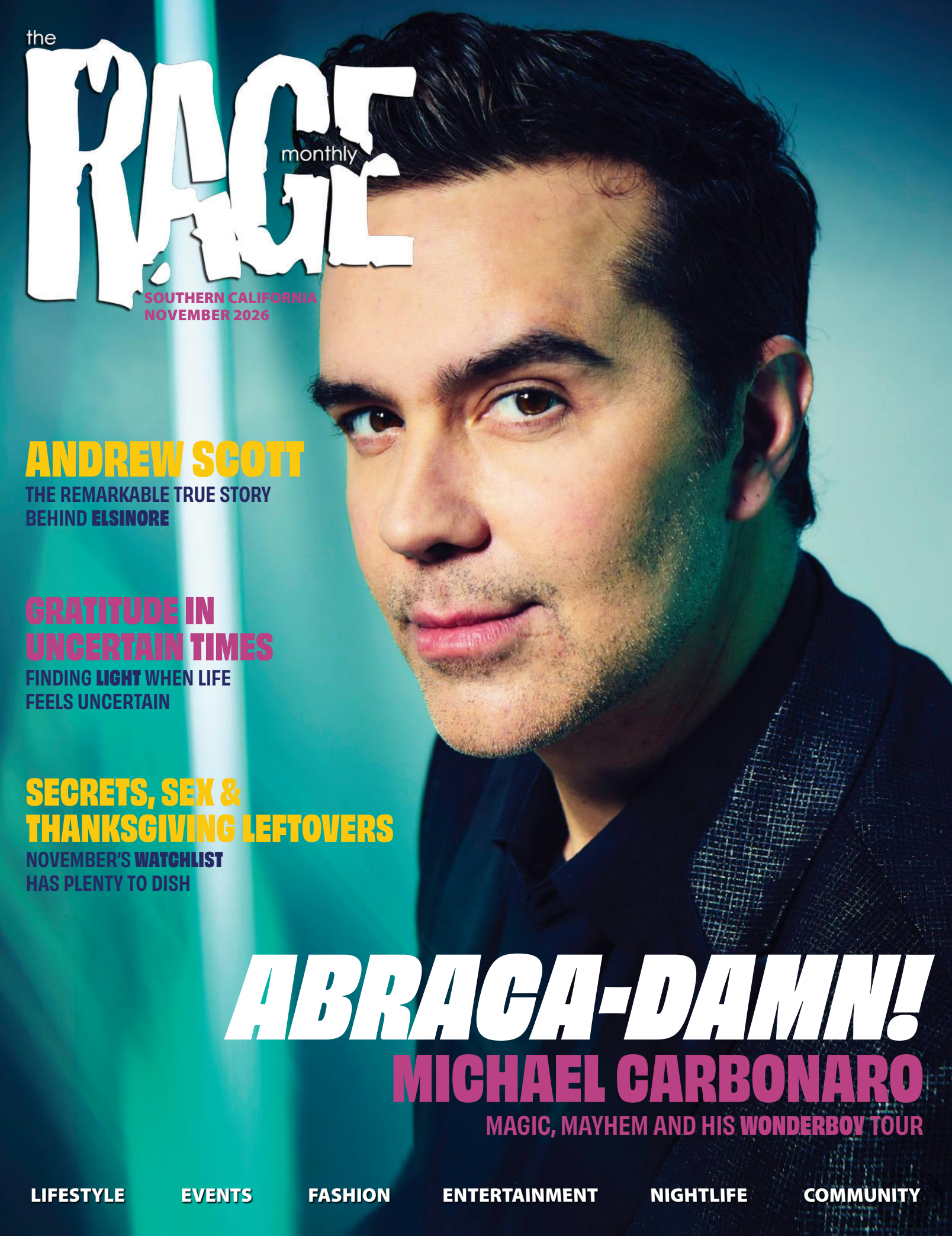
the RAGE monthly
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 2026



ANDREW SCOTT
THE REMARKABLE TRUE STORY BEHIND **ELSINORE**

GRATITUDE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES
FINDING **LIGHT** WHEN LIFE FEELS UNCERTAIN

SECRETS, SEX & THANKSGIVING LEFTOVERS
NOVEMBER'S **WATCHLIST** HAS PLENTY TO DISH

ABRACA-DAMN!
MICHAEL CARBONARO
MAGIC, MAYHEM AND HIS **WONDERBOY** TOUR

LIFESTYLE EVENTS FASHION ENTERTAINMENT NIGHTLIFE COMMUNITY

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Music by Mel Marvin
Original production conceived and directed by Jack O'Brien
Original choreography by John DeLuca
Directed by James Vásquez

November 4 – December 31



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¡Sólo cuatro funciones!

Dr. Seuss's ¡Cómo el Grinch Robó la Navidad!

19–22 de noviembre

Un maravilloso y fantasioso musical basado en el clásico libro del Dr. Seuss. Con las canciones **"Santa for a Day," "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch"** y **"Welcome, Christmas (Fah Who Doraze),"** el encantador villancico de la popular versión animada de *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Celebra las fiestas mientras el **Donald and Darlene Shiley Stage** del **Old Globe Theatre**, parte del **Conrad Prebys Theatre Center** del Globe, se transforma una vez más en la nevada **Villa Quién**, hasta el último detalle y la última lata de **Who-hash**.



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Updated laughs for 2026!

By Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen
Based on *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
Directed by Gordon Greenberg

Ebenezer Scrooge's Big San Diego Christmas Show

November 20 – December 27

(from left) Josh Breckenridge, Jacque Wilke, James Joseph O'Neil, Susana Cordón, and Will Carlyon, 2025. Photo by Rich Soublet II.

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Meow Meow: *Feline Festive*
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Hilary Hahn

Hilary Hahn, *violin*; Matthias Goerne, *baritone*; Gloria Chien, *piano*
Saturday, December 5 · 7:30 PM

Three-time GRAMMY®-winning violinist Hilary Hahn joins Met Opera star Matthias Goerne and acclaimed pianist Gloria Chien for an unforgettable evening of operatic power and virtuosic artistry.

Edmar Castañeda Quartet
Friday, December 11 · 5:30 PM & 8 PM

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Lukas Sternath, *piano*
Sunday, December 13 · 3 PM

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The Hot Sardines
Friday, December 18 · 7:30 PM

