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CONTENTS //

EAT & DRINK...15

Restaurants are one of the few meritocracies left in this country — and **ARI TAYMOR** says chefs need to run them more compassionately.

GO LA...21

A lecture about the history of cats in L.A., a screening of Cindy Sherman's weird thriller *Office Killer*, Fourth of July fireworks and parades and more fun stuff to do in L.A. this week.

CULTURE...24

A peek inside the Sunday night scene at Skateland in Northridge, where grown folks and custom skates rule the rink. **BY LASHEA DELANEY.** In ART PICKS, an artist unveils a lighthouse in the desert, and another finds inspiration in toilet seats. In STAGE, the Independent Shakespeare Company is bringing a couple of "riskier" shows to the Griffith Park Festival this summer.

FILM...28

BILGE EBIRI sings the praises



of Edgar Wright's *Baby Driver*, and **APRIL WOLFE** reviews philosophical nun comedy *The Little Hours*, plus Oliver Hirschbiegel's *13 Minutes*, Bong Joon-ho's *Okja* and other movies **OPENING THIS WEEK**, and **YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DO LIST.**

MUSIC...35

Rapper Nocando tells **JEFF WEISS** why he had to cut a lot of old ties before making his latest album, *Severed*, and **HENRY ROLLINS** examines the real politics behind the Trump circus. Plus: listings for ROCK & POP, JAZZ & CLASSICAL and more.

ADVERTISING

CLASSIFIED...49

EMPLOYMENT...50

REAL ESTATE/
RENTALS...51

BULLETIN BOARD...50

ON THE COVER:
ILLUSTRATION BY PETER RYAN



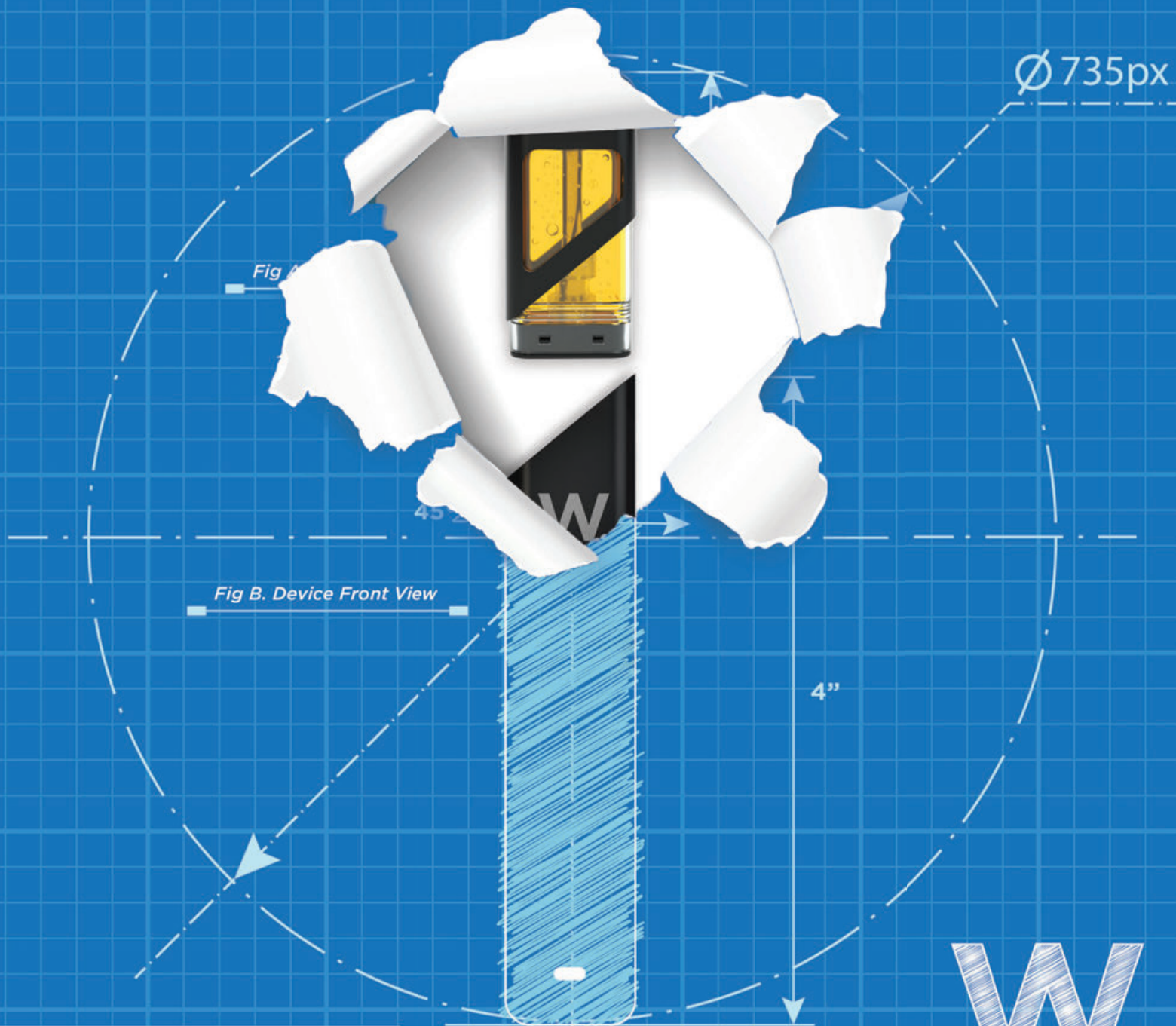
20 WAYS TO FIX LOS ANGELES ... 7

There are no easy solutions. Yet there are ideas out there that can make a sizable dent in L.A.'s problems.

BY HILLEL ARON.

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>> 7) lutions to these problems. Every new idea creates winners and losers, and brings more change to which certain factions will be ever more resistant.

But there are ideas that can make a sizeable dent in these problems, and we'd like to take the opportunity to surface some of them. Some are expensive. Some are free. Many already have been proposed, in policy-wonk circles or in opinion pieces. We've restricted ourselves to ideas that have not been adopted by any legislative body or by the voters yet, and we've tried to offer a range of ideas tackling issues that matter to a broad swath of Angelenos, from housing to education to the environment to police reform.

Here are 20 ideas that could fix L.A.

Housing

1 & 2. Make it cheaper and easier to build housing.

During the first half of this decade, Los Angeles added more than 230,000 residents and 150,000 jobs. During that same time, it added just 40,000 housing units. What happened as a result is a simple matter of supply and demand: The average rent for an L.A. apartment has gone up \$1,000 a month in the last six years, while the median home price has increased by nearly \$200,000 since 2010.

Reforming two laws would go a long way toward increasing the housing supply in Los Angeles, which experts say could drive down housing costs — or at least halt their precipitous rise.

1. The first law in need of reform requires that every new building provide a minimum number of parking spaces, which, according to developer Mott Smith, can be prohibitively expensive. "Parking spots can cost \$30,000 or \$40,000 apiece," he says.

Only about a third of households in Los Angeles have more than one car, yet apartment developers usually must secure 2.5 parking spaces for every housing unit they construct.

Doing away with or at least easing the parking requirement would lead to more housing units being built, Smith and others says. As for people living in a building without parking, they could be forced to pay for it — or they could decide to go carless. Smith goes so far as to say that getting rid of parking minimums "is the No. 1 thing we could do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

2. The second law is the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA, which perhaps unwittingly opened the door to a parade of lawsuits challenging any large construction project, though of late it has mostly targeted new apartment buildings. Between 2012 and 2015, 14,000 housing units were challenged under CEQA. Many of them were never built; others were delayed for years.

Some projects were halted or pared down before any suit was filed. Just the ever-present threat of a CEQA lawsuit raises the cost of apartment construction, since developers are forced to hire high-priced attorneys and consultants to CEQA-proof their projects.

Jennifer Hernandez, a San Francisco-

based land-use attorney and CEQA expert, suggests several ways to change the law: Eliminate the ability for plaintiffs to remain anonymous when suing under CEQA; force plaintiffs to show that they're trying to protect the environment (and not just protect their own economic interests or preserve the "character of a community"); and limit a judge to halting only projects that are actually harming the environment.

CEQA reform wouldn't just make housing cheaper to build, it also would make

3. The Costa-Hawkins Act limits local rent-control ordinances to housing units built before 1995. More important, it bans any law that would limit a landlord's ability to raise the rent of a vacated apartment. Because L.A.'s rent-control law limits the amount a landlord can raise the rent for an existing tenant (in units built before October 1978, anyway), Costa-Hawkins gives landlords a huge incentive to get rid of old tenants.

"It essentially puts a bull's-eye target on

the Ellis Act. Every month, the city loses another 100 rent-controlled units.

"We're not going to address our affordable-housing crisis unless we preserve our existing affordable housing," Gross says. One change, he says, would be to limit landlords to one Ellis Act usage a year. Another would be to limit Ellis Act evictions to properties where the owner has owned the building for more than five years. "But really," he says, "the solution is to just get rid of the law."

5. Build a million homes in the Wilshire Corridor.

The majority of environmentalists say the only way to make L.A. environmentally sustainable is to make it denser. That would reduce automobile trips, which are by far the single greatest source of greenhouse gas emissions. And the increase in supply would make housing across the city cheaper, some say.

To that end, renowned architect Thom Mayne has a bold idea. Instead of building taller buildings willy-nilly in different parts of the city, why not leave 99 percent of Los Angeles alone and focus densification efforts along one single stretch of roadway: the Wilshire Corridor.

Mayne and other urban planners say Wilshire is perfect for such radical densification. It runs from downtown to the beach, passes LACMA and UCLA, and is served by the Purple Line subway, which will run from downtown to Westwood by the middle of the next decade. Mayne's plan extends the Purple Line to the beach and allows for the construction of very tall apartment buildings along the corridor. It also would add a ton of parks. Think of it as a long, slender stretch of Manhattan, embedded within the L.A. sprawl.

"Wilshire can already be seen as a city within a city," Mayne says. "We're only intensifying that condition."

6. Build pods for the homeless.

Los Angeles has more people experiencing chronic homelessness than any other city in America. The city has taken some notable steps in the last year, such as passing a tax hike to pay for the construction of permanent supportive housing for the homeless. But those buildings will take several years to be constructed. There's much that could be done to improve the lives of people living on the streets right now.

One idea comes from a grant-funded USC architecture class tasked with designing emergency housing for people living on the streets: 92-square-foot prefabricated pods that can be easily assembled, customized, stacked and transported by a flatbed truck or forklift. The units, dubbed Homes for Hope, would cost no more than \$25,000 apiece, including construction.

The class worked with city officials to pre-certify the pods, which should expedite the approval process.

"The goal isn't for this to be a forever home," says one of the class's teachers, Sofia Borges, a designer and director of Madworkshop. "The goal is for this to be a place for people to stabilize, catch their breath and move on." **(10 >>**

Thanks to CEQA, "It literally takes 20 years to build a rail line, which is crazy!"

—land-use attorney **Jennifer Hernandez**



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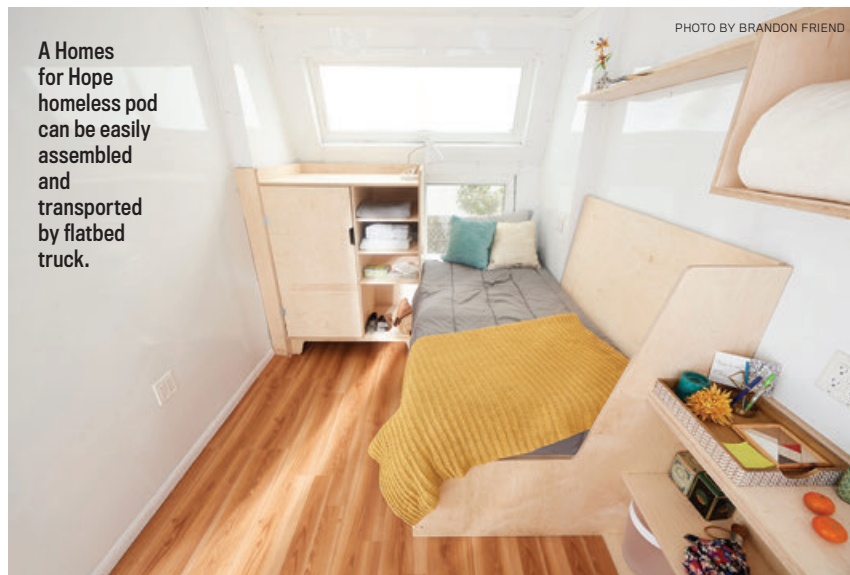


PHOTO BY BRANDON FRIEND

other big infrastructure projects cheaper — and faster — to build, including parks and light rail. Hernandez says that thanks to CEQA, "It literally takes 20 years to build a rail line, which is crazy!"

3 & 4. Reform rent-control laws

The housing crisis isn't just a supply problem — an accelerated construction blitz would do nothing to help people being displaced from their homes today. That's why housing advocates are calling on lawmakers to repeal and replace two state laws that limit local rent-control ordinances.

every rent-control tenant in the city," says Larry Gross, who helped write L.A.'s rent-control law and who heads the Coalition for Economic Survival.

State Assemblyman Richard Bloom, who represents West Los Angeles, co-authored a bill to repeal Costa-Hawkins. But the proposal was delayed until next year.

4. Another bill Assemblyman Bloom is looking to change is the Ellis Act, which allows landlords to evict tenants under certain conditions. Since 2001, more than 22,000 rent-controlled units have been taken off the market by landlords using

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>> 8) 7. For a homelessness plan, look to Long Beach.

The number of people experiencing homelessness in the city of Los Angeles surged 20 percent last year, to more than 34,000. The homeless population in Long Beach, meanwhile, has dropped 21 percent over the last two years. In the two years before that, it fell 18 percent.

Yes, Long Beach is a much smaller city. But its demographics aren't all that different from L.A.'s, and Long Beach officials say there's no reason their own solutions couldn't be scaled up. All it takes is money — and since L.A. County voters recently approved a tax hike to pay for homeless services, that shouldn't be too much of an impediment.

Like Los Angeles, Long Beach builds supportive housing for people without homes and offers rental subsidies to people living at the margins of homelessness. But it does some other things from which L.A. could learn a thing or two.



The addition of paid toll lanes would offer a number of traffic solutions.

“Our outreach team can honestly say they know everyone out there,” says Teresa Chandler, Long Beach’s Human Services Bureau manager. “They know them by name. Because of the constant contacts they make, when people are finally ready to come in, they let them know they’re ready. It’s all about relationship building, and that’s what our team does well.”

The bureau has a database that lists every person living on the street, every time they’ve been contacted, every service they’ve been provided. Also, it has one building that houses 11 agencies and functions as a one-stop shop for all homeless services. A person can walk in and immediately speak with a case manager. There is a single phone line to call for anyone requesting help, and calls are returned within 24 hours.

Transportation

8. Put a toll lane on every freeway.

The county of Los Angeles is midway through an ambitious plan to build a light-rail system. It’s been slow going, but you can finally take the train from downtown to Santa Monica. Bus ridership, meanwhile, is shrinking at a faster rate than train rider-

ship is growing. And traffic is worse than ever.

“I think the main goal should be to try to provide viable alternatives,” says Ethan Elkind, the director of the Climate Change and Business Research Initiative at both UC Berkeley and UCLA law schools, as well as the author of *Railtown: The Fight for the Los Angeles Metro Rail and the Future of the City*.

Elkind says one idea is to expand the county’s FasTrak program — paid toll lanes — to every freeway in the city (the lanes currently exist on the 110 south of downtown and the 10 east of downtown). This idea offers a number of positives: It gives paying customers an alternative to sitting in traffic, it gives people an incentive to carpool (since the price of riding in FasTrak lanes is cheaper with a passenger), and it provides a revenue stream to pay for better transit services. You could even let buses use the lanes. Imagine an express bus line going up and down the 405 freeway.

