

Special Issue!

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From the \$800s

Attorney General Bonta Opposes Trump Administration's Attempt to Weaken Discrimination Protections for LGBTQ+

resource Attorney General Bonta press release

California Attorney General Rob Bonta has joined a coalition of 19 attorneys general in opposing proposed changes by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that critics say would weaken protections for LGBTQ+ Americans in federally funded programs.

The proposal centers on revisions to HHS's Assurance of Compliance form, which organizations must sign when applying for federal funding. The updated language would remove "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" from definitions tied to federal sex discrimination protections under Title IX and the Affordable Care Act's Section 1557.

Attorney General Bonta called the proposal "another bad-faith attack" on transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming people, arguing that the changes would undermine longstanding

civil rights protections while creating confusion for organizations receiving federal funds.

The proposed revisions are tied to President Donald Trump's executive order, "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government," which directs federal agencies to recognize only two genders based on biological sex.

In a formal comment letter submitted this week, Bonta and the coalition argue that HHS exceeded its legal authority and failed to properly inform the public during the

review process. The coalition also criticized HHS for attempting to pressure funding recipients by suggesting they could face liability under the False Claims Act if they fail to comply.

The attorneys general further contend that the proposal would create unnecessary compliance burdens, misrepresent how federal nondiscrimination laws apply, and potentially violate both the Administrative Procedure Act and the U.S. Constitution.

The coalition is urging the Office of Management and Budget to reject the proposed changes.

Federal Appellate Court Just Blocked Trump's Military Ban

resource National Center for LGBTQ Rights

A federal appeals court has upheld a preliminary injunction blocking the Trump administration from discharging transgender service members, marking a major legal victory in *Talbott v. USA*. The ruling allows an earlier order from District Judge Ana Reyes to take effect while the case moves forward.

Judge Reyes previously criticized the policy in sharp language, writing that the ban was "soaked with animus and dripping with pretext," and argued it likely violates the Constitution while undermining national security.

LGBTQ+ legal advocates praised the decision. National Center for LGBTQ Rights Legal Director Shannon Minter said the ruling stops what he called an "unprecedented" effort to remove qualified

troops who have served honorably around the world. GLAD Law Senior Director Jennifer Levi called the decision a "powerful vindication" of transgender service members' dedication and fitness to serve.

Talbott v. Trump was the first lawsuit filed challenging President Donald Trump's transgender military ban executive order. A hearing on broader protections for transgender service members is scheduled for June 30.

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Sir Ian McKellen Leads “Commonwealth Walk of Shame” Protest in London

resource and photo, Peter Tatchell,
Director of the Peter Tatchell Foundation

Legendary actor and longtime LGBTQ+ activist Ian McKellen took to the streets of London on May 30 to help shine a spotlight on anti-LGBTQ+ laws that still exist across much of the Commonwealth.



The protest, called the “Commonwealth Walk of Shame,” began outside the Nigerian High Commission and continued past several embassies representing countries where homosexuality remains criminalized. Organized by the Peter Tatchell Foundation alongside several international LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, the march called attention to laws that campaigners say continue to put millions of queer people at risk.

Currently, 29 Commonwealth nations still criminalize LGBTQ+ people under laws largely dating back to the British colonial era. In some countries, same-sex relationships can carry life imprisonment – and in places including Uganda, Brunei and parts of northern Nigeria, even the death penalty.

Many participants in the march were LGBTQ+ refugees who had fled persecution in their home countries.

McKellen spoke before the march began, saying, “No one should face prison, violence or death simply for being themselves and loving another person. Yet across most of the Commonwealth, LGBTQ+ people are still treated as criminals.”

He also pointed out the painful irony that many of these laws were originally imposed during Britain’s colonial rule.

The march stopped outside the High Commissions of Nigeria, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad & Tobago, Ghana, Jamaica, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Activists involved in the event also criticized the Commonwealth itself, noting that for decades its leadership has largely avoided publicly addressing LGBTQ+ human rights issues despite the organization’s stated commitment to equality and democracy.

Among the speakers was Deborah Birunji Nabisere of Out and Proud Africa LGBTI, who fled Uganda after facing persecution as a lesbian woman. She spoke about the daily reality many LGBTQ+ people face under these laws – from fears about personal safety to barriers involving employment, housing and healthcare.

Veteran activist Peter Tatchell urged the Commonwealth’s new Secretary-General, Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey of Ghana, to make LGBTQ+ equality a priority moving forward.

For many at the march, the message was simple: human rights cannot be selective, and silence only allows persecution to continue.

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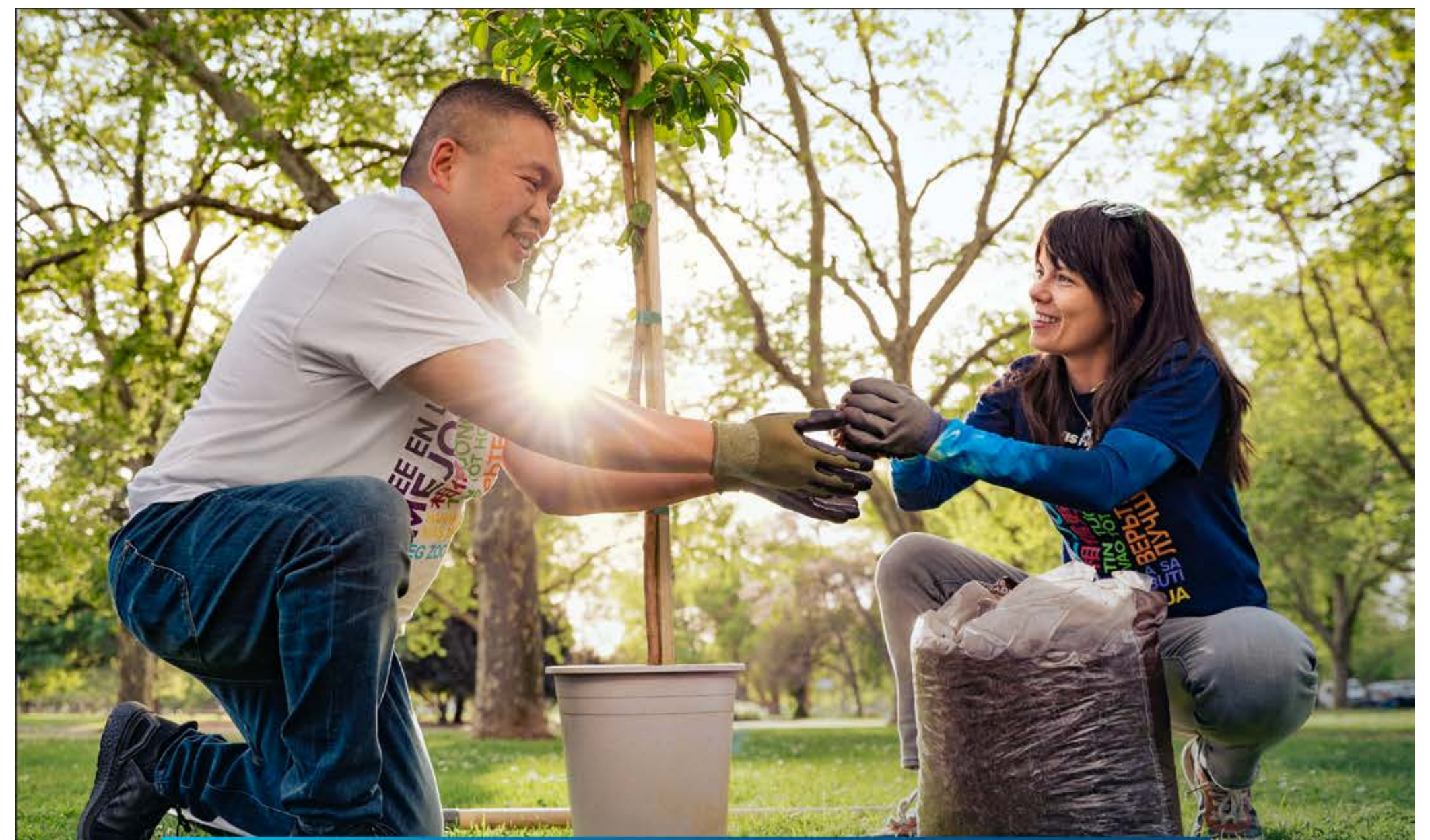
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Pride Means Safety for All

At WEAVE, Pride Month is both a celebration and a call to action. We honor the strength and resilience of LGBTQ+ communities while recognizing the reality that many individuals face disproportionate rates of domestic and sexual violence.

We know that LGBTQ+ individuals experience intimate partner and sexual violence at equal or higher rates than their heterosexual, cisgender peers. Nearly half of transgender individuals report experiencing sexual violence in their lifetimes, and 1 in 3 lesbian women report experiencing severe physical violence by an intimate partner. Survivors often face additional barriers when seeking help, including stigma, discrimination, and a lack of inclusive services. That is why WEAVE's work is grounded in accessibility, equity, and belonging.

WEAVE was founded in 1978, and you may know the agency's legacy acronym, Women Escaping A Violent Environment. In 2018 we began having conversations about the fact that, while the name has a place in our history, it no longer reflects who we serve. We intentionally moved away from the acronym to acknowledge a simple truth: survivors are not defined by one gender or experience. Today, we serve All Relationships, All Genders, All Ages, All People—All the Time.

Last year, 5% of the survivors WEAVE served self-disclosed that they identify with

an identity other than heterosexual/straight. We know that we still have much work to do to ensure that everyone in the LGBTQ+ community knows that WEAVE is a welcoming space to seek safety and healing. WEAVE's mission is to promote safe and healthy relationships and support survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking. Everything we do is guided by our vision: When Everyone Acts, Violence Ends. Ending violence requires a collective commitment to supporting survivors and challenging harmful norms.