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Edmar Castañeda

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CONTENTS

VOLUME 20 ISSUE 6

8 COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: FESTIVAL OF TREES

10 COMMUNITY BRIEFS

12 PULSE OF PALM SPRINGS

16 STAGE: MICHAEL CARBONARO

18 | 20 THEATRE BRIEFS

22 FILM: ELSINORE

26 STREAM QUEEN

28 SPIRITUALITY

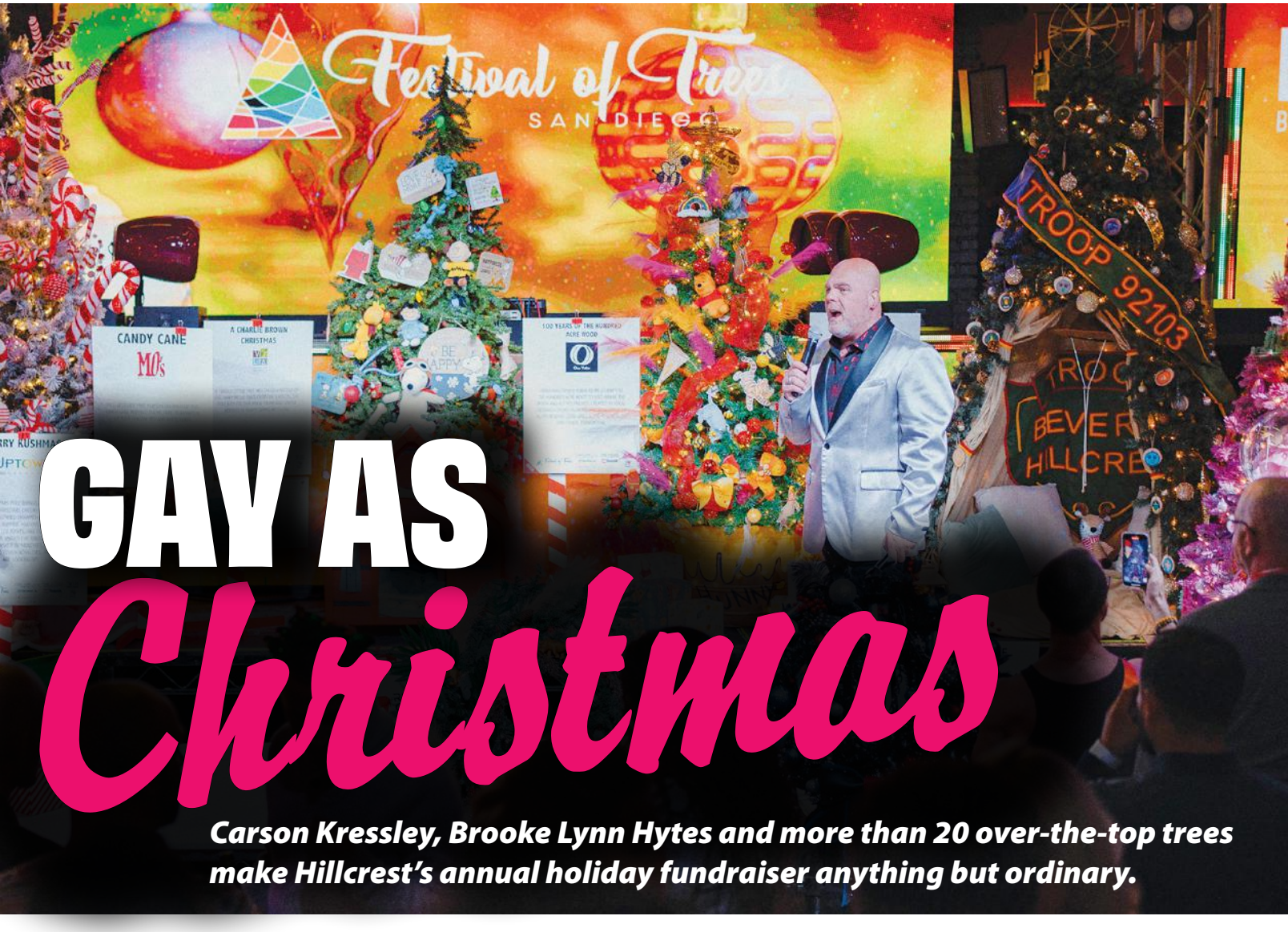
29 QUEER STORIES

30 MILLENNIAL MATTERS



Michael Carbonaro
cover photography by Pari Dukovic
contents photography by Stuart Pettican


MURRAY & PETER PRESENT
A DRAG QUEEN Christmas
Hosted by NINA WEST
12.09
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Channel 24
12.10
San Francisco
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Stockton
Bob Hope Theatre
12.12
Los Angeles
The Wiltern
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GAY AS Christmas

Carson Kressley, Brooke Lynn Hytes and more than 20 over-the-top trees make Hillcrest's annual holiday fundraiser anything but ordinary.

Festival of Trees is Hillcrest's official holiday kickoff. Featuring a live auction of 20+ expertly decorated Christmas trees, this holiday carnival is the perfect way to celebrate the holidays while giving to a good cause. Since its inception six years ago, Festival of Trees has raised more than $200,000 for local LGBTQ+ nonprofits. Join us as we sit down for a kiki with founder **Bobby Gordon**.

Give me the genesis story of Festival of Trees.

When I moved to San Diego pre-COVID, I began looking around for nonprofit opportunities. I noticed a big gap in community events after the AIDS Walk and Red Dress Party in the fall. Tantrums & Tiaras had also recently shuttered, so there was a long stretch of time with no celebratory community-wide fundraisers.

I will fundraise for HIV/AIDS until there is a cure. Although there are many available mental health resources, not many have had a specific lens on LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention. Suicide is the No. 1 killer of queer youth. The federal government shut down the specialized LGBTQ+ youth service within the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline in 2025. Although the service was restored this September, the need for LGBTQ+ youth mental health support remains urgent.

We needed something to address this crisis, and I also wanted a way for the community to end the year together in celebration. Our first Festival of Trees was a "proof of concept." Mariam T and Mo Girton from Gossip Grill were my co-hosts.

There came a point in the night where we realized that, in all our planning, we forgot we needed to book an auctioneer. That was our biggest growing pain in the first years, actually: realizing all the roles we needed to fill to make it a smooth show.

That night Mariam jumped into action, as she does, and absolutely dominated as our auctioneer. Since that first year at insideOUT, Festival of Trees has grown into something we never could have dreamed of. We didn't expect the community to embrace it as much as they have.

The outpouring of love from our neighbors and volunteers has made the event the huge success it is today.

What can we expect this year?

Between trees, silent auction items and sponsorships, we have over 100 businesses participating in this year's Festival of Trees. **Carson Kressley** is our celebrity host and auctioneer, and **Mo Girton** is back as our amazing co-host. **Brooke Lynn Hytes** will perform and do a VIP meet-and-greet with Carson.

There's an official pre-party at Flicks and an official after-party at Rich's. We have over 20 trees, a robust silent auction, a travel raffle sponsored by Southwest, and the best part is that all trees are delivered the next day by San Diego Armada Gay Rugby Football Club.

I understand you regularly rotate who the event benefits. What about this year?

In the past, Festival of Trees has benefited Being Alive, North County LGBTQ Resource Center and Trans Family Support Services. The event was always intended to rotate through the community and share the wealth.

This year, our beneficiary is **Stepping Stone of San Diego**. Celebrating their 50th year in operation, they are one of the only LGBTQ-focused alcohol and drug recovery programs in the country. They are the only recovery treatment center in Southern California with special focus on trans youth. I admire their holistic approach to physical and mental health, and it only makes sense to benefit them this year, as all funds we raise go to support HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention.

The holidays offer a unique opportunity to reflect and energize for the next year. Given current political turmoil and attacks on our community, there is no better time than now to come together and celebrate but also bolster and plan for next year. Our event provides the opportunity for the community to do just that — reflect, celebrate and strengthen.

What are some of your favorite trees you've seen through the years?

Nightmare Before Christmas is always a hit, Dolly Parton, *Wicked*, we had a *Beetlejuice* tree once with a running train — Oh! One year we had a Selena tree that came with a Yolanda piñata.

Now going into your sixth year, I'm sure you've auctioned off over 100 trees. What makes a tree stand out from the others?

Over the top, uniquely fabulous, sparkly and shiny, and has unique vignettes throughout. And a huge bonus if it comes with awesome swag and giveaways. Last year the Brass Rail's *KPop Demon Hunters* tree came with a $1,000 party package!

What would you tell people thinking of attending this year for the first time?

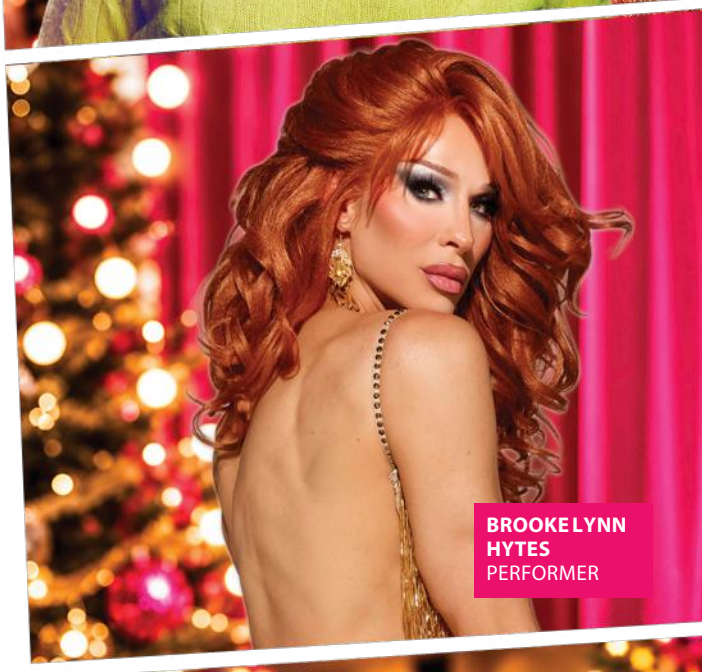
We sell out every year, especially VIP. Get your tickets sooner rather than later; don't wait until the week of! And even though the main part of the event is the tree auction, not everyone has to have thousands of dollars to participate. We have two raffle trees, a travel raffle sponsored by Southwest and a silent auction. Coupled with our volunteer opportunities, we make sure everyone has a way to give back while we celebrate our community.

And as a 100% volunteer-run organization, we average between 75%-85% of funds raised going directly to beneficiaries. Which is huge in the nonprofit world. We also couldn't do this without Rich's, Mo Girton of Gossip Grill, and our incredible team of volunteers who donate their time to make this event such a hit.

