

outWord

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Catherine O'Hara: An Appreciation by Chris Narloch

I had almost gotten over the death last year of Diane Keaton when word came earlier this year that we had lost another wonderfully wacky woman, the great Catherine O'Hara, known most recently for "Schitt's Creek" and her classic characterization of Moira, the formerly famous soap opera star and matriarch of a down-but-not-out family forced to live in a motel.

Moira's wigs and her wardrobe were almost as funny as O'Hara's line readings, and the actress deservedly won the 2020 Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series Emmy Award for "Schitt's Creek." As with Keaton - and other funny women like Goldie Hawn and Madeline Kahn and Lily Tomlin - O'Hara wasn't afraid to appear ridiculous, and her memorable performances in "Home Alone," "Beetlejuice," and a quartet of Christopher Guest comedies cemented her status as one of the greatest comedic actors to ever grace the silver screen.

O'Hara left us on January 30, 2026, at the age of 71, and her death was later attributed to a pulmonary embolism linked to an underlying cancer diagnosis, bringing to a close a remarkable career that spanned more than five decades.

Born in Toronto in 1954, O'Hara first gained attention as part of the legendary Canadian sketch-comedy series SCTV, where her sharp improvisational skills and ability to create wildly original characters quickly made her a standout performer. From those early comedy roots, she built a career that seamlessly moved between television, film, and voice work, earning numerous honors including two Emmy Awards, a Golden Globe, and several Screen Actors Guild Awards.

For many fans, O'Hara will forever be remembered as the frantic but devoted mother Kate McCallister in the holiday classic "Home Alone." Her determined cross-country scramble to get back to her son became one of the film's most memorable emotional anchors, proving she could balance heartfelt warmth with impeccable comic timing.

O'Hara also delivered an unforgettable performance as Delia Deetz, the avant-garde stepmother in Tim Burton's cult favorite "Beetlejuice," where her flamboyant style and theatrical energy helped make the film a lasting pop-culture staple.

Off screen, colleagues often described O'Hara as generous, collaborative, and endlessly inventive. She is survived by her husband, production designer Bo Welch, and their two sons.



The Great
Catherine O'Hara

Outword Staff

PUBLISHER
Fred Palmer

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE
PUBLISHER
Julie Ebe

ART DIRECTOR/PRODUCTION
Ron Tackitt

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Julie Ebe
Ron Tackitt

EDITOR
editor@outwordmagazine.com

ARTS EDITOR
Chris Narloch

SALES
Fred Palmer

CONTRIBUTING
WRITERS
Chris Allan
Matthew Burlingame
Diana Kienle
Chris Narloch
Judy Saint
Mark Segal
Ron Tackitt

PHOTOGRAPHY
Chris Allan
Ron Tackitt

ON THE COVER
A beach near Brisbane, Australia.
Photo by Chris Allan

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Outword Magazine Inc.

Mailing Address
1026 Florin Road, #344
Sacramento, CA 95831

PHONE: (916) 329-9280
www.outwordmagazine.com
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RedRover Permanently Expands Grant Eligibility to Homeless Shelters for Pet-Friendly Programming

RedRover® is proud to announce the continuation of its Safe Housing Homeless Shelter Program, thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor. This grant helps RedRover permanently expand its Safe Housing pilot program beyond supporting domestic violence and animal shelters, and is another way to ensure that those experiencing homelessness can keep their beloved pets safe by their side.

A study by Randall Singer, Lynette Hart, and Lee Zasloff found that 93% of men and 96% of women said that they would not stay at a homeless shelter if pets were not allowed (Singer et al., 1995, Dilemmas Associated with Rehousing Homeless People Who Have Companion Animals).

John Thompson, Deep Roots family shelter executive director, said, "Becoming pet-friendly has changed everything for Deep Roots family shelter. In the winter of 2023, we met a mother and her two children living in a tent in the woods with their dog. When we offered them shelter, they said no, not without our dog. At that moment, our hearts broke because we

understood their choice, but we could not help them the way they needed. Thanks to RedRover, that story now has a different ending. Today, no family has to choose between safety and love. Because of this support, we can say yes to the whole family, and that has brought healing, dignity, and hope to the very core of our mission."

The program offers Safe Housing grants of up to \$60,000 for U.S. homeless shelters to start a pet-friendly program. The funds can be used for building, renovations, and pet care supplies, with limited funds available for veterinary care, transportation, and more.

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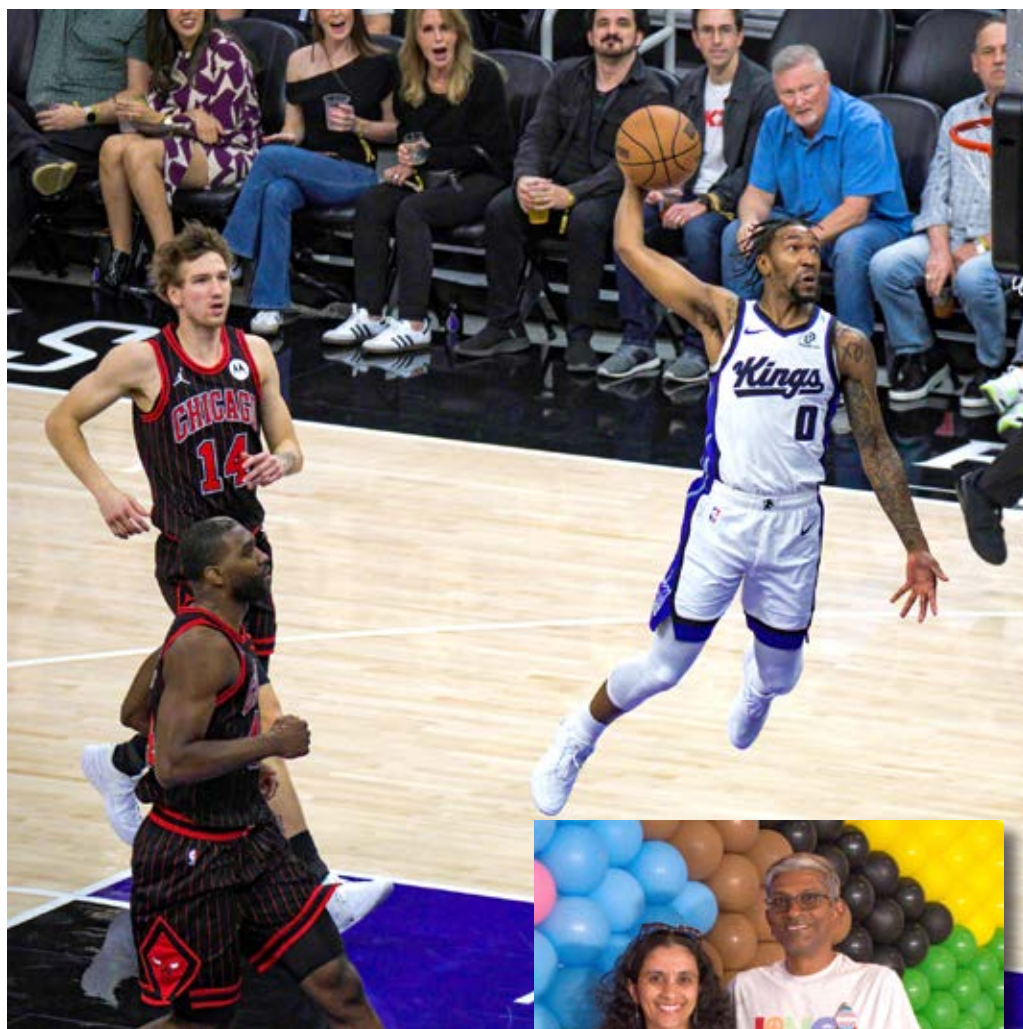
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Kings Host Bulls for Pride Night

