

DECEMBER 27, 2024

THE AUSTIN

VOL. 44 • NO. 17

FREE
BUT NOT CHEAP

CHRONICLE



New Year's Eve ✨

PREGAME // POSTGAME ✨
Guide

PAGE
18

be safe have fun

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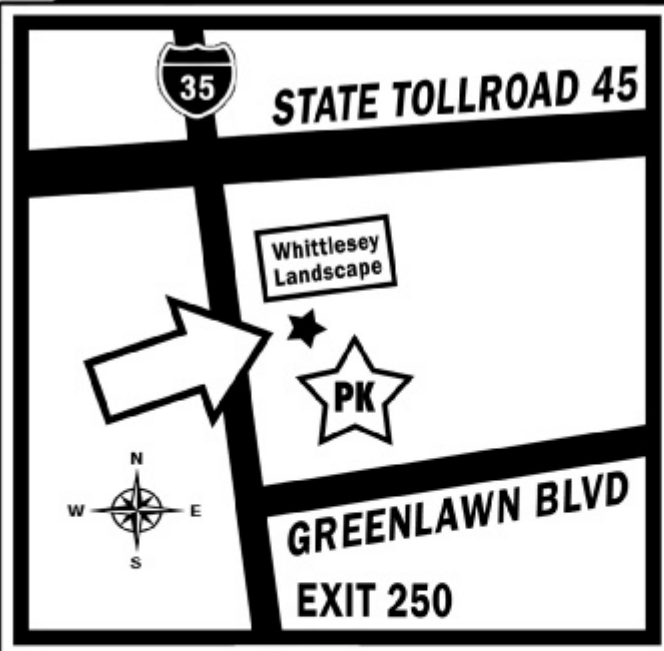
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FEEDBACK

LETTERS + COMMENTS

YOU'RE SUCH A DISEASE

Dear Editor,

Trumpism is a boil manifesting the underside of American democracy.

Like a bacterial infection, Trumpism entered our damaged body politic. Fed by disgruntled Americans, this dangerous strain was now poised to attack not only our vulnerable institutions, but our basic values.

Veterans and the disabled were mocked. Vaccine deniers often died. Children were separated from their parents. Pregnant women were (are) suddenly in danger.

Biden attempted a cure. He honored the military, supported science, created jobs and shored up the middle class, but his efforts can be compared to putting warm compresses on a festering boil.

Sometimes, lancing is the only cure even if the stench may be overwhelming. Perhaps that will be the function of Trump's second term. Finally, the pus and dead tissue will drain, exposing the inhumane damage caused by Trump's policies.

As more people suffer, as the elderly lose Social Security, as the hypocrisy of Christians-in-name-only comes to light, America may finally treat this potentially fatal wound and begin to heal.

Lancing may not be enough. Like boils that must be treated with antibiotics, America must finally wash away the misogyny, racism, and xenophobia that continues to threaten its lofty ideals.

Barbara Chiarello

COMPLETELY UNKNOWN

Dear Editor,

For some time I have been annoyed by how lame the movie coverage has become in the *Chronicle*. A lot of new releases are not even being reviewed it seems. But the worst is today's issue (12/20), which does not even mention or list anywhere in the film section the new Bob Dylan biopic, *A Complete Unknown*. It's opening 12/24 at the Metropolitan and the Alamo Drafthouse and possibly more. It's listed on their websites, but you'd never know it from the *Chronicle's* listings. This movie has gotten rave reviews everywhere and Timothée Chalamet will surely get an Oscar nomination if early reports are accurate. Come on, guys! You can do better.

Jennifer Dinger

Editor Kim Jones responds: You can find our review of *A Complete Unknown* on p.44. (Spoiler: not a rave.)

COAL FOR LD'S STOCKING

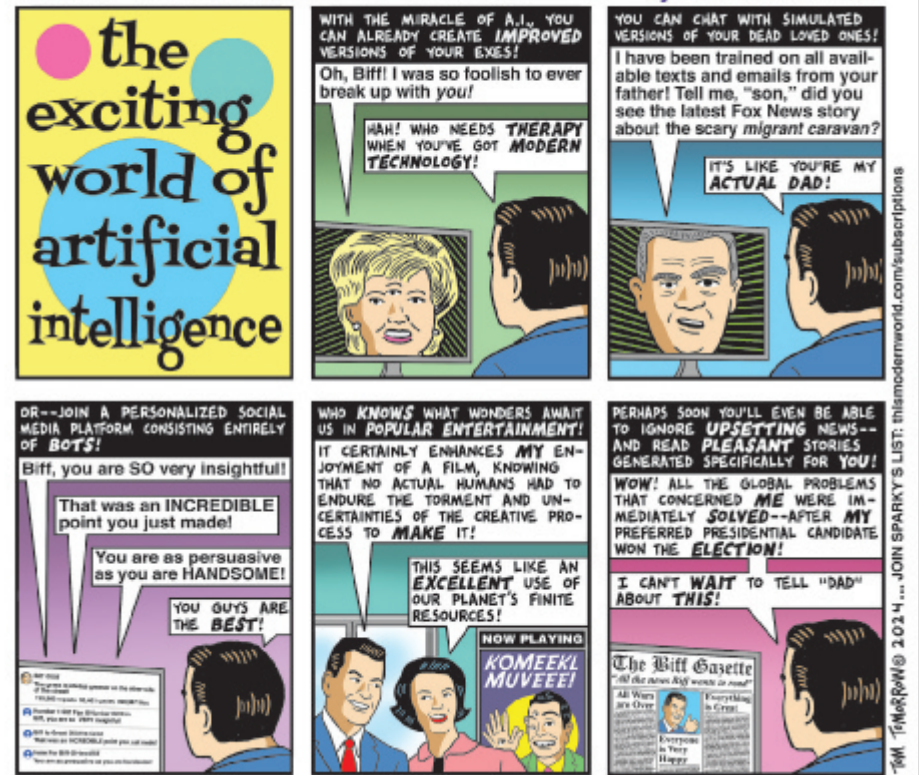
Dear Editor,

Want to agree with letter to the editor last week about luv doctor ["The Luv Doc Makes Me [sic]," Feedback,]. I used to luv him but he is veering too far and too often from relationships.

Linda Craig

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



GOT SOMETHING TO GET OFF YOUR CHEST?

The *Chronicle* welcomes submissions of opinion pieces on any topic from the community. Find guidelines and tips at austinchronicle.com/contact/opinion.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR must be signed with full name and include daytime phone number, full address, or email address. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. We reserve the right to edit all submissions. Letters may not be edited, added to, or changed by sender once we receive them.

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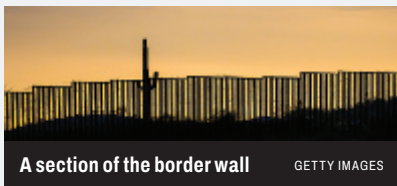
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HEADLINES

MORE BILLIONAIRE BUDDIES: Donald Trump’s pick for U.S. ambassador to Italy? Houston billionaire Tilman Fertitta, owner of the Houston Rockets and Landry’s restaurant group and a donor to Greg Abbott. Fertitta also hosted a fundraiser for Trump at his Post Oak Hotel in Houston this year, The Texas Tribune reports. Fertitta’s great-great-uncles emigrated from Sicily to Galveston, where they operated a nightclub which doubled as an illegal casino. Previously, Abbott appointed Fertitta to the University of Houston System Board of Regents, and Fertitta has been chair of the board for a decade.

BUILD THE WALL FULL OF HOLES: Is a wall a wall if there are big holes in it? The *Chronicle* would argue no, and using that standard, the \$3 billion that Texas taxpayers have shelled out for Gov. Greg Abbott’s border fantasy have been completely wasted. A first-time analysis by The Texas Tribune finds that the few-and-far-between segments of the wall Abbott promised in 2021 have been built in remote areas, leaving huge gaps in between. Turns out, many landowners have refused to let the wall be built on their properties. Next up, Tribune reporters: Find out which builders got the contracts and if they kicked anything back to Abbott.

AUCTIONING OFF THE BORDER WALL: And, of course, the border-obsessed Republican Party continues to find more ways to get pissed about the wall. This week’s outrage concerns a claim by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick that President Joe Biden is auctioning off materials intended for construction of the border wall “for pennies on the dollar.” The auction Patrick referred to was ordered by Congress last year and, according to The Texas Tribune, much of the material has already been purchased with Texas tax dollars. Nonetheless, Trump referred to the auction as “almost criminal” — meaning, it’s not criminal?



A section of the border wall

GETTY IMAGES

CONTINUED ON P.10



Taylor Sole (left) and Erik Mendoza of the Downtown Austin Alliance

PHOTO BY BENTON GRAHAM

SOMETHING IN THE WAY THEY MAINTAIN DOWNTOWN

Seeing Downtown through the eyes of Austin’s caretakers **BY BENTON GRAHAM**

When Erik Mendoza visits other cities he has to stop himself from picking up litter off the sidewalks. That’s what happens when you’ve been a Downtown Austin Alliance ambassador for eight years. “Our motto is, ‘No one walks by litter,’” he said.

In recent years, the folks in red shirts who clean the sidewalks, give directions to tourists, and paint over graffiti have become a staple of Downtown Austin. The DAA, which

contracts with a company called Block by Block for the program, launched the program in 2016 and now has around 90 ambassadors.

The ambassadors fall into different job buckets: hospitality, cleaning, special projects, and power washing. It also has representatives in green shirts at Waterloo Park and Republic Square, a Downtown safety team in fluorescent yellow, and one person on South Congress in a blue shirt.

I decided to tag along with Mendoza, an operations manager, as well as Taylor Sole, a general manager, to see what Downtown looks like from ambassadors’ eyes.

KEEP AUSTIN NICE

From Seguin, Ruben Alvarado had been in an ambassador role as a cleaner for two months when we spoke. When he was in his

CONTINUED ON P.10

“I WAS TIRED OF LIVING WITH MY FIBROMYALGIA PAIN”

Fibromyalgia has been difficult to treat and even more difficult to understand, UNTIL NOW! Dr. Brown or Rosedale Acupuncture and Wellness provides patients with much needed relief from Fibro symptoms!

If you're suffering from Fibromyalgia you understand this sentiment all too well. Local resident Lindsay K. found herself at a turning point when she noticed her diagnosis had started to take a toll on her marriage.

“I was angry all the time because of all the things I couldn't do anymore because of my fibromyalgia. That anger cycled through to depression and affected everyone around me – my husband more than anyone. It made our lives miserable.”

Fibromyalgia affects the entire body. to make things complicated it affects everyones body a

little differently. To make things even more complicated, those effects can change on a daily basis. Sometimes you're plagued with wide-spread muscle pain and fatigue, and other days it's a headache and heightened sensitivity to touch.

“I could barely stand to have the light weight of bedsheets touching me, much less a hug from my husband,” explains Lindsay.

This is what it's like to suffer from Fibromyalgia. Symptoms make everyday life incredibly difficult. Mundane, daily tasks are nearly impossible.

And too often, these symptoms are only made worse because practitioners find it difficult to understand and even more troublesome to treat. It's characterized by widespread pain in muscles, and tissues rather than inflammation of the joints, muscles and tissues.

Then your primary care doctors suggest dietary changes, pain liniments and prescription medications to the point where your life is no longer ruled by Fibromyalgia. It's now ruled by a difficult routine and pill regimen that are suppose to aid in avoiding flare ups.

Lindsay put it this way. “My life was no longer my own” Eventually Lindsay did her own research and discovered that acupuncture can Improve the quality of life in Fibro patients. Determined to find the best in the business, she discovered Rosedale Acupuncture & Wellness Center lead by Dr. Lucas Brown LAc DAOM who has been successfully treating difficult to manage, chronic pain cases for over a decade.

“I feel like a new person. My husband comes with me to my appointments. He spends most of it thanking Dr. Lucas for giving him back the woman he married. And for the first time since we moved here, one of my neighbors told me I looked good! It's a miracle he treated my Fibro, I don't know how else to explain it.”

He uses the time-tested science of acupuncture and integrates it with modern medical advancements that expedite healing and recovery. Acupuncture works by reducing inflammation, stimulating the release of endorphins and offers much needed, effective symptom relief for Fibromyalgia.

Then Dr. Brown skillfully layers other therapies like ATP Resonance Biotherapy and 03 Regenerative Therapy for amplified, long-lasting results.

If you're looking for a doctor and a practice who not only understands your diagnosis but also has a proven solution for chronic pain, look no further than Rosedale Acupuncture & Wellness, Lindsay describes the clinic almost as enthusiastically as she does their treatments. “I love it here!”

Additional information about Dr Brown and his various treatments can be found by visiting rosedaleacuwell.com.

Have questions or ready to schedule a new patient consultation? Call 512-623-1996 where a Patient Care Coordinator is waiting to help you live life free from pain and suffering!



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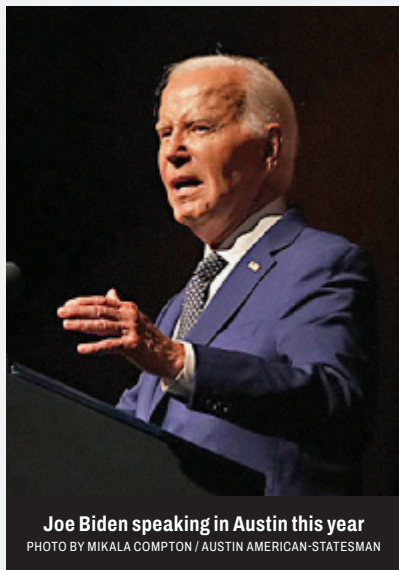
Speaking of wasting our goddamn money: Ken Paxton continues to flush taxpayer dollars down the toilet to spread trans hate. The AG announced on Sunday (right in time for Christmas!) that he is suing the National Collegiate Athletic Association for violating the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act, accusing the group of allowing transgender women to participate in events marketed as women's competitions.

GOVERNMENT STILL GOVERNING,

WOOHOO: Congress avoided a government shutdown at pretty much the last minute Friday. The House was set to pass a continuing resolution last week to keep the government open until March in a bipartisan deal, but some Republicans hated the plan, and then least-favorite-Austinite Elon Musk tweeted that the package was no good. Trump was against it, too, and within 24 hours, the resolution was dead. The passed spending package includes financial aid for farmers and money for recent natural disasters.

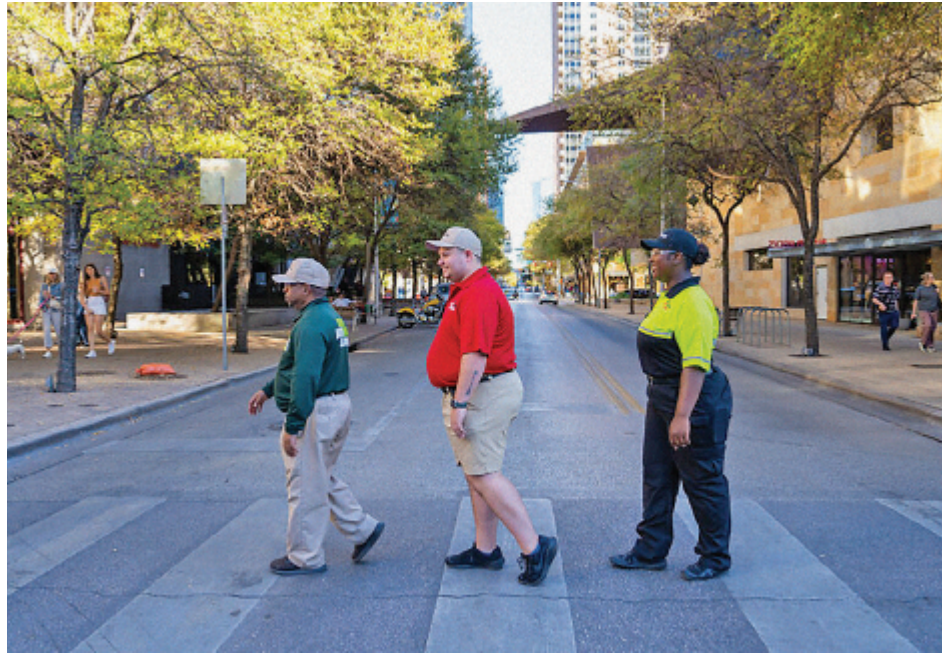
DEATH SENTENCES COMMUTED:

Speaking of the orange monstrosity, you may recall that Trump went on a killing spree at the end of his term in 2020, pushing the executions of several people on the federal prison system's death row, the first such executions in decades. To stop him from killing more, President Joe Biden commuted the sentences of 37 of the 40 remaining federal death row prisoners.



Joe Biden speaking in Austin this year
PHOTO BY MIKALA COMPTON / AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN

CONTINUED ON P.12



Downtown Austin Alliance ambassadors do a little Abbey Road action

COURTESY OF DOWNTOWN AUSTIN ALLIANCE

AMBASSADORS CONTINUED FROM P.8

early 20s, he frequented Downtown Austin. It was a big town, and he loved the music.

One time, he went Downtown to celebrate his cousin's 21st birthday. At the end of the night, Alvarado recalled that the group was ravenous. They got a pizza ... and promptly dropped the pizza on the street. When they woke up in their hotel room the next morning, their stomachs felt off. "What did we eat?" they asked each other. Then, they saw the pizza box covered in dirt and completely empty.

Alvarado moved to Austin 10 years ago. The job as an ambassador has given him a new perspective on Downtown. The bigness of it feels normal now. He's already seen Josh Brolin trying to secretly leave an event through a back alley. But the smaller side of Austin has been more interesting to him. He's been surprised by how much residents seem inclined to chat or roll up their sleeves and clean alongside him. "There's a lot of work for me to do, but there would be a lot more if people weren't so polite," he said.

DREAM PANTS

Sarah Marks also has a deep history with Austin. She was born in the city. In a Downtown where new skyscrapers seem to go up every other week, she said that Waterloo Park is one of the biggest changes that she's seen. Back in the 1980s and 1990s, she wasn't a big fan of Downtown, but it's grown on her – particularly since she became an ambassador six years ago. Now, if someone visits her from out of town she takes them to the 2nd Street District and then to Waterloo Park.

One of Marks' favorite things about the park is the Creek Show. Her favorite installation was the Dream Pants from 2022. "They had some that were on bikes, some that were crossing the river, some that were doing a picnic, one reading a book," she said. "That was pretty cool."

BIGBELLIES

Taylor Sole is new to town. When we spoke, he'd been living in Austin for 30 days, but he's been working with Block by Block for nine years. Like Mendoza, the job has infected the way Sole thinks about cities. "Oh my gosh, I haven't seen that kind of trash can before," he'll catch himself thinking.

The two main trash cans are Victor Stanley, which has an opening on the top, and Bigbelly, which has a handle and a foot press to open. The Bigbellies are less vulnerable to dumpster diving, but they have a lower capacity, Sole said. Downtown Austin mainly employs trash cans that look like Victor Stanleys.

FROM THE MEDICAL FIELD TO WATERLOO PARK

Much of VJ Durairaj's family works in the medical field. His brother is an ophthalmologist, his sister-in-law is in internal medicine, and his father was an orthopedic surgeon in

San Antonio. Durairaj has his own medical story too. He was born three months early at 1 pound. He also previously worked as a certified nursing assistant.

