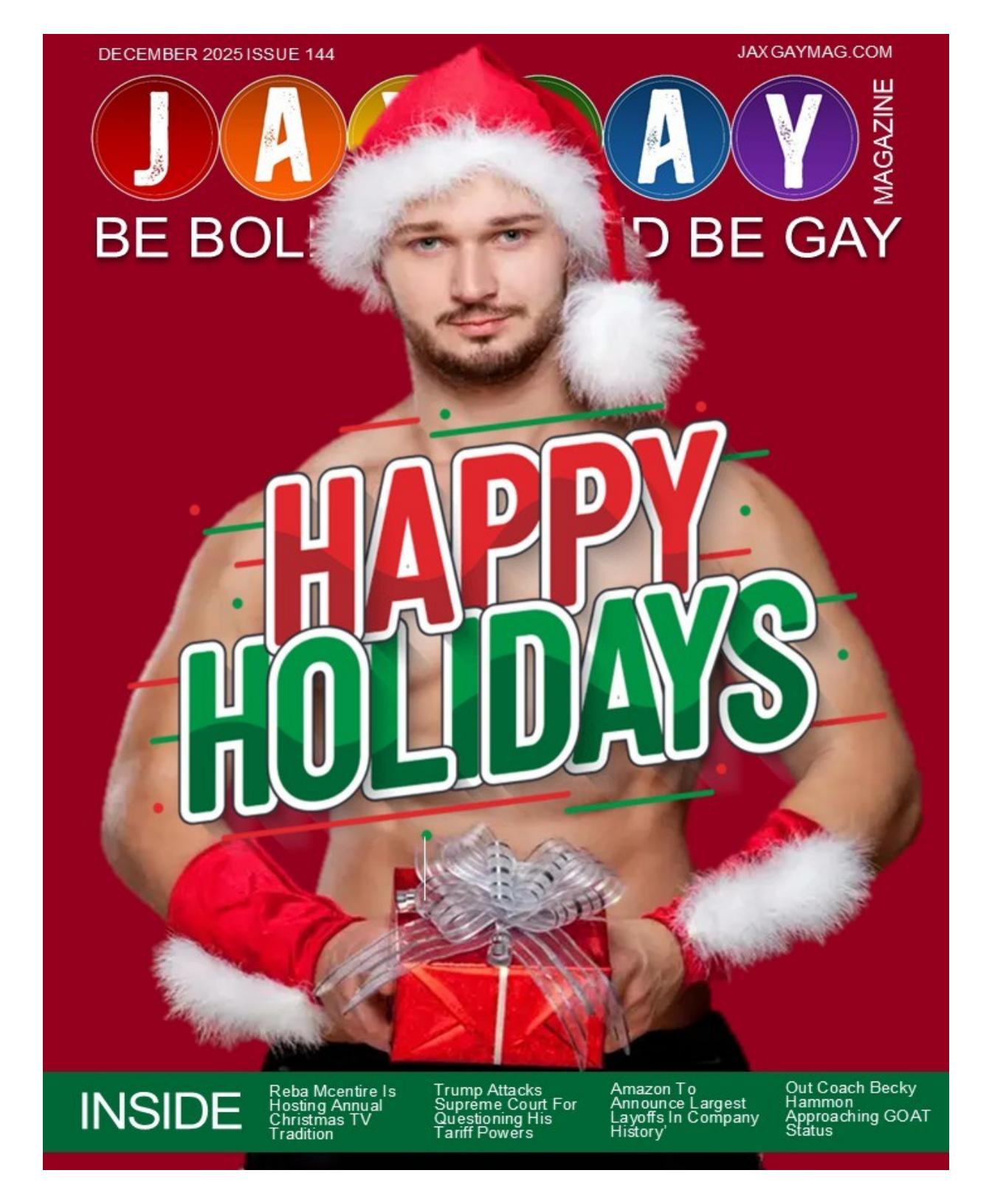


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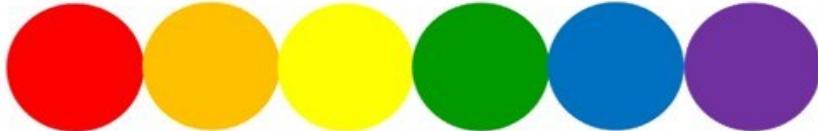
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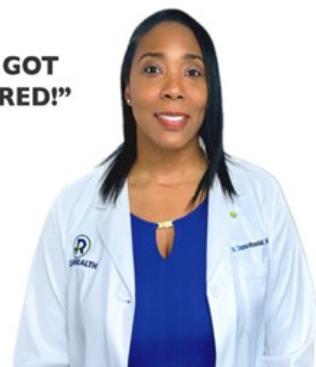
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Jax Gay Magazine is published every first Friday of the month (12 issues/year).

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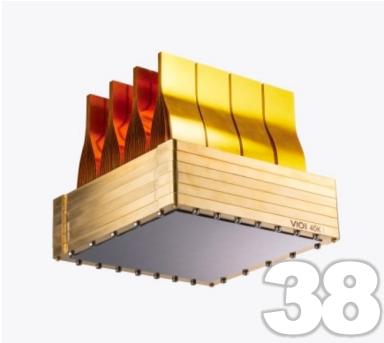
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Best Trader Joe's Gifts For Food Lovers In 2025

By David Vandygriff



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News & Politics

Florida Republican: US Needs To Invade Venezuela

By David Vandgriff

Rep. Maria Elvira Salazar (R-Fla.) backed U.S. military intervention in Venezuela on Monday, arguing President Nicolás Maduro knows the U.S. is about to “go in,” resulting in a “field day” for American oil companies.

Salazar called Maduro “the head of a terrorist organization” on Fox Business the same day that the Trump administration designated Venezuela’s Cartel de los Soles as a foreign terrorist group. This puts Maduro “right in the crosshairs — we can take him out and extradite him,” she said.

“So now that he has understood that he’s on that very nefarious list of the terrorist organization, that the airspace above Venezuela has been closed off, and the commercial airlines from the United States are not flying, he’s understanding that we’re about to go in,” she told Fox host David Asman.

“He understands that he is — he has been our enemy for the last 25 years,” Salazar continued. “Venezuela, for those Americans who do not understand why we need to go in, for three — basically, for

three reasons.”

The first reason, Salazar said, was that Venezuela’s oil production would offer “a field day” for U.S. oil companies.

“American companies can go in and fix all the oil pipe — the whole oil rigs and everything that has to do with the Venezuelan petroleum companies, or everything that has to do with oil and the derivatives,” Salazar said.

She next said Venezuela has been a “launching pad” for Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, Cuba and other countries and terrorist groups that want to “do harm to us and our young Americans.” Thirdly, Salazar claimed Maduro was the leader of the Cartel de los Soles.

Asked what will happen if the Venezuelan people do not back regime change, she said the country’s people, including its military, do not support Maduro.

“We know, maybe the top echelon of the military forces in Venezuela may be with Maduro, and they’re going to flee with him,” she said. “But the middle and lower ranks are with the opposition. This is going to be very similar to Panama.”



Salazar, a former journalist who has denounced various Latin American leaders including Cuba’s former President Fidel Castro before his death, is a frequent critic of Maduro’s presidency and has repeatedly called for his ousting on social media.