words and photos by Chris Allan



The Sacramento Kings hosted the Chicago Bulls for Pride Night on Sunday, March 8. The atmosphere at the Golden 1 Center was festive from the start, with massive rainbow balloon installations and photo displays featuring queer icons like NBA trailblazer Jason Collins. Arena programming included queer anthems like Lady Gaga's "Born This Way," while the team's mascot, Slamson, wore rainbow-striped stockings. The Team Store offered a special-edition Pride sweatshirt and the Purple Promise initiative recognized two local girls' basketball coaches. Both the Kings and the Bulls have struggled to find consistency throughout the current season, but ultimately the Kings capitalized on the home-court energy to secure a 126 - 110 victory over the Bulls.



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Brisvegas, Baby!

words and photos by Chris Allan

Around the turn of the millennium, Brisbane was the neglected stepchild of Australian cities, its nightlife deader than a dingo's dinner. It took a saucy Aussie—likely queer and certainly sharp-witted—to spot the irony. With a wink and a nod, they christened the city “Brisvegas,” a nickname that was equal parts punchline and pipe dream.

Since then, Brisbane's grown up. It's the continent's third-largest city, with a population twice that of Sacramento. Though founded in 1824 as a penal colony, its splashy modern skyline barely hints at its humble beginnings.

We stayed at the elegant Royal on the Park, across from the City Botanic Gardens and walking distance to trendy gastropubs, the promenade, and free Cityloop bus. With regional fares starting at just \$0.50, the buses, trains and ferries make exploring this subtropical city without a car a breeze. Plus, Brisbane is a quick train ride to the Sunshine and Gold Coasts, home to some of Australia's sunniest, golddest beaches.

While it is true that no other location in Australia can compete with Sydney for its over-the-top queer Mardi Gras, we popped into Brizzie during its annual Melt festival. Running throughout October and November (spring down under), the event featured a huge array of performances and exhibits, and

was headlined by none other than Broadway diva Bernadette Peters. We stopped into the free Museum of Brisbane to catch “Shimmer,” a gorgeous and poignant series of costumed portraits created by Gerwyn Davies with various trans and gender-diverse youth.

And I reckon we were the only tourists to catch “Oh, Am I?” – a comedy show at the intimate PIP Theatre in the Milton District. We sat with a packed house listening to Lily Mitchell and Zoe Oh Gee, two very funny Millennial lesbians share life stories of living life with ADHD, crushes on Helen Hunt, and a dodgy reference to bestiality with a wombat. (Note that Australia has got heaps of marsupials, with up to 300 different varieties).

Beyond the festival, Brisbane offers LGBTQIA+ travelers two neighborhoods to pub and club crawl. We hopped a bus to the West End, home to the diverse, inclusive area around Boundary Street. Bent Books

had already closed, but Come to Daddy was open for business. A friendly, low-key club that features heavy metal music, mermen art and small-stage drag shows, CTD also has a solid cocktail list and yummy poutine. “It's a younger area,” noted the bartender, sporting an all-black kit and a spiky studded bracelet. “That's the nicest thing you've ever said,” quipped a local (older) patron. The enclave also features street murals and other queer hangouts, and like the rest of Australasia, has a huge number of Asian food choices.

The nightlife scene, however, is to be found in and around Fortitude Valley. About 15 minutes north of the CBD (Central Business District) it features the historically important Wickham Hotel, a popular drag venue at the gay-owned Sportsman Hotel, and the gigantic Beat Megaclub, which offers six different dance floors.

While the queer scene might not be your number one reason for visiting this Southern Queensland city, consider the wonderful Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary. It's the oldest and largest koala sanctuary in the world and is accessible via a cross-city bus. Plan to spend half a day here watching snoozing koalas in open-air eucalyptus enclosures. The Sanctuary has had good luck breeding this

vulnerable species and they are absolutely adorable. The complex also has a free-range, five-acre marsupial habitat that includes kangaroos and wallabies up-close (and feedable), while other paddocks include the ever-elusive Tasmanian Devil, short-beaked echidnas and northern brown bandicoots.

The other big highlight for us was a day trip to Moreton Island at the Tangalooma Resort. The original penal colony started on the island, and for \$100 you can take a short cruise to Moreton to enjoy resort amenities, and opportunities for touring the island, snorkeling around deliberately sunken ships, and more. The beaches and islands are spectacular, offering weather more stable than the south and far less humidity than tropical Cairns to the north.

So if you're contemplating the 17-hour trip to this part of the world (we broke it up in Honolulu) consider adding Brisbane to your East Coast itinerary. Once you're here, the international airport's got scores of flights all over the country, the major cities in New Zealand, and other international destinations.

It might not be the Strip, but as the Aussies like to say, Brisvegas is still a ripper of a time.

Photo courtesy of Megabeat



Photo courtesy of Megabeat





Tampa Bay Shines by the Tampa Bay LGBT Chamber

While California has long been a beacon for LGBTQ+ culture on the US west coast, Tampa Bay shines as Florida's very own west coast. It has emerged as a sun soaked counterpart where queer creativity, community, and coastal living thrive just as brightly. From St. Pete's vibrant LGBTQ+ districts to Tampa's booming arts and nightlife scenes, the region offers travelers a familiar spirit of inclusivity wrapped in a distinctly Gulf Coast vibe. It's a cross country connection that feels unexpected yet is instantly welcoming.



One of the fastest growing regions in Florida, Tampa Bay encompasses 3 urban areas, each with a very distinct personality that is reflected in their respective LGBTQ+ communities: Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota.

Tampa

Tampa, with its riverfront paths, cultural attractions, and year-round events, extends an irresistible invitation for you to come to play. You can spend the day at a theme park, explore museums and galleries, or experience hands-on attractions that are sure to keep you entertained.