9. Make bike lanes safer (and therefore more popular).

Los Angeles is in the process of building more bike lanes. But most of these lanes are little more than stripes of paint on the pavement. Surveys show that many would-be cyclists don’t feel safe biking in these lanes in Los Angeles, between the cars whizzing by on the left and parked cars opening their doors on the right.

Joe Linton, a bicycle activist and editor of *StreetsblogLA*, says one cheap and easy thing that could increase bicycle ridership would be to protect bike lanes with cones embedded in the street. Los Angeles already has a few such lanes; one example can be seen on Van Nuys Boulevard in Pacoima.

Not every bike lane could be protected without reconfiguring the street in some way. But several streets do have the space.

“The city should be able to squeeze this in in at least a dozen places without removing car lanes,” Linton says. “In theory, that can be done dirt-cheap without the city having to apply for grants. The city can just do it.”

10. Ban truck deliveries during peak hours.

In the months leading up to the 1984 Summer Olympics, Angelenos were in a state of near panic. Would the influx of tourists clog the streets, bringing traffic to a standstill?

The traffic apocalypse never happened. That’s because lawmakers passed a number of temporary measures in anticipation of it. Some streets were made one-way. People were urged to work from home. Perhaps most important, delivery trucks were encouraged to make their drop-offs at night. As a result, traffic fell rather dramatically in the summer of 1984.

In the wake of that apparent miracle, a number of politicians including then-Mayor Tom Bradley tried to make the nighttime delivery rules permanent. But the idea failed to gain traction and was largely forgotten — though not by former Riverside City Councilman Steve Adams, who flogs the proposal every chance he gets.

Forcing trucks to make their deliveries between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. “would immediately eliminate 45 percent of prime drive-time traffic,” Adams says. “It doubles our freeway capacity and does not cost a penny. It also cleans our air up.” (Less congestion means fewer vehicles idling, which means



The proposed \$850 million Hollywood Central Park

lower emissions.)

Adams says truckers are fine with the proposal, since it would allow them to make more deliveries per shift. Store owners and employees, who’d have to add night shifts, are the biggest opponents to the idea. Says Adams: “It’s a small price to pay for the quality of air, the quality of life that would be restored.”

Public Space

11. Cap our freeways with parks.

Ever since they were first erected, freeways have acted as unnatural boundaries, dividing neighborhoods and filling the air with noise and noxious gas.

Also: Los Angeles is notoriously park-poor. The Trust for Public Land ranks L.A.’s park score at 74th out of 100 cities, outpaced by such derided locales as Reno, Bakersfield and Buffalo, New York.

Those two seemingly unrelated problems could be solved by one ingenious, expensive idea: the cap park.

Cap parks can be placed atop any freeway built inside a trench, which includes much of the 101 and 10 freeways and parts of the 110 in South L.A. Cap parks turn freeways into long tunnels with giant air filters that

look like turbines, topped with a long park bisected by various streets. That makes cap parks triply environmentally friendly: They filter air pollution, they cool the atmosphere with trees, and they make neighborhoods more walkable.

A number of U.S. cities already have cap parks (including Seattle, Boston, Dallas, Phoenix and Sacramento), and there are a few existing proposals for building them here: Park 101 in downtown L.A. and Hollywood Central Park, a mile-long, 38-acre park with sports fields, an amphitheater, a community center and tons of open space.

Estimated cost of Hollywood Central Park: \$850 million. Spare some change, Mr. Trump?

12. Exhume our creeks.

Little-known fact: Los Angeles has dozens of creeks. Many are buried underground, often encased inside pipes that carry stormwater out to the ocean, where it’s lost forever. If you were looking to add

a bit of nature to L.A. but didn’t have \$850 million lying around, you could do a lot worse than to start “daylighting” these creeks — getting them back above ground, where they belong, where they create habitat and cool the atmosphere.

Best of all, creeks replenish our aquifers, helping to make L.A. less dependent on outside sources of water.

“You would be bringing back habitat, you’d see an increase in birds and frogs,” says Jessica Hall, a landscape architect. The unearthed creeks “would become a place for people to find peace of mind and recreation. And they would provide some cooling to the environment.”

13. Make Silver Lake Reservoir a park with a swimmable lake.

This idea first surfaced in 2014, as the city prepared to empty the 776 million-gallon Silver Lake Reservoir. Since it was decommissioned in 2008, the reservoir has been a useless if somewhat scenic body of water trapped behind a chain-link fence (in essence, a prison for water no one is using). Instead of merely refilling it, why not turn it into something better, something everyone could use: a park, perhaps, or a swimmable lake?

Some nearby residents went ballistic at the prospect of a lake attracting tourists, traffic, noise and disturbances. And they got their way. The reservoir has been re-filled but is still off-limits, and the group that first proposed the idea of a swimmable lake, Silver Lake Forward, has scaled back its proposal, at least publicly.

But others still like the idea of beach access for people who can't always get to the beach. More important, they say the body of water shouldn't exist simply as eye candy for well-to-do homeowners. It's public land and should be treated like public space.

14. Legalize street vending.

Earlier this year, the L.A. City Council voted to decriminalize street vending. It was a good first step, but street vendors can still be fined and even have their food carts confiscated. Clare Fox, executive director of Los Angeles Food Policy Council, says the city should go further and legalize selling food on sidewalks.



PHOTO BY NANETTE GONZALES

The city should incentivize street carts that sell fruits and vegetables.

"L.A. is the only large city that doesn't have a sidewalk food-vending program," Fox says. "It's a part of our urban life. But it's completely in the shadows."

She says the city should set up a permitting process for street vendors, as well as a healthy-food cart program to incentivize selling fresh produce in areas where residents don't have easy access to fruits and vegetables.

"That's a very simple thing the city can do to address the issue of food deserts," Fox says.

Job Creation and Protection

15. Peg Hollywood tax credits to diversity.

Los Angeles is about 70 percent non-white. But the vast majority of "below-the-line" employees (the non-famous people) in Hollywood is white. While much attention has been given to the lack of onscreen diversity, and the lack of women and people of color directing major feature films, the lack of diversity among the Hollywood proletariat is a bigger problem that affects a greater number of people.

The state of California doles out hundreds of millions of dollars in tax credits to film and television productions in order

to keep entertainment jobs from leaving the state.

As long as we're doing that, shouldn't we make sure they're hiring a diverse set of employees?

"Underrepresentation of women and people of color persists at all levels in the film and television industry," State Assemblyman Sebastian Ridley-Thomas says. "Tax credits must promote equality, not heighten inequity."

Tax credits are handed out based on a complex formula that ranks productions according to how many jobs they create, plus special "bonus points" for certain types of jobs. It would be relatively easy to add into this equation another set of bonus points for women and people of color employed by the production.

16. Give independent contractors more protections.

A recent study by the UC Berkeley Labor Center estimated that as many as 8.5 per-

cent of workers in California rely on independent contracting gigs as their primary source of income. This type of employment is especially common among janitors, construction workers and truckers. The latter were recently highlighted in a *USA Today* exposé that described Port of Los Angeles truckers as "modern-day indentured servants."

"Many employers will convert full-time employees to contract employees as a way of not having benefits and not having to provide stable employment," says Kent Wong, director of UCLA's Labor Center. "Truckers are doing the same work truckers have always done. They're working for the same companies but at drastically reduced pay."

Wong adds: "Attaching a formal employer-employee relationship would help stabilize and enhance the chances of these workers to upgrade those wages and benefits."

There are, of course, workers in the so-called gig economy—Uber and Lyft drivers, for example—for whom such employee designations may not work. For those workers, California could adopt a third class of worker called "dependent contractors." That designation would qualify (13»

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>> **11**) gig workers for some protections (such as minimum wage) and would likely be welcomed by the tech industry, which is currently faced with myriad lawsuits questioning how to classify independent contractors.

Government and Police Reform

17. To reform pensions, ax the California Rule.

The city's ability to fund any new idea is severely hampered by its obligation to retired employees, whose pensions eat up more than 20 percent of operating revenue every year — a percentage that's expected to grow.

"Los Angeles is in danger of becoming a zombie city," says former San Jose mayor Chuck Reed, who has been leading an effort to reform the state's pension laws. "You just keep putting more and more resources into retirement benefits, and less money into serving its residents."

The city has signed contracts to address the pensions of newly hired workers but can't do anything about current employees' pensions (if it even wanted to, which is far from certain) because of the "California Rule," which limits local governments' ability to adjust the way their employees' retirement benefits and pensions increase over time. A number of recent court cases have challenged that interpretation of the rule, and the state Supreme Court is expected to make a decision this year that may clarify or even strike down the California Rule.

"If it is struck down, then you can go to the bargaining table with public employee unions and say, 'We have a problem, and everything is on the table,'" Reed says. If not, then the state could pass a constitutional amendment allowing cities to change the way worker benefits get ratcheted up. This would by no means solve L.A.'s pension woes, but it would be a start.

18. Decentralize LAUSD.

Lots of parents go to great lengths to avoid schooling their children in Los Angeles Unified, the nation's second largest district. Opinions about what should be done to fix LAUSD are deeply polarized. School reformers argue for more charter schools and for making it easier to fire bad teachers. The teachers union argues for fewer charter schools and more money for the district.

But one thing that everyone agrees on, more or less, is the need to decentralize LAUSD — that is, to give schools more freedom to make their own decisions on whom to hire, how big their classes should be, how many administrators they need, and so on.

Decentralization has long been the goal of many superintendents and school board members. But whereas charter schools have spawned at an astonishing rate, the process of giving district-run schools the same autonomy has proceeded at a crawl.

At a certain point, however, this plan will get resistance from teachers, who currently enjoy job protections that would be in jeopardy if every school in the district were allowed to control whom it hires.

19. Make police officer discipline more transparent.

In the last two years, Los Angeles Police Department officers killed more people than any other police force in the country.

Under current state law, records of police discipline are confidential — which means that in most cases it's nearly impossible to find out whether an officer has been disciplined. That's true even if you're the alleged victim. Changing the law would give some much-needed transparency to the discipline process and would be the first step to reforming the system, according to ACLU attorney Melanie Ochoa.

Ochoa says the discipline process also lacks consistency. It's up to the chief of police to recommend what punishment, if any, an officer is given. Then it's up to the Board of Rights to accept that recommendation or make the punishment more lenient (the board doesn't have the power to make it more severe). Ochoa says one solution would be to limit the chief's discretion and create a "discipline matrix," a sort of formula that takes into account a number of circumstances and then determines a range of punishments.

"The public sees little discipline being levied, and from the officers' perspective, there's so much inconsistency," Ochoa says. "A disciplinary matrix would address both concerns."

20. Create a team of mental health first responders.

According to an LAPD report published last year, more than a third of people shot by police in 2015 had documented signs of mental illness. Some advocates say police officers aren't the best people to be dealing with the mentally ill — that when someone calls 911 to report a person clearly suffering from mental illness, dispatch shouldn't send someone carrying a gun, at least in instances where no violence is being reported.

"LAPD shouldn't be responding to a mental health crisis," says Melina Abdullah, a Cal State L.A. professor and Black Lives Matter organizer. "Mental health interventionists should be."

These same mental health interventionists also could be doing outreach work for the homeless, trying to get them off the streets and into supportive services.

It's an example of how many of these problems are connected — policing affects mental health, mental health affects homelessness, homelessness affects housing, housing affects transportation, transportation affects public space, and public space affects mental health. It's enough to make you think the solutions to the city's problems are trapped in a morass of fatigue and red tape.

But problems do get solved. Los Angeles was once shrouded by a thick cloud of smog 200 days of the year. The 1970 Clean Air Act began to change that. In 1993, there were more than 1,000 murders in the city of L.A. In 2016, there were fewer than 300. In the 1980s, the only way to get around the city was by car or bus. Now you can ride the Expo Line from downtown to the sandy beaches of Santa Monica.

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CHEF, INTERRUPTED

Restaurants are one of the few meritocracies left in this country — and we chefs need to run them more compassionately

BY ARI TAYMOR

A few weeks ago, I walked away from opening a new restaurant. Everything about it was perfect. The location was dreamy: beautiful, quiet but close to everything. The investors were young, creative and enthusiastic. The creative team was incredible: designers, builders and craftspeople who have inspired me for a long time. The problem was me.

As young cooks, we want to make our impact fast. The media spur this on — best new chef, best new restaurant, rising star. We feel a pressure to compete, to be the youngest and the first. We push ourselves through 90-hour weeks, we leave loved ones behind for unpaid stages in far-flung corners of the world. We push our bodies and our minds as far as they can go. We sacrifice. We're so focused and single-minded that anyone who doesn't share that passion seems like an alien. We grocery shop, drive and talk the way we cook: fast and efficient, a mantra propelling us forward. If we're lucky, this leads to a chef position, to a platform from which to make a name.

But life often has other plans for us. There will be situations, relationships and circumstances that talent cannot fix. I pushed myself and my career to heights I only dreamed of. I didn't allow for distraction or for anything to get in my way. But there was so much collateral damage.

My business partner, Ashleigh Parsons, and I opened Alma in 2012. It was a tiny storefront in downtown Los Angeles, sandwiched between a marijuana dispensary and a hostess club. We had no investors; everything was done on a shoestring. Because of this, there was no margin for error. I was the first one there and the last one out every day. I wasn't around for my family and was barely present as a close friend slowly succumbed to cancer. My stress and anxiety, my lack of balance, created an ulcer that sent me to the emergency room at 26 years old with massive internal bleeding. I felt numb, the hallmark of depression.

My cook mentality told me to push. I ignored everything and everyone around me that didn't have forward momentum. I took myself into darkness, and it affected my work, my restaurant and every aspect of my life. I was relentless with my cooks: aggressive, unforgiving and at times just

plain insane. The example I set was to drive until you break, and then to keep going. I hated myself, I hated my work, and my food was filled with meaningless ego and negativity. Despite this, the good press and accolades continued to pile up. I got everything I thought I wanted, like some kind of surreal joke.

At the supposed peak of my career, with a James Beard nomination and a string of other awards in hand, I broke. Except this time I couldn't keep going. My restaurant was failing; in spite of the immense good press we received, we remained mostly empty, often cooking for just a handful of people each night. I had been battling a lawsuit brought by a former customer, and I had eaten myself alive with self-doubt. I

THE EXAMPLE I SET WAS TO DRIVE UNTIL YOU BREAK, AND THEN TO KEEP GOING. I HATED MYSELF.

possessed no coping skills. I had abandoned my friends and family. I'd completely tuned out the advice of teachers and mentors. What played out over the next few months was a cliché: The restaurant closed, I filed for bankruptcy, and I took stock of my life and saw nothing.

Despite of all this, the family and friends I had pushed aside were there to catch me. To hold me just above the bottom. Friends loaned me money they knew I couldn't pay back. My parents co-signed a credit card for me. Calls were made to help me get back on my feet and find a job. I didn't deserve their love, their support, but they gave it anyway. Without the identity of my restaurant and my position, I was forced to start anew, and I created a sense of self that was separate from work. I learned compassion and patience and tried to let go of ego and ambition. I cooked at home again for the first time in years, just purely for the pleasure of it. I started meditating. I opened myself up to advice and guidance from friends and professionals. Instead of burying my hurt, I exposed it.

Many others aren't so lucky. Completely alone, they turn to drugs, alcohol or other forms of self-sabotage. If I was going to



Ari Taymor abandoned a new restaurant for a more balanced life.

PHOTO BY ANNE FISHBEIN

lead young men and women, I had to change. I had to set the example that while work is important, there will be so many moments that cooking cannot prepare them for. I needed to show, and more importantly demand, that they take care of themselves as people. Make time for friends, for books, for museums and travel. To prepare, so that when those moments find them, they're ready. What good is being the best cook in the world if you can't weather the storm?