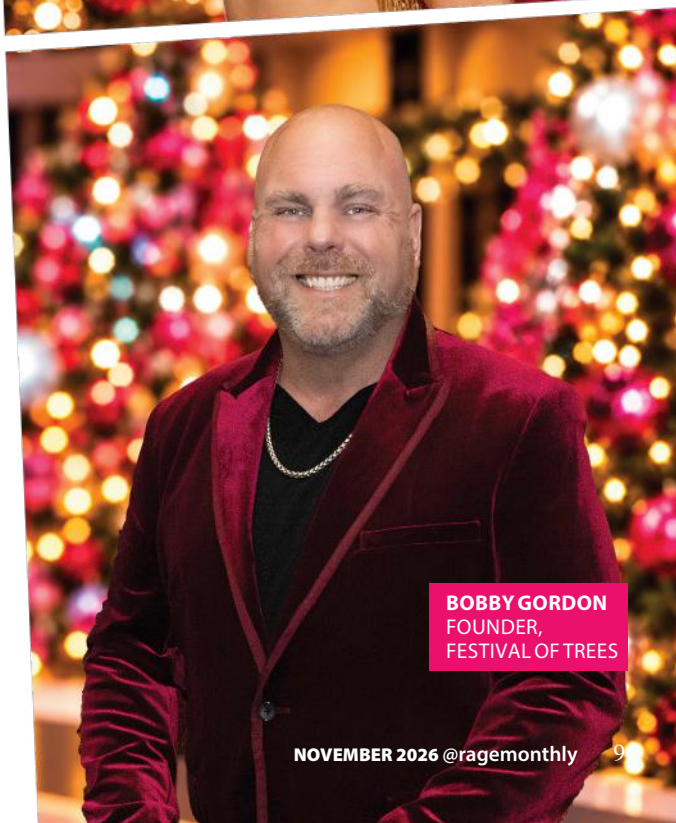
FESTIVAL OF TREES TAKES PLACE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22 AT RICH'S SAN DIEGO. TICKETS AT FESTIVALOFTREESSD.ORG



CARSON KRESSLEY
CELEBRITY HOST AND AUCTIONEER



BROOKE LYNN HYTES
PERFORMER



BOBBY GORDON
FOUNDER, FESTIVAL OF TREES





A NOVEMBER TO REMEMBER

From Long Beach art exhibitions to San Diego celebrations, November offers plenty of reasons to get out and support the LGBTQ+ community.

Long Beach is turning its neighborhoods into an art festival this November. **Long Beach Queer ArtFest** returns for two weekends, **November 13–15** and **20–22**, bringing LGBTQ+ creativity into galleries, businesses, nonprofits and other spaces throughout the city.

The festival goes well beyond paintings on a wall. Visitors can explore art exhibitions, live music, drag performances, poetry, artist talks and opportunities to make art themselves. **A Queer Artists Showcase**, hosted in partnership with Long Beach Forward, features performance art on November 14 and visual art on November 21.

One of the best things about the festival is its accessibility. Events organized by Queer ArtFest are free to attend, and artists, nonprofits and participating businesses aren't charged to take part. The idea is to introduce people to artists they might not otherwise discover while creating lasting connections throughout Long Beach. lucasgordonphotography.com/longbeachqueerartfest

November also brings a chance to recognize LGBTQ+ military service members. On **Thursday, November 5**, the San Diego LGBT Community Center hosts its annual **LGBT Veterans Wall of Honor Induction Ceremony**. Four veterans will be honored: **Clifford Krapf**, **Dr. Laura D. Castro**, **Rodney Newman** and **Sam Rodriguez**.

California Secretary of Veterans Affairs **Lindsey Sin** will deliver the keynote address, with remarks from **Congresswoman Sara Jacobs** and The Center CEO Cara Dessert. The ceremony takes place in The Center's Bob Nelson Auditorium.

In West Hollywood, fashion takes on a larger purpose when **GARRAS 2026** arrives at the Pacific Design Center on **Saturday, November 7**. Presented by **The TransLatin@ Coalition**, the annual fundraising fashion show celebrates the creativity and leadership of transgender, gender-expansive, Two-Spirit and intersex communities.

This year's event, ***Transpower in the Flesh***, brings fashion and artistic expression to the runway while raising money for the coalition's year-round programs, including housing assistance, education, legal support and other services. garras.org

Meanwhile, the **San Diego Gay Men's Chorus** is heading to ancient Rome, or at least its own wonderfully exaggerated version of it. The chorus presents its **When in Rome gala** on **Saturday, November 14,** at Skylight Venue in Hillcrest. Emmy-winning entertainer **Jai Rodriguez** hosts an evening of food, performances, raffles and Roman-inspired theatrics. Proceeds support the chorus, its performances and outreach throughout San Diego. sdgmc.org

A few days later, Hillcrest recognizes the people who help make the neighborhood what it is. The fourth annual **Hillcrest Honors** takes place **Monday, November 16**, celebrating local residents, organizations, businesses and personalities who contribute to the neighborhood's character. Created by **Rick Cervantes** and **Benny Cartwright**, the awards recognize everyone from community volunteers and activists to entertainers and neighborhood businesses. hillcrest-sandiego.com/hillcrest-honors



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Feel It! Live It! Love It! THEN FEEL IT AGAIN!



Palm Springs is a symphony of contradictions. Our architecture swoops impossibly from angled roofs to refined geometry; our fashion is loud yet luxurious, mixing patterns and palettes with ease; and our history is a collage of influencers and outcasts … sometimes in the same body! The city's robust range is on full, fabulous display every day — can I get a gay hooray!? But this month, the diversity of the desert is especially delightful, courtesy of Greater Palm Springs Pride.

PRIDE AND NO PREJUDICE


Aubrey O'Day

Conjure up a vision of the most homophobic a-hole you can imagine. The blank stare, the gaping mouth, the cousin/spouse by their side. You can almost smell the Axe Body Spray, eh? Now say the word "Pride" and watch them spit out their Mountain Dew and chewing tobacco. They're scared of us. Good.

We Pride so hard in Palm Springs that the haters have good reason to fear us. Loving and living at maximum velocity is just our gay way. Jealous? Well, there's no need to seethe. Just breathe! *Be Included* is the theme of this year's festival, which features headliners like **Aubrey O'Day**. Her pop perfection will make you tap your toes and strike a pose. Country fans will also love **The Cowgays**, a sexy trio that twangs triumphantly through their catalog of empowering anthems and saddle-slapping bangers.

The soiree never stops on Arenas Road, the epicenter of excess. DJs spin all day and beverages pour all night, making this the gayest gala in the Inland Empire. And speaking of bodacious bashes, who likes naked pool parties? (the internet breaks) CCBC is hosting next-level nude gatherings all weekend, so iron your birthday suit (ouch!) and dive into decadence.

The **Palm Springs Pride Parade** puts the 'Funday' in 'Sunday.' A-list grand marshals **Fortune Feimster** and **Cheyenne Jackson** sprinkle celebrity stardust on the festivities, which showcase over 200 organizations kickin' it queer-style! Marching musclemen, sober sisters, leather lotharios and everyone in between strut down Palm Canyon Drive to flex their inclusivity. Hugs flow like Fiji water (buttery!) at the feel-great event of the year. You really can't contain your smiles when you're surrounded by this magnitude of merriment. pspride.org

DRAG DETOUR

Drag is like wine; it gets better with age and it gives you a righteous hangover. Well, chug some ibuprofen and shake off the withdrawals because **Miss Richfield 1981** is presenting a pageant full of bad decisions! Her show, titled *You Can't Have Ice Cream When You're Dead*, blends existential angst and hedonistic aplomb into a malted mélange of gooey gay goodness. In other words: Live it up, buttercup, because the grave is calling your name. Miss Richfield invades the Palm Springs Cultural Center on **Thursday, November 5**, followed the very next night by ***Jurassic Drag***.