Education is key to prevention. Domestic violence is often misunderstood as only physical abuse, but it can take many forms. At WEAVE, we recognize six types of abuse:

- Physical abuse: Causing or threatening bodily harm
- Emotional or psychological abuse: Manipulation and coercive control
- Sexual abuse: Any non-consensual sexual activity within a relationship
- Financial abuse: Controlling access to money, damaging credit and coercive debt
- Technological abuse: Using technology to monitor, stalk or harass
- Spiritual abuse: Misusing beliefs to



control, manipulate or demean

Recognizing these forms of domestic violence is especially important in LGBTQ+ relationships, where harmful stereotypes can cause abuse to be overlooked.

This Pride Month, we reaffirm our commitment to creating a community where everyone feels safe, seen, and supported. Pride is more than celebration—it is about ensuring that every person, regardless of who they are or who they love, has the right to

live free from violence.

If you or someone you know needs support, WEAVE offers a 24/7 Support & Information Line, counseling services, safe housing, legal support, and more for survivors of sexual or domestic violence. Our services are free, confidential, and available to all survivors.

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Finding Presence and Purpose in the World Today

by Ryan A. Cheperka, Ph.D.

Part of the human experience is figuring out who we are, not only on the inside, but in relation to our family, friends, communities, and the world we live in. From birth until death, we are regularly faced with tasks involving who we are. Sometimes we have support, sometimes we don't, and everything we go through along the way will shape us. Figuring out "who we are" can feel like a daunting idea, but in reality, it's the small many moments of daily life that carry us through and help us figure ourselves out. What we need most is the practice of being present, so that we can be fully in our lives and know that we belong.

Quite literally, the only moment we have is now. It is the only time we have a true sense of control, and the good news is that the present moment is always here for us. Most of us get lost in our minds, distracted by worries, emotions, daily life tasks, and technology. We can use a few simple practices to bring our awareness back to the present, any time we remember to try. First, our external senses can be relied upon. Some examples include taking a moment and noticing three things that you can see, such as parts of your environment that you aren't used to looking at (like that corner of the wall, or the places a tree trunk meets the branches), noticing what you can hear (nearby or further away), noticing what you can feel (the texture of your chair, or a breeze on your skin), and noticing any scents or tastes in the moment.



Dr. Ryan Cheperka

We can also use our breath to bring us into the moment. Feeling the sensations of the breath as it moves through the body (air in the nose/mouth, expansion of the belly/ribs), or making a noisier breath (make it sound like the ocean!) can help us harness our breath as a tool to start noticing. Lastly, movement can help us with coming back to the moment. Stretching, wiggling or rotating the joints, and expanding the body in whatever ways we can help get the blood and energy moving, and get us out of our minds. What's the point of being present? Because the more we engage in the actual moment we are in, the more we can make choices in our lives that are meaningful and intentional, and over time the calmer we can feel.

Presence sets us up for engaging in our surroundings in a more purposeful way, such as with community and nature. Regardless of how much we feel it at any time, we are a part of this world, a part of all of the people in it, and a part of nature. We often find our purpose when we venture into the world, spending time in the moment with the living things around us. What I want you to remember, the moment is already here, we just need to access it.

Ryan A. Cheperka, Ph.D. is a licensed psychologist in Sacramento, CA. She is the owner of a private practice, [Snail's Pace Therapy and Wellness](#), and a clinical supervisor at Alliant International University, Gender Health Center, and the LGBT Center. She has been serving the LGBTQ+ community for 20 years and has a passion for liberating and affirming care, as well as a respect of the art of movement and of nature.

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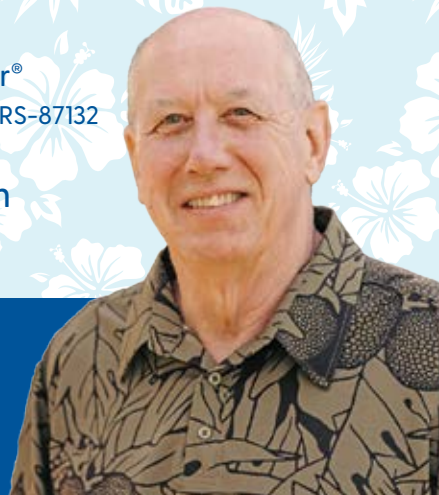


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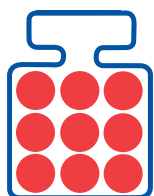
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For many people in our community, Pride is the first time they see themselves reflected in a way that feels whole, joyful, and possible. It can be the moment a young person realizes they are not alone. The moment someone feels safe enough to hold a partner's hand in public. The moment someone stands in a crowd and understands they belong.



David Heitstuman speaking at the Progress Flag raising at City Hall

These moments matter, and do not end with the Pride weekend. The visibility, connection, and joy people experience at Pride often become the first opportunity to find support, services, chosen family, and care that carry them through the other 364 days of the year. It is community care in action!

The elders in our community remind us of what it took to get here. Not long ago, gathering openly required courage. Police raided bars and nightclubs. LGBTQ+ people were banned from teaching and serving in the military. Living authentically often meant sacrificing safety, housing, employment, or family. We must remember that Pride began as a protest against violence and discrimination. It grew into a movement for visibility, equity, and justice. That history matters, especially now.

While we celebrate progress, many LGBTQ+ people feel less safe being out than they did just two years ago. Access to healthcare is shrinking, rights that once felt secure are being challenged, and for many it is becoming harder to find joy in everyday life. Pride reminds us that progress is not inevitable. It is something we build and protect together.

That includes allies, businesses, and institutions. Showing up is not symbolic; it is essential.

Pride also sustains our community in tangible ways. It supports LGBTQ+ artists and performers, creates opportunities for small businesses and vendors, and energizes local bars, restaurants, and gathering spaces. It brings visitors into our city, filling hotels, supporting local media, and strengthening the broader economy. For many years, Pride has also helped sustain year-round services at the Sacramento LGBT Community Center.

But since the pandemic, producing Pride has become increasingly difficult. Many don't know that the Sacramento LGBT Community Center produces Pride as a community program, not a fundraiser, even as costs for safety, permits, sanitation, and infrastructure have nearly tripled and political pressures continue to grow. Across the country, multiple Pride events have been canceled, or organizations have closed, while corporate sponsorships have become scarcer and harder to receive.

Despite these challenges, our commitment remains unchanged. Pride must be accessible to everyone. Each year, thousands of free tickets are distributed to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation.

But sustaining Pride requires all of us. We need you to show up, march with us, attend the festival, bring your friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues, purchase a ticket to the Festival if you are able, and join us visibly in support. If you lead an organization, sponsor the event, become an exhibitor, and bring a contingent to the Pride March!

Because Pride is not just an event. It is something we build together, and for someone coming through those gates for the first time, it may change everything.

We hope you will join us. Help us remind every LGBTQ+ person that they are seen, loved, and never alone.

With gratitude and hope,

David Heitstuman
Chief Executive Officer
Sacramento LGBT Community Center

Sacramento once again made a clear and colorful statement of inclusion as the Pride Progress Flag was raised above Sacramento City Hall during the annual “Sacramento is a Welcoming City for All” celebration. Community leaders, advocates and supporters gathered to mark the beginning of Pride season with a moment that was both symbolic and heartfelt. The event reaffirmed the city’s ongoing commitment to visibility and equality for LGBTQ+ residents and visitors alike.

Photos by Fred Palmer. Thank you to Counselmember Lisa Kaplan, Councilmember Caity Maple and Mayor Pro Tem Eric Guerra for their acknowledgements.



“In the face of an increasingly toxic and hostile environment for the LGBTQIA+ community across the country, raising the Pride flag is not just a symbolic act, it is an essential statement of local values and unwavering support. I unequivocally stand with our LGBTQIA+ community. Silence from leaders can easily be interpreted as complicity or rejection. By raising the Pride flag at Sacramento City Hall, we are making it undeniably clear that our city embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are ensuring that our LGBTQIA+ youth, neighbors, and colleagues see themselves represented, respected, and protected.

“Alongside the Sacramento LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group, I was proud to host the flag raising at City Hall in honor of Pride Month. For me, raising the Pride flag is a statement about who we are as a city and the values we choose to uphold. We cannot be a city for some. We must be a city for all. When the Pride flag flies above City Hall, it sends a clear message that LGBTQ+ residents, employees, and families are seen, valued, and loved. That message matters, especially for those who may feel vulnerable, isolated, or uncertain about whether they are accepted.”

Councilmember Caity Maple (she/her)
City of Sacramento, District 5

History has consistently shown that the arc of justice bends toward equality. Standing up for fundamental human rights, dignity, and acceptance always places us on the right side of history. Sacramento will continue to be a beacon of light, showing that love, acceptance, and community solidarity will always triumph over hate.”



Councilmember Lisa Kaplan



“Sacramento is a welcoming city for all. Raising the Pride Progress Flag above City Hall is not just a symbol, it’s a statement. A statement of unwavering support, understanding, and our continued commitment to making Sacramento a city for everyone. June is a month of celebration, pride, remembrance and resistance which honors the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender movement that continues to defend the progression of human rights. This flag raising comes at a time where the LGBTQ+ community faces continued attacks on visibility, human rights and their ability to live authentically.

We are not only celebrating pride but reaffirming our commitment to stand with our LGBTQ+ residents, workers, youth, and community members.”