Her interview comes as tensions escalate between the U.S. and Venezuela; Monday’s announcement on the Cartel de los Soles will give the White House wider authority to impose sanctions and crack down on Maduro’s assets.

The Trump administration has accumulated a large military presence in the Caribbean, with airstrikes attacking alleged “narco-terrorists” on drug smuggling boats. Since September, more than 80 people have been killed in the strikes. The administration has said these strikes have been conducted to prevent drugs from reaching American shores.

But as tensions ramp up, most Americans say they do not want to see military action in Venezuela. A recent CBS News/YouGov shows that 70 percent said they were against “the U.S. taking military action

in Venezuela," while 30 percent said they were for it.

The Federal Aviation

Administration also recently advised pilots to "exercise caution" when flying near Venezuela due to the

"worsening security situation and heightened military activity" in and around the country.

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OUT & HEALTH

New Mutant Mpox Strain Discovered In England

By Barbara Yeng

Health officials in England have identified a newly evolved strain of mpox in a person who recently returned from traveling in Asia. The rare recombinant version of the virus blends two major global strains, the BBC reports.

Genomic testing by the UK Health Security Agency found that the new virus variant contains genetic elements from clade Ib, which has been linked to more severe illness, and clade IIb, the strain responsible for the 2022 global outbreak. The virus does not yet have a formal name, and officials say they are still assessing its public health significance.

“It’s a watch and wait situation at this point,” Dr. Demetre Daskalakis said on Monday. “It’s hard to say what it means other than vigilance needs to continue for mpox and [this] highlights the importance of a strong public health system to detect changes in the virus.”

Daskalakis is a leading infectious disease physician who previously served as the White House National Mpox Response Deputy Coordinator under President Joe Biden. In August, he resigned as director

of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. In his resignation letter, he said that under the second Trump administration, the agency had been politicized beyond repair.

He stated at the time that the CDC, as it was known, “is over.” Last week, Daskalakis was named chief medical officer at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center in New York City, one of the United States’s largest providers of LGBTQ+ health care.

The CDC’s mpox website, which was last updated on December 5, does not mention the new strain.

Daskalakis said that the UK Health Security Agency’s website is a reliable public source for updates on the new variant.

The discovery in England follows alarming reporting in October, when a more severe strain of mpox, clade I, was confirmed in three hospitalized patients in Southern California with no travel history, marking the first known cases of local transmission of that strain



inside the United States.

In an interview at the time, Daskalakis described the moment as an inflection point. “That means somewhere there’s been local transmission of a virus that we know can transmit and has a pretty good profile for being contagious,” he said.

All three California patients — two in Los Angeles and one in Long Beach — were hospitalized and unvaccinated. While their cases appeared unrelated, genomic sequencing showed the viral samples were genetically linked. Clade I, Daskalakis warned, is not necessarily more infectious, but significantly more severe than the clade II strain that drove the 2022 outbreak.

“The same communities who were most at risk in 2022, men who have sex with men, trans and nonbinary people, people living with HIV, are the ones who need to pay attention again,” he said.

Daskalakis described that moment as one of “watchful waiting,” not panic, but warned that sustained viral spread creates the precise conditions for mutation and

recombination. The new recombinant strain now detected in England reflects exactly that risk: a virus adapting in real time as it moves through uneven global health systems.

Department of Health and Human Services press secretary Emily Hilliard did not respond to Jax Gay Magazine's request for comment.

Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an assistant professor of medicine at Emory University, told the BBC that the new strain represents what many experts feared would happen if mpox transmission continued unchecked. "The more mpox circulation we permit, the more

opportunities the virus has to recombine and adapt, further entrenching mpox virus as a human pathogen that is not going away," she said.

Vaccination remains the most effective protection against severe disease. Health officials estimate the mpox vaccine is 75 to 80 percent effective. While no studies yet confirm how well it protects against the new recombinant strain, officials believe a high degree of protection is likely.

Dr. Katy Sinka, head of sexually transmitted infections at UKHSA, said genomic testing made the discovery possible. "It's normal for viruses to evolve," she said.

"Getting vaccinated is a proven effective way to protect yourself against severe disease."

In October, Daskalakis stressed that the Jynneos vaccine remained fully protective. "Two doses are enough. You don't need a booster right now."

Mpox spreads through close physical contact and contaminated materials. While the 2022 outbreak disproportionately affected gay and bisexual men and transgender people, experts continue to stress that the virus is driven by exposure and not identity.

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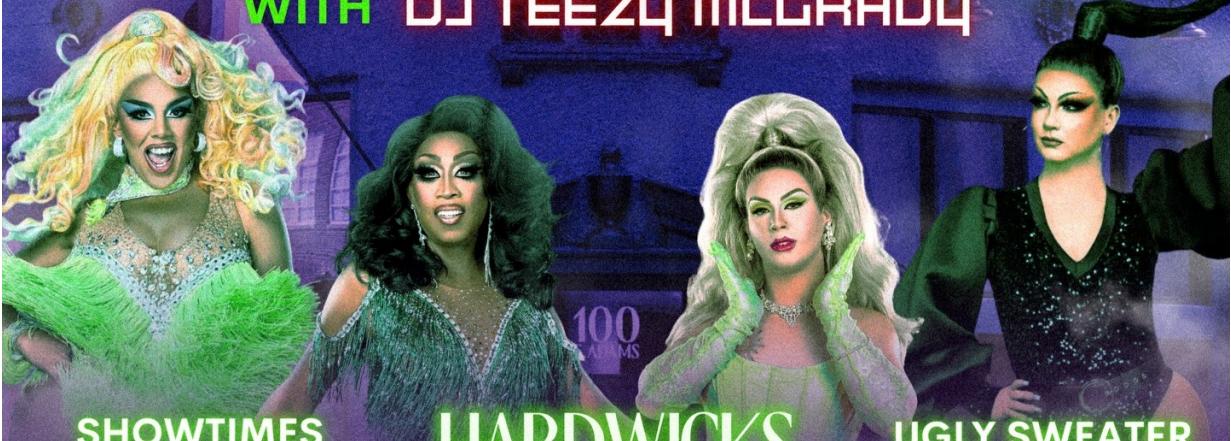
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Science & Technology

Production Begins Of 'World's First' Electric Flying Car In California

By Joe Ronning

In 2022, after a decade of development, the company unveiled its all-electric Model A, capable of driving 220 miles (354 kilometers) and flying 110 miles (177 kilometers).

Backed by early Tesla and Bitcoin investor Tim Draper, Alef progressed from its 2016 prototype to full-size test flights in 2018 and obtained airworthiness certification from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 2023.

"We are happy to report that production of the first flying car has started on schedule. The team worked hard to meet the timeline, because we know people are waiting. We're finally able to get production off the ground," said Jim Dukhovny, CEO of Alef, in a

In February, the company released footage showing its flying car completing successful test flights in an urban environment.

Alef Takes Off

Based in San Mateo, California, Alef is a sustainable electric transportation company developing a road-legal

passenger car capable of vertical takeoff and forward flight. Fully electric and road-legal, Alef has reported that its flying car has already received 3,500 pre-orders worth \$1 billion, demonstrating strong demand for the futuristic yet practical vehicle.

