

NOVEMBER 2025 ISSUE 143

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MAGAZINE

JAXGAY

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Gay Men Thanksgiving: Gratitude, History, Community

A person wearing a dark suit jacket and a light-colored shirt is pulling open the jacket with both hands. Underneath, a brown t-shirt is visible with the words "HAPPY" and "THANKSGIVING" in large, bold, yellow letters. Above and below the text are yellow infinity symbols. The background is a wooden wall.

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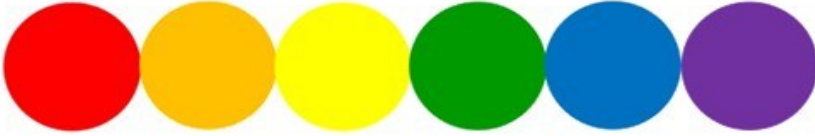
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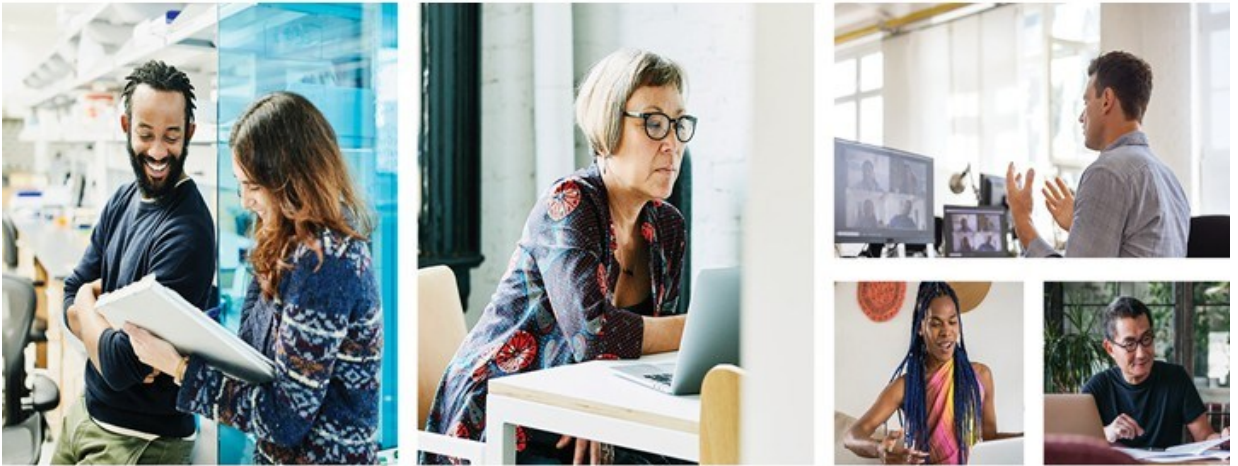
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Gratitude, History, Community**
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News & Politics

Attacks Supreme Court For Questioning His Tariff Powers

By Angela Granillo



President Donald Trump erupted Sunday at the Supreme Court as its increasingly skeptical justices weigh in on the president's authority to impose sweeping tariffs.

"So, let's get this straight??? The President of the United States is allowed (and fully approved by Congress!) to stop ALL TRADE with a Foreign Country (Which is far more onerous than a Tariff!), and LICENSE a Foreign Country, but is not allowed to put a simple Tariff on a Foreign Country, even for purposes of NATIONAL SECURITY," Trump wrote on his social media platform Truth Social. "That is NOT what our great Founders had in mind!"

The Supreme Court first heard

arguments for and against Trump's authority to impose tariffs last week, and a majority of the justices expressed skepticism at the Trump administration's position, a skepticism that saw online betting platforms predict the court would strike down Trump's signature trade policy.

Trump has grown increasingly panicked at the possibility of the Supreme Court striking down his tariffs, warning that the United States "could be reduced to almost Third World status" should the court rule against him. And on Sunday, that panic appeared to evolve into rage as Trump lashed out at the court online.

"The whole thing is ridiculous! Other Countries can Tariff us, but we can't Tariff them???"

Trump wrote. "It is their DREAM!!! Businesses are pouring into the USA ONLY BECAUSE OF TARIFFS. HAS THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT NOT BEEN TOLD THIS??? WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON???"

Trump's argument in defense of the tariffs rests on his administration's reading of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, a 1977 law that permits the president to impose tariffs in response to emergencies. The emergency, his administration has claimed, is the United States' trade deficits with other countries. Whether the court will agree with that position is set to be determined in the coming days or weeks.

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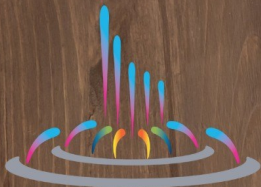
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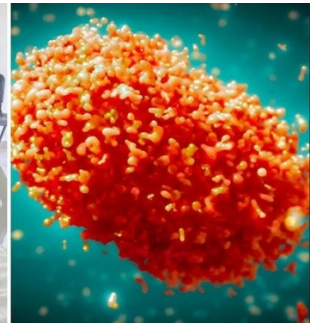
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OUT & HEALTH

**News Severe Mpox Strain
Appearing In The U.S.**
By Greg Keaton



A more severe strain of mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, has quietly appeared in California, and for the first time, the infections weren't brought here by travelers. For the nation's LGBTQ+ communities, the news is unsettling not only because of what it says about the virus, but also because of what it reveals about a public health system in crisis. The strain began to spread in the spring of 2024 in people who had traveled outside the United States.

In an interview, Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, former director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases and the Biden administration's White House deputy coordinator for the national mpox response and now principal at Dr. Demetre Consulting, said the development marks an inflection point.

He explained that this is the first time in the U.S. that Clade I has been identified in three people without a travel nexus. "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," Daskalakis said.

All three patients, two in Los Angeles and one in Long Beach, were hospitalized. None were vaccinated. The cases appear unrelated, though their viral samples are genetically linked. "It's a signal that somewhere, this virus is moving among us," Daskalakis said.

What Is The New Mpox Strain?

Clade I, the version of mpox now circulating in Southern California, is not new to science. It's been responsible for severe outbreaks in Central and Eastern Africa and has a higher rate of complications than the Clade II strain that spread globally in 2022.

"It's not necessarily more infectious," Daskalakis explained, "but it's more severe. That's what worries people. 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."

Despite the heightened

concern, he emphasized that the Jynneos vaccine still works. "There's nothing about this virus that's going to make the Jynneos vaccine not work," he said. "Two doses are enough. You don't need a booster right now."

For those who received only one dose during the 2022 outbreak, "it's never too late," he added. "You don't start over, you just catch up."