Mayor Pro Tem Eric Guerra

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Sierra Donor Services Partners with Mojo's Local Tap & Kitchen

A new partnership between Sierra Donor Services and Mojo's Local Tap & Kitchen is helping bring conversations about organ donation directly to the dining table in downtown Sacramento.

The nonprofit organization recently launched its new "Meals with Meaning" initiative with Mojo's, aimed at raising awareness about the importance of registering as an organ, eye and tissue donor. Informational table tents placed throughout the restaurant and bar make it easy for diners to learn more and sign up for the donor registry while enjoying a meal.

According to Sierra Donor Services, nearly 100,000 people nationwide are currently waiting for a life-saving transplant. Every registered donor has the potential to save up to eight lives through organ donation and improve the lives of up to 75 more through eye and tissue donation. California residents account for roughly 20 percent of those waiting for transplants.

"It's easy to think about: one decision can save someone's life," said Mojo's owner Cristin Prenez. "Coming together as a community to help one another, often when we don't know each other, is what it is all about."

Founded in 2022 by Sacramento locals Cristin and Scott Prenez, Mojo's has built a reputation around community, inclusivity, local craft beer and a dog-friendly atmosphere. The restaurant was even named after the couple's beloved pup. [Website](#).

Founded in 1985, [Sierra Donor Services](#) serves more than 5 million people across Northern California, Nevada and New Mexico, working to save and improve lives through organ, eye and tissue donation.



Happy Pride 2026!

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Truckee Pride Thrives in Year #3

words by Chris Allan, Images by Sonya E.J. Wong

For a small mountain community, Truckee just threw a massive celebration. This tight-knit Nevada County town delivered an astonishing 37 events for just its third annual Pride celebration.

Rather than taking a traditional approach, organizers built something more immersive. “We’re unlike other Prides in that we don’t really do a parade or march, instead we do a week of events all over town,” said co-founder and lead organizer David Mack. This year that week actually stretched from May 28 through June 7.

Their Sierra-sized lineup included:

- Kickoff BBQ: A cross-generational community hangout
- Bike Parade: An adult-flavored sunset ride with costumes, lights, and high-altitude energy
- Rainbow Run: A colorful, family-friendly run
- Queer Prom: A dress-to-impress evening for 18+
- And so much more: Queeraroke, skate night, and “Sip with Pride” wine tasting were just a few of the three dozen-plus gatherings on the calendar.

Driven by a mission to bring joy and connection to local LGBTQ+ residents, Truckee Pride delivered a celebration as big as the mountains surrounding it.



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Bridging the Gap: Creating Gender Affirming Care by Us for Us *by River Wu*

Uncertainty caused by executive orders, closures of programs in hospitals, and the heightened transphobia occurring in everyday life make the future of gender-affirming care (GAC) feel in doubt. GAC isn't just hormone replacement therapy (HRT); it includes access to affirming health spaces where identities are respected and cared for, mental health support, substance/addiction treatment, puberty blockers, voice therapy, resources for social transitioning, and much more.

We, as trans people, understand how life-saving it is to have access to all these services. The Williams Institute found that a majority of GAC providers are cisgender, which can create a wall of separation between these doctors and their patients. There needs to be more ways to support more transgender people to enter this line of work to alleviate the disconnect. Closing this gap will improve outcomes for transgender patients, as transgender and non-binary GAC providers can see themselves in the care they provide.

Research shows that Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) patients are more comfortable with BIPOC doctors compared to white doctors. This ease is created through engaging in higher-quality communication and focusing on patient engagement and their needs. Having the comfort of a shared identity extends to transgender and non-binary patients when their provider is another transgender person. This can be due to transgender providers not asking uncomfortable (and many times blatantly transphobic) questions, better engaging with the patient to meet their healthcare goals, and thoroughly explaining treatment plans. From my own experience, it makes a big difference to have a trans provider when starting GAC. They are more likely to take the time to explain each available path, provide tips and tricks for medication, readily write appropriate referrals, and ease the worries about the process.

As part of a volunteer clinic team, I unfortunately saw a doctor insistently ask unnecessary questions and order tests that cause extreme discomfort and dysphoria. As our team debriefed about it later, I realized that it would take me, as a transgender person advocating for another transgender person, to find resources that would prevent this situation from happening again. This experience, so early in my career, reinforced how meaningful it can be for a transgender patient to have a transgender person on their care team.

There are barriers outside of the clinic and politics that are not often highlighted. These barriers include housing status, navigating insurance approvals/denials, access to a phone, and substance use. Substance use, tobacco use specifically, is a disqualifier for getting access to top and bottom surgery due to smoking inhibiting blood flow, making it harder for the body to heal, and risking complications to the surgery. This barrier can be devastating after putting in the work to find a provider, just to be told you can't access it while smoking. Therefore, having a provider acutely aware of the barriers trans people face when receiving care is important, as they will guide patients through different LGBTQ+ competent resources and how to navigate the different barriers.

At a time where GAC is being limited in every direction—clinics scaling back or shutting down services, providers leaving the practice out of fear, and critical research being defunded—we have to think intentionally about the future of this care and who will be there to provide it. We have to think about closing the gap between transgender people who want to serve the community and the medical system providing GAC. That includes making real investments in the people entering medicine now and creating pathways for transgender people looking to serve our communities through gender-affirming care. This can look like providing more scholarships for the transgender community to pursue higher education, creating mentorship programs between transgender providers and those looking to get into GAC, safe spaces where providers can debrief and share resources, and paid opportunities (like companions, scribes, medical assistants) to start their work in the field.

As we look toward the future of gender-affirming care, we need providers who are equipped to care for every patient with dignity and respect, regardless of identity. We also need to make space for transgender people who feel called to this work. For those of us who want to enter the field of GAC, that path should be protected, supported, and expanded. Because the future of this care depends not only on preserving access, but ensuring the people providing it understand what is at stake and are informed on what affirming care truly means.

River Wu (they/he) is an Asian transmasculine person studying Human Biology at UCLA. They plan to attend medical school to specialize in gender-affirming care. River is currently interning with We Breathe, a program of the California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network, hoping to uplift queer voices, especially those from the TGI (Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, Intersex) community, to emphasize that we are not alone in our struggles and we will stand together in solidarity, no matter the circumstances.

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Sacramento is Serving: A Taste of the City Takes Off at SMF

If you haven't been through Sacramento International Airport lately, prepare to whet your appetite. SMF is nearing the end of a full-scale food and beverage transformation, and the city's most beloved restaurants are leading the way before you even board your flight.

The airport has been rolling out a new generation of concessions drawn almost entirely from the Sacramento dining scene, and the results are something locals and visitors alike can genuinely get excited about. Several spots are already open and drawing lines, with more on the way through the end of summer.

Already Open

The crown jewel of the new program is Nixtaco, the Michelin-recognized Mexican restaurant from chef-owner Patricio Wise that has earned a devoted following for its creative, masa-forward cooking. Finding it inside an airport feels a little like spotting a unicorn and it's worth the early arrival.

BAWK! by Urban Roots brings the acclaimed restaurant's whole-bird approach to fast-casual format, making it easy to grab something genuinely delicious between gates. Urban Roots is a cornerstone of Sacramento's food scene, and the airport outpost delivers on the brand's farm-to-fork ethos without the sit-down wait.

Café Bernardo is a Sacramento

institution and its SMF location offers reliably good coffee, seasonal salads, and scratch-made food that has kept the brand beloved across its multiple city locations for decades. It's the ideal spot for a leisurely pre-flight breakfast or a quick bite that doesn't feel like a compromise.

Maggie, another of Sacramento's celebrated farm-driven restaurants, is serving its thoughtful, locally sourced menu in the terminal. For travelers who know the midtown restaurant, it's a welcome send-off and or those who don't, it's an introduction worth making.

Centro Cocina rounds out the Mexican food offerings with its own distinct style, while Local Flights Brews & Bites gives the airport a proper craft beer anchor with a locally rooted tap list – and this is pre-security – giving the passengers and the people who love them a chance to enjoy California-inspired bites and craft drinks together.

Coming Soon

The additions keep coming through this summer. Temple Coffee, Sacramento's



beloved independent roaster, opens June 13. This is excellent news for anyone whose travel survival depends on a proper cup. Starbucks follows July 1 for the brand loyalists in the crowd.

July 2 brings One Speed Pizza, the East Sacramento neighborhood gem known for

its thin-crust pies and easygoing atmosphere. And closing out the summer, Bambuza Vietnam Kitchen + Bar opens in both Terminal A (July 30) and Terminal B (August 30), bringing an overdue pan-Asian presence to the airport in a region where nearly 20 percent of residents identify as Asian.

Rounding out the new options, Midtown Spirits will replace Cafeteria 15L in Terminal B in October.

Why It Matters


This isn't just a nice upgrade. The new slate of concessions reflects a genuine shift in how SMF approaches its entire dining and beverage program. Airport officials threw out the standard playbook, ditching traditional minimum annual guarantees in favor of a revenue-share model that leveled the playing field for small operators. The result: 47 percent of the new program is made up of small businesses, far exceeding the airport's own ambitious original goal of 30-percent.

The bottom line for travelers is an airport experience that finally feels like Sacramento – diverse, food-obsessed, and proud of what grows and gets made here. Whether you're a local heading out or a visitor just arriving, the food at SMF is now a reason to show up a little early.

For more information, visit sacramento.aero.



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The Heart of Lavender Heights

Every Saturday, the Midtown Farmers Market is a place brimming with an abundance of produce and lively mix of folks from all walks of life, making it a welcoming place for Sacramento's LGBTQ+ community to put down roots.