Ybor City, Tampa's iconic historic district, has long been the heartbeat of the city's LGBTQ+ community. Once a juggernaut for cigar manufacturing companies, it has evolved into a district with the charm and cachet of New Orleans' French Quarter, and is home to exceptional dining, lively dance venues, and inviting gathering spots that shine both day and night.

It also provides the perfect backdrop for Pride of Tampa (March 28, 2026) and a host of other large scale festivals, that cement the district's reputation as a vibrant hub of culture and celebration.

St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg – affectionately known as St. Pete, or simply “The Burg” to locals – is one of Florida's premier destinations for fun, sun, beaches, culture, art, and incredible food. For LGBTQ+ residents and visitors alike, St. Pete offers a laid back coastal vibe with endless ways to explore, unwind, and connect with community. What truly sets this corner of Florida apart is the remarkable diversity within its LGBTQ+ population. Long known as a haven for lesbian retirees, the city is now home to a growing mix of gay men, transgender residents, and an energetic younger nonbinary crowd, creating a community as vibrant and varied as the city itself.

The communities surrounding St. Pete add even more color to the region's LGBTQ+ landscape. Gulfport, Clearwater, Dunedin, and Treasure Island all offer tight knit, welcoming scenes with plenty of queer culture to explore.

The city serves as host to not one, but 2 pride festivals.

St. Pete Pride (typically the last weekend in June) welcomed over 350K visitors in 2025 and is considered the largest pride festival in the southeast. The partnership between the organizers and the City of St. Petersburg has become a model for producing an event with such significant economic impact.

Winter Pride St. Pete – a week long celebration held each February – just wrapped its second year, and it's remarkable how quickly it has grown. The festival now features events that spotlight the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community, from dance parties and elegant galas to vibrant street festivals. It all culminates in a delightfully quirky homemade race car derby where drag queens take center stage as the star racers. This year also introduced a stunning new feature: a rainbow colored laser installation that swept across the Grand Central District, casting a vibrant canopy of light as a symbol of unity. The display offered a powerful, joyful reminder of the LGBTQ+ community's resilience and the pride that defines St. Pete.

Sarasota

A quick and scenic drive over the Sunshine Skyway Bridge brings you to Sarasota, another Gulf Coast gem worth exploring. While the city may lean red at the polls, its social atmosphere is remarkably progressive and welcoming. Sarasota's Pride festival, held each October, supports the LGBTQ+ community on the southern end of the region and adds yet another vibrant celebration to Tampa Bay's broader queer landscape.

To learn more, visit the Tampa Bay LGBT Chamber, visit www.tampabaylgbtchamber.org or follow us on Instagram and LinkedIn.

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Rainbow Capital: Where Washington, DC's Gay Scene Comes Alive

by Patrick Algyer (he/him)
Executive Director, Equality Chamber

Washington, DC isn't just the seat of American power — it's a city where queer culture thrives in plain sight and after dark alike. From historic neighborhoods that helped shape LGBTQ+ rights to nightlife that ranges from chic cocktail lounges to packed dance floors, the District's gay scene is as layered as the city itself.



photo by Dima Gilmour for Capital Pride

At the heart of it all is Dupont Circle, long considered the spiritual home of DC's LGBTQ+ community. By day, locals sip iced lattes on shaded patios, browse independent bookstores, and wander leafy streets lined with classic row homes. By night, the neighborhood transforms — music hums through open doors, laughter fills the sidewalks, and the energy of the community spills into the streets.

Just a few blocks away, Number Nine remains a favorite starting point for a night out, known for its rooftop views, stylish crowd, and expertly poured cocktails. For those craving something louder and looser, Green Lantern delivers unapologetic dance-floor energy — sweaty, joyful, and famously welcoming. Meanwhile Nellie's Sports Bar keeps things relaxed with drag brunch, rooftop gatherings, and big screens for game days.

But DC's LGBTQ+ nightlife isn't confined to one neighborhood. The U Street Corridor blends queer-friendly bars, live music venues, and late-night dining into a vibrant district that reflects the city's diversity and creativity. It's this mix — history, culture, and nightlife layered together — that gives Washington its unique rhythm.

What truly sets DC apart, though, is how seamlessly queer life fits into the everyday fabric of the city. Same-sex couples picnic on the National Mall, Pride flags fly year-round in café windows, and community gatherings happen everywhere from art galleries to neighborhood parks.

Supporting that inclusive ecosystem is the Equality Chamber of Commerce DC Metro Area, which champions LGBTQ-owned and allied businesses across the region. Their business directory is an invaluable resource for travelers looking to support queer-friendly establishments — from restaurants and boutiques to service providers and entertainment venues. Exploring the city through the Chamber's directory not only helps visitors discover hidden gems, but also ensures travel dollars strengthen the local LGBTQ+ business community.

For visitors planning a stay, a stylish option in the center of the action is the Moxy Washington, DC Downtown, offering a special discounted rate for travelers through this booking link:

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1772745669523&key=CORP&app=resvlink>

With its playful design, rooftop bar, and walkable location near Dupont Circle and downtown nightlife, the Moxy makes an ideal home base for exploring DC's LGBTQ+ scene.

The city's energy reaches its peak during Pride. At the center of Washington's celebrations is the Capital Pride Alliance, which produces the National Capital Region's annual LGBTQ+ Pride events. While the organization is widely recognized for producing the iconic Capital Pride Parade, Festival, and Concert each June, its work extends far beyond a single month. Through its Pride365 initiatives, Capital Pride Alliance drives year-round programming that advances visibility, education, advocacy, and equity — ensuring Pride is not just a moment, but a movement.

June 12-21, 2026, Washington will host one of the most anticipated Pride celebrations in the country, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to the city. Expect massive parades, vibrant festivals, rooftop parties, cultural programming, and community gatherings across multiple neighborhoods. For travelers, it's a chance to experience the District at its most colorful and connected.

Washington, DC offers something rare: a queer scene that feels vibrant without being overwhelming, historic without feeling stuck in the past, and welcoming without trying too hard. You can spend the morning touring museums, the afternoon exploring LGBTQ-owned businesses, and the evening dancing with new friends under city lights.

Come for the monuments. Stay for the community. And don't be surprised if DC steals a piece of your heart — and your weekend plans — along the way.



Where You Are the Majority: Why Provincetown, MA Belongs on Every LGBTQ+ Traveler's Bucket List

by Rachael Brister

There is a moment that happens to nearly every LGBTQ+ traveler the first time they set foot in Provincetown, Massachusetts. It arrives quietly – maybe while strolling down Commercial Street on a sun-drenched August afternoon, or sipping a cocktail on a harbor-facing patio, or simply watching the foot traffic drift by. The moment is this: you realize, with a jolt of something close to disbelief, that you are not the minority here. You are not scanning the room. You are not editing yourself. You are not performing a careful, practiced version of yourself. In Provincetown, you are simply you – and so is everyone around you.