But he decided to hang up his nursing career. He has been one of the ambassadors in a green shirt that takes care of Waterloo Park since January 2021. He said he enjoys talking to people who visit the park. "We just try to clean up the park and clean the restrooms," he said. "Make it nice for people to come back."

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Mendoza takes pride in how the ambassadors keep Downtown clean. "If you look around, you'd be pretty hard-pressed to find any stickers, posters, except Sixth Street. Sixth Street's a whole different beast," Mendoza told me as we stood at the corner of Sixth Street and Congress Avenue – what he calls the mecca of Downtown Austin.

As an operations manager, Mendoza's radio nickname is "Ops-1." Mind your feet if you hear "foxtrot" over their radios, as that is the code for feces.

After we traced some of the 120 blocks that the ambassadors cover, my phone calculates that I walked 1.72 miles during our tour, but I feared I was slowing down Mendoza, who often walks 10 miles on the job. "The first month your feet are just tore up, but after that, you just kind of get acclimated to it," he said.

Born in Chihuahua, Mexico, Mendoza moved to a town in the Texas Panhandle called Dumas and eventually to Austin. He's now been in the city for 24 years. He has seen many of the different ambassador roles, including cleaner, safety, and parks.

Mendoza marveled at how the ambassadors go above and beyond their job descriptions. When Winter Storm Uri blanketed the city in snow and ice, the ambassadors were given the week off. But Mendoza, along with his manager at the time and a few other ambassadors, decided to come Downtown anyway. Mendoza didn't live far, so he borrowed his dad's truck and made the drive.

With ice picks, hammers, and other landscaping tools, they began to break up the ice that covered the sidewalks. By the end of the day, the group of eight ambassadors had cleared about 30 blocks, Mendoza estimated. For Mendoza, that day was representative of the spirit of ambassadors. "Nine times out of 10, if we have the tools to do it, we're gonna step up." ■

"There's a lot of work for me to do, but there would be a lot more if people weren't so polite."

DOWNTOWN AUSTIN AMBASSADOR RUBEN ALVARADO



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HEADLINES CONTINUED

NONSTOP FLIGHTS IN 2025: What flight options will we have out of Austin in 2025? KUT's Nathan Bernier laid out changes in detail this week. A few new nonstop flights will be added to Jacksonville, Memphis, Milwaukee, and Reno. But the airport is expecting overall less passenger traffic. Internationally, Lufthansa is downgrading its service to Frankfurt with a smaller aircraft from March through August, and KLM Royal Dutch will continue flying to Amsterdam on a Boeing 787 Dreamliner.

HEY TEXAS, IT'S OKAY TO ACCEPT HELP: The deadline for Texas to apply to participate in a federal food assistance program that gives families \$120 per school-aged kid to buy groceries in the summer is coming up Jan. 1, and Texas hasn't done its thing yet. Texas was one of 13 states that did not opt into the program in 2024, and advocates are concerned the state will miss out on hundreds of millions of dollars for the second year in a row, KUT reports.

BACKING PENNYBACKER BRIDGE: City Council's cooking on a plan to improve access to the Pennybacker Bridge Overlook for years to come. To get more people enjoying one of the most bangin' views in Austin, Council members unanimously approved eminent domain proceedings to acquire a little more than an acre near the Loop 360 overlook for roughly \$167,186. This will become public parking, sidewalks, and trails to serve the overlook, the Austin Monitor reports.



The Pennybacker Bridge
GETTY IMAGES

CONTINUED ON P.14



The district's budget problem will likely lead to school closures

ZEKE BARBARO (PHOTOS BY JANA BIRCHUM / GETTY IMAGES)

Austin Public Schools May Need to Consolidate. Trustees Aren't All Ready to Talk About It.

Candid ruminations on the possibility of school closures in AISD **BY BRANT BINGAMON**

You can definitely see the discomfort when Austin ISD Superintendent Matias Segura is hit with a question he'd rather not address. It doesn't happen often, but it did on Dec. 12, during a board of trustees meeting detailing the strategies the district is considering to reduce its \$92 million budget deficit.

AISD already cut \$30 million from last year's budget and the administration has identified another \$26 million to cut this year – all without laying off teachers or touching classroom instruction. At the meeting, interim CFO Katrina Montgomery presented ways to cut \$47 million more in fiscal year 2025-26. The strategies include allowing employees to work from home; reconfiguring bus routes; eliminating the district's many portable buildings; and re-negotiating contracts for special education services, among others.

Down at the end of the list of possibilities was an italicized phrase – *Direct Impacts to Campuses*. This was an oblique reference to the idea of closing and consolidating schools in poorer areas of town that have had declines in attendance as a result, in part, of gentrification. Such a consolidation

last happened in 2019 and was traumatic for families and neighborhoods.

And Board President Arati Singh wanted to talk about it sooner rather than later. After Montgomery's presentation, she acknowledged that the idea of school closures was "super tricky, super political" but said that if closing schools is on the list she would like to see AISD begin discussions about it with the communities that might be affected, so the conversations would not have to be rushed and potential decisions could be nuanced.

"If we're going to have tough, tough decisions to make for that school year, I would love to hear from the community," Singh said. "And not just things like, 'Hey, don't cut this,' but like, 'Don't cut this, but we can live with this other thing if you want to cut that.' Like, I need to hear the alternatives, not just noes. For example, what would be worse? Would it be worse to reduce teacher planning periods, or would it be worse to consolidate some campuses? That's the kind of comparison that I really hope we elicit from the community, because eventually we are going to have to face questions like that. We can't avoid it."

Singh mentioned that in recent months she's heard from six community members who said they would be open to the idea of consolidating schools if it were done in a way that enhanced educational opportunities for neighborhood kids. She said a good beginning for the conversation would be to tour some of the district's new campuses, presumably including the Norman-Sims Elementary campus, one of the 2019 consolidations that is now considered a model of how to do it right.

Segura mostly kept his head down during Singh's comments. After Trustee Noelita Lugo amplified them, he explained that the administration's lack of community engagement on the issue was intentional, that in his experience the introduction of that kind of topic, before exploring all other alternatives, risked undermining the budget-cutting process. "So I'm in a difficult spot here," he said, "because I'm trying to thread multiple needles and create a process that doesn't compromise our values but also acknowledges that if we don't find the \$20 or \$25 or \$30 million, then we have to go down this other path."

Fortunately, it's very possible, even likely, that Texas lawmakers will provide additional funding for the state's schools in the upcoming legislative session. So talking about closing and consolidating schools at this point could be not only counterproductive but unnecessary. However, after listening to the trustees over the last year, one gets the sense that consolidating schools is, on some level, inevitable. And it feels like the conversation is shifting from a place of reaction to one of proaction.

Following Segura's remarks, Trustee Candace Hunter picked up the thread, saying that consolidations can actually improve education, citing the success of Norman-Sims Elementary. "Norman-Sims, it didn't start out the best way but, boy, has it ended up a beautiful thing," she said. "So I'm just saying, listen to the community. ... If there's a community out there raising their hand and saying, 'We two [schools] think that we are really aligned,' let's listen."

Segura agreed that Norman-Sims has provided a case study in how to create a successful consolidation, something that could be helpful in the future. "Whenever we have that discussion, if we have to have it, I want to make sure that I can clearly communicate that this is what we observe to be the model for a successful kind of merger, and it usually has these ingredients, and then let the conversation take place," he said. "I just don't necessarily feel comfortable at this point getting into the middle of it."

And with that he let out a sigh and stated the obvious: "You're stressing me out right now." ■

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HEADLINES CONTINUED

EVERYTHING'S (STILL GETTING)

BIGGER IN TEXAS: Texas' population grew by a little more than half a million people between July 2023 and July 2024, per census estimates. That puts the state population at more than 31 million. Though growth among new residents coming from other states slowed, the overall population growth of 1.8% was still the third-highest in the country, behind Florida and the District of Columbia.

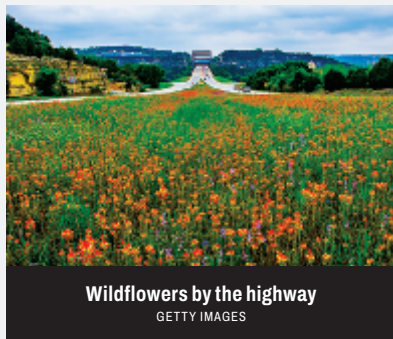
AUSTIN DROPS TO 5TH BIGGEST: Austin has dropped from fourth-most populated city in Texas to fifth, based on population estimates from July 1, 2023, and Jan. 1, 2024, which were published in the Texas Demographic Center's 2023 Population Estimates report. Fort Worth took the spot, growing 7.7%, compared to Austin's 2.6%, the *Statesman* reported.

LOCAL REAL ESTATE MARKET

BASICALLY STEADY: Austin's "supernova" growth period looks to be over, but real estate experts and developers expect Central Texas to remain a desirable location in 2025, per Urban Land Institute's report called "Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2025." The report found a lower than ideal completions-to-household formation ratio, which signals undersupply. Meanwhile, we seem to have an oversupply of office space, as the local office market faces the same kind of slowdown observed in other large metros.

WHAT'S WITH THOSE FLAGS ALONG

MOPAC?: They're not an art installation, unfortunately, but they will become something beautiful ... eventually. If you've noticed the rows of pink and blue flags along MoPac southbound in North Austin, KVUE reports that they are markers placed by the Texas Department of Transportation to identify wildflower seedlings the transportation agency has planted as part of a series of landscaping projects underway throughout parts of Central Texas.



Wildflowers by the highway
GETTY IMAGES



Robert Roberson with his daughter, Nikki

COURTESY OF ROBERT ROBERSION

Paxton Blocks Death Row Inmate From Testifying at Capitol

A.G. says reps won't compromise; committee chair says he's lying **BY BRANT BINGAMON**

Republican State Rep. Jeff Leach, a member of the Texas House's Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence, predicted two months ago that Attorney General Ken Paxton would find a way to silence death row inmate Robert Roberson, to keep him from telling his story to lawmakers at the Capitol. Last week, Paxton did just that.

Roberson had been scheduled to appear before the committee on Dec. 20 to assert his innocence in the 2002 death of his 2-year-old daughter, Nikki. Paxton filed a motion the day before, on Dec. 19, claiming the subpoena the committee issued to force the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to bring Roberson to the Capitol was invalid. The motion allowed prison officials to ignore the subpoena.

Paxton's move deprived Roberson and his supporters of a high-profile forum to argue that the scientific theory used to convict him at trial – shaken baby syndrome – is now regarded as junk science. It deprived the House committee of an opportunity to discuss the ineffectiveness of the state's junk science law, which is supposed to, but almost never does, provide new trials to people like

Roberson, who are convicted on the basis of science that is later reevaluated.

Though Roberson did not appear, the committee hearing went on as scheduled with Leach and the committee's chair, El Paso Democrat Joe Moody, excoriating Paxton for his manipulation of the law. Moody recounted Paxton's claim that the committee had failed to compromise with TDCJ on Roberson's appearance by, for example, allowing it to occur by Zoom.

"This is a lie," Moody said. "We have been attempting to try to find an accommodation since October, and they have never responded to anything meaningfully, because they don't want to have Robert here."

In his motion, Paxton requested a hearing on the matter on Jan. 13, one day before the current jurisprudence committee disbands and its members are re-selected by House leadership for the upcoming legislative session. Moody said the timing demonstrates that the A.G. is trying to run out the clock so that the public never hears Roberson's story straight from his lips, a story his advocates believe would be moving and persuasive. Both Moody and Leach insisted they will continue working to bring him to the Capitol, no matter what changes happen to the jurisprudence committee.

"Something that really struck me in the A.G.'s filing was their line about bringing [Roberson] to the seat of 'our' state government," Moody said, emphasizing "our."

"Here's a fact: It's his state government, just as much as it's ours, just as much as it's anybody's in Texas. Our laws have affected [Roberson] as deeply as they can affect anyone, and it's our job here in this building to make sure they're fair and just and work as intended. That job is far from over on this issue, and we don't intend to leave it undone." ■

"Something that really struck me in the A.G.'s filing was their line about bringing [Roberson] to the seat of 'our' state government. Here's a fact: It's his state government, just as much as it's ours."

STATE REP. JOE MOODY, WHO CHAIRS THE TEXAS HOUSE'S COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE

NONPROFIT WISH LISTS

Every year, *The Austin Chronicle's* annual Wish List offers readers a guide to charitable giving. As always, do your own due diligence before offering your support, and remember that monetary donations, volunteering, and tech accessories (computers, tablets, etc.) are almost always needed in addition to the requests below. Wondering how to get your nonprofit in our database? Email wishlist@austinchronicle.com for details.

— JAMES RENOVITCH



American Youth Works

1901 E. Ben White,
512/744-1904, ayw.org

Winterwear: Coats or hoodies in adult sizes, gloves, scarves, beanies

Back-to-school supplies
Gift cards, gas cards
(See online for full list)

Art From the Streets

916 Springdale Rd.,
Bldg. 2 #105, 512/695-9977,
artfromthestreets.org

Acrylic paint, professional watercolor paints
Professional paint brushes
Watercolor pencils
Small canvases, pads of high-quality paper
(See online for full list)

Austin Voices for Education & Youth

5221 Ledesma, 512/653-4935,
austinvoices.org

Gift cards: H-E-B and general (\$20 each)
New or gently used children's/youth bicycles
New or gently used children's books
Weeklong Capital Metro bus passes
(See online for full list)

Creative Action

512/442-8773, creativeaction.org

iPads
Gift cards: Amazon, Jerry's Artarama, H-E-B
Digital SLR cameras
Unlocked or T-Mobile smartphones

Con Mi MADRE

1825 Fortview Rd. #114,
512/467-4483, conmimadre.org

Gift Cards: H-E-B, Target, Walmart, Amazon
Mother's Day Brunch Gifts:
Self-care kits, small appliances, gift sets.
Journals, professional bags, keepsakes
Back-to-School Supplies
(See online for full list)

Dress for Success Austin

3000 S. I-35 #180, 512/389-3723,
dressforsuccessaustin.org

Toiletries (including hair care products for textured hair)
Cosmetics
Handbags
Shoes (sizes 9+ preferred)
Bras

Florence's Comfort House

515 Kemp, 512/385-8672,
florencescomforthouse.org

Pull-Ups for boys and girls, size 6
H-E-B gift cards
Socks and underwear for children/teens
Toys

Green Corn Project

PO Box 49468, Austin, TX
78765, greencornproject.org

Garden tools
Bags of garden soil and compost
Gift cards: Natural Gardener, Brite Ideas, Home Depot
(See online for full list)

LifeWorks

3700 S. First, 512/735-2400,
lifeworksaustin.org

Gift cards (\$25): Walmart, Target, Visa
Air mattresses (any size)
Pack 'n Play
Winter jackets (adult sizes), hand warmers, socks, gloves, hats, scarves

Planned Parenthood

201 E. Ben White, 512/275-0171,
ppgreaterx.org

Stickers and sticker books
Art supplies
Mega MagnaBoom Bluetooth speaker
Easy-to-care-for or fake plants
(See online for full list)

Rancho Alegre

5304 Blue Bluff Rd., 512/609-9208,
ranchoalegre.org

Professional video camera
GoPro Hero (any version)
Production staff
(See online for full list)

Transgender Education Network of Texas

877/532-6789, transtexas.org

Volunteers
Attorneys to assist with specific projects
Gas / airline / grocery gift cards
Electronics such as tablets, iPads, etc.
(See online for full list)

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER
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TV HOST //
THESPACEGAL



FEATURED SPEAKER
Manu Kapur
PROFESSOR //
ETH ZURICH, SWITZERLAND



FEATURED SPEAKER
Kara Bobroff
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR //
ONE GENERATION FUND

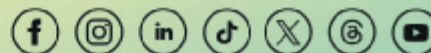
FIRST KEYNOTE SPEAKER ANNOUNCED

Introducing out-of-this-world additions to the program. TV host and 100th woman in space, **Emily Calandrelli**, also known as 'The Space Gal,' will illuminate the world of science television in **Keynote Session** by unveiling inequities for women in STEM and discussing the importance of representation in the entertainment industry.

Plus, new **Featured Sessions**, the **Mentor Program** lineup, and much more has just been revealed. Dive in at sxswedu.com/news to explore the latest announcements for March.

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AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/WISHLIST



Texas' Hemp Industry Wants Smarter Regulation. Dan Patrick Wants to Nuke It.

I often find myself making a face. I'm at some gas station gazing into a display case of weird loophole-weed products: random prerolls of unknown origin festering unsealed in a display box; edibles with cringey packaging advertising ludicrous potency like "420MG PER GUMMY;" vape cartridges containing God-knows-what with branding aimed at 14-year-old *Fortnite* players; and products with an alphabet soup of minor cannabinoid distillates like THC-M, THC-P, CB9-A. Disgustedly, I mutter something like, "Jesus, I'd rather smoke embalming fluid."

If there's a problem, this shit is it. And I don't know who the target market is for these creepy corner-store cannabis products, but it's definitely not adult stoners. Weed lovers, like wine snobs, are painfully discerning people. We like organic products, accurate strain information, and assurances against contaminants like heavy metals or residual solvents. As such, even on the "black market," self-regulation exists because the customers are picky know-it-alls. So this is one thing I agree with conservative Texas politicians on: Those C-store THC products are alarming.

With Texas' legislative session looming, the first since psychoactive hemp became mainstream, there's been broad agreement amongst cannabis advocates that this Wild West market needs some level of regulation – such as age restrictions, packaging standards, and testing requirements. But doing so in a way that supports the small businesses selling quality hemp-derived products while eliminating the irresponsible retail of underresearched synthetic substances – well, that would require a great deal of nuance.

Enter Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, a man not known for nuance. On Dec. 4, he issued a statement pushing for a ban on all THC. The bulletin introduced Senate Bill 3, purportedly sponsored by Charles Perry of Lubbock, and began with an alarmist sub-head: "Thousands of Stores Have Opened to Sell All Types of Dangerous Products with Unlimited THC. These Stores Even Target Your Children." That message seemingly conflates corner stores with the many smoke shops that have flourished on the

profitability of hemp. In reality, smoke shops in Texas require you to be 21 to enter.

Of course the most amusing line in the press release was Patrick asserting that some products contained "three to four times the THC content which might be found in marijuana purchased from a drug dealer," which raised eyebrows because A) it sounds like he's recommending "drug dealers" as a safer alternative and B) "drug dealers" are people who sell meth and heroin; the correct parlance is "weed plug."

While Patrick projected "overwhelming support" for the bill, one notable Texas Republican seemed to question the blanket ban of THC. Agricultural Commissioner Sid Miller reacted to the legislative initiative on X, stating: "Not everyone is on the same page on this. The GOP needs to find some consensus instead of constantly running in opposite directions. We know what the polls say. It's time to support the will of Texans." In a follow-up post, Miller intimated his support for "letting sick folks have medicine."

Susan Hays, an attorney, political strategist, and cannabis advocate – who coincidentally ran against Sid Miller in the 2022 election – says she was unsurprised by the lieutenant governor's proposed THC ban.

"I was expecting it," she tells me. "But I think a lot of the community has had their heads in the sand. There were witnesses at the May and October [Senate Committee on State Affairs] hearings who kept digging their own graves and not understanding the gravity of what is facing the cannabis industry."