Just after closing Alma in 2015, we were offered an opportunity to resurrect it as a temporary pop-up at the Standard in Hollywood. It was an easy decision, and the gig has since grown into running the entire food and beverage program for the hotel. I am extremely fortunate, supported by a company that allows me to be creative and shields me from the spotlight and pressure of owning a small restaurant. They take care of my cooks with benefits, good pay and vacation. The work I put into myself has allowed me to grow creatively in the kitchen as well. I have more pride in the food we now cook at Alma than ever before.

But I worried that, from the outside, I looked like a sellout. I'm a hotel chef, something I used to scoff at as a young cook. I felt something creep up inside of me: this need to prove myself again, to rebuild my name and reputation. And so I sought out a new restaurant. As I got closer to realizing that goal, I felt this anxiety gnawing at me, demanding my attention.

When the time came to sign a lease, this feeling got stronger. I swallowed my ego and the fears that I might never have this

opportunity again, and at the 11th hour I walked away. I wrote to my team, the investors and everyone who had put so much effort into creating this restaurant. I told them the truth: I wasn't ready, as much as I wanted to be. The wholeness of my life was more important than the arc of my career. I expected responses of anger and frustration at time wasted, of energy spent on nothing. Instead, what I received was overwhelming support, love and kindness.

Weakness is something we are taught to be allergic to as cooks. The ideal cook is stoic, unmoved in the face of pain and pressure. I hoped that by sharing this with my cooks, they would see an alternative.

Socially and politically, we are in a moment filled with anger and violence. What we need are real leaders. Restaurants are one of the few meritocracies left in this country, places where talent and hard work are still regularly rewarded, where someone can come from nothing and drag themselves to the top. But we must teach our cooks the value of community — teach them how to cope with stress and depression and support them when they need to prioritize their lives at the cost of our menus and our legacies.

There are chefs who have been doing this, mostly silently, for a long time. My hope is that as our industry grows and evolves, the media and dining public will realize that these leaders are as worthy of our praise and adoration as those who trail-blaze with their cuisine — and that we are able to create an army of men and women who are talented and driven but also compassionate and balanced.

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We all know that, generally speaking, L.A.'s best restaurants are in strip malls. It comes as a surprise to visitors and new arrivals, but natives and old-timers know that the most interesting food is usually hidden in plain sight here. But sometimes — very rarely, but it happens — a restaurant owner will find an even more unlikely location for a project. Like, say, an old house, practically under the 134, blocked from street view by a dentist's office.

Cascabel, in the Toluca Lake/North Hollywood area, is that restaurant. Most people approach it — via said dentist's office's driveway and parking lot — with some trepidation. But then you walk through the arched entryway and realize that, if nothing else, you'll be spending the evening in beautiful surroundings.

The converted house was built in or around the 1920s, in the classic Spanish style of the era: exposed beams, lushly painted tiles, white walls and wood floors. The decor has been chosen to match the style of the house in a self-aware, rustic way, with leather and velvet and wicker. The little patio is a great choice for eating outside (use the old Valley trick of pretending the sound of the freeway traffic is actually the ocean).

As a city we're still struggling with some deeply held, and incorrect, notions about what kinds of food are "allowed" to be expensive. Generally, we think Mexican cuisine is supposed to be cheap. If I tell you right now to stop thinking that way, will you?

The surroundings at Cascabel should be your first clue that this is not a combo-platter restaurant. The enchiladas are served singly. The cocktails are more likely to be made with small-batch mezcal than with tequila. On the other hand, chips and salsa are set on every table. When asked via email if that was his personal preference, or if the market demands chips and salsa, chef Alex Eusebio answered, "Honestly, a little bit of both. People love chips and salsa, myself included."

In a way, that pairing of chips and (very above-average) salsa with dishes such as "Mazatlan bouillabaisse" and duck confit with tarragon salsa verde is exactly in line with what Eusebio wants to accomplish. "I call it 'L.A.-based Mexican' because while it is Mexican-inspired, it's not 'traditional' Mexican. Everything we serve is influenced in some way from Mexico, and interpreted through the lens of Los Angeles. L.A. is very Mexican, and Cascabel is an extension of that. We are Mexican-inspired but not bound exactly within the 'traditional,'" he says.

There are homemade "choco tacos" on the dessert menu, showing there's room for whimsy in a kitchen that's doing thoughtful work. You might be too full to try them, though, after indulging in the brightly colored drinks and a few snapper or lamb tacos. Cascabel seems to do its very best work with starches, such as the plaintain and sweet potato enchilada with goat cheese, a real lick-the-plate situation.

Or since, everything's à la carte, make a night of it, ordering just a few things at a time, maybe deciding to go for that bacon guacamole after all, after starting with

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CHINESE FOOD

Hong Kong–Style Embassy Kitchen Serves Complex and Home-Style Dishes

When people talk about L.A.’s best Chinese restaurant, the same names come up time and again: Sea Harbour in Rosemead, Chengdu Taste, Lunasia, King Hua and Szechuan Impression in

Alhambra, Newport Seafood and Mian in San Gabriel, and Din Tai Fung in various mall locations. (Or if you’re Yelp, then it’s Americanized restaurants such as Sea Dragon, Yang Chow and Wah’s Golden Hen.)

But what if we throw another contender into the mix: Embassy Kitchen in San Gabriel, located directly in front of the Embassy Billiards pool hall, whence it derives its name.

Given its location, this is equivalent to bowling alley dining, in a sense. And it’s been around for 20 years, making it senior to all the other top non-Yelp contenders except Newport Seafood, which opened in San Gabriel a year earlier in 1996. Embassy Kitchen started as a small adjunct restaurant to the billiard parlor around 1997, even using the Embassy Billiards moniker. It then moved to the large restaurant space in front of the pool hall around 1999.

Like other top Chinese restaurants Sea Harbour, Lunasia and King Hua, as well as most all of the other banquet-sized Chinese restaurants in the San Gabriel Valley, Embassy Kitchen serves Hong Kong–style cuisine. But Embassy Kitchen diverges from these other restaurants in many ways. There are no tanks full of live seafood, nor is the dining room huge, loud or boisterous. There is not a gaudy menu with so many choices that it could be made into a movie, and the restaurant gladly takes reservations.

But what really distinguishes Embassy Kitchen from the pack is the food selection. Yes, you will find Cantonese

favorites such as rock cod in corn sauce, walnut shrimp, fish maw crab meat soup, *e-fu* noodles and steamed chicken with ginger and scallions. But what you also find at Embassy Kitchen are two extremes not typically seen at most Hong Kong–style restaurants in Los Angeles — complex dishes that require ordering in advance, and wonderful home-style dishes.

Most of these dishes are obscured on the Embassy Kitchen menu, as they are only found on Chinese-language paper inserts on the inside cover of the permanent menu. On the other hand, that might not make much of a difference, since non-Chinese faces are rare at this restaurant. There is no nefarious intent in relegating these dishes to a Chinese-language supplement — the owners indicate that they just weren’t sure how to accurately describe these dishes in English.

Perhaps the best exemplar of the complex advance-order dishes is the boneless chicken stuffed with shrimp paste. The chicken skin is light and crispy and the shrimp paste provides a savory contrast.

Then there are the tilapia rolls with whole carcass, one of the most visually interesting dishes you will find at a Los Angeles–area Chinese restaurant, though from a taste point of view the re-stuffed fish (where the bones are removed and the fish is filled back up with fish and ground pork) might be a better choice.

One of the special items that does not necessarily require an advance order is the “eight treasures” stuffed duck.

Other signature dishes include the chicken stuffed with sticky rice (a traditional Cantonese dish still popular in the San Francisco area but difficult to find in Los Angeles) and the fried rice with whole Dungeness crab or lobster. Note that all of these dishes are large and cost around \$50, and hence are more suited to large parties. Indeed, Embassy Kitchen has a larger quotient of large-size tables compared with most other Chinese restaurants in Los Angeles.

At the other end of the spectrum are the many uncommon home-style dishes on Embassy Kitchen’s menu. However, be aware that these dishes are not inexpensive, as there are few items on the Embassy Kitchen menu that are less than \$15, and many are \$20 or more. But these dishes contain expensive ingredients. For example, our party was stumped by the steamed egg with tofu and seafood topping, so we had to ask what was in it. The answer: “shrimp roe.” Such ingredients also explain the higher price point.

Try the steamed eggplant with dried scallop and ground pork; the clear rice noodles with cabbage, egg and dried scallops; stir-fried beef, egg and French-style beef stew (which comes with noodles at lunchtime but not at dinner).

When the kitchen is in top form, this is the closest thing to artisan Chinese cooking that you will find in L.A. —David Chan

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DO AMERICAP. 22 **TUE**
PACIFIC PALISADES DOES
THE FOURTH OF JULY RIGHT**fri** 6/30

FOOD & DRINK

To Market, to Market

626 Night Market was created seven years ago as an homage to the nighttime food markets of East and Southeast Asia. And it's still going strong, as Angelenos get ever more into the idea of food markets that sell a high-quality product, consistently. The Night Market is now spread over a number of weekends all summer, in two locations. This is the L.A. County kickoff. Expect a huge array of grilled meats, *takoyaki*, seafood in pineapples, bento boxes, burgers and a bunch of novelty desserts. Plus, it goes until well after dark, which is a pleasant change, and welcome in this heat. *Santa Anita Park, 285 W. Huntington Drive, Arcadia; Fri.-Sat., June 30-July 1, 4 p.m.-1 a.m.; Sun., July 2, 4-11 p.m.; \$3 Fri. & Sun., \$5 Sat. 626nightmarket.com.* —Katherine Spiers

POLITICS

A More Perfect Union

Drink up and brush up on your knowledge of a great American founding document at the last installment of the Hammer's **Constitution Happy Hour** series. The guided conversations are the brainchild of artist Linda Pollack, who believes, "The U.S. Constitution is a living document, part of our quotidian life, influencing us in both large and small ways daily." Previous conversations have addressed gender-based rights, immigration rights and voting rights. Tonight's topic: "Is Hate Speech Protected Under the Constitution?" Damon Huss, senior editor and curriculum specialist at the Constitutional Rights Foundation, will expound on the topic. Getting drunk and telling off-color jokes is not recommended. *Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Fri., June 30, 6 p.m.; free. (310) 443-7000, hammer.ucla.edu.* —David Cotner

sat 7/1

CYCLING

A Ride With a View

L.A.'s Latino heritage is richly repre-

sented in murals on walls throughout the city but particularly in East L.A. and other neighborhoods east of downtown. (No, Silver Lake isn't the Eastside, dudes.) To celebrate that tradition and to encourage transportation policy that encourages bike- and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, Multicultural Communities for Mobility and L.A. Metro are hosting the **Eastside Mural Ride**, a roughly 10-mile bike ride through East L.A. and City Terrace. Besides mural appreciation, riders will learn about bike safety and riding in traffic with insufficient bike infrastructure, and bike mechanics will be on hand in case of any blowouts or other mishaps. There's no better way to see the city. *Ride begins at East L.A. Civic Center, 4801 E. Third St., East L.A.; Sat., July 1, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; free. eventbrite.com/e/eastside-mural-ride-2017-presented-by-metro-tickets-35187198859.* —Gwynedd Stuart

MUSEUMS

Bodily Function

In conjunction with the exhibit "Body Worlds: Pulse," the California Science Center screens **The Human Body**, which shows the inner workings of the human body, from conception and birth to puberty and adulthood, all blown up in IMAX format. Based on a BBC documentary series, the movie uses scanning electron microscopes, thermal imaging, medical computer graphics and other technologies to follow the routine bodily functions of one family — 8-year-old Zannah, teenage Luke, Uncle Buster and pregnant Aunt Heather — for a single day. You'll see how fast hair grows, how a tomato travels through the stomach, how the ear makes sense of sound and how a fetus develops. *California Science Center, 700 Exposition Park Drive, Exposition Park; opens Sat., July 1, 10 a.m., 12, 2 & 5 p.m. (runs through Sept. 4); \$8.50, \$6.25 students and seniors, \$5.25 children. (323) 724-3623, californiasciencecenter.org/imax/the-human-body.* —Siran Babayan

Palisades Americanism Parade: See Tuesday.



PHOTO BY LUIS VELASQUEZ/PALISADES NEWS

CONS

Tune in Tokyo

In what has become a Fourth of July tradition, tens of thousands of anime fanatics will spend their holiday weekend at the Los Angeles Convention Center for **Anime Expo**. Many will show up in costumes ranging from simple store-bought pieces to elaborate, homemade re-creations of their favorite characters. Many more will line up for panels, screenings and concerts, and will squeeze through the exhibit hall in search of everything from collectibles to fan art. While there are a few events on Friday, June 30, the extravaganza officially launches July 1 with programming that includes a world-premiere screening of *Cardcaptor Sakura: Clear Card Arc Prologue*. Highlights for the rest of the convention include the World Cosplay Summit U.S. Preliminary on July 2 and a panel with anime artist/director Tensai Okamura (*Darker Than Black, Blue Exorcist*) on July 3. *Los Angeles Convention Center, 1201 S. Figueroa St., downtown; Fri., June 30-Tue., July 4; \$20-\$115. anime-expo.org.* —Liz Ohanesian

sun 7/2

COMEDY

Porn Yesterday

Unlike unintentionally funny porn, with its title puns and pizza-delivery-boy plots, Alia Janine and Sovereign Syre are intentionally funny porn stars. In **Alia and Sovereign Do America**, the two discuss, among other topics, sex, dating, relationships, politics and their careers acting in the adult-film industry. Alia, who's appeared in some 150 movies — don't make us list their names — is retired and lives in New York, while Sovereign is currently on hiatus and lives in Los Angeles. The two crossed over into performing comedy a few years ago and recently launched their stand-up tour in the hopes of not only destigmatizing porn but also proving that not all porn stars-turned-comedians are hacks like Ron Jeremy. Alia hosts her own podcast, *Whormones*, and Sovereign hosts the podcast *Observations* — she's even opened for Marc Maron. Tonight, they'll be joined by guest Maron, as well as emcee and fellow stand-up comic

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Tamer Kattan. *Nerdist Showroom at Melt-down Comics, 7522 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood; Sun., July 2, 9-10:30 p.m.; \$10. (323) 851-7223, nerdmelta.com. -Siran Babayan*

FOOD & DRINK

Happy Hundredth

What to expect at the **Culver City Centennial Food & Wine Festival**: a lot of food, a ton of booze and fun for a good cause. The ticket price isn't steep, and the money goes to a pair of local charitable organizations — Meals on Wheels Culver/Palms and Culver City Backpacks for Kids — as well as local musician Rick Joswick, who is battling cancer. The event is 21 and up, because there will be a number of alcohol vendors, including Spa Girl Vodka, American Born Whiskey, Rock & Roll Tequila, Humboldt Rum and Vodka and Iron Fist Craft Beer — not to mention the wines. Good thing the food vendors tend toward the carby. *Courtyard by Marriott, 6333 Bristol Pkwy., Culver City; Sun., July 2, 4-8 p.m.; \$60-\$100. culvercity100.org/events/culver-city-centennial-westside-food-wine-festival. -Katherine Spiers*

mon

7/3

COMEDY

Out of Site

The women's satire website Reductress turns you on to L.A.'s finest comedians

with the latest iteration of the comedy showcase **Haha, Wow!** Hosted by Rekha Shankar of CollegeHumor and Janie Stolar, co-creator of talk show indictment *The Female Gaze*, and featuring comedy by Amber Nelson, Alison Leiby, Broti Gupta and Brianna Baker, *Haha, Wow!* tackles issues as wide-ranging as female empowerment, healthy sexual expression and insults that really hit home. Expect to explore the thin line between shocked laughter and knowing laughter. *UCB Sunset, 5419 W. Sunset Blvd., East Hollywood; Mon., July 3, 10:30 p.m.; \$8. (323) 908-8702, sunset.ucbtheatre.com/performance/55339. -David Cotner*

tue

7/4

HOLIDAYS

Bursting in Air

The political climate being what it is, you might not exactly be in the mood to chant "USA! USA!" this July Fourth. Totally fair. But can anyone resist a free fireworks display, impending doom notwithstanding? Grand Park and the Music Center have again joined forces to host the **Fourth of July Block Party**, a big downtown L.A. hang session with music, food, games for kids and, of course, a big fireworks show once the sun goes down. Entertainers this year include the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles and Angel City All-Star Brass Band, plus DJs and local pop acts. *Grand*