Legendary "ladies" **Coco Peru**, **Varla Jean Merman**, **Jackie Beat** and **Sherry Vine** are roaring into town on **Friday, November 6** to split your sides or break a hip tryin'! And on **Saturday, November 7**, **John Cameron Mitchell** presents his seminal (teehee) film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*. The movie celebrates its 25th anniversary, which makes us feel old enough to join the cast of *Jurassic Drag*. Oh well, put on some makeup and join the fierce fun! psculturalcenter.org

If your gown cascades beyond Pride Weekend, be sure to enjoy dizzying drag domination throughout the month. **Toucans Tiki Lounge** hosts weekly events with special guests who put the 'damn!' in 'damn, diva!' Keep your smoky eyes peeled for RuPaul royalty at **Freakqncy Fridays**, **Drag Revue Saturdays** and **Latin Sundays**. Whew and a half! Don't worry, you can sleep during the werk week. toucanstikilounge.com




Jonas Brothers

SMALL TOWN VIBES, BIG TIME ENTERTAINMENT

Plaza with a Z — Palm Springs' newest venue is also its oldest. How's that for queer complexity? The Plaza Theatre welcomed Greta Garbo back in the 1930s, wowed generations that followed, then lay dormant for years. But its stunning recent restoration is the talk of the town, and now it's THE place to see LGBTQ+ luminaries. Comedians **Sam Morrison**, **Margaret Cho** and **Fortune Feimster** yuk it up **November 6-8**; ***Bare*** celebrates the nude male body through the lens of Pulitzer Prize nominee Robin Layton on **Thursday, November 5**; and even more beefcake sizzles its way onto the stage on **Monday, November 23** with Australia's ***Thunder from Down Under***. G'day, indeed! palmspringsplazatheatre.com

Acrisure Thing — If you're wearing too many panties, throw them on the stage **Tuesday, November 17**! That's when the **Jonas Brothers** perform at Acrisure Arena, home of the hunky hockey champs: Coachella Valley Firebirds. It's like *Heated Rivalry* IRL! acrisurearena.com

IT'S GIVING THANKSGIVING

We gays love Thanksgiving. It's a time to appreciate our chosen families and honor our queer ancestors. Like the time our foremothers and forefathers carved open the first disco ball and served sensible, low-carb options to the passengers on the Gayflower. That's just basic Herstory 101 — look it up.

Fast forward to the queer-and-now. Palm Springs puts on a smorgasbord of sass at several fine dining establishments you simply must savor. For upscale yums, check out **Le Vallauris**, serving fabulous French cuisine in the crisp open air of a desert autumn. Magnifique to the max!

Keep the European aesthetic flowing at **Johannes**, known for its schnitzel. Scho delischious! For a throwback mid-mod experience, groove on over to **Melvyn's** at Ingleside Estate and tear into a Steak Diane just like the gay pilgrims did. And for true hometown hospitality, consider spending your holiday at one of our absolute fave spots: **Zin American Bistro**. Mindy is basically the mayor of downtown PS and her amazing crew will wine, dine and dazzle you. Togetherness is served! zinamericanbistro.com

It's a good idea to make reservations at any and all of the restaurants above, especially during the bustling holiday season. And while you're booking rezzies, click over to Eventbrite and search for ***TRANS-Giving 2026***. The wonderful folks at the Transgender Health & Wellness Center are opening their hearts to our LGBTQ'mmunity and feeding our souls with empowerment, engagement and delectable noshes! Admission is free, but the nourishment you'll receive from the trans, nonbinary and ally attendees will enrich you through Thanksgiving and beyond. Start a conversation, spark a connection.

PURPLE REIGN

Calling all kweens and the kings who love them! Revelry rules at **Purple Room**, a former Rat Pack enclave that now flexes its LGBTQ+ bona fides brilliantly. **Michael Holmes** channels Judy Garland for a bawdy and ballsy show every Sunday night, and Purple Room packs its weeknights with wow!

Powerhouses grace the stage on Fridays and Saturdays, including **Jonathan "Cutie" Karrant** on **November 6 and 7**. The following weekend, **Miss Conception** aborts the competition with her take-no-prisoners, spare-no-feelings, wear-no-underwear tour de farce, *Make America Gay Again!* Right-wingnuts, you've been warned. Shifting gears massively, **Jane Monheit** launches us into the holiday season with a winter wonderland of warm jazz on **November 20 and 21**, and the final weekend of the month belongs to **Janis Siegel**, founding member of Manhattan Transfer and winner of 10 Grammy Awards!

Oh, and did we mention the world-class steak-and-martini menu at Purple Room? So, bring your appetite for iconography (with a plucky Palm Springs twist) and paint the town purple! purpleroompalmsprings.com


Janis Siegel

TANTALIZING TEASER: Let's make it a December to remember with three dragstravaganzas, two gorgeous gay choruses and a partridge in a pear tree. Such practical gifts!

TGIF ART FAIR

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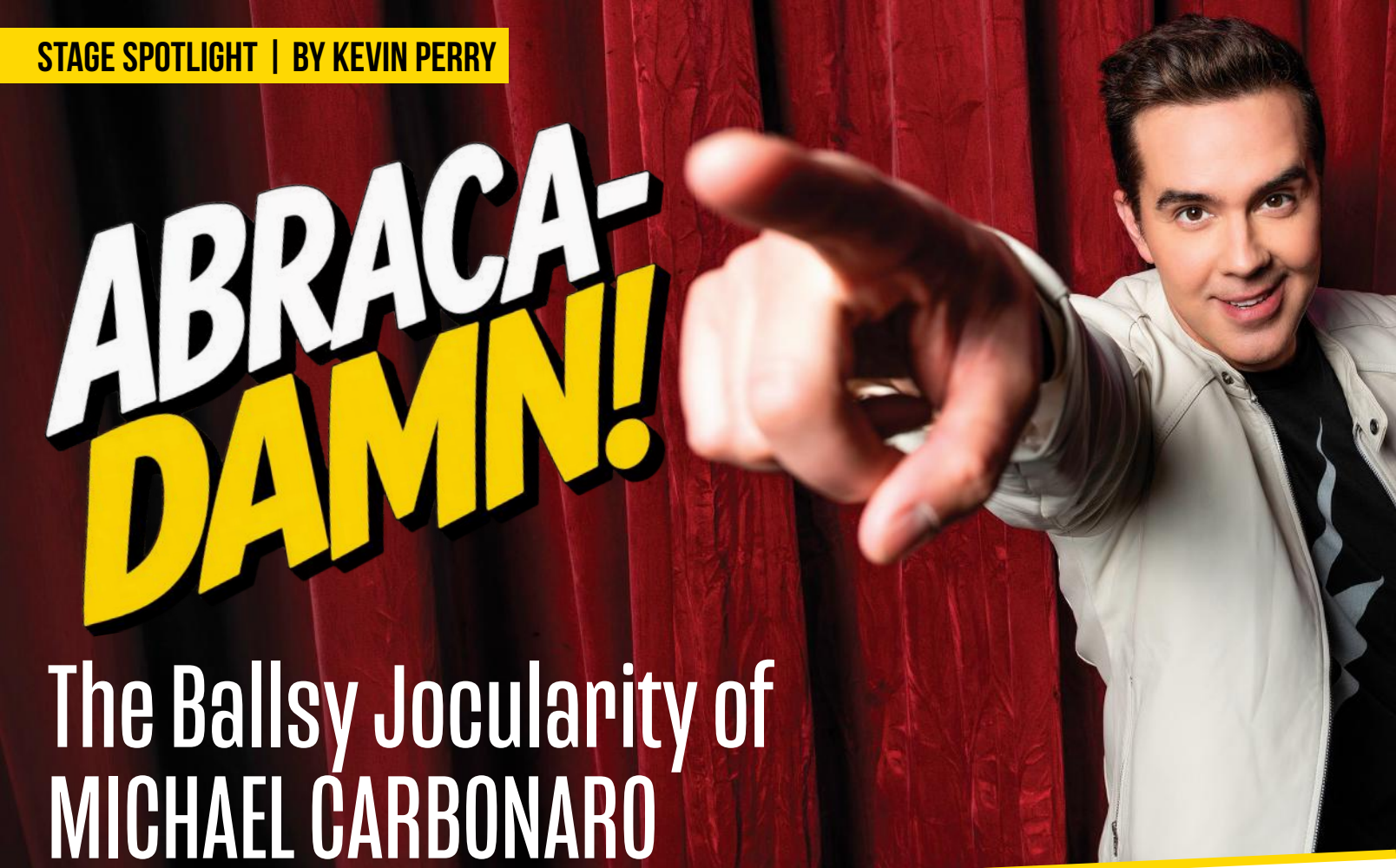
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ABRACA-DAMN!

The Ballsy Jocularity of MICHAEL CARBONARO

Let's face it: the world is f***ed with a side of spicy lube. But what are we gonna do about it? In the face of impending doom, some of us crumble, some of us RAGE, and some of us heckle the Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Michael Carbonaro is one hell of a heckler.

The immensely accomplished comedian/magician mocks Armageddon, conjures the impossible, and does it all with gay gusto.

"First of all, we've been turning trauma into fabulousness for generations," Carbonaro says, "so let's give credit where it's due. But I really do think queer people understand transformation in a very specific way. Reinvention, performance, imagination, deciding who you are instead of accepting the version somebody else had planned for you — that's the magic. Also, lighting. We understand lighting."