I asked Hays, who supports "a well-regulated cannabis industry with quality products," to outline possible outcomes for SB 3.

Scenario 1: The House Votes No. "I'm not convinced a total ban bill could even pass the House," Hays says. "I know Republicans in the House who are opposed to [SB 3] because they've heard from people who are using it medicinally and they can't access TCUP [Texas' medical cannabis program] or can't afford it, and it helps these people. If it doesn't pass the House, nothing changes. The black and gray markets rage on, and the really nasty stuff is still available everywhere."



Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick

PHOTOS BY JANA BIRCHUM / KEVIN CURTIN

Scenario 2: Lawmakers Pass the Bill. "If they get their 76 votes in the House and actually pass the bill, can they really enforce the law effectively? ... Take a look at the capacity of the forensic crime labs for testing THC potency. So the outcome is black and gray markets rage on."

Scenario 3: A Better Bill Emerges. "The Legislature does some serious, thoughtful policymaking, studies what other states have done, and does what I call a 'middle ground bill' – a bill that allows true hemp extracts, but bans novel and synthetic, high-dose cannabinoids, then puts some funding into enforcement," Hays explains. "But that's only going to work if they vastly expand the TCUP program to meet the demands of consumers who find cannabinoids very helpful for what ails them. That's the only scenario where the black and gray markets don't explode."

The 2019 passage of HB 1325, which broadly legalized hemp, helped establish a variety of successful small businesses in Austin, many of which capitalized on trends of CBD, Delta 8, and THCA thereafter. Presently, prerolls of THCA flower are the top-selling product at many head shops and most smoke shops in Austin. And some of the most beautiful hemp you can get is grown locally.

Jeremy Anderson is a licensed hemp grower who's built a successful business since launching in 2020. His legal, lab-tested THCA flower has won multiple statewide awards and four people make a living at his Jeremy Greens farms. He says he understands legislator concerns about the low-integrity products people see at convenience stores.

"Those lawmakers have it right! They are marketing to kids and who the fuck knows what's in those products?" Anderson says. "But that would be the tragedy of this ban: Instead of letting the players who are setting the high standard for this industry show everyone the path with testing and monitoring and transparency, we're the ones who are gonna get our asses handed to us."

The really twisted part is that, if all forms of THC were banned, the corner stores that sold the sketchy stuff wouldn't go out of business – they make money on gas and cigarettes and beer – but the small businesses and smoke shops could be decimated.

When asked about the impact of a THC ban, Anderson directs concerns toward the individuals who purchase his hemp flower: customers who use it to replace addictive prescription medication; strangers who message him to tell him that his product saved their marriage.

But what would it mean for his business? "It would mean a hardship that is likely to be insurmountable," Anderson says. "If a ban does happen, there's a huge likelihood I'd just have to shut down and figure out how to do it in New Mexico or Oklahoma because four people's lives depend on this business."

"And I'm a special case," he continues. "You take some of these smoke shops that two-thirds of their business is THCA... they might as well not even open the next day because it's over. They are held up by four letters: THCA. If they take away this industry, 7,000 mom-and-pop businesses are gonna crash." ■

In the next edition of The Austin Chronic, we'll hear from smoke shop owners about how SB 3 would alter their existence.

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What's Your New Year's Eve?

Plan your NYE to predict your new year's persona

BY JAMES SCOTT

Wow: 2024 is basically over! What are you gonna do about it? If you're cool, you'll be at a New Year's Eve event that'll serve as a portent to your 2025. Saint that I am, I've sorted myriad NYE events around town into categories so you can choose the future you desire.

Find more New Year's event listings on p.26.
 Note: Events sell out, so be sure to confirm times and ticket availability before you head out.

A YEAR OF FOODIE FRATERNIZING

Get your prix-fixe fix.

Kalimotxo

1813 E. Sixth

\$95 with à la carte menu available

Serenade

American Brasserie

200 Lavaca, W Austin

\$105

Carpenters Hall

400 Josephine St.

\$130, with optional \$90 wine pairing

Canje

1914 E. Sixth

\$125



COURTESY OF CANJE





GETTY IMAGES

A YEAR OF QUEER CHEER

Whatever letter you're vibing with in the alphabet mafia, these are the places to be.

Austin Roundup's New Year's Eve

Austin Galano Club, 6809 Guadalupe St.

Feat. non-alcoholic bevies and dancing. \$25 or free for set up/take down volunteers.

A Tuna Surprise! New Queer's Eve Day Show

Knomad Bar, 1213 Corona

Feat. the Tuna Helpers, St. Inky, Deceptacon, Angel Fur, and Stanley Roy. Free. 3-8pm.

Western Elegance New Queer's Eve Party

Knomad Bar, 1213 Corona

Feat. the Side Saddles and Country Fried Danceree. Free.

NYE @ CUC

Cheer Up Charlies, 900 Red River St.

Feat. Orya, Dina, Dragonnqueen, Lidia Beatz, and Winona Grindr. \$17 with complimentary champers and a tequila shot at midnight.

New Bear's Eve

The Iron Bear, 301 W. Sixth

Feat. DJ Mike, Miss Good, and Chique Fil-Atio. Free. Champagne toast at midnight.

Yearly White Party

The Austin Eagle, 8201 Cross Park Dr.

Feat. DJ Tristan Jazz and DJ Marco. Free until 11pm.



A YEAR OF CLASSIC AUSTIN

This is the normie event of choice for a reason: It never loses its spark.

Austin's New Year

Auditorium Shores

Feat. Third Eye Blind and a midnight fireworks display. Free.



A YEAR OF BODY SHAKING

No more stagnant celebration: These events are all about getting down on the dance floor – or roller rink!

Swing in the New Year

Louis Shanks Furniture Store, 2930 W. Anderson

Feat. Dan Walton & the Night Owls. \$40-45 with a midnight sparkling cider toast.

Player's Ball

Sahara Lounge, 1413 Webberville Rd.

Feat. Body Rock ATX. \$20 with the option to add champagne for \$15.

New Year's Eve Dance Resolution

Austin Uptown Dance, 8868 Research

Feat. the Nash Hernandez Orchestra, hors d'oeuvres, and a midnight toast. Free.

Totally Awesome '80s NYE Bash

Austin Roller Rink, 11600 Manchaca Rd. #101

\$75 and BYOB.



A YEAR OF BRAT

No one told these venues and event organizers that brat summer is over, so settle in for another 365 days of Charli.

BRAT NYE 2025

Highland Lounge, 404 Colorado St.

\$20 or \$1,000-plus for the 365 Party Girl Package.

360 NYE: A Very Brat, Not Demure NYE Party

Remedy Austin, 360 Nueces #30

Free.

nye is brat

Drinks Lounge, 2001 E. Cesar Chavez

Free.

brat

The Party Starts at Home

A New Year's Eve playlist for any occasion

BY CARYS ANDERSON

It's the biggest party night of the year – you've gotta start it on the right foot. Whether you're getting dressed with the girls, downing a few shots at the pregame before the Uber arrives, or just taking it easy at home, these are the songs – made by Austin artists and international favorites alike – guaranteed to make the last night of 2024 a good one.

Le Tigre – “Deceptacon”

Being Dead – “Muriel's Big Day Off”

Talking Heads – “Making Flippy Floppy”

Nuclear Daisies – “Honey in the Wound”

Caroline Polachek – “So Hot You're Hurting My Feelings”

Die Spitz – “Hair of Dog”

The B-52's – “Private Idaho”

Font – “Hey Kekulé”

Beyoncé – “CUFF IT”

Big Bill – “Poverty of Wires”

No Doubt – “Hey Baby”

Quentin Arispe – “Kunt”

Charli XCX – “365”

J'cuuzi – “You Can't Wallow With Us”

LCD Soundsystem – “Daft Punk Is Playing at My House”



Find this and other *Austin Chronicle* playlists on Spotify.



COLLAGE BY ZEKE BARBARO

Binge Now for a Better Tomorrow

Get ready for 2025's returning shows with a refresher watch **BY KIMBERLEY JONES**

The homebodies among us have our own New Year's Eve ritual, and that's ringing in the new year with a binge watch.

Now, you could spend the night catching up with some of the year's best television. Say, prestige projects like FX's awards juggernaut **Shōgun**, or the arty, seductive **Ripley** (Netflix). How about an only-good-vibes show like the deliciously trashy **Rivals** (Hulu), rom-com **Nobody Wants This** (Netflix), or the (sadly axed) comic-fantasy-bodice ripper **My Lady Jane** (Prime)? Or perhaps a romping spy series like **Mr. and Mrs. Smith** (Prime) or **Black Doves** (Netflix)?

But maybe those shows sound so 2024, and you want to look to the future. That means a rewatch (or first watch) to ready you for 2025's returning shows.

Rogue Heroes (MGM+)

If you think World War II on TV is all played out, consider this roisterous action drama from *Peaky Blinders* creator Steven Knight. Broadly based on a book by Ben Macintyre, it follows the formation of a British Army's special forces unit given leave to go commando (to AC/DC needle drops, no less) in the North African campaign against Rommel. You can screen the six-part first season on Prime.

RETURNS JANUARY 12

All Creatures Great and Small (PBS)

Also set during World War II is this gentle family drama about a veterinarian in the Yorkshire Dales. It's based on the beloved book series by James Herriot, and it's the television equivalent of a hot water bottle, cozy and warming. Donate to PBS to access to the first four seasons via the Passport app.

RETURNS JANUARY 12

Severance (Apple TV+)

By the time the second season of this trippy workplace psychological thriller debuts, more than a thousand days will have passed since *Severance*'s first season concluded. Admit it: You need a refresher on where we left the Innies, Outies, and those baby goats.

RETURNS JANUARY 17

Mo (Netflix)

This autobiographical series (from Mo Amer and Ramy Youssef) about a Palestinian refugee in Houston was one of 2022's best comedies. The first season ended on a wild cliffhanger, Fellini meets Kafka along the Mexico border, and that's where the second (and final) season picks up.

RETURNS JANUARY 30

Yellowjackets (Showtime)

You know those "People Also Ask" AI prompts that Google's feeding us now? Well, I just typed in "Yellowjackets" and apparently what people are asking is "Who is the girl eaten in the first episode of *Yellowjackets*?" So that should give you a pretty good idea if this dark drama – about a high school soccer team stranded in the wilderness when their plane goes down – is for you. Paramount+ subscribers get the early drop on Valentine's Day with the third season's first two episodes.

RETURNS FEBRUARY 16

The White Lotus (HBO)

Do you really need to watch previous seasons of Mike White's resort-based, satirical murder mysteries? Not precisely – these are standalone stories – but season 1 masseuse Natasha Rothwell *does* return in the Thailand-set season 3 (alongside new cast members Walton Goggins, Parker Posey, Carrie Coon, Jason Isaacs, and Patrick Schwarzenegger), so that's a good enough excuse to go back to the well.

RETURNS FEBRUARY 16

Daredevil (Disney+)

Honestly, Marvel Studios' TV output has been pretty terrible, but hope springs eternal, especially considering *Daredevil: Born Again* reassembles the same leads from the series that aired on Netflix from 2015-2018 – Charlie Cox as the titular lawyer-slash-masked vigilante and Vincent D'Onofrio as his nemesis, cueball Kingpin. Those episodes have all migrated to Disney+ now; be sure to nightcap with episode 8 from *She-Hulk: Attorney at Law*, for Matt and Jennifer's zingy, what-might-have-been flirtation.

PREMIERES MARCH 4

Make It a Mocktail Party

Recipes for a booze-free celebration **BY REN LEIJA**

Whether you're sober-curious or simply seeking a hangover-free way to celebrate the new year, an alcohol-free night doesn't have to mean a night free from festivities.

Paige Danoff, founder of Sober and Funky, knows firsthand the joy of creating imaginative, alcohol-free drinks. A former bartender and bar owner, Danoff now shares tips through Sober and Funky after becoming sober in 2015, with the mission to show non-drinkers they can still enjoy vibrant, exciting experiences without alcohol. "Making drinks and community just kind of go hand in hand, so I was really missing that [when I got sober]," Danoff tells the *Chronicle*. "I wanted to introduce people to the world of non-alcoholic beverages because they had come so far since I owned a bar."

For a simple yet elevated option, Danoff recommends starting with a base of sparkling water or juice and building from there. She says fresh herbs like basil or rosemary, or aromatics like smoked salt, can transform a seemingly basic beverage into something special.

Chris Marshall – founder of Sans Bar, Austin's first sober bar – advises hosts to be inclusive of guests by providing extra non-alcoholic options. "You'll be amazed how many people will consume non-alcoholic beer, even if they're consuming alcohol," Marshall says. "It's like people don't even realize they want the option until you give it to them."

Marshall emphasizes that we "drink with our eyes first," so he recommends experimenting with garnishes, such as adding an orange wheel to sparkling water. For those seeking the tartness of alcohol, he suggests using non-alcoholic bitters – pointing out that traditional bitters contain 35-45% alcohol, which many people don't realize. "Non-alcoholic bitters are a great option,

especially if you're trying non-alcoholic wine – they add the tartness you're looking for and really bring these wines to life," Marshall says.

Jade Place-Matthews, co-founder of East 11th restaurant Hillside Farmacy, encourages people not to feel ashamed about opting out of drinking. For her and the team at Hillside, choosing a non-alcoholic drink is as natural as ordering a glass of wine. "It's just normal – we don't even have a separate section for non-alcoholic drinks on our menu. It's all just drinks, mixed together," Place-Matthews says. "We're seeing more and more people choose non-alcoholic beverages." She also suggests elevating the experience by using special glassware, like serving sparkling water in a champagne glass, or incorporating seasonal ingredients to highlight the holiday spirit.

Austin bar service company Drink Slingers owner Sadie Smythe advises hosts batch beverages without the alcohol and let guests mix in their own choice so everyone can customize their drink to best suit their taste. For customizable mocktails, Smythe recommends starting with a base like club soda or kombucha, then adding a splash of cocktail syrup. To make the drinks visually appealing, experiment with syrup flavors like strawberry, blueberry, or even seasonal pumpkin. For a creamy twist, Smythe suggests adding a touch of coconut milk to give the drink extra body and richness.

The possibilities are endless when it comes to crafting mocktails. What's most important, Marshall says, is to reframe ideas about abstaining.

"The conventional thinking around non-alcoholic drinks is that it's about restricting, it's about having less fun or less social life," Marshall says. "Really, I believe that this is the movement of *more options, more fun with your friends, more opportunity to have safe workplace experiences.*"



Country Doc Syrup Party Size Recipe by Hillside Farmacy

(Can be served hot or cold)

5 apples
1 piece of ginger
zest from 2 oranges
3 cinnamon sticks
1/2 cup lemon juice
1.5 oz. Angostura bitters
1 quart white sugar
1.3 quarts water

Simmer all ingredients.
Strain before pouring.

Ginger-Coconut NA Margarita by Paige Danoff of Sober and Funky

2 oz. Lyre's Agave Blanco Spirit
(or any NA tequila)
1 oz. Lyre's Orange Sec (or orange juice)
1/2 oz. Cheeky Honey Ginger Syrup
1/2 oz. lime juice
honey
sweetened shredded coconut
pressed coconut water

Rim glass with honey and shredded coconut then set aside. Pour the first four ingredients in a shaker over ice. Shake it up! Fill your glass with ice and strain your cocktail in. Top with coconut water.

Dry Sleigh Ride by Chris Marshall of Sans Bar

3 oz. Ritual Rum Alternative
1 oz. fresh orange juice
1 oz. vanilla cinnamon syrup
2 oz. ginger beer

In a shaker filled with ice, combine the Ritual Rum Alternative, orange juice, and syrup. Shake until well chilled. Strain into two glasses filled with ice (rocks or highball). Top each glass with 2 oz. ginger beer and stir gently. Garnish with a cinnamon stick.

SORRY, Y'ALL: THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO PREVENT A HANGOVER

And you're probably not going to like it

BY AMAYA AUSTIN

The clock strikes midnight, you toast to new beginnings, but by sunrise, it's all headaches, nausea, and a foggy memory. Looking to prevent the dreaded New Year's hangover? There's only one way, said Dr. Kim Nixon, a professor of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Texas at Austin: To skip the hangover, skip the booze – or at least drink in moderation.

According to Nixon, binge drinking – defined by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism as consuming four or more drinks in two hours for women, and five or more for men – "would be enough to bring your blood alcohol level up above that .08 legal driving limit."

While everyone's body responds differently, the more you drink, the more likely it is that you'll feel the effects the following morning. And don't think pre-gaming with a big meal will solve the problem. While food can slow alcohol absorption, Nixon said it's not a miracle fix.

"If you have a full stomach, it will take the alcohol a little longer to get into your system ... but it's still a dose-response," she said. "The more you drink, the worse the consequences are going to be."

What you can do is space out the booze and sprinkle in some NA cocktails or sparkling waters – fuzz without the buzz. "If you're a host, have those great mocktails for your friends who don't drink," she said. "That also helps encourage people to drink in moderation."

And if you did party too hard? Just drink water and wait it out.

"There is no cure," Nixon said. "Some water to help with the dehydration might help your headache a little bit, but ... it really doesn't have an effect [on hangover symptoms]."

Thinking of popping Tylenol? Bad idea. "There is an interaction between alcohol and Tylenol, and it is toxic to your liver, so you would want to avoid that." What about another drink – the old "hair of the dog" strategy? "It just prolongs the pain," she said.

So as you head out this holiday, keep prevention front of mind. Drink responsibly, stay hydrated, and make a plan – whether it's having a designated driver, using a rideshare service, or sticking to NA bevs – to make sure you ring in 2025 with more good memories than regrets.

Sorry



Country Doc Syrup
from Hillside Farmacy

COURTESY OF HILLSIDE FARMACY



ART BY ZEKE BARBARO / GETTY IMAGES

This January, Consider Bumping New Resolutions to March

And other ways to rethink your New Year's resolutions **BY AMBER WILLIAMS**

"New year, new me." If that phrase elicits an eye roll, you're not alone. According to the Pew Research Center, seven out of 10 Americans elected *not* to make resolutions last year. Of the 30% who were still faithful, health, wealth, and relationships topped lists. But too often these idealistic bullet points scribbled out on the first of January turn into unused gym passes and dusty self-help books by Valentine's Day.

"The flaw in the concept of the New Year's resolution is the idea that just committing to doing something is going to be the thing that makes the change," says Art Markman, a cognitive scientist and co-host of KUT program *Two Guys on Your Head*.

Real change takes planning, and planning takes time. Markman says if goal setters want to make resolutions on December 31, they should wait until March to actually start – March 4, to be exact, which has a marketing angle handily built into the date.

"That's the day that we should say, 'Okay, now my plan is in place, and from here on, I'm going to 'March fourth' into my future.'" Apparently, he pitches this idea around every year. "It hasn't worked yet, but, you know, I'll try it again."

New holiday or not, Markman says this time block helps people identify their desired behavior changes and anything getting in the way. He suggests jotting down quick observations in a habit diary.

"You're going to check your cellphone less often," Markman says. "Every time you pick up that cellphone, make a little note. Where was I? What was I doing? How was I feeling?"