Now, Alef Aeronautics has begun production of its first flying car, the Alef Model A Ultralight, marking a significant milestone in electric air mobility. Hand-assembled in California at Alef's Silicon Valley facility, each car will take several months to complete.

According to the firm, the production process combines robotic and industrial manufacturing with handcrafting, ensuring rigorous testing of individual components and extensive test flights of the fully assembled vehicle. The careful approach allows Alef to refine manufacturing techniques before scaling to automated mass production.

The initial batch of Alef flying cars will be delivered to a select group of early customers for real-world testing under

highly controlled conditions. These early adopters will receive training, compliance guidance, and ongoing maintenance support from Alef. Insights gained from this phase will be used to optimize production and prepare for fulfilling the company's pre-order backlog.

Roads Meet Sky

Alef's flying car stands out through a combination of features that distinguish it from both traditional vehicles and modern eVTOL aircraft. It is considered the first true "flying car" because it functions as a road-legal automobile while also performing vertical takeoff and flight.

Unlike cars, it can lift off and fly, and unlike eVTOL air taxis, it can be driven on public roads without relying on airports or vertiports. According to Alef, it also differs from cars with deployable wings, as it requires no runway and offers full vertical takeoff capability. The vehicle is 100 percent electric, delivering clean-energy transportation with lower energy use per trip than a Tesla, other EVs, or eVTOL air



taxis.

Alef is currently testing the "Model Zero," a research platform designed to evolve into the company's first consumer product, the Model A. The Alef Model A is the only drivable flying car with vertical takeoff and landing that fits within existing city infrastructure for parking and

road travel. It offers a 220-mile (354-kilometer) driving range and a 110-mile (177-kilometer) flight range, supported by a gimbaled cabin, elevon system, and fully enclosed propellers. Key safety features include Distributed Electric Propulsion, multi-layer redundancy, advanced diagnostics, obstacle avoidance, glide landing, and a

ballistic parachute.

The Model A is available for pre-sale at \$300,000. Alef's long-term vision includes the Model Z, a four-seat sedan planned for 2035, priced at \$35,000 and capable of 200 miles (321 kilometers) of flight and 400 miles (643 kilometers) of driving, with projected autonomous flight capabilities.



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The 'Loving' Bea Arthur

By Unknown



She borrowed a winter coat from Angela Lansbury, flew across the country despite having cancer, and performed one last time. Three years later, she left \$300,000 to save homeless LGBTQ+ kids nobody wanted.

Long after *The Golden Girls* had made her a household name, Bea Arthur lived quietly in Los Angeles, fiercely guarding her privacy.

The woman who had terrified Archie Bunker as the feminist powerhouse Maude, who had silenced prison riots and thrown Betty White into closets as Dorothy Zbornak, lived a life her closest colleagues barely knew.

She hosted raucous dinner parties in the 1970s filled with closeted gay men who were drawn to her like moths to light.

Her son Matthew, watching these gatherings as an eleven-year-old, remembered: "They were always excited to come to her house."

Bea understood something fundamental: she was beloved by the gay community. And in her seventies, she decided to

give something back.

The year was 2005. Bea Arthur was in her early eighties and privately battling cancer.

That's when her friend Ray Klausen came to her with a story that broke her heart.

Ray was an iconic set designer who'd worked with Madonna, Barbra Streisand, Elvis, even Judy Garland. He'd started volunteering at a tiny organization in New York called the Ali Forney Center.

The center had opened three years earlier with six cots in a church basement for homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Ray told Bea what he'd learned: thousands of LGBTQ+ kids across America were being thrown out of their homes simply for being who they were.

Parents were abandoning their own children. Teenagers were sleeping on the streets. Facing violence. Harassment. Exploitation.

The Ali Forney Center had only twelve shelter beds. Over a hundred kids were waiting on the streets to get in.

Those beds were precious—the only place many of these

kids could go where they wouldn't face homophobic abuse.

When Bea Arthur heard this, she was horrified.

"These kids at the Ali Forney Center are literally dumped by their families because they are lesbian, gay or transgender," she said in an interview with *Next Magazine*. "This organization really is saving lives."

She told Ray: "I would do anything in my power to protect children who are discarded by their parents for being LGBT." And she meant it.

Ray assembled a team to put together a benefit performance. Bea went to work immediately, giving interviews, promoting the show, raising awareness.

The plan: she would revive her one-woman Broadway show, "Bea Arthur on Broadway: Just Between Friends," for one night only.

All proceeds would go to the Ali Forney Center.

There was just one problem.

The performance would be in December. In New York City.

Bea Arthur hated the cold.

Hated it so much she usually refused to go anywhere with winter weather.

She didn't even own a winter coat.

But she'd made a promise to those kids.

So she called her best friend Angela Lansbury and borrowed a coat.

Then, in December 2005, despite being in her eighties and secretly fighting cancer, Bea Arthur flew from California to New York.

Carl Siciliano, the Ali Forney Center's executive director, met her at the theater.

He was taken aback by her appearance. Bea looked frail. Tired. Nothing like the force of nature he'd imagined.

Later, he would understand why. She'd been sick. Pushing through illness and pain to be there.

But when the curtain rose, something happened.

Bea Arthur transformed. that night, she raised \$40,000 for homeless LGBTQ+ youth. Forty thousand dollars from a single performance.

For Carl Siciliano and his tiny organization, it was a miracle. But Bea's impact went far beyond the money.

Bea Arthur was show business royalty. A Tony winner. An Emmy winner. A cultural icon.

When someone of her stature stood up for homeless LGBTQ+ youth, people paid attention.



She continued giving interviews about the Ali Forney Center. Talking about these kids who'd been thrown away. Using her celebrity to shine a light on an invisible crisis.

New donors started appearing. The organization began to grow.

Because Bea Arthur had said these kids mattered.

Three years later, on April 25, 2009, Bea Arthur died of cancer at age 86.

Carl Siciliano cried when he read the obituaries.

That's when he learned she'd been quietly struggling with cancer for years.

She'd been sick when she flew to New York. Sick when she performed. Sick when she pushed herself so hard to help. She'd done it anyway.

A few months after her death, Carl received devastating news.

The recession had hit. Hard.

The Ali Forney Center was on the brink of collapse.

Foundation money had dried up. Corporate donations disappeared.

They were struggling to pay rent. To buy food. To keep the doors open.

Over a hundred kids were waiting for housing every single night.

Carl didn't know how they'd survive.

Then, one morning, a FedEx package arrived at his office.

Inside was a check for \$300,000.

From Bea Arthur's estate.

Carl hadn't known the amount. He knew Bea had included the Ali Forney Center in her will, but had no idea it would be this much.

The check arrived exactly when they needed it most.

"I honestly don't know how we would have made it through the recession without that extraordinary gift," Carl wrote later. "Bea Arthur truly meant it when she said she would do anything



to help our kids."

At Bea's memorial service—hosted by Angela Lansbury at Broadway's Majestic Theatre—Carl made a pledge.

The first building the Ali Forney Center ever owned would be named in honor of Bea Arthur.

It took eight years, but in 2017, that promise became reality.

The city of New York turned over a long-abandoned building—a former crack house—to the Ali Forney Center.

With \$3.3 million from the New York City Council and Manhattan Borough President, they renovated it completely.

On November 30, 2017, the Bea Arthur Residence for Homeless LGBTQ+ Youth opened its doors.