That feeling cannot be fully described. It has to be experienced. And that is precisely why Provincetown, Massachusetts – located at the very tip of Cape Cod, three hours from Boston and a world away from ordinary – should be on every LGBTQ+ person's travel bucket list.

A Place Unlike Any Other

Provincetown is not a gay neighborhood. It is not a queer-friendly resort enclave carved out of a larger city. It is something far rarer and more extraordinary: an entire town – its restaurants, its beaches, its shops, its culture, its very identity has been shaped, sustained, and celebrated by the LGBTQ+ community for decades. No other destination in the United States comes close to what Provincetown is.

The town's connection to LGBTQ+ life stretches back to the 1970s and earlier, when artists, activists, and queer people discovered that the remote beauty of Cape Cod's outermost tip offered something genuinely rare: freedom. What began as a refuge became a community. That community became a culture. Today, Provincetown is recognized as one of the most welcoming and authentically queer destinations on the planet – not just because it promotes itself that way, but because its residents, business owners, and visitors have built it that way, year after year, decade after decade.

Commercial Street: The Beating Heart of Ptown

If Provincetown has a backbone, it is Commercial Street – a narrow, mile-and-a-half stretch of road that runs along the harbor and serves as the social, commercial, and theatrical center of town. Walking it is an experience unto itself.

On any given summer afternoon, Commercial Street is alive with drag artists greeting guests outside brunch spots, couples strolling hand in hand without hesitation, lesbians, gay men, non-binary people, and LGBTQ+ elders - the full spectrum of queer community all sharing the same sidewalk, reveling in the unique queer joy only Provincetown can offer. The street is lined with independent shops, art galleries, guesthouses, bars, and restaurants where the menus often feature entrees with a side of people-watching.

What makes Commercial Street truly unique is its social physics. In most American cities, LGBTQ+ visibility in public space often requires some level of vigilance – an awareness of one's surroundings, a "reading of the room." On Commercial Street, that vigilance disappears. There is no room to read. The room is yours. For many visitors, especially those who have never experienced anything like it, this is quietly life-changing.

Art, Culture, and a Legacy of Creativity

Provincetown holds the distinction of being the oldest continuous art colony in the United States. Since the early 20th century, artists have been drawn to the extraordinary quality of its light – the way the Atlantic wraps around the peninsula on three sides, creating a luminosity that painters have chased for generations.

That creative legacy lives on in the town's remarkable concentration of galleries, studios, and performance venues. The Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM), founded in 1914, remains a vital arts institution, hosting exhibitions that span traditional Cape Cod landscapes and cutting-edge contemporary work. Independent galleries are all over town, showcasing everything from photography and sculpture to painting and printmaking. Many of the artists showing their work are LGBTQ+.

Beyond visual art, Provincetown has a thriving performing arts scene, anchored by the historic Provincetown Theater and a myriad of cabaret and performance spaces where drag, comedy, and live music expertly blur the line between entertainment and art form.

The Events That Define the Calendar

Provincetown's event calendar is one of the most robust and community-specific in LGBTQ+ travel, with each week or weekend drawing a different facet of the community, giving the town a kaleidoscopic quality throughout the year. Each summer kicks off with Provincetown Pride, the first weekend of June – more intimate than the urban Pride parades and festivals in major cities, but no less fabulous. It is Pride at a human scale, in a town that practices it year-round.

By July, Bear Week arrives, drawing thousands of bears, cubs, otters, and their admirers from across the country and around the world for a week of pool parties, dances, themed events, and community as warm as the summer weather. It is one of the largest Bear gatherings in the world. Then comes Carnival Week in August. Built around a theme that changes each year, Carnival's signature event is a parade down Commercial Street that is part spectacle, part performance art, part block party, and entirely unforgettable. The costumes are extraordinary, the energy is electric, and the sense of collective joy lingers with visitors long after they've returned home.

But perhaps the best-kept secret on the calendar is Holly Folly, the only LGBTQ+ holiday festival in the country. Every weekend in December, Holly Folly fills Ptown with cabaret performances, holiday shopping, Inn Strolls, Bar Crawls, queer holiday cheer, and reveals a quieter, more personal side of Provincetown. With the summer crowds gone, the town's guesthouses, restaurants, and performance spaces feel like a living room you've been invited into. For many who attend, it becomes their favorite time of the year in Provincetown.

Go. Just Go.

There are places in the world that LGBTQ+ travelers visit because they are welcoming. And then there is Provincetown – a place that does not merely welcome queer people, but exists because of them, for them, and with them in a way that is unlike anywhere else on earth.

The feeling you get walking down Commercial Street – that profound, wonderful, and unmatched sensation of belonging completely – is not something you can manufacture or approximate. It is specific to this place, at the tip of Cape Cod, in this town that has spent decades becoming exactly what it is.

Every LGBTQ+ person deserves to feel it at least once. Put Provincetown on your list. Then go. You will understand the moment you get there.

For travel planning, event calendars, accommodations, and a Provincetown LGBTQ+ and allied business directory, visit ptown.org.



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Sunburst Project's Lovin' Bubbles Returns for a Sparkling Third Year

Jacob Bradley-Rozve, CNE (He/Him)
Chief Executive Officer

On February 27, Sunburst Projects hosted its 3rd Annual Lovin' Bubbles Champagne Tasting, welcoming a sold-out crowd to the beautiful estate of TJ Bruce for an evening of celebration, community, and generosity. The event brought together supporters, friends, and champagne enthusiasts to raise funds for the life-changing client services provided by Sunburst Projects.



Guests were greeted with a welcoming glass of champagne and invited to mingle while enjoying an elegant grazing table filled with delicious cheeses and savory nibbles. The relaxed and festive atmosphere set the tone for an evening designed to delight the senses.

In partnership with Total Wine & More, Sunburst Projects curated a unique blind tasting experience featuring six carefully selected Champagnes. Each bottle of Champagne was paired with a complementary savory or sweet bite, allowing guests to explore the flavors and aromas of each selection without knowing the label behind the glass. Tasting stations were spread throughout the home, encouraging guests to move about the estate, compare notes, and discover new favorites.

Throughout the evening, the sound of live music filled the space, creating a warm and sophisticated ambiance. Pianist Michael Shugert and guitarists Clark Smith and Dan Polastre provided beautiful musical accompaniment as guests sampled Champagnes and connected with fellow supporters.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of attendees and sponsors, the evening raised nearly \$10,000 to support Sunburst Projects' vital client services. These funds will directly help individuals and families in our community who are impacted by HIV, ensuring they have access to compassionate care, essential resources, and supportive programs.

