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News Briefs: Holiday tree lighting ceremony inspires hope

by Cynthia Laird, News Editor | Wednesday November 29, 2023

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The Rainbow World Fund's World Tree of Hope lighting ceremony and celebration will take place Monday, December 4, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Grace Cathedral, 1100 California Street in San Francisco.

Jeff Cotter, a gay man who's executive director of Rainbow World Fund, an LGBTQ humanitarian group, will make remarks. The tree is unique in that it contains thousands of origami cranes that contain messages of hope for a better world. Origami artist Linda Mihara will be among the special guests, an email announcement stated.

According to the announcement, this marks the 18th annual tree lighting ceremony. The event will include emcee Donna Sachet, the Very Reverend Malcolm Young, the Grammy Award-winning San Francisco Boys Chorus, the consul general of Japan, and small business owner Manny Yekutieli. Empress Cameron Stiehl-Munro and Emperor Michael Chu will be on hand, along with Tammy Lynne Hall, and the Queer Chorus of San Francisco.

The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence will bless the tree.

There is no cost to attend. To RSVP, click here ([http:// https://www.worldtreeofhope.org/help-us](http://https://www.worldtreeofhope.org/help-us)).

SOMA holiday market

The San Francisco Leather & LGBTQ Cultural District's popular Second Saturdays event moves indoors December 9 and has a holiday theme.

According to the cultural district's newsletter, 35 kinky vendors will be at the SOMArts Cultural Center, 934 Brannan Street, from noon to 5 p.m. In addition to the vendors, there will be a bondage suspension program from Twisted Windows, "Oogie-Boogie," a nightmare before Christmas burlesque by Alotta Boutté, and an Instagram photo booth with naughty Santa and some kinky elves.

There will also be a gear swap (more info here (<https://sfleatherdistrict.org/saturday/#gear>)).

In addition to the cultural district, the holiday market is presented by Folsom Street and the SOMA West Community Benefit District, with support from Success Centers.

There's a free shuttle to other South of Market locations, including the SF Eagle, Azúcar Lounge (opens at 3 p.m.), Zozi's Loft, Powerhouse (opens at 4 p.m.), Leather Etc., and Mr S Leather.

Admission to the holiday market is free. For more information, go to sfleatherdistrict.org/holiday (<https://sfleatherdistrict.org/holiday/>).

SFAF World AIDS Day event in Oakland

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Healing & Uniting Every Sista, or HUES, a program of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, will unveil the "Songs of Our Mothers" mural on World AIDS Day, Friday, December 1, at 7 p.m. at Oakstop, 1721 Broadway in Oakland.

The World AIDS Day event will feature the lives and experiences of women living with HIV, a news release stated.

"We are mothers, grandmothers. We are women who lived through turbulent times in our 20s and are finding our way as we age. We have explored our passions through careers in advocacy, and we are now women, maturing into elderhood with strong life stories that should be shared with younger generations of women," said one participant, who was not named in the release.

At the event, the founding "Mothers" of HUES, who are long-term survivors of HIV, will share their experiences living with HIV through the unveiling of a nine foot mural, a short film, and other works of art.

"We invite the community to join us in honoring these incredible women and their stories. Their journey exemplifies resilience, hope, and the human spirit," stated Ebony Gordon, program coordinator of HUES at the AIDS foundation.



The event aims to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS, celebrate the strength of HIV survivors, and foster understanding among generations of women, the release noted. There is no cost to attend.



Let's Glow SF to light up icons

The Downtown SF Partnership will host its third annual Let's Glow SF free outdoor 10-night event in which five iconic San Francisco buildings will be illuminated. The event will take place December 1-10, a news release stated.

Let's Glow SF will kick off Friday, December 1, at 6:30 p.m. at the foot of Market Street facing the Ferry Building, with a countdown kickoff ceremony open to the public. In addition to the Ferry Building, others that will be illuminated are Salesforce Tower, 415 Mission Street; Hobart Building, 582 Market Street; One Bush Street; the Pacific Stock Exchange, 301 Pine Street; and the Landing at Leidesdorff, 565 Commercial Street.

The release stated that the holiday event will use high-tech Panasonic projectors and lasers to project large-scale art concepts across the facade of the buildings from 5 to 10 p.m. nightly. This is the first year that the Ferry Building will be included. Salesforce Tower will also showcase Let's Glow SF artwork on the LED panel atop the building, visible throughout the Bay Area.

 Mayor London Breed praised the event in a statement. (<https://www.facebook.com/BayAreaReporter/>)  (<https://www.twitter.com/ebarnews/>)

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"Let's Glow SF has become a signature annual holiday event for San Francisco that captures the charm and dynamic energy of our downtown," Breed stated. "I am thrilled to once again support the Downtown SF Partnership in lighting up downtown to bring San Franciscans and visitors into the area, showcasing the arts and the city's beauty in this special way."

For more information, go to downtownsf.org (<https://downtownsf.org/>).

SF supes OK leather district signs

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors on November 28 unanimously approved a resolution to add placemaking signs to existing street signs at 26 intersections in the Leather & LGBTQ Cultural District in the South of Market neighborhood.

The signs would help promote the cultural district, Bryan Dahl, a legislative aide to gay District 6 Supervisor Matt Dorsey, told the board's land use and transportation committee during a November 13 hearing. Dorsey sponsored the proposal. San Francisco Public Works and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency are aware of the plan, Dahl said.

Leather district officials also spoke at the committee meeting, as the Bay Area Reporter previously reported.

David Hyman, another cultural district board member, said wayfinding is important.

"I take joy and pride in the way San Francisco celebrates its neighborhoods," Hyman said. "It would make this a visible declaration of our pride."

MTT Way approved by supes

The one block of Grove Street adjacent to Davies Symphony Hall will soon be commemoratively named MTT Way in honor of Michael Tilson Thomas, a gay man who served as the San Francisco Symphony's music director for 25 years. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the resolution November 13.

Tilson Thomas is suffering from an aggressive form of brain cancer. He was appointed music director of the symphony in 1995 and stepped down in 2020, becoming music director laureate. San Francisco Mayor London Breed proposed the legislation in October.

The honorary street sign is in recognition of Tilson Thomas' many years of service to the symphony and his upcoming 79th birthday.

At the board's land use committee meeting November 13, symphony officials endorsed the proposal, as the B.A.R. previously reported.

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Priscilla Geeslin, chair of the symphony's board of governors, said the body "wholeheartedly" supports the honorary street name for Tilson Thomas. She pointed out Tilson Thomas held a Pride concert at a time when LGBTQ rights were under attack and the symphony inaugurated Chase Center in 2019 with a concert featuring the rock band Metallica.

Matthew Spivey, CEO of the symphony, also stated his support.

"He fully embraced his role with style, grace, and vigor," Spivey said of Tilson Thomas' tenure as music director.

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44 Gough St. #302

San Francisco, CA 94103

keepintouch@ebar.com

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