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Park, 200 N. Grand Ave., downtown; Tue., July 4, 2-9:30 p.m.; free. grandparkla.org/event/4thofjuly. —Gwynedd Stuart

HOLIDAYS

God Bless Americanism

Perched along steep, crumbling cliffs above the ocean between Santa Monica and Topanga, Pacific Palisades is part of the city of Los Angeles, although you wouldn't necessarily notice it while driving past on PCH, as there are almost no signs marking the wealthy enclave. But for one day each year, the neighborhood welcomes outsiders for a Fourth of July celebration that includes the annual, early-morning Palisades Will Rogers 5K and 10K runs, followed in the afternoon by the **Palisades Americanism Parade**. Unlike most small-town processions, the parade, which travels down Sunset Boulevard, is a pretty spectacular affair that features skydivers, a horde of marching bands and local celebrities, and culminates in a pop concert and fireworks display. 15120-15140 Sunset Blvd., Pacific Palisades; concert and fireworks at Palisades Charter High School, 15777 Bowdoin St., Pacific Palisades; Tue., July 4, 2 p.m., concert and fireworks at 6 p.m.; free (\$50 for grandstand seating), \$10 for concert and fireworks. palisadesparade.org. —Falling James

wed 7/5

LECTURES

Here Kitty, Kitty

Paul Koudounaris is a man of many interests. After earning his Ph.D. in art history from UCLA, he set out to photograph the ossuaries and charnel houses of Europe, which resulted in the publication of three books. He's also a fervent animal lover, consistently unearthing some of the most interesting stories about our furry friends. Now, Dr. Koudounaris debuts **Los Cat-gees: A History of L.A. Cats**, a lecture on the feline residents of his hometown of Los Angeles. Not only is L.A. home to more cats than any other U.S. city, it also has the highest number of cat-related ghost stories, such as the one about Beelzebub, the black cat who used to patrol the former Ambassador Hotel, even in the afterlife. Hear these fascinating stories and more, plus music from Sister Calypso, Gianna Gianna and DJ Don Bolles. *Hyperion Avenue Tavern*, 1941 Hyperion Ave., Los Feliz; Wed., July 5, 9:30 p.m.-1 a.m.; free. (323) 665-1941, facebook.com/events/263996650741321. —Tanja M. Laden

thu 7/6

FILM

A Night Out

Outfest, which turns 35 this year, kicks off on Thursday with the annual opening-night gala. This year's centerpiece is a

screening of British director Francis Lee's *God's Own Country*; Bryan Fuller, screenwriter and producer of *American Gods*, *Hannibal* and *Pushing Daisies*, will be honored with the 2017 Outfest Achievement Award at the party, catered by a dozen restaurants. Nearly 200 feature films, documentaries and shorts from 30 countries will be shown at various venues throughout the LGBT festival's run. Among them are movies about Tom of Finland, famed makeup artist Kevyn Aucoin, *Grease* producer Allan Carr and *Tales of the City* author Armistead Maupin, as well as *Freak Show*, the first fiction feature from director Trudie Styler (aka Mrs. Sting), starring Bette Midler and Laverne Cox. The schedule boasts addition-

al events, including a panel with directors of the TV series *Queen Sugar*, a preview of the upcoming season of *Transparent* with cast and crew, and a 20th-anniversary screening of *Chasing Amy* with Kevin Smith. *Various venues through July 16. Opening-night gala, Orpheum Theatre, 842 S. Broadway, downtown; Thu., July 6, 6:30 p.m.; opening-night gala \$60-\$175; regular screenings \$15-\$20. (213) 480-7065, outfest.org. —Siran Babayan*

FILM

Mousy Murderer

Artist-photographer Cindy Sherman is best known for her provocative self-portraits in which she sardonically rein-

vents herself via a series of chameleonic characters. In 1997, she released her only full-length film as a director, **Office Killer**, co-written with Todd Haynes and others and featuring a stellar, mostly female cast that includes Carol Kane, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Molly Ringwald. Unlike so many dozy and pretentious art projects, *Office Killer* is a witty, fast-paced, thoroughly campy horror-comedy that portrays Kane as a nebbishy, mistreated magazine editor who ends up murdering her pompous co-workers and even some innocent Girl Scouts. *Echo Park Film Center*, 1200 N. Alvarado St., Echo Park; Thu., July 6, 8 p.m.; \$5 donation. (213) 484-8846, echoparkfilmcenter.org. —Falling James



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Rum & Humble



Sunday night regulars come to Skateland to hear grown-folks music.

PHOTO BY STAR FOREMAN

Culture //

NOSTALGIA ON WHEELS

Sunday nights at Skateland in Northridge are for grown folks and custom skates

BY LASHEA DELANEY

Skateland on a Sunday night is all about the sounds. When you walk through the door, the speakers are blaring golden oldies, the slow jams of the past, that smooth R&B. The music is what makes everyone want to get on the floor and move. The whir of the skates on the maple skating floor, a stomp when the beat hits and the chatter of people who are excited to see one another create a party atmosphere.

The skaters on Sunday night are skilled — they move in unison but everyone has a style of their own. If you are on the outside of the circle, there's no slowing down — you have to go with the flow and the rhythm of the group. If you want to slow down or work on your footwork, you can skate into the center of the circle, maybe learn a routine. There are single skaters, couples locking arms and threesomes supporting one another on the floor, and they are all in the pocket, moving without thought, just letting their skates glide. The fluidity and freedom of their movement is infectious.

Another thing you'll notice about

Skateland on Sunday night is that the crowd is almost exclusively African-American and many skaters are nearing retirement age.

The 21-and-up Oldies Night on Sundays began out of necessity. As demand has dwindled, skating rinks in Los Angeles, including the legendary Skateland in Compton, have shuttered one by one, as they have elsewhere in the country. Skateland has been a fixture since 1958 and has managed to survive what other rinks have not. A small group of adult skaters who'd been displaced as other rinks closed approached Skateland general manager Courtney Bourdas Henn and let her in on the amazing potential of a session that caters to older black skaters. Incrementally, the evening grew, despite some hiccups. Henn went through three DJs before being introduced to DJ Clyde the Glide, who finally nailed the Skateland sound.

DJ Clyde the Glide has been playing rinks since 1981. He's had nights at all of the biggest roller rinks in Los Angeles and was also a radio personality. Oldies Night at Skateland became what it is because of the crowd that Clyde was able to bring with him. Skaters care about the music and the vibe;

they won't just skate to anything. On a recent Sunday night, several skaters told me that they don't go to certain rinks because the music is too "young." Clyde plays grown-folks music, which is what everyone wants to hear. He plays "O-o-h Child" by the Five Stairsteps and Vaughan Mason & Crew's "Bounce, Rock, Skate, Roll." The Staples Singers' "I'll Take You There" gets a particularly enthusiastic crowd reaction. He makes the session move. He plays all the hits and the crowd responds by moving with the beat, taking hold of a partner or stomping their skates.

There are adult skate scenes in black communities all over the country, but what sets L.A.'s apart is the proliferation of outrageous custom roller skates — and the skaters at Oldies Night at Skateland have the best-looking skates around. Gator-skin

THERE ARE ADULT SKATE SCENES IN BLACK COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, BUT WHAT SETS L.A.'S APART IS THE PROLIFERATION OF OUTRAGEOUS CUSTOM ROLLER SKATES.

lace-ups, cowboy boots, Nike sneakers and Stacy Adams dress shoes have been retrofitted to become roller skates. They come in purple suede, pink patent leather and leopard-print fur. The man responsible for the creations is Rick (Sk8manrick on Instagram) at RS Custom, a second-generation skate maker who fashions built-to-order skates out of his shop in Lawndale, following in the footsteps of his father, who was in business for 35 years. When Rich steps into Skateland, he gets hugs from friends and former customers; he estimates that he personally made around 80 percent of the custom skates at Skateland on a given Sunday night. I asked him whether there are any shoes he won't make into skates, and he replied with a resounding "no."

On the night that I visited Skateland, two people were celebrating birthdays. There was food, hugs and an overall feeling of fellowship. The skating community is dynamic, allowing older people to move with grace and speed. I spoke with two women who have been friends since 1966, when they met in high school. One of them was wearing sparkling skate covers that she made herself. They stood next to each other moving to the music, looking vibrant and feeling the energy in the room. They skated away holding hands like schoolgirls and could've been mistaken for them as they entered the rink and glided across that maple floor.

PHOTO BY STAR FOREMAN



RS Custom makes many of the skates seen at Skateland.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

JEFF AND MIKE LIPSCHUTZ
EXPLORE "POST-TERRITORY"
AT MARS GALLERY

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an artist unveils a lighthouse in the desert, and another finds inspiration in toilet seats.

Family business

The father-son team of Jeff and Mike Lipschutz go by Lipschutz & Lipschutz, the name intentionally resembling a family law or accounting firm. They wanted through their current exhibition at MaRS Gallery to explore what they call "post-territory," a more barren, chaotic time and space beyond the golden age of American progress. The show features both paintings on the walls and sculptures scattered throughout the space. The sculptures, made entirely of found objects, often involve telephone books — one red-painted telephone book sits on a yellowed stand with two blue feet. It looks like a worn-out relic of a pre-digital era, perhaps left behind in someone's sun-baked backyard. The paintings are more like maps of past and future. Some reference Eagle Mountain, the once-functional ghost town where Jeff Lipschutz grew up, and others reference contemporary debris, like junk filling up an empty desert swimming pool. 649 S. Anderson St., Boyle Heights; through July 22. (323) 526-8097, marsgallery.net.

Seas of sand

Desert Lighthouse, a sculpture by Daniel Hawkins in the Mojave Desert, looks mystical in renderings. It's white and glowing amidst an arid sea of sand, mountains visible in the distance. Although made for land and not sea, Hawkins' lighthouse is meant to function just as such structures do: as a beacon for travelers. According to writer Doug Hickey, the artist conceived of the sculpture after an agoraphobic night driving through the desert and feeling lost at sea. It officially opens this weekend, with a sunset reception. RSVP required. 34.957, -117.212, Hinkley; Sat., July 1, 6-9 p.m. desertlighthouse.org/launch.

Have a seat

It takes a moment to realize that you're looking at toilet seats when you first see Joel Holmberg's paintings, up now at Michael Benevento Gallery. Initially, they look like flat, whimsical abstractions, rectangles layered over big ovals. But the rectangles are in fact pieces of toilet paper used to cover the seats of a public toilet (Holmberg used as his model for these paintings the communal toilet in his studio building). His work shares space with Tory J. Lowitz, who has been studying *ikebana*, Japanese floral arrangement. Lowitz's minimal

sculptures mimic the gallery's infrastructure and hold fresh flowers and plants. As you open the gallery door, you're face to face with a white metal door frame holding a modest plant on a built-in shelf. 3712 Beverly Blvd., Koreatown; through July 8. (323) 874-6400, beneventolosangeles.com.

Heavy petting zoo

Amy O'Neill brought her parents' kitschy, endearing 1970s television console to Kristina Kite Gallery, where it sits in the gallery's back room, in front of a stack of bean bags, as part of O'Neill's show "Convex Cornea." Playing on the TV screen inside the console is a collaged-together 16mm film called *Zoo Revolution and the Well Fed Wolf*. The heavy-metal soundtrack, by the band Orphan, gives



COURTESY OF MARS AND THE GALLERY

"Lipschutz & Lipschutz" installation view

the footage a nostalgic but also comically dramatic weightiness. Clips from cartoons and childhood films interrupt footage of a now-closed petting zoo and storybook garden O'Neill used to visit as a child. The film recalls the absurd, anxiety-filled performance and videos L.A. icon Mike Kelley used to make about his teenage years, except O'Neill's film isn't angst. Rather, it's comfortable with its nerdy quirks and dramatics. Also included in the exhibition are the artist's "Bean-Bag Flats," 1970 bean-bag chairs taken apart at the seams and screen-printed with slogans from vintage T-shirts. 3400 W. Washington Blvd., Arlington Heights; through July 15. (323) 643-4656, kristinakitegallery.la.

Fame, loss and minimalist sculpture

The fierce scholar Anna Chave has written extensively about minimalism and about the work of Carl Andre, whose retrospective currently fills the main galleries of MOCA's Geffen Contemporary. She has interrogated, among other things, the ways in which Andre's work relates to that of the legacy of his late wife, artist Ana Mendieta. Mendieta's death in 1985, from a fall out the window of the 34th-floor apartment she shared with Andre, left the art world rattled. While Andre was acquitted of her murder, questions about her life and career always accompany the institutional attention he receives. Is Mendieta being overshadowed in death? How do feminist artists honor her legacy? "Some male critics have suggested that, as Mendieta's posthumous reputation grows, ill feeling toward the more celebrated Andre might accordingly subside; but the reverse may just as easily be imagined," Chave wrote a few years ago. It's a bold move by the museum to bring her in; hopefully, her talk will invite incisive, complicated conversation. 152 N. Central Ave., downtown; Thu., July 6, 7 p.m.; free. (213) 621-1745, moca.org.

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UCLA Meth Clinical Trial

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A UCLA meth clinical trial may be able to help. UCLA is conducting a clinical trial to find out if an anti-inflammatory medication can help patients to stop or reduce their meth use, and improve mental functioning, by reducing toxic brain inflammation caused by meth. Counseling, study medication, and compensation are included in this 18-week outpatient clinical trial. Interested in learning more?

If you are 18 years or older, using crystal meth, and looking to stop, call our research clinic in Hollywood (866) 449-UCLA or visit www.uclacbam.org/meth

UCLA IRB#12-000949. This UCLA research study is being conducted by the UCLA Dept of Family Medicine (PI: Keith Heizerling MD). Funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

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RAISING THE BARD

Independent Shakespeare Company brings two “riskier” shows to the Griffith Park Festival

BY EMILY ROME

“Comedy: love and a bit with a dog. That’s what they want,” Geoffrey Rush declares in *Shakespeare in*

Love. Indeed, that’s what’s supplied in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which features the Bard’s only canine role. Still, the play has never shared the enduring popularity of Shakespeare’s most celebrated comedies. Nor has *Measure for Measure*. Yet this summer the Independent Shakespeare Company is taking on these two lesser-known, less beloved plays, which also present some plot elements and character turns a modern audience may find problematic, or challenging, to say the least.

“It is a slightly riskier season,” admits David Melville, managing director of the company, which has brought such staples as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* to Griffith Park in recent years.

It’s the first production of *Measure for Measure* for ISC, founded in 1998. The

selection still follows the company’s typical model for the festival: “We usually try to pick one crowd-pleasing comedy and then something slightly more challenging,” Melville says. *Two Gentlemen* has proved to be that crowd pleaser in the three times ISC has produced it.

Measure for Measure follows the novice nun Isabella as she pleads for the life of her brother, Claudio, when he is sentenced to death for impregnating his betrothed before they’ve married. A society that criminalizes cohabitation may sound distant and outdated for a modern production, but ISC’s promotional materials manage to frame it in a way audiences today may find relevant, describing Claudio as “a man whose only crime is love.”

Featuring a corrupt government, *Measure for Measure* appears to be getting staged more than usual this year across the country (including in Berkeley and Santa Cruz). “Even though it seems like perhaps one is picking it for sort of political reasons, we didn’t,” Chalsma notes, adding that ISC announces the following season’s lineup at the end of each summer festival, “so, at that

time, we were still living in the happy possibility of our first female president instead of who we got.”

Husband-and-wife team Melville and Chalsma explained that they decided to tackle *Measure for Measure* simply because the company hadn’t done it before. “For us, we’re not really interested in doing this if all we’re gonna be doing is the obvious [plays],” Melville says.