Illuminating! His fantastical philosophies exist on a parallel plane of existence, piercing our earthly realm every so often just to mess with our minds … in a whimsical way.

"I basically use magic to tamper with people's confidence in reality," Carbonaro says. "I've never been very interested in the 'Behold my mysterious powers' school of magic. I'd rather get everybody comfortable, make them laugh, and THEN quietly ruin their understanding of how the universe works."

This anarchic yet playful perspective has fueled the performer's robust career for decades. Appearing in everything from *Another Gay Movie* to *All My Children* to *30 Rock*, Carbonaro is a fierce force of nature. We ask about one particular stint on an enduring cornerstone of televised iconography: *Law & Order: SVU*. "I mean, I gotta say it's weird to think I was paid to say 'Eat me, bitch' to Mariska Hargitay."

Dun Dun, indeed.

All of his showbiz shenanigans led to the illusionist's breakthrough reality series in which he used close-up magic to prank bystanders caught on hidden camera. "*The Carbonaro Effect* was about taking one unsuspecting person down the rabbit hole at a time," he says. It launched the joyful jester into superstardom as well as seriously warped and hilarious adventures.

Now he is taking his triumphant trickery on the road, up a notch, and in your face! "Live touring, I get to scale the operation. The whole theater gets dragged in together. It's interactive, playful, funny and full of those moments where people turn to whoever they came with and say, 'No. Absolutely not. That did not just happen.'"

Photo by: Aaron Farrier

"And the nice thing about doing it live is that you can't blame TV editing anymore. I remove that emotional support system immediately. I called this tour *WONDERBOY* because underneath all of it, is this idea of getting back to that childhood feeling when your imagination felt like a superpower."

Creativity entertains us, tickles us, thrills us and it can even save us. "It is extremely difficult to maintain your righteous fury while you're laughing and pissing your pants," Carbonaro argues, graphically.

"Laughter reminds you very quickly that the stranger sitting next to you is another human being. A room full of people can disagree about virtually everything and still laugh at the same thing, gasp at the same thing, and have the same moment of 'What the hell just happened?'"

"I don't think a magic show is going to heal civilization. That seems like an unreasonable amount of pressure to put on me. But getting a few hundred people into the same room to laugh and feel wonder together? That counts for something."

Oh, that is everything. Count us in.

Carbonaro sees these divided times like a lovely assistant who has been sawed in half. He can stitch her up and have the audience in stitches while he's at it … and he's inviting YOU to join the mirthful mayhem.

"Come see me at Sycuan on **Saturday, November 21**.

"A room full of people can disagree about virtually everything and still laugh at the same thing, gasp at the same thing, and have the same moment of 'What the hell just happened?'"

It's 21+, which means it's basically the same as my family show, but I'm naked the whole time. Teasing. Just at the end."

Damn, now *there's* a reason to watch the end. Get it? End = butt. OK, OK — we'll leave the jokes to the professional. Carbonaro's *WONDERBOY* will wow you and wiggle your funny bone jauntily.

Check him out at **Sycuan Casino Resort** in El Cajon this month. Magic: Accomplished.
sycuan.com



photo by: Michelle Waters

FOUR SHOWS, FOUR VERY DIFFERENT STORIES



ARROWHEAD

An unexpected pregnancy, an abortion party and a weekend at the lake set the stage for Diversionary Theatre's latest comedy.

An abortion party isn't exactly what most people have in mind when planning a weekend getaway. But playwright **Catya McMullen** has made it the centerpiece of *Arrowhead*, a comedy arriving at **Diversionary Theatre** in San Diego.

The story follows Cam, a lesbian facing an unexpected pregnancy, who invites a group of friends to a lake house for a private weekend. The gathering is meant to provide a little support and some discretion, but neither proves particularly easy once everyone is under the same roof.

Old disagreements surface, relationships become increasingly complicated and the weekend takes several turns nobody anticipated. There's even a cat tree involved in the proceedings, which suggests McMullen isn't particularly interested in keeping things conventional.

Arrowhead deals with abortion, bodily autonomy and the often-messy dynamics between friends and siblings. These aren't subjects usually associated with an evening of comedy, but McMullen approaches them through the personalities and conflicts of the people involved rather than turning the play into a series of arguments about reproductive rights.

Diversionary **Artistic Director Sherri Eden Barber** directs the show. Barber has compared the play's fast-moving exchanges and ensemble dynamics to a sitcom, an interesting approach for a story built around such a personal and politically charged subject.

Lindsay Coryne returns to the role of Cam, which she originated in the play's 2024 Los Angeles world premiere. The cast also features **Taylor Renee Henderson**, **Michael DiRoma**, **Lester Isariuz**, **Becca Myers**, **Angelynne Pawaan** and **Annelise Salazar**.

It's an unusual premise for a comedy, particularly one in which an abortion party serves as the reason for bringing everyone together. But that's also what makes *Arrowhead* worth a look. McMullen has created a situation where the characters have plenty to say, not necessarily when they should say it and certainly not always to the right person.

Thursday, November 12 – Sunday, December 6 | Diversionary Theatre, San Diego | diversionary.org | 619.220.0097

DADA WOOF PAPA HOT

Two gay couples discover that marriage, children and suburban-style domesticity aren't necessarily the happily-ever-after they imagined.

For years, gay couples fought for the right to marry, raise children and enjoy the same domestic privileges as their straight neighbors. But what happens when they finally get everything they wanted and discover that family life isn't quite what they expected?

That's the premise of **Peter Parnell**'s *Dada Woof Papa Hot*, coming to **The Bent** in Palm Springs this November.

The comedy follows two affluent gay couples in New York City who have settled into marriage, parenthood and the routines that come with raising children. Their lives now revolve around school schedules, parenting responsibilities and the everyday complications of maintaining a relationship. The freedom and excitement they once enjoyed have largely been replaced by domestic obligations.

Parnell takes a pointed look at the expectations surrounding gay marriage and parenting, particularly the assumption that achieving equality means adopting the same lifestyles and conventions as everyone else. There's sex, marital frustration and plenty of uncomfortable territory along the way

Friday, November 13 – Sunday, November 29 | Palm Springs Cultural Center | thebent.org | 442.268.5474

continues on page 20

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THE LAUGH TRACK

International City Theatre's West Coast premiere takes audiences behind the scenes of I Love Lucy and introduces the woman who helped write its biggest laughs.

Lucille Ball could make an audience laugh just by walking into a room. But somebody had to write the jokes, and one of those people was **Madelyn Pugh**, a pioneering television writer whose work helped make *I Love Lucy* one of the most successful sitcoms in television history.

Pugh's story is the inspiration for *The Laugh Track*, a new comedy by **Wendy MacLeod** receiving its West Coast premiere at **International City Theatre** in Long Beach.

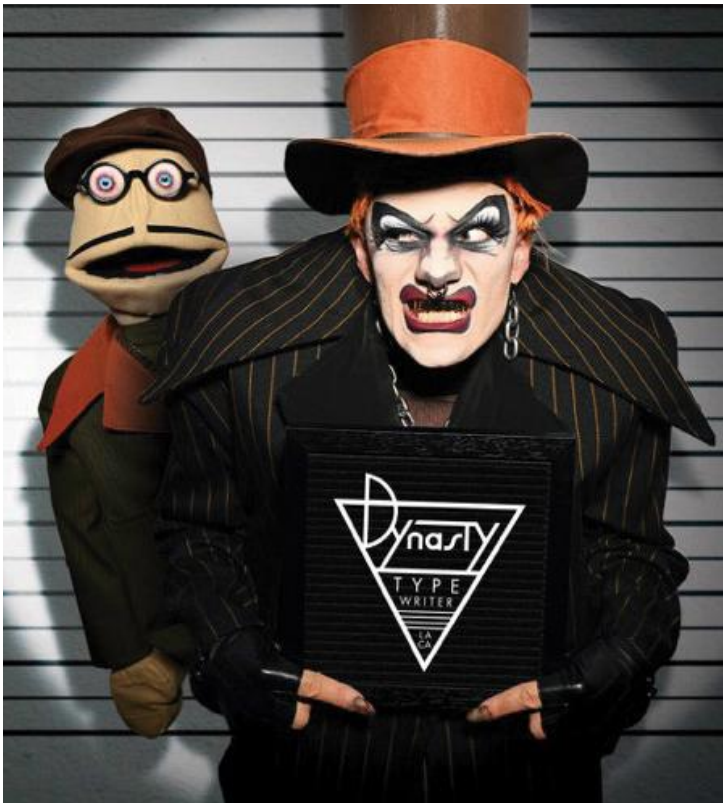
The play begins in 1957, when Pugh (**Alli Brown**) meets her longtime writing partner Bob Carroll Jr. (**Josh Odsess-Rubin**) at a restaurant following the end of their work on *I Love Lucy*. Their conversation takes audiences back to the early days of television, when scripts were written under tight deadlines, network executives had plenty of opinions and women weren't exactly running the writers' rooms.