The Chubby Cupboard at the Midtown Market

Long before the first canopy goes up on a Saturday morning, Lavender Heights is already alive with anticipation. Parking spots fill early. The smell of freshly roasted coffee drifts down the block. Vendors of all backgrounds, many of them LGBTQIA+ small business owners, have poured their identity, heritage, and craft into every item on their tables. They begin arranging their wares with the quiet pride of people who know exactly why they show up every week.

The Midtown Farmers Market, held every Saturday in the heart of Sacramento's iconic Lavender Heights district, is a living, breathing expression of community where spending twenty dollars doubles as a transaction and as an act of solidarity. Crossing items off of your grocery and wish lists becomes a direct investment into our local farmers, artisans and the fruits of their labor.

Consider Chad, of Chad Fabulous Designs, who crafts hand-embroidered towels and handmade teddy bears. Many are fashioned in a Pride flag collection throughout June and represent hours of meticulous, loving labor. Or Leah of Hella Leaf, whose Succulent Bar invites visitors to build their own arrangements while learning the quiet art of nurturing something green. Leah's biggest goal is to educate and help others grow their green thumb. At the market, she does exactly that, one tiny cactus at a time.

The food lining the stalls, shelves and tables have stories to tell as well. The Chubby Cupboard crafts small-batch, air-dried pasta from their Sacramento home kitchen, every strand packaged by hand, every bite a product of love. Edward of Salsa Sazona brings his Chilanga mother Becky's recipes to the table, turning fresh salsas into a love letter to Mexican heritage. Puzz E Gata Jamaica steeps hibiscus flower tea in the traditions of Mexico, guided by the ancestral principle that "nothing is wasted," a philosophy that shows up in everything from their hibiscus butter to their chamoy.

For those drawn to beauty and adornment, the market delivers. Olive of Owlhaired Designs creates jewelry, illustrations, and preserved florals in carefully handcrafted frames made from flowers grown in their own garden. Their art embodies the joy, magic, and solace found in the natural world. Taylore of Lazy Dazy Ceramics throws, trims, fires, and glazes every colorful ceramic piece herself in Sacramento. Bee Zapped Permanent Jewelry welds custom bracelets that last for months, a fitting metaphor for the enduring bonds this community builds.

Anchor & Tree Coffee Roasting brings sustainability and fair-trade sourcing to every cup, proving that good coffee and good ethics aren't mutually exclusive. You can find them at the market and at their Midtown café on 16th Street. Isabel Emilie Gonzales of Radical Wellness offers crystals, tarot deck bags, and healing rituals rooted in intersectional, decolonial practices, a fitting reminder that wellness, like community, looks different for everyone.

Together, these vendors bring vibrancy and depth to the market. Their unique stories, talents, and charm are an invaluable piece of one of Sacramento's most invigorating gathering places, week after week, in a neighborhood that has long been a haven for those who seek to build a safe and supportive community. Shopping at the Midtown Farmers Market is a love language spoken by all patrons, residents, and guests. May we all continue to spread that love.

Visit the Midtown Farmers Market every Saturday, from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., in Lavender Heights. Discover more on Instagram at @midtownfarmersmarket



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Many Local Museums Report Urgent Need for Volunteers

Sacramento area museums are thanking the community for its generous support during this year's Big Day of Giving, but many say financial contributions are only part of what is needed right now. Museums across the region are also reporting an urgent need for volunteers this summer and beyond.

More than \$490,000 was collectively inspired through the 2026 Big Day of Giving campaign benefiting members of Sacramento Area Museums (SAM), part of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation initiative. While that funding helps support exhibits, programs and special events, museum leaders say volunteers remain essential to daily operations.

"Volunteers are the heart and life support of any museum," said Delta Pick Mello, Executive Director of the Sacramento History Museum and former Chair of Sacramento Area Museums. "We appreciate not only those who give financial support, but also those who give us the precious commodity of their time."

An informal survey of nearly 25 SAM member organizations found that 90 percent described volunteers as extremely important to operations, while a combined 90 percent reported a high or extremely high current need for volunteers. Educational programs, special events and visitor services were identified as the areas with the greatest need.

Several local museums are actively recruiting new volunteers.

The [California Museum](#) is seeking volunteers to assist with educational programs, field trips and special events for



Image provided by the California State Railroad Museum, courtesy of Dhon Santos

more than 100,000 annual visitors. No experience is required, and volunteers receive training along with perks such as museum membership and reciprocal admission benefits.

The [California State Railroad Museum](#) is also looking for volunteers to help with docent programs, school activities and railroad operations. Museum officials say there are opportunities available for nearly every interest and schedule.

The volunteer-run Museum of Medical History is seeking help with guided tours, exhibit maintenance, research projects and photography support.

Meanwhile, the Sacramento [Children's Museum](#) continues to host volunteer orientations and welcomes both individuals and groups interested in helping with programs and special events.

The [SMUD Museum of Science and](#)

[Curiosity](#), better known as MOSAC, is also encouraging community members to get involved. Volunteers support hands-on science activities, guest engagement and seasonal programming, with opportunities available for adults and teens.

"As a free museum, we rely on dedicated volunteers to continue our mission of education and preservation," said Sam Mello, Program Manager of the [Museum of Medical History](#). "Without volunteer help, this important work is at risk."

Museum leaders say volunteering offers more than community service hours. Volunteers often gain specialized knowledge, meet people from around the world and become part of a community built around shared interests and local culture.

More information about Sacramento area museums and volunteer opportunities is available at [SacMuseums.org](#).



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Scan for info and tickets: californiarailroad.museum/events/golden-hour-express

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Apply Now for SMUD's Shine Program

Nonprofits across the Sacramento region have an opportunity to turn bright ideas into real community impact as applications officially open for SMUD's annual Shine Awards program.



Designed to help strengthen and revitalize local communities, the Shine program supports projects focused on clean energy, workforce development, affordability, economic growth, and STEM education. Applications are open now through July 31 for eligible nonprofit organizations within SMUD's service area.

Funding awards range from \$5,000 to \$100,000 and are divided into three categories: Spark awards up to \$10,000, Amplifier awards up to \$50,000, and Transformer awards up to \$100,000. The program is highly competitive, with SMUD looking for projects that align with its ambitious Clean Energy Vision goal of eliminating all carbon emissions from its power supply by 2030.

Priority will be given to projects that promote clean energy solutions, support zero-carbon workforce training, improve energy efficiency and affordability in underserved communities, encourage economic development, or provide education opportunities tied to renewable energy and STEM fields.

Last year alone, SMUD awarded more than \$524,000 in Shine funding to 25 local nonprofit organizations whose proposals demonstrated strong collaboration and broad community impact.

To help organizations navigate the application process, SMUD will also host several technical assistance webinars throughout the summer.

In addition to the Shine program, SMUD contributes roughly \$3 million annually in financial support and in-kind services to community organizations throughout the region.

For more information, webinar registration, or to apply, visit SMUD's Shine program page at smud.org/Shine.

Sacramento Region Community Foundation Ensures Legacy of BENT Film Festival Lives On

In recognition of Pride Month, Sacramento Region Community Foundation is now accepting applications for the BENT Film Festival Grant, which supports LGBTQ+ filmmakers and artists in the greater Sacramento region. The deadline to apply for available 2026 grants is June 29. The longest-running LGBTQ+ film festival in Sacramento, the BENT Film Festival celebrated queer stories and fostered activism, inclusion, and cultural expression for nearly 30 years before sunseting in 2023.

"These grants carry forward the BENT Film Festival's legacy by celebrating creativity and visibility, and by uplifting LGBTQ+ artists whose voices need to be heard," said Kerry Wood, CEO of Sacramento Region Community Foundation. "This cause is critically important, especially at a time when support for the arts and LGBTQ+ causes is increasingly at risk."

Through the BENT Film Festival Fund, managed by Sacramento Region Community Foundation, its leaders continue the festival's legacy by empowering the next generation of queer storytellers and artists.

Available BENT Film Festival Grant Details:

- Grants of \$1,500 are available to support creative projects that spotlight LGBTQ+ experiences, history, or perspectives – especially those reaching youth, art students, or LGBTQ+ gallery audiences.
- One or two grants will be awarded in 2026.
- Eligible applicants must identify as LGBTQ+, live in El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, or Yuba counties, and be working on a visible film or art project that uplifts the queer community.
- For complete details and to apply for the 2026 BENT Film Festival grants, please visit <http://www.sacregcf.org/nonprofits>.

Past grant recipients include local artists A La Mode, Cecilia Romo, Alice Covello, and Daniel Sellers-Norman, whose powerful projects celebrate the diverse experiences and creative voices of the LGBTQ+ community.

One of last year's recipients, Alice Covello, used the funding to support *Digging for Freedom*, a heartfelt, comedic short film she co-wrote with her father. The film follows a young girl, her eccentric grandfather, and a reluctant schoolteacher on a treasure hunt that uncovers hidden LGBTQ+ history in Sacramento.

"I'm incredibly honored to receive this support," Covello shared. "As a queer filmmaker who was born and raised in Sacramento, this project holds deep personal significance."

Opening a charitable fund like the leaders of the BENT Film Festival have done is a meaningful way to keep an organization or collaboration present for years to come. Community members, businesses, and/or organizations interested in helping to strengthen the nonprofit sector by establishing similar grants in partnership with the Sacramento Region Community Foundation are encouraged to visit www.sacregcf.org.

About Sacramento Region Community Foundation

Since 1983, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation has awarded over \$275 million in grants and scholarships on behalf of local people, families, and businesses – and through its flagship program to grow charitable giving in the capital area, Big Day of Giving. The center of philanthropy in the capital area, the Foundation's mission is to lead, serve, and inspire enduring philanthropy for a just and vibrant Sacramento region. Learn more at www.sacregcf.org.