Among the plays’ challenges: Both depict attempted sexual assault, and their final scenes each leave a female lead silent for a long stretch of time when audiences—modern ones, at least—might expect these women to have something to say. William Elsmann, who plays the corrupt, conflicted deputy Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, said he expects the production “to prompt a lot of discussion. Part of the ending is the question, would you be willing to forgive your attacker, your abuser, the person that assaulted you?”

Directors Chalsma (*Measure*) and Melville (*Two Gentlemen*) did not begin work on this season with a solidified vision for their interpretation of the plays’ tricky endings, allowing them to be discovered in rehearsal with the actors.

While there are adult themes in each play, Chalsma said kids are welcome. “We present all our plays as adult plays. It’s not children’s theater, but it’s family-friendly.”

With a 1950s setting and a rockabilly band onstage—plus Chalsma and Melville’s dog, Pickles, playing Crab—ISC’s

Kalean Ung as Isabella and Nikhil Pai as Lucio in *Measure for Measure*



Two Gentlemen aims to be a lively romp. But the text of *Measure for Measure* serves up plenty of laughs, too, making frequent tonal shifts from darkly intense scenes to the farcical and silly.

Elsman noted the Globe Theatre, where many Shakespeare plays were first performed, “was designed for these plays to be audience-interactive. [Our audience] will experience that—they will take with us a trip to a very dark place, and they will take a hairpin turn and go to a farcical, wacky place. It’s just even more extreme and delightful explorations of the palette that Shakespeare provides, and that is the human experience.”

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Ansel Elgort in
Baby Driver

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| Film //

DRIVEN BY THE BEAT

Edgar Wright's *Baby Driver* makes the car chase soar again

BY BILGE EBIRI

Edgar Wright's *Baby Driver* is a remorselessly entertaining, impeccably assembled action-musical in which cars and people defy the laws of physics and common sense. They leap into gunfire and hop over hoods and careen down streets in perfect time to the beats of an unimpeachably cool soundtrack. It's all absurd, but set to music it just feels right. And unlike, say, a *Fast and Furious* flick, Wright's movie delivers action that's convincing and concrete — the cars seem real, even when the people don't. This is the kind of pure pop confection that leaves you breathless with admiration for the director's supernatural command of his frame. But it might also leave you a little cold.

Not being familiar with the Simon & Garfunkel song, when I first heard this movie's title I briefly entertained the notion that Wright, the auteur of the glorious *Cornetto* Trilogy (*Shaun of the Dead*, *Hot Fuzz*, *The World's End*), had made some weird family comedy about a toddler getting behind the wheel, or a guy who transports babies around. (This latter idea remains the *Rock's* for the pitching.) Or maybe a *Kill Bill* sequel. Or, hell, a *Kill Bill* prequel. *Baby Driver* turns out to be a riff on Walter Hill's Ryan O'Neal-starring gearhead classic, *The Driver*, about a brilliant, silent getaway driver fleeing from the law. (And that film plays like a riff on Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le Samourai*.) This is sort of the junior version of all that, I suppose.

This time, the lonesome driver is Baby (Ansel Elgort), an introverted automotive savant who knows his music as well as his cars, and uses both to hide a lot of hurt. Baby works for Doc (Kevin Spacey), a smooth, calculating crime lord who plans immaculate heists that ultimately hinge on one key element: Baby's expertise behind the wheel. The assorted goons Doc hires — crude stickup men played with grimy glee by the likes of Jon Hamm, Jamie Foxx and Jon Bernthal — are understandably put off by our hero's aloof, unnaturally quiet demeanor. Is there something wrong

with him? Does he think he's better than they are?

The dark sunglasses never come off and the earbuds never come out; Baby needs his music the way Samson needs his hair. It's the source of his strength — his ability to stay focused and centered and on the move. (It also drowns out his tinnitus.) And if Baby keeps his distance from the other thugs, it's because he absolutely is not one of them, and Doc recognizes that: This is just a kid who's slowly paying back some debt to Doc in perfectly executed getaways. (The precise nature of the debt, as far as I can

tell, is never explained.) When he's not transporting sociopaths, Baby takes care of his elderly, deaf foster father, Joe (C.J. Jones), and longs quietly for Debora (Lily James), a waitress who reminds him of his deceased mother.

Wright is playing with archetypes here. Throughout, his characters deliver hilariously quotable mock-tough-guy dialogue. ("We've met before, right?" "I don't know. You're still alive, right?" "Yeah." "Then I guess we ain't never met.") Baby and Debbie both long to escape — they want to be lovers on the run, tapping into a noble cinematic tradition of romantic wanderlust. ("Sometimes, all I want to do is head west on 80 in a car I can't afford, with a plan I don't have.")

Cars, shootouts, gangsters, doomed lovers and limitless blacktop to match the limitless menace of men — this is Edgar Wright's fantasy of America, a land where everyone is a killer or a dreamer or a driver, and sometimes all three. A guy like David Lynch uses such archetypes to explode our myths and reveal our spiritual corruption. But hey, he's a disillusioned Eagle Scout from Missoula, Montana; U.K.-born Wright is the zealous outsider who longs to make the myths breathe again.

Baby Driver is an almost perfect pastiche, a thoroughly enjoyable object. But sue me, I kind of miss the losers of the *Cornetto* Trilogy. In the masterpieces *Shaun of the Dead* and *The World's End*, Wright blends humiliation comedy with the choreographed mayhem, finding humanity in between; when the characters start fighting zombies to the accompaniment of Queen songs, you roar with approval not just for the filmmaking but for the triumph of little people finding their rhythm. In *Baby Driver*, by contrast, everybody is super-cool, and I'm not sure they ever quite come to life. But it's all so effective as a demented action spectacle that this is a minor quibble. I'll probably see this thing 10 more times.

BABY DRIVER | Directed and written by Edgar Wright | TriStar Pictures | Citywide

13 MINUTES TAKES ALMOST TWO HOURS TO TELL US WHY GEORG ELSER TRIED TO KILL HITLER

You can't expect a storyteller to wring much suspense out of a real-life plot to assassinate Hitler. In the case of Georg Elser, the subject of Oliver Hirschbiegel's German drama *13 Minutes*, the filmmakers must contend not just with the fact that we know Elser's 1939 bomb won't end the Reich — poor Elser (Christian Friedel) manages to get arrested after he plants that bomb but before its explosion. That comes some 10 minutes into the movie, after a tense and detailed montage of Elser piling dynamite in a hole in a brick wall in Munich's Bürgerbräukeller beer hall, where the führer soon will be expectorating at a phalanx of

his most rabid brass.

The blast, when it comes, is captured in a long, silent shot of prewar Munich; it rips the night open but not the führer, who cut his speech short that night. No dummies, the cops and the Gestapo immediately suspect Elser, and he doesn't really bother denying their charges. The story's suspense then becomes diffuse: How much torture can he take before signing a formal confession? Did he act alone? Will his loved ones suffer, too? How long before the Nazis kill him?

Unfortunately, the script never surmounts the dramatic challenges those first scenes suggest. Here's a story where getting pinched for not quite killing Hitler is the inciting incident. Where to go from there? The unsurprising — but never satisfying — answer is into brutality (see in real time a hanged man twitch till he stops!) and flashbacks,

Christian Friedel,
not quite ending
the Reich

PHOTO BY BERND SCHULLER/COURTESY SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

which never illuminate the central question: Why was Elser moved to action when so many other Germans weren't? —Alan Scherstuh

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Kate Micucci, left,
Alison Brie and
Aubrey Plaza

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Film //

GET THEE TO IT

AT LAST, A FOUL-MOUTHED, PHILOSOPHICAL NUN COMEDY

BY APRIL WOLFE

Dueling images of Catholic nuns portray either holier-than-thou punishers in habits or hippie types with acoustic guitars, like the postulant Maria in *The Sound of Music*. Both stereotypes obscure the fact that, in real life, a lot of nuns are just ... kind of weird. At one of the many Catholic campouts I once was required to attend, I first had the epiphany that some may have started out as social outcasts looking for a hideaway from judgment by the culture at large. There, one of the sisters went around every morning, sweeping up all the socks and underwear we'd left on the floor of our cabin, so she could boil them and sell them at rummage sales. "They're mine now!" she cackled. But when a brave girl questioned her, the nun shyly backed away and never made eye contact with us again.

Writer-director Jeff Baena (*I Heart Huckabees*, *Life After Beth*), in his lighthearted medieval nun-spoilation comedy, *The Little Hours*, depicts these socially rejected sisters as they may really have been, using modern-day language but also Boccaccio's *The Decameron* as source text. The film follows three young women — Alessandra (Alison Brie), Fernanda

(Aubrey Plaza) and Ginevra (Kate Micucci) — as they try to fill up hour after boring hour with anything, leading to much gossip, bickering and a dabbling in witchcraft. What's that the Bible says about idle hands?

Throughout the film, crystal-blue skies frame a picturesque landscape of rolling green hills and the clean beige stucco of the abbey where the nuns reside — immensely peaceful scenes Baena creates just so he

THE COMEDY
HERE ISN'T
WHAT
YOU'D CALL
HIGHBROW.

can muck them up. When the convent's handyman dares to smile at them, one of the women screeches, "Fuck you, don't look at us!" These nuns are aggro, none more than Fernanda, who takes great joy in physically intimidating men. When the convent's humdrum day is interrupted by an alluring manservant (Dave Franco) escaping the wrath of a jealous husband (Nick Offerman), Fernanda puts an ax to the manservant's throat, her face millimeters away from his as she bellows into his ear, "Who the fuck are youuuuuuuuuuu?"

Though the F-bombs wear a little thin, laughs do come at the expense of Offerman's Lord Bruno and Lauren Weedman, who plays his wife. Bruno dons a voluminous, frizzy bowl cut and yacks on and on about how the Guelfs killed his family, always over-pronouncing "Guelf" — God, it's a funny word. The comedy here isn't what you'd call highbrow. When the bumbling Father Tommaso (John C. Reilly) attempts to define "sodomy," sussing out whether it's anal sex or oral sex, he's a little stumped: "Sodomy is lots of different things," he says, unsure (and piss-drunk).

The Little Hours shares more than a small helping of sincerity with *I Heart Huckabees*, which Baena co-wrote with David O. Russell. The film follows up its punch lines with philosophical discussions untangling why people behave so absurdly. The developing friendship among the sparring nuns is actually sweet to watch unfold, as is the romantic relationship between Tommaso and Mother Superior (Molly Shannon). This isn't a laugh-a-minute movie; it's more a succession of snickers, punctuated by genuine emotion. We're watching some serious weirdos try to connect — in a medieval nunnery.

THE LITTLE HOURS | Written and directed by Jeff Baena | Gunpowder & Sky | ArcLight Hollywood

THE B-SIDE: ELSA DORFMAN'S PORTRAIT

PHOTOGRAPHY Documentarian Errol Morris' latest is a significantly more playful and understated film than the work he's been recognized for in recent years. In *The B-Side*, photographer Elsa Dorfman recalls her decades of taking portraits using large-format Polaroid cameras. She's a chatty subject, and the film has the feel of an engaging doodle, as Dorfman guides us through her archive, rarely dwelling on one picture or figure for too long (though she does discuss her long friendship with Allen Ginsberg, whom she shot in some startling ways). The pictures are so huge that when she holds them out for Morris' lens, the images often cover her up. There's something there, we sense, about how the person behind the camera engages with her subject, but Morris prefers to let the idea just hang there, visually, instead of going too far into it. That's not a problem. Portrait photography can

have a frozen, cast-in-stone quality, but the Dorfman images seen here capture the immediacy of the moment; there's an ephemerality to them. The reason might be embedded in the title of the movie: The "B-sides" in question are the photos she has kept in her archive, which are often the ones *rejected* by her clients. These discards, we come to learn, reveal more about the subjects and the circumstances of the photographic instant than more polished portraits ever could. The implication is that there's resonance in imperfection, depth in disposability. The same could be said of this slight, fascinating little movie. (Bilge Ebiri)

FOOD EVOLUTION What Scott Hamilton Kennedy captures in his scrupulous, optimistic documentary *Food Evolution* is the new reality for American scientists: the challenge of reaching a public bombarded by conspiracy theories and fearmongering. The March for Science on Earth Day was prompted by recent federal government policy (the defunding of scientific re-

search) but also by the more general political agenda to devalue scientific findings. In exploring the heated rhetoric about the prevalence of genetically modified organisms in our agriculture system (more than 90 percent of corn, cotton, soybeans and sugar beets planted in the United States are GMOs), Kennedy (*The Garden*) offers a methodology for scientists to systematically address bias with fact. *Food Evolution* opens with a milestone for the anti-GMO movement, when local legislators on the island of Hawaii passed a ban in 2013. Prominent anti-GMO activists calmly assert terrifying scenarios about widespread health and environmental danger (peppered with qualifiers such as "possibility"). By contrast, molecular biologist Dennis Gonsalves can barely suppress his fury as he stands by his development of the rainbow papaya, a genetically engineered solution to the ringspot virus that had decimated the major Hawaiian crop. Kennedy splits GMOs into two categories: those concentrating on biological

diseases (banana wilt) or environmental factors (drought resistance), and those engineered to work with specific herbicides — particularly seeds created by Monsanto. Much of the antipathy toward GMOs focuses on that reviled chemical company, but there's also a strong undercurrent of distrust in corporations and institutions. Kennedy unabashedly admires scientists, and *Food Evolution* is his rallying cry to make advocacy as important as lab work. (Serena Donadoni)

GOOD FORTUNE John Paul DeJoria is, by all accounts, an amazing man with an even more amazing life story, having overcome two separate instances of homelessness, multiple divorces and many failed career ventures before co-founding Paul Mitchell and Patrón Tequila and in the process becoming a philanthropic billionaire who gives back to people and the planet. Too bad, then, that *Good Fortune* is such a doggedly hagiographic nonfiction portrait, reducing his entire saga and ethos to PR-style

slogans. Narrated by pal Dan Aykroyd as if he were providing overblown voice-over for a 1940s newsreel, Joshua and Rebecca Harrell Tickell's documentary employs flashy aesthetics (split screens, color filters, archival-media montages); a boisterous score; and interviews with DeJoria, his relatives and acquaintances to recount the rags-to-riches tale, which is embellished with asides about how much DeJoria loved his mother and cares for his kids. Throughout, DeJoria's own recollections sound rehearsed, while everyone else's comments come across as tailored for soundbites. No doubt, these talking-head assertions about DeJoria's charitable attitude toward work and life — from his support of eco-conservationist efforts to his backing of heart-in-the-right-place entrepreneurs to his providing free meals to those who work for him — are true. Alas, they're delivered in a celebratory one-note package that feels like something cooked up by a publicity team. (Nick Schager)



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- Elsa Dorfman

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IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE Patrick Shen's *In Pursuit of Silence* argues for an antidote to our loud, hectic, tech-driven society. He visits with psychologists, ornithologists and monks, explores John Cage's 1952 piece '4'33" (the one in which musicians don't play a note), and collects persuasive notions on the value of mindful pauses and contemplation. The flip side is tragic: a school so close to railroad tracks that students lose hours of instruction as passing trains drown out their lessons, workers and city dwellers forced to tolerate unhealthy, high-decibel environments. But Shen overplays his hand. "All of us know that the most essential things in life are exactly what we can't express," says one expert. "Silence is our natural milieu," says another, "and the farther we get away from silence, the more we lose our humanity." Such diktats pile up, accompanied by the counterintuitively generous use of a serene but nondescript piano score. The music, pronouncements and footage of quiet scenery can't hide the confusion in Shen's rich material. Consider Cage's '4'33", forged after the composer spent time in an anechoic chamber and designed to show that any sound, or no sound at all, is



