

# LAW WEEKLY

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SNAPCHAT HQ

MEET MERCURIAL  
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BACK TO THE FEATURE  
DOCUMENTARY

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THE SISTERS OF MERCY SANDWICH CRUEL WORLD AS  
A DARK WAVE ENVELOPES L.A.

# DARK WORLD

BY BRETT CALWOOD

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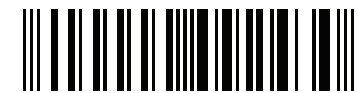


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# PARENTS PROTEST AT SNAPCHAT HQ, BLAME APP FOR CHILDREN FENTANYL OVERDOSES

Parents are asking Snapchat for stricter parental controls as they attempt to raise awareness of possible drug deals happening through the app

BY ISAI ROCHA



Maria Ortega speaks on the overdose death of her son Adrian DeJesus during a protest outside of Snapchat HQ in Santa Monica. (Isai Rocha/L.A. Weekly)

Dozens of parents rallied outside the Snapchat office in Santa Monica on Friday, May 12, blaming the app for their children's deaths and demanding changes to core features.

Holding photos of their children, the protesting parents alleged that their kids, often teens, purchased drugs from

users on Snapchat, leading to eventual fentanyl overdose deaths.

"Do they really want to be the company that's known for dead children?" Amy Neville, one of the protest organizers from Laguna Niguel told L.A. Weekly. "They have the power to change. They can set an amazing example to other social media companies if they did make

that change."

After the overdose death of her son in June 2020, Amy started the Alexander Neville Foundation, named after her son.

Neville said her son's "inquisitive nature" unfortunately led him to drug use, using Snapchat to communicate with the dealer. It was June 23, 2020 that Amy made her way to Alexander's room, where she found him lying on his beanbag chair, pale-faced and unresponsive.

The family learned that Alexander had taken drugs laced with fentanyl.

Snapchat has a unique set of features than some of the more widely-used social media apps, with one being disappearing messages. The protesting parents worry about untraceable communications that can lead to illegal activity, such as drug deals.

When asked about the alleged overdose deaths and the connections being made to Snapchat, Snap Inc. attributed the problem to an overdose epidemic that grew in the pandemic years.

ing closely with law enforcement, collaborating with other technology companies, and by having a zero-tolerance policy where we shut off the infringer's account."

In late 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) began investigating possible fentanyl sales through Snapchat and other commonly used apps. The year, the DOJ also recognized May 9 as National Fentanyl Awareness Day, with Snap being a founding partner as one of its attempts at being proactive toward the issue.

Snap also said it began "sharing patterns and signals" with Meta Inc., as the two social media platforms say they made attempts to remove accounts connected to drug content, or dealing.

"If they have a zero-tolerance policy, why are kids still dying?" Neville said in response to Snap's statement. "They might not 'allow' it to happen, but it's happening right in front of their very eyes."

## L.A. MOURNS GLORIA MOLINA, A PIONEER FOR LATINAS IN POLITICS

Gloria Molina, who laid the stepping stones for Latinas in local politics, died Sunday, May 14, after a three-year battle with cancer.

Molina, 74, not only was the first Latina to serve on the Los Angeles City Council and board of supervisors, but also was the first Latina to serve in the California state assembly.

"It is with heavy hearts that our family announces Gloria's passing this evening," Molina's daughter Valentina Martinez said in a statement. "She passed away at her home in Mt. Washington, surrounded by our family."

Her fingerprints were all over the city of L.A. from her activism, to her work to ensure the Latino community's needs were heard and represented, primarily in the 1st district neighborhoods she represented in the city council.

On March 14, Molina publicly announced her battle with terminal cancer, saying she had been receiving aggressive treatment.

After Molina's announcement, the city looked for ways to honor her, with Supervisor Hilda Solis proposing that Grand Park outside Los Angeles City Hall be renamed Gloria Molina Grand Park. The city council also approved a motion to rename the crosswalks surrounding City Hall the "Gloria Molina Legacy Pathway."

"Words can't express the loss of Gloria Molina," Solis said. "She was a beacon of hope to many — including myself. Seeing her break several glass ceilings throughout her public service career inspired me to follow in her footsteps and be of service to our community."