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Film Festival Fever Hits NorCal

by Chris Narloch

Whether you are French or queer (or both) – or simply love movies – Outword has you covered with reporting on two fabulous film festivals happening this month in Northern California.

Frameline50

The queer media nonprofit Frameline recently announced the full lineup for the 50th San Francisco International LGBTQ+ Film Festival (Frameline50), the largest, longest running, and most widely recognized queer film exhibition in the world. Frameline50's 11 days of programming feature over 140 films from 35 countries.

Half a century of queer films is beyond historic, and if you have yet to attend Frameline, this is the year to remedy that situation. Frameline50, the first LGBTQ+ film festival in the world to reach the five-decade milestone, will open on June 17 at The Castro Theatre with D'Arcy Drollinger's "Lady Champagne."

Other San Francisco-centric titles include Byrdie O'Connor's "Barbara Forever," the Festival's Centerpiece film, and Jennifer M. Kroot's "Hunky Jesus," the Pride Kickoff Film. All three films reiterate San Francisco's enduring legacy of fostering queer cinema and art.

Building on the Festival's annual Juneteenth programming, Frameline will present Emmy-winning actor Colman Domingo with The Variety Creative Conscience Award on Friday, June 19, followed by a conversation with Domingo and Variety's Jazz Tangcay.

On Saturday, June 20, the Festival will screen Alexandria Stapleton's "The Brittney Griner Story," a Sundance standout that chronicles WNBA star and Olympian Brittney Griner's harrowing time as an international political prisoner and the pay inequities in professional women's sports that led to it.

Other highlights include Gregg Araki's irreverent sex comedy "I Want Your Sex," starring Olivia Wilde and Cooper Hoffman; Hayley Kiyoko's directorial debut, "Girls Like Girls"; Adrian Chiarella's highly-acclaimed queer horror film, "Leviticus"; and the West Coast Premiere of Xiaodan He's slow-burn sapphic romance "Montreal, My Beautiful," starring San Francisco's own Joan Chen.

Finally, Frameline50 will conclude with the highly anticipated horror flick, "Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma," starring Gillian Anderson and Hannah Einbinder and directed by Jane Schoenbrun ("I Saw the TV Glow," "We're All Going to the World's Fair"). Before the film screens at the historic Castro Theatre, on June 27, Schoenbrun will receive the Frameline Queer Lens Award for Filmmaking.

Frameline50 will run June 17-27 in venues in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland, including The Castro Theatre, the Roxie Theater, the Vogue Theatre, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), and The New Parkway Theater. Tickets for all programs are now on sale at frameline.org.



SFFF 25

Closer to home, the Sacramento French Film Festival (SFFF) has reached its own remarkable milestone – a quarter century of bringing the finest in Gallic cinema to California's capital.

Returning to Sacramento's historic Tower Theatre this June 26-28, SFFF 25 will present 9 movies (plus a collection of short films) over one weekend, including two queer features this year.

"Enzo" follows the titular hero, who defies his bourgeois family's expectations by starting a masonry apprenticeship, a path far removed from the prestigious life they had envisioned for him.

In their chic villa in the sun-drenched South of France, tensions simmer as relentless questions and pressures weigh on Enzo's future and dreams.

When he meets Vlad on a construction site, the handsome and charismatic Ukrainian colleague shakes up Enzo's world and opens the door to unexpected romantic possibilities.

"The Little Sister" centers on Fatima (Nadia Melliti), a young lesbian descendent of Algerian immigrants living in Paris, who struggles to balance her religious upbringing and the expectations of her Muslim family with the sexual freedom of student life in the city.

"The Little Sister" features a vivid depiction of the vibrant lesbian culture in Paris and a superb performance by Ms. Melliti that won her a 2025 Best Actress Award at the Cannes Film Festival.

For more information about this year's programming and to purchase tickets, please visit <https://sacramentofrenchfilmfestival.org>

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Out & About

photos courtesy of Davis Pride, photographer Maddy Ryen

Davis Pride returned to Civic Center Park on June 6 for its 12th annual celebration, bringing together LGBTQ+ community members, allies, local organizations and families for a day of visibility, advocacy and fun. From the morning Run/Walk for Equality to the evening PrideFest, the event showcased the welcoming spirit that has made Davis Pride one of the region's favorite community celebrations. While official attendance figures have not yet been released, early reports and social media posts suggest a lively turnout and another successful year for Yolo County's largest LGBTQ+ event. [Davis Pride website.](#)





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OFFICIAL PRIDE GUIDE

SATURDAY JUNE 13
FESTIVAL 1 - 7 PM

SUNDAY JUNE 14
PRIDE MARCH 11 AM - 2 PM
FESTIVAL 12-6 PM



Our weekend will feature captivating entertainment from local talents in the Sacramento region and the greater LGBTQ+ community!

Featured performers include Bentley Robles & ZEE MACHINE, appearing Saturday the 13th, alongside RuPaul's Drag Race favorites Detox and Willam, performing Sunday the 14th. Stay tuned for an unforgettable experience packed with music, drag, and high-energy local performances all weekend long!

BENTLEY ROBLES & ZEE MACHINE



Tickets at SacramentoPride.org

SAC PRIDE JUNE 13-14 2026 SACRAMENTO CAPITOL MALL

OFFICIAL PRIDE GUIDE

SATURDAY JUNE 13
FESTIVAL 1 - 7 PM

SUNDAY JUNE 14
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SAC PRIDE MARCH
JUNE 14, 2026
11AM-2PM

At a time when lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people are under attack in their schools, at work, in their doctors' offices, and even at drag shows across the country, you can show up for the LGBTQ+ community by marching with us on Sunday, June 14 at 11:00 a.m. from Southside Park to the Capitol. The route begins on T & 8th Streets, turns onto 10th St, passing an announcer "grandstand" on R & 10th. The route concludes at Capitol Mall with vehicles turning right onto N St and marchers turning left on Capitol Mall.

We invite you as an individual, to march with the Sacramento LGBT Community Center's contingent, displaying the power & strength of community support. Visit sacramentopride.org/march for more information.

Funds raised at Sac Pride events directly support year-round programming provided by the Sacramento LGBT Community Center.



Republic for All! *words and photos by Chris Allan*

With soccer fever sweeping North America on the eve of the FIFA World Cup, Sacramento Republic FC hosted Monterey Bay FC for its annual Pride Night on Saturday, June 6.

A cool, breezy evening at Heart Health Park greeted fans, along with a giant rainbow balloon heart, rainbow fan giveaway, and special Pride merchandise.

"I was heartened by how many fans I saw with Pride gear!" remarked De Calvert.

Before the match, a mini Pride parade entered the stadium, with community groups including Cosumnes River College's Pride Center and Frontrunners. Lady Gaga's "Born This Way" set the tone before kickoff, and a skydiver descended, trailing a massive rainbow Pride flag, and landing dramatically on center pitch.

Next, the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus delivered a stirring national anthem, before returning at halftime with a sassy "Rainbow Rodeo" (rhinestones and all). Student Hansen Wang also received a special Pride scholarship for his queer-affirming work at Cosumnes River College.



Hansen Wang



Sac Gay Mens Chorus



Sac Republic FC goalie Danny Vitiello

The match itself was a rollercoaster. Republic FC absorbed a huge blow 30 minutes in when a red card ejection left them a player down. MB's Riley Bidois capitalized, scoring in the second half, but Republic refused to fold. A handball in the box earned them a penalty kick, which Ryan Spaulding converted to level the match.

With the final score tied 1-1, the game went to a penalty shootout – a feature of the Prinx Tires USL Cup format that caught many fans off guard, but delivered pure drama. Sacramento's kickers converted four of five attempts, with goalkeeper Danny Vitiello making a crucial save to deny MB's Ilijah Paul, sealing a 5-4 shootout victory. The win moved them closer to the tournament's knockout round as happy fans streamed out to the triumphant strains of Diana Ross's "I'm Coming Out."

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Strange Journey: The Story of Rocky Horror

If you're a Rocky Horror fan, this new documentary is an absolute must-see. "Strange Journey: The Story of Rocky Horror" is a joyful and wild ride through the tale of the cultural juggernaut that is "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."



From its humble origins as a London fringe theater play, the documentary tracks the movie's meteoric rise, fall and resurrection, to become the biggest cult film of all time. With intimate access to its creator Richard O'Brien and other major players such as Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon and Lou Adler, the documentary explores what makes the play and film so singular: including groundbreaking and transgressive themes, its iconic performances, and the epic songs that took over popular culture. The cult phenomenon that sprung around it is unparalleled, and it created not only the midnight screenings which continue to this day, but also a haven for those who ever felt different or marginalized – with particular significance for the queer community. In our current political climate, Rocky Horror's message of inclusion and self-expression holds more resonance than ever. As Dr. Frank-N-Furter says, "Don't Dream It, Be It." Linus O'Brien's dynamite, 89-minute documentary is now available to stream via Apple TV, Fandango, and Prime Video.

Pattie Gonia Faces Trademark Battle with Patagonia

One of the LGBTQ+ community's most recognizable environmental activists is now locked in a legal dispute with outdoor clothing giant Patagonia – and the situation has many supporters feeling more than a little conflicted.