Eighteen beds. A two-year transitional living program. Clinical support. Job training. Education placement.

A place where kids discarded by their families could heal. Could build futures. Could learn they deserved dignity and love.

Bea's son Matthew and grand-

son Brody attended the opening ceremony.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio declared November 30th "Bea Arthur Day."

Matthew Saks later reflected on his mother's charity choices: "It seemed like all her charities were mostly about innocents—either kids or animals or gay or lesbian teens, who have a bigger fight than anybody can imagine."

Today, the Ali Forney Center serves over 2,000 LGBTQ+ youth each year.

They operate fifteen residential sites across New York City. A 24/7 drop-in center. Medical and mental health clinics. Educational programs. Job placement services.

They've helped thousands of kids transition from homelessness to independent, thriving lives.

And it exists, in large part, because Bea Arthur borrowed a winter coat, flew into the cold, and performed one last time while secretly dying of cancer.

Because she left \$300,000 to kids she never met.

Because she believed that no child deserves to be thrown away.

Bea Arthur was famous for her zingers. Her perfectly timed putdowns. Her ability to silence a room with a single look.

But her greatest performance wasn't on stage or screen.

It was quieter than that.

It was flying across the country when she was sick.

It was using her fame to amplify voices no one wanted to hear.

It was ensuring that her legacy would include a building where kids kicked out for being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender could find safety.

"I would do anything in my power to protect children who are discarded by their parents for being LGBT," she'd said.

And when she died, she proved she'd meant every word.

Her son Matthew said something that captures it perfectly: "That's something she wouldn't have wanted—having a building named after her. But too bad. She deserves it."

In a world that celebrated Bea Arthur for her sharp wit and commanding presence, her most enduring act was one of quiet generosity.

Eighteen beds in Manhattan. A refuge for kids society had abandoned.

A promise kept beyond the grave.

Because Bea Arthur understood that sometimes the most important thing you can do is show up—even when you're tired, even when you're sick, even when you'd rather stay home in the warm California sun.

She borrowed a coat and flew into winter.

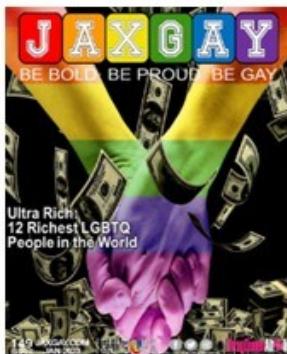
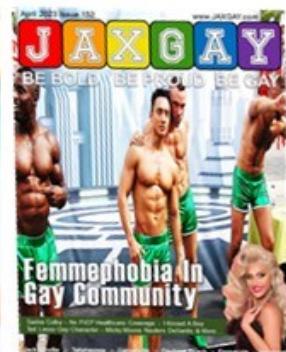
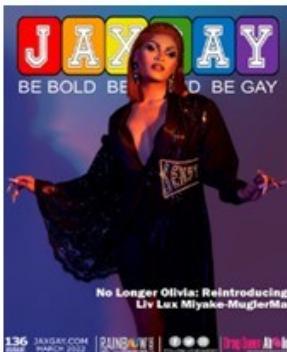
And because she did, thousands of kids found their way home.

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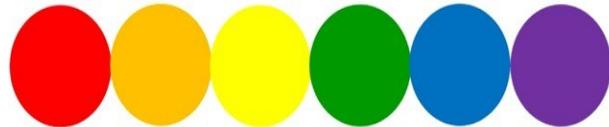
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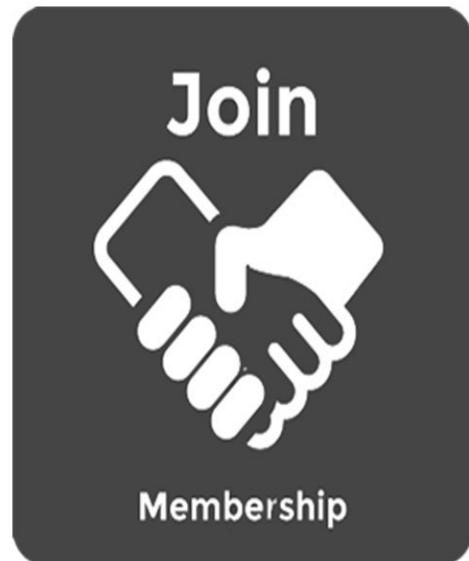
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OUT & HEALTH

L.A. Hits Record-High LGBTQ Hate Crimes

By James Maker

In a city that's considered one of the friendliest places for LGBTQ+ people to visit and reside, hate crimes based on sexual orientation and gender identity reached a "record-high" in 2024.

There were 1,355 reported hate crimes in Los Angeles last year, according to the 2024 Report on Hate Crimes, with the county experiencing "record-high crimes targeting African Americans, Jewish people, Latino/as, LGBTQ+ individuals, Middle Easterners, Muslims, Scientologists, and women."

"Each of these numbers represents a person whose dignity was violated and whose community feels that harm," LACCHR Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath said in a statement.

"This year's report makes clear that hate isn't slowing — it's evolving and appearing in the daily lives of far too many Angelenos. As a County, we will not accept this as our new normal."

The data for transgender people is particularly alarming — there were 102 anti-trans hate crimes in the city last year, a staggering 95 percent of which were violent. This is the largest number reported since the LA County Commission on Human Relations began tracking hate crimes in 1980. The county has only tracked crimes against nonbinary people since 2023, but still saw a sharp increase of 275 percent, from four incidents to 15.

The report mirrors a national

trend of increasing violence against trans people. Nearly 6 in 10 trans adults (59 percent) in California have recently experienced violence or harassment, a separate November report from the Williams Institute found, with almost one in ten (7 percent) reporting experiencing one or more physical attacks in the past year.

"We are strengthening our partnerships with schools, community organizations, and survivors to confront hate early, directly, and with compassion," Horvath continued. "No matter who you are or how you show up in the world, you deserve to be safe and supported in Los Angeles County. We will not rest until that is true for everyone."



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Life and Style

JD Honey Brings Out Hidden Notes In Your Whiskey & Coke

By Glenda Rutherford

When serving up an expensive whiskey, you don't want to mask the unique flavor notes the distillers have brought forth in the spirit by adding a mixer. There are definitely certain spirits you should just drink straight. However, if you're simply looking to whip up a fun cocktail that improves cheap whiskey, Coke is one of the most common flavor-enhancing options. It's a classic cocktail for a reason. Sometimes, though, you might be looking for a bit of a twist, which is where flavored whiskey comes in.

When you're envisioning a flavored whiskey that pairs well with Coke, vanilla or cherry whiskey are likely the first options that come to mind. After all, those variations of flavored Coke exist, so it seems a natural pairing. For a fresh take, we suggest using Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey for your whiskey and Coke. The blend of iconic Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 Tennessee Whiskey and the brand's own carefully crafted honey liqueur combines into a spirit that has a subtle sweetness and depth of flavor courtesy of the honey liqueur, as well as some notes of vanilla, caramel,

and spice found in the Jack Daniel's whiskey formula.

Though the actual recipe behind Coca-Cola's iconic flavor is a secret, the mixer has flavor notes of vanilla, caramel, cinnamon, citrus oils for that refreshing taste, as well as spices including nutmeg and clove. There's a lot going on in terms of flavor, which makes something subtle like honey the perfect accompaniment.