After playing Nancy Drew for two weeks, it's time to get specific with the resolutions. This means blocking off exact days and times of gym visits. For some goals, Markman recommends changing the environment. "There's the magical discovery, you can't eat an ice cream that's not in your freezer."

Markman also emphasizes reframing goals in terms of actions rather than inactions.

"I can't build a habit to *not* do something. I can only build a habit to do something."

The last tip about resolutions? Know when not to set them.

"Not every change is possible," Markman says. "Not every change that's possible is something I should be doing right now."

Especially in today's realm of toxic comparison supercharged by social media influencers, accepting can feel harder than changing. That's why grace plays a key role in making (or not making) resolutions.

"I think people are meaner to themselves than they are to anyone else in their lives," Markman says.

"We have to act with a certain amount of self-compassion, too."

Bump

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Soul-Warming Austin Dishes You Can Have Delivered on New Year's Day

The front-door service you need after New Year's Eve partying

BY TAYLOR TOBIN

It's a truth universally acknowledged that a fun, lively, and memorable New Year's Eve can lead to a deeply painful and regret-ridden New Year's Day hangover. When I'm in that situation, the last thing I want to do is get dressed and head to brunch. I want flavorful, indulgent, and comforting food brought to my house, and I want to eat it in my pajamas in front of the TV. Luckily, Austin restaurants know how to handle the sorry aftermath of New Year's Eve by shuttling their tasty dishes right to diners' doors. These five spots serve some of our favorite hangover helpers in town, and they're available for New Year's Day delivery.



A sandwich from Home Slice Pizza will cure what ails you

PHOTO BY JANE YUN / COURTESY OF GIANT NOISE

Italian Sandwich From Home Slice Pizza

Savory cured meats, plush Italian bread, piquant provolone, tangy vinaigrette, sharp red onion, and the requisite lettuce and tomato: The Italian sub practically screams "I need to cure my hangover." And all food-loving Austinites know that the locally beloved Home Slice Pizza – which will offer delivery at several of its locations on New Year's Day – makes an Italian sandwich that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with versions made in New York City.

Chimichanga From Texican Cafe

When a night of champagne toasts and ill-advised tequila shots leaves me couch-bound, there's nothing that makes me happier than good old-fashioned fried food. And Texican Cafe, a classic Tex-Mex joint, serves a deep-fried burrito (aka a chimichanga) that offers everything one might want from that dish: a crunchy exterior, an interior bursting with cheese and your choice of protein, zippy salsas, tangy sour cream, rice and beans on the side, and even a complimentary serving of chips and house salsa. It got me through New Year's Day 2023, and I'll be calling upon it to do the same this year.

Bananas Foster French Toast From Phoebe's Diner

If you're craving a sweet treat to snap you out of the January 1 blues, Phoebe's Diner has you covered. Their bananas Foster French toast is a true brunch-dessert hybrid with sliced bananas, pecans, whipped cream, and a heavy drizzle of bourbon caramel.

Cumin Lamb at Fat Dragon

Spicy food can be polarizing for the exhausted and/or hung over among us: Some find that dishes with a kick are too volatile for their delicate stomachs, while others welcome the heat as a way to reset their systems. I fall into the latter camp, so I've definitely headed to Fat Dragon, a North Austin Chinese restaurant with a heavy Sichuan lean, on post-partying days. Their earthy, intense, and zesty cumin lamb is the right move for those who like to feel the burn.

Wonton Soup at 1618 Asian Bistro

Soup just might be the most soothing food on Planet Earth, so when you're starting the year in a wobbly state, a warming, comforting dish could do a lot to help. At 1618 Asian Bistro, a lively Asian-fusion restaurant in East Riverside, the wonton soup comes with a rich and meaty pork broth, tender wontons stuffed with both shrimp and pork, a sprinkling of fried onions for both flavor and texture, and aromatic cilantro to tie all of the flavors together.





PHOTO BY JANA BIRCHUM

Diving In

Why Austin loves the Polar Bear Plunge

BY EDEN SHAMY

For 45 years, Austinites have headed to Barton Springs Pool on the first day of the year for the Polar Bear Plunge. In collaboration with the Save Our Springs Alliance, the event raises money and awareness to preserve the Austin landmark. It's also a chance to wash off the languor of the holidays and find a sharp new sense of rejuvenation in the pool's 68-degree (F) waters.

Dr. Jessica Tranchina, a physical therapist and CEO of the Generator Athlete Lab Downtown, explained that while cold plunging – or brief immersions in water between 50 and 70 degrees – can sound scary, it has a variety of short- and long-term health benefits.

“You feel like you’re fighting the bear,” Tranchina says. “It activates what we call the sympathetic nervous system, known as the fight or flight [response].”

The body responds to the cold temperatures with a rush of exciting, feel-good hormones including dopamine, serotonin, endorphins, and norepinephrine.

“The more you consistently do cold plunging, the higher your threshold and levels of dopamine in your body,” Tranchina says. “So even when you’re not cold plunging, or you didn’t cold plunge that day, you feel more focused.”

Cold plunge enthusiasts point to heart benefits as well. When plunged into frigid water, the body constricts blood flow to the core. Then the blood pumps back out through arteries and veins when exposed to warmth. (Note: Cold plunges are not generally recommended for people with heart conditions or other medical conditions.)

“It’s like flexing the muscles of your vascular system,” she says.

Similarly, a polar plunge can help remove toxins and damaged tissues from the body by activating both the lymphatic system and the immune system, Tranchina said.

“You release white blood cells in this proportion when you’re sick,” she says.

“The only other time that [white blood cells] are released in this quantity is in a cold plunge – which is basically hacking your body.”

If you want to start the new year off with a splash, or need some mental clarity after a spirited New Year’s Eve, then come “fight the polar bear” and experience the surge of adrenaline yourself.

Stepping Out

From black light scavenger hunts to sunrise saunters, First Day Hikes is a great way to greet the new year

BY AMBER WILLIAMS

Patrick Flynn wanted to get people out to the parks during wintertime. That’s why on January 1, 1992, the park supervisor offered a guided hike through Blue Hills Reservation in Milton, Mass. It was a success – 380 trekkers showed up. Today, his idea has snowballed into a nationwide movement known as First Day Hikes with more than 1,000 different programs offered at public parks across all 50 states.

This year, Texas is serving up a wide spread, from self-guided strolls to ranger-led summits. Early risers can find programs at 6:45am, while night owls are invited for midnight excursions on the 31st. Bird lover? There are a few hikes for that. Dinosaur digger? You won’t be disappointed. If you’re not into hiking, then horseback riding, paddleboarding, fishing, and biking fill the agenda, too.

“It really runs the gamut of whatever you would like to get out of your first day hike,” says Katie Raney, a field interpretation coordinator for Texas State Parks.

The roughly 120 programs are listed on the Texas State Parks website under the First Day Hike page. Inks Lake State Park, offering both midnight and day hikes, and Lockhart State Park, with self-guided experiences, are just a couple of the offerings near Austin. Some programs ask for pre-registration and most parks require you to purchase a day pass. Popular locations can sell out early, so check the individual park websites before lacing up your boots.

As you hike, track your mileage and report to the park headquarters at the end. Not only do you get a free sticker for your trouble, but you also help tally up the total numbers. Last year, Texas charted 17,000 miles – taking home a new personal record and beating out all other states. (Even hiking is bigger in Texas.)

This turnout not only rejuvenates the parks but also the staff. Raney led her first hike for the program at the Bastrop State Park in 2012 after a severe fire burned 96% of the park’s 6,565 acres of pine-oak forest.

“I can’t tell you how hopeful it made me feel,” Raney says of seeing the 60 bright faces who showed up on January 1.

Aside from supporting parks, hikers participate in this tradition for the camaraderie and to set a positive tone for the rest of the year.

“Whether you’re diving in the river or you’re hiking to a mountain peak together,” Raney says, “we’re starting the year off on what we think is the right foot.”

Peruse all participating state parks at tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/first-day-hikes.



COURTESY OF FIRST DAY HIKES

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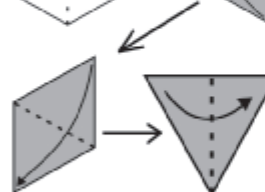
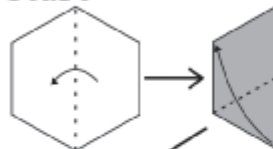
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BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

Two exhibitions too good to miss.

Native America: In Translation

Closes January 5, 2025

Long Live Surrealism! 1924–Today

Closes January 12, 2025

Native America: In Translation is curated by Wendy Red Star. The exhibition is organized by Aperture and is made possible, in part, with generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts. Support for this exhibition at the Blanton is provided in part by the Carl B. Marilyn Thomas Foundation. Additional support for this exhibition at the Blanton is provided by Suzanne Deal Booth. Image: Martine Gutierrez, *Queer Rage, Imagine Life-Size, and I'm Tyra*, p66–67 from the series *indigenous Woman* (detail), 2018, archival pigment print, 42 x 28 in., Courtesy of the artist and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York.

Long Live Surrealism! 1924–Today is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art. Image: Emily Mae Smith, *Temptation Island* (detail), 2019, oil on linen, 38 x 30 in., Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin, Purchase through the generosity of Alana and Adiel Hoch, 2020. © Emily Mae Smith

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Night Ritualz MUSIC

FRIDAY 27, HOTEL VEGAS

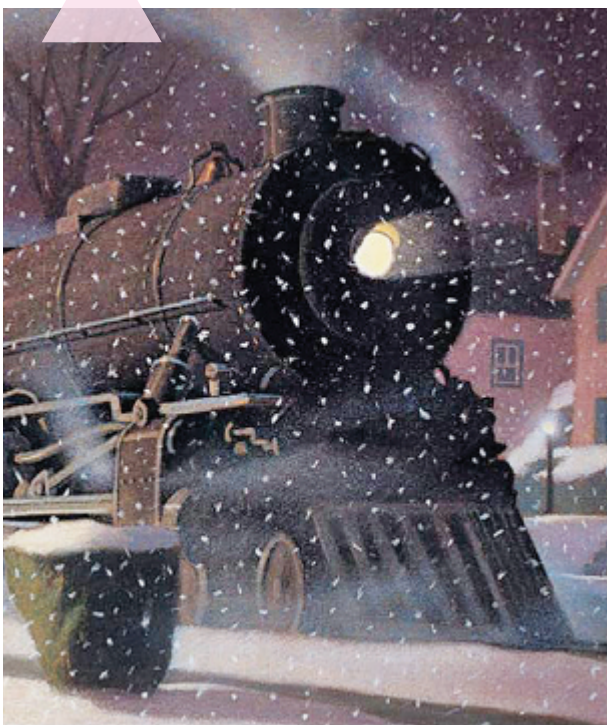
Though he sings tracks like “Cuando Andas” and “Vida” in Spanish, San Antonio darkwaver Night Ritualz leads his other electronic-tinged post-punk with an English groan. Both singable and club ready, cuts like 2023 single “Cross My Heart” and January’s “Try Means Fail” play like goth lullabies, while latest release “Turn N Burn” opts instead for a hammering house beat. Fellow SA “sludge pop” duo Gillian Dream opens with similar woodpecker rhythms and ghostly vocals. — **CARYS ANDERSON**

The Polar Express Storytime BOOKS FAMILY

SATURDAY 28, BOOKPEOPLE

If you’ve got kids at home, welcome to the doldrums of winter break. Holiday celebrations are officially done, your offspring are probably already over their toys, and the whining. Oh, the whining flowing forth from those oversugared, overstimulated, overly bored chaos machines. BookPeople is here to rescue you. They’re coming in clutch with an opportunity to pack up the littles and get them to a second location. *The Polar Express* storytime has all the comfort of a classic story, but without any creepy motion capture Tom Hanks to give everyone nightmares. Instead, the warm tones of booksellers might just lull the children into winter zen. Or maybe the free hot cocoa will do that. Either way, you’re all out of the house and entertained for at least a little while. — **CAT MCCARREY**

CONTINUED ON P.30



FAMILY



Thinkery's New Year's Eve balloon drop

COURTESY OF THINKERY AUSTIN

DROPPING THE BALL EARLY WITH KID-FRIENDLY NYE FUN

As a former kid, I've had boots-on-the-ground experience feeling left out on New Year's Eve. All the fun started after I was settled down for a long winter's nap! Come to think of it, that hasn't changed much ... anyway! I'm sympathetic to the under-20 set's lack of New Year's celebrations.

While kiddos can't make the midnight champers toast due to their age, there's still plenty of appropriate alternatives right here in Austin. Each of these daytime NYE options provide fun activities as well as a way to tucker the youths out. Nothing starts the new year off better than a well-kept bedtime – for both the young and old.

Please remember to double check these events before attending, as time, capacity, and venue are all subject to change – as are we all, right? There'll also be guidance on what ages each event is appropriate for, so make sure the fun fits your kiddo's needs. See y'all in 2025!

— **JAMES SCOTT**

Foodie Kids New Year's Eve Party

3818 Far West #107, foodie-kids.com

Feat. a lesson on how to make confetti cake balls, brie & cranberry bites, midnight melt fondue, sugar cookie wands, and a countdown crunch. \$80.

Noon Year's Eve Storytime Celebration at Yarborough Branch Library

2200 Hancock, library.austintexas.gov

Feat. a special storytime, artmaking, noisemakers, bubbles, and a balloon drop. Free.

Noon Year's Eve Party at Terrazas Branch Library

1105 E. César Chávez St., library.austintexas.gov

Feat. crafting, dancing, snacks, and a balloon drop. Free.

Thinkery NYE Celebration

1830 Simond, thinkeryaustin.org

Feat. a balloon drop, scarf drop, and festive crafts. \$35 for non-members.

Noon Year's Eve at Pinballz

All Pinballz locations, pinballz.com

Feat. a balloon drop, arts & crafts, arcade games, and prizes. \$15 standard, \$20 VIP that includes 1,000 bonus tickets.

Noon Year's Eve Party at Twin Oaks Branch Library

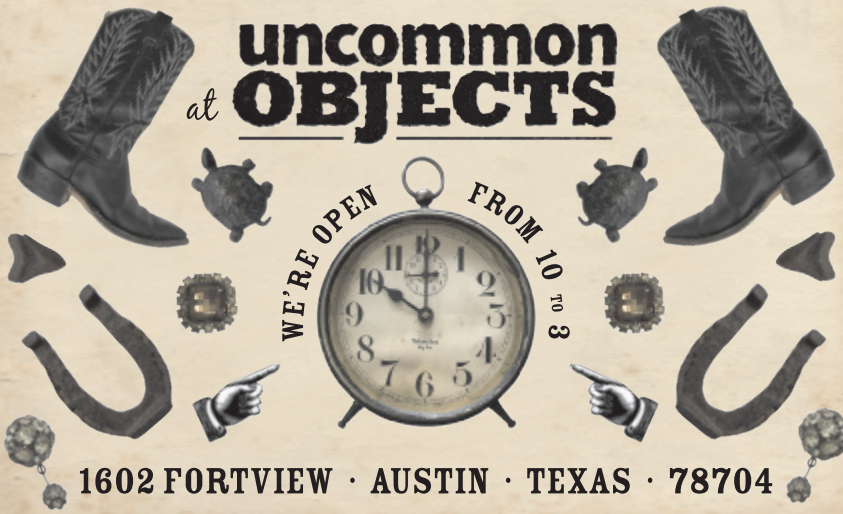
1800 S. Fifth, library.austintexas.gov

Feat. a dance party storytime, festive crafts, bubbles, and a balloon drop. Free.

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Bullet Journal & Planner Social

COMMUNITY

SATURDAY 28, YARBOROUGH BRANCH

Listen, if I won't follow through on New Year's resolutions (I will never, ever respect a goal I set for myself), at least I can make them look pretty. Enter the Yarbrough Branch Library, where gaggles of goal-setting planner people can descend on a conference room and swap marking methods and those cool little bujo stickers. The library will provide an assemblage of tracking sheets, calendars, and pens, plus some basic journals for complete newbies. Unfortunately, they won't provide the goals or calendar fodder for you, but at least you'll have like-minded souls to bounce ideas off of. Feel a little prepared for the new year with a fabulous planner in hand.

— CAT MCCARREY

Cries and Whispers

FILM

SATURDAY 28 & THURSDAY 2, ALAMO VILLAGE

Red is blood. Red is passion. But in Ingmar Bergman's oppressive and suffocating family drama, it is the color of a slow burn, as three sisters and their maid self-immolate and desiccate in their remote, isolated Swedish manor house. Bergman said that his films were essentially black-and-white, except for *Cries and Whispers*, as its crimson tones won Sven Nykvist an Oscar for his extraordinary and dread-drenched cinematography. A silent primal scream of lust and mistrust, it's a key influence on Robert Eggers and screens at selected Drafthouses around the country as a primer to his new version of genre-defining vampire horror *Nosferatu*.

— RICHARD WHITTAKER

When Harry Met Sally...

FILM

SATURDAY 28 - MONDAY 30, ALAMO VILLAGE, SLAUGHTER LANE, LAKELINE & MUELLER

Billy Crystal appeared on *The Late Show* recently, where Stephen Colbert asked him to share his favorite moment from *When Harry Met Sally...*, released 35 years ago this summer. Without missing a beat, the actor stood from his chair, stared down the camera, and recited his character's final declaration of love: "I came here tonight because when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible." Over three decades since filming, the comedian can still pull Nora Ephron's dialogue out of thin air. There's no better sign of a perfect movie than that.

— CARYS ANDERSON

A Tribute to Alex Chilton and Big Star

MUSIC

SATURDAY 28, HOTEL VEGAS

Eccentric Memphis rock & roll legend Alex Chilton's career traversed blue-eyed soul stardom with the Box Tops – scoring a global smash with "The Letter" as a teen – to Big Star's definitive Seventies power pop. Gorgeous classics like "September Gurls" contrast with his later experimental turns into Memphis roots and avant-rock chaos. East Austin hipster/garage haven Hotel Vegas hosts this tribute night, featuring Broken Gold (Riverboat Gamblers guitarist Ian MacDougall's superb post-punk outfit), the eccentric brilliance of John Wesley Coleman, and the Stayres, a power pop trio heavier than Big Star. Austin's take on Chilton's mercurial genius should be intriguing.

— TIM STEGALL

Teens Only Game Day

COMMUNITY

SATURDAY 28, UNIVERSITY HILLS BRANCH LIBRARY

Kids these days have a much better array of options when it comes to jamming down the D-pad. However, microtransactions threaten to ruin all the fun, especially with games like *Fortnite* that also encourage isolating your interactions online only. Start the new year sans headset and pricey online multiplayer setup by joining IRL friends at your local library. With gaming systems provided and prepped, as well as free snacks to keep y'all fuelled up, this teens-only space promises no gamer-rage moments – only gamer joy!

— JAMES SCOTT

DAY TRIPS

BY GERALD E. MCLEOD

The Morton Preserve off of River Road outside of New Braunfels offers a stunning view of the Guadalupe River, but it's open to the public for a limited time.

Part of a former ranch, the 288-acre property was acquired in 2008 by Comal County as a sanctuary for the gold-cheeked warbler, an endangered songbird that winters in Mexico and breeds in the Hill Country during the summer.