Pattie Gonia, the drag and advocacy persona created by environmentalist Wyn Wiley, has built a massive following by blending queer visibility, climate activism and a love of the outdoors into a colorful and inspiring brand. But earlier this year, Patagonia filed a trademark lawsuit claiming the name "Pattie Gonia" is too similar to its own. According to reports, Patagonia argues it must defend its trademark and prevent consumer confusion, particularly because Pattie Gonia merchandise and branding have expanded commercially over the last several years. The company has stated that the lawsuit is not about stopping LGBTQ+ advocacy or drag performance, and it is reportedly seeking only symbolic financial damages. Still, many fans of Pattie Gonia see the lawsuit as disappointing, especially given Patagonia's longtime reputation as a progressive and environmentally conscious company. Pattie Gonia has publicly argued that the name is parody, activism and performance art rolled into one – not an attempt to impersonate the clothing brand. The dispute has quickly become a flashpoint online, with many LGBTQ+ activists questioning where the line exists between corporate trademark protection and the realities of grassroots queer organizing. Pattie Gonia has also warned that prolonged legal costs could threaten the fundraising and merchandise sales that help support advocacy work and community projects. Despite the tension, both sides continue to position themselves as champions of environmental causes. Whether the case ultimately settles quietly or heads deeper into court, the story has already sparked a broader conversation about identity, activism and who gets to claim space in the outdoors movement. For more information and to lend support for Pattie, go to [her website](#).



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BTS "Arirang" Live

The historic journey continues. Following the record-breaking opening of the "Arirang" world tour, pop royalty BTS returns to the iconic Busan Asiad Main Stadium for a monumental homecoming, broadcast live to cinemas around the world.



This marks their poignant return to the very venue where they shared their final full-group performance before enlistment in 3 years and 8 months. Spanning 34 cities with 85 shows, this tour reaches a new pinnacle as the most extensive tour ever by a Korean artist.

Most notably, the performance falls on Saturday, June 13 – BTS's debut anniversary – adding a profound layer of symbolism as the group celebrates their legacy and their future. Titled "Arirang," the tour accompanies BTS's fifth full-length album, weaving together the group's identity through honest introspection and the universal themes of longing and deep love.

With its signature spectacular 360-degree in-the-round stage design, the show delivers an immersive experience that places you at the heart of the celebration. Share the electrifying energy of BTS's stage on the big screen, in cinemas worldwide, on a special day, June 13, from Busan.

Check local listings for showtimes and tickets.

Calling All Rhinestone Cowboys & Cowgirls Saddle Up for SGMC's 2026 Pride Concerts

by Chris Narloch

Throw on a cowboy hat, boots and buckles – or a pair of Wranglers – and head to The Sofia this June for one of four fabulous Pride shows featuring Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus (SGMC), where country classics meet queer joy. If you're feeling extra adventurous, you might want to dig deep and rock a pair of Daisy Dukes.



Saddle up for a rhinestone-studded, toe-tappin' Pride Month hoedown celebrating resilience, love, and pride, with big harmonies. A little bird told me we can expect a marvelous medley of John Denver, Willie Nelson, and Dolly Parton, plus hot hits by Beyonce ("Texas Hold 'Em"), Lil Nas X ("Old Town Road"), and many more.

Whether you're a cowboy, cowgirl, or cowthey, SGMC's all-ages "Rhinestone Cowboy" concerts are your ticket to the queerest hoedown in town, this June 19 – 21 at The Sofia in midtown Sacramento. For showtimes and to purchase tickets, please visit www.sacgaymenchorus.com

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“Devout: Losing My Faith to Find Myself” by David Archuleta

book review by Terri Schlichenmeyer

So just make up your mind already. The decision is very much in your control – or, at least that’s how it’s supposed to be. It’ll be your future, your path, and seizing it may not just be necessary, but mandatory. It’s your life, and no one can live it for you. As in the new memoir “Devout” by David Archuleta, that goes for career and for love, too.

Born to parents who both had musical careers before they wed, David Archuleta remembers an early childhood growing up in a Hispanic Mormon community in Florida, where kin was always nearby. He was six when his parents moved the immediate family to Utah; the first thing he remembers about that is the snow, and how it was so cold, it burned.

Because music was in his blood, Archuleta grew up singing and dancing, often with his mother whom he calls “my rock.” It was his father, however, who encouraged him to perform; first, with a gentle push, then a shove toward a career Archuleta didn’t really want.

But he did want to make his father happy, so he went along with the contests, embarrassing meet-and-greets with stars, and uncomfortable introductions. Slowly, though, performing became more fun, and Archuleta made friends.

Meanwhile, back home, everything was breaking apart. A “family friend” whom Archuleta refuses to name accused his father of abuse. He was exonerated, but it affected the family’s closeness and they stopped being affectionate.

That was a painful backdrop to Archuleta’s soaring career, his appearances on Star Search, friendships with other rising stars, his runner-up spot on American Idol, tours, and recording contracts. His father kept pushing him.

But there was one thing missing.

Since he was a boy, Archuleta had known that he was attracted to men, but his Mormon faith taught him that that was unacceptable. Kissing, his abuelita said, was wrong. He tried hard to date girls, in the most chaste way. Anything past that was against God – and anything at all with a man was unthinkable...

Though it absolutely favors his personal life and dwells on it a bit too much, “Devout” strikes an otherwise nice balance between that, author David Archuleta’s career, his sexuality,



Portion of “Devout” book cover written by David Archuleta

and his faith. The latter two are loaded with controversy.

You don’t need to be Mormon to fully understand the faith part; Archuleta offers non-Mormons a brief education, so readers can see the importance of the Church’s teachings in his life and why he felt the need to abandon it as his understanding of his bisexuality grew. It’s emotionally raw and honest, but also so respectful that it almost bears re-reading. Such candor and the heart-on-his-sleeve tone you’ll sense are features in the entire book, alongside Archuleta’s family’s struggles and his learning to strike out alone.

It’s harmonious in more ways than one, and fans will be happy.

So, too, will anyone who wants a unique memoir with a dose of faith, or someone who’s an American Idol watcher. Find “Devout” and be sure to share. You won’t mind.

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“Star Wars” & “Backrooms” Plus, Nick Jonas & Paul Rudd

by Chris Narloch

Tower Theatre is the place to be this month, with a funny new queer-friendly comedy starring RuPaul opening, along with flashback films like the great John Huston’s “The Asphalt Jungle,” co-starring Marilyn Monroe.

Another great director, David Lynch, is being celebrated at the Tower this summer, with a retrospective of some of his finest films, including “Eraserhead,” “The Elephant Man,” and “Mulholland Drive.”

For Tower showtimes and information, you can visit [Tower’s website](#). And here are some other movies in local theaters that I am (mostly) excited about.

Backrooms

A 20-year-old director named Kane Parsons has a viral hit on his hands with this big screen version of his YouTube web series about mysterious, mostly empty, interconnected backrooms that seem to go on forever. Chiwetel Ejiofor and Renate Reinsve costar as a troubled furniture store owner and his shrink, who is trying to help him deal with the collapse of his marriage.

Both characters get trapped in the strange rooms behind the furniture store and come face to face with their haunted pasts. That’s about all I can say about the plot which is ultimately less interesting than the look and feel of the film, and the lead performances.

There is no denying that the movie is a trip, and there are many startling images throughout, but, ultimately, it’s a trip to nowhere. The director has a real eye for set design and an ear for sound design. Now he just needs to learn how to develop a story that pays off.

Still, Mr. Parsons deserves credit for having a huge hit at such a young age. My hat is off to anyone who can make yellow wallpaper and a pile of furniture under fluorescent lights creepy. “Backrooms” is currently in wide theatrical release.

Power Ballad

Amid all the horror hits and summer sequels currently in theaters, Lionsgate has released this bro’ comedy (or dude dramedy) starring Paul Rudd and Nick Jonas as two strangers, both musicians, who meet at a wedding and write a song together that becomes a hit for one of the men, which makes the other guy very resentful and a little crazy.

Nick Jonas plays the hitmaker and former boy band member, while Paul Rudd is a struggling wedding singer. The two leads are good together, and Rudd, who holds his own in the performance scenes, is especially strong in the film’s dramatic moments.

John Carney, the talented director of “Once” and “Sing Street,” does a fine job here with a tricky script. “Power Ballad” is currently in wide theatrical release.

Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu

At this point, “Star Wars” is like an old friend that you haven’t seen in a while, who isn’t as funny or interesting as you remembered, but you’re still happy to see them. I will admit that I was not a fan of “The Mandalorian” series, because any show (or movie) that puts a helmet on Pedro Pascal so I cannot see his handsome face is not the show for me.

On the plus side, there is some fine CGI on display in the new “Star Wars” installment, although a little of Baby Yoda goes a long way, and there are too many cutesy critters on display here.

That said, the middle section of the new movie, set in a mossy forest, did remind me a little of that old “Star Wars” magic. This movie is currently in wide theatrical release.

Stop! That! Train!

Just in time for Gay Pride, RuPaul has unveiled a crazy, candy-colored comedy that plays like a hilarious cross between “Airplane” and “The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.”

Ru has a lot of fun playing United States President Judy Gagwell, but the real stars of the movie are two divine drag queens, Ginger Minj and Jujubee, playing “breast” buddies (and rail hostesses) who are tasked with trying to stop! that! train! – which is headed “straight” for a catastrophic Stormaganza.

It helps to be a fan of snarky, drag queen humor, raunchy jokes, and disaster films – think “Sharknado” meets “To Wong Foo...” – and the wacko supporting cast includes Lisa Rinna, Charo, Matt Rogers, Jai Rodriguez, Jerry O’Connell, Joel McHale, Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Michelle Visage, Raven-Symone, Sarah Michelle Gellar, and drag queens for days.

“Stop! That! Train!” is scheduled to open at Sacramento’s Tower Theatre on June 12.



Backrooms



Power Ballad



Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu



Stop! That! Train!