Sunburst Projects also extends sincere thanks to the event's generous sponsors, whose support helped make the evening possible: Badlands / The Depot / Roscoe's, Outword Magazine, Supervisor Patrick Kennedy, and Bear & Crown.

Now in its third year, Lovin' Bubbles continues to grow as a beloved annual tradition—bringing together community, music, and a shared commitment to making a meaningful difference.

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The Magic of a Houseboat Trip at Shasta Lake

The first thing you notice when arriving at Shasta Lake is the sense of space. The air feels a little cleaner, the sky a little wider, and the mountains that wrap around the water seem to quietly welcome you in.

Stepping aboard a houseboat is a special moment. There's a mix of curiosity and anticipation as everyone explores the rooms, the kitchen, the bedrooms, and of course the upper deck—the place that will quickly become the favorite spot on the boat. Once the engines start and the marina slowly fades behind you, the adventure truly begins.

The water of Shasta Lake stretches in every direction, cruising across the lake feels peaceful and free at the same time. The steady hum of the boat and the gentle movement of the water create a rhythm that instantly slows everything down. Suddenly it feels like the stress of everyday life quietly disappears somewhere behind the wake.

Finding the perfect cove is part of the fun. There are countless quiet spots tucked between rocky shorelines and tall trees where the water becomes calm and private. Once anchored, the lake becomes your backyard. Some people dive straight into the cool, refreshing water, while others sit on the swim platform with their feet in the lake, soaking in the sunshine.

Mornings on a houseboat are surprisingly peaceful. The lake is usually calm and glassy, reflecting the surrounding mountains like a mirror. The smell of coffee drifts through the air as the first person wakes up and steps onto the deck. You might see a few fishing boats quietly moving across the water or hear the distant call of birds echoing off the cliffs. It's the kind of morning that feels simple and perfect.

The day unfolds naturally, without any real schedule. Some people paddle along the shoreline exploring little coves, others relax on floaties drifting slowly in the water, and the more adventurous take-out jet skis or a pontoon to explore deeper into the lake's winding arms.

Afternoons tend to bring a bit more energy. From the top deck of the houseboat, the view is incredibly endless blue water surrounded by rolling hills and forests. It's easy to lose track of time when every direction looks like a postcard.

As the sun begins to lower in the sky, the lake changes its mood again. The light softens and the water turns golden. Dinner on the houseboat becomes a relaxed gathering where everyone shares stories about the day.

Sunset at Shasta Lake is something people remember long after the trip ends. The sky slowly fills with shades of orange, pink, and purple, reflecting across the water in a quiet



The Titan

show of color. It's the kind of moment where conversations pause for a minute and everyone just watches.

When night falls, the lake becomes calm and still. Far away from city lights, the stars appear brighter than usual. Sitting on the deck under a sky full of stars, it's easy to feel completely disconnected from the busy world. The cool evening air and quiet surroundings create a sense of calm that's hard to find anywhere else.

After a couple of days living on the water, something shifts. Time seems to slow down, and simple moments become the highlights—morning coffee on the deck, swimming in a quiet cove, watching the sunset with friends, or just listening to the gentle movement of the lake.

Eventually, the houseboat heads back toward the marina, but the feeling of the trip lingers. A few days on a houseboat at Shasta Lake isn't just a getaway, it's a chance to reconnect with nature, with friends and family, and with the simple joy of being out on the water. It's the kind of experience that people talk about for years, and the reason many find themselves returning to the lake again and again. houseboats.com

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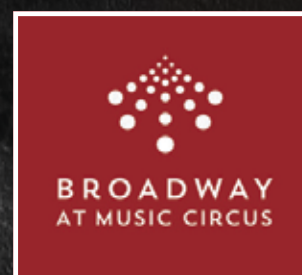


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Calaveras County Provides a Refreshing Escape

by Martin Huberty, Executive Director at Calaveras Visitors Bureau & Film Commission

Nestled in the heart of the Sierra Nevada foothills, Calaveras County offers something increasingly rare in today's travel landscape: authenticity. With its Gold Rush towns, rolling vineyards, towering sequoias, and welcoming small-town charm, Calaveras is not just a beautiful destination it is a place where visitors can truly exhale. For LGBTQ travelers seeking a blend of natural wonder, culture, and community connection, Calaveras County provides a refreshing and inclusive escape.



New Melones Fog Parrots Ferry

Calaveras County is perhaps best known for its legendary frog-jumping tale made famous by Mark Twain, who first heard the story in the historic mining town of Angels Camp. Today, that same playful spirit lives on in the county's festivals, art galleries, and lively main streets. The annual Jumping Frog Jubilee and year-round events bring together visitors from all walks of life in an atmosphere that is joyful, creative, and unmistakably welcoming.

For LGBTQ travelers, safety and comfort are key when choosing a destination. Calaveras County's tourism community, local businesses, and civic organizations increasingly embrace diversity and inclusion as core values. In towns like Murphys, you'll find boutique shops, wine tasting rooms, and locally owned restaurants where hospitality feels personal and genuine. The region's thriving wine scene rivals more crowded destinations, yet maintains a relaxed, unpretentious vibe that makes everyone feel at home. Share a tasting flight at a family-owned winery or enjoy live music under the stars with our summertime concert series.

Nature lovers will find Calaveras County especially inspiring. The awe-inspiring giants at Calaveras Big Trees State Park offer a profound reminder of resilience and strength. Walking among ancient sequoias that have stood for over a thousand years can be both grounding and empowering. Beyond the Big Trees, visitors can explore hiking trails, kayaking on New Melones Lake, skiing in winter, or simply taking scenic drives along Highway 4 and Highway 49. The region's four distinct seasons make it a year-round destination.

Calaveras County also provides space, literal and figurative, for connection. Unlike crowded urban destinations, here travelers can slow down and engage meaningfully with the landscape and with one another. Romantic cabins tucked into pine forests, charming bed-and-breakfasts in historic homes, and inns create intimate settings ideal for anniversaries, honeymoons, or spontaneous weekend getaways.

Importantly, rural destinations like Calaveras are evolving. Community leaders, tourism advocates, and local organizations increasingly recognize that welcoming LGBTQ visitors is not just good ethics, it's good business. Calaveras County is also perfectly positioned for easy access while still feeling worlds away. Located within a few hours' drive of the Bay Area and Sacramento, it provides an ideal escape from city life without requiring complicated travel plans. That accessibility makes it especially attractive for couples and friend groups seeking a quick but meaningful retreat.

Perhaps most importantly, Calaveras County offers a sense of discovery. It's a destination of shared experiences: sipping wine as the sun sets behind oak-dotted hills, laughing together at a frog-jumping contest, hiking beneath cathedral-like trees, or gathering around a firepit beneath a sky thick with stars. It is about creating memories in a setting that feels sincere and grounded.