'Watchful Waiting,' Not Panic

Daskalakis described the current phase as "watchful waiting" with "aggressive investigation," not cause for panic. "We're globalized," he said. "Things move. The key is staying ready: that means public health must still be strong enough to respond."

But that last part, he said, is no longer a given.

Since President Donald Trump's return to power, the CDC has been gutted by political interference, mass resignations, and data manipulation. Daskalakis himself resigned in August, stating that he could no longer serve amid what he termed the "weaponization of public health." Under the leadership of Health and Human Services

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Daskalakis said that scientists were not consulted about vaccines, and instead, political ideology and conspiracy theories prevailed

He said after stepping down that “the CDC we knew is over. Unless someone takes radical action, there’s nothing there that can be salvaged.”

In Thursday’s interview, he was blunt about the damage. “I scoured the CDC website,” he said. “Their information on mpox is still up to date, but people should cross-check it. Talk to your doctor, or if you don’t have one, your local health department.”

That distrust, he said, isn’t paranoia. “It’s healthy to be skeptical about what the CDC is saying about LGBTQ+ health right now, because they’ve clearly stated their ideology, and that makes me very concerned.” Since the beginning of the Trump administration, the federal government has erased references to transgender and nonbinary people and excluded significant populations from its research and reporting.

Communities Filling The Vacuum

With trust in federal institutions fractured, community groups have stepped in. Matthew Rose, the HRC’s director of public policy and health equity, said HRC is now tracking changes to CDC guidance and providing alternatives when necessary.

“You see the CDC remove

orientation and gender identity, then it comes back, but not all the pages come back — they’re still deleting pages,” Rose said. “Our community has a long history of taking care of itself. We find trusted messengers like Demetre and make sure we can throw them everywhere they’re willing to go.”

HRC has relaunched its mpox resource page to help people access clear, science-based information on the virus and vaccination. The page emphasizes that mpox is not a “gay disease,” but a viral infection that can spread through close, often skin-to-skin contact, regardless of gender or sexuality. “What we are seeing reflects tight-knit sexual and social networks, not identity,” the organization notes. “Addressing mpox requires centering science, not stigma.”

The HRC Foundation urges equitable public health responses that prioritize those most impacted, including gay, bisexual, and transgender people, people living with HIV, and LGBTQ+ communities of color. Its guidance stresses that the Jynneos vaccine remains protective against Clade I, does not currently require a booster, and should be accessible to anyone at risk.

California’s response to the mpox strain

The California Department of Public Health confirmed the three Clade I cases in Southern California in a statement on October 17, saying the cases



were not travel-related and that “this is the first time clade I cases without a history of international travel have been reported in California or the United States. All previous clade I mpox cases in CA and the U.S. reported international travel to countries where clade I mpox was known to be spreading.”

The department stated that the risk to the general public remains low, but urged individuals at higher risk to complete both doses of the Jynneos vaccine. The CDPH is also monitoring wastewater for signs of viral spread and stated that enhanced surveillance and contact tracing are underway.

Daskalakis said that wastewater surveillance is among the most effective methods for detecting pathogens like mpox because, although many people are not being tested, all individuals use the restroom and take showers, which allows scientists to estimate the amount of virus present in the population of any given region.

What Comes Next?

Daskalakis said his focus is on three data points: wastewater,

- and so far, there's little evidence of widespread viral presence. "That's reassuring," he said. But the fact that all three California patients were hospitalized "makes my antennae go up."

If more severe cases appear or wastewater signals rise, he said, that would demand an immediate, coordinated response. "The question," he added, "is whether that coordination still exists."

In response to inquiry, HHS Press Secretary Emily Hilliard did not respond to questions but said in a written statement

that the Trump administration "is committed to reopening the government for the American people." She said that while "mission-critical activities at CDC will continue" during the ongoing government shutdown, responses to media questions "may be delayed."

Hilliard added that the department is working to provide information "as soon as we are able" and referred the public to their local health departments and the CDC's mpox information website for updates. Daskalakis told The Advocate that it was noteworthy that the CDC has

updated its mpox page throughout the government shutdown.

Both Daskalakis and Rose framed vaccination not only as a scientific matter but also as a matter of survival. Rose said, "Be up to date on your vaccines. Lifetime immunity is lifetime immunity."

Daskalakis ended the interview with a reminder drawn from poet Audre Lorde: "caring for oneself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and in times like these, that is an act of political warfare."



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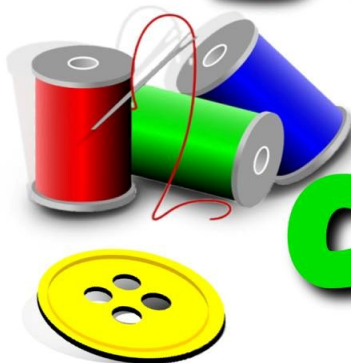
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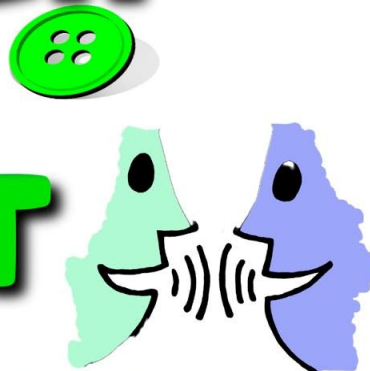
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Science & Technology

China: World's Fastest Train Breaks Speed Record

By Ginger Allen



China has begun pre-service trials for CR450, hailed as the world's fastest bullet.

The train clocked a speed of 281 mph (450 km/h) in the trials on the Shanghai-Chongqing-Chengdu high-speed railway line, as revealed on October 21.

The CR450's prototype was unveiled in November last year as a bullet train capable of hitting the 249 mph mark (400 km/h), and subjected to continuous testing across all metrics.

Now in its final testing stage, the bullet train has to achieve 373,000 miles (600,000 kilometers) of operation before being cleared for commercial services.

Given its latest attempt, the CR450 has surpassed the current fastest speed record of 217 mph (350 km/hr) achieved by CR400 Fuxing trains.

Started as a project in 2021 by China State Railway Group, the train is expected to enter commercial operations in 2026, post the evaluation phase. It is manufactured by subsidiaries

of the state-owned China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC).

How does the CR450 achieve its speed?

The CR450 is equipped with structural enhancements. Its nose cone has been increased from 41 feet (12.5 meters), as on the existing 217 mph trains, to 49 feet (15 meters), reducing drag.

The train has fully enclosed bogies and lower skirt panels beneath carriages, and a design philosophy inspired by high-performance cars. These innovations have helped the train reduce its overall resistance by 22 percent.

CR450's height has also been reduced by 8 inches (20 centimeters), with weight being trimmed by 55 tons. The developers have focused on drag reduction as a top priority, which has also helped achieve dramatic acceleration.