Subtle, Sweet, And Satisfying Honey Whiskey

A lot of flavored whiskeys can be quite overpowering, often completely masking the taste of other components in a cocktail. Or, with a mixer that has a complex flavor like Coca-Cola, the two might end up battling it out, creating a cocktail that feels a bit chaotic with too many flavors in the mix. Other flavored whiskeys are quite sweet, which, when paired with a sweet mixer like Coca-Cola, will yield an almost cloyingly sugary cocktail that only a select few will enjoy.

Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey works because it enhances rather

than masks or battles the flavors of Coca-Cola. The honey and vanilla notes in the spirit amplify those dessert-like flavors in Coca-Cola, such as caramel and cinnamon. The honey liqueur adds smoothness and sweetness that beautifully balances out the citrus and spice in the mixer. Since it's a more subtly flavored whiskey on its own, you can use the Tennessee Honey in the same proportions you would any other whiskey for your cocktail. It's ultimately a matter of preference, as with any cocktails, but a ratio of three parts Coke to one part whiskey is a good place to start. For a unique final touch, garnish with a small piece of honeycomb.

Inspired to further expand your whiskey and Coke repertoire? We've highlighted 18 flavored whiskeys that we love — and quite a few, such as Crown Royal Peach and Traverse City Whiskey Co. American Cherry, would pair wonderfully with a crisp Coke.





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COVER STORY

Best Trader Joe's Gifts For Food Lovers In 2025

By Michael Brayson

Trader Joe's is known for its unique and fun offerings, and super fans of the chain jump at the chance to try a new item as soon as it drops. In addition to its rotating cast of seasonal items, the grocery store offers mainstay items with equal appeal. So, if you're looking for a gift for your food-obsessed friend or loved one, Trader Joe's could be the perfect place to go.

Whether the object of your giving is a master chef, baking extraordinaire, or coffee fanatic, the aisles of Trader Joe's are overflowing with items waiting to be gifted. From syrups perfect for lattes to little treats and cookies to bottled cocktails, the chain has an option for every kind of food lover. We've compiled a list of some of the most-loved Trader Joe's gifts for foodies in 2025, and there's something for everyone's tastes. Keep in mind, though, that Trader Joe's is always out of products and is notorious for switching up its products (often unexpectedly), so some of the items listed here might be sold out or unavailable in certain regions.



Bourbon Vanilla Bean Syrup

If you're a fan of Trader Joe's Pure Bourbon Vanilla Extract, the chain created a syrup version with real vanilla bean seeds that's delicious. Plus, it comes in an aesthetically pleasing glass bottle that you'll want to show off on your counter. The Bourbon Vanilla Bean Syrup is perfect for coffee-lovers looking to add a bit of sweetness to their drink. Additionally, you can use the syrup to flavor your cake layers or incorporate it into a fruit salad.

Purchase the Bourbon Vanilla Bean Syrup for \$4.49.



Sparkling Apple Cider



For the friends you'd like to celebrate who aren't big drinkers, Trader Joe's offers the perfect alternative: a Sparkling Apple Cider. The beverage is both sweet and tart from the apples, and is the ideal way to mark any special occasion.

Purchase the Sparkling Apple Cider for \$3.49.



Harvest Chocolate Collection

Little treat lovers, rejoice! Trader Joe's offers a collection of Belgian-made chocolates inspired by autumn leaves and pumpkins for under \$6. The assortment features white, milk, and dark chocolates, with delicious fillings and flavors like hazelnut. Although the Harvest Chocolate Collection is a seasonal item, the chain offers other chocolate collections as the seasons change — for example, Chocolate Truffle Eggs in the springtime.



Pound Plus Chocolate Bars

For your chocolate- and baking-obsessed friend, the Trader Joe's Pound Plus Chocolate Bars are the perfect gift. The bars come in milk, milk with almonds, and dark chocolate varieties, and flaunt (as the name suggests) more than a pound of delicious Belgian chocolate. The object of your gift-giving can eat the bar as is, or melt it down to use in any number of creative confections — like chocolate-dipped coconut macaroons.

Purchase the Pound Plus Milk Chocolate Bar for \$7.99, the Pound Plus Milk Chocolate Bar with Almonds for \$7.99, or the Pound Plus 72% Cacao Dark Chocolate for \$8.99.



Crunchy Chili Onion and Sprinkle Seasoning

Crunchy Chili Onion is a Trader Joe's product that has long been a customer favorite — one popular trend saw at-home chefs using it to craft flavorful fried eggs. The jarred oil and

newer Crunchy Chili Onion Sprinkle Seasoning make the perfect gifts for your friend who's looking to add a bit more spicy and garlicky flavor to their cooking.

Purchase the Crunchy Chili Onion for \$4.49 or the Crunchy Chili Onion Sprinkle Seasoning for \$1.99.



French Galettes Butter Cookies

Among the plethora of cookie offerings that Trader Joe's has available, the French Galettes Butter Cookies are a clear winner when it comes to gift-giving. The chain's galettes are special because they are made in a French town called Nantes. If you have a Francophile you're looking to impress, these cookies could be the perfect choice, and can be paired with a cup of coffee or tea or eaten with some fruit.

Purchase the French Galettes Butter Cookies for \$3.49.



Espresso Martini

If sparkling cider isn't your jam and you want to give something a little boozier, Trader Joe's pre-made drinks, specifically the Espresso Martini, are great options. The slightly sweet bottled cocktail is entirely ready to drink, and is made of all of the espresso martini classics: vodka, espresso, and vanilla. Along with pouring out a glass, the drink can also be used to craft boozy affogatos, or your friend could try to blend the espresso martini with ice for the ultimate boozy coffee slushie.

Purchase the Espresso Martini for \$9.99.



Milk or Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups

A fan-favorite item, Trader Joe's peanut butter cup offerings are a delicious option for your candy-obsessed friend. The chain offers the individually wrapped peanut butter filled bites in both milk and dark chocolate options. Trader Joe's fans can't get enough of the dark chocolate peanut butter cups specifically, which even made the chain's Product Hall of Fame — an honor given only to products that have won their categories in the yearly Customer Choice Awards more than five times.

Purchase the Dark Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups or Milk Chocolate Peanut Butter Cups for \$5.99.



Cocoa Truffles

Sticking with the theme of sweet treats, Trader Joe's Cocoa

Truffles are an amazing choice for those who just can't get enough chocolate. Through the end of October 2025, the chain will stock its Cocoa Truffles with Maple Sugar, and during the holiday season, it offers the classic Cocoa Truffles and even Minty Flavored Cocoa Truffles. And if you want to amp up the gift-giving, Trader Joe's recommends gifting these

alongside a bottle of champagne.

Purchase the Cocoa Truffles, Cocoa Truffles with Maple Sugar, or Minty Flavored Cocoa Truffles for \$4.49.



All the Things Cookies

Trader Joe's All the Things Cookies are filled with exactly what the name suggests: all of the delicious things you could want. The butter cookie base is stuffed with corn flakes, pretzels, marshmallows, chocolate chips, and crispy rice. One user on Reddit called them "addicting," and another said they have a wonderful "sweet/salty combo" taste, making these cookies perfect

for someone who likes each bite to be a unique blend of flavors.