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Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass called Molina an inspiration who set the blueprint for women such as herself to thrive in politics.

“Gloria Molina was a force for unapologetic good and transformational change in Los Angeles,” Bass said. As an organizer, a city councilwoman, a county supervisor and a state assemblywoman... she shaped Los Angeles in a lasting way, while paving the way for future generations of leaders.”

### ARRESTS MADE IN BEVERLY CREST TRIPLE HOMICIDE

Arrests have been made in connection to a Jan. 28 triple shooting in Beverly Crest, with each suspect being from the Chicago, Illinois area, according to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

The three women who were shot and killed were reportedly inside a parked car located in a residential area around 2:30 a.m., and are not believed to have been the intended targets.

Daries Stanford and DeJean Thompkins, both 28, and Dontae Williams, 22, are being charged by the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office, with Thompkins facing four counts

of murder and six counts of attempted murder. Both Williams and Stafford are facing three counts of murder and six

counts of attempted murder, each.

Law enforcement agencies from across the country worked with LAPD on the investigation, as the suspects were tracked, found and arrested in multiple states, before being extradited to Los Angeles.

“The collaboration and cooperation between law enforcement agencies across the country is crucial in ensuring those responsible in such brazen acts of violence are brought to justice no matter where they may attempt to flee,” Los Angeles County District Attorney Chief of Staff Joseph Iniguez said.

The first suspect found, Thompkins, was arrested in the Chicago area by the Chicago FBI on April 10. On April 26, Williams was arrested in Gary, Indiana, as it is believed by officials that he fled Chicago to evade arrest. Stanford, the final arrested suspect, was found in Manhattan, New York, on May 10.

The victims who were shot and killed were identified as Iyana Hutton, 33, Neneh Davis, 29, both from the Chicago area, and Destiny Sims, 26, from Arizona.

While LAPD declined to speak on the suspected motives for the shootings, Capt. Tippet said all three suspects were connected to Chicago gangs, to some capacity. [A]



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# DESERT FUNGI

Canyon Creek Mushrooms Are Feeding The Coachella Valley

BY MICHELE STUEVEN



Jim Shafer at Canyon Creek Mushrooms

When snowbird Jim Shaffer emigrated from his frigid Michigan roots to the warm breezes of the Coachella Valley, the only thing he really missed was finding fresh mushrooms to satisfy his love for fungi. After spending a few hundred hours on YouTube, he created his own farm in a spare bedroom, and within three years, his Canyon Creek Mushrooms could hardly keep up with the desert demand.

The one-room operation started in 2019, when Shaffer built his first fruiting room in his garage, followed by an incubation room and a lab. What was just meant to be a source of fresh fungi for family and friends, Canyon Creek Mushrooms outgrew its garage-based farm and moved into its current 4,500-square-foot facility in Palm Desert in 2021.

“When most people think of mushrooms, they think of dark caves and manure; that’s so not us,” Shaffer tells *L.A. Weekly* in the sterile climate-controlled fruiting chamber located in an industrial section of the Washington Business Park.

“The toughest thing about growing

mushrooms in the desert is when the humidity spikes in the desert, it really mucks with our control system,” he says. “The hardest part is managing the climate here when the environment outside can be so variable. We can be in the 50s in the winter and 120 degrees in the summer, so heating and cooling are a big challenge. We have to pre-mix the air in a special chamber. Another challenge is the fine particulate dust from the desert that has to be filtered out, which carries other bacteria.”

Because they cultivate indoors in a climate-controlled environment, Canyon Creek Mushrooms produces 11 different types of fungi year-round, including Black King, Pink Oyster, Chestnut, Elm Oyster, King Trumpet, Lion’s Mane and Pioppino. Its stunning Brown Oyster can be found at one of Palms Springs’ best restaurants, Workshop Kitchen and Bar, chicken-fried with bread and butter pickle, buttermilk sauce, spiced honey and a Parker House roll.

The tree-based mushrooms are grown on a certified hardwood substrate, specifically produced for cultivation, which is supplemented with soy hulls and sorghum grain.