Through a series of flashbacks, we meet Lucille Ball (**Jennifer Sorensen**), Desi Arnaz (**Bill Mendieta**) and the people responsible for keeping the television machine running. Pugh and Carroll's working relationship also comes under examination, particularly Bob's habit of letting Maddie handle the typing while taking credit for some of her best material.

MacLeod discovered Pugh's story while researching early television for another project. What caught her attention wasn't simply the success of *I Love Lucy*, but how many television firsts were connected to the show, including Ball's on-screen pregnancy and Arnaz's role as a Cuban-born leading man.

Directed by **Brian Shnipper**, *The Laugh Track* looks at the personalities, professional rivalries and considerable work involved in producing a weekly sitcom. It also offers a different perspective on a show most of us know from the finished product rather than what happened behind the cameras.

Friday, November 6 – Sunday, November 22 | Beverly O'Neill Theater, Long Beach | internationalcitytheatre.org | 562.436.4610



DODGY

Dragula's Felony Dodger brings a theatrical robbery, original music and a few questionable characters to Dynasty Typewriter.

Robbing a theater might not be the smartest way to make a living, but it's the starting point for *Dodgy*, a new production starring **Felony Dodger**, a contestant on Season 7 of *The Boulet Brothers' Dragula*.

The show follows Felony and her goonie, who have fallen on hard times and decide that breaking into a theater might solve their financial problems. Getting inside is the easy part. Getting out alive, preferably without breaking into song, could be another matter.

Written, produced and directed by Felony Dodger and Sob Sister (**Caden Gray**), *Dodgy* combines original music with the costume design, puppetry and prop-making skills that have become part of Felony's drag performances.

The production also features appearances by **Jayden Libran**, whose credits include *Beavis and Butt-Head* and *Helluva Boss*, along with **Barry Under Your Bed** and **Charles Galin King**.

It's an unusual combination of drag, musical theater and a robbery plot, with plenty of room for Felony's offbeat imagination.

Wednesday, November 18 | Dynasty Typewriter, Los Angeles
Tickets and a livestream option available | dynastytypewriter.com

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ONE LAST PERFORMACE

Andrew Scott stars in Elsinore, the extraordinary story of Ian Charleson, whose portrayal of Hamlet became an unforgettable act of defiance.

Photos: Anthony Dickenson / © 2026 FOCUS FEATURES LLC

As a film critic, I try to see new and upcoming releases ASAP, but there are very few movies I would drive two hours each way to watch in a cinema. I was willing to do that to see an advance press screening of *Elsinore*. This powerful biopic about Scottish actor Ian Charleson will open nationwide on **Friday, November 20**. Some San Diegans attended its local premiere during last month's San Diego International Film Festival.

Charleson made an international splash as one of the lead runners in 1981's Oscar-winning *Chariots of Fire*. He appeared in other popular 1980s films including *Gandhi* and *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*. Charleson's career and life were cut short as a result of AIDS in 1990. He kept his homosexuality and his HIV+ status secret while living but allowed them to be publicized after his death in an effort to heighten public awareness.

Before his death, however, Charleson starred as Hamlet at London's Royal National Theatre and won accolades. *Elsinore* recounts this final but enduring achievement. Out actor **Andrew Scott** (*All of Us Strangers, Ripley*) embodies Charleson in the movie — especially with his hair dyed blond — and provides a fitting testament to the late artist. As a result, Scott is garnering awards buzz as a potential Best Actor nominee/winner.

"It's about the fact that we only have one chance to live, and you've got to live it," Scott says of the film. "Throw yourself into whatever you feel passionate about, whatever that may be. Ian was in love with the theatre, and he loved being an actor. And he had this opportunity to play this part — and he wasn't going to let anything stop him."

Elsinore was written by **Stephen Beresford**, who previously illuminated another little-known chapter of LGBTQ+ history in the 2014 movie *Pride*. He had long known about Charleson and the legend of his run as Hamlet. But it wasn't until Beresford really began to read about the story of Charleson's final year — about the depth of his dedication to the performance, the love that surrounded him and that he inspired, and the complex political reality he faced as a gay actor in the late 1980s — that he felt compelled to write the story of the actor's life in *Elsinore*.



"When you start researching a story and talk to the real people who were involved, and the first impression you get is that they're so happy because they feel it should be told, that's how you know you're onto something, and that was certainly the case with this," Beresford says. "Ian was so deeply loved. It's very hard to find anyone who has a bad word to say about Ian because he had such a wonderful sense of humor and fun and a love of life."

Scott felt the same way. Beresford had immediately passed the script over to the actor, a close friend and collaborator who Beresford saw in the role from the start. But perhaps most importantly, Scott had also played Hamlet in 2017 in the West End, and it was his intimate understanding of the monumental task that a gravely ill Charleson took on at the National Theatre — in a role that at its core looked death in the face, no less — that floored him most of all.





"*Hamlet* is so exhausting to do," Scott says. "You do it eight times a week, and it requires every single part of you because you're playing the lover, the soldier, the grieving son, the student. There's a sword fight in it. Just the sheer amount of stage time when you're doing that twice a day; it's seven hours. It's an Olympian task. It just blew my mind that Ian went through that when he was so sick. It's a mark of the man that he chose to do that."

Charleson's indefatigable, improbable dedication to the role came at a clear cost. As he was undergoing treatment led by Dr. Margaret Johnson (played in the film by **Olivia Colman**), a groundbreaking physician researching and treating HIV/AIDS when it was widely stigmatized, Charleson knew that joining the production would amount to a guaranteed subtraction of his chances against the disease.

Beresford, who spoke to Dr. Johnson while writing the script, recalls the level of resilience and even rebellion that Charleson displayed while ravaged by illness in order to get onto the stage. "Margaret Johnson told me stories of him being in the clinic and her saying 'You can't perform tonight' and then he'd sneak out the back door to get in a taxi and go to the theater and do it anyway."

While Charleson was fighting the disease and preparing for *Hamlet,* he was also forced to suffer in secrecy around his struggle and identity. As the AIDS crisis raged on in the late 1980s, mainstream attitudes toward queer sexuality and the disease at large were shaped by intense fear and prejudice.

"In the early days of the crisis, people who died from AIDS were buried in graves where they were surrounded by concrete," Beresford recalls. "When 100,000 people had died of COVID in the United States, *The New York Times* put it on the front page. When 100,000 people had died of AIDS, *The New York Times* put it on something like Page 48."

Living in this era of intense homophobia, Charleson chose to keep his identity and diagnosis private from the wider world while he was still alive. That decision, and the complex politics that an entire generation of gay men (and, in Charleson's case, public figures) had to wrestle with, is reckoned with directly in *Elsinore,* primarily through the relationship between Charleson and queer artist Derek Jarman.

Jarman (played by **David Dawson**) was a contemporary who had collaborated with Charleson early on in their respective careers. Whereas he felt it imperative to center queerness and the reality of AIDS in his work, Charleson struggled with his decision to keep his sexuality secret. An intense confrontation between the two men is depicted in the film, when Charleson chafes against Jarman's criticism of him for refusing to go public.

"The film is asking the question: What are we alive for and what matters most?" Beresford says. "I hope it is a call to live. There are some wonderful films that explore the themes of the AIDS crisis, but many of them focus on the tragedy, the loss of life. One of the things that's so extraordinary about the crisis and people living with HIV today is how much they live."

Similarly, Scott was drawn to the strain of lively will that persisted, even amid Charleson's darker circumstances. "I wanted to capture a sense of the fun of the man, that he was really vibrant," Scott says. "The most important thing was to get that essence and the energy of who he was: that just because you're dying, it doesn't mean that you can't live."

ELSINORE | **Opens nationwide Friday, November 20**

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BAD Decisions, GOOD Television and THANKSGIVING Leftovers



November has arrived, which means the holidays are officially breathing down our necks. Before you start worrying about who is bringing the stuffing, who is drinking too much and which relative is going to ruin dinner, there is plenty worth watching from the safety of your couch.

This month, we're splitting our streaming time between LGBTQ+ television and Thanksgiving movies that don't get nearly enough attention. One group features secrets, sex and questionable judgment. The other features families, food and questionable judgment. November has a theme, it seems.

WHAT'S QUEER ON THE STREAM?

