

AMPLIFYING LGBTQ+ VOICES SINCE 1978

JUNE 3-15, 2026

QVEGAS

HONEY
VINTAGE & BATH

Honey Vintage & Bath Buzzes Into the Arts District



Photo: Sebastien Thevenin @seb.theve / @lumenandcolv

With a proud publishing legacy that dates back to 1978, QVegas has been at the heart of Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ community for over four decades. What began as a grassroots newsletter has evolved into a dynamic weekly publication that informs, celebrates, and amplifies queer voices across Southern Nevada. QVegas is available in print at over 30 LGBTQ+ establishments, community nonprofits, and partner advertiser locations, making it a vital part of the local scene.

Beyond the printed page, QVegas connects with readers through a robust digital presence—on the web, across all major social media platforms, in our dedicated iOS app, and through weekly email blasts that keep the community in the know. Our coverage spans nightlife, entertainment, politics, health, advocacy, and the everyday stories that make up the diverse LGBTQ+ experience in Las Vegas.

As an advertiser-supported publication, QVegas is the most effective way to reach LGBTQ+ locals and visitors alike—offering unparalleled access to one of the city's most loyal and engaged audiences. In an era where equality rights are under attack nationwide, QVegas stands as a strong and unwavering community partner, committed to visibility, representation, and celebrating the power of queer voices.



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Soap, Receipts, and the Whole Ballot

Turn to our cover and you'll meet Rocco DeBenedictis — a man who survived a stroke, lost his best friend, and walked away from a decade of corporate event planning, then opened a store where the main event is making soap shaped into whatever you can imagine.

You'll find his Honey Vintage & Bath tucked into the Holsum Lofts just off Charleston, around the corner from the Arts District, re-opening June 6 under new LGBTQIA+ ownership. Rocco and his husband, Craig Rosen, didn't open a bar. They built a hive, and you're invited: handcrafted glycerin soaps, vintage finds, Pride ducks, and a workshop where you'll light up the moment your soap pops out of the mold. Come by daylight and it's family-friendly; stay past dark on opening day and you'll land in a 21-and-up drag party. As Rocco puts it, he wants you to know there's a fun, whimsical place in this city you can go to "that isn't a bar." A safe space. Family-run. Good clean fun.

Read on, and you'll see why that story sits where it does. A few pages over, you'll find Part I of "What's Wrong with Pride?" — our sourced, public-record investigation into the embezzlements, bankruptcies, and governance collapses hitting Pride organizations across the country. You'll read about two guilty pleas. A \$1.2 million fraud judgment. A festival canceled an hour before its doors opened. These aren't abstractions — they're communities betrayed by the people they trusted with their money. You can trust what you're reading, because we built it

on convictions, court filings, and IRS records, not rumor.

So take this issue as a study in contrast. On one page, you meet a man who nearly lost everything, choosing to rebuild out of joy. On another, an accounting of institutions that forgot whose money they were holding. Pride, in 2026, is both of those things at once, and you deserve to see them side by side.

You'll also find something you can use today. The QVegas Voter Guide is now live on ballot.watch, built to walk you through Nevada's notoriously complicated ballot ahead of the June 9 primary. We don't endorse candidates — we gather the picks of the groups that do the real vetting, this cycle Nevada Impact and Silver State Equality, so you don't have to hunt. Enter your address. Mark your choices. Carry the list to the polls.

That's your assignment in one issue: celebrate the people building something good, hold the rest accountable, and vote the entire ballot.

Happy Pride. Now go make some soap.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media

HOROSCOPES ARE A DRAG™

Gemini
May 21 - Jun 20
May 2026

Honey, May's got you serving LOOKS in every room, darling! Venus is painting your love life in hot pink—whether you're coupled up or flying solo, you're STUNNING. Career-wise, strut that confidence; promotions are calling! But listen, sis, pace yourself —Mercury says slow down before you burn out those gorgeous heels. Journal those feelings, meditate, and remember: you're not just fabulous, you're FIERCE. This month, let your light sparkle, not sizzle. Own it, babe!

via QVegas

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Piranha NIGHTCLUB + GIPSY *RuPaul's* DRAG RACE

P R I D E M O N T H



FRI JUNE 5
LUCKY STARZZZ

ALL STARS 11 VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY



FRI JUNE 12
APRIL CARRIÓN

ALL STARS 11 VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY



SAT JUNE 13
AURA MAYARI

SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY



FRI JUNE 19
SALINA ESTITTIES

ALL STARS 11 VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY



SAT JUNE 20
JOEY JAY

SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY



FRI JUNE 26
KENNEDY DAVENPORT

ALL STARS 11 VIEWING PARTY | 8 PM at GIPSY
SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY
+ 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY



SAT JUNE 27 | SHUGA CAIN

SHOWTIMES | 11:30 PM at GIPSY + 1:30 AM at PIRANHA
MEET & GREET | 12:30 AM at GIPSY

GIPSY DOORS OPEN FRI AT 7:30 PM | SAT AT 9PM // PIRANHA DOORS OPEN FRI AND SAT AT 10 PM



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the **LGBTQ+**
center
OF LAS VEGAS

Wellness for everyone.