PHOTO BY MICHELE STUEVEN



PHOTO BY MICHELE STUEVEN

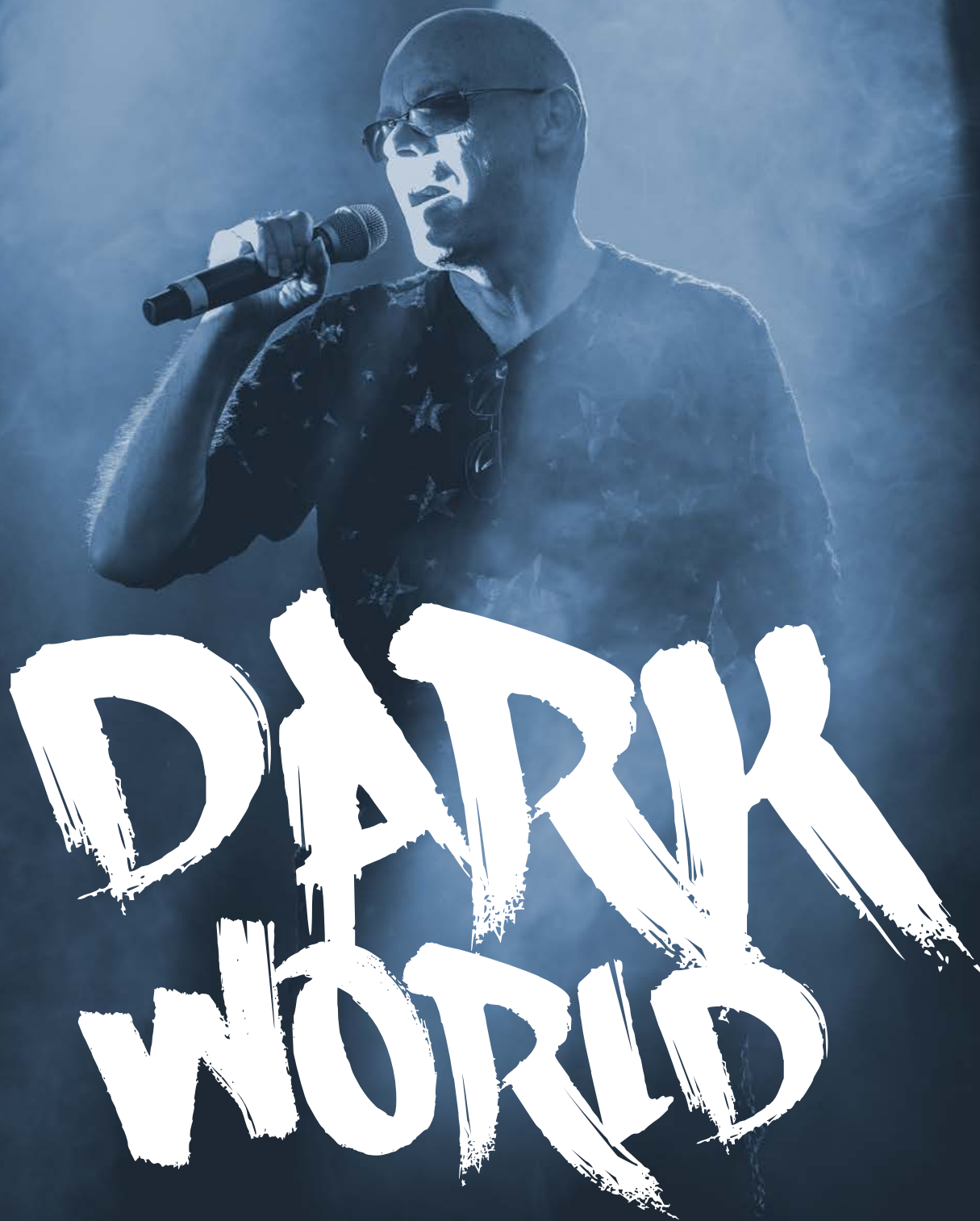
The substrate is completely sterilized in a steamer made from a horse trough at 214 degrees for 24 hours to eliminate any foreign spores or bacteria. The total time from inoculation to fruiting for most strains is about three weeks. Mushrooms are harvested every day and delivered the same day.

“I was just growing them for fun and all of a sudden the word got out,” says Shaffer. “I got a call from my first restaurant, Giant Rock Meeting Room in Yucca Valley, and then heard from my first farmers market in Twentynine Palms. Workshop Kitchen and Bar has been a customer since the be-

ginning. I knew nothing about mushrooms three and a half years ago, other than I liked them and I missed them.”