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Friday, June 30

Beat the Devil, John Huston's cheeky 1953 attempt at suspense parody, is frequently singled out as the first "camp" film. Truman Capote collaborated with Huston on the script, which is filled to the tipping point with bizarre characters, inside jokes and a casual disregard for traditional storytelling mechanics. For years, the film was available only via third-rate public-domain copies, which makes the new digital restoration of the original, uncut release version a special event. UCLA will pair it with **The List of Adrian Messenger**, Huston's gimmicky 1963 thriller featuring four famous actors disguised under heavy makeup. Everyone in it seems to be having the time of their lives. **UCLA's Billy Wilder Theater, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood; Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m.; \$10. (310) 206-8013, cinema.ucla.edu.**

Jean Vigo was 29 and dying of tuberculosis when he made one of the most beautiful films in French cinema. **L'Atalante**, his 1934 masterwork about a young village girl's marriage to a barge captain, thrums with life from the very first frame and doesn't let up all the way through the final, transcendent aerial shot. This restlessly inventive romance will play as part of **La Collectionneuse**, Cinefamily's monthly salon dedicated to the cream of French film culture. The screening will include the obligatory soirée in the backyard of the Silent Movie Theatre, where you can sip cognac and parse the wonders of Vigo's *mise-en-scène*. **Cinefamily/Silent Movie Theatre, 611 N. Fairfax Ave., Fairfax; Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m.; \$12. (323) 655-2510, cinefamily.org.**

Saturday, July 1

Here's a recipe for success: Take a proven crowd favorite and add fireworks to it. Cinespia, L.A.'s premier outdoor screening venue, will show **Dirty Dancing**, one of the tastier coming-of-age dance flicks to follow in the wake of *Flashdance*. The pregame show includes a themed photobooth and a DJ dance party. Afterward, a fireworks display will light the sky over Hollywood Forever Cemetery. Shows usually sell out faster than Patrick Swayze can swivel his head, so don't dawdle. **Hollywood Forever Cemetery, 6000 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; Sat., July 1, 9 p.m. (doors 7:15 p.m.); \$16 (plus \$12 for on-site parking). cinespia.org.**

Tuesday, July 4

Robert Preston found the role of a lifetime as the titular con artist in **The Music Man**, the 1962 cinematic translation of the hit Broadway musical. His rat-a-tat line delivery and boyish charm carry the show through the slow bits, and his "Ya Got Trouble" number was immortalized in a *Simpsons* parody (see: "The Monorail Song"). This thick slice of Americana is an easy choice for a Fourth of July activity; Laemmle's **Anniversary Classics** series will beam it into three theaters on Independence Day only. **Laemmle NoHo (also at the Ahrya Fine Arts and Playhouse 7), 5420 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood; Thu., July 4, 3:30 p.m.; \$11. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.**

You can't call yourself an American until you've seen James Cagney as George M. Cohan in Michael Curtiz's 1942 musical biopic. As the Irish-American playwright whose Broadway songs defined patriotism for a generation, Cagney sings and dances with such originality that you'll wonder why actors today are even popular. If you're hard-pressed to find a suitable July 4th outlet, Laemmle's **Anniversary Classics** series helps you out by screening **Yankee Doodle Dandy** simultaneously in three locations. Miniature American flags are encouraged. **Laemmle NoHo, 5420 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood (also at the Ahrya Fine Arts and Playhouse 7), Thu., July 4, 1 p.m.; \$11. (310) 478-3836, laemmle.com.**

-Nathaniel Bell

“music.” It was a koan angrily rejected by its first audience; today, people clap. One especially fine rendition is a 1993 piano recording by Frank Zappa, a musician whose natural milieu was hardly silence. “The disgusting stink of a too-loud electric guitar,” he reportedly once said — “now that’s my idea of a good time.” (Daphne Howland)

MARIE CURIE During her lifetime, Marie Curie was seen as an anomaly, not a pioneer. Writer-director Marie Nöelle (*The Anarchist’s Wife*) and co-screenwriter Andrea Stoll capture this in their fragmentary biopic set between 1905 and ‘11, when Curie’s legacy was far from assured despite her major achievements. It opens and closes with Nobel ceremonies: Marie (Karolina Gruszka) travels to Stockholm with husband Pierre (Charles Berling) to accept a shared physics prize (after giving birth to their second daughter), and she returns to receive a solo medal for chemistry after setbacks and scandal. Nöelle’s portrait is untidy and jittery, her Marie methodical and impetuous. To judge by the dialogue, all that concerned Curie was science and love (Pierre offered both); there’s little reference to all that she had to overcome to pursue her work, which included developing the theory of radioactivity and initiating its medical use. Madame Curie was an outsider, born Maria Skłodowska in Poland (her nickname was Mania), and held progressive beliefs that put her at odds with Parisian society. But Nöelle’s biggest concern is reclaiming Marie as a woman, and she uses nudity as a reminder of the female body beneath the scientist’s utilitarian clothing. In photographs, the real-life Curie wore a dour expression and appeared nearly asexual. Here she’s a mercurial woman dealing with personal trials and professional obstacles, more concerned with finding passion and achieving her goals than being a role model. *Marie Curie: The Courage of Knowledge* is essentially a swooning romance, with science as the binding energy. (Serena Donadoni)

THE ORNITHOLOGIST (O ORNITÓLOGO) Portuguese director João Pedro Rodrigues has called *The Ornithologist*, which follows a lone bird expert in a remote northern part of the country, an “adventure film.” It’s a genre he fantastically destabilizes to encompass martyrdom, transmigration of the soul, and wild revelers cavorting in Mirandese, a nearly extinct language spoken in his country and one of five heard in this invigorating shape-shifter. *The Ornithologist*, Rodrigues’ fifth feature, opens with an epigraph from Saint Anthony of Padua: “Whoever approached the Spirit will feel its warmth, hence his heart will be lifted up to new heights.” The holy figure is embodied in flesh at least twice. In his initial incarnation, he is Fernando (Paul Hamy), the movie’s fowl-focused protagonist, first seen swimming languidly in a river. He returns to shore to take a call from his solicitous boyfriend and to record notes on some nesting grebes. Often seen through binoculars, the birds, with their beautiful rust and indigo plumage, are filmed patiently, lovingly. The voice of Hamy, a French actor, was dubbed by the

director himself; intermittently operating as a surrogate for his leading man in fleeting segments, Rodrigues, by film’s end, assumes Hamy’s role entirely. It’s a strange, enchanting kind of doubling. Though full of mysteries and consistently unpredictable, *The Ornithologist* may be the director’s most conventional narrative, tracking Fernando’s escapades after his kayak capsizes in the rapids. He’s rescued by a pair of Chinese Christians, blood-licking crypto-lesbos trekking to a pilgrimage site. Beyond the religious — or sacrilegious — signs and symbols, *The Ornithologist* abounds with pagan rituals and mythological figures. Like the unorthodox dramatis personae he’s constructed over the past three decades, Rodrigues demands multitudes for himself. (Melissa Anderson)

THE REAGAN SHOW The new archival doc *The Reagan Show* purports to examine the fabulistic photo op that was the movie star’s administration, studying his White House’s attention to imagecraft. In its sprightly opening minutes, Pacho Velez and Sierra Pettengill’s film stirs laughs and small insights: Witness the Gipper, at his Santa Barbara ranch, serving as something like the second-unit director of his own photo shoot. “I’ve got an idea for another picture,” he says, grinning goonily in his cowboy shirt — clearly he loves this shit. His brainstorm: Nancy, who already has expressed some distaste at being coerced into horseback riding for the cameras, will stand in front of a scrawny tree, protecting it from Reagan, who will pretend to be trying to hack at it with a chainsaw. She demurs, at first, until he reassures her — the chainsaw won’t be on. Here is Reagan as child and mythmaker, as cosplay cowboy and presidential auteurist, his staging of a George Washington tree-chop scene duded up in John Ford drag but playing as B-movie comedy. President-as-performer is no fresh insight, of course. Working exclusively in collage mode, without present-day narration, Velez and Pettengill strive to link their footage to the now. Inevitably, we see Reagan vow to make America great again. CNN produced the film, which means you can’t expect it to dig deep or advance an argument. After that lightly provocative start, *The Reagan Show* settles into a narrative driven not by fresh archival finds but by TV news reports. It breathlessly recounts the history of the Reagan-Gorbachev summits, arranging the old footage for narrative suspense, not revelation. (Alan Scherstuh)

GO SAMI BLOOD (SAMEBLOD) Amanda Kernell’s scrupulously shaped coming-of-age drama opens with Christina (Maj-Doris Rimpi), an elderly woman wearing sparkling pearls and a pitiless countenance, turning bitterly obstinate when taken back to the Lapland of her birth for her sister’s funeral. She’ll speak to no one, vows not to stay the night, and has zero tolerance for displays of *yoik*, the local throat singing. Then we flash back eight decades. *Sami Blood* plunges into the origins of that anger, examining with rare anthropological acuity the abuse of the indigenous Sami people of northernmost Europe — “the filthy

BONG JOON-HO’S MAD OKJA FASCINATES BUT DOESN’T EXACTLY WORK

What is *Okja*, exactly? A children’s movie? An action flick? A subtle political allegory? A flamboyant, dystopian satire? A vegetarian manifesto? It is a little bit (maybe even a lot) of all these things — and for a while, at least, it works marvelously. The satire is initially foregrounded, as the Mirando Corporation, a giant multinational run by the garishly narcissistic Lucy Mirando (Tilda Swinton), unveils a super-pig that has been discovered in Chile. She announces a contest in which farmers around the world will be given a piglet each and compete to raise the finest super-pig. How will they determine the winner? The pig, as Lucy tells us, “needs to taste fucking good.” (So maybe it’s not a kids movie?)

The story kicks into gear some years later, as Mija (Ahn Seo-hyun), an orphaned girl living in the mountains of South Korea whose beloved super-pig, Okja, is her constant companion, resists the efforts of Mirando employees to take away her porcine pal. Enter the Animal Liberation



COURTESY NETFLIX

Front, an environmental resistance group led by Jay (Paul Dano), the most sensitive, beta-male revolutionary leader in the history of cinema. As Mija and these oddball guerrillas battle the megacorporation in an effort to save Okja (not to mention all the other super-pigs), the picture veers into a throw-it-all-against-the-wall free-for-all.

Anyone who’s familiar with Bong’s filmmaking should know, however, that there are deeper, more serious ideas at work here. Still, the political overtones get muddled, and the human story becomes more cloying and artificial. As its many fragmented ideas threaten to fall apart, *Okja* ladles on the sentiment — with diminishing returns. —**Bilge Ebiri**

OKJA | Directed by Bong Joon-ho | Written by Bong and Jon Ronson | Netflix | Monica Film Center, New Beverly

Lapps,” we hear a blond boy spit as young Christina (now named Elle-Marja and played by Lene Cecilia Sparrok) troops through the woods with her schoolmates. Writer-director Kernell expertly tracks Elle-Marja’s adolescent development and her realization that, no matter her intelligence or aptitude, Sweden offers nothing to a Sami. At a girls boarding school, Elle-Marja is mistreated and condescended

to. The most wrenching scene concerns the examination of the Sami girls by an ethnographic quack: He measures their skulls as if he’s judging produce at a fair, and then demands that they pose nude for photographs. It’s Elle-Marja who must disrobe first, and it’s in Sparrok’s tearful, terrified defiance that we first see the anger that will give her the will to escape. Matter-of-fact in its scenecraft but searing

in its content, *Sami Blood* is about girlhood and racism, passing and escape. It’s also about guilt, about the toll taken on a life of rejecting one’s minority origins in accordance with (and in defiance of) the majority’s unjust prejudice. Kernell and her prodigiously talented lead make Elle-Marja’s hardest decision both a terrible surprise and a clear inevitability. (Alan Scherstuhl)

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CUTTING LOOSE

BATTLE RAP LEGEND NOCANDO
HOLDS NOTHING BACK ON
SEVERED, HIS BEST AND
MOST PERSONAL ALBUM

BY JEFF WEISS

Any one rupture that Nocando endured in the last three years could have inspired an album in its own right. There was his divorce, a split with his partners in Low End Theory, and public rancor with several artists on his Hellfyre Club label. So it was only right that his latest full-length should be called *Severed*.

During this decade, South L.A.'s James McCall turned himself from a Project Blowed legend and battle-rap deity into the resident emcee at the best weekly club night in America, the owner of the most consistently innovative indie-rap imprint of the 2010s and a critically acclaimed solo artist. Dr. Dre might take credit for discovering Anderson .Paak, but Nocando actually released 2013's *Cover Art*, Paak's first album to warrant substantial attention.

"Everything happened when I turned 30, and the lesson I learned was that like it or not, everything was mostly my fault," Nocando says over sandwiches at a Leimert Park deli.

"It's not because this person did this thing to me or this thing happened, but ultimately, it happened because I was too agreeable and I said 'yes' to too many things."

Severed was recorded during that discordant period between 2014 and 2015 — a turbulent window that simultaneously afforded Nocando significant victories. He inked a lucrative publishing deal that found him holding his own in writing rooms alongside platinum stars and songwriting hired guns. He wrote hundreds of songs, some lingering in hard drives, others appearing on the first Emmy-nominated season of *Empire*. Several songs on *Severed* trace back to these sessions. "Villain" was originally conceived for Panic! at the Disco.

The record's chief engine is "El Camino," an instant classic inspired by Frantz Fanon's anti-imperialism opus, *The Wretched of the Earth*. In four minutes, the song sums up the genius of Nocando at his best, as the rapper delivers a diatribe against the death of the American dream, nine-minute Macklemore songs about white privilege, Rodney King's

naivete and people chanting political slogans for social media capital.

He uses the 'hood classic, a Chevy El Camino, as a symbol of hopes deferred, switching between character and real life. He shouts out his Ford Bronco, purchased because "O.J. was my hero." It's scathing and brutal, nuanced and subtle, but fearlessly daring to be misinterpreted.

Bidding farewell to his underground past, Nocando recruited his heroes and inspirations for the album: Slug of Atmosphere, storied battle rapper Otherwise, Aceyalone of Freestyle Fellowship. It acknowledges his roots but engages in live-wire experiments, sustaining the legacy of the Good Life Cafe and Project Blowed.

"I know who the fuck I am," Nocando says. "I don't really care about being the boss or the soldier. I just don't want to deal with people who think small. And that's the story of *Severed*. It's me realiz-



PHOTO BY ADAM STANZACK

ing who I was when I was 19 with big, lofty dreams, then getting into this and having to be practical."

He pauses for a second, as though to consider the scope of the dozen years since Aceyalone took him on his first tour: the nights balancing studio, family and hosting duties, memorialized rap battles and forgotten Project Blowed cyphers.

BEFORE *SEVERED*,
"I FELT LIKE I
COULDN'T MAKE
THE MUSIC I
WANTED."

"I felt like I couldn't make the music I wanted because I had to spend a time working at this place to take care of my kids, or I had to work with these people or this engineer, or use this kind of production because these are the people that were around," he continues. "But now, I feel free from all of that. I'm more in love with music than at any point since I first started making it."

(Disclosure: Nocando is a sometime columnist for *L.A. Weekly*, and he and I used to co-host a podcast together.)

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits *Passion of the Weiss* and hosts the Bizarre Ride show on RBMA Radio. Follow him on Twitter @passionweiss.

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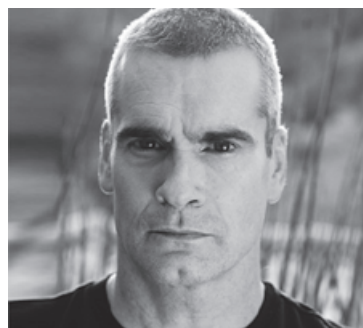
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Henry Rollins

The Column!



THE DISTRACTOR-IN-CHIEF

Most politicians aren't stupid. We like to say they are. It's one of the first attempts at a takedown of an elected official. They're either stupid, insane, evil or a combination thereof.