HEALTHCARE AND RESEARCH PROGRAM

The LGBTQ Center's Healthcare and Research Program is dedicated to advancing medical knowledge and improving public health through cutting-edge research, innovative treatments, and comprehensive care initiatives for the LGBTQIA+ community.

- Affirming Healthcare for All
- Research Advancing LGBTQIA+ Health and Wellness
- Community-Based, Culturally Competent Mental Health
- LGBTQIA+ Care Rooted in Dignity and Respect
- Culturally Responsive Care for Communities of Color
- Mobile Health for Rural and Underserved Communities





**Your ultimate guide to Las Vegas LGBTQ+ life,
entertainment, and community.**



**Everything LGBTQ+ Las Vegas
in one app.**



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How to Build a Pride That Survives

A generation of embezzlements, overspends, and collapses has handed the next wave of boards and organizers a clear playbook — and it starts with watching the money.



A mult-part investigation into the embezzlements, bankruptcies, dissolutions, and governance failures shaking America's Pride organizations.

Editor's note on method and standard of proof:

This report is built only on the public record: criminal complaints and pleas, civil judgments, bankruptcy filings, IRS and state nonprofit records, organizations' own public statements, and reporting by named newsrooms. Throughout, claims are tiered by what can actually be proven:

- *Convictions and guilty pleas are stated as fact.*
- *Civil judgments are described as findings of *liability*, not crimes, and are noted where they remain under appeal.*
- *Allegations contained in lawsuits or made by named individuals are clearly attributed as such, and the people they concern are presumed innocent of anything not yet adjudicated.*
- *Leadership during a financial or organizational failure is reported as a fact of who held the role. It is not, by itself, an accusation of personal wrongdoing, and the report does not imply otherwise.*

Where an organization or individual has disputed an account, that dispute is included. Corrections are welcome and will be published.

The reckoning of 2025–2026

Pride in America is having its worst run of headlines in a generation, and it is tempting to blame the obvious villain. In 2025, corporate sponsors fled en masse. The Associated Press documented hundreds of thousands of dollars in shortfalls across the country as companies that had long bankrolled Pride quietly walked, citing a chillier political climate and a federal administration openly hostile to transgender protections and to diversity programs. San Francisco Pride entered the season facing a roughly \$200,000 gap; New York City Pride reported a hole closer to \$750,000.

That story is real. It is also incomplete. The external shock of 2025 landed on an

infrastructure that was, in case after case, already rotten from the inside — built on weak boards, unmonitored finances, founder fiefdoms, and in the worst instances, outright theft. The sponsorship collapse did not create those problems. It exposed them.

What follows is an accounting of how Pride organizations across the United States have failed their own communities, and of the people the public record places at the center of those failures.

Part I — The receipts: theft and fraud

San Luis Obispo, California: a guilty plea

The most recent criminal case is also the cleanest. In December 2025, the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office charged Dustin Robert Colyer-Worth, 46, the former executive director of the Gala Pride and Diversity Center, with four felony counts of grand theft by embezzlement. Prosecutors alleged he diverted the LGBTQ+ center's funds into his own accounts between November 2022 and October 2024.

The center had already caught him. In a board letter in October 2024 — after cutting ties with him that September — Gala told supporters it had uncovered evidence that a trusted leader had been siphoning money amid the organization's own financial struggles. District Attorney Dan Dow framed the harm in terms beyond the dollars, pointing to the broken trust when money meant for a community is rerouted into private pockets.

In late May 2026, Colyer-Worth pleaded guilty to two of the four counts. The court ordered him to repay \$59,302 to the nonprofit ahead of a sentencing hearing

set for June 25, 2026. This is a conviction, not an allegation.

Houston, Texas: a \$1.2 million judgment, and a Pride that split in two

The Houston case is the most consequential civil matter, and the most instructive about how a board loses control of its own money.

Lorin "Lo" Roberts served as president of Pride Houston from 2017 to 2020 — an unpaid volunteer role — before being promoted to the organization's first paid executive director at a salary of roughly \$61,000 plus benefits. The board fired Roberts in June 2021 after discovering, it said, unauthorized credit lines and expenditures. In July 2021 the nonprofit sued, alleging breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, embezzlement and theft, fraud, and fraud in the inducement. Court filings alleged Roberts had stolen more than \$100,000 and misappropriated more than \$50,000 — roughly \$150,000 in total — while ignoring board members' financial inquiries, misleading them about event permits, and, after termination, refusing to hand over the organization's assets.