Purchase All the Things Cookies for \$4.49.



Hot Honey Fudge

For another popular sweet treat with a flavor twist, Trader Joe's Hot Honey Fudge is a great option for your more adventurous and spice-obsessed foodie friends. The chain sources classic fudge from a supplier in the U.K., which adds a hot chili pepper-spiced honey to produce a bite that's sweet and hot all at once.

Purchase the Hot Honey Fudge for \$2.99.

A graphic for the Jacksonville LGBT Chamber of Commerce. It features a rainbow-colored bar at the top. Below it, the text 'JACKSONVILLE LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE' is written in a stylized font. At the bottom, there is a large, bold text 'SUPPORT LOCAL LGBT-OWNED & ALLIED BUSINESSES' with a small heart icon containing a rainbow flag.

An advertisement for Carmine's Pie House. The top half features a yellow banner with the text 'INTRODUCING ONLINE ORDERING!' in large, bold, red letters. Below the banner is a photograph of a large pizza on a wooden board. The bottom half of the ad contains the text 'Carmine's Pie House 2677 Forbes Ave Jacksonville, FL 904.387.1400 ORDER DIRECT FROM CARMINESPIEHOUSE.COM & SAVE ON THIRD PARTY DELIVERY FEES!' with a small graphic of a hand pointing to the website address.



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Science & Technology

Quantum Breakthrough: World's First 10,000-Qubit Processor

By Jennifer Davis

QuantWare claims the quantum industry has reached a turning point. The company unveiled a new generation of its Quantum Processor Unit (QPU) architecture that supports the creation of chips with 10,000 qubits.

That makes it 100 times larger than any quantum processor available today. Despite the leap in scale, the processor fits in a smaller footprint than current systems.

For nearly a decade, the quantum sector has struggled to grow processor size. Most commercial systems stalled around the 100-qubit mark.

Google increased the number of qubits from 53 to 105 in six years. IBM recently revealed a 120-qubit design, and its latest roadmap suggests that it will remain a leading size into 2028.

Hardware bottlenecks forced companies to link many small processors rather than scale individual ones. That approach increased complexity and cost, slowing real-world progress.

Breaking The Scaling Plateau

QuantWare says its new architecture removes that barrier. The system uses a 3D scaling approach and a chiplet-based design.

It supports 40,000 input–output lines and connects modules with high-fidelity chip-to-chip links. That design unlocks very large processors while keeping reliability and performance intact.

The company says the new system delivers more compute per dollar and per watt than today's networked multi-QPU platforms.

It also positions the architecture as a scaling standard for the wider industry. Any organization working with superconducting qubits can use it to build more powerful QPUs.

QuantWare also continues developing its Quantum Open Architecture ecosystem around the new processor. NVIDIA NVQLink joins the ecosystem as a compatible platform.

QuantWare says combining NVQLink with its architecture connects hyperscale quantum compute with high-throughput,



low-latency classical compute. Developers can access both resources through NVIDIA CUDA-Q.

"When combined, VIO and NVQLink enable the leaps in scale that the quantum computing industry requires," the company noted in the announcement.

Alongside the launch, QuantWare announced plans for Kilofab, a large-scale fabrication facility. The fab will open in 2026 at the company's headquarters in Delft, Netherlands.

QuantWare calls it the world's first dedicated facility for Quantum Open Architecture devices and one of the largest quantum fabs ever planned.

The company says it already ships more quantum processors than any commercial supplier by volume. Kilofab will expand that production capacity twentyfold.

Matt Rijlaarsdam, CEO of QuantWare, says the industry has waited for this moment.

"For years, people have heard about quantum computing's potential to transform fields

from chemistry to materials to energy, but the industry has been stuck at 100-qubit QPUs forcing the field to theorize about interesting but far-off technologies," he said.

He added that the new system

"finally removes this scaling barrier, paving the way for economically relevant quantum computers."

Rijlaarsdam continued, "With VIO-40K, we're giving the entire ecosystem access to the

most powerful, hyper-scaled quantum processor architecture ever."

Reservations for the processor are open now. The first devices will ship in 2028.

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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

Heard Dat Kitchen: New Orleans Hole-In-The-Wall Best Restaurant

By Ceara Milligan



In the heart of New Orleans, Heard Dat Kitchen radiates heritage and pride. Chef Jeffery Heard built his restaurant on family values, transforming a former Soap Works building into a community cornerstone on Felicity Street. Born in the Big Easy in 1961, Heard began washing dishes as a teenager. Over the decades, he refined the art of service in hotels, banquet halls, and fine dining establishments. In 2015, he founded his own restaurant that has been dubbed one of the best hole-in-the-wall restaurants in America.

Heard Dat Kitchen opened as a family venture. The founder's wife and children are integral to the daily operation, from managing orders. Another facet of the business is Audrey Mae's Catering. It's named for Heard's mother, whose recipes inspired many menu staples. His version of red beans and rice, for instance, follows his

mother's method: beans soaked overnight and simmered low and slow. Each portion is prepared thoughtfully, ensuring every serving feels familiar and intentional.

Heard Dat Kitchen Feeds New Orleans With Soul & Style

The menu at Heard Dat Kitchen celebrates New Orleans cuisine with a modern twist, earning its reputation as one of the best soul food restaurants in the U.S. Dat Fries come piled high with seasoned french fries, candied bacon, and ranch. The BBQ Shrimp Fries layer buttery Gulf shrimp over a bed of seasoned fries. The Superdome features blackened fish with mashed potatoes, topped with lobster cream sauce, corn, and crispy onion rings. Bourbon Street Love brings together fried chicken and macaroni beneath a drizzle of "Crawdat" cream sauce, and the Seafood

Extravaganza unites fried or blackened fish and shrimp with Crawdat fries and angel sauce. Heard's signature gumbo — brimming with shrimp, sausage, and chicken — is a warm, flavorful classic. The iconic Creole stew boasts a thick roux of hearty veggies and bold spices and ranks among the must-try dishes in New Orleans.

Through various challenges, the Heard family found ways to persevere. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, the eatery pivoted to grab-and-go meals and partnered with local nonprofits to feed communities across the city. Teachers receive weekly discounts, and regulars are greeted like old friends, their names and preferences remembered. Heard Dat Kitchen stands as a reflection of the city it serves — resilient, soulful, and grounded in connection.



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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

New Foreclosures Jump 20%, Housing Market Distress

By Paige Washington



Foreclosure filings climbed again in October, after sitting at historic lows in recent years, according to new data released.

While the numbers are still small, the persistent rise in foreclosures may be a sign of cracks in the housing market.

There were 36,766 U.S. properties with some type of foreclosure filing in October — such as default notices, scheduled auctions or bank repossessions, according to Attom, a property data and analytics firm. That was 3% higher than September and a 19% jump from October 2024, and marked the eighth straight month of annual increases, Attom said.

Foreclosure starts, which are the initial phase of the process, rose 6% for the month and were 20% higher than the year before. Completed foreclosures, the final phase, jumped 32% year over year.

“Even with these increases, activity remains well below historic highs. The current trend appears to reflect a gradual normalization in foreclosure volumes as market

conditions adjust and some homeowners continue to navigate higher housing and borrowing costs,” said Attom CEO Rob Barber in a release.