In a world where travel can sometimes feel transactional, Calaveras County stands apart as a destination rooted in story, nature, and community. For LGBTQ travelers Calaveras offers a welcoming foothold in the Sierra - a place to celebrate, connect, and simply be.



Spring Into a Sacramento Staycation

If you're looking for a reason to stay close to home this spring and summer, Sacramento is delivering one of its most exciting seasons yet. With major events on the calendar, favorite teams returning and long sunny days perfect for getting outdoors, there's never been a better time to plan a Sacramento staycation.

March brings a milestone moment for the capital city as Sacramento hosts the NCAA Women's Basketball Regionals at Golden 1 Center, March 27-30, 2026. Eight elite teams will compete in the Sweet Sixteen and Elite Eight rounds right in the heart of downtown, each vying for a spot in the 2026 Women's Final Four. Expect high-energy matchups and an electric atmosphere inside the arena and around town. With restaurants, bars and hotels just steps away, it's the perfect opportunity to turn game day into a full weekend experience. Start with dinner in DOCO, catch the action courtside and toast the night at a nearby bar.

Just weeks later, Sacramento welcomes one of the biggest events in global women's rugby. The 2026 Pacific Four Series kicks off at Heart Health Park on Saturday, April 11, bringing four of the world's top women's rugby nations to California's capital. Fans can experience an unforgettable double-header as Team USA takes on New Zealand's legendary Black Ferns, followed by Canada versus Australia. It's a rare chance to see an international sporting event up close, no passport required.

The excitement doesn't stop there. Spring also marks the return of fan-favorite local teams. The Sacramento River Cats are back at Sutter Health Park, and new this season is their "Festival of Baseball," a summer-long lineup of themed nights, special promotions and entertainment. The Athletics continue play in West Sacramento, giving baseball fans the rare opportunity to experience MLB baseball close to home. Meanwhile, Sacramento Republic FC kicks off another exciting season, bringing nonstop action and passionate crowds to Heart Health Park.



photo by Francisco Chavira

Beyond the packed sports schedule, spring and summer offer even more ways to enjoy the city. With more than 270 days of sunshine each year, it's the perfect time to get outside and take advantage of everything the region has to offer. Take a bike ride along the American River Parkway, one of the most scenic trails in the region. Spend an afternoon paddleboarding or kayaking on Lake Natoma. Stroll through Midtown's tree-lined streets to discover local boutiques, colorful murals and some of the city's best coffee shops and restaurants.

For those with little ones, Sacramento offers endless ways to turn a simple weekend into an adventure. Step back in time at Old Sacramento Waterfront, where cobblestone streets, river views and engaging museums bring Gold Rush history to life. Keep the curiosity going at the SMUD Museum of Science and Curiosity or the Sacramento Children's Museum, where hands-on exhibits entertain for hours. Then head to William Land Park for a full day of outdoor fun. Pick up lunch from a nearby restaurant for a picnic under the trees before exploring the Sacramento Zoo, letting imaginations run wild at Fairytale Town or enjoying classic rides at Funderland Amusement Park.

Spring and summer also bring patio season into full swing. Whether it's drinks on a rooftop overlooking downtown or dinner al fresco at a neighborhood favorite, Sacramento offers no shortage of places to enjoy a meal in the open air.

This season, you don't have to travel far for unforgettable experiences. Whether you're cheering courtside, catching a baseball game, exploring the river or enjoying dinner outdoors, Sacramento offers countless ways to make the most of spring and summer, all right in your own backyard.

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words and photos
by Chris Allan

Sacramento's Capitol Mall was transformed into a glittering sea of green, purple, gold and more on the last day of February for the City of Trees Mardi Gras festival. Thousands of revelers descended on the Mall to celebrate the largest Mardi Gras event in California. The fifth annual production featured a vibrant afternoon festival and colorful 90-minute parade that rolled from the Capitol steps to Old Sacramento. Proudly co-sponsored by Outword, the celebration was full of community spirit, blending the soulful traditions of New Orleans with lively Brazilian samba and Sacramento's own queer-friendly flair. Between the brass bands, 1,300 performers, and "Burner" art cars, the good times were rollin' and the beads were flyin'.



Out & About



A taste of Yountville Returns This Spring

Napa Valley has no shortage of unforgettable food and wine experiences, but one of its most charming annual gatherings returns this spring in one of wine country's most beautiful settings. The 2026 Taste of Yountville takes place Sunday, April 26, in the lush garden setting at Chandon, bringing together some of the region's celebrated wineries and culinary talent for an afternoon of tasting and conversation.



Hosted by the Yountville Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Chandon, the event offers guests the chance to sample wines from a dozen acclaimed Yountville wineries and tasting rooms. Participating producers include Bell Wines, Cornerstone Cellars, Goosecross Cellars, Handwritten Wines, Hill Family Estate, Hoopes Vineyard, Hope & Grace, Jessup Cellars, Priest Ranch, Silver Trident, Stewart Cellars and, of course, Chandon.

Each pour will be complemented by farm-to-table bites prepared by the Chandon culinary team, along with elegant cheese and charcuterie boards from Graze Provisions. The setting—Chandon's beautifully landscaped gardens—adds a relaxed yet refined backdrop that feels perfectly suited to an afternoon devoted to wine country pleasures.

According to Yountville Chamber President and CEO Natalie Leighton, the event is designed to celebrate both the wines and the sense of community that defines the village. Guests can sip, stroll the gardens, and connect with fellow wine lovers while discovering the stories behind the vintages.

Tickets are limited to just 300 guests, helping keep the event intimate. General admission includes tastings from participating wineries and curated food pairings, while VIP tickets add access to a special "Meet the Makers" reception featuring additional library wines.

Often called the culinary heart of Napa Valley, Yountville is an easy day trip from Sacramento and a destination worth lingering in, with its walkable streets, acclaimed restaurants, boutique hotels, galleries and tasting rooms.

For tickets and details, visit yountville.com/tasteofyountville.