In December 2023, Harris County Judge Tamika Craft granted Pride Houston partial summary judgment. Roberts was ordered to pay \$1.2 million: \$300,000 in actual damages and \$900,000 in punitive damages, plus more than \$7,000 in attorney's fees. Roberts and her defense attorney, Debra Jennings, were also sanctioned several thousand dollars. The matter has since moved through the Texas First Court of Appeals (*Jennings and Roberts v. Pride Houston, Inc.*, 2025), so it should be described as a civil judgment that has been litigated on

appeal, not a final criminal outcome. Roberts has not, on the available record, been criminally charged.

The lawsuit originally named two former treasurers as co-defendants. Jacob Siegel reached a settlement with Pride Houston and was dismissed. The other, Dustin Sheffield, was named in the complaint over the same alleged misrepresentation of the organization's finances; as of early 2024 the nonprofit said he had not yet been served. Sheffield went on to join the advisory board of a competing organization, New Faces of Pride Houston. The allegations against him remain allegations.

The collateral damage is its own indictment of the governance that allowed this. Pride Houston skipped its 2023 festival entirely, citing the financial strain of the litigation against its own former director. To keep the organization alive, then-president Kendra Walker has said she and another board member personally lent it thousands of dollars — Walker put in about \$30,000 of her own money. By 2024, Houston had two rival Pride celebrations marching a week apart, a city's LGBTQ+ community fractured downstream of one organization's failure to watch its books.

Oklahoma City: a guilty plea, a "defective" dissolution, and a name war

Oklahoma City's story carries all three failure modes at once — theft, broken governance, and a successor fight that landed in court.

OKC Pride, Inc. ran Oklahoma City's Pride events for decades. In February 2018, Lori Kay Honeycutt — who also went by Slider, Downs, and Standifer, and who had previously served prison time for forgery — became its president. By that summer, the board had flagged more than \$5,000 in unauthorized transactions. According to a probable-cause affidavit, the organization never wrote checks to cash, held no events during the months in question, and required board approval for all spending; yet five checks were written to "cash" between February and March, along with a check made out to Honeycutt herself. The Oklahoma County District Attorney charged her with one count of felony embezzlement in September 2019. On March 4, 2020, Honeycutt entered a blind plea — a guilty plea with no agreed-upon sentence — to embezzlement, and was ordered to repay more than \$12,000 ahead of sentencing.

The theft also broke the organization's governance. In 2018, three directors voted to dissolve OKC Pride, Inc., even though the bylaws required a majority of five. In 2021, after a lawsuit by member John Gibbons, Oklahoma County District Judge Aletia Haynes Timmons ruled the dissolution legally "defective," effectively reviving the corporation and ordering transferred assets returned. The judge also barred the breakaway successor

group, Oklahoma City Pride Alliance, from using the "OKC Pride" name or the OklahomaCityPride.org and OKCPride.org domains, finding it infringed the original entity's trademark, and held that the embezzlement restitution then held by the DA belonged solely to the revived OKC Pride, Inc. The cleanup fell to volunteers: an interim president had to investigate which past purchases were even legitimate, and a finance volunteer had to rebuild the organization's QuickBooks records all the way back to 2016. (A separate \$3 million federal embezzlement indictment against an Oklahoma City Black Lives Matter leader in late 2025 involved a different, unrelated organization and is not part of this account.)

Part II — The money pits: mismanagement and collapse

Not every failure is a crime. Some are simply the result of organizations spending money they did not have, with no one empowered to stop them.

Salt Lake City: a festival that lost a fortune

The Utah Pride Center spent approximately \$1.5 million *more* on its 2023 Pride Festival than it had the prior year, even as revenues stayed flat — a swing that, by its own new leadership's account, left it hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt. Security costs alone for the June 2023 event ran around \$300,000.

The fallout was brutal and fast. The center laid off staff in two rounds in August and September 2023, cutting a workforce of 19 down to a skeleton. In a statement posted to Instagram in late August — and then deleted the same night — officials admitted "massive financial turmoil." When new executive director Ryan Newcomb took over that fall, he described the debt run-up bluntly as "indefensible," and the center launched an internal financial review, saying it was still receiving previously undisclosed bills and contracts. In singling out responsibility, the center's leadership pointed — by title, as the executive who oversaw the festival — to former co-CEO Jonathan Foulk; CEO Tanya Hawkins was among the leadership named in the organization's public statements during the crisis. (Neither has been accused in any court of personal theft; the failure described here is one of management.)

The center also went to court itself, alleging in a breach-of-contract suit that it had paid a vendor \$80,000 for security and emergency medical services that were never properly delivered, and that it was never refunded, claiming an additional \$100,000 in damages. To dig out, the Utah Pride Center ultimately sold the building it owned. Newcomb stepped down in March 2024, citing health.

