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## News Briefs: 'Drag Me Downtown' returns for 2024

by Cynthia Laird, News Editor | Wednesday June 5, 2024

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Attendees of a Drag Me Downtown event last year surrounded drag artist Bobby Friday. Photo: Courtesy Downtown SF Partnership

The Downtown SF Partnership has announced that "Drag Me Downtown," a weekly series of pop-up drag performances, is returning for Pride Month after a successful run last year. The district oversees 43 blocks across San Francisco's Financial District and the Jackson Square Historic District.

A news release stated that the series takes place from 5 to 7 p.m. each Thursday and starts June 6 at Harrington's Bar and Grill, 245 Front Street. Other events are: June 13 at PABU Izakaya, 101 California Street; June 20 at The Third Floor at the Jay Hotel, 433 Clay Street; and June 27 at One Market Restaurant at 1 Market Street.

The final date will also feature a queer history bus tour and sing-along (<https://downtownsf.org/do/drag-me-downtown-a-queer-history-bus-tour-and-sing-along>) led by Sister Roma of the drag nun group the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. It takes place from 1 to 2:30 p.m. (The first bus tour just before the event at One Market Restaurant sold out.)

Performing at the June 27 drag shows will be San Francisco drag laureate D'Arcy Drollinger.

 "As a San Francisco native and the city's first drag laureate, my goal is, and will always be, to celebrate and elevate the art of drag," Drollinger stated.   

As the Bay Area Reporter noted last year (<https://www.ebar.com/story.php?ch=news&sc=news&id=325874>), the idea for Drag Me Downtown originated with Robbie Silver, a bi man who is executive director of the Downtown SF Partnership. He had been thinking of creative ways to bolster nightlife downtown, which has suffered in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic.

"To continue honoring downtown San Francisco's deep cultural heritage and history as an inclusive space, we are looking forward to ringing in another fun-filled month of Pride celebration with Drag Me Downtown," Silver stated. "Our goal is to give local institutions a place and purpose downtown, in addition to presenting new and exciting ways to experience the public realm."

Drag artists are also looking forward to participating, including Bobby Friday, the drag persona of Bobby Rivera, a gay man, who is returning.

"I am so excited to partner with the Downtown SF Partnership again this year for Drag Me Downtown," Friday stated. "I love the city of San Francisco and am so grateful to be a part of the vibrant, creative, diverse, and beautiful queer community that is here."

People are encouraged to pre-register for the drag nights. All proceeds from pre-registration will benefit the Transgender District.

Breonna McCree, a woman of trans experience, and Carlo Gomez Arteaga, a trans man, are co-executive directors of the cultural district.

"We are thrilled to partner with Drag Me Downtown to commemorate our history and support our ongoing initiatives," McCree and Arteaga stated.

Shayne Watson, a lesbian public historian who will take part on the bus tour, noted that downtown San Francisco used to have a thriving LGBTQ scene.

"Not many people know that downtown San Francisco was the incubator for LGBTQ community development in the city," she stated.

For more information on Drag Me Downtown, go to [downtownsf.org/do/drag-me-downtown](https://downtownsf.org/do/drag-me-downtown) (<https://downtownsf.org/do/drag-me-downtown>).



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Donna Personna will speak about the play she co-wrote, "The Compton's Cafeteria Riot." Photo: Jane Philomen Cleland

### **SF Pride to hold kick-off party in the Tenderloin**

The San Francisco LGBT Pride Celebration Committee will hold its kick-off party Friday, June 7, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Tenderloin Museum, 398 Eddy Street.

An email announcement stated that the program features the creative team behind the play "The Compton's Cafeteria Riot" – director/co-producer Ezra Reaves, and trans co-writers Donna Personna and Collette LeGrande – in conversation with queer historian Joseph Plaster, author of "Kids on the Street: Queer Kinship and Religion in San Francisco's Tenderloin." Additionally, there will be remarks from SF Pride Executive Director Suzanne Ford, a trans woman; SF Pride Board President Nguyen Pham, a gay man; and Tenderloin Museum Executive Director Katie Conry.

The evening's program centers on honoring the 1966 riot at Gene Compton's Cafeteria, a seminal act of trans-led queer resistance that took place in the Tenderloin three years prior to the more famous Stonewall riots in New York City. (The exact date has been lost to history.)