The land was acquired through grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

While the songbird is away on a winter vacation to warmer climates, the preserve is open to the public from September to February. This is the first year that visitors are allowed through a reservation system.

Visitors are limited to hiking a half-mile-long former ranch road and a paved parking area. The park is mainly a tangle of oaks and Ashe junipers surrounding meadows guarded

by prickly pear cactus and thorny bushes. The afternoon I visited, the only wildlife present were yellow butterflies.

Still, it was worth the journey just for the spectacular view of the river valley from the bluff.

To get to the well-hidden turnoff to the left of the Action Angler fly shop you have to travel several miles of River Road. Despite the nearly continuous line of riverside campgrounds, vacation homes, and tubing outfitters, River Road is still one of the most scenic byways in the area.

The Morton Preserve is outside of New Braunfels off of River Road just west of the Third Crossing. The nature preserve is open from 7am to 5pm. Reservations must be made through Comal County at www.cceo.org/parks/morton-preserve in order to get the code to the locked gate. There are no facilities at the park, and dogs are not allowed. The view of the river from the bluff is worth the price of admission.



GERALD E. MCLEOD

1,735th in a series. Everywhere is a day trip from somewhere: Follow "Day Trips & Beyond," a travel blog, at austinchronicle.com/daily/travel.



Eyes Wide Shut FILM

SATURDAY 28, MONDAY 30 & TUESDAY 31, AFS CINEMA

Hello: You may remember me from last week, where I wrote about this movie when it screened at Alamo Drafthouse. Well, I'm back and once again asking you to give famous director Stanley Kubrick a chance. Often mischaracterized as an entirely dour filmmaker due to film bro culture overemphasizing his works' serious subject matter, the true soul of Kubrick is humor. He's funny, guys! Nowhere do you see this satirical wit more than in this Tom Cruise vehicle, where the ultra-star's asexual magnetism is dismantled to hilarious effect. Cruise's Dr. Bill Harford literally flashes his medical license around like a cop's badge – echoing the false authority certain celebrities try to flaunt. Come for the Christmas cheer; stay because *Tar* director Todd Field plays a piano man.

– JAMES SCOTT

Shelley Carrol Quartet MUSIC

SATURDAY 28, MONKS JAZZ

Though a longtime member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, saxophonist Shelley Carrol has deep Texas roots. Part of a family of players and gospel singers from Houston, he attended the city's famed High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and was part of the renowned One O'Clock Lab Band while attending University of North Texas. Now based in the Dallas area, he teaches jazz to young folks at West Mesquite High School and the South Dallas Cultural Center when he's not on the road with the Ellington band, the Count Basie Band, or Sheryl Crow. Two shows land at 8 and 10pm. – MICHAEL TOLAND

Dual Language Japanese-English Storytime

COMMUNITY LEARNING

SATURDAY 28, MILWOOD BRANCH LIBRARY

Created in 2017, Austin Japan Community née Austin Shakaijin Kai works year-round to support the entire Japanese community in ATX as well as foster knowledge in those who simply enjoy Japanese culture. Though focused primarily on children's entertainment, this Saturday's storytime provides fun for all ages – while also teaching about Japan's new year's cultural celebrations. Enjoy seasonal children's songs, reading from picture books, and a paper puppet show in the tradition of Kamishibai, aka Japanese picture theatre. But don't think you'll leave engaged but empty-handed: AJC also offers make-and-take crafts such as a kawaii (cute!) origami snake and a new year's wreath, as well as refreshments to enjoy after storytime.

– JAMES SCOTT

CONTINUED ON P.32



COURTESY OF SHELLEY CARROL

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JANA BIRCHUM

Vixens of Volstead: The Best of 2024

QUEER

SUNDAY 29, THE VOLSTEAD LOUNGE

What a 2024 we've all had: *brat* summer, *Wicked*, beautiful Italian men with a weakness for hash browns, etc. Who better to capture this crazy year than Best of Austin winners the Vixens of Volstead? This Eastside drag show has been bringing the hotness for ages, and they plan to send off the year with the expected aplomb. May Magdalene, Mars, and Veronica Valentine host, with a special appearance by Monica Monáe Davenport to keep everyone on their toes. DJ Boyfriend provides this year's top tunes, so come out, have a Bloody Mary, and say goodbye to 2024's trends the way they deserve.

— JAMES SCOTT

The Apartment

FILM

SUNDAY 29 - TUESDAY 31, ALAMO SOUTH LAMAR, SLAUGHTER LANE, MUELLER, LAKELINE & VILLAGE

I love Jack Lemmon. He hits the sweet spot of non-queer actors who play queer well, although perhaps Pauline Kael, in a recently resurfaced quote, better describes his allure. She spoke about his continued casting as Jewish despite being a goy, stating "He's cast as a Jew for the same reason Montgomery Clift was after the accident that disfigured him — because the look in his face passes for pain." Lemmon in this Billy Wilder classic embodies the quiet suffering of a man suppressed: by his bosses who use his titular flat without ever providing him upward mobility; by his neighbors who believe him a sex addict despite his never being the culprit; and by his own simmering desires for Shirley MacLaine's magnetic elevator operator. Together their sadness spins a perfect end-of-the-year watch, capturing a welcome melancholy as 2024 draws to a close.

— JAMES SCOTT

Get Crafty: New Year's Charms

COMMUNITY

MONDAY 30, RUIZ BRANCH LIBRARY

We could all use some good fortune and protection in 2025, and here's one way to up your chances. Learn at the library how to make clay charms and paper omamori, which are Japanese amulets found at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, so named from the Japanese word "mamoru" meaning "to protect." Just come up with a good intention or prayer for the new year and swing by for a lunchtime craft hour from 1 to 2pm. All ages welcome.

— KAT MCNEVINS

Nico Santos

COMEDY

MONDAY 30, CAP CITY COMEDY CLUB

Austin gets a real treat in this special visit from Nico Santos, a Philippines-to-Bay Area transplant by way of Oregon you may recognize as the witty and fashionable Oliver from *Crazy Rich Asians* or as Recorder Theel from last year's *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*. Santos really made a name for himself onscreen over six seasons of NBC comedy *Superstore*, which benefited from his stand-up background as well as the real-life retail experience that supplemented his comedy career. Don't miss this rare chance to see him live in Austin, and get more Santos via guest spots on NBC comedies *Night Court* and *St. Denis Medical*.

— KAT MCNEVINS

LOOKING FOR MORE THINGS TO DO ON NEW YEAR'S EVE? SEE P.18.



Charley Crockett

MUSIC

TUESDAY 31, ACL LIVE AT THE MOODY THEATER

A line stretched in both directions around Waterloo Records before Charley Crockett's in-store performance this past April. Don't call the Texas country buck grassroots anymore, because at least here at home, he's gone as mainstream as Yeti. Inside the store, warming up before Lone Stars of every stripe packed in, he stood solo onstage with his guitar, his low and soulful croon still spellbinding. "Whaddya got," I cracked. "More than you can handle," he snapped back, edge-sharp. *\$10 Cowboy* proved that in 2024, and now *Live From the Ryman* encores. Willie Nelson used to own this Moody NYE slot, so take the hint: Crockett's his replacement.

— RAOUL HERNANDEZ



PHOTO BY LYZA RENEE



PHOTO BY MICAH E. WOOD

Feeble Little Horse

MUSIC

TUESDAY 31, PARISH

Feedback freaks and DIY enthusiasts need look no further for NYE plans than Feeble Little Horse's year-end Austin stop. The Pittsburgh fourpiece's 2021 debut EP *modern tourism* announced the group as prominent noise-pop newcomers, melting heads with fuzz-filled guitar work and sardonic lyricism. Last year's tour de force *Girl With Fish* saw the band expand their musical palette, combining chirpy electronic touches without sacrificing their signature grit. Tourmates Sword II ride into Austin on the success of a sludgy recent collaboration with They Are Gutting a Body of Water.

— GENEVIEVE WOOD

TR/ST

MUSIC

TUESDAY 31, MOHAWK

In the mood to dance yourself clean of the tire fire that was 2024 with the darkest music you can find? Throw on leather, eyeliner, and possibly a coat and head off to mope and vibrate to this Los Angeles-via-Canada moody electronic outfit. On this year's *Performance*, Robert Alfons' void-gazing synth project acquires a cool driftiness to go with its beat science. On NYE he plays with the indestructible synth-punk band Adult., the similarly goth San Antonio outfit Haunt Me, and Holy Water, the latter of whom has likely forgotten more about Depeche Mode than you will ever know.

— JOE GROSS

Third Eye Blind

MUSIC

TUESDAY 31, AUDITORIUM SHORES

Why not ring in the new year with a free show by one of the most famous party bands of the Nineties? (You knew "Semi-Charmed Life" was about drugs, right?) Whether or not you plan to bump again on Dec. 31, you might as well admit that Third Eye Blind's 1997 self-titled album is full of bangers. "How's It Going To Be"? Iconic breakup song. "Jumper"? A masterclass in suicide prevention. "Graduate"? A commencement soundtrack for a generation. Before you move forward, look back with some undeniable power pop.

— CARYS ANDERSON

Phantom Thread

FILM

TUESDAY 31 AND WEDNESDAY 1, ALAMO SOUTH LAMAR, LAKELINE

Maybe you've already caught this "final" (for now) Daniel Day Lewis performance in theatres. But hear me out — *Phantom Thread* is the ideal film for ringing in the New Year. Is that just because it has an ethereally gorgeous New Year's party scene? Maybe. But this luscious movie deserves to be seen on the big screens, nothing distracting you from the quiet beauty of fashion and relationships. Listen to Jonny Greenwood's wonderful score on a top-notch sound system. Watch every larger-than-life fold and billow of dressmaking. Entrap yourself in the twisted love between DDL's eccentric fashion house head and Vicky Krieps' not-so-naive country girl drawn into his web. Let yourself get lost in the romanticism, and definitely don't investigate why their power dynamic is so fascinating.

— CAT MCCARREY

CONTINUED ON P.34

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The Wizard of Oz FILM

TUESDAY 31, CENTRAL LIBRARY

I once held the championship title in my immediate family for the *Wizard of Oz* trivia game, where I could recall every fact at the drop of a dice. How curious no one suspected I might be neurodivergent... anyway! Ease into the new year with a classic: In conjunction with their Read Watch Talk Book and Movie Club, which is currently delving into Oz's many, many iterations, the Austin Public Library screens 1939's Technicolor wonder. This screening offers silent disco headphones, so you control the volume on the screening without disturbing other patrons. Whether you listen soft or loud, the beautiful notes of Judy Garland wondering what lies over the rainbow hit every single time. — JAMES SCOTT

Dahomey FILM

TUESDAY 31, WEDNESDAY 1 & SATURDAY 4, AFS CINEMA

How do our histories continue beyond their lifetimes? As the world wavers over climate change's steep ledge, conversations about preservation have produced the most fascinating works of 2024. From psychic grave robbers in *La Chimera* to this week's Doc Nights select, how to care for artifacts – and where those historical items belong – stays a potent topic. Directed by Mati Diop, the return of 26 sacred pieces concerns most of this documentary's runtime, following their journey from a Paris museum back to what was once the titular African kingdom, now called Benin. This story comes from multiple viewpoints, including interviews with University of Abomey-Calavi students as well as a statue of King Ghézo, given voice by Haitian writer Makenzy Orcel. — JAMES SCOTT



The Wizard of Oz

DJ Paul MUSIC

TUESDAY 31, ANTONE'S

DJ Paul of legendary Memphis rap group Three 6 Mafia fame kicks out the jam and headlines Antone's monster New Year's Eve bash. Also on the bill, Jake Lloyd and Deezie Brown's Geto Gala run continues following the release of the fantastic full-length *Major League*. Mississippi-raised LOS KEMET makes nuanced hip-hop he calls "Southern Gangsta Musik." Blakchyl, alongside Vintage Jay, put out one of the year's best extended plays in *Process of Shinnin*. YOSO brings a potent blend of Southern rap, Afrobeats, and dub Belizean reggae. DJ Mahealani provides support with a delectable vinyl set. — KAHRON SPEARMAN

Black-Eyed Pea Cook-Off FOOD

WEDNESDAY 1, WILLIAM CHRIS VINEYARD

Originating in West Africa and a portent of good luck, black-eyed peas are essential eating on New Year's Day. If you want to get your fix in as well as a nice drive, consider heading to Hye for William Chris Vineyard's annual Black-Eyed Pea Cook-Off. A \$50 ticket (\$20 children) will pack your plate with Hoppin' John, braised collards, and more. That ticket also gains you access to live music, lawn games, a welcome glass of wine, a commemorative tee, and the right to taste and vote for the best dish, which is great for anyone who made "be more judgy" a New Year's resolution for 2025. — KIMBERLEY JONES

Bona FILM

WEDNESDAY 1 & SUNDAY 5, AFS CINEMA

Because all misogyny was fixed in 1990 by women in pantsuits, watching women-centric films from those pre-enlightened years is so fascinating. Obviously I jest, seeing as America just elected possibly the most anti-women candidate for our highest office, but I'm not joking when it comes to the importance of historic feminist cinema. This until-now largely unseen Filipino feature follows a young woman infatuated with an actor, whose enveloping of her into his life proves enlightening about patriarchy's harsh rule. Released in 1980, the film's lead actress Nora Aunor won a Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences Best Actress award, as well as sweeping up another Best Actress title at the Gawad Urian Awards. Catch the latest 4K restoration as the new year starts, putting you one-foot forward to a more worldly cinematic 2025. — JAMES SCOTT

New Year Mimosa Run SPORTS

WEDNESDAY 1, 410 PRESSLER

Start your year the right way ... and the wrong way. The fine and fit folks at Rogue Running will host a 3-7 mile jaunt through Austin – that's the healthy part – followed by mimosas, coffee, and sparkling cider – that's the unhealthy part, although it might help your mental health. Maybe this will be a whole new fitness leaf you'll be turning over, but even if your resolution to run only lasts for that one day, you'll still be that tiny bit healthier going into what promises to be a grueling 2025. — JAMES RENOVITCH

CONTINUED ON P.36



PHOTO BY JASMINE WAHEED VIA UNSPLASH

QMMUNITY

BY JAMES SCOTT

I'm writing this column from behind a crystal ball, within which are purple and pink swirls of precog magic. How do you score one of these? First, you have to be really beautiful, and God has to love you. Then, you have to be queer – although that's basically just restating the obvious. Anyway: I looked into my shiny totem to glean incredible insight into what events all the star signs must attend. What I saw has been here logged for your betterment.

Or you can just go to the events that seem fun to you. Whatever, dude. I'm not your mom. ■

Sagittarius: Red District Party

Monday 30, 207 W. Fourth

Sir Rat Leather & Gear hosts a vibrant, edgy experience sure to bring out the adventurous Sag as well as their sensual friends, featuring a bathhouse vibe and music by DJ Cosmique and DJ Daddy D.

Capricorn: Tuezgayz 2025

Tuesday 31, Barbarella & Swan Dive

The financially informed Capricorn knows a good deal when they see one, which is why they ought to attend Barbs/Swan Dive's "3 Parties 1 Cover" NYE party – that's a million-dollar value for only \$20.

Aquarius: Garage Comedy

Thursday 26, Fallout Theater

A stacked lineup of women and nonbinary comedians promises to "pack a punch EVERY week" that will delight the cool and quirky Aquarius, especially if they get to brag about it later in the week.

Pisces: A Tuna Surprise: New Queer's Eve Day Show

Tuesday 31, Knomad Bar

Save a tissue or two for the sensitive Pisces, who'll surely shed a tear at this fond reunion of art folk rockers the TunaHelpers as well as contribute an art piece to the 2025 Resilience & Regeneration ofrenda altar.

Aries: Black Party

Saturday 28, the Austin Eagle

Too hot to handle is the name of the Aries game, as is this party that celebrates the dark clothes, tunes, and vibes – so dress in the style of shadows.

Taurus: Drag Bingo Happy Hour

Sunday 29, Jo's Coffee Symphony Square

Gastronomes that they are, Taurus readers ought to try their luck at this drag bingo hosted by Lawrie Bird, where delicious prizes and Jo's refreshments await.



What's in your future?

PHOTO BY WYRON A. VIA UNSPLASH

Gemini: Tongue in Cheek

Thursday 2, Swan Dive

Those guffawing Geminis may have their fill of funny folks at Ivy Le's queer comedy open mic: a perfect way to kick off a very silly year indeed.

Cancer: TGQ Social North

Saturday 28, Slab BBQ & Beer

Slip out of that shell, Cancer, and find new friends at this Northside hang held by TGQ Social, where gender diverse peeps and their allies gather together.

Leo: Big Gay Night Out: New Year's Eve Edition

Tuesday 31, Fallout Theater

Let the lion roar a little – or a lot – at this comedy show hosted by the talented Greg Phelps and featuring local gay luminaries in the he-he/ha-ha field.

Virgo: NYE 2025 at the Coco Complex

Tuesday 31, Coconut Club

Organization mavens like Virgos will love how Coco Club collects all the hot platter-spinners under one roof and across five dance floors – all for \$20.

Libra: New Year's Day Polar Plunge + Boozy Brunch

Wednesday 1, Austin Motel

Balance the scales, Libra, with this party that promises delicious eats, beats by Boi Orbison, and drag by Cheeki Khant.

Scorpio: NYE @ CUC

Tuesday 31, Cheer Up Charlies

Chups salutes the Scorpio's sexy taste by packing their NYE lineup with DJs who really bring the steamy spins – plus complimentary champers and a tequila shot with ticket purchase? Wahoo!