Long Beach, California: \$1.8 million in losses and a festival canceled an hour before doors

No single organization better illustrates the through-line from governance failure to financial ruin than Long Beach Lesbian & Gay Pride, Inc.

The warning signs are years old. In December 2018, board member Alexa Castanon — the board's only transgender member — sued the organization, alleging that president Denise Newman and vice president LaRhonda Slaughter had rigged a board election by having ballots thrown in the trash, and that the two routinely made unilateral spending decisions that benefited their friends. The Long Beach Post reported reviewing security footage that appeared to show ballots being swept into a trash can. These were allegations in Castanon's lawsuit; the organization declined to comment on the litigation. Over the same period, Long Beach Pride put up for sale a 10-unit apartment building it had owned for nearly two decades — housing where people with HIV/AIDS had lived and received services — as it retreated from the community grants it once made.

Then came the numbers. According to tax filings reported in May 2026, Long Beach Pride lost more than \$1.8 million across just three years: \$819,066 in 2022, \$716,729 in 2023, and \$306,000 in 2024. By the spring of 2026 the organization's treasurer, Wayne Manous, had warned the board in writing that it could not afford to pay its loan or cover festival costs. Against a \$500,000 festival budget, the organization had raised under \$100,000 and sold only 331 tickets as of an April 29 report. It had no major corporate sponsor — no company at the \$30,000-and-up level that had been routine in better years — relying instead on a handful of \$10,000 backers including Honda, St. Mary Medical Center, LA Metro, AHF, and the Port of Long Beach.

On May 15, 2026 — less than an hour before the festival's opening "Teen Pride" event was to begin — the City of Long Beach canceled the festival outright, saying the organization had repeatedly failed to submit the permit and safety documentation needed to inspect the stage, electrical systems, tents, and emergency exits. President Tonya Martin disputed the city's account, insisting the paperwork had been filed on time and calling on the mayor and council to intervene. The parade and other events went ahead; the main festival did not. Whatever the truth of the permit dispute, an organization that bleeds \$1.8 million in three years and sells 331 tickets to a half-million-dollar event was already in freefall.

Phoenix: into bankruptcy court

Phoenix Pride, which has run Arizona's largest LGBTQ+ celebrations since 1981, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on May 28, 2026 — days before Pride

Month. Court filings listed more than \$432,000 in debts, the bulk of it (nearly \$419,000) tied to a lawsuit brought by a Chandler-based company, Pride Group LLC, in late March 2026.

The crisis had been building in plain sight. In November 2025, Phoenix Pride publicly disclosed a roughly \$350,000 budget shortfall, falling attendance, and the loss of major sponsors, after having already cut its 2024 budget by more than 20%. The organization reported steep declines: admissions down about 28%, beverage sales down 50%, and sponsorship income down nearly 30%. Phoenix Pride says it is restructuring, not closing, and that its festivals will continue under court supervision. Chapter 11 is a request for time, but it is also an admission that the bills can no longer be paid.

Part III — Organizations that simply ceased to exist

Tucson: the oldest Pride in town shuts down — and loses its tax exemption along the way

In January 2026, Tucson Pride — the metro's oldest and largest Pride organization — announced it was dissolving and canceled the festival it had already rescheduled. The financial story behind it: declining sponsorship and donations, debt from a 2024 festival hammered by record heat and low turnout, and, tellingly, a temporary loss of the group's nonprofit status in 2021 after it failed to file required paperwork. That lapse is a textbook governance failure; the IRS automatically revokes 501(c)(3) status from organizations that miss filings for three consecutive years.

The dissolution was not quiet. Wolf Gaona, named Mr. Tucson Pride in 2024 and a would-be volunteer in the revival effort, publicly accused leadership of mismanagement, saying organizers had repeatedly promised to open the books and never did — that they "lied to my face" about releasing financials. That is Gaona's characterization, but the organization's collapse is a matter of record.

Boston: a 50-year institution dissolves itself

Boston Pride's failure was not financial; it was a crisis of legitimacy that ended in self-destruction. After more than 50 years, the board announced on July 9, 2021 that it was dissolving rather than reform. The trigger was years of accusations that the organization — led by a board widely described as all-white — had marginalized queer and trans people of color. In 2020, after a Boston Pride statement was edited to remove references to Black Lives Matter, roughly 80% of the organization's volunteers quit in protest. A coalition that eventually grew to 26 LGBTQ+ organizations called for a boycott, demanding the board's resignation and the elimination of bylaws

that critics said gave the board undemocratic control. Board president Linda DeMarco had signaled she would step down; instead, the board voted to shut the whole thing down.