Over five years of research and testing, improvements have been measured in minute increments as small as 0.1 percent.

The CR450 can accelerate

from 0 to 350 km/h in 4 minutes and 40 seconds. This is 100 seconds faster than the existing Fuxing EMUs, which take 6 minutes and 20 seconds to reach the same speed.

An EMU is a train made of self-propelled, electric-powered carriages that don't require a separate locomotive.

Decoding the broader vision

China's national television broadcaster CCTV also revealed how the country views this development as a major step towards modern innovation.

"The recent test run is the final step for the CR450 to enter the commercial operation phase and will be a milestone symbolizing that the technological prowess of China's high-speed rail is leaping from 'Made in China' to 'Created in China'," said CCTV.

China's CR450 project is part of a sweeping initiative to expand and modernize the nation's world-leading transport network.

The country now operates the largest high-speed rail and expressway systems globally,

forming an integrated grid that stretches over six million kilometers.

Modern transport corridors link over 80 percent of China's

county-level regions, encompassing over 90 percent of its economy and population.

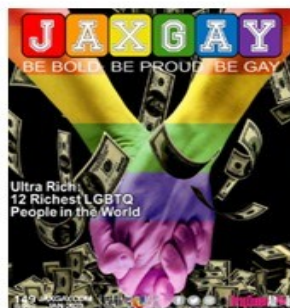
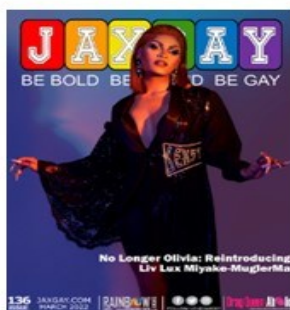
The scale of this network was on full display during the recent

National Day holiday, when 2.4 billion interregional trips were recorded. Railways alone carried 213 million passengers – averaging 18 million train travelers daily.

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Reba McEntire Is Hosting An Annual Christmas TV Tradition

By Drew Williams



Reba McEntire is taking on the Big Apple this holiday season. The country singing icon is set to host the iconic Christmas in Rockefeller Center on NBC, which features its highlight anticipated annual tree lighting ceremony.

McEntire is thrilled to take on hosting duties for the big night. The annual special will air on Dec. 3 at 8 p.m. ET on NBC and be available to stream on Peacock.

"I'm really excited to get to go to New York City in December. I've never been there in December," The Voice coach told PEOPLE. "To see all the Christmas decorations and to

get to be a part of the tree lighting ceremony, Rockefeller Center, it's something that I've always wanted to do and I'm honored that they asked me to do it."

McEntire will serve as both host and a performer. Others set to take the stage will be announced in the coming weeks.

Preparing for the N.Y.C. weather, McEntire, a country star, says she plans to "bundle up," noting, "I'm going to triple, quadruple layer. I'll probably have my heated vest on, and all the clothes I can, insulated underwear."

In her PEOPLE cover story, where she discusses the hosting gig, she also opens up about her career renaissance she's experiencing at her age. "I think I'm happier now than I've ever been in my life," McEntire said. "It's amazing. It's wonderful being 70 and getting to do what I get to do at the level I want to do it."

She's juggling her two NBC shows, The Voice and Happy's Place. "Anytime I get to step on that set, I feel like home. It's my happy place," she says of the sitcom, in which she stars alongside Melissa Peterman, Belissa Escobedo and fiancé Rex Linn, which returns Nov. 7.

A dramatic illustration of a large ship, resembling the Titanic, hitting a massive iceberg in the middle of the ocean. The ship is partially submerged, and a large plume of smoke is rising from its funnel. The scene is set against a blue sky with white clouds.

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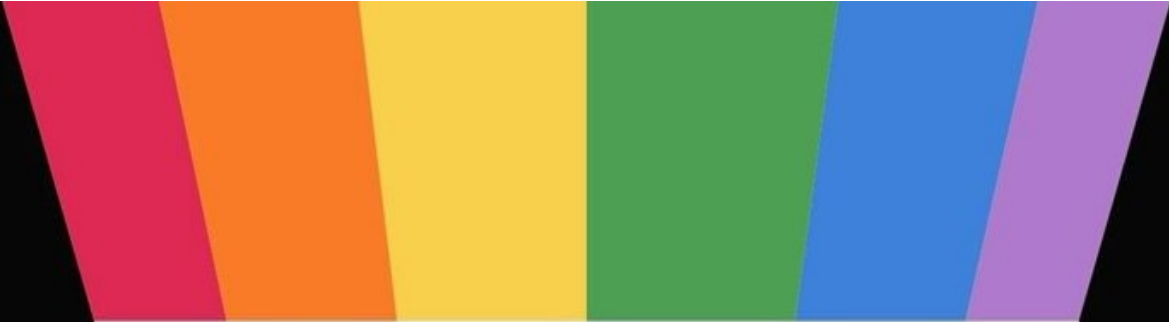
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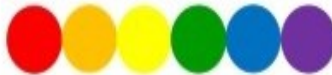
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OUT & HEALTH

Out Coach Becky Hammon Approaching GOAT Status

By Adam Alsop



If there were any doubts about Las Vegas Aces head coach Becky Hammon, now in her fourth season with the WNBA team, last night they were forever silenced.

The out legend secured her third title in those four seasons, as the Las Vegas Aces completed their sweep over the Phoenix Mercury to win the 2025 WNBA Finals.

This is the third championship in franchise history, all under the helm of coach Hammon. The win puts the Aces — and Hammon — tied for second all-time in league history for most WNBA titles. The Minnesota Lynx, led by fellow out legend Cheryl Reeve, hold the record with four championships in seven years.

Hammon was all smiles in the postgame presser, as she

admired her star player in A’ja Wilson. The duo have won each of the Aces titles together, and they show no signs of slowing. Just this season, Wilson became the first ever Most Valuable Player, Defensive Player of the Year and Finals MVP in WNBA history.

This Aces squad has changed over the years, but it’s largely maintained its championship core since 2022. Proud wife Chelsea Gray — one who is not afraid to get her hands on balls — leads the team as a four-time WNBA champion.

The squad has had Gray, Wilson, Jackie Young, Kierstan Bell and Kiah Stokes since at least 2022, while adding stars in Jewell Loyd, Dana Evans, Megan Gustafson, Aaliyah Nye, Cheyenne Parker-Tyus,

and NaLyssa Smith to this year’s winning team.

For Smith, who signed with the Aces midseason after a trade from the Dallas Wings, this is her first ever career title. Fans of Smith know her girlfriend, fellow WNBA-star DiJonai Carrington, who was in Smith’s arms as soon as the confetti began to fall in Phoenix.