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PHOTO BY SUSANNE JUTZELER, SUJU-FOTO VIA PEXELS

Polar Bear Splash

COMMUNITY SPORTS

WEDNESDAY 1, BARTON SPRINGS POOL

No polar bears were invited to this year's plunge, as far as I know, but they wouldn't like the weather in Austin anyway. A bit too humid, TBH! So this event rec goes out to all our non-polar bear readers, many of whom are humanoid and will take great delight in hopping feet first into the chilly Barton Springs. I'll say this: It's certainly a unique way to welcome the new year. Cold, wet, and awake too early – such is the edict for 2025. Of course, you can always hit up Save Our Springs for free coffee and donuts to warm up post-plunge. — JAMES SCOTT

The First Sip Brunch

FOOD

WEDNESDAY 1, THE THOMPSON

Maybe you're not interested in a subdued 2025. You desire a new year filled by decadence, luxury, and excess – which is why you're even considering a Downtown Austin hotel brunch at all. Few places could kick off your gourmet future better than this New Year's Day feast over at the Thompson's first-floor 5th Street Diner. On offer here will be millennial-bait avocado toast, green eggs and ham benedict, bread-pudding French toast, or Irish oatmeal, whose brûléed raw sugar and fresh fruit don't exactly call to mind the humble cuisine of Ireland but like. You're not in Ireland, so why pick nits? Top this foodie finery off with an elevated cocktail, such as 2024's darling the espresso martini or a tropical pineapple orange mimosa. The world may be burning, but who cares when the eating's this good? — JAMES SCOTT

Paris, Texas

FILM

THURSDAY 2, ALAMO SOUTH LAMAR

Even though it was directed by Wim Wenders and written by Sam Shepard, it's not Paris, North Rhine-Westphalia, or Paris, Illinois. It's Paris, Texas, and it's the delicate pen of cinematic hall-of-famer and co-screenwriter L.M. Kit Carson that grounds this 1985 tragic odyssey as a defining Lone Star State film. Desperation blooms in the heat as lost soul Travis (Harry Dean Stanton, gaunt and mute) staggers out of the West Texas desert on a quest to pull some of his life back together, and make amends for sins from which he had run away four years earlier. Yet what was truly unforgivable: the crime, or the escape? The movies have never had a better showdown than Stanton on the phone in a peepshow booth, confronting his past and confessing for something like redemption. — RICHARD WHITTAKER

The Bloody Lady

FILM

THURSDAY 2 & SATURDAY 4, AFS CINEMA

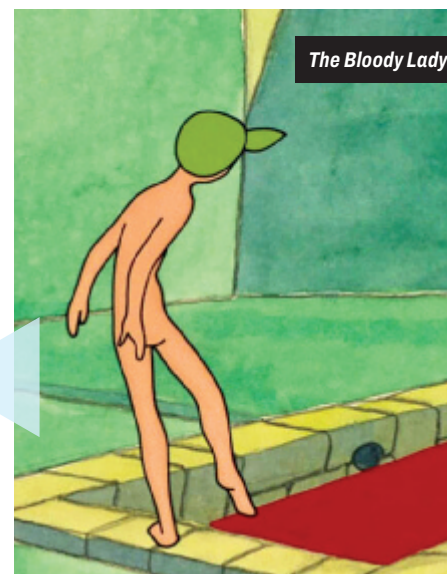
Hungarian serial killer Elizabeth Báthory, allegedly a bather in the blood of virgins in a quest for eternal youth around the turn of the 17th century, was the subject of a recent *You're Wrong About* podcast episode. Does that mean this 1981 "Disneyfied goth retelling" of her story, as AFS puts it, may not be based on fact? Can we even call her a serial killer? Perhaps ol' Liz is due for a name-clearing, and her story is certainly ripe for revisiting via this strikingly told tale from Slovakia's "father of animation," Viktor Kubal. — KAT MCNEVINS

The Taste of Mango

FILM

THURSDAY 2 & THURSDAY 9, AFS CINEMA

Moms hold a lot of histories: theirs, their children's, and even their own mother's. In her debut documentary feature, filmmaker Chloe Abrahams delves into three family generations to find their true stories filled by overwhelming love and violence. By unpacking her mother Rozana and her grandmother Jean's lives before hers, Abrahams uses their stories to "testify to the entangled and ever-changing nature of inheritance and the ways in which we both hurt and protect the ones we love," as the director's own website describes. Having secured a Best Debut Director award from the British Independent Film Awards, the documentary lands in ATX courtesy of Austin Asian American Film Festival and AFS' Doc Nights series. — JAMES SCOTT



The Bloody Lady

Music Notes

BY DEREK UDENSI



Golden Dawn Arkestra

JANA BIRCHUM

Alejandro Escovedo

Friday 27 - Saturday 28, Saxon Pub

These two shows were originally scheduled for earlier this month, but Escovedo had to undergo surgery to resolve a case of appendicitis. The Austin Music Awards Hall of Famer released his latest LP, *Echo Dancing*, back in March.

Real World Hotel Vegas

Tuesday 31, Hotel Vegas

The rarely dull East Sixth locale once again hosts a massive, end-of-year blowout that'll pay homage to legends of yesteryear. This go around, members of 20 local acts celebrate the Nineties in a manner that'd make the creators of VH1's *Aughts* television miniseries *I Love the '90s* beam with glee. Artists set to be covered include the Breeders (performed by Farmer's Wife), Green Day (Another Scorcher), Pavement (members of John Wesley Coleman Band), and Weezer (Gus Baldwin & the Sketch).

Interstellar New Year's Eve

Tuesday 31, Radio/East

Funky. Otherworldly. A piss-ton of members. Those are some succinct ways to describe the large, luxurious nature of galaxial bands Golden Dawn Arkestra and Grandmaster. The latter act released its self-titled debut on Spaceflight Records earlier this year. Andrew Cashen & the Disciples of Creation open Radio/East's farewell to 2024.

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» Up Next

NEW YEAR'S EVE
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DEC 31

» Coming Soon

JAN 5

Sarah Silverman POSTMORTEM

FRI JAN 17

JJ GREY & MOFRO OLUSTEE TOUR WITH ANDY FRASCO (DUO)

SAT JAN 18

RODNEY CARRINGTON

FRI JAN 24

PHANTOGRAM RUNNING THROUGH COLORS TOUR

SAT JAN 25

TRAVIS RAZE THE BAR TOUR WITH AKIRA

JAN 30

THE TEMPTATIONS & THE FOUR TOPS 40TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

FEB 2

Mania THE ABBA TRIBUTE

FRI FEB 7

The Fab Four USA MEETS THE BEATLES! A 60TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

FEB 18

JORJA SMITH FALLING OR FLYING TOUR 2025

FEB 20

DAVID GRAY PAST & PRESENT TOUR WITH SIERRA SPIRIT

FRI FEB 21

THREE DOG NIGHT

SAT FEB 22

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» This Weekend

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DECEMBER 28

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ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO 10PM



DECEMBER 30

JOHNNY NICHOLAS 6PM
LONELYLAND 8:30PM




DECEMBER 31

NEW YEAR'S EVE
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CLUBS CONTINUED

THE CUT Kyle Walker (2:00am) **R**

DRISKILL BAR Sharon Bourbonnais Trio (10:00)

ELEPHANT ROOM NYE w/ Ephraim Owens (8:00) **R**

EMO'S Toadies, Vandoliers (9:00) **R** **A**

EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM NYE w/ DJs Concept, BFlow, Tylinn, DJ Deking (10:00)

THE FAR OUT Yacht Rock NYE w/ Heavy Mellow, DJ Dead Flowers (8:00)

FLAMINGO CANTINA NYE Reggae Ball w/ Mau Mau Chaplains, DJ DNGR (9:00)

GRUENE HALL NYE w/ Pat Green, Walt Wilkins (10:00) **R** **A**

HAUTE SPOT NYE w/ Stony LaRue (8:30)

HOLE IN THE WALL Hickoids, Clyde & Clem's Whiskey Business, Sodomy Cop, HUNCH (9:00)

HOTEL SAN JOSÉ NYE w/ NEZ (8:00) **R**

HOTEL VEGAS NYE Nineties music tribute w/ Another Scorcher, Billy Glitter, Broken Gold, Bubba Lucky, Farmer's Wife, more (9:00) **R**

KICK BUTT COFFEE NYE w/ the Brothels, MDC, Peelander-Z, Worm Suicide, Shitty Advice, Maddie & the Dead Names, Dead Horse Creek, Naga Brujo (7:30) **R** **A**

MOHAWK TR/ST, ADULT., Haunt Me, Holy Water [outside] (9:00) **R** **A**

MOODY CENTER Goose (9:00) **R**

MOZART'S Haitches (11:30am), Ibra Martinez (9:00am) **A**

PARAMOUNT THEATRE NYE w/ Bob Schneider, William Harries Graham (9:00) **A**

PARISH feeble little horse, Sword II (9:00) **R** **A**

RADIO COFFEE & BEER Feeling Small, Herdscene (8:00)

RADIO/EAST NYE w/ Golden Dawn Arkestra, Grandmaster, Andrew Cashen (8:00) **R** **A**

SAGEBRUSH NYE w/ Silverada, Aaron McDonnell & the Neon Eagles (8:00)

SAHARA LOUNGE Body Rock ATX: NYE Player's Ball w/ DJ Chorizo Funk & Riders Against the Storm (9:00) **R**

SAM'S TOWN POINT Dan Whitaker (5:00)

SAXON PUB NYE w/ Nik Parr & the Selfless Lovers (8:00)

SOUTH CONGRESS HOTEL NYE w/ TC Superstar, DJ King Louie, more (9:00)

SPEAKEASY NYE w/ the Spazmatics (8:00)

STERLING STAGE NYE Cotton Club Countdown w/ members of Rotel & the Hot Tomatoes

SUMMIT ROOFTOP NYE w/ CRG (10:00)

VALHALLA NYE w/ Daikaiju, WE Are the Asteroid, Shysters (9:30)

THE WHITE HORSE The Mellows, Blake Whitmire Band, Missy Beth & the Morning Afters (8:00)

WEDNESDAY 1/1

DEVIL MAY CARE Los Gatos 512 (9:00)

HALF STEP Canned Beets (9:30)

MOZART'S Camila Rivers (11:30am), Ibra Martinez (9:00am) **A**

SAM'S TOWN POINT Guthrie Girls (10:00), Libby & the Loveless (8:00)

THE WHITE HORSE Grant Edward McMahan, Shinglers, Johnny McGowan's Rugged Gents (8:00)

THURSDAY 1/2

29TH STREET BALLROOM Free Week w/ Witches Exist, Water Damage, dorothy's **R**

BATCH CRAFT BEER + KOLACHES Amelia Ray (6:00) **R**

BROKEN SPOKE Jeff Hughes & Chaparral (9:00), Tracie Lynn (6:00)

COME & TAKE IT LIVE Astrixion, Release the Captive, OPAKE, Topdown (7:00) **R**

CORAL SNAKE TC Jester, tiny specks, Side Saddles (8:00)

EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM Purgatory Creek, VVOOOLLLUUUMMEEEE, Bernardo Mountainair [control room] (8:00) **R**

LITTLE LONGHORN Rugged & Right (9:00)

MOHAWK Free Week w/ Creeping Death, Mujeres Podridas, Muggler [outside]; Houses We Die In, NRA, Dewormer [inside] (9:00) **A**

RADIO COFFEE & BEER

Erik Hokkanen & the Hip Replacements (7:00)

SAHARA LOUNGE Southern' Cookin, Harvey Holt Experience, Josh Langford (8:00), jazz improv jam (6:30)

SAM'S TOWN POINT Jimmie Dreams & Friends (10:00), Sentimental Family Band (8:00), two-step dance lessons w/ Double or Nothing (6:00)

THE WHITE HORSE Michael Monroe Goodman, Taylor Graves, Fingerpistol (8:00)

FRIDAY 1/3

29TH STREET BALLROOM Free Week w/ Borzoi, Ritual, Gummy Fang

BANGER'S The Merles (8:00)

BATCH CRAFT BEER + KOLACHES Violet Crown Affair (7:00)

BROKEN SPOKE Smith & Reeves Band (9:00)

BUCK'S BACKYARD Scotty Alexander (9:00) **R**

C-BOY'S Mel & James [jade room] (10:00)

CHESS CLUB Free Week w/ Pussy Gillette, haha Laughing, Subpar Snatch, Froggy Style (8:00)

COME & TAKE IT LIVE

Brewtality Inc., Shitty Advice, Bigwood, Kabuto, Worm Suicide (7:00) **R**

CONTINENTAL CLUB The Blues Specialists (6:30)

CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Josh Perdue (10:30)

CORAL SNAKE Stalefish, Leo Napoleon, Motorsports, HUNCH (9:00) **R**

ELYSIUM Free Week w/ Haunt Me, Most Modern, Gaven Ludington (9:00)

EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM Free Week w/ JaRon Marshall, Trejo, DJ Hair of the Dog [garage]; Magic Rockers of Texas, Lola Tried, Tied Up, Half Dream [control room] (8:00)

THE FAR OUT Hail Marley, Sahara Allstars (8:00)

FRIENDLY RIO MARKET Portnoy's Complaint, MalaysiaBrunei, Unrestricted Internet Access (7:00)

HAUTE SPOT Deadeye (7:00)

KNOMAD BAR Wild Heaven, Prom Threat, Losers, Snack Supper, Hoorary Internet (7:00) **R**

LITTLE LONGHORN The Big Gun Show (6:00)

MOHAWK Free Week w/ Being Dead, Rattlesnake Milk, Bubba Lucky [outside]; Cactus Lee, JD Clark, Brody Price [inside] (9:00) **A**

MONKS JAZZ CLUB Adam Hutcheson & Russel Haight Quintet (10:00, 8:00)

RADIO/EAST King Warbler, Ramesh Srivastava, Batty Jr. (8:00) **A**

SAGEBRUSH The Point, Money Chicha, Hotel De Nova, Los Alcos (8:00) **R**

SAHARA LOUNGE Huerta Culture, Mario y Su Timbeko, Unico (8:00)

SAM'S TOWN POINT Neighborhood Bullys (10:00), Stereo Hum (8:00)

SAXON PUB Carly Jo Jackson (10:00), Jon Dee Graham (8:00), TG BAD (6:00)

STUBB'S Free Week w/ Leila Sunier, Kiki Machine, the Irons, Vintage Pictures (9:30)

SWAN DIVE Free Week w/ Rookie Park, Banged Out, Glass Mansions (DJ set)

VALHALLA Free Week w/ Chancla Fight Club, Ampersand, the Swift Drag, oogWei (9:00)

THE WATER TANK Meg Groves (5:30)

THE WHITE HORSE Paige Plaisance, Weldon Henson, Jack Fister's Wildlife (8:00), Jacob Alan Jaeger (5:30)

SATURDAY 1/4

3TEN ACL LIVE Cracker (8:00) **R**

THE ABGB Darci Carlson Band (9:00)

ANTONE'S Jackie Venson, Sydney Wright (8:00) **R**

THE BALLROOM Free Week w/ TEAR DUNGEON, Think No Think, fifi knifefight

BANGER'S Sachin & the Porch (8:00)

BATCH CRAFT BEER + KOLACHES Vintage Ties Quartet (7:00)

BUCK'S BACKYARD Bo Luna (8:00)

CHESS CLUB Free Week w/ Leche, Queen Serene, Guiding Light, Sugar World, Prehuman (9:00) **R**

COME & TAKE IT LIVE The Mosh Network fifth anniversary w/ Foreword, Future Ghost, Mass of Amara, Waves in April, Inside the Hollow, Blackhat (5:30) **R**

CONTINENTAL CLUB Sarah Barlow (10:30), Elvis Presley tribute w/ Ted Roddy & the King Conjure Orchestra, Rosie Flores & the Ramblers, & Marti Brom (7:00) **R**

CONTINENTAL CLUB GALLERY Josh Perdue (10:30)

ELYSIUM Free Week w/ Sine, Telemetry, In a Darkened Room, Art Versus Industry (9:00)

EMPIRE CONTROL ROOM Free Week w/ Gilded Lows, sleep well., GOOD., Font [garage]; Pelvis Wrestley, Barb, Retro Cowgirl [control room] (8:00)

THE FAR OUT Return to Ruins, WhiskeyDick, Bluebonnet Plague, EL GALLO! de ALIEN TEJAS, Ari (7:00) **R**

GRUENE HALL The Lowdown Drifters, Wade Forster (9:00) **R** **A**

HAUTE SPOT Suede Austin (7:00)

HOLE IN THE WALL Little Mazam, Chris Acker, Sentimental Family Band (9:00) **R** **A**

LITTLE LONGHORN Shotgun Ready (9:00), ATX Pearl (6:00)

MOHAWK Free Week w/ Ringo Deathstar, fawn, Dottie [outside] (9:00); Night Drive, Jet Cemetery, Pax Laurel [inside] (10:00) **R** **A**

MONKS JAZZ CLUB Jerome Gillespie II Quintet (10:00, 8:00) **R**

PARISH Chris Travis (8:00) **R**

RADIO/EAST Simon Says (Paul Simon tribute) (8:00) **A**

SAGEBRUSH Brother Thunder, Nether Hour, Nik Parr & the Selfless Lovers (8:00)

SAHARA LOUNGE Africa Night w/ Zoumountchi, Frederico7, Afro Jazz (7:00) **R**

STUBB'S Free Week w/ Variety, Next of Kin, Geto Gala (9:30) **R**

SWAN DIVE Free Week w/ French Film, Allwax, Lauren Lakis

VALHALLA Free Week w/ Duel, Transit Method, Megafauna, Demons My Friends (9:00)

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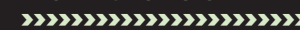
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Baby John

(NR, 165 min.)


Hindi-language action thriller stars Varun Dhawan as a police officer who fakes his own death to protect his daughter and evade the wrath of a powerful enemy.

A Traveler's Needs

(NR, 90 min.)

Isabelle Huppert is an eccentric French tutor in this comedy from the prolific Korean director Hong Sang-soo.

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 INDICATES WE HAVE A
FULL-LENGTH REVIEW



A Symphony of Horror Is Revived Once More FILM

Robert Eggers finds new life in an undead classic **BY RICHARD WHITTAKER**

Vampires are not sexy. It doesn't matter whether we're talking about *Twilight* or *Interview With the Vampire*, the fetishization of the bloodsucker depends on ignoring the fact that, whether you call them vrykolakas, bruxa, obur, or strigoi, they are supernatural mass murderers.

To see that is to see the truth of the myth, and so it's easy to imagine Robert Eggers coming out of watching Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* and wondering why everyone was slaving over the beast that rips throats and damns souls. It could explain why *Nosferatu* – his remake of F. W. Murnau's seminal expressionist horror *Nosferatu – Eine Symphonie des Grauens* – remembers in every frame that Count Orlok is a creature of darkness, death, corruption, and the grave.

Murnau's 1922 classic is an unlicensed adaptation of *Dracula* and follows its story closely (closely enough that Stoker's widow sued him). With both book and film now in the public domain, writer/director Eggers is free to give his own spin on Henrik Galeen's original script. However, as the

saying goes, why mess with perfection? The story remains basically the same: In 19th century Germany, promising young lawyer Thomas Hutter (Hoult) is dispatched to the Carpathian Mountains for what he thinks is a simple property sale to a foreign aristocrat. What he doesn't know is that Orlok is *nosferatu*, the undead, the slayer, the carrier of plague, who aims to destroy the city of Wisborg. He is ancient evil pitted against modernity – a conflict that only scientist/chemist prof. Albin Eberhart Von Franz (a suitably unhinged Dafoe) understands – and this devil has particular, malicious plans for Hutter's wife, Ellen (Depp).

Ever the historian, Eggers doesn't try to rebut or rewire Murnau's work. Instead, he elaborates upon it and makes reference without simple emulation. He has stepped onto this unholy land and paid perfect tribute. Just as he plays with Murnau's themes of doom and darkness, so his oppressively Gothic visuals takes vital imagery – a shadow of a hand on a wall, crosses on sand dunes, a driverless coach at midnight – and gives them new, corrupted life. Moreover,

his solutions to some of the more antiquated and problematic elements of the story are subtle and ingenious, such as how the Szigany locals are depicted.

What Eggers truly comprehends is that *Nosferatu* is not about sex. It's about power. Pure, malevolent, selfish, devastating power. His version of Orlok is not the rat-faced horror so memorably summoned by Max Schreck in the original, and fascinatingly copied by Klaus Kinski in 1979's *Nosferatu the Vampyre*. Instead, as bone chillingly portrayed by Bill Skarsgård, he's a giant, rotten warrior, and possibly the closest we've seen on screen to Vlad Tepes, the real-life Transylvanian historical inspiration for *Dracula*. The moment that Hutter crosses the broken threshold of Orlok's decrepit castle, he is a fragile insect before a dark god, and so it is for all who come under his sway. It is true horror – not simply shock or grossness, but the absolute terror of doom. It's what Murnau understood, and what Eggers has always understood. All of his films – *The Witch*, *The Lighthouse*, and *The Northman* – have focused on characters contending with

their lack of control, and in *Nosferatu* that theme is played on a greater scale than ever through the tragedy of Ellen.

