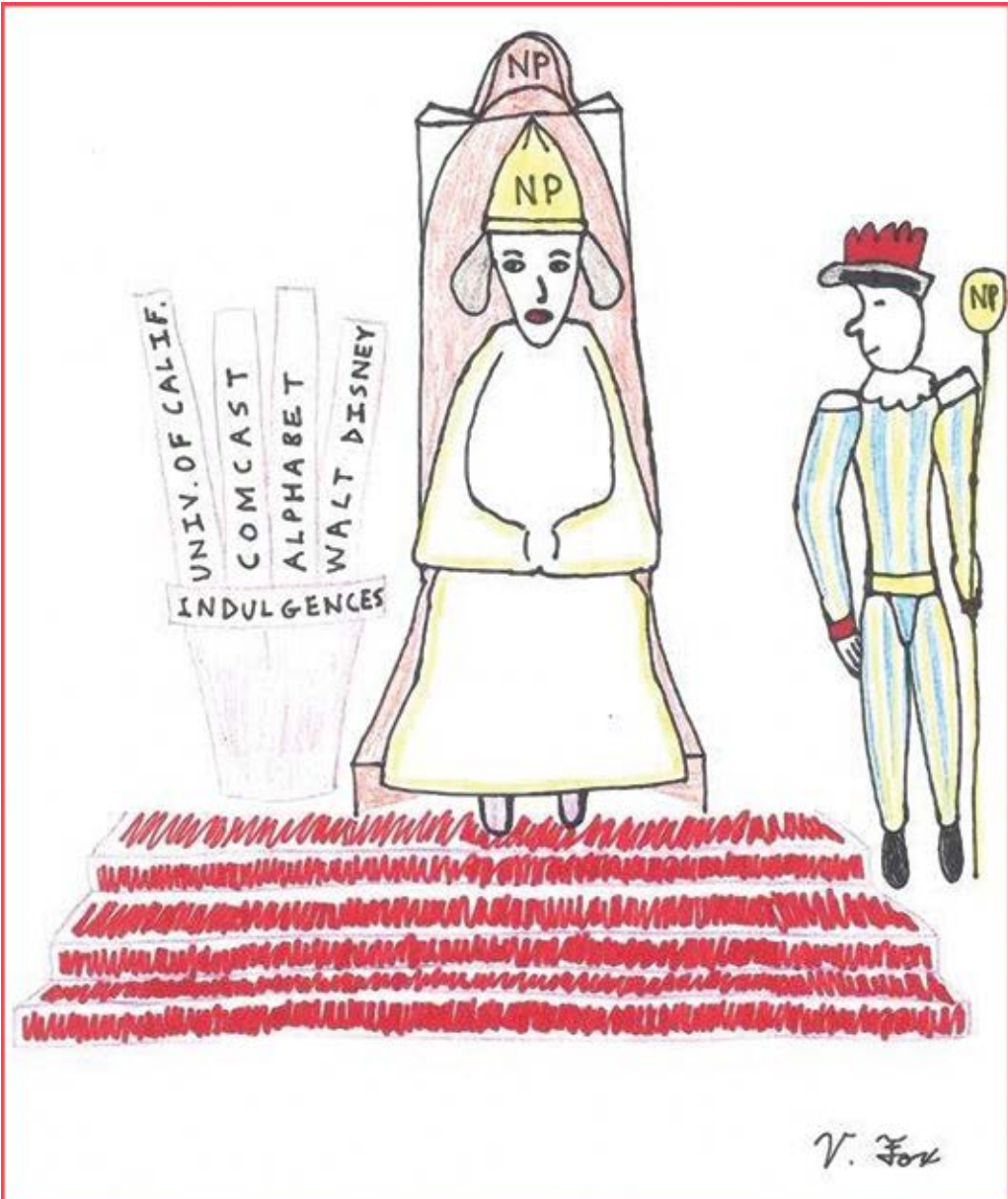
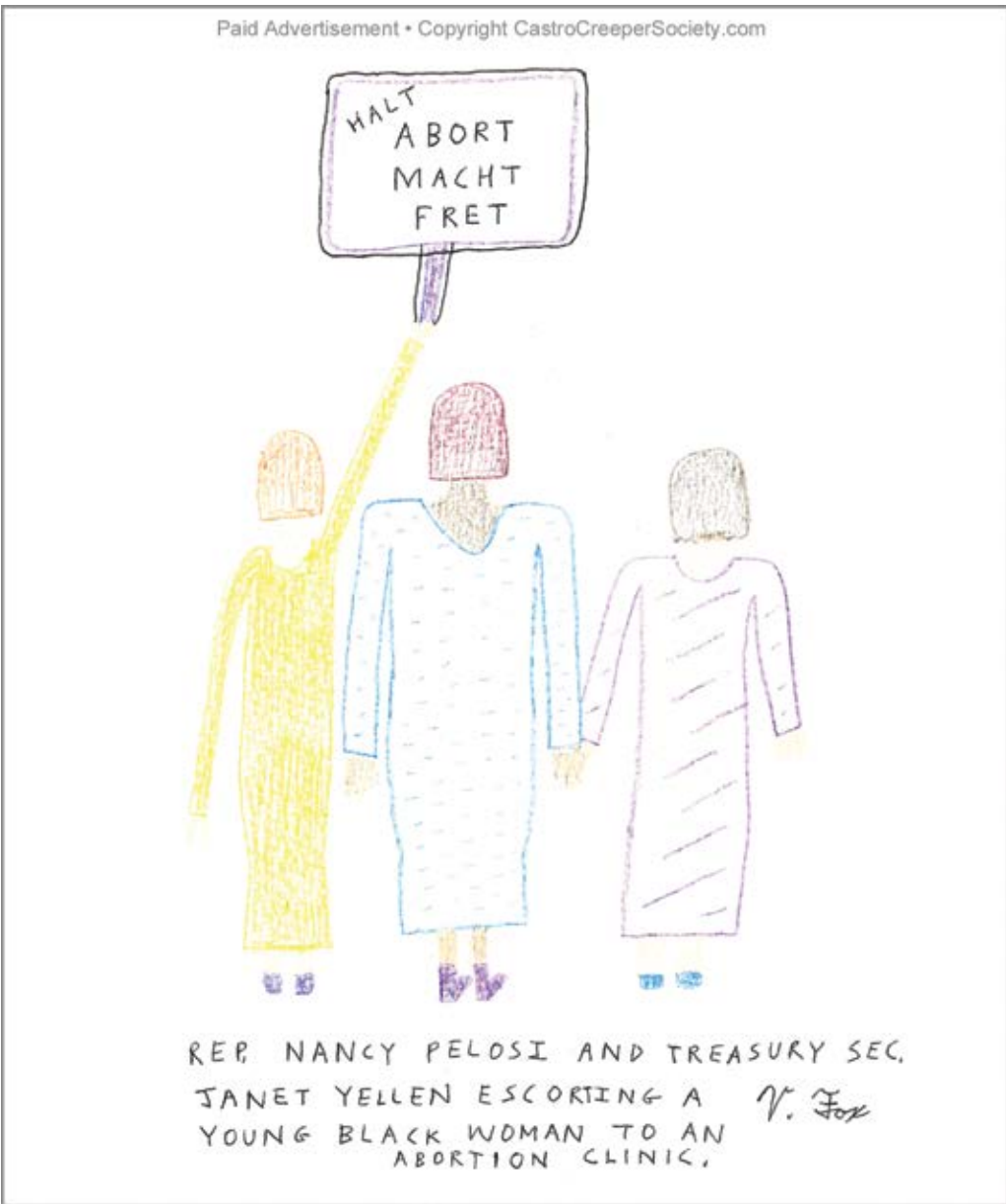


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All details can be found on our website, Facebook, or Meetup.com  
www.PrimeTimersofSacramento.org

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