Carrington and Smith played on the Wings for a short stint earlier this season before both were traded away, so for one to win a title in the same season had to have meant the world to them.

As the Aces take over the Vegas Strip with their coming celebrations, we can’t help but think this won’t be the last time Hammon and Wilson are hoisting a trophy together.

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Life and Style

How Queer Sobriety Became A Revolution Of Joy

By Mario Moreno



Queer spaces have long been tied to nightlife culture, born from necessity in bars and clubs where safety and community were first found. But what started as a sanctuary has, for some, become a source of harm. As rates of addiction, relapse, and overdose climb across the LGBTQ+ population, we must reckon with an uncomfortable truth: celebration shouldn't come at the cost of our lives.

This is not a call to ban alcohol from queer spaces. This is a call for balance, choices, and inclusive celebration that embraces sobriety as more than just abstinence but as joy, vitality, and connection on our own terms.

The Queer Addiction Crisis

A 2020 study from the National Institute on Drug Abuse found that LGBTQ adults are more than twice as likely to experience substance use disorders as their heterosexual peers. Rates among transgender individuals are even higher, driven by disproportionate levels of stigma, trauma, and mental health challenges. Among queer men, the use of methamphetamine, particularly

in the context of sex, remains a pressing public health concern.

Experts point to three main reasons: community norms that normalize heavy use; expectations that partying is part of queer life; and the ongoing trauma and stress of discrimination. The COVID-19 pandemic only deepened the crisis. Isolated and vulnerable, many LGBTQ individuals relapsed or found themselves using more to cope.

A Movement Takes Root

In 2009, a group of newly sober gay men in Manhattan attended a church-basement dance on Pride weekend. The event was meant to be a safe space, but the atmosphere was somber, the crowd sparse. As fireworks lit up the Hudson River, one of them asked, "Why isn't there something big and fun for us?"

That question sparked a movement. The following year, that same group pooled their resources and threw a sober Pride party they dubbed "The Wild West." It was rowdy, vibrant, and completely alcohol-free. Over 300 people showed up.

That night, Gay & Sober was born.

Since then, the organization has grown into one of the largest sober LGBTQ+ event producers in the world. What began as a single party has evolved into a full-fledged non-profit that now hosts events in Fire Island, Amsterdam, and Tennessee, with plans to soon expand to London. The decision to host an event in Tennessee was both political and personal, as queer people living in states hostile to LGBTQ+ rights also deserve queer and sober safe spaces. Similarly, the London expansion was prompted by rising rates of methamphetamine use in the city's gay male population.

More Than Just Abstinence

Gay & Sober isn't about replacing one scene with another. It's about reimagining what joy can look like when it's not filtered through a substance.

In fact, not everyone who attends these events identifies as being in recovery. Today, an estimated 10% of attendees are "sober curious," or people who want to explore a life without substances, even if they don't use the language of addiction. Another 10% are allies or loved ones. The

remaining 80% come from traditional 12-step backgrounds.

Gay & Sober's programming reflects this diversity. The annual conference includes workshops on sober dating, sexual health, meditation, trauma recovery, and more. Keynote speakers have included folks ranging from The Velvet Rage author Dr. Alan Downs to former presidential candidate Marianne Williamson and designer Marc Jacobs.

Whether someone is newly sober, curious about quitting, or thirty years into recovery, the message is the same: you belong here. You deserve joy. And you don't have to do it alone.

Pushback and Progress

The journey hasn't been without criticism. Some old-school AA members have balked at the party atmosphere. "Go-go dancers at a sober event?" one detractor asked. Others raised concerns about sexual energy being triggering, particularly for those recovering from chemsex addiction.

Gay & Sober responded not by scaling back but by expanding. They introduced programming to directly address these issues: workshops on sober intimacy, boundaries, and harm reduction; guided meditations; and peer-led recovery circles.

Sobriety doesn't mean sitting quietly in the corner while the

rest of the world celebrates. It doesn't mean exclusion from queer joy, culture, or community. It means agency. It means safety. It means showing up to your life fully present, fiercely proud, and radically alive. As Gay & Sober continues to grow, one thing is clear: the future of queer nightlife includes sober spaces. And that future is already here.

Because addiction may be dark, but recovery can be electric.

Mario Moreno is an alumnus of Gay & Sober, since its creation on Facebook in 2009, and has been involved in their annual conference as Volunteer Coordinator (2018-2019, 2021) and as Co-Chair (2022).



COVER STORY

Gay Men at Thanksgiving: Gratitude, History, Community

By David Vandygriff

Thanksgiving approaches, my pondering thoughts (as I am prone to have, as bloggers do) about how this holiday relates to gay men. What meaning does it have for us, as a community, that perhaps it doesn't really have for our straight brethren? There is overlap, for sure. For most Americans, Thanksgiving (especially those of us of Anglo-Saxon descent or families that go back to New England colonial times, but certainly others, too) is a time when we collectively celebrate the spirit of gratitude. For some, it has a religious connotation, as it did with the early New England settlers, but gratitude can be a secular humanist value as well.

People ask me sometimes, as a therapist, what is the "key to happiness", and I always say that to my observation and experience, as a therapist for over 25 years, that the way to make yourself feel better faster than anything is to simply practice gratitude. Some religious people do this, thanking "God" for their

bounty, or people in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) practice this idea, and New Age spirituality adherents do, too. You hear sometimes of people having a practice of making a "Gratitude List" as a daily ritual, which can lift your spirits. (By contrast, by the way, the most efficient way to make yourself miserable is to make comparisons to others, when you beat yourself up and feel like you come up short in some way: money, prestige, appearance, social status, privilege, "accomplishment", etc.) So it's kind of funny that a very old American holiday like Thanksgiving has this very "New Age" spiritual connotation to it.

For others, Thanksgiving is about family, and while this can be true for many gay men, especially today, when large numbers of gay men bring home their boyfriend/partner/spouse to their family of origin, and the partners are accepted like "one of the family", this is not always the case. Family of origin conflict, caused by family members who are

rejecting, hostile, and anti-gay (usually for warped "religious" reasons) also is in supply. In my practice, I hear quite a mix of guys whose partners are accepted by their families, and those who are not. I'm struck by the stark contrast, really, because it seems like it's one extreme or the other. So while for straight people, Thanksgiving means Family of Origin fellowship, for gay men, often it can be observed with friends who are really "Family of Choice", in the now-classic "Friendsgiving".