The story has a strange coda. In 2023, Boston Spirit Magazine reported that the board had quietly reversed its dissolution — without clearly announcing it — with DeMarco still president and five of the six original members still seated (among them Malcolm Carey, Martha Plaza, Tina Rosado, and Deborah Drew). An organization that publicly euthanized itself, then declined to stay dead, is its own kind of governance failure.

Part IV — The cancellation wave

The 2025–2026 seasons produced a string of canceled events that cannot all be filed under "corporate pullout."

In Tampa, the board announced a one-year hiatus, canceling the 2026 festival and Diversity Parade, and terminated the contract of its longtime president and co-founder, Carrie West, who had led the organization for 12 years. The board cited the political and economic climate — reductions in corporate, county, state, and federal funding, and Florida's rollback of diversity programs. It was not Tampa Pride's first such retreat; in 2023 it had canceled a "Pride on the River" event after Florida restricted children's attendance at drag performances, with West telling the *Tampa Bay Times* he feared a state crackdown. In the vacuum, a new group, Pride of Tampa, formed to stage 2026 events.

Nearby in St. Petersburg, organizers kept their festival alive but only after losing, by president Byron Green-Calisch's account, between \$150,000 and \$175,000 in sponsorships in a single summer, forcing a shift toward donation-based funding.

The most prolonged collapse, though, was in Fort Lauderdale. Pride Fort Lauderdale — legally Greater Fort Lauderdale Pride, Inc., the oldest Pride in Florida — spent two consecutive years failing to stage its signature event. Trouble surfaced around the February 2023 "Pride of the Americas": amid what local LGBTQ outlet OutSFL reported as a lack of transparency and logistical planning, sponsors Tito's Vodka and CAN Community Health withdrew, the three-day beach festival shrank to a single day in a park, the entire board resigned except president Miik Martorell, and executive director Kevin Clevenger departed. Martorell then hired a longtime friend and colleague, Ernie Yuen — who simultaneously serves as executive director of Las Vegas PRIDE (SNAPI) — as the organization's new executive director, and launched a year-round "Pride 365" program. It did not stop the bleeding: the February 2024 festival and parade were canceled and pushed to 2025, and then the February 2025 event was canceled as

well, with permits left languishing at city hall amid the group's financial and organizational woes.

Two episodes from that stretch stand out. First, a longtime volunteer, John Michael Gordon, who had donated \$1,000 earmarked for the canceled 2024 festival, asked for his money back; according to OutSFL, the organization did not return it, and major sponsor CAN Community Health likewise sought a refund it was refused. Reporting noted that while the organization pleaded poverty, its leadership — Martorell, Yuen, volunteer director Robyn Ludy, and others — traveled to Las Vegas for a national Prides gathering (Ludy said Martorell personally covered the bulk of that trip). Yuen and Martorell did not respond to the outlet's requests for comment on the refund. Second, after Martorell resigned in October 2024 and a short-lived new vice president stepped down in January 2025, the board ultimately gave up: in February 2025 it voted to dissolve and hand the Pride Fort Lauderdale brand over to a media company, Hotspots Happening Out. None of this involves any allegation of personal theft; it is a story of an organization that could not deliver what it had collected money to deliver, and of leadership that was elsewhere when it mattered.

The people left holding the bill. When a Pride collapses, the unpaid are rarely the celebrities — they are the vendors, contractors, drag performers, and small donors. Phoenix Pride's largest bankruptcy creditor is not a star but an events-operations company, Pride Group LLC of Chandler, which sued for nearly \$420,000; Phoenix is disputing that claim in federal court. Fort Lauderdale's casualties were a corporate sponsor and a \$1,000 individual donor who could not get refunds. The most extreme documented case of a Pride stiffing its talent, though, is overseas: Manchester Pride in the U.K. went into voluntary liquidation in October 2025 owing roughly £1.3 million (\$1.7 million) to 182 creditors — including the production companies of headliners Nelly Furtado (about £145,000) and Olly Alexander (about £48,000) — with the performers' union Equity alleging that some acts were told to get their invoices in quickly because organizers already knew not everyone would be paid. No equivalent A-list stiffing by a U.S. Pride has surfaced in this reporting, but the place such debts would appear is in bankruptcy creditor schedules like Phoenix's, which merit watching as more U.S. organizations seek court protection.

These are the visible failures. Behind them sit the budget gaps already noted in San Francisco and New York, and the broader corporate retreat — a structural pressure that healthy organizations might have weathered and fragile ones did not.

To Be Continued...

The QVegas Voter Guide

Las Vegas LGBTQ+ Progressive Voter Guide Launches on Ballot.Watch

QVegas is proud to announce the launch of the QVegas Voter Guide, now live on ballot.watch. For the 2026 election cycle, we've partnered with Ballot.Watch to give our community a simple, trustworthy way to walk into the booth knowing exactly who's on the ballot and which candidates have earned the backing of the organizations we trust most.