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We Love You Sarah by Ron Tackitt

There are certain voices that instantly transport you to another time, another feeling, another version of yourself. The moment Sarah McLachlan sings a single note, it all comes rushing back. The dreamy melancholy. The candlelit heartbreak. The soft, poetic ache of the '90s that somehow still feels just as powerful today.

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NOV 22 CHICAGO, IL	

So yes, it is very exciting to see Sarah McLachlan heading back out on tour this year. Fans across the country will once again get to hear classics like “Building a Mystery,” “Sweet Surrender,” “Angel,” and “Possession” performed live by the woman whose music practically defined emotional vulnerability for an entire generation.

But there is one tiny problem. Apparently Northern California was only granted partial visitation rights.

While McLachlan’s tour includes a stop in Concord, Sacramento was left sitting dramatically by the window, in the rain while “In the Arms of an Angel” plays softly in the background, clutching a faded Lilith Fair ticket stub and wondering what we did wrong. No Sacramento date. No Golden 1. No SAFE Credit Union Performing Arts Center moment. Just a polite little reminder that if we want the feelings, we’ll need to hit the road and make a night of it.

To be fair, Concord is not exactly far away. And honestly, Sarah McLachlan concerts have always felt worth a little effort. Her shows are less about spectacle and more about atmosphere. They are intimate, emotional and beautifully human in a way that feels increasingly rare in modern pop touring.

McLachlan also remains an important figure in LGBTQ+ circles thanks to her longtime support of queer audiences and artists, along with her groundbreaking role in founding Lilith Fair, the legendary touring festival that opened doors for countless women musicians in the late '90s.

So while Sacramento may have been skipped this round, we will still gladly take the nearby visit. Northern California could certainly use a little more beauty, tenderness and piano-driven emotional devastation right about now.

Now somebody queue up “Adia” and start planning the carpool. [Better Broken Tour.](#)

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Activating Taste Buds

At Home With Great Wine *submitted by Fred Palmer*



If you live in the Sacramento area and grow vegetables, it is officially zucchini season. And if your garden is overflowing with zucchini, take a little time to make stuffed zucchini blossoms. They are easier than they sound and absolutely worth it.

The batter is simple, with lots of variations, but I like using sparkling mineral water because it keeps things light and crisp instead of heavy. For the filling, a blend of herbs and cheeses works beautifully. Use your favorites, though ricotta, Pecorino Romano and Parmesan make a pretty perfect combination.

To go with the dish, we paired one of our longtime favorites from the Russian River Valley, a Pinot Noir from Moshin Vineyards. For more information about the wine, visit Moshin Vineyards [by clicking here](#).

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Out & About with Matthew Burlingame

Pride Month is in full swing, and there has never been a better time to celebrate exactly who you are. Across the Sacramento region, communities are coming together for parades, concerts, parties, fundraisers and festivals that honor the rich diversity of LGBTQ life. Whether you're loud and proud, quietly authentic or somewhere in between, this is your month to shine. So wave those rainbow flags, support local events, embrace your community and be unapologetically, unabashedly gay all month long.

June 13

Start Pride weekend with a hearty meal and plenty of community spirit at the Pride Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, June 13 at 11 a.m. at Bolt Bar, 2560 Boxwood St. Hosted by Alta California Leather Corps, the fundraiser features pancakes, sausage, prize drawings every 30 minutes and lots of Pride fun. Breakfast plates are \$10, with proceeds helping support community programs. Organizers promise food, laughter and chances to win throughout the event.

Travel back to the days of the Wild West during Powder, Poker, & Petticoats on Saturday, June 13 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Sacramento History Museum, 1002 Second St. in Old Sacramento. Presented by Sacramento Living History, this free, family-friendly event features historic firearms demonstrations, games of chance and colorful Old West characters roaming the streets. Organizers promise a lively saloon-style adventure where visitors never know what... or who... they might encounter. Sachistorymuseum.org

June 14

Join Sacramento Valley Sparks for the Sacramento Pride March & Parade on Sunday, June 14 at 11 a.m., beginning at Southside Park near Eighth and W streets and ending at the State Capitol festival entrance. Marchers will be joined by the mutant vehicle Abu, along with music, smiles and plenty of community spirit. Organizers invite participants to help promote a "Leave No Trace" mindset while celebrating Pride, visibility and environmental stewardship throughout downtown Sacramento. Sacvalleyspark.org

June 19

Sierra Repertory Theatre invites audiences to take a nostalgic trip through television's golden age with Don't Touch That Dial! from June 19 through July 19 at the Historic Fallon House Theatre, 11175 Washington St. in Columbia State Historic Park. Created by Roger Bean, the fast-paced musical comedy features nearly 100 classic TV tunes, beloved television tropes and audience-friendly interactive fun. SierraRep.org

June 20

Sinister Creature Con returns Friday and Saturday, June 20-21, 2026, at Sacramento Scottish Rite, 6151 H St. Doors open at 11:30 a.m. for VIP and early entry with general admission starting at 12:30 p.m. both days. The Northern California horror, SFX and makeup expo features vendors, panels, cosplay, celebrity guests and more macabre thrills for fans of the eerie and extraordinary. Sinistercreaturecon.com

June 24

Experience the Sacramento premiere of The "Two Kids That Blow Sh*t Up" by Carla Ching from June 24 to July 26 at Capital Stage, 2215 J St. This dramatic play follows Diana and Max from age 9 through adulthood as their lifelong bond shifts between friendship and love in a beautifully raw and intimate exploration of connection and conflict. Capstage.org

Upcoming:

Roxette 40th Anniversary Tour 2026 comes to Toyota Pavilion at Concord, 2000 Kirker Pass Road in Concord, on Saturday, Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m. Led by founding member Per Gessle and joined by Lena Philipsson, the legendary Swedish pop-rock group will celebrate four decades of hits including "The Look," "Joyride" and "It Must Have Been Love." Fans can expect a nostalgic, high-energy evening honoring one of the world's most successful pop acts, with more than 80 million records sold worldwide. Toyotapavilionatconcord.com

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

June 12

Liquid Therapy Pure Pride 2026 kicks off Sacramento Pride weekend on Friday, June 12, at 5:30 p.m. at Badlands Sacramento, 2003 K St. Hosted by Outword Magazine, this festive happy hour brings the LGBTQ community and allies together for an evening of celebration, connection and Pride spirit. Enjoy great company, strong drinks and a colorful atmosphere as one of the region's biggest Pride weekends gets underway. Admission is free. Outwordmagazine.com

Laugh for a good cause at Comedy for Bikes, a special benefit show on Friday, June 12 at 9 p.m. at STAB! Comedy Theater, 1710 Broadway. The evening features a lineup of queer comedians and drag performers raising funds for the Friends for Life Bike Rally, one of Canada's longest-running charity cycling events supporting people living with HIV/AIDS. Organizers promise a hilarious night of entertainment, community and giving back, proving that laughter really can help change lives. Stabcomedytheater.com



photo courtesy of John Cates

Palm Springs recently went platinum blonde in honor of what would have been Marilyn Monroe's 100th birthday. The citywide "Marilyn 100" celebration brought together fans, performers, drag artists and more than a thousand Marilyn look-alikes for a weekend of glamour, and just the right amount of camp. Centered around the iconic Forever Marilyn statue, festivities included themed parties, brunches, live entertainment and even a Guinness World Record attempt, that succeeded, in drawing more than 1,000 people dressed as the legendary star. A century after her birth, Marilyn remains one of Hollywood's most recognizable figures, and Palm Springs proved that her sparkle hasn't faded one bit. If anything, it's still shining as brightly as ever in the desert sun.

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Tuesday Vape*

JUNE 23

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Buddies Vapes
California Love Vapes
Cap City Vapes
Claybourne Co. Vapes
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Cure Injoy Vapes
Gelato Vapes
Halfpipe Vapes
Heirbloom Vapes
Howie Roll Vapes