The original centered on her as the pure-hearted wife who sacrifices herself to conquer evil. For Depp's explosive, shocking interpretation, sex is present, yes, but it's corrupted by Orlok. There's nothing erotic about this wheezing, rotting, carnivorous corpse, and Eggers rebuts the "sexy vampire" nonsense by depicting a supernatural abusive relationship. If you think that there's anything sexy about how he rips the throats from babes, that's on you. ■

Nosferatu

DIRECTED BY ROBERT EGGERS.
STARRING BILL SKARSGÅRD, NICHOLAS
HOULT, LILY-ROSE DEPP, AARON
TAYLOR-JOHNSON, EMMA CORRIN,
WILLEM DAFOE, RALPH INESON, SIMON
MCBURNEY. (R, 132 MIN.)

★★★★

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Babygirl

COURTESY OF A24

BABY DID A BAD BAD THING

“Is that what you want?”

It’s a charged question. Depending on the tone, it can be an accusation, a taunt, or a come-on. And to answer the question head-on can be an act of extreme vulnerability, trust, and bravery.

Or “radical honesty,” to borrow the eye-rolling corporate speak banded about at a robotics company run by Romy Mathis (Kidman), sloughing off a gone-stale run of prestige-lite, small-screen mysteries like *The Perfect Couple* and *The Undoing*). Romy is seemingly successful and well-liked, but she’s nonetheless feeling pressure from all sides: a boss demanding results; a PR flak, coaching her on the correct image to project (confident but not cocky, super-competent but approachable, strong but soft, and so on); a younger generation nipping at her heels; her feminist teenage daughters, sneering at Mom for getting Botox; and her husband (Banderas), a sensitive theatre director who’s actually not all that sensitive to what Romy likes in bed.

Babygirl starts with a bang; there’s audible moaning before a single image is shown. But pretty quickly we glean what we’re watching here – loving if boring coitus between husband and wife – is not at all what Romy is into, and that performative moaning is not at all what Romy in orgasm sounds like. (It’s actually closer to the sound of dry heaving, to be honest.) For the real deal, Romy has to rely on her own industrious hands – that is, until she meets working-class Samuel (*Triangle of Sadness*’ Dickinson), a new intern at her company 30 years her junior, and initiates

an affair that could be professionally and personally ruinous.

Babygirl is the third feature from Dutch writer-director Halina Reijn, following up 2022 indie hit *Bodies Bodies Bodies*, and it’s similarly hybridized. In genre and tonality, *Babygirl* defies easy categorization: Depending on the angle (or how winking the latest needle drop is), it’s a psychosexual thriller, a corporate satire, a pushback on beauty, aging, and gendered expectations, and a sex-positive, pro-kink examination of figuring out what you like and feeling good about asking for it. (It’s also destined to join another Nicole Kidman erotic drama, *Eyes Wide Shut*, on “surprise, it’s actually a Christmas movie!” holiday watchlists.) For all the provocativeness of its premise, *Babygirl* is notably committed to nuance, even if the pacing doesn’t always feel intuitive. It marks a major leveling up for Reijn, cements Dickinson’s rising star status, and reminded me – for the first time in a long time – of what a truly terrific Kidman performance looks like ... and, yep, sounds like, too.

– KIMBERLEY JONES

Babygirl

DIRECTED BY HALINA REIJN. STARRING NICOLE KIDMAN, HARRIS DICKINSON, ANTONIO BANDERAS, SOPHIE WILDE, ESTHER MCGREGOR, VAUGHAN REILLY. (R, 114 MIN.)

★★★★

PLUGGING INTO BOB DYLAN AT AN INSTRUMENTAL MOMENT IN TIME

Walk the Line filmmaker James Mangold returns to the milieu of Sixties singer-songwriters with this contained portrait of Bob Dylan. Timothée Chalamet plays Dylan from the pivotal stretch of 1961 to 1965, from his open mic early days in Greenwich Village to the Newport Folk Festival barnburner where he famously went electric. (Johnny Cash – portrayed this time by Mangold’s *Logan* baddie Boyd Holbrook – also pops in now and then to growl sagely.)

That evolution – from a complete unknown to folk hero to Judas with an amplifier – complicates Dylan’s relationships both professional and romantic: To-rock-or-not-to-rock is presented as a kind of kill-your-daddies conundrum vis-à-vis his mentors Pete Seeger (Norton) and Woody Guthrie (McNairy), while his love life keeps snagging between art student Sylvie Russo (Fanning, in a lightly fictionalized version of the real-life Suze Rotolo) and Joan Baez (Barbaro), a much bigger star than Dylan when they first met.

That may sound like enough plot to hang a movie around, but Mangold and Jay Cocks’ script (adapted from Elijah Wald’s book *Dylan Goes Electric! Newport, Seeger, Dylan, and the Night That Split the Sixties*) is weirdly thin. It presumes viewers are learned enough to already know what role Dave Van Ronk played in the scene and which disease cruelly sent Guthrie to a premature death, but not sophisticated enough to intuit Dylan’s discomfort with his skyrocketing fame or chafing at expectations to stay in line, which the film dramatizes with all the

subtlety of a hammer to the hand. Uniformly, the picture is admiring of Dylan, and entirely unilluminating.

Mangold has cast his hagiography well: Despite barely written roles, Barbaro and Fanning demand your attention; Norton makes sure Seeger’s fundamental decency doesn’t get subsumed by the aw-shucks accent; and Norbert Leo Butz heroically accepts his assignment to play Alan Lomax as a sniveling villain. (You’d think the movie would have more respect for a guy willing to throw a punch over his ideals.) As for the main act? Chalamet embodies Dylan in a quite literal sense; he’s clearly studied the tape and does a more than passable mimicry of Dylan’s voice and performing style. Problem is, it’s an intentionally opaque characterization, in a film overcramped with musical performances – onstage, in the studio, on the bed noodling on a new song – which basically means half the movie is like watching pretty good karaoke. I don’t know who the audience is for that, but it ain’t me, babe.

– KIMBERLEY JONES

A Complete Unknown

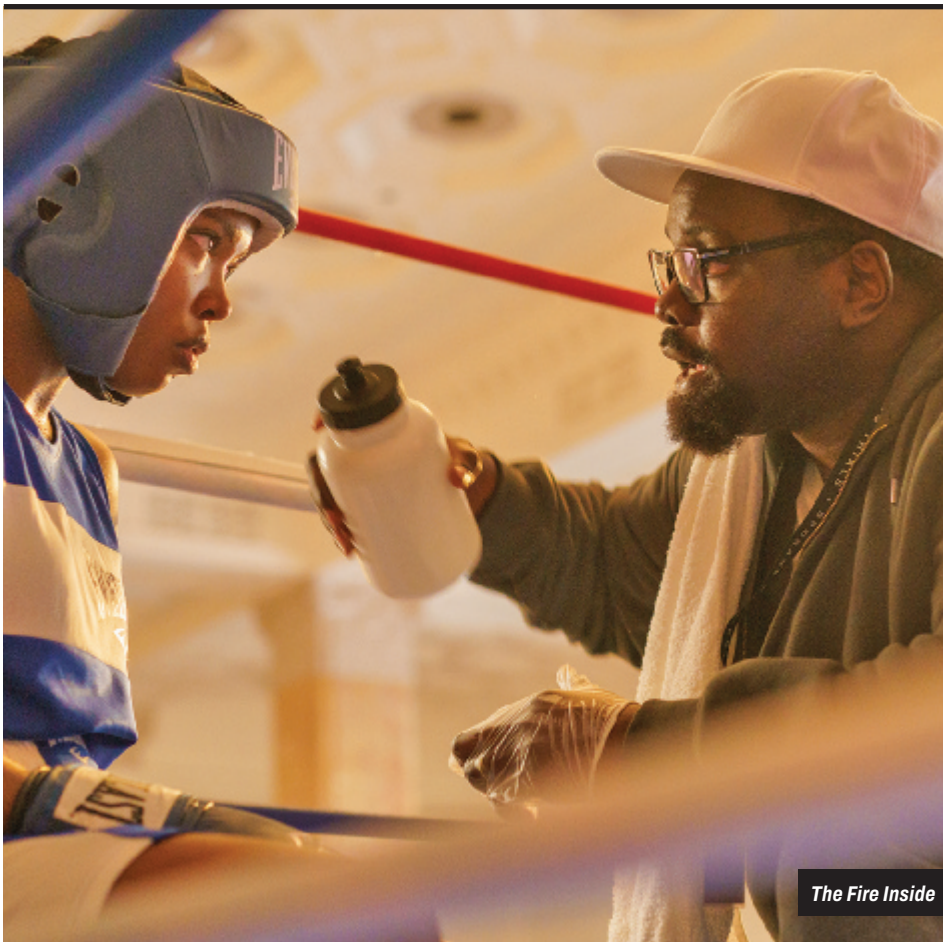
DIRECTED BY JAMES MANGOLD. STARRING TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET, EDWARD NORTON, ELLE FANNING, MONICA BARBARO, SCOOT MCNAIRY. (R, 140 MIN.)

★★★



A Complete Unknown

PHOTO BY MACALL POLAY / COURTESY OF SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES



The Fire Inside

SABRINA LANTOS © 2024 AMAZON CONTENT SERVICES LLC.

NOT QUITE A KNOCKOUT

“We don’t train no girls.” When coach Jason Crutchfield (Henry) dismisses wannabe boxer Claressa Shields from his gym in Flint, Mich., it’s inevitable that he’ll get shown up. If you know anything about boxing, you’ll know that young Claressa showed everyone, with an undefeated professional career and 15 titles in five different weight classes. Nicknamed T-Rex, and played here by fellow Michigander Ryan Destiny, hers is the definitional rags-to-riches boxing story – so much so that it seems like a cliché.

That’s the real fight for first-time director and Oscar-nominated cinematographer Rachel Morrison (*Mudbound*, *Black Panther*): to make Shields’ story feel unique, to really wrangle with what it is to become a successful athlete in a sport when all the cards of race and class and gender and geography are stacked against you. Yet the lightweight script by Barry Jenkins – concentrating on Shields’ run at Olympic gold in 2012 – never really lands a punch on any of these topics. Nor does it truly grapple with who Shields is, beyond her being a hardscrabble hero. If anything, the script is far more interested in Crutchfield as her coach, proxy father, and

advocate. Indeed, it’s only after the Olympics that it gets interesting, as Shields has to decide whether to be a regular teen or keep on striving for the dream.

Yet it’s all undercut by surprisingly flat cinematography from music video veteran Rina Yang, a tepid strings-and-piano score by Tamar-kali (*The Assistant*, *Shirley*), and generally lackadaisical pacing from Morrison. There’s an important message in here, especially when it comes to the financial inequality between men and women in sports. But rather than using the 17-year-old Shields’ pugnacious attitude to really explore how she landed body blows on the sexist establishment, *The Fire Inside* just ends up shadow boxing. — RICHARD WHITTAKER

The Fire Inside

DIRECTED BY RACHEL MORRISON.
STARRING RYAN DESTINY, BRIAN TYREE
HENRY, OLUNIKÉ ADELIYI, DE’ADRE
AZIZA. (PG-13, 109 MIN.)

★★★

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It's the End of the World as We Know It, and Bernardo Mountainair Feels Fine

MUSIC

Nolan Potter guitarist Dillon Fernandez issues his own psych-prog lament **BY CARYS ANDERSON**

Behold: a flourishing, progressive rock-inspired sector of Austin's long-fabled psych scene. KUTX named the costumed, 13-piece funk collective Grandmaster its June Artist of the Month; self-proclaimed "bozo rockers from space" Gumma emerged from a three-year recording hiatus to release the November LP *Sweetness of Nothing*; and, oh yeah – Nolan Potter continues to issue a plethora of protracted sonic experiments, either alone or with his Nightmare Band.

Dillon Fernandez has long backed Potter on guitar, so it's no surprise that his solo project would revel in the pocket of a similar cosmic realm. Performed, recorded, and engineered entirely by the multi-instrumentalist himself, *Dark Times in the Land of Plenty* landed on Bandcamp Dec. 5 as Fernandez's second full-length album as Bernardo Mountainair.

Like its predecessor, 2023's *Songs of Space & Time*, *Dark Times* was initially conceived during the pandemic, though its delayed world premiere – some six weeks before Donald Trump's reinauguration – feels equally prescient. Still, despite its dire political origins, the record doesn't wallow – sonically, at least. Instead, its seven tracks ring out long and pleasant, slow-swirling guitars and

spacey synths concocting a blissful, multi-suite experience.

Take "Bloodlust," track two after the whimsical crescendo of opener/lead single "It's What You Feel," which possesses no such vengeful energy. Twinkling keyboards and heavy reverb ooze like a Mac DeMarco song, and Fernandez sings of our collective downward spiral ("I fear the worst is yet to come," "It's not alright, I say") with the same serene quality as that Canadian slacker. Later, a tinny drum machine beat propels "Deine Mütze Bitte," German for "your hat please," where the artist's boyish vocals again accept an uncertain future. "The world is going to change and you will see/ That there's more to life and anything you could ever ask to be," he promises.

Bernardo Mountainair evades positive monotony with the occasional tone shift. Initially a relaxed bossa nova, 10-minute centerpiece "Mirrored Vision" smartly leaves the jazz club behind about halfway through and rockets into space instead. The track's lush instrumentals drop off, leaving only one sinister guitar line, then 8-bit synths, and, finally, the type of downtuned vocals you'd attribute to a masked cartoon villain.

This grim downturn flows into "A Pensive Moment in Chaos," a *Dark Side of the Moon*-style atmospheric breather where slow-strummed chords and a sampled voice pondering "vibrations of color" and "vibrations of sound" offer a contemplative halfway-mark pause. Only a temporary sulk, of course, that external voice reminds us: "The important thing is to be able to come back to reality" – and cues our David Gilmour to sing his own words.

Wrapping with "Vape Her Wave" – a play on the niche 2010s genre vaporwave – *Dark Times* reinstates Fernandez's sense of humor, though the closer opts for more live-recorded originals, not chopped and screwed jazz loops. "It feels like I just might lose my mind this time," the auteur croons, while his guitar gently weeps.

The world is ending, Bernardo Mountainair knows. On *Dark Times in the Land of Plenty*, however, he wonders: Why not go out with a good soundtrack? ■

Bernardo Mountainair
DARK TIMES IN THE LAND OF PLENTY
(SELF-RELEASED)

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Diego Rivera

OFRENDA
(POSI-TONE RECORDS)

The UT jazz professor's tenor saxophone anchors his third album of 2024.





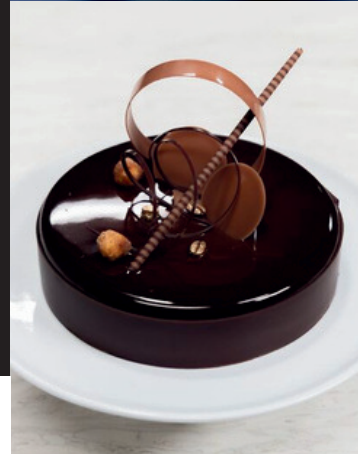
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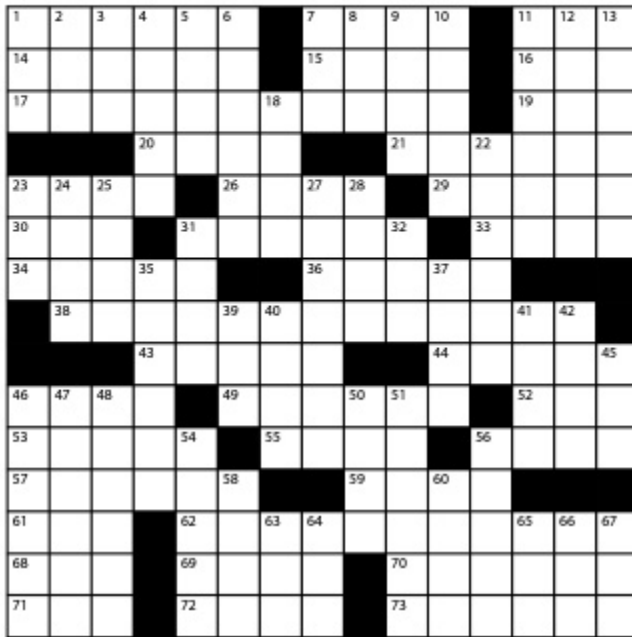
I think...

Puzzle by J. Reynolds

No. 873

Across

1. Tibetans or Thais
7. Racer
Yarborough
11. 1972 treaty subj.
14. Two-seated carriage
15. "Not guilty," e.g.
16. Stephen of "The Crying Game"
17. Question after the fact
19. Mouse catcher
20. Billiards relative
21. Group of 100 in Washington
23. Sean Connery, for one
26. Gun's recoil
29. With regrets
30. Sounds of doubt
31. Open to everyone



33. Gets the picture
34. Chip dip
36. Assumed name
38. Ballpark figure
43. Closes in on
44. Glows
46. Auditors
49. Brought up
52. Be mistaken
53. Broadcaster
55. Noted initials in 70's-80's comedy
56. Change for a twenty
57. Violent, perhaps
59. Lascivious look
61. On the _____ (fleeing)
62. Exhibiting good judgement
68. Here, in France
69. Aroma
70. No longer pale

71. Albany is its cap.
 72. Refusals
 73. Certain home improvers
- Down**
1. Capp and Capone
 2. Freelancer's enc.
 3. Co. name ender
 4. Take in
 5. Prefix meaning "one-billionth"
 6. Numbers game
 7. PC's brain
 8. A pint, maybe
 9. More or _____
 10. Lets up
 11. Skee-Ball site
 12. Fab Four member
 13. Buccaneer's buddies
 18. Smooth-talking
 22. Long Island county
 23. French possessive
 24. Burn a bit
 25. Capital on a fjord
 27. Enduring literary work
 28. Bagpiper's wear
 31. Use a beeper
 32. LI doubled
 35. Clichéd movie ending
 37. In _____ rush
 39. Laugh sound
 40. Extended periods
 41. Arborist's concern
 42. Make, as money
 45. Promgoers: Abbr.
 46. Comic who quipped "No comment" is a comment
 47. Illegal copying
 48. Dumas duelist
 50. Normandy battle site
 51. Occasions
 54. Scout's mission
 56. The way things are going
 58. Birdbrain
 60. Actor Morales
 63. One of the Three Stooges
 64. "_____ Doubtfire"
 65. Direction opposite SSW
 66. To be, in Barcelona
 67. Mag. staff



by Sam Hurt

New Moon, Rookie Mistake



PEPPERMINT TEARS

WWW.RYANHENNESSEE.COM

RYAN HENNESSEE 2024



How'd you do? See this week's puzzle solution here:

AUSTINCHRONICLE.COM/CROSSWORD



THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE PRESENTS...

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A MINI LIVE MUSIC SERIES AND DONOR DRIVE

The series kept rolling last week with live music from **GETO GALA**, food from Mission Dogs, and giveaways from PPD – plus complimentary drinks from WYNK, Austin Beer Garden Brewing Co., and Carbonero Tequila. To everyone who came out, and to all of the following supporters, we'd like to say...