Endorsements You Can Trust

QVegas does not endorse candidates. Instead, the QVegas Voter Guide aggregates the published endorsement guides of organizations that have done the deep, on-the-ground research. For the 2026 Mid Term Primary, we combined Nevada Impact and Silver State Equality.

These groups vet candidates up and down the ballot — interviewing them, scoring their records, and measuring their commitment to equality, civil rights, and the issues that matter to LGBTQ+ Nevadans and their allies. By bringing their guides together in one place, QVegas lets you see where the organizations you trust have planted their flags, then carry those picks straight to the polls. The endorsements belong to Nevada Impact and Silver State Equality; QVegas simply makes them easy to find and act on.

Built on Ballot.Watch

The guide is powered by Ballot.Watch, the non-partisan, ad-free election platform built right here in Southern Nevada. That foundation gives the QVegas Voter Guide some powerful tools:

- **My Ballot** — Enter your address and see every race you'll actually vote on,

from U.S. Senate down to county commission, judicial seats, and school board. No guessing which assembly district you live in.

- **Mark Your Picks** — As you review endorsed candidates, tap to mark your choices and build a personalized checklist to take to the polls — on your phone or printed out.
- **Candidate Profiles** — Go beyond party labels with policy positions, organization endorsements, campaign links, and the latest news.
- **Key Dates** — Nevada's full calendar: the June 9 primary, early voting October 17–30, and the November 3 general election, plus registration and mail-ballot deadlines.

Why It Matters for Nevada

Nevada has one of the most complex ballots in the country — and one of the most engaged electorates. The state now counts more than 2.45 million registered voters, and for the first time the largest bloc isn't a party at all: 965,000

nonpartisan voters outnumber both registered Democrats (666,000) and Republicans (656,000). That makes independent, organization-backed research more valuable than ever.

Nevada also makes voting easy: automatic, online, same-day, and Election Day registration are all available, and rights are automatically restored upon release from prison. With 301 races and 660 candidates on Nevada's 2026 ballot, the hard part isn't can you vote — it's knowing the whole ballot.

That's where the QVegas Voter Guide comes in. Visit ballot.watch/ballot, enter your address, find the QVegas Voter Guide, and let the research of Nevada Impact and Silver State Equality help you fill out every line.



ballot.watch

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Good Clean Fun: Inside the Arts District's New Queer Soap Haven

There is a certain kind of magic that happens when someone survives loss, survives a stroke, and then decides—against all reasonable odds—to open a store where the main event is making soap shaped like whatever you want. That's Rocco DeBenedictis, and that's Honey Vintage & Bath.

Tucked inside the Holsum Lofts at 231 W. Charleston Blvd., Suite 140, right around the corner from Brooklyn's Best Pizza and a short stroll from the creative heartbeat of the Las Vegas Arts District, Honey Vintage & Bath is celebrating a grand re-opening on June 6, 2026, under new LGBTQIA+ ownership. DeBenedictis and his husband Craig Rosen are throwing the kind of party that makes a ribbon cutting feel like an understatement.

From Corporate Events to Good Clean Fun Before soap, there was a career that would exhaust most people just hearing about it. DeBenedictis spent over a decade as a corporate event planner, orchestrating large-scale productions for clients pouring into Las Vegas from every corner of the world. Then came a moment that changed everything.

"I suffered a loss of a best friend and was recovering from a stroke," he says, candidly. "I just didn't really have the capabilities to deal with corporate America anymore. It was too much. I was burnt out."

He stepped back and leaned into something he'd been quietly nurturing on the side—vintage. He'd spent years

helping a friend with her vintage business, maintained a booth at an antique mall, and eventually grew that into a second location. Then, last April, something unexpected happened: soap making workshops went viral on TikTok and Instagram.

The original owner of Honey Vintage & Bath, a soap maker named Tova who has been crafting specialty formulas for 15 years—including collections seen on the Strip—asked DeBenedictis for help managing the surge. He came in, reformulated the workshops, turned what had been an occasional open space into a fully functioning retail store, and helped build the business through a buzzy summer. By January 2026, he purchased the company outright.



"I just wanted to keep the core foundation of what it is, but add to it," he explains. "Taking all the things I've learned from my previous roles and putting it into the store."

A Hive for Everyone

Walk into Honey Vintage & Bath and the warmth hits you before the scent does. The space is a deliberately curated love letter to joy—handcrafted glycerin soaps in jewel-toned molds, bath bombs, shimmer body sprays, perfume rollers, candles made by a team member, lip balm ("purely selfish to have," DeBenedictis admits), vintage clothing that spans Y2K to actual decades-old finds, kitschy keychains, Rainbow Pride rubber ducks, and brands selected with a values filter that is non-negotiable.

"I only work with brands that match our values," he says during a virtual tour that veers delightfully from Caesars robes to feminist milk bath products. "I want stuff that can make people happy. It's like gifts for gays."