THE GILDED AGE — HBO MAX

If you think gay dating is difficult now, try doing it in 1880s New York, where your biggest romantic obstacle isn't a terrible Grindr profile but the possibility of complete social ruin.

HBO's lavish period drama returns with more money, more manners and more people quietly despising one another over dinner. **Oscar van Rhijn** remains one of the show's most interesting characters, a gay man navigating a world where keeping up appearances is practically a full-time occupation.

Naturally, the gowns, mansions and spectacularly petty social climbing are reason enough to tune in. Nobody throws shade quite like a wealthy Victorian with an inheritance to protect.

BLACK DOVES — NETFLIX

Ben Whishaw returns as Sam Young, the gay assassin whose professional life involves eliminating people and whose personal life is somehow even more complicated.

Keira Knightley is back as Helen Webb, the undercover spy juggling domestic life with the occasional international conspiracy. Together, they make a wonderfully dysfunctional team.

The first season gave us espionage, murder, romance and enough double-crossing to make a family Thanksgiving look positively civilized. Season 2 promises more trouble. And let's be real, Whishaw could read a grocery list while holding a gun and we'd probably watch.

YELLOWJACKETS — PARAMOUNT+ WITH SHOWTIME

After years of cannibalism, trauma, secrets and increasingly questionable wilderness survival techniques, *Yellowjackets* is finally heading toward its conclusion.

The relationship between Taissa and Van has been one of the show's most compelling queer storylines, even if romance tends to take a back seat when everyone is busy trying not to get eaten. The series has never been particularly interested in making its characters likable, which is probably why they're so much fun to watch. Will the final season answer all our questions? Will anyone make a reasonable decision? At this point, we'd settle for someone getting through an episode without a nervous breakdown.

THE HUNTING WIVES — NETFLIX

Some women join a book club. Others take up tennis. The ladies of *The Hunting Wives* apparently prefer seduction, manipulation and the occasional dead body.

Brittany Snow and **Malin Åkerman** return as Sophie and Margo, whose relationship has already caused enough trouble to keep several therapists comfortably employed.

The show's first season was a gloriously trashy mix of Southern privilege, sexual tension and murder. Season 2 arrives just in time for Thanksgiving, which seems appropriate. Nothing says holiday relaxation quite like watching rich people destroy their lives.

CRUSH HOUSE — MENCRUSH

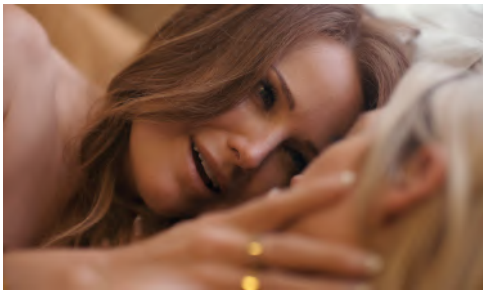
Ten adult-content creators. One luxury villa in Baja California. A $20,000 prize. And apparently, keeping your clothes on is not a prerequisite for winning a reality competition.

MENCRUSH's first reality series brings together 10 international adult performers competing for the title of Most Valuable Crush. Hosted by adult film stars **Josh Moore** and **JJ Aussie**, the show serves up the usual reality-television ingredients: attractive contestants, shifting alliances, eliminations and enough flirting to keep everyone wondering who is playing the game and who is playing each other.

But there's more happening here than a houseful of handsome men showing off their assets. As the competition progresses, the contestants get surprisingly candid about their lives in the adult entertainment industry. They discuss family rejection, relationships, professional challenges and what it's like being openly gay while working in a business where everyone thinks they already know everything about you.

But this is still a competition, and nobody came all the way to Baja California just to have a group therapy session. mencrush.com







PASS THE PIE AND PRESS PLAY

Thanksgiving movies have always gotten the short end of the holiday wishbone. Christmas has about 47,000 films involving small towns, handsome widowers and women who rediscover the true meaning of life after leaving their corporate jobs.

Thanksgiving gets a parade, a turkey and whatever argument your family has been saving since Easter.

Still, there are some terrific films built around the holiday. Here are five worth revisiting before the relatives arrive.



THE ICE STORM (1997)

However your family Thanksgiving goes, it's probably calmer than the suburban Connecticut one in Ang Lee's *The Ice Storm*.

Set in 1973, the film follows two families dealing with infidelity, sexual experimentation, emotional repression and an unfortunate weather forecast.

Sigourney Weaver, **Kevin Kline**, **Joan Allen** and **Christina Ricci** lead an exceptional cast. It's beautifully made and deeply uncomfortable, so probably not the movie to put on while Grandma is carving the turkey. Unless Grandma has a surprisingly adventurous taste in cinema.



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS (1995)

Jodie Foster directed this wonderfully chaotic Thanksgiving comedy starring **Holly Hunter** as a woman returning home after a spectacularly bad day.

Her family isn't exactly waiting with open arms and perfectly basted turkey. There's an overbearing mother, a difficult sister and a gay brother played by **Robert Downey Jr.**, who brings much-needed mischief to the proceedings.

It never pretends family gatherings are magical, which is why it's so funny and, somehow, so tender. Surviving Thanksgiving is the whole point.



THE HUMANS (2021)

A family gathers for Thanksgiving in a rundown Manhattan apartment. Sounds pleasant enough, right? Not particularly.

Based on Stephen Karam's acclaimed play, *The Humans* stars **Richard Jenkins**, **Jayne Houdyshell**, **Amy Schumer** and **Beanie Feldstein** in a drama that slowly reveals the anxieties, resentments and disappointments lurking beneath an ordinary holiday dinner.

The apartment itself deserves a supporting-actor nomination. Between the strange noises, gloomy lighting and unsettling atmosphere, you'll wonder whether you're watching a family drama or a horror movie. The answer is a little of both.



WHAT'S COOKING? (2000)

This overlooked Thanksgiving film follows four Los Angeles families preparing for the holiday, each bringing different cultural traditions and plenty of personal baggage to the table.

Directed by **Gurinder Chadha**, the movie features an ensemble cast that includes **Joan Chen**, **Julianna Margulies**, **Kyra Sedgwick** and **Mercedes Ruehl**.

One storyline follows a lesbian couple navigating family expectations, giving the film a particularly welcome place in our Stream Queen lineup.

It's warm and funny, with enough food on screen to make you hungry even if you've just finished dinner.



TOWER HEIST (2011)

Thanksgiving doesn't always require a dining room. It can also require **Ben Stiller**, **Eddie Murp**hy and a plan to rob a wealthy businessman during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

This breezy heist comedy features an entertaining ensemble, including **Alan Alda**, **Matthew Broderick** and **Téa Leoni**. It's not exactly a traditional holiday movie, but the parade plays a significant role in the action.

And after several films about dysfunctional families, it's refreshing to watch people take their frustrations out on a billionaire instead of one another.

Besides, by the time Thanksgiving dinner is over, you might be ready to plan a heist of your own. Preferably involving the last piece of pumpkin pie.

Gratitude IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Finding Light in the Darkness



November has traditionally been a month when we turn our attention to gratitude. As Thanksgiving approaches, we are encouraged to count our blessings, gather with loved ones, and reflect on the things that bring joy and meaning to our lives. But this year, gratitude might feel a little harder to come by.

At the beginning of the month, we have an extremely consequential midterm election. Even if the results are decisive, many are concerned about what might happen between Election Day and January, when those elected take office.

For many in the LGBTQ+ community, these concerns are not simply about political preferences or disagreements over policy. They are about our families, our relationships, our safety, and our right to live openly and authentically. It is difficult to feel grateful when you are worried about what tomorrow might bring.

Then there is Thanksgiving. For some, the holiday means gathering around a table with people who love and affirm us. For others, it means navigating complicated family relationships, carefully choosing which subjects to avoid, or preparing for conversations with relatives whose deeply held beliefs challenge our very identities.

Some of us have created chosen families because our families of origin could not or would not accept us. Others continue the challenging work of maintaining relationships across differences. None of this makes gratitude particularly easy. But what if we thought about gratitude differently?

We sometimes treat gratitude as though it requires everything to be going well. We imagine that being thankful means setting aside our fears or pretending that everything is fine. Yet gratitude does not have to mean denying the difficulties of our lives.

Some of the deepest gratitude comes from recognizing what we have managed to preserve, create and nurture in the midst of adversity. And if there is one thing the LGBTQ+ community knows something about, it is living through adversity.

We have lived through times when our relationships were criminalized, when our love was considered shameful, and when our very existence was treated as a threat. We have endured the devastation of the AIDS crisis, fought for the right to marry, and worked tirelessly to create communities where young people might grow up with greater freedom than previous generations ever imagined.