The reality is that many of them are lawyers, come from great educational backgrounds and are quite intelligent. But mainly, they're clever. The ones you like and the ones you don't all have to be sharp to stay in office.

It's impossible to tell the truth to millions of people and have it go well. You can't even pull it off at the family dinner table without causing a fight. So many politicians lie, or shade the truth, or give frustratingly almost-answers to direct questions. That's the lawyer/huckster thing. It's offensive and they know it. They also know you're used to it by now and that not only will you take it, you will vote for them again, resigned to their opacity.

Politicians are shape-shifting pugilists who must think election to election to stay afloat. Many of them will do almost any damn thing to stay in office until they have prepared their private-sector nest. But of all the elected officials in America today, one is getting played harder than his hubris and self-absorption will ever allow himself to understand. He doesn't get it.

I'm willing to bet that Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell were sincerely happy about comrade Trump's victory, but not for the reasons they've given publicly. Not only do they have a Republican in office — which, no matter who it was, would be better than a Democrat — but none of the other candidates who were eliminated over the grueling months of the campaign would have been such a flat-footed dupe as the man who won.

In comrade Trump, his mutant family and demented/inept cabinet, they have found the perfect distraction by which they can advance their agenda with great speed. I know that the Comey/Mueller/Kushner/Flynn/Kislyak show is fun to watch, but what do you think will come of the investigation? That someone will go to jail? That you will get to see the smirk on Sessions' face fall so fast he'll get whiplash?

I doubt any of that's going to happen. Trump gets jammed up on charges, President Pence pardons him, à la Ford pardoning Nixon. If any of the sidemen go down, they will wriggle out à la Oliver North, with convictions eventually reversed and a book deal inked.

There is nothing the GOP heavyweights would like you to do more than watch every

embarrassing, catastrophic move Trump makes as they get busy in other parts of the building. Any further gaffes that Trump will perpetrate, which seems to be minute-to-minute, can be smoothed over in back-channel communications. Every leader in the world knows that Trump is a lightweight, easily goaded — in other words, the perfect mark. In Las Vegas terms, a whale. They see guys like him coming from miles off and have everything in place to take it all.

This is how the GOP is playing the American people as they crassly move a health care disaster bill through the Senate. They're doing it on your watch but not in your face. As I said, they're clever. Meanwhile, smarter, more insidious voter-suppression methods are being employed to wreak havoc in 2018.

Vladimir Putin — or the Butcher of Chechnya, as I like to call him — is an enemy of every good person in the United States. What he has been able to get away with in Russia, we will never know nearly the full extent of. Nadya and Masha of Pussy Riot got off easy. They're still alive. Look up what happened to one of the greatest journalists of our time, Anna Politkovskaya. Putin is the baddest of the proverbial "bad hombres" on America's radar. However, even he can't rival the hurt that the GOP wants to put on millions of Americans via Trumpcare and voter suppression.

GOP LEADERS WANT YOU TO WATCH EVERY EMBARRASSING MOVE TRUMP MAKES.

They could very well get away with all of this. Meanwhile, we're plugging up our ears with shows about Watergate. That's an amazing story, but them's were different times. Media wasn't a profit-based concern and even the staunchest conservatives couldn't stomach what Nixon was serving up. Robert Bork stupidly took Tricky Dick's bait in the resulting cover-up attempt and you know where that landed him. Not even Reagan could get Bork on the Supreme Court. Words mattered, laws mattered, the Constitution mattered. It all mattered. It mattered more than party, more than an administration.

For now, that's not how it is. That being the case, it's not the time to take your eye off the other hand.

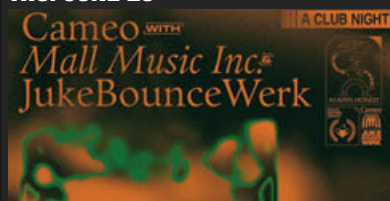
Sure, Trump is easily the best political spectator sport of my lifetime at least. He makes George W. Bush, a man I have grown to feel sorry for over the years, seem semirational, with a fair number of words in his random access memory. If you drill down, even a little bit, you can see that Dubya wasn't a bad guy as much as someone who wandered into the maelstrom of the military industrial complex. He made a few people rich and got a lot of people killed.

Watching Trump blow out is like watching a stand-up comedian give his last performance on a ship's deck, right after it hit the iceberg. It's a tough laugh but it's there. However, there are much, much worse things afoot in America and they're happening right now, in broad daylight.

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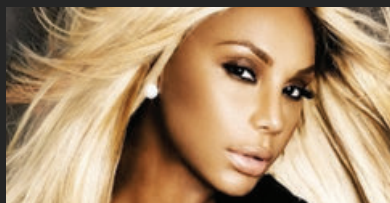
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- 7/16 AMIRSAYSNOTHING
- 7/16 PROTOTYPE
- 7/18 TACO TUESDAYS
- 7/21 TRAP KARAOKE: L.A. EDITION
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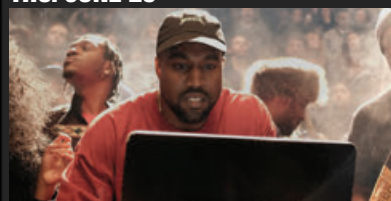
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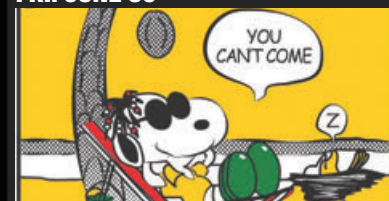
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FRI. JUNE 30



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FRI. JUNE 30



TEEN PARTY
 BRANDON WARDELL, KJS, BRITTNEY SCOTT + MORE!

SAT. JULY 1



BOOTIE LA: POP CANDY!
 MYSTERIOUS D & DJ SHYBOY!

SAT. JULY 1



SHABBAAAA!

SUN. JULY 2



MONOPOLY

COMING SOON:

- 6/30 THE HOLY TRINITY!
- 7/2 THE BLACKOUT PARTY
- 7/4 ANTICHRIST
- 7/6 THE MOTH
- 7/6 JIMMY AUDIO EP RELEASE PARTY
- 7/7 NOCHE DE VERANO KANDELA
- 7/8 BOOTIE LA: COMIC-CON PRE-PARTY
- 7/8 DILF LOS ANGELES
- 7/9 B. FERG AKA FAMOUS
- 7/10 COAST 2 COAST LIVE
- 7/11 GLORYHOLE
- 7/12 THE LOVE-INNS
- 7/12 DESORDEN PUBLICO
- 7/13 EVERYTHING IS ON THE ONE
- 7/13 HALLYU NIGHTS
- 7/13 MOON BOUNCE
- 7/14 CLUB 90S!
- 7/15 BOOTIE LA: 12-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY
- 7/16 MORNING IN MAY
- 7/17 THE FLOOR IMPROV NIGHT
- 7/18 THE MOTH
- 7/18 CHAOS
- 7/20 ELECTRIC BOOGIE
- 7/22 BOOTIE LA: BEACH PARTY
- 7/23 AFTON SHOWS PRESENTS: KARKAZA
- 7/25 COLORS COMEDY
- 7/27 KABAKA PYRAMID
- 7/29 BOOTIE LA: '90S VS. '00S MASHUP NIGHT
- 8/5 J.R. DONATO
- 8/5 EYEHATEGOD
- 8/12 SMASH IT LIVE PRESENTS: WAYNE WONDER
- 8/17 MO LOWDA & THE HUMBLE
- 8/27 WEST COAST AWARDS BALL
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Friday • June 30 • 5 PM EDGAR WRIGHT SIGNING - SOLD OUT!

Filmmaker, Edgar Wright, celebrates the release of his new film, *Baby Driver* (opens 6/28 in LA), with a soundtrack signing at Amoeba. This signing event is sold out!

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Monday • July 10 • 6 PM GARBAGE BOOK SIGNING

Garbage, featuring Shirley Manson, Duke Erikson, Steve Marker, and Butch Vig, celebrates the release of their new book: *This Is the Noise That Keeps Me Awake*, with a signing event at Amoeba. Purchase the book in-store at Amoeba Hollywood beginning July 4th to receive a ticket to attend the signing. Space is limited to first 240 books purchased.

More details available on Amoeba.com.

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Music //
Picks //

fri

6/30

Cat Power

@ THE OBSERVATORY

Cat Power hasn't released a new album since 2012's *Sun*, hasn't posted on her Facebook page in more than a year, and her official website is bare except for video links and a trio of shows listed on the tour page. But the singer also known as Chan Marshall has always moved at her own pace, taking the time to mull over her feelings and let them sink in fully before transforming them into music with her rich, distinctively languorous voice. Her songs feel more like emotionally cathartic incantations rather than simple pop tunes, although she breaks free from the stark folk balladry of her early records into a more uptempo, funky and rocking mix on *Sun*, ranging from the title track's swirling electronica to "Nothin' but Time," a hypnotizing, 10-minute-plus duet with a low-crooning Iggy Pop. —Falling James

Vieux Farka Touré

@ LEVITT PAVILION

Notes come pouring out of Vieux Farka Touré's guitar like a sudden cloudburst after a long drought. The riffs begin spiraling outward in a dazzling skein of glittery melodies, yet each note is detailed and dynamically precise. The Malian singer-guitarist draws upon the strangely mesmerizing and slinky guitar patterns of traditional West African and Saharan music but also infuses them with straight-ahead hard-rock power, bluesy psychedelia and lulling reggae rhythms. The son of the influential vocalist Ali Farka Touré, Vieux is a true guitar hero, but it's not all about flash with him. Backed by the very tight, heavy-hitting duo of drummer Mamadou Koné and bassist Marshall Henry, Touré uses his wizardry on guitar to propel such compulsively uplifting tracks as "Homafu Wawa," from his latest album, *Samba*. —Falling James

Matrixxman, Randomer

@ LOT 613

Droid Behavior and Prototype present a big doubleheader at Lot 613 featuring two emerging talents from the U.S. and U.K. techno scenes. Matrixxman (Charlie Duff, from San Francisco) has put out a bevy of driving, futuristic releases over the past five years on imprints including Dekmantel and Spectral Sound; he dropped his sci-fi- and Detroit-inspired debut album, *Homesick*, on Ghostly International in 2015. He has established himself as one of America's most in-demand techno DJ/producers. Randomer (London-based Rohan Walder), a producer with roots in drum 'n' bass and dubstep, also crafts distinctive, biting techno for labels such as Perc Trax. Droid's Raiz and Ruse DJs (Template and Kglndo) are on warmup duty. —Matt Miner



Luis Pérez Ixoneztli;
See Wednesday.

PHOTO BY CARLOS COLORADO

sat

7/1

Iron Maiden, Ghost

@ GLEN HELEN AMPHITHEATER

Iron Maiden were among many acts selling out stadiums and arenas during the 1980s heavy-metal boom. Today, they remain one of the few from that era still capable of pulling massive hordes of headbangers. The timelessness of galloping, shout-along anthems such as "The Trooper" and worthy newer catalog additions such as 2015's *The Book of Souls* plays a large part in their enduring appeal, but it's their still-powerful live shows that keep them at the top. Vocalist Bruce Dickinson still hits his patented "Air Raid Siren" high notes while the band tightly slings both new hits and old favorites as energetically as in their formative years. Swedish occult rockers Ghost will add to the metal celebration with the catchy Satanic sing-alongs — such as "Square Hammer" — that have made them a fan favorite in recent years. —Jason Roche

Agent Orange, JFA

@ ALEX'S BAR

Despite the encroaching luxury condos, Long Beach is still very much a working-class city, musically defined as much by the G-Funk hip-hop of the '90s as by the hardcore, skate punk and ska scenes that have been an off-and-on presence in the city since the early '80s. That makes the slightly seedy Alex's Bar in Long Beach a perfect venue, in a perfect city, to see the '80s surf-punk pioneers Agent Orange and the skate-punk trailblazers JFA. Although both bands are getting up there in age, they still play with an impassioned snarl that can match any 18-year-old punk's energy. Both bands should bring in a typically diverse mix of Long Beach punks of all races and orientations. —Sam Ribakoff

sun

7/2

DJ Quik, Suga Free

@ THE TROUBADOUR

Alongside N.W.A, 2Pac and Snoop Dogg, Compton-born hip-hop artist

DJ Quik emerged from the California gangsta-rap scene of the early '90s with a pioneering, funk-infused sound. Although not quite a household name like those other artists, his enduring influence on legions of emcees, DJs and producers can't be overstated. This show is a rare opportunity to see this living legend perform in the intimate environs of the Troubadour backed not by two turntables but by a live band. Also performing will be the Quik-produced artist Suga Free, whose soulful, often humorous tracks reflect on his life as a pimp. Proceeds from this all-ages show will go to support Black Tone, Quik's friend and manager, who is recovering from a recent stroke. —Matt Stromberg

Dirty Penni Fest 2

@ THE ECHO AND ECHOPLEX

Dirty Penni Fest is the wild child of Dirty Laundry TV, the long-standing L.A. multimedia interviewers who did indeed start out filming in a laundromat, and Penniback Records, the DIY home label of Clit Kat, Jurassic Shark and more. Together they bring a lot of power to bear, and the lineup at this second annual Dirty Penni Fest proves it. Besides headliners Deap Vally and The Shrine, who do different and yet somehow equally shreddy heavy rock, they've got harrowing Whittier punk screamers Plague Vendor; hometown hero Mike Watt; psychotronic metalloids Zig Zags; crushing, Wipers-style rockers Flat Worms; high-intensity, high-anxiety outfit Girl Tears; and lots more besides. Altogether, this fest is a still-sizzling cross-section of a certain loud 'n' proud kind of L.A. music — the kind of stuff you should soak in if you feel as if every band you've spotted lately is too soft, sad or slow. —Chris Ziegler

mon

7/3

Bloody Death Skull, Cutty Flam, Ramonda Hammer

@ THE ECHO

Bloody Death Skull belie their macabre name with a fun yet smart combination of lo-fi folk, garage rock and punky pop. Even when the local group cover a morbid song like Leon Payne's endlessly

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MARSHALL 7/8

Stitched Up Heart 7/9

Last In Line 7/14

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disturbing "Psycho," on their 2016 EP, *The Haunting of*, they give it a refreshingly cheery twist, with jaunty banjo twisted within ghostly girl-group harmonies and lead singer Daiana Feuer's earnestly cracked delivery. Cutty Flam are a San Fernando Valley trio who churn out stripped-down garage rock on their 2014 Burger Records album, *Robot Heart*.