The decision to make Honey Vintage & Bath an explicitly LGBTQIA+ owned safe space is personal in the way that only lived experience makes things personal.

"I never had those spaces as a young child to go and feel completely comfortable in without judgment," DeBenedictis says. "I grew up in the Bay Area. My parents were born-again

Christians. I always sounded gay. I had the gay voice. I always wanted to be around girls. I was a better dresser than most kids. I let my sister perm my hair—that didn't help anything."

He pauses, then turns serious: "In this time of turmoil, we really need to know where we can go to be safe. I'm putting myself out there. It can be scary, because when you do that, stuff happens. But I don't care anymore. I want to make sure that no one ever has to go through that pain."

Representation extends to every shelf in the store. DeBenedictis describes a small keychain—a little Black girl with her white girlfriend—and what it means to watch children pick it up and see themselves.

"Seeing little girls pick this up because it looks like them—that's really important," he says quietly. "That's why I choose brands that lift other people up."

The Workshop is the Point

While the retail side of Honey Vintage & Bath would be enough to justify a visit, the workshops are what put the business on the map—and what DeBenedictis believes is the future of brick-and-mortar retail.

"If it's not interactive, people aren't going to do it," he says. "Retail is super stagnant. If this was just a regular store, I probably wouldn't have purchased it."

The signature Make Your Own Soap

workshop runs Wednesday through Sunday at 1, 2, 3, and 4 p.m. Participants choose their fragrance, color (reds, oranges, yellows, greens, blues, and yes, purple too), and eucalyptus-leaf glitter that washes off without leaving you permanently sparkly—unless you want that, in which case there are other products for the occasion. The glycerin-based soap is poured into molds, then cures for an hour while guests explore the Arts District. When they return, the soap pops out like a prank waiting to happen.

"I still get happy whenever they do that," DeBenedictis says of the reveal moment, "because it's just fun. It's fun to see adults get excited about stuff."

Beyond soap, the store has hosted a sold-out tea blending workshop with Rough Seeds Productions, a felted soap bar class with the Vegas Crochet Collective, and a rotating roster of guest educators from around the city. Birthday parties, bachelorettes, Girl Scouts, private events—if you need a space and a concept, DeBenedictis is ready to make it happen.

June 6: More Than a Ribbon Cutting

The grand re-opening kicks off at 11:30 a.m. with a welcome toast, followed by a ribbon cutting at noon—though DeBenedictis hints the ribbon will be something more symbolic than a standard satin strip. "It will be something very symbolic of things that we need to break



the chains of as we go forward," he says. Daytime festivities run until 4 p.m. and include 20% off all purchases (excluding workshops), discounted Make Your Own Soap bookings made on opening day, goodie bags for the first 18 guests in line, mimosas, mid-day appetizers, fabulous entertainment, and raffle prizes with every purchase.

You'll also meet the family. DeBenedictis and Rosen are joined by their 16-year-old daughter in running the business, and opening day is a family affair in every sense.

"Know that we're a real family," he says. "We're doing this because we're here for the community."

Then the sun goes down.

Beginning at 6 p.m. (check-in at 5:30), the 21-and-over Drag Night takes over, hosted by the Faaabulous! Edie. Guests are guided through adult-shaped soap making (yes, really), leads trivia, performs, and adds new surprises to an already stacked evening. Tickets are \$40 per

person and available now at honeyvintageandbath.com.

Also premiering that night: the Decorate Your Cake Workshop—a brand-new interactive experience where guests decorate soap that looks exactly like cake, donuts, and assorted confections using tiny soapy fruits, flowers, and, because this is Honey Vintage & Bath, other shapes best left to your imagination. "You get to decorate your soaps," DeBenedictis says, barely containing excitement. "It's interactive, fun, a quick take-home, and then you have some champagne while doing it."

What Comes Next

DeBenedictis is already thinking past June 6. Stronger bachelorette programming is on the horizon for summer 2026. Community fundraising partnerships are a core pillar of the business model. Guest educator collaborations continue to expand. And Pride Month is, naturally, a season the store was built for—Pride soap, Pride ducks, Pride everything.



"I want QVegas readers to know that there's a fun, whimsical place in Las Vegas that they can come and do things that isn't a bar," he says. "A supportive environment, a family-run environment, where they know they'll find things that make them happy."

"We're a hive for all—a safe space for good clean fun."

Honey Vintage & Bath is open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 6 p.m. The grand re-opening is June 6, 2026, at 231 W. Charleston Blvd., Suite 140, Las Vegas, NV 89102. Free parking available. Drag Night tickets (\$40, 21+) are on sale now at honeyvintageandbath.com.