Since then, the funky hippy farm inside the business park has expanded to retail that includes everything from mushroom jerky and powders to fresh and dried fungi, with DIY kits on the way. Shaffer’s operation can be found at farmers markets throughout the Coachella Valley, including Palm Springs and La Quinta, as well as the best restaurants in the desert like Bar Cecil, Copley’s, Farm Palm Springs, Two Bunch Palms and Daniel’s Table in Cathedral City. 🍄

THE SISTERS OF MERCY SANDWICH CRUEL WORLD AS  
A DARK WAVE ENVELOPES L.A.



BY BRETT CALWOOD

Andrew Eldritch

Context is key. This coming weekend, the latest installment of the *Cruel World Festival* takes place at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena — the nostalgia-fueled goth, punk and new-wave festival that this year features the likes of *Iggy Pop*, *Siouxsie*, *Billy Idol*, *the Human League*, *Adam Ant*, *Gang of Four* and many more.

Cruel World is sandwiched by two shows at the Hollywood Palladium headlined by dark rockers (don't call them goth) the Sisters of Mercy. Some might think that the Sisters would be perfect for a Cruel World spot. Frontman Andrew Eldritch is certainly not one of those people.

"O... what? Oh... is that the pasty Californian dweeb thing? You may quote me on that," Eldritch says. "Something did cross my desk that involved pasty-faced Californian dweebs. It crossed my desk very swi... ly."

Eldritch has a reputation for being a massive grump. Scratch the surface and he's a charmer with a bone-dry sense of humor, who doesn't seem to care a whole lot about nostalgia or attaching himself to a scene that is rooted in a bygone age.

Honestly, that ship has probably sailed. And it's likely that a lot of the same "pasty-faced Californian dweebs" that will be at Cruel World also will be at the Palladium. ose that do go will hear an awesome rock 'n' roll band performing some new music alongside old classics.

"I feel good about it," Eldritch says. "It has the melodicism of early Sisters stu", which is probably due to Ben (Christo, guitar) liking the early stu" more than I do, and he's largely responsible for the melodicism of those songs. On the other hand, the words are better than they've ever been, and, sometimes the power of them overwhelms me. I'm genuinely impressed by what we've recently achieved. Lyrically, I'm not going to comment on the authorial voice — that's the job of journalists. I will say that the narrator is a di"erent person now than he may have seemed to have been when you thought that was who the author was. I could talk for hours about this and dramaturgy. Because dramaturgy is my yeld of expertise. I never thought I'd be doing it, but I do know a lot about it. at's my academic frame of reference."

On the subject of the older stu", the Sisters' early Reptile House EP was recently re-released on pretty, smoky vinyl for Record Store Day. e frontman says that he wasn't involved or even asked.

"It's remarkable how a major record company can release stu" without consulting the artist

involved," he says. "At all. You'd have thought they would, because it might help shi... some units. But, hey, record

companies. What are they like? Well, they're not like record companies."

"There hasn't been a new Sisters of Mercy album since 1990's *Vision*—interesting, despite the fact that they continue to write new music. Eldritch must love touring then, right? Not really, although he does enjoy being places.

"Going to places is terrible these days," he says. "Travel is a nightmare. Being places is nice. I'm very good at landing some place and acting natural and blending in. I dress down and I speak the language. I don't care what your language is, I speak it. With performing, my terror manifests itself in different ways. Right now, I'm kind of having fun with it. And that was just terror upon terror. These days, I go on with a smile on my face and I go on with a smile on my face. And that is different. Don't ask me what's caused it."

"The current Sisters lineup is still fairly fresh, with the main man joined by guitarists Ben Christo (since 2006) and Dylan Smith (since 2019). Ravey Davey, who operates famed electronic beat keeper Doktor Avalanche, completes the troupe."

"On a tech level, we're not gelled at all," Eldritch says. "There's work to be done on that side. Right-wise, lick-wise, mates-wise, we're doing good."

"I think there's a good onstage synergy," adds Christo. "Over the years we've developed a sort of 'performer sonar'"

"These dates will be the Sisters' first Stateside in a decade. The authorities here apparently don't make it easy for touring bands."