I really de-emphasize the whole thing about the ritual of eating a turkey as being the piece de resistance of the holiday. I know many people like the taste and the ritual, but I eschew the "factory farming" of all that, and I feel good about that in my conscience. But I know I'm in the minority on that. I like to think of the ritual of the feast, sharing either high quantities or high-quality of foods, is symbolic of the ritual of group sharing. Throughout the world, observations of special occasions in a culture is done through the foods you eat. "Breaking bread" is a ritual that bonds people together. And, like maybe costumes, crafts, or dances, it's something to actually DO on the holiday (certainly for many gay men – although certainly not all – it's not the incessant football on television! But I know some gay men who are "into" that, and with players who like some (like Eric Decker, right — who can

blame them!). The ritual of the feasting is the physical manifestation of the symbolic ritual of spending time together and bonding along a common humanity. That can be with family of origin, but sharing that with the “tribe” of gay men is also meaningful.

Gay men have a lot to be thankful for lately. We have been delivered, through the benevolence of fair Law and Justice, from the oppressive discrimination against marriage equality. The bigots lost, and we are grateful for that. Medical technology has given us PrEP, and so we are grateful that HIV risk management has helped us to take better medical care of ourselves as a community, after so many years of feeling like HIV held the upper hand in suppressing our lives and well-being. We can be profoundly grateful that the same virus that killed so many of us only about 25 years ago (and still does, in some cases) is now, largely, contained in unprecedented ways.

We can be grateful that while there are SO many oppressors still among us (such as the Republican party platform that is virulently, publicly, and extremely anti-gay in everything from health care to civil rights to education) and the Internet and social media gives unprecedentedly wide audience to the most extreme of the anti-gay Exterminationist Movement, which includes most religious conservatives of all “faiths”, we also have unprecedented numbers of average Americans who see



the anti-gay pundits as immature, hateful, crass fools that have no place in mainstream American society. The majority of Americans now support marriage equality, and that wasn't so just a few Thanksgivings ago, so that is a heartwarming fact that feeds our sense of dignity, relief, and gratitude.

Gay men might have very individual, as opposed to community, reasons for gratitude. Getting a new job, starting a new/exciting relationship, moving into a new home, having enjoyable experiences this year (vacations, outings, accomplishments) can make us all grateful within ourselves as individuals. To stop and recognize our gratitude through various rituals at this time of year for these things can “solidify” our gains and strengthen our Sense of Self, or as we shrinks call it, “self-efficacy”, when we prove to ourselves that our thoughts,

feelings, beliefs, and behaviors that we choose can influence our lives for the better. We have agency, we have influence, we have power to guide at least part of our lives, and we have the ability to respond to challenges, setbacks, and random unfortunate events with healthy, adaptive, coping responses. As Jack Canfield says, we can't always control what happens to us, but Event + Response = Outcome. It is our response to random events that influences the ultimate outcomes, for better or worse.

What are you grateful for? Can you allow yourself to just sit in the quiet of mindful observation, and let yourself acknowledge these things? How can you express your gratitude? Do you make a toast? Decorate? Cook? Gather others near you? Give to others in some way? Write something? Many would say that our gifts from the Universe

are gifts it gives to us; how we respond to those gifts – how we use them, apply them, share them – is our gift back to it. It's an evergreen exchange of energies that fuel our lives for a lifetime, and create our relationships, families and our cultures throughout time.

When we are stressed, it's easy to "take inventory" of the stressors: this is stressful, that is stressful, that's messed up, this is chaos. But if we can quiet our minds for a moment and instead re-focus on what see/hear/feel that we can be

grateful for — even if it's just a new day to start facing challenges all over again — this can help. We all have unique skills, talents, and aptitudes that can help us face many different environmental stressors. Some of these we face alone, because we just rally our own resources, and some things need the help of a therapist/coach to help facilitate their resolutions, or at least their acceptance. Focusing on empowering actions can make the difference between despondency/depression and feeling confident.

By the way, I am very grateful to you, Gentle Reader; to be of service to those who appreciate my writing and my therapy/coaching services, in the hopes that I may be of help to you. It is a vicarious reward to help others thrive, in the way that they define "thriving" for themselves, because it is in that, I feel that I thrive as well. You give me a livelihood, a purpose, a sense of reward, and an endless fascination with the human condition. Thank you, and enjoy your Thanksgiving in unprecedented ways each year!

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Science & Technology

Russia Tests Nuclear Cruise Missile That Flew 8,700 Miles

By Angie Sappington



Russia's experimental nuclear-powered cruise missile, called the 9M730 Burevestnik or SSC-X-9 "Skyfall" by NATO, is causing new discussions.

Moscow announced that the missile has recently completed a long flight powered by a small nuclear reactor. This achievement is similar to tests from the Cold War that were once considered too dangerous to continue.

On October 21, 2025, Russian President Vladimir Putin was reportedly briefed that a Burevestnik missile had flown for 15 hours, covering roughly 14,000 kilometers (8,700 miles) while powered by a compact onboard reactor.

The announcement, timed with large-scale nuclear drills, was promoted by Russian state media as proof that the weapon had reached an advanced testing stage.

No independent evidence, such as satellite data or international monitoring, has confirmed the flight.

Western defense officials said the announcement

demonstrates resolve rather than a verified technical milestone. Previous Burevestnik tests have produced mixed or failed results.

A revival of Cold War concepts

The Burevestnik draws inspiration from Project Pluto, a US program launched in the 1950s to develop a nuclear-powered ramjet missile called the Supersonic Low-Altitude Missile, or SLAM.

The project produced two working reactor prototypes, Tory-IIA and Tory-IIC, but was abandoned in 1964 due to safety concerns over radioactive exhaust and the rise of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Putin first unveiled the Burevestnik 2018, describing it as a missile that could "fly as long as you like." The system was designed to bypass missile defenses by flying at low altitude with, in theory, unlimited range.

Evidence of Burevestnik testing dates back to 2017 at remote Arctic and White Sea sites. Many early tests reportedly failed.

In August 2019, an explosion at the Nyonoksa test range near the White Sea killed several engineers from Russia's state nuclear agency, Rosatom. It caused a temporary radiation spike in the nearby city of Severodvinsk.

Western intelligence linked the blast to a failed recovery or reactor test involving the Burevestnik. Moscow later described it as an accident with an "isotope power source." It remains the most serious known mishap associated with the program.

How the missile reportedly works

According to open-source assessments and US intelligence reports, the Burevestnik uses a conventional booster to reach cruising altitude before switching to nuclear propulsion.

Air enters the missile's intake, passes through a fission reactor, and is heated directly by the reaction to produce thrust.

The concept allows for extremely long endurance but poses major technical and environmental challenges,

protecting electronics from radiation, managing heat, and containing contamination in case of a crash or malfunction.