Florida, South Carolina and Illinois led the nation in state foreclosure filings. On a metropolitan area level, Florida’s Tampa, Jacksonville and Orlando had the most filings, with Riverside, California, and Cleveland rounding out the top five.

Looking specifically at completed foreclosures, Texas, California and Florida had the most, suggesting those states will see more inventory coming on the market at distressed prices. There is still very strong demand for homes, especially in lower price ranges, so it is likely those foreclosed properties will find buyers quickly.

At the peak of the Great Recession, more than 4% of mortgages were in foreclosure, according to Rick Sharga, CEO of CJ Patrick Co., a real estate market intelligence firm. Today, less than 0.5% are in foreclosure, well below the historic average of between 1% and 1.5%. In addition, 4% of

mortgages are delinquent; at the peak of the financial crisis, almost 12% were.

“So, no foreclosure tsunami to worry about,” said Sharga. “That said, there are a few areas of concern. [Federal Housing Administration] delinquencies are over 11%, and account for 52% of all seriously delinquent loans; we’re likely to see more FHA loans in foreclosure in 2026.”

He also noted that states where home prices have been falling while insurance premiums have been soaring — Florida and Texas, in particular — are seeing an uptick in defaults.

While home prices nationally are easing, they remain stubbornly high. Meanwhile, mortgage rates, which were expected to fall more sharply after the Federal Reserve started to cut rates, are still within a percentage point of their recent highs. Some recent buyers who thought they might have been able to refinance to lower rates by now may be feeling pressure, especially with still stubborn inflation.

Consumer debt is at an all-time high, delinquencies are rising in

other types of consumer credit and the job market appears to be weakening — all of which could contribute to cracks in the housing market.

“None of these issues have impacted mortgage performance — yet, but it would be unrealistic to assume that these trends, along with slow home sales and declining

home price appreciation, won’t lead to at least a slight increase in delinquencies and defaults in the months ahead,” added Sharga.



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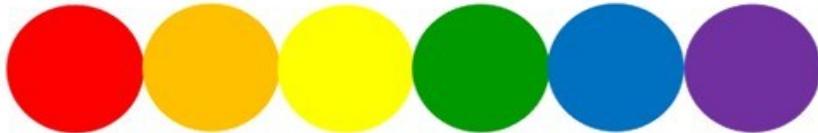


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Life and Style

The Classic Sunday Stew Your Grandparents Loved

By Judy Griffin

Popular recipes come and go in the same way fashion, music, and other trendy things often do. One generation's favorite may be virtually unknown by the time their grandkids are cooking in kitchens of their own, for no reason other than changing tastes and food priorities. A classic example of this can be found in a simple, hearty dish with very humble roots. It's known as mulligan stew, and it's fallen off the food radar in the decades since many of our grandparents regularly enjoyed it.

Mulligan stew has a history about as unpretentious as it gets, tracing its origins to the migrant workers of the early 20th-century. These traveling workers developed a close-knit community, often having to make do with what little food they could afford or scrounge together, which led to the creation of this filling, yet flexible, stew. There's no hard-and-fast recipe that defines what constitutes mulligan stew;

in fact, it's generally defined by combining assorted bits of available meat, vegetables, and seasonings into a warm, satisfying meal. The Irish-inflected name is often attributed to the dish's general resemblance to traditional beef stews from that country.

With the onset of the Great Depression, ordinary Americans were forced to innovate much like the traveling workers. Mulligan stew became a common Depression-era dinner (alongside the similarly flexible Hoover stew) because it made the most of often-limited food supplies. This means various versions can star beef, chicken, or other meats, alongside veggies, like carrots, potatoes, onions, or whatever else might be readily available.

Old School Roots, Timeless Taste, And Simplicity

Although the Depression came to an end after abandoning the gold standard kick-started the American economy, old food habits often die hard —

meaning those who developed cooking skills during this period held tight to the lessons they learned over decades. So, many Americans who grew up during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s likely chowed down on the budget-friendly classic, mulligan stew.

However, over time, this stew steadily slipped into the category of classic meals your grandparents loved that slowly disappeared. Still, those who'd like to try it can easily do so, either winging it with their leftovers, Depression-style, or seeking out one of the many online versions that standardize the dish for more recipe-oriented modern cooks.

So, if you're looking for a hearty stew to cook up for dinner but find yourself a little short on funds or ingredients, think like grandma and grandpa. Their old school favorites, like mulligan stew, are delicious lifesavers that help carry on America's unique food heritage.



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RuPaul's New Drag Race Film Receives Fierce Title & Release Date

By Jordan Robledo

Drop everything, divas! We finally have a title and release date for the upcoming Drag Race film.

Back in September, it was announced that RuPaul would be headlining a new action-comedy set in the universe of his beloved and long-running Drag Race series.

Over the last few weeks, fans have been eager for more information about the dragtastic project, specifically regarding its release date and title.

Fortunately, The Hollywood Reporter finally answered all of our questions on 25 November, revealing that the Adam Shankman film is titled *STOP! THAT! TRAIN!*.

The news outlet also revealed that the highly anticipated comedy will be heading to North American cinemas on 29 May 2026.

As of this writing, an international release date has not been announced. However, it was previously reported that Universal Pictures Content Group had secured the international rights to the feature.

In addition to Mama Ru, *STOP!*

48 www.JaxGayMag.com

THAT! TRAIN! will feature an all-star cast full of beloved Drag Race talent, including Monét X Change, Latrice Royale, Jujubee, Ginger Minj, Symone, Brooke Lynn Hytes and Marcia Marcia Marcia.

In a statement to the aforementioned news outlet, Shankman gushed about his filming process for the project.

"I've had the greatest time shooting *STOP! THAT! TRAIN!* with some of the most hilarious and game people out there, and we can't wait to bring it to audiences nationwide next May," he exclaimed.

"I know I've needed to laugh now more than ever, and if you're not howling during this one, I'm pretty sure you're made of coal and possibly a descendant of the Grinch family!"

STOP! THAT! TRAIN! will follow Tess (Ginger) and DeeDee (Jujubee), two best friends and train stewardesses who leave their "dreary shifts on the Stank Rail" to work aboard the Glamazonian Express.

The official synopsis adds: "When a catastrophic 'Stromganza' threatens to derail the high-speed train and

crash it into Los Angeles, the duo in coach must join forces with the snobby first-class attendants — and President Gagwell (RuPaul) — to save the day."

World of Wonder, the production company behind the Drag Race franchise, is producing the film alongside Bleecker Street. RuPaul, Fenton Bailey, Randy Barbato, Tom Campbell and Shankman will also serve as producers.

Stay tuned for more information regarding *STOP! THAT! TRAIN!*



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is obvious. At the end of the day, drag is art. Artistic expression — including nudity — has been celebrated for centuries, even in churches

like the Sistine Chapel. And while I might be one of the girls who leans a little more on the skimpy side, we all know how to read the room.

If something's family-friendly, we respect that. Always have, always will."



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News & Politics

GOP Comer: Epstein Files Release May Grind To A Halt

By Kate Alsup

A series of challenges threaten the timely release of Jeffrey Epstein's files according to investigation lead James Comer.

The House investigation is already facing off against a flurry of issues in securing the release of the files, but other problems could make it so nobody believes what they are reading, Politico reported. Investigation head Comer believes there is too much speculation around the Epstein files for the release to be believed.