They invoke the low-key charm of Buddy Holly and Jonathan Richman, but there's also something weirdly unique about leader Cutty's insolently romantic vocals. Ramonda Hammer are a comparatively heavier quartet, with vocalist Devin Davis drowning out her own introspective musings with thunderous grunge guitar. -Falling James

tue 7/4

Bloodshot Bill
@ RESIDENT

What better way to celebrate (or ignore) the Fourth of July than by spending it in the company of a diehard Canadian one-man band whose idea of a good time is to take the most revered and authentic roots music and trash it up as thoroughly as possible? Bloodshot Bill hails from Montreal and has collaborated in various projects with like-minded roots-diggers King Khan (as Tandoori Knights) and Mark "BBQ" Sultan (in The Ding-Dongs). All by his lonesome, Bloodshot Bill yowls like a sick and seedy alley cat while chopping away at his guitar and stomping on a board for percussion. Such ditties as "The Girl Who Dances Alone" and the shaggy-dog UFO tale "Creature From the Sky" shuffle along with raw, primitive simplicity. -Falling James

wed 7/5

Luis Pérez Ixoneztli, Mike Wexler
@ ZEBULON

Two contrasting other-music masters offer alternative sounds for the soul, for the spirit and for sheer sonic splendor. Mexico City multi-instrumentalist Luis Pérez Ixoneztli and partner Christopher Garcia offer extended pieces that re-create the music the Aztecs were making before the European conquest. Ritual chants sung in various native Mexican languages are performed to the accompaniment of percussion and wind instruments from Mesoamerica such as clay flutes, ocarinas, whistles made from bee's wings and butterfly chrysalises, instruments of bone and feathers, gongs and suspended metal objects. Highly regarded Brooklyn acoustic guitarist Mike Wexler earned his props back in the mid-2000s with three albums of medieval folk-derived



PHOTO BY JEN ROSENSTEIN

songs featuring his heavy-plucking solo stringwork and inventive, freeform song structures, culminating in 2012's *Dispossession* (Mexican Summer), recorded with members of White Magic, The Occasion and several NYC improvisers. -John Payne

The Regrettes:
See Thursday.

thu 7/6

Melvins

@ THE OBSERVATORY
Nearly 35 years into their critically, if not commercially, lauded career, there are still few bands that put on a show so monstrously heavy and brutally monolithic as the Melvins. Longtime members King Buzzo and Dale Crover have always made it their mission to release gleefully difficult, radio-repellent, sludgy punk rock. Fans in the underground were left polarized with the band's major-label debut, *Houdini*, back in 1993. But by '97, that flirtation with stardom was left to rot, and the Melvins crawled back into the primordial metal ooze where they truly belong. The remarkably prolific trio, now also featuring bassist Steven McDonald, just released a new double album, *A Walk With Love and Death*, this year, so expect plenty of new songs. Also at The Troubadour, Friday, July 7. -Brett Callwood

The Regrettes, The Tracks
@ LEVITT PAVILION

The Regrettes are the *Teen Vogue* of rock bands: Their intelligence and astute observations are shocking only to those who forget that young people are often smarter than grown-ups. On debut album *Feel Your Feelings Fool!*, they tackle issues such as body image and relationships with rock & roll rhythm and a sense of empowerment. More recently, in their video for "Seashore," the L.A.-based band move from a presidential stage to a witch burning to a suffragette protest, exasperated at the never-ending history of sexism. If there's a band ready to lead the new generation of punk-influenced feminists, it's The Regrettes. Fellow locals The Tracks have been making a splash even without much music available online. Most recently, they unleashed two live tracks recorded for Amazon series *I Love Dick*, including a stunning cover of the Don Gibson song "Oh Lonesome Me." -Liz Ohanesian

CLUBS

ROCK

ACEROGAMI: 228 W. Second St., Pomona. DJ Zomb-E, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m., free. Radio Clash, Thu., July 6, 10 p.m., free.

ALEX'S BAR: 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach. Betty Blowtorch, GayC/DC, The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., \$10. Agent Orange, JFA, Harbortown Saints, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., \$15 (see Music Pick). Flattbush, Bad Acid Trip, Sun., July 2, 1 p.m., \$10; Sueños, Brundle Fly, Snow Nerds, Slippers, Sun., July 2, 8 p.m., \$5. Posse Whipped, Thu., July 6, 8 p.m., \$5.

AMOEBIA MUSIC: 6400 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. DJ Liz Warner, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., free.

THE BACK ROOM AT HENRI'S: 21601 Sherman Way, Canoga Park. The Back Room Trio, first Saturday of every month, 7:30 p.m., \$5.

BACKSTAGE BAR & GRILL: 10400 Culver Blvd., Culver City. King Chris & the Groove Thang, Wednesdays, 9 p.m., free.

BOOTLEG THEATER: 2200 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. KillRadio, Radkey, Secondaries, Fri., June 30, 8:30 p.m., \$15. Diana, Nicholas Krgovich, Sat., July 1, 8:30 p.m., \$12. Adan Jodorowsky, Cesar Saez, Rudy de Anda, Sun., July 2, 8:30 p.m., \$18. Anarbor, Sundressed, Shadow the Wild, Wed., July 5, 8:30 p.m., \$12. Kyle McNeill, Maesa Pullman & the Last Hurrah, Fabiano Nascimento, Thu., July 6, 8:30 p.m., \$8.

CAFE NELA: 1906 Cypress Ave., Los Angeles. Mushroom, 2-Bit Whore, Victor Krummenacher, Sat., July 1, 8:30 p.m., \$5.

CANYON CLUB: 28912 Roadside Dr., Agoura Hills. Erotic City, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m., \$19.50. America, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m., \$69-\$89. Dwight Yoakam, Wed., July 5, 9 p.m., \$68-\$110. The Blockbusters, Thu., July 6, 9 p.m., \$19.50.

COAXIAL ARTS: 1815 S. Main St., Los Angeles. Blessed Sacrifist, Chantepleur, Eyes of the Naga, Black Cat, Wreckage, Ritual Chair, Fri., June 30, 9 p.m., \$5.

CODY'S VIVA CANTINA: 900 Riverside Dr., Burbank. The Woody James Big Band, Fridays, 1-3 p.m., free; Steve Waddington, Susan Ritter, Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m., free; The Pynacles, The Gargoyles, The Shag Rats, The Sound Reasons, Fri., June 30, 9 p.m., free. The Cody Bryant Experience, Steve Waddington, Susan Ritter, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., free. Murphy's Flaw, Steve Lewis, Sun., July 2, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., free; Debra Lee & Trigger Happy, Sundays, 6:30 p.m., free. The Brombies, Mondays, 7:30 p.m., free. The Flight 584 Big Band, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free; John Pisano's Guitar Night, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. This Ain't Your Daddy's Big Band, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. Jimmy Angel, Thu., July 6, 6:30 p.m., free; The Glen Roberts Big Band, Thursdays, 7 p.m., free; The Bluelight Band, Thursdays, 8 p.m., free; Jay Dee Maness, Cody Bryant, Skip Edwards, Ronnie Mack, Thursdays, 8:45 p.m., free.

THE ECHO: 1822 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. NK-Riot, Vowws, The Eleventh Frequency, Fri., June 30, 8:30 p.m., \$10. Bloody Death Skull, Cutty Flam, Ramonda Hammer, August Eve, Mon., July 3, 8:30 p.m., free (see Music Pick). Froth, Adult Books, Moaning, Thu., July 6, 8:30 p.m., \$12.

THE ECHOPLEX: 1154 Glendale Blvd., Los Angeles. Dirty Penni Fest, with Deap Vally, The Shrine, Plague Vendor, Mike Watt, Enjoy, Starcrawler, Zig Zags, Jurassic Shark, Girl Pusher, Flat Worms, Here Lies Man, Beach Bums, Hit Bargain, The Red Pears, Clit Kat, Espresso, Keif Season, Girl Tears, Janelane and many others, Sun., July 2, noon, \$20 (see Music Pick); Noveller, Troller, Pet Heaven, DJ Sky Madden, Sun., July 2, 9 p.m., \$13. David Bowie Night, with DJ Jose Maldonado, Mon., July 3, 9 p.m., \$10. Sister Nancy, Michael Palmer, Quinto Sol, La Chamba Chica, Abstract Rude, Wed., July 5, 9 p.m., \$20. Teen Daze, Sam O.B., Thu., July 6, 8:30 p.m., \$13.

FIVE STAR BAR: 267 S. Main St., Los Angeles. Phobia, Gravehill, Witchaven, Bruce Campbell, Doesn't Matter, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., \$10.

4TH STREET VINE: 2142 E. Fourth St., Long Beach. Zig Zags, Skin Drips, Half Breed, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., free.

GENGHIS COHEN: 740 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles. Sofia Wolfson, Charlie Hickey, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., TBA. Lois Blaisch, Jenny McNabb, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., TBA.

THE GLASS HOUSE: 200 W. Second St., Pomona. Buddha Man, Wayne G, UXP, Kilo Sweet, Quineth, Jake Trill, Mirk Beniah, Sat., July 1, 7 p.m., \$12.

HAM & EGGS TAVERN: 433 W. Eighth St., Los Angeles. ModPods, Anatomy, Inti Wawa, Sat., July 1, 8:30

p.m., \$5.

HARD ROCK CAFE HOLLYWOOD: 6801 Hollywood Blvd. No. 105, Los Angeles. Canada Day, with Fresh Wes, Flo Soul and others, Sat., July 1, 7 p.m., \$25.

HARVARD & STONE: 5221 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles. Johnny Travis Jr. & the Delta Dawns, Sundays, 8 p.m., free; Hollow Sidewalks, Las Cruces, Sun., July 2, 9:30 p.m., free. Velvet, Juggs, Wet & Reckless, Mon., July 3, 8 p.m., free.

THE HI HAT: 5043 York Blvd., Highland Park. Ducktails, Jimmy Whispers, Martin Frawley, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., \$14. John Isaac Watters, Flood Coats, Anna Vogelzang, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., free. Miss Jupiter, Mother Echo, Nora Keyes, Rachel Mason, Wed., July 5, 8 p.m., \$10. Robert Jon & the Wreck, The Two Tens, L.A. River Bend, Thu., July 6, 8 p.m., free.

HMI157: 3110 N. Broadway, Los Angeles. The Joe Bourdet Band, Nightingale Rodeo, Roselit Bone, Paige Calico, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., \$7. Ravens Moreland, L.A. Drones, Bustie, GunHer, Sat., July 1, 8:30 p.m., \$10. Paz Lenchantin, Shazzula, Crush, Sun., July 2, 8 p.m., \$10.

HOUSE OF BLUES ANAHEIM: 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim. Jessie James Decker, Fri., June 30, 7 p.m., \$25; Raven Felix, DJ Bonics, Salma Slims, Fri., June 30, 7 p.m., \$14. Power Serge, Sat., July 1, 7 p.m., \$20; Gravel, Sat., July 1, 7 p.m., \$10. All Time Low, SWMRS, Waterparks, The Wrecks, Wed., July 5, 5:30 p.m., \$33.50.

HYPERION TAVERN: 1941 Hyperion Ave., Los Angeles. Sister Calypso, Gianna Gianna, plus another cat lecture by Paul Koudounaris, Wed., July 5, 9:30 p.m., free; Ye Olde Hushe Clubbe, with DJ Don Bolles, Wednesdays, 9:30 p.m., free.

LARGO AT THE CORONET: 366 N. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles. Jon Brion, Last Friday of every month, 9:30 p.m., \$30.

LOS GLOBOS: 3040 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Sk8, Dice Soho, Sat., July 1, 7 p.m.

THE MARKE: 3311 S. Main St., Los Angeles. Badfish, Sun., July 2, 8 p.m., TBA.

MAUI SUGAR MILL SALOON: 18389 Ventura Blvd., Tarzana. The Focke Wolves, Transers, The Katellas, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m., free. Just Dave Bernal's Last Chance Country Jam, Wednesdays, 9 p.m.

THE MINT: 6010 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles. Louisiana Love Act, Malsi, Jacob Mondry, Gigi Rich, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., \$12. Yolanda Johnson, Odd Signatures, You Are Here, New Track City, Dandau, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., \$12. Noelle Tannen, Maayan, Erisy Watt, Georgi Kay, Liis, Sun., July 2, 7 p.m., \$6. The Ryan Shaw Quintet, followed by the Mint Jam, Mon., July 3, 8 p.m., \$5. Big Something, Fencer, Abigail Selby & Eric Selby, Wed., July 5, 8:30 p.m., \$15. San Miguel Perez, Maria Maria Tango Passion, and guest Colin Hay, Thu., July 6, 8 p.m., \$10.

MOLLY MALONE'S: 575 S. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles. Alexa Villa, Djoir Jordan, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m., TBA.

PALADINO'S: 6101 Reseda Blvd., Reseda. Delphic Sybil, Megalomaniacs, Faux No More, Bellevue, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., \$10. Rock for Melanie, with Slick Shoes, Go Betty Go, True Rivals, Fozzy's Hero, Sat., July 1, 8 p.m., \$15. Lucky Otis, Mondays, 8 p.m., TBA.

PAPPY & HARRIET'S PIONEERTOWN PALACE: 53688 Pioneertown Rd., Pioneertown. The Sunday Band, Sundays, 7:30 p.m., free. Open Mic, Mondays, 7 p.m., free. Rosie Flores, Thu., July 6, 9 p.m., \$15.

THE REDWOOD BAR & GRILL: 316 W. Second St., Los Angeles. Dr. Savage & the Shrunken Heads, The Sloths, Fri., June 30, 9 p.m. Glam Skanks, Scant Regard, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m.

RESIDENT: 428 S. Hewitt St., Los Angeles. Maria del Pilar, Fri., June 30, 8 p.m., free. The Bolos, Leggy Peggy, Sun., July 2, 5 p.m., free. Trans FX, P22, Dollar Band, DJ Guy, Mon., July 3, 8 p.m., \$8. Bloodshot Bill, Frantic Rockers, Patsy's Rats, DJ Howie Pyro, Tue., July 4, 8 p.m., \$10 (see Music Pick). She-Devils, Tesha, Wed., July 5, 8 p.m., \$10. Lindsay Adams, Paige Weldon, Jon Daly, Danielle Radford, Baron Vaughn, Thu., July 6, 7 p.m., \$5.

THE ROSE: 245 E. Green St., Pasadena. Britain's Finest, Fri., June 30, 10 p.m., \$19.50. Erotic City, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m., \$19-\$19.50. Ted Nugent, Sun., July 2, 9 p.m., \$58-\$88. Sir Mix-a-Lot, Thu., July 6, 9 p.m., \$24-\$38.

THE ROXY: 9009 W. Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood. Buzzcocks, The Dollyrots, Fri., June 30, 9 p.m., \$27.50. Yung Pinch, Sat., July 1, 9 p.m.

RUSTY'S SURF RANCH: 256 Santa Monica Pier, Santa Monica. Billy Vera & the Beaters, Fri., June 30, 9:30 p.m. Mr. Giant, Sat., July 1, 10 p.m.

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HAPPY TOGETHER TOUR 2017 JUL 15	BUDDY GUY & QUINN SULLIVAN JUL 27	QUEEN NATION AUG 11	STAN LEE AUG 22	AUG 5: FANTASTIC DIAMOND 11: DSB & QUEEN NATION 12: LED ZEPAGAIN & BONFIRE 26: EXTRAORDINARY: STAN LEE 22: WHICH ONE'S PINK
WHICH ONE'S PINK? AUG 26	STEPHEN STILLS & JUDY COLLINS SEP 1	ACCEPT SEP 7	OTTMAR LIEBERT SEP 9	SEP 1: STEPHEN STILLS & JUDY COLLINS 7: ACCEPT 9: OTTMAR LIEBERT & LUNA NEGRA 22: GEORGE THOROGOOD & THE DESTROYERS
GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE DESTROYERS SEP 22	CALIFORNIA TRIO OF YACHT ROCKERS: AMBROSIA PABLO CRUISE PETER BECKETT OF PLYER SEP 24	YOUNG JEEZY OCT 6	MICKY DOLENZ & FELIX CAVALIERE OCT 21	24: AMBROSIA, PABLO CRUISE & PETER BECKETT OF PLYER OCT 6: YOUNG JEEZY 21: MICKY DOLENZ OF THE MONKEYS & FELIX CAVALIERE OF THE BASALS
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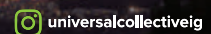
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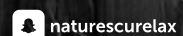
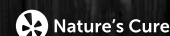
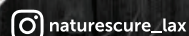
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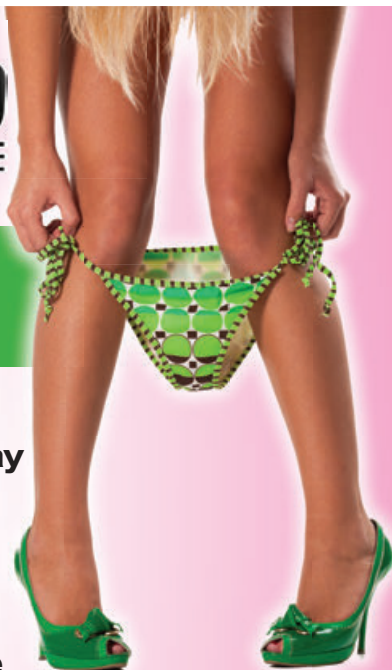


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