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Thursday Beverage*

JUNE 25

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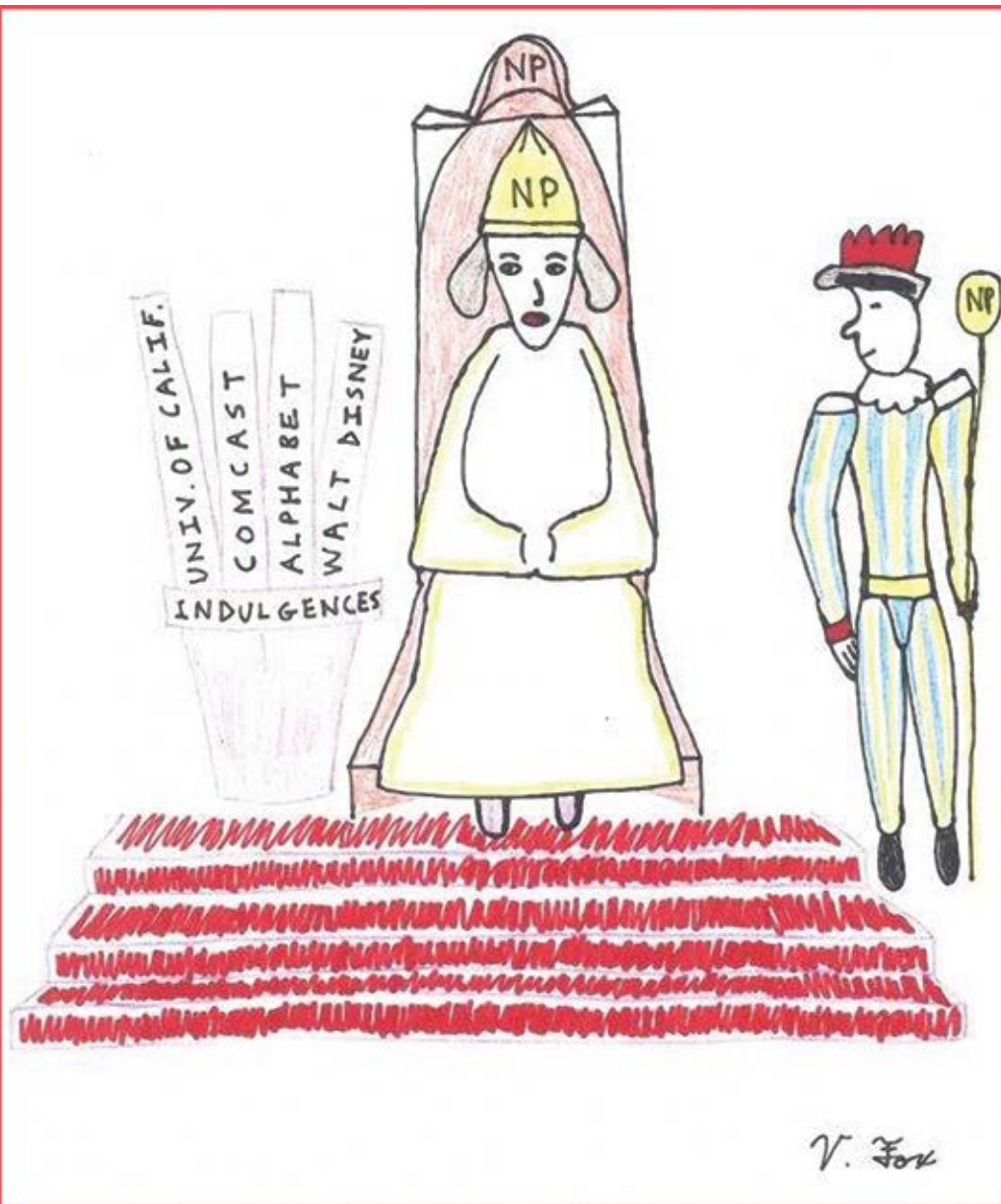
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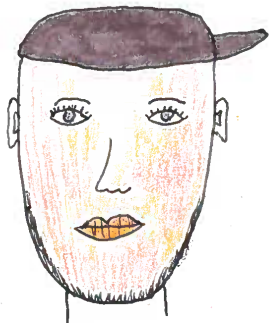
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Being Mr. Bolt 2027 *by Tony Webb, Mr. Bolt 2027*

Being selected by the judges as Mr. Bolt 2027 is an incredible honor, and it means even more because of the journey it took to get here.



The competition was a long and rewarding weekend that challenged me in every way. I went through three rounds of interviews with the judges, answering twelve questions total. I also competed on stage in three different looks: bar wear, revealing wear, and formal wear. Along with that, I had to show stage presence, answer a pop question, and deliver a speech that was deeply personal to me.

Just one week before the competition, I was in a serious car crash. It was terrifying, and I was still shaken up and dealing with a concussion as the weekend approached. But I knew that pain and fear would eventually pass. The opportunity to show up, represent who I am, and give back to a community that has given so much to me meant more.

So I pushed through. I worked hard. I showed up fully, not because it was easy, but because it mattered.

I was also fortunate to share this experience with amazing contestants: SIR Aaron Wolf, my first runner-up, Brian Knirk, and Paul Chambers. Sharing this moment with them made the entire experience so much more enjoyable. We all worked hard, brought our own stories and strengths to the stage, and did our best to represent the leather community with pride.

In my speech, I shared how leather has been part of my journey since I was younger and beginning to understand my sexuality. Leather was always something I felt drawn to, even before I fully had the words for why. At first, it was misunderstood by people close to me as something purely sexual. Over time, and through some very honest conversations with my family, I was able to explain what leather really means to me.

For me, leather is not just about what happens behind closed doors. It is about identity, pride, expression, confidence, and belonging. It is about finding community and creating space for people to show up fully as themselves.

This title gives me a platform to continue that work. As Mr. Bolt 2027, I want to encourage a deeper understanding of leather for all kinds of people, whether they are young, seasoned, kinky, vanilla, curious, or already part of the community. Leather is not one single thing, and it does not belong to only one kind of person. Leather is for you too.

I am especially grateful to the judges, The Bolt Sacramento, my family, and everyone who supported me throughout the weekend. My parents may not have been in the room during the competition, but they were right on the other side of the door cheering me on. That meant everything to me.

I am also excited to begin my year with my first official Mr. Bolt event, First Strike, happening June 19, 2026 at 9 PM at The Bolt Bar, 2560 Boxwood St, Sacramento, CA 95815. Proceeds will benefit the Mr. Bolt Travel Fund and the Black Utopians Program by Gender Health Center. The event will feature Jell-O shots, a raffle, bootblack on site, and a live impact demo by Sir Thomas.

This win is not just a sash or a title. It is a responsibility, an opportunity, and a beginning. I am proud to represent The Bolt, proud to be part of the leather community, and excited to use this year to build connection, raise visibility, and create spaces where people feel seen, welcomed, and understood.



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Please consider making a contribution, in the dollar amount that works for you, using our relaunched Outword Rainbow Fund. Every contribution will make a difference and with a simple, and secure transaction, you can show your support.

We are proud to be one of the LGBTQ+ voices for the Sacramento community over the years, and we are committed to continuing for years to come. Let’s not let our voices be silenced. Help us continue getting the Word Out.

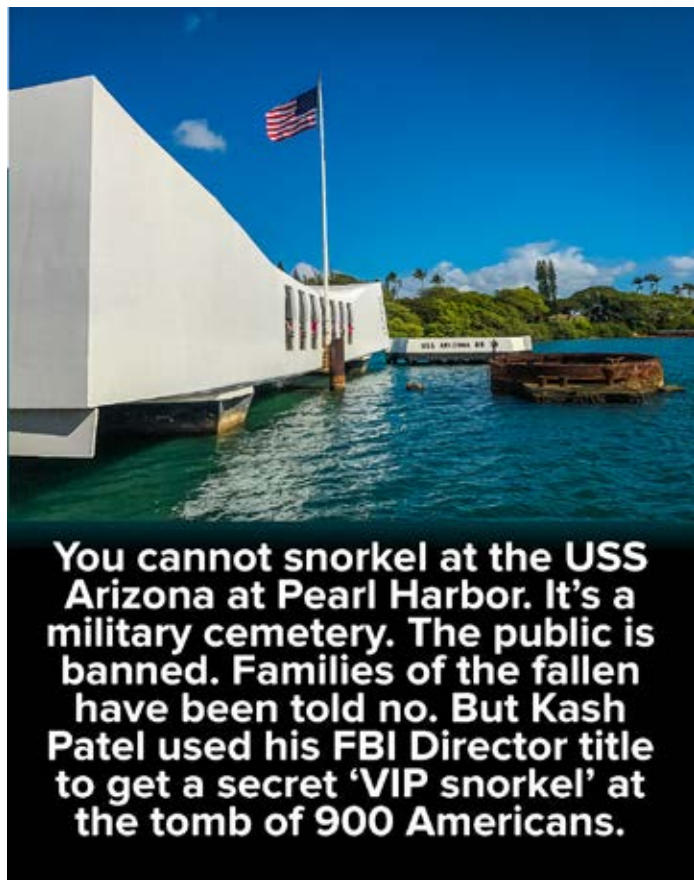
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Mememes from Facebook



You cannot snorkel at the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor. It's a military cemetery. The public is banned. Families of the fallen have been told no. But Kash Patel used his FBI Director title to get a secret 'VIP snorkel' at the tomb of 900 Americans.



Mayor Zohran Kwame Mamdani ✓
@NYCMayor

It would take far more than a month to honor the contributions of queer and transgender New Yorkers. From the Cercle Hermaphrodites in 1895, the first trans advocacy group in the United States, to the drag balls of the Harlem Renaissance, to the Stonewall uprising, to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, to ACT UP!, founded in 1987 as queer people fought for their lives while the Reagan administration looked away, New York City's history has long been shaped by queer and trans New Yorkers. To all our queer and trans neighbors: you deserve a City where you can afford to live safely, openly, and joyfully. Happy Pride, New York City.

Their latest line is, "He isn't sleeping, he's just bored." I think the word they're looking for is dementia.



I'M SOOOOO GLAD TRUMP WILL BE AROUND TO SEE HIS NAME CHISELED OFF OF THE KENNEDY CENTER

@theliamnissan



Every time Chief Justice Roberts whines that MAGA Justices on SCOTUS aren't political, remind him who killed *Roe v Wade*, turning the principle of *stare decisis* into a joke, gutted the Voting Rights Act, flooded politics with dark money (*Citizens United*), criminalized homelessness, neutered regulatory agencies, slow-walked Trump's sedition case (*Trump v. U.S.*)—forcing Jack Smith to eventually dismiss the charges—ruled that Presidents are immune from prosecution for criminal acts they commit in office, and refused to adopt a binding Code of Ethics despite evidence of *flagrant* corruption on the court???

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HEALING A NATION: HUNGARY'S NEW PRIME MINISTER REINSTATES PRIDE MARCH IN BUDAPEST

Transgender troops can stay in US military as Trump's ban found to be illegal



Alexander James
@DrunkScribe

Some years back my wife and I got into the habit of asking each other 'do you want comfort or solutions' when the other was having a bad time. That one sentence can save us from an argument 9/10 times.



The fact that the Epstein Files **STILL** have not turned into the **Epstein Trials** goes to show just how far this country has fallen.

@JezziB



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