Experts such as Jeffrey Lewis and James Acton say there is no credible evidence that Russia has achieved a sustained nuclear-powered flight, calling the weapon "largely experimental and

unreliable."

If confirmed, the claimed flight would represent the first nuclear-thermal cruise stage to achieve extended flight, something the United States never demonstrated during Project Pluto. However, analysts question its strategic value.

While the missile could, in

theory, bypass missile defenses, each test risks radioactive fallout if the reactor disintegrates during flight or on impact.

Critics warn that even partial failures could scatter contaminated debris across wide regions, raising environmental and political concerns.

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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

GM Lays Off More Than 200 Salaried Workers

By James Wilson



General Motors laid off more than 200 salaried employees on Friday, as the automaker continues to reevaluate its businesses and cut costs to boost profits.

The impacted employees were largely Computer-Aided Design, or CAD, engineers who worked at the company's global tech campus in metro Detroit, according to GM.

"We're restructuring our design engineering team to strengthen our core architectural design engineering capabilities," GM said in an emailed statement. "As a result, a number of CAD execution roles have been eliminated. We recognize the efforts and accomplishments of the impacted team members, and we thank them for their contributions."

GM declined to comment on the number of employees affected, but a source familiar with the matter confirmed to CNBC that it was more than 200 employees, which was first reported by Bloomberg News. The person spoke anonymously because the number had not yet been made public.

The employees were told their roles were being eliminated due to "business conditions" and not their performance via Microsoft Teams calls on Friday, the source said.

The Detroit automaker has been regularly reviewing its business units and organizations for years in an effort to cut costs, boost profits and eliminate what it considers unneeded or overstaffed roles for future operations.

The most recent layoffs represent a small percentage of the automaker's salaried workforce, but continue a trend of white-collar U.S. headcount reductions. GM's U.S. salaried headcount fell from 53,000 in 2023 to 50,000 to end last year.

GM's layoffs also come a day after all-electric vehicle maker Rivian laid off roughly 4.5% of its workforce, or more than 600 people, to restructure some teams as the EV market faces growing challenges amid policy changes and slower-than-expected demand.

The most recent cuts come as President Donald Trump touted on social media Friday

that Ford Motor and GM are "UP BIG on Tariffs" amid tariff changes last week for heavy- and medium-duty trucks, which he referred to as "Big and Midsized Trucks."

While both Ford and GM, including CEO Mary Barra, this week praised the tariff changes, which also included extending offsets on U.S.-produced vehicles, the automakers are still seeing additional cost burdens from the levies. These changes are simply helping to lower those added costs.

The layoffs come days after GM raised its 2025 financial guidance Tuesday as it beat Wall Street's top- and bottom-line earnings expectations for the third quarter, causing the stock to have its second-best day on the market since its 2009 emergence from bankruptcy.

Shares of GM are up more than 29% this year, while Ford's stock is up roughly 38%. Both hit new 52-week highs.

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BUSINESS & TRAVEL

Amazon To Announce Largest Layoffs In Company History

By Michael Brayson



Amazon is preparing to announce sweeping job cuts beginning Tuesday, CNBC has learned.

The layoffs will amount to the largest cuts to Amazon's corporate workforce in the company's history, spanning almost every business, according to a person familiar with the matter, who asked not to be named because the details are confidential.

Amazon is expected to begin informing employees of the layoffs via email Tuesday morning, the person said.

The company plans to lay off as many as 30,000 staffers across its corporate workforce, according to Reuters, which first reported the news.

Amazon declined to comment.

Amazon is the nation's second-largest private employer, with more than 1.54 million staffers globally as of the end of the second quarter. That figure is primarily made up of its warehouse workforce. It has roughly 350,000 corporate employees.

The planned layoffs would also represent the biggest job cuts

across the tech industry since at least 2020, according to Layoffs.fyi. As of Monday, more than 200 tech companies have laid off approximately 98,000 employees since the start of the year, according to the site, which monitors job cuts in the tech sector.

Microsoft has laid off about 15,000 people so far this year, while Meta last week eliminated roughly 600 jobs within its artificial intelligence unit. Google cut more than 100 design-related roles in its cloud unit earlier this month, and Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff said in September the company laid off 4,000 customer support staffers, pointing to its increasing AI adoption as a catalyst behind the cuts. Intel's cuts this year totaled 22,000 jobs, the most of any listed by Layoffs.fyi.

The steepest year for job cuts in tech came in 2023, as the industry reckoned with soaring inflation and rising interest rates. Close to 1,200 tech companies slashed over 260,000 jobs, the site said.

Over the past year, companies across industries including tech, banking, auto and retail

have also pointed to the rise of generative AI as a force that's likely to or already changing size of their workforces.

Amazon has conducted rolling layoffs across the company since 2022, which has resulted in more than 27,000 employees being let go. Job reductions have continued this year, though at a smaller scale. Amazon's cloud, stores, communications and devices divisions have been hit with layoffs in recent months.

The layoffs are part of a broader cost-cutting campaign by Amazon CEO Andy Jassy that began during the Covid-19 pandemic. Jassy has also moved to simplify Amazon's corporate structure by having fewer managers in order to "remove layers and flatten organizations."

Jassy said in June that Amazon's workforce could shrink further as a result of the company embracing generative AI, telling staffers that the company "will need fewer people doing some of the jobs that are being done today, and more people doing other types of jobs."

"It's hard to know exactly where

this nets out over time, but in the next few years, we expect

that this will reduce our total corporate workforce," Jassy

said in the June memo to staff.



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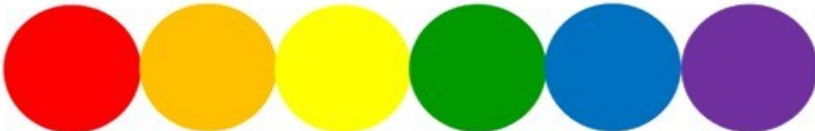
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Life and Style

Tortillas Vs White Bread: How They Compare

By Richard Thomas



Wherever you are in the world, every global cuisine has its carb-heavy staple food. In the United States, two of the bases that make up many meals are bread and tortillas. Both are versatile pantry staples, best to always have on hand to whip up a quick meal whenever needed. But nutritionally speaking, how do they stack up?

To understand the macro makeup and calorie count, it's best to break down first what these are made from. For white bread, refined wheat flour is the primary ingredient, which is flour that has been bleached and stripped of nutrients and fiber, giving it that pure white color. White bread purchased from grocery stores typically also includes water, sugar, vegetable oil, salt, dough conditioners (to soften the bread), yeast, and a mix of vitamins like folic acid, iron, and niacin. These are mixed in because the flour has been stripped of its nutrients. To ensure white bread doesn't go bad in a matter of days, preservatives are also added. And if you don't have a favorite brand yet, Mashed has a few recommendations for the best white breads to buy from the

grocery store.