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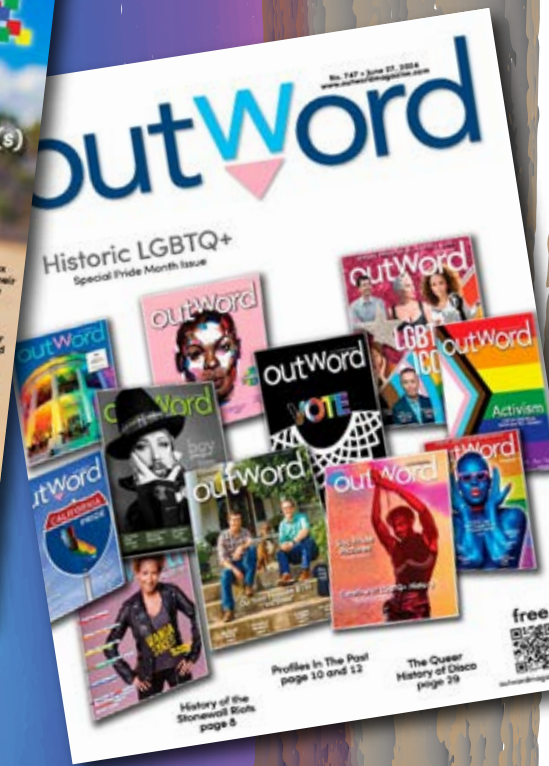
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Three Cheers to the Academy *by Ron Tackitt*

I was not expecting that. Episode eight of the new Star Trek spinoff, “Starfleet Academy,” is powerful in a subtle but intelligent way. It gently reminds us to pause and recognize the simple relationships and everyday experiences in our lives—and how meaningful they are, or at least should be.

I didn’t think I was going to like this new Star Trek series. It seemed like a blatant attempt to bring in a younger demographic to a very old, time-honored franchise. Having grown up on Star Trek—and loving nearly every episode except for “Catspaw”—I wasn’t eager to watch them introduce a bunch of fresh young cadets. Even though the entire premise of Star Trek has always been inclusive, I figured they might somehow manage to mess up a good thing.

I was wrong.

From what I gather, there’s quite a bit of flak online about the series, but personally, I’m really enjoying it. The production values are out of this world, so to speak. The things they can show now—images and worlds the original series could only dream of—are incredible, though admittedly what we’ve come to expect in the age of digital effects.

The young cast members are all solid choices. It’s a good mix of backgrounds without feeling like it’s trying too hard to check boxes. I also had doubts about casting Holly Hunter as the lead captain figure. Boy, was I wrong. She’s wonderful, and I love how they’ve developed her character. It’s also worth noting that the show has introduced the first openly gay male Klingon in the franchise’s 60-year history—and done so with a light, effortless touch.

“Starfleet Academy” is available on Paramount+, rolling out week by week. I must admit, I’m not looking forward to the fact that there are only two episodes left this season. Gone are the days of 24-episode runs. Still, if you’re a Star Trek fan at all, sit down with an open mind and see what they’ve done with the franchise. Whoever’s steering this ship is doing an excellent job.

“All My Sons” Hits the Bullseye at Berkeley Rep *by Chris Narloch*

Even with gas prices skyrocketing, I urge you to make the drive over to Berkeley to see a classic play from 1947 come to magnificent life as if it had been written today.



Wanda De Jesus and Jimmy Smith costar in “All My Sons.”

I had never seen (or read) Arthur Miller’s “All My Sons” -- which is not as famous as the playwright’s Pulitzer Prize-winning “Death of a Salesman” -- but I was bowled over by how relevant and powerful the work still is, over 75 years after it was written.

At Berkeley Rep, real-life partners Jimmy Smits and Wanda De Jesus play husband and wife, in the story of a family in turmoil after a fateful decision from the husband’s past comes back to haunt them. (The play’s plot is based on a real incident in Ohio involving the Wright Aeronautical Corporation, which knowingly shipped defective aircraft engines to the military, resulting in 21 pilot deaths in the early 1940s.)

The play is about moral compromise and the American Dream, themes that never grow musty, and I was very happy that the director chose to give his production a classic, period-appropriate look and feel that includes a beautifully detailed and realistic-looking set by Anna Louizos. The costume design by Toni-Leslie James and the lighting by Russell H. Champa are also superb.

I need to add that the casting of Smits and De Jesus is no gimmick, and the couple prove that they are as magnetic on stage as they are on screen. In fact, the entire cast hits a home run, and the production’s taut direction by Berkeley Rep’s Associate Artistic Director David Mendizábal is also first-rate.

“All My Sons” continues through March 29, 2026. For tickets, visit www.berkeleyrep.org



Out & About with Matthew Burlingame

Even in challenging times, our community finds strength in coming together to celebrate creativity, culture and connection. From lively festivals and art markets to neighborhood gatherings and live performances, these events remind us that joy is still possible and our resilience remains strong. Taking time to support local artists, businesses and organizations helps keep our cultural spirit thriving. So make sure to explore something new and celebrate our vibrant and strong community.

Mar. 12

Stitch together some inspiration at the Quilt, Craft & Sewing Festival, March 12-14 at Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd. Northern California's largest creative showcase features sewing, quilting, needle-art and craft vendors, plus free classes, demos, make-and-takes and daily door prizes. Whether you're a seasoned maker or curious beginner, there's plenty to see, try and create. Quiltcraftsew.com

Mar. 14

Dig into history, culture and community during Community Day on Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sacramento History Museum, 101 I St. Celebrate the "Black Soil: Our Roots Run Deep" exhibit with cooking demos, music, arts and crafts, and meet local farmers. Museum admission is half-price for the day. Sachistorymuseum.org

Don't toss it... fix it! The Oak Park Fix-it Café returns Saturday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 3818 Stockton Blvd. Neighbors gather to repair bikes, clothes, electronics, knives and computers while sharing skills and community spirit. It's always free, always welcoming and a great way to keep useful items out of the landfill. Oak-park-fix-it-cafe@mailchimp.com

Shop local and discover handmade treasures at the FUMC Second Saturdays Art & Craft Fair on Saturday, March 14, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 2100 J St. Browse unique creations from local artisans and makers while enjoying a lively morning of community and creativity. Entrance to the fair is on the west side of the church on 21st St.

Mar. 17

Mix, mingle and make magic at the Sacramento Rainbow Chamber of Commerce's March Networking Mixer on Tuesday, March 17, from 6-7:30 p.m. at The Healing Touch Chiropractic, 1210 G St. Hosted in the heart of downtown, this lively gathering offers light bites, drinks and plenty of connection. Members attend free; non-members are \$10. Come network, collaborate and celebrate Sacramento's vibrant LGBTQ business community. Rainbowchamber.net

Raise a pint and wear your green when Fox & Goose Public House celebrates St. Patrick's Day on Tuesday, March 17, at 1001 R St. Marking 51 years of Irish cheer, the festivities feature traditional fare from 3-10 p.m., Guinness on tap and live music from 4-10 p.m., including bagpipes, Celtic tunes and a lively sing-along. Sláinte! Foxandgoose.com

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Mar. 18

"Fat Ham," the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by James Ijames, arrives in Sacramento March 18-April 19 at Capital Stage, 2215 J St. This uproarious, modern take on Hamlet follows Juicy, a queer Southern college student, as he confronts family, identity and vengeance with humor and heart in a compelling theatrical event. Capstage.org