Follow the store on Instagram at [@honeyvintageandbath](https://www.instagram.com/honeyvintageandbath) and on TikTok at [@OhHoneyvintageandbath](https://www.tiktok.com/@OhHoneyvintageandbath). Reach them by phone at (702) 592-2569 or by email at hello@honeyvintageandbath.com.

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aclunv.org

ADL
lasvegas.adl.org

ALCOHOLICS TOGETHER
alcoholicstogetherlasvegas.com

BEARS LAS VEGAS
bears.lv.org

HENDERSON PRIDE
hendersonpride.org

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
hrc.org

**IMPERIAL ROYALE SOVEREIGN COURT
OF THE DESERT EMPIRE**
irscdei.org

LAMBDA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
lambdalv.com

LAS VEGAS MEN'S CHORUS
lvmenschorus.org

LAS VEGAS PRIME TIMERS
lasvegasprimetimers.com

**LEATHER UNIFORM CLUB OF LAS VEGAS
(LUC OF LV)**
thelucolvy.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

NEVADA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION
ngra.com

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetree.co.uk

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

**SOUTHERN NEVADA ASIAN PACIFIC
ISLANDER QUEER SOCIETY**
snapiqs.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
youngequal.org



Wellness Resources

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COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER**
thecenterlv.org

AFFINIDERM
affiniderm.com

**COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF
SOUTHERN NEVADA**
cccfsn.org

FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hpvlv.com

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

PARCS DENTISTRY
parcsdentistry.com

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
umcsn.com



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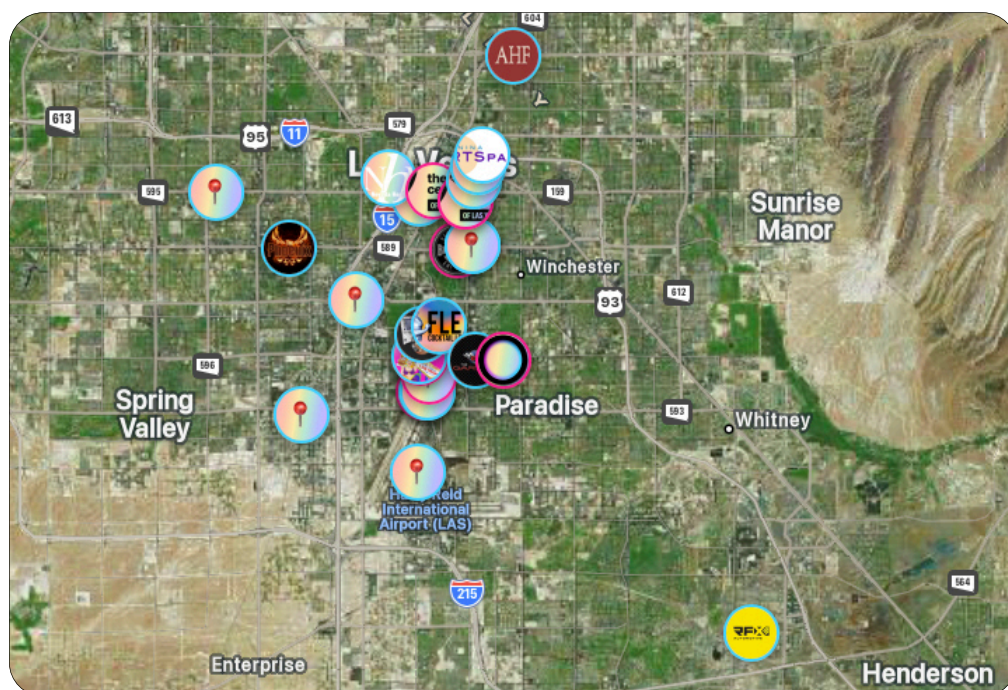
AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
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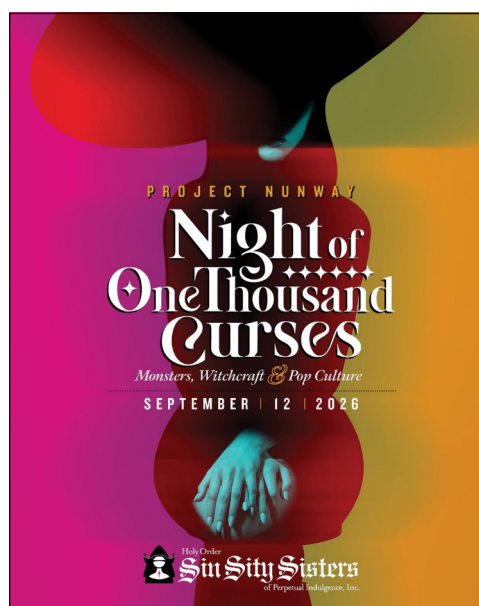
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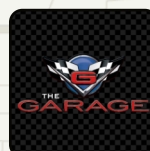




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