Flour tortillas typically contain fewer ingredients and are also made from refined wheat flour, salt, baking powder, preservatives, water, and a fat, like vegetable oil. Homemade flour tortillas may contain manteca, or lard, for the fat. Corn tortillas, on the other hand, are the simplest of the three, typically just made from masa harina, a corn flour that has gone through nixtamalization. This process, which dates back to the Aztecs in pre-Cortez Mexico, involves treating raw corn with limewater to unlock nutrients like niacin and improve digestibility. Store-bought corn tortillas that are not refrigerated may contain preservatives.

Comparing Serving Size And Calories Of Bread And Tortillas

If you're watching your calorie intake or are just curious how these staples stack up, know that the serving size does vary between white bread and tortillas. One bread slice does not equal one tortilla. For white bread, a standard serving is one slice, which adds up to 70 to 80 calories depending on the brand. Some denser slices may be closer to 140 calories per

slice. That's what you can expect if you decide on a single slice of toast for breakfast. But for a sandwich with two slices of bread, you'd be looking at around 140 to 280 calories.

Flour tortillas have a bit more variety in terms of size. An average medium tortilla (8-inch) has about 140 to 160 calories, which largely comes from the added fat content. Larger burrito-sized versions (10 to 12 inches or more) can be as much as 200 to 300 calories each. It's easy to not realize how calorie-dense flour tortillas are, especially since visually, they're much thinner than bread.

Corn tortillas offer a lighter alternative: One small corn tortilla (6-inch), often used for street food tacos, usually has about 50 to 60 calories. You're normally going to be eating more than one of these, but two or three would still keep it under 200 calories. There are larger corn tortilla sizes as well, from 6 to 8 inches, which might be used for a quesadilla and add up to around 70 calories each.

Comparing Macros And Fiber Of Bread And Tortillas

Calories don't tell the whole story of nutritional content —

there's also fiber, fat, and protein. In terms of fiber, corn tortillas come out on top. This is the only option with the whole grain base, masa harina, and two small corn tortillas can provide around 3 to 4 grams of fiber. Flour tortillas, on the other hand, tend to be lower in fiber with 1 to 2 grams per tortilla. White bread doesn't offer much, typically with 1 gram per slice (unless it has been fortified).

For the macros, a flour tortilla has 26 grams of carbohydrates, a slice of bread has 18, and a corn tortilla has

11 grams. None of these carb-heavy staples is really protein-rich, but each offers a few grams, and this can add up when paired with fillings like beans or meat. One slice of white bread has around 2 to 3 grams of protein, a medium flour tortilla typically has 4 to 5 grams, and two corn tortillas come in at about 1 to 2 grams total. These options are also not a high source of fat, with all falling under 3 grams of fat.

If you want a less processed, lower-calorie base for your meal with more fiber, corn tortillas are the top choice.

Flour tortillas and white bread are similar nutrition-wise, and are more processed foods. Which you choose from these really just depends on what cuisine you're in the mood for. If you want to make a homemade version, know that tortillas will be the quicker, low-fuss option, as the masa (dough) doesn't need to rise like bread — but you'll need to get a tortilla press. Ultimately, all three can have a place on your plate, but it just depends on what your diet and what your cravings call for.



Florida AG Seeks To Ban 'A Drag Queen Christmas'

By Glenda Rutherford



Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier is demanding that a Pensacola theater cancel a Christmas drag show, calling it “demonic” and harmful to children, even though it’s an 18-and-older event.

The Pensacola Saenger Theatre has scheduled A Drag Queen Christmas, billed as the nation’s longest-running drag tour, for December 23. Hosted by Nina West, the show features legendary drag artists Lexi, Bosco, Shea Coulee, Jewels Sparkles, Crystal Methyd, Suzie Toot, Brooke Lynn Hytes, and Lydia B. Kollins.

Florida’s anti-drag law, which threatens the business licenses of venues that allow children into “adult live performances,” has been blocked in court. And the Saenger Theatre’s website states “18+ welcome” for the drag show. But that didn’t keep Uthmeier, a Republican, from railing against it.

“Two days before Christmas, Pensacola will host a demonic, sexually explicit drag show at the city-owned Saenger Theatre,” he wrote on X, formerly Twitter. “Pensacola shouldn’t platform obscenities

that denigrate its residents and expose kids to harmful content. They should cancel the event.”

Along with this, he posted a letter he wrote to the Pensacola City Council, dated Friday, taking issue with the city’s position that the show does not pose a risk to public health, safety, or general welfare. He said several of the performers use “demonic” or “satanic” imagery and that the production is “anti-Christian.”

“It will be playing in the middle of downtown at the same time as Pensacola’s family-friendly Winterfest,” he continued. “So, while Pensacola children are taking pictures with Santa, men dressed as garish women in demonic costumes will be engaged in obscene behavior mere feet away.”

“While the First Amendment safeguards freedom of expression, it does not require a city to platform and endorse disgusting, obscene content that denigrates its residents’ religious beliefs,” he added. He also raised the threat that these “deranged performers” could “expose themselves” to children attending the nearby Christmas festivities.

Last month at a City Council

meeting, Pensacola residents offered comments both for and against the show. Saenger General Manager Jeffrey Sharp “emphasized ... that every show is required to comply with city ordinances and state law,” radio station WUWF reported at the time.

“If this show’s content violates city ordinances or state laws regarding nudity, graphic content, or obscenity, performers could face arrest, the production company could be held legally liable, and authorities could shut down the production immediately,” Sharp said, according to the station.