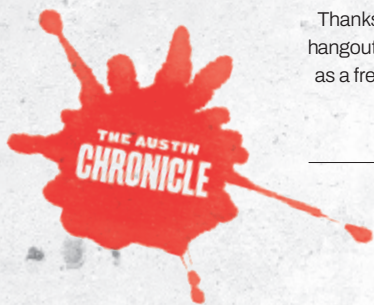
THANKYOU THANKYOU THANKYOU

Adam Wood	Denae Avila-Dickson	Joel Chapa	Lynn Wolfe
Amy Donovan	Derek Stearns	John Bassett	Molly Schnitzius
April Gregory	Forrest Novy	John Foor	Nevin Kamath
Benjamin North	Gary Amaon	Joshua Gonzalez	Nicki Ittner
Brian Mankinen	Greg Smith	Karen Miller	Nora Levesque
Catharine Wall	Isabella Jimenez	Kathleen Maher	Robert Cross
Chadwick Wood	Jaclyn Wisniewski	Kayleigh Young	Ruth Jansa
Charlotte Katzin	Jaelene Fayhee	Kerri Morgan	Sally Blue
Christopher Jones	Jeanne Mankinen	Kimberley	Tim Hudson
Connie Brewster	Jeanne Ryan	Scannell Larsen	Wendy Gordon
Craig Cainkar	Jennifer Kemeny	Lindsey Machamer	Zane McDurham

THANKYOU THANKYOU THANKYOU

Thanks to everyone who came out and supported **FREE PRESS FOREVER** this year! We hope you had as much fun enjoying live music hangouts at our offices as we did. We are especially grateful to everyone that made a donation. Your contributions help us continue vital work as a free and independent paper, and we couldn't do it without you. Keep an eye out for future shindigs at the Chron offices in the new year!

P.S. Donations are always welcomed and appreciated. Scan the QR code to chip in any amount.



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PHOTOS BY JAN-ALAN BALTERRA

The Luv Doc

Dear Luv Doc,

I have been feuding with my boyfriend for the last week about his general messiness and lack of hygiene. For the past few years he has really let himself go. His clothes are all old and worn out. Some of them even have stains. His hair always looks a little bit messy – which was sort of cute at first but now that I know why it's messy it's not cute anymore. He just doesn't care. Back (five years ago?) before the pandemic, he dressed a little bit better, but doesn't go into the office anymore so, in his opinion, there's no reason to get dressed up at all other than to wear an unstained shirt for his Zoom calls. His hair is always messy, which isn't entirely his fault – his hair is really wavy and hard to control – but he still makes no effort. There are times when he goes two or three days without showering or using deodorant. I won't even go near him sometimes because he gets so gamey. The last straw was last week when we went to my work holiday party. Even though he did put on a pair of jeans and an unstained shirt, his hair looked like a rat's nest and he argued with me when I asked him to try and comb it. He barely made an effort even though we were going to be around my co-workers all night. At some point about halfway through the party I overheard two of my co-workers complaining about how bad he smelled. To be perfectly honest, I had barely noticed because I am so used to it. I was mortified. I grabbed him and we left early and on the way home I told him what happened at the party. He brushed it off like it was no big deal and said they were just being bitchy. I told him that I know these women and they are not bitchy, they were being honest about his body odor. We went back and forth about it all night and we are still arguing today. How do I get him to see this is a serious issue? I don't know if I can be with him if he continues to act this way. How do I get him to clean up his act?



"Smelly Guy"

As human beings, there are many things that are outside of our control. We squirt out of a bloody vadge onto a wet rock that's hurtling through space at 67,000 miles per hour through a cold, empty void that stretches for an eternity. There is only one exit, and it looks even darker, so we put on a brave face, pull ourselves together, and try to make something out of this baffling, possibly meaningless earthly existence. We get up, wash our asses, brush our teeth, throw on some clothes, go to school, buy houses and cars and Red Bottoms and face-lifts and try to convince ourselves that we're fundamentally different than some squealing, shit-stained hog in a mud pit, but the bottom line is: We can never be certain.

So, either nothing matters or everything matters. Personally, I lean toward the latter. Everything is a choice. We have literally one job on this planet. That is to give a shit. To care. For me, that care starts every morning with a luxuriously long, Hollywood shower that includes soap, shampoo, and probably some other stuff that's slowly killing the planet but making me feel and smell amazing – which is how I want everyone else to feel and smell as well – including your boyfriend. Honestly, that's kind of an unmovable baseline for me. Are there are days when I fall short of the mark? Sure, but they're few. Nobody needs to go camping for more than a weekend, right? I don't think it's wrong to expect good hygiene from the people with whom I live and associate. It's part of the social contract. You break it, all bets are off. I can't be around you. Call me bitchy if you want. Just do it from a distance.

Now, I realize having standards about personal hygiene might seem a little bougie, but Western civilization didn't get to where it is today by wallowing in raw sewage. Were we a few thousand years behind Eastern civilization? Yes, but we caught up eventually. It would be a shame to let all that insanely slow progress go to waste out of sheer laziness. Tell your boyfriend that you are not going to tell him how to live his life. Instead, tell him how you are going to live your life: without him – at least until he learns to bathe and put together a decent wardrobe. I wouldn't hold my breath – even though I imagine you're pretty good at it by now.

Need some advice from the Luv Doc? Send your questions to luvdoc@austinchronicle.com.



Mr. Smarty Pants Knows

The 1900 model of the Woods Electric car could go 100 miles on one charge.

The Elf on a Shelf tradition began in 2005.

In the 19th century, many North Americans participated in a Christmas bird hunt to count how many birds they could kill. In December 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman proposed counting birds rather than killing them. The Audubon Society holds a Christmas Bird Count from December 14 to January 5.

Actor William Frawley, best known for portraying Fred Mertz on *I Love Lucy*, played the part of an adviser in *Miracle on 34th Street*. He warns a judge about the political consequence of ruling there is no Santa Claus.

If you're in Rochester, N.Y., and order a "white hot," you'll get an uncured hot dog made from a combination of uncured and unsmoked pork, beef, and veal.

Above is information that Mr. Smarty Pants read in a book, a magazine, or the newspaper; heard on the radio; saw on television; or overheard at a party. Got facts? Write to Mr. Smarty Pants at the *Chronicle*, or email mrpants@austinchronicle.com.

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

DEC. 27
- JAN. 2

by Rob Breznsky

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Since 1985, musician David Gilmour has led Pink Floyd. The band has sold over 250 million records. He's in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in both the UK and the U.S. But my favorite thing about Gilmour is that he's a passionate activist who has crusaded for animal rights, environmentalism, poverty, and human rights. A few years ago, he auctioned off 120 of his guitars, raising over \$21 million for an environmentalist charity. In accordance with astrological omens, I propose we make him one of your inspirational role models in 2025, Capricorn. May he mobilize you to use your stature and clout to perform an array of good works that are of service to your world.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Aquarian author Virginia Woolf extolled the virtues of cultivating a supple soul that thrives on change. She pledged to be relentless in her commitment to be authentically herself and not succumb to groupthink. I recommend you make these two of your featured themes in 2025. To inspire your efforts, I will quote her radical perspective at length: "Movement and change are the essence of our being; rigidity is death; conformity is death: let us say what comes into our heads, repeat ourselves, contradict ourselves, fling out the wildest nonsense, and follow the most fantastic fancies without caring what the world does or thinks or says."

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): In 1992, two friends promised each other that if either of them ever won the lottery, they would share it with the other. Twenty-eight years later, that's exactly what happened. In 2020, Thomas Cook bought a ticket that turned out to be the winner of the Powerhouse jackpot in Wisconsin. He called Joseph Feeney with the good news. After paying taxes, both men were \$5.7 million richer. I am not predicting the exact same sequence for your future, Pisces. But like Cook and Feeney, I expect you will glean pleasing rewards generated from seeds planted in the past.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): In 2025, I would love for you to specialize in making new connections and deepening your existing connections. I hope you will summon extra creativity and panache as you regularly blend your beautiful energies with others' beautiful energies. I predict you will thrive on linking elements that should be linked but have never been before. What do you think, Aries? Does it sound fun to become a playful master of mixing and combining? Would you enjoy generating splashy unifications that serve your dreams?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): "Confidence is 10 percent hard work and 90 percent delusion," declared Taurus comedian Tina Fey. But I believe you will disprove that assessment in the coming months. The work you do will be unusually replete with grace and dynamism. It will be focused and diligent work, yes, but more importantly, it will be smart work that's largely free of delusion. That's why I'm inclined to revise Fey's formula for your sake. In 2025, your brimming levels of confidence will be primarily due to your fine, conscientious, effective work.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): In the 1960s, a Swedish journalist tried an experiment. He wanted to see if art critics could distinguish between abstract paintings made by skilled artists and those created by a 4-year-old chimpanzee whose pseudonym was Pierre Brassau. Surprise! Many of the critics treated all the paintings with equal respect. One even gave special praise to Pierre Brassau, describing his strokes of color as having "the delicacy of a ballet dancer." I'm authorizing you to unleash your inner Pierre Brassau in the coming months, Gemini. Be an innocent rookie, a newcomer with great instincts, an exuberant amateur who specializes in fun experiments. Do you know what beginner's mind is? You approach every experience with zero assumptions or expectations, as if you were seeing everything for the first time. For more, read this: wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoshin.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Ohio's Cuyahoga River used to catch on fire regularly. The cause was pollution. For a hundred years, industries had poured their wastes into the waterway. The surface was often dotted with oil slicks. But after a notorious river fire in 1969, the locals decided to remedy the situation, aided by the newly established Environmental Protection Agency. Today, the Cuyahoga still isn't 100% clean, but it's far better. It hosts kayaking, fishing, and paddleboarding. I propose we use its rehabilitation as a symbol for you in 2025. You will have welcome opportunities to clean up messes that have lingered for far too long. Please take full advantage of these cosmic invitations to sweep karmic debris out of your life.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Steve Jobs, founder of Apple computers, said, "The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do." I propose that you make this one of your mottoes in 2025. More than ever before, you will have exceptional power to transform the environments you share with others. You will have an enhanced ability to revise and reinvigorate the systems and the rules you use. Don't underestimate your influence during the coming months, Leo. Assume that people will be listening especially closely to your ideas and extra receptive to be affected by you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): I will give you four related terms to describe your key motif in 2025: 1) Your Soul's Code. 2) Your Master Plan. 3) Your Destiny's Blueprint. 4) Your Mission Statement. All four are rooted in this epic question: What is your overarching purpose here on Earth, and how are you fulfilling it? The coming months will be a time when you can make dramatic progress in formulating vivid, detailed visions of the life you want to live. You can also undertake robust action steps to make those visions more of a practical reality. I encourage you to write your big-picture, long-range dreams in a special notebook or a file on your tech device. Keep adding to the text throughout the coming months.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): People in India were the first to discover diamonds buried in the earth. Most historians believe it happened in the 4th century BCE. For the next two millennia, India remained the only source of diamonds. Finally, new stashes were found in Brazil in 1725 and in South Africa in the 1870s. Let's use this 2,000-year gap as a metaphor for your life. I suspect that far too many months have passed since you have located a fresh source of a certain treasure or bounty you crave. That will change in 2025. Here come long-delayed blessings!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): In my vision of your life in 2025, you will dramatically enhance how togetherness works for you. Below are four questions to help guide your explorations and breakthroughs. 1) Is it feasible to change yourself in ways that enable you to have a more satisfying relationship with romantic love? 2) Will you include your intimate relationships as an essential part of your spiritual path – and vice versa? 3) What work on yourself can you do to heal your old wounds and thereby make yourself a better partner and collaborator? 4) Can you help your best allies to heal their wounds and thereby become better partners and collaborators?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In Japanese, the word for "frog" sounds similar to the word meaning "to return." That's one reason frogs have been lucky in some circles of Japanese culture. They symbolize the blessing that occurs when travelers return home safely, or when health is restored, or when spent money is replenished. I bring this to your attention, Sagittarius, because I suspect 2025 will be a time when satisfying and enjoyable returns will be a key theme. Consider keeping the likeness of a lovable frog in your living space.

Go to RealAstrology.com to check out Rob Breznsky's EXPANDED WEEKLY AUDIO HOROSCOPES and DAILY TEXT MESSAGE HOROSCOPES. The audio horoscopes are also available by phone at 877/873-4888 or 900/950-7700.

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EMPLOYMENT

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Informatica LLC is accepting resumes for the following position in Austin, TX: Senior Manager, DevOps (7296008): Build and operate at large scale. Deploy clusters in multiple Cloud Providers. Telecommuting permitted.

Email resume to InformaticaTalent@informatica.com. Or mail resume to Informatica LLC, 2100 Seaport Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94063. Resume must include job title, job ref. #, full name, email & mailing address. No phone calls. Must be legally authorized to work in U.S. without sponsorship. EOE.

TECHNOLOGY

Informatica LLC is accepting resumes for the following position in Austin, TX: Technical Support Manager (7371182): Work with world class enterprise support team owning Cloud and on-prem support for company's Cloud Mass Ingestion and PowerExchange products. Telecommuting permitted. Email resume to InformaticaTalent@informatica.com. Or mail resume to Informatica LLC, 2100 Seaport Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94063. Resume must include job title, job ref. #7371182, full name, email & mailing address. No phone calls. Must be legally authorized to work in U.S. without sponsorship. EOE.

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Keysight Technologies, Inc. is accepting resumes for the position of Application Engineer, Advance in Austin, TX (Ref.# AE12). Using a wide range of networking & troubleshooting skills be able to quickly identify issues with products or environment for all layers of the OSI model. Position may require up to 5% domestic and/or international travel. The level of this role will be based on applicable experience, education, and skills requirements. This position is also eligible for standard benefits, please see <https://jobs.keysight.com/content/Our-Benefits/?locale=en>

US. Email resume & reference job code to Chrc.us@keysight.com. Resume must include Ref. # AE12, full name, email address & mailing address. No phone calls. Must be legally authorized to work in U.S. without sponsorship. EOE.

PROFESSIONAL

EXECUTIVE LEADER

Whole Foods Market Services, Inc. seeks Executive Leader, Sourcing Process and Analytics, in Austin, TX to oversee the development of our upstream procurement function. May req up to 20% domestic & intr'l travel time. Partial telework allowed but must live within commuting distance of Austin, TX. Mail resume: HR - GM, Whole Foods Market Services, Inc., 550 Bowie St, Austin, TX 78703. Ref EL171 in response.

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philosophy. Must have a Master's deg in Finance, Fin'l Engg, Mathematics, or related quantitative field. Must have completed at least Level 1 towards CFA designation Must have 3 yrs of exp in Quantitative Analysis, Researcher or Trader positions performing/ utilizing the following: Fluency in Excel VBA, Python & SQL; principles of business, finance, acctg, & security analysis; trading exp knowl of trade entry, settlements, compliance, mkt dynamics, trading strategies, & risk mgmt; utilizing quantitative tools for data analysis & modelling; analytical skills to interpret fin'l data & derive actionable insights; working w/ FactSet, Bloomberg & other similar mkt data providers; Portfolio Mgmt, portfolio construction, portfolio optimization, Factor construction, & Performance attribution; automating trading processes & strategies; leveraging technology to enhance efficiency & reduce manual intervention; quantitative analysis to optimize & refine trading approaches; & writing fin'l reports. Position may be eligible to work hybrid/remotely but is based out of & reports to Invesco offices in Austin, TX. Must be available to travel to Austin, TX regularly for meetings & reviews w/ manager & project teams w/in 24-hrs' notice. Apply online (<https://careers.invesco.com/>) or email resume to: Niamh McNamee, Global Mobility Specialist, Niamh.McNamee@invesco.com.

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LEGAL NOTICES

CALL TODAY 512/302-2737

AN APPLICATION IS BEING MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT BY UNIVERSITY FOOD SERVICES, INC. D/B/A UNIVERSITY FOOD SERVICES, INC. LOCATED AT 2300 ORACLE WAY, AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TX 78741. OFFICERS OF SAID CORPORATION ARE SHANNON MARLIANI., PRESIDENT/EXEC VP/ TREASURER/DIRECTOR AND DANIEL SLEAR, SECRETARY.

AN APPLICATION IS BEING MADE

WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT WITH A FOOD AND BEVERAGE CERTIFICATE AND A LATE HOURS CERTIFICATE BY TRIBUTE HOSPITALITY, LLC D/B/A AC MARRIOTT AUSTIN HILL COUNTRY. LOCATED AT 7415 SOUTHWEST PKWY, BLDG 8, SUITE 100, AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TX 78735. MANAING MEMBER OF SAID LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY IS DWIGHT H. CURRY.

Application has been made with Texas

Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit by BanJoo INC to be located at 5222 Burnet Rd. STE 500, Austin, Travis County, Texas 78756. Officers of said company are Jeaphil Chun, President, Vice President, and Secretary.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit by San Juanita's LLC DBA San Juanita's Tacos to be located at 4619 S Congress Avenue,

Ste: E, Austin, Travis Co., Texas. Member of said LLC is Marina G. Moncada - Member

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Permit by Mort Subite, LLC dba Mort Subite located at 308 Congress Ave., Austin, Travis County, Texas. The Managers of said limited liability company are James O. Houchins, Richard O. Clements, and James Jackson Leach.

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage

Commission for a Wine and Beer Retailer's On-Premises (BG) permit by 4751 E PARMER LN LLC dba TECH FUEL MARKET, to be located at 4751 E PARMER LN, AUSTIN, TRAVIS COUNTY, TEXAS 78754. Officers of said Corporation are ABID MOMIN - Managing Member IRFAN DHUKA - Managing Member

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Malt Beverage Retailers on-premise permit by Coffee Traders

Inc dba Texas Coffee Traders, to be located at 3223 E 7th St, Austin, 78702, Travis County, Texas. Officer of said corporation is Alli Anderson, General Manager.

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF TEXAS CAUSE NO: D-1-FM-20-006084 To: EZEQUIEL YAHUEDT RODRIGUEZ GUZMAN and to all who it may concern, Respondent(s); GREETINGS: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED. You may appear an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 A.M. on the Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org. YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to appear and answer before the Honorable District Court, 98TH DISTRICT COURT, Travis County, Texas, at the Civil Family Court Facility of said County in Austin,

Texas, at or before 10 o'clock A.M. of the Monday next after expiration of Twenty days from the date of service of this citation, then and there to answer the PETITION TO MODIFY PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP, filed by, BELINDA AGUINAGA ORTIZ filed in said court of Travis County, on JULY 08, 2022, against, EZEQUIEL YAHUEDT RODRIGUEZ GUZMAN and said suit being number D-1-FM-20-006084 on the docket of said Court, and entitled "IN THE INTEREST OF J. R. CHILD(REN)". The nature of said suit is a request to MODIFY THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP of the parties, appoint managing and possessory conservators, and divide the estate of the parties in a manner that the court deems just and right. The date and place of birth of the child (children) who is (are) the subject of the suit: JESSICA GUADALUPE RODRIGUEZ AGUINAGA D.O.B 02/08/2011 The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the CHILD's interest which will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conserva-

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