"The logistical side of it is still difficult because America is, frankly, a shambles," Eldritch says. "But America needs us. And we are capable of dealing with the challenges. And so much of what we do is predicated on American rock 'n' roll that you can't ignore it forever. I don't remember our 2008 tour other than that Obama was being elected and we celebrated that to the max. So, we had a blast. Because: Obama. But that was before the pandemic and everybody's life—everybody's life—has been reset since then. The time before lockdown seems like a different era. And it's a lump of stuff that happened before lockdown."

Eldritch refers to the pandemic as "the Event," and considers the "lump of stuff" that happened before "the Event" as from a previous life.

"Possibly similar to the World Wars, inasmuch as we lost people in the event," he says. "And similarly, a whole generation of people got wiped out, particularly in the First World War. My family was just... wiped out."

When asked about his Los Angeles memories, the first thing that comes



to mind for Eldritch is the notorious Tropicana.

"I remember the Tropicana," he says. "Bad times at the El Royale. A very famous rock 'n' roll

motel. Everything you think happened there really did happen there. Of course, I didn't do it... but I may have watched it. I think they tore it down. Or the cockroaches ate it. Performance-wise... you're asking me this question now, when I'm on stage. When I'm on stage, I'm a completely different headspace."

One band that is playing Cruel World is Love & Rockets. That means Daniel Ash, Kevin Haskins and David J will be back at the festival a year after they performed there with their other band, Bauhaus.

"We had no intention of doing this," says Ash. "The offer came out of the blue. Kevin has contact with promoters in town, because he lives in L.A. He got a phone call a few months ago—did we want to do Cruel World? He thought it

through, and the offer was great, so why not? It's a déjà vu situation. We were doing exactly the same thing last year, so it's almost like a continuation. But that's how it happened. I know I didn't think in a million years that we'd be doing Love & Rockets this year after doing Bauhaus last year. With bands, if you do a big gig in town, then you don't come into the town again for at least 18 months. But this is actually a different band with different songs. But we were pleasantly surprised. We were also pleasantly surprised and excited about the interest from the public. So when this was offered, it snowballed into many other offers coming through. So we embraced it. We're going to be doing 16 or 17 gigs. Beggars Banquet, the record company, six months ago said that they wanted to re-release all of our back catalog on vinyl, etc. So everything has come together by accident. We're having some good luck at the moment."

Bauhaus, Ash says, is done now. He



## “THE WHAT? OH... IS THAT THE PASTY CALIFORNIAN DWEEB THING? YOU MAY QUOTE ME ON THAT”

also says that Love & Rockets will be done after the current run of shows. He's said things like that before, but he seems to mean it this time. At least for now he does.

"I've made the mistake in the past of saying something is done, and then something else might come up," he says. "Having a 13-year break makes it all fresh again. But there are no plans at all for this. Myself, I see this as one last blast."

"There's a new CD/digital collection out called *My Dark Twin*, a sequel of sorts to 1996's *Sweet FA*. We might get some of that at Cruel World, but Ash is promising a crowd-pleasing set. And a show!

"The main thing for us is we're trying out something very new with lights," he says. "We've got what I would call a modern psychedelic show. I can't go into detail, but it's something very new for us, the technology that we're going to be using at this show for the lights. As far as the set goes, we're in rehearsals right now. We're planning on playing mostly what people want to hear with a few things like 'Deep Deep Down' that we haven't played for a long time. So there's a few little surprises in the set—a few tracks that we've never played live before. But in essence, it's all the faves."

He's not the only one with plans. Roman Komogortsev of Belarusian post-punks Melchat Doma says that he wishes he wasn't playing so early, mind you.

"We'll play a regular festival set," he says. "We were very upset when we found out that we were performing so early in time, which did not allow us to reach our full potential on stage, but we think that everything will be fine. We would love to see the performance of such artists as Gary Numan, the Human League, Animotion, but due to the fact that we are currently on tour, it seems to me that, purely physically, we will not be able to see them, because most likely we will go to rest in a hotel."

Mick Conroy of Modern English is well aware of what a festival crowd of this type will want to hear.

"We are playing songs from our first two LPs, *Mesh & Lace