Mar. 21

The Sacramento Goddess Festival returns March 21-22 at Sacramento Scottish Rite, 6151 H St., celebrating community, creativity and spiritual connection. The two-day gathering features workshops and speakers on wellness and empowerment, live music and dance, yoga and sound baths, sacred ceremonies, a moon dance party, and an artisan marketplace showcasing local creators and healers. Sacramentogoddessfestival.com



Step back into Gold Rush-era California during Demonstration Day on Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Sutter's Fort State Historic Park, 2701 L St. Watch blacksmiths at work, see cooking and carpentry demonstrations, spin wool into yarn and learn about overland migration through interactive presentations and hands-on activities. Parks.ca.gov

Tradition, family and resilience take center stage when "Fiddler on the Roof" opens Sierra Repertory Theatre's 2026 season, running through Mar. 29 at the East Sonora Theatre, 13891 Mono Way in Sonora. The beloved musical follows Tevye and his tight-knit village as they navigate love, change and community amid shifting times. Sierrarep.org



British folk-rock favorites Mumford & Sons bring their Prizefighter Tour to Shoreline Amphitheatre in Mountain View on Thursday, Oct. 8 at 7:30 p.m. Known for anthems like "I Will Wait" and "Little Lion Man," the Grammy-winning trio delivers their signature banjo-driven sound live. The tour also partners with PLUS1 to support Children in Conflict through the War Child Alliance. Mumfordandsons.com

Mar. 24

Queer suspense takes center stage Tuesday, March 24, at 6 p.m. when Lavender Library, 1414 21st St., hosts a lively launch for Brianna Heath's neon-lit mystery Robbie McNeil's Hit List. Heath joins bestselling crime writer Michelle Chouinard for sharp talk, queer joy, and killer storytelling—plus exclusive swag. Lavenderlibrary.org

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



March Movie News The Oscars Arrive!

by Chris Narloch

The Academy Awards are almost here, and we will know whether Oscar voters prefer vampires or revolutionaries on Sunday night, March 15.



Isaac Hernandez and Jessica Chastain costar in "Dreams."

Hosted by Conan O'Brien for the second year in a row, the 98th Academy Awards will be broadcast live from the Dolby Theater in Hollywood, beginning at 4 p.m. PT on ABC. Unlike some years, this Oscars promises to be suspenseful, since so many of the "major" categories are up for grabs.

As I noted above, the Best Picture winner will likely be either "Sinners" or "One Battle After Another," with "Hamnet" a longshot dark horse. The only real "done deal" in the top categories is the great Jessie Buckley for Best Actress, while Best Actor is a tight race between Michael B. Jordan and Timothee Chalamet. (I'm rooting for Jordan.)

I'm also rooting for Amy Madigan - who blew my mind in "Weapons" with her unbelievably bizarre performance as crazy Aunt Gladys - to take Best Supporting Actress. If Madigan loses, the winner will undoubtedly be Teyana Taylor, who was sensational in "One Battle..."

Best Supporting Actor is even more of a horse race. I would love to see Delroy Lindo or Stellan Skarsgard take it, because both Sean Penn and Benicio del Toro have won Oscars before, but Jacob Elordi was also superb in "Frankenstein."

As for Best Director, Paul Thomas Anderson, who (shockingly) has never won an Oscar of his own, deserves to finally win for "One Battle..." but Ryan Coogler could sneak in and take the award, for "Sinners."

Speaking of the Oscars, Academy Award-winning actress Jessica Chastain ("The Eyes of Tammy Faye"), who was born and raised in Sacramento, continues to astound with another fearless performance in her latest film, "Dreams."

Chastain could have coasted after her well-deserved Oscar win. Instead, she has doubled down with this twisted tale of an obsessive romance between a wealthy, American socialite (Chastain) and a sexy, younger man (played by Isaac Hernandez), an undocumented Mexican dancer who dreams of a ballet career in the U.S.

The plot of "Dreams" has echoes of "Fatal Attraction," but the new film is much deeper, and a drama rather than a thriller. The movie is also very explicit, with intense sex scenes between Chastain and Hernandez, who is a highly acclaimed, professional ballet dancer in real life.

"Dreams" includes scenes of deportation that are incredibly timely, but the film is more about the shifting power dynamics of an ill-fated love affair.

"Dreams" opened at Sacramento's Tower Theatre on March 6th.

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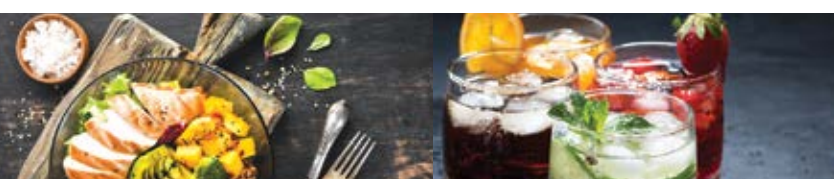
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The Drink: The “Per My Last Email” Old Fashioned

(Serves one person who already answered this question)

Ingredients

- 2 oz bourbon or rye whiskey
- ½ oz simple syrup (or one sugar cube)
- 2-3 dashes Angostura bitters
- Orange peel
- Large ice cube
- Optional single cherry on a toothpick

Directions

Add the bitters and sugar to a glass and stir.

Drop in a large ice cube and pour the whiskey over it.

Stir slowly until chilled.

Express the orange peel over the drink and place it in the glass.

Sip.

Consider drafting your next response tomorrow.

Why This Works

The Old Fashioned doesn't over-explain.

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Pair With:

- Closing your laptop at a reasonable hour
- Choosing peace instead of replying all
- Letting someone else “circle back” tomorrow
- The quiet knowledge that you were right the first time

Because sometimes the most professional thing you can do after work...

is pour a drink and log off.

Clocked out.

Poured up.

See you next issue.



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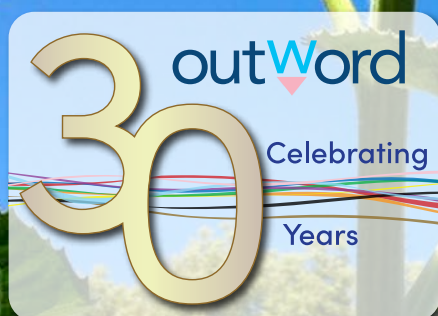
Today, that role matters more than ever. LGBTQ+ media is essential, especially as our community continues to face hostility and erasure in very real ways. That's why we've launched a subscription and reader-supported donor program, designed to help ensure Outword remains a reliable source of information, visibility, and community connection.

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,
The Outword Team

For more information please email us or give us a call:
fred@outwordmagazine.com
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<https://outwordmagazine.com/rainbow-fund/>

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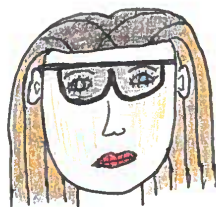


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