He said, "There's so many conspiracy theories." Another issue is that some may "never believe" what they read in the report. Comer added, "I fear the report will be like the Warren Report. Nobody will ever believe it."

Further troubles could come from how the list is formatted. He added, "If there is no Epstein list, and the American people expect us to compose

an Epstein list, if we don't get any names from the victims, it's going to be hard to do."

Politico writer Hailey Fuchs suggested the biggest challenge of all is not in formatting or believability, but in getting the files issued in a timely manner while facing off against the GOP.

Fuchs wrote, "But the most significant challenge Comer faces is managing the political fallout for Trump and the GOP writ large." Comer, a Republican politician from Kentucky, may be overthinking the burden of trying to push the files into a releasable state, according to a White House insider.

They said, "The president likes James Comer a lot. In fact, I spoke with [Trump] recently about [Comer] and he said he's always been good and with him all the way. There's no problems there."

The vote to release the Epstein

files in the House earlier this month was passed onto the Senate, who voted unanimously to have the bill signed. Trump would sign off on the Epstein files bill, and it's a sign the Republican Party members had "declared war on the president", according to a report published on Monday.

A Republican representative believes the vote was a loyalty test within the Republican Party masterminded by Thomas Massie. Kentucky congressman Massie had pushed for a vote on the Epstein files, heading up a bipartisan group, according to Politico.

Representative Don Bacon sympathized with House Speaker Mike Johnson, saying he "tries his best" to keep the party together. But the Epstein vote has tested the GOP, and Bacon said the discharge petition for the files was an act that essentially "declared war on the president."



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Art & Entertainment

Cynthia Erivo Makes Golden Globes History With Second Nomination

By Greg Warner

We are just about to get into the most anticipated time of the year for the entertainment industry: Awards Season. This exciting time kicks off with Golden Globe nominations, which were announced Monday. Cynthia Erivo made history as the first Black woman to be nominated twice in the lead actress (comedy or musical) category. The nomination for her work in *Wicked: For Good* comes in a contentious awards season where she's up against fellow nominees Kate Hudson, Chase Infiniti, Rose Byrne, Amanda Seyfried, and Emma Stone.

After the nominations were announced, Erivo posted about her excitement in a post uploaded to her Instagram story, writing, "WOW!! What lovely news to receive live from the rehearsal room of

@draculawestend. It's an honor to be nominated once again for this film."

She continued, "It has been a beautiful journey to play this character, and this is the cherry on top. This entire journey wouldn't have been possible without the wonderful leadership of my brother and glorious director @jonmchu and producer extraordinaire everyone could only wish for, Marc Platt." Erivo ended her statement by congratulating her costar, Ariana Grande, who was nominated for Best Supporting Actress, and thanking the Golden Globes.

Erivo also reshared a post to her Instagram Story that announced this historic nomination and wrote, "This means so much to me. I don't even know what to say, thank you." According to Variety, only



12 Black women have been nominated in the lead actress category and there's only been one winner: Angela Bassett in 1994's *What's Love Got to Do With It*, where she portrayed the iconic singer Tina Turner.

Both Wicked: For Good actresses sang songs nominated in the Best Original Songs category from the Ozian musical — Elphaba's "No Place Like Home" and Glinda's "Girl in the Bubble." They were written by Stephen Schwartz. In total, *Wicked: For Good* received five Golden Globe nominations.

At present, Cynthia is preparing to star in the play *Dracula* on the West End, directed by Kip Williams. Erivo will portray 23 roles in the production, including the titular fanged character.

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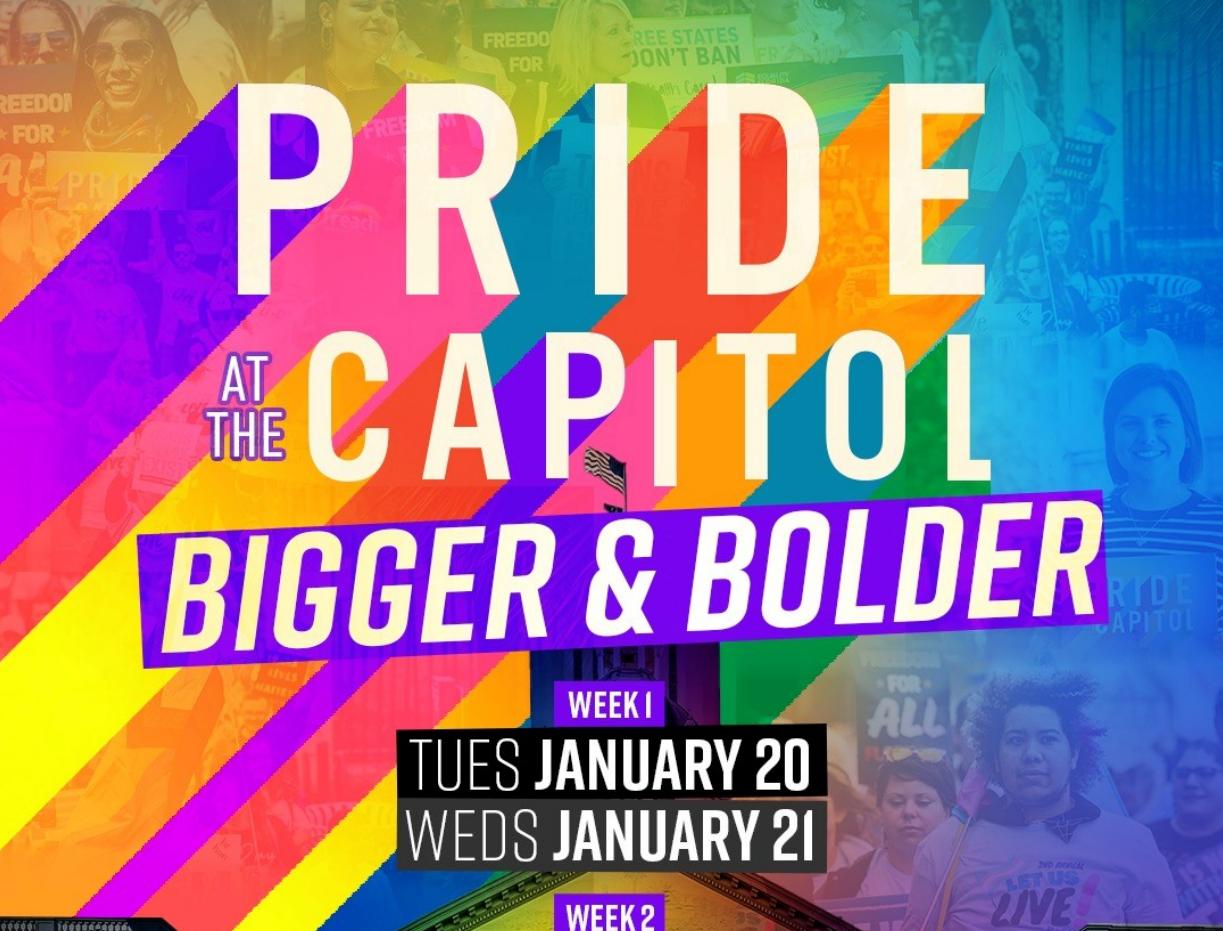


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