The Compton's riot is the inspiration for an immersive theater experience – "The Compton's Cafeteria Riot" – that is produced by the Tenderloin Museum and set to open as an ongoing production in a permanent, purpose-built venue at 835 Larkin Street in the Tenderloin.

A limited number of attendees will be able to start the evening with a free short walking tour from 5 to 6 p.m. that visits both the physical site of the Compton's riot and the immersive venue for the eponymous play just a few blocks away.

Tickets for the kick-off party are \$25, though no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

To purchase tickets, click here (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-sf-pride-kickoff-party-at-the->

## 'Party On! Party People' in TL

For You has announced "Party On! Party People," a series of events produced in partnership with Little Brother's Friends of the Elderly. One of them, "The Tom Party," features a gay senior, Tom (no last name provided), and takes place Tuesday, June 11, at 10:30 p.m. at Aunt Charlie's Lounge, 133 Turk Street.

According to an email announcement, Tom, originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has lived in San Francisco since 1991 and currently resides in the Tenderloin.

In collaboration with Brittany Newell and Maria Silk, the hosts of "Angels," a monthly drag and dance show at the bar, For You will honor Tom with a drag number inspired by things he loves, from the movie "Tootsie" to bicycles and the Volkswagen Karmann Ghia.

Guests at Aunt Charlie's must be 21 years of age or older. Admission at the door is \$5.

## Pink triangle volunteer reminder

Patrick Carney, co-founder of the annual pink triangle installation atop Twin Peaks, wants to remind people that there are still volunteer opportunities available for this year's project, which culminates with the installation and ceremony Saturday, June 8.

From noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, June 6, help is needed getting materials from the warehouse. On Friday, June 7, from noon to about 2 p.m., volunteers will install the pink outline borders, which are made out of hundreds of feet of sailcloth.

On Saturday, people will complete the main installation beginning at 7 a.m. The ceremony follows at 10:30. Members of the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band (the city's official band) will perform, along with musical theater star Leanne Borghesi and others.

Carney stated that confirmed speakers include Mayor London Breed, San Francisco Pride community grand marshals, drag laureate Drollinger, and Honey Mahogany, the new executive director of the San Francisco Office of Transgender Initiatives.

The pink triangle will come down Sunday, June 30, after the Pride parade. Help is needed from 4 to 8 p.m., Carney noted, adding that this is the hardest day for which to get volunteers. Finally, on Monday, July 1, from noon to 1 p.m., people are needed to unload the pink triangle materials back into the

f warehouse.

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All volunteers will receive a fashionable pink triangle T-shirt, courtesy of Thomas E. Horn, a gay man who used to be publisher of the Bay Area Reporter and who oversees the Bob Ross Foundation, which is named after the paper's founding publisher.

For more information on the pink triangle or to donate, go to [thepinktriangle.com](https://thepinktriangle.com) (<https://thepinktriangle.com/>).

### **Castro cultural district donates Pride flag**

The Castro LGBTQ Cultural District has donated a Progress Pride flag to Fisch & Flore, the revamped restaurant that used to house Cafe Flore at 2298 Market Street. The flag will be unveiled Friday, June 7, at 4 p.m. during a program that will include remarks from Breed and gay state Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), a news release stated.

The cultural district noted that the newly refurbished restaurant represents a substantial investment by new owner Serhat Zorlu. The space has been made ADA accessible and the eatery's features and menus have been modernized. As a key business in the LGBTQ neighborhood, the cultural district is keen to support the endeavor, especially now that it is open for lunch and dinner service, the release noted.

"I'm thankful for the donated flag by the Castro LGBTQ Cultural District," stated Zorlu, a straight ally. "The flag signals that we love the community and are eager to be a fabulous part of this great neighborhood."


Tina Aguirre, a genderqueer Latinx person who is director of the cultural district, added, "I want to make sure we give love to Fisch & Flore because it is so welcoming to us as LGBTQ community members. Donating this Progressive Pride flag is important to the district's work to center LGBTQ people, places, and culture and that includes supporting economic vitality in the neighborhood."

### **Forum on Mission Dolores neighborhood landmarks**

Gay District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman and the San Francisco Planning Department will hold a community forum about potential landmark designations in the Mission Dolores neighborhood. The meeting will take place Thursday, June 13, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Noe Valley/Sally Brunn branch library, 451 Jersey Street, between Diamond and Castro streets.

According to a notice sent to neighbors, planning staff will be on hand to discuss the city landmark

designated process, associated preservation incentives and responsibilities, and opportunities for public participation.

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