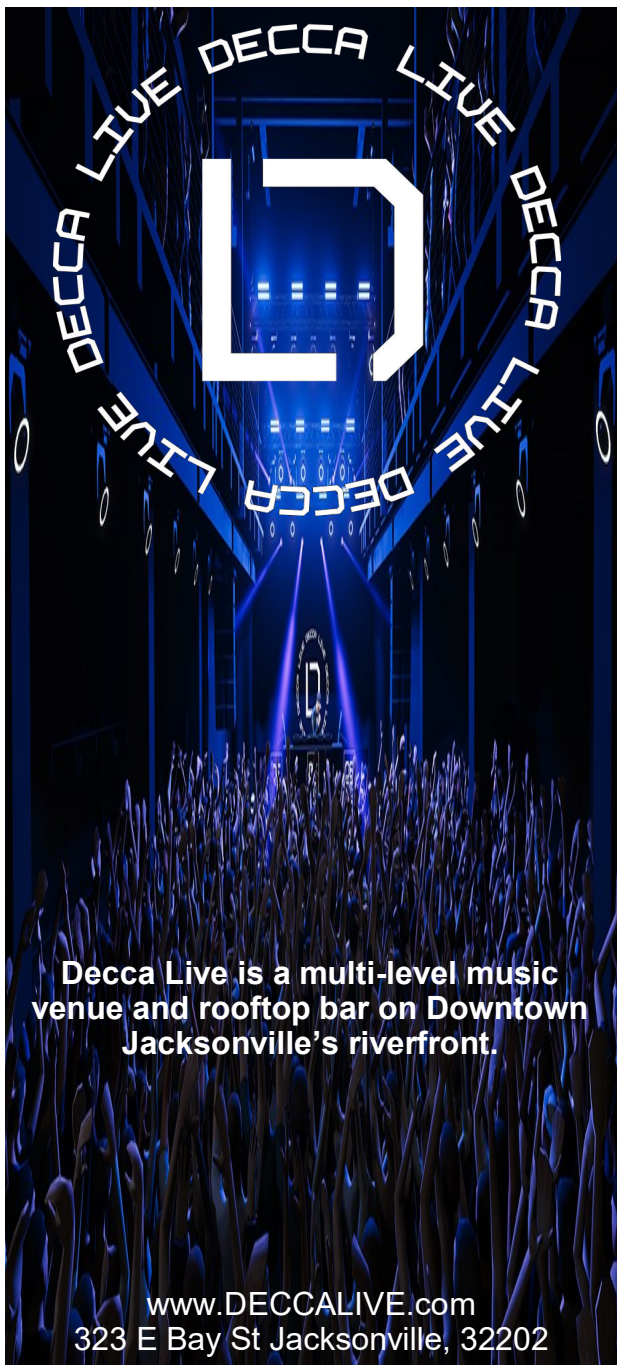
Performer Lexi, in a statement, said much of the information in Uthmeier’s letter “is outdated or just plain wrong. Many of the girls’ brands have evolved over time, and in Suzie’s case, calling her a ‘demonic Betty Boop’ couldn’t be further from reality. Sure, she’s a self-proclaimed demon twink — but that’s campy, not corruption.”

“And honestly, if this were a nativity play and we were ‘men in dresses’ portraying the wisemen or angels, no one would bat an eye,” Lexi continued. “They’d probably praise it. The double standard

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

DOJ Admits to GOPers That Epstein Files Are Even Worse for Trump

By Anna Buckley



Rumors about Donald Trump's connection to Jeffrey Epstein have gripped the Republican Party.

A few conservative representatives with ties to the FBI and the Justice Department have spilled that the true details of the Epstein files are "worse" for Trump than previously reported, according to journalist David Schuster.

Michael Wolff, a longtime chronicler of Trump's White House who conducted extensive interviews with Epstein prior to his death, told *The Daily Beast* last month that Epstein had shown him photos of Trump with half-naked "young girls" in his lap.

These rumors have galvanized into a legitimate movement among Republicans, who are now, Schuster wrote on X Wednesday night, clamoring for the files' full release.

For months, just four

Republicans had penned their signatures on a discharge petition demanding transparency into the investigation of the pedophilic sex trafficker and his potential associates. Those conservative lawmakers include Representatives Thomas Massie, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Nancy Mace, and Lauren Boebert.

Representative-elect Adelita Grijalva, who won the special election in Arizona in September, has also vowed to sign the bipartisan petition. She's the last signature that the House needs to force a vote on the issue—and Speaker Mike Johnson has conveniently refused to swear her in for more than a month.

But the disturbing new rumor has dredged up far more support, with "more than 100 Republicans" planning to vote alongside Democrats in an effort to "get in front of what's

coming," reported Schuster.

The Trump administration has failed at every turn to mitigate anxieties about the president's longtime friendship with the child sex criminal. The typically bombastic Attorney General Pam Bondi was silent when asked about the photos during a Senate hearing last month, a choice that further "spooked" several GOP lawmakers, with many interpreting her nonresponse as a very vocal "yes."

"The question is, did the FBI find those photographs that have been discussed publicly by a witness who claimed that Jeffrey Epstein showed them to him?" asked Democratic Senator Sheldon Whitehouse in early October.

But Bondi could only blink with her mouth agape. "You don't know anything about that?" Whitehouse said. "OK."



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Miley Cyrus Releases Debut Clip Of Ballad For Avatar: Fire And Ash

By Debbie Davis



Miley Cyrus is joining the world of Pandora! On Wednesday, the singer shared a snippet of her new song that will be featured on the soundtrack for James Cameron's franchise film *Avatar: Fire and Ash*.

"Dream as One," which Cyrus wrote alongside Mark Ronson and Andrew Wyatt, is a slow-building ballad. In the short clip released via social media, Cyrus sings, "Even through the ashes in the sky / Baby, when we dream, we dream as one."

"Having been personally affected by fire and being rebuilt from the ashes, this project holds profound meaning for me," Cyrus wrote in text accompanying the clip on Instagram. "Thank you, Jim, for the opportunity to turn that experience into musical

medicine. The film's themes of unity, healing, and love resonate deeply within my soul, and to be even a small star in the universe the *Avatar* family has created is truly a dream come true."

In 2018, Cyrus and her ex-husband, Liam Hemsworth, lost their home in the Woolsey Fire in Malibu, California. In January of this year, when another devastating blaze occurred in the area, the singer shared candid feelings about that loss — along with resources to help those affected by the new fires — in an Instagram post.

"This is a photo taken of my front porch in 2018 after losing our house in the Woolsey fires. It's a feeling you don't ever forget. Walking up to the door you would pass through daily,

looking forward to being greeted by the ones you love like you always do but instead being met by a pile of ash and rubble," she wrote. "My soul aches for those who are experiencing this devastation firsthand and I cry for my city. It's beyond heartbreaking. Los Angeles represents 'living the dream' but the reality today is wreckage and destruction."

Cyrus won her first career Grammy in 2024 for her song "Flowers," and now, many are predicting she could have a shot at an Oscar as well. However, she'll have to go up against an already crowded field, with tracks from KPop Demon Hunters, Sinners, and *Wicked: For Good* also likely to be competing for this year's best original song.

A promotional banner for freeSTDcheck.org. The background shows a crowd of people at a concert or event, with many hands raised in the air. Overlaid on the image is the text 'READY TO PLAY?' in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this, the website 'freeSTDcheck.org' is written in a similar font. In the bottom right corner, there is a red square logo with the white text 'AHF'. In the bottom left corner, the text '54 www.JaxGayMag.com' is visible.



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