Those victories were not inevitable. They took courage, persistence, organizing and countless difficult conversations. They came because people refused to surrender hope, even when there seemed to be little reason for it.

We have also navigated difficult elections before. We have watched our rights debated, our families questioned, and our humanity reduced to campaign talking points. Yet here we are. Not untouched by those experiences but certainly shaped by them. Because of them we are, perhaps, wiser, more resilient, and more aware of the extraordinary power of community.

That does not mean we should simply accept whatever comes next. Gratitude is not complacency, and hope is not passivity. We can be thankful for the progress we have made while remaining determined to protect it. We can appreciate the people who have stood beside us while recognizing those who still need our support.

And we can offer something to the wider world that is desperately needed right now: the wisdom of people who have learned how to find light in dark places. Our lived experience has taught us that we can be joyful amid uncertainty, that disagreement does not have to destroy relationships, that community can sustain us when institutions fail us, and that hope is something we create through our actions.

This Thanksgiving, we do not have to pretend the world is better than it is. We can recognize the love that persists despite the world's imperfections. We can be grateful for chosen family, for hard-won freedoms, for the courage of those who came before us, and for those who carry the work forward today.

Darkness is real, but so is the light we bring to it. Sometimes, the most meaningful way to give thanks is to become the reason someone else has to hope.

Tony Bianca is the director of Spiritual Exploration and Worship Arts at First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego. firstuusandiego.org

Sweet Evening Breeze

THE "MOTHER" OF A SOUTHERN TOWN

Like her name, **Sweet Evening Breeze** — affectionately known as Sweets — tenderly flows through the memories of many who still live in Lexington, Kentucky. Drag queen, churchgoer, community caretaker and a child of former slaves, Sweet Evening Breeze led a fascinating life defying what many would expect from a gender nonconforming Black person in the segregated South.

Born James R. Herndon in 1892, Sweet Evening Breeze would become a beloved member of the Lexington community and a pioneer in the city's early LGBTQ+ visibility. Sweets worked at Good Samaritan Hospital, where she eventually became head orderly (a major accomplishment for a Black person living in the Jim Crow era). She developed a reputation for her compassion and continued care for others, even outside of the hospital. "If you were driving into Lexington and saw Sweets sitting on somebody's porch in the evening," friend and local activist Robert Morgan recalls, "you'd know, 'Oh somebody is sick there, Sweets is taking care of them.'"



An avid churchgoer, Sweets would put on unique fundraisers for Black churches — the most famous being her "womanless weddings." Authentically held inside a chapel, ticket-buyers would act as guests in what was essentially an immersive theatrical performance — with all roles being played by men. It is said that she raised enough money to make sure that every child in the community had shoes. She was in many ways a mascot of Lexington, playing important roles throughout the community, and eventually earning the title of the **Mother of Us All.**

Her home on Prall Street became an important gathering place for friends, her drag family and community members from all walks of life. It offered opportunities for entertainment, connection and belonging in a time when discrimination made safe social spaces difficult to find.

One of her drag daughters, Leigh Angelique, often appeared on stage at The Living Room on East Main Street. One night in the spring of 1970, police raided the bar and arrested several performers, including Leigh, for "wearing a disguise" (i.e., cross-dressing).

Released from jail with an impending court date, Leigh desperately sought help from her drag mother in the middle of the night. For you see, those who were close to Sweets knew she had a nice *and* a naughty side. Those with the proclivities knew her house was a place one could have a sinful rendezvous. "Individual people could approach Sweets, not for something gay necessarily, but for a safe place to meet up with someone for sex," friend Robert Morgan recalls. It was alleged that Sweets kept track of everyone who came through her door — including elected officials, policemen and other esteemed members of the community — in case she needed to leverage it later.

Upon hearing the news of her drag daughter's arrest, Sweets called the judge overseeing the case. Simply telling him it was "in his best interest to drop the charges," the judge complied. In the words of Leigh, "I don't know what Sweets had on the people in this town, but she had something." It is believed this was the last time a Lexington bar was raided for being a gay hangout.

Sweet Evening Breeze died on December 16, 1983, at age 91. She lived in a period when LGBTQ+ stories were often overlooked or excluded from mainstream historical accounts, but her legacy has continued to gain recognition. It's not a story you'd typically expect to come out of a Southern town in the Jim Crow era.

"The thing is, there have always been queer people everywhere doing the work, even in places you'd consider too conservative or backwards," says **Fernando Lopez**, senior strategist of the National LGBTQ Task Force. In just a few months, the organization will bring its annual **Creating Change** conference to Kentucky, where over 2,500 people from 1,100 organizations will spend a week learning from LGBTQ+ organizers on the ground.

"Across Kentucky, community organizers have built durable infrastructure while navigating escalating state-level attacks, particularly targeting trans communities," Lopez says. "Kentuckians know how to operate inside constraints, defend local gains, advance policy where possible, litigate strategically and build coalitions that hold under pressure."

This is in no doubt thanks to the impactful work of the trailblazers that came before us, including Sweet Evening Breeze. Her story is an enduring part of Kentucky's heritage, no matter how you feel about the red state. Sweets showed that legacy comes from living with courage, that compassion can cross social boundaries and that one person's determination can inspire a community long after their lifetime.

Mother Of Us All. John Ashley. 1972. Collection of the Faulkner Morgan Archive.

SHOULD YOU TALK TO YOUR GYM CRUSH?

These days, getting to the gym is a task. First, there's finding the time and energy. And while I'm vastly aware of the phrase, "If you want it badly enough, you'll make time for it," I also understand that bitches be tired. Hi, I'm bitches. Second, instant gratification: Why hop on an elliptical machine if you can just take a shot or pop a pill or whatever is the most popular way to consume a GLP-1.

No judgment — I believe everyone is entitled to do what they need to do in order to feel better about themselves. That's why you can find me over at the Botox clinic, refreshing my face for the holidays. It's going to be a very merry Christmas when I'm unable to offer any sort of expression or emotion.

Believe it or not, you can also find me at the gym. Why? No. 1, I like to eat … a lot. I know that working out five to six days a week, incorporating cardio and weight training, won't completely counteract my routine Wingstop binge attack. But I'm hoping it's good for a couple of drumsticks. No. 2, I'm a bit of a masochist. I actually enjoy exercising, especially running. My deepest apologies to the patrons at my local Planet Fitness who have to endure me thinking the treadmill is a runway. No. 3, and perhaps the most important one, I have a gym crush. Who am I kidding? *Crushes*. I learned early in life that you should never pin all your tails on one donkey. Still, there is one crush in particular who keeps me coming back to sweat it all out.

Unfortunately, I fear this man is straight. I don't have any proof; it's just a hunch. The good news is that my hunches aren't always spot-on. I mean, I had a huge hunch that Kamala Harris was going to win in 2024. Look how great that turned out. That leaves us with the bad news: Donald Trump is president.

This is one of those ridiculous moments when I wish everyone wore a nametag, offering some no-frills information. You know: Gay, straight. Single, taken. Top, bottom. Wealthy, generous. Because without some sort of identification, I don't know how to approach this man, or if that would even be a good idea, which leads me to wonder … should you talk to your gym crush?

Funny enough, about a month ago, I thought he was coming over to talk to me. I was on the treadmill, lip syncing for my life, when his what-has-to-be size 12 shoes stepped toward me. I immediately pulled out one of my ear buds and waited for him to propose … coffee! What do you take me for? Turns out, he was simply moving out of the way of oncoming traffic. I told you: I'm not so good at hunches. Or maybe it was the result of participating in a little puff, puff, pass before my session.

Now, imagine my surprise — and disgust — when just last week I *did* see him talking to someone. A man. A man who was not me. To add insult to injury, they weren't just chatting it up like fucking Marv and Harry planning their next heist, but laughing hysterically, nearly causing a scene. I wonder how amusing they'll find it that I turned them into management for lewd behavior. Like I said, I'm bitches. And bitches don't play. Also … bitches sound a little crazy town.

Obviously, there are pros and cons to putting yourself out there and making an introduction to your gym crush. The pros: He may be gay, single, vers, wealthy and generous — or your version of that. The cons: You may have to stop going to the gym. But is that *really* a con, or more like a bonus pro? After all, winter is coming, and instead of toning it, we can just cover it with a flannel shirt or bulky sweater. So what we ultimately have here is a win-win situation.

The takeaway is pretty clear: It's important to get out of your comfort zone and try something new. Sure, you may strike out. Yet, you could also hit a home run. Told you that I was vers. Yeah, I know what you were thinking. In the end, you never know until you try. And honestly, it's just life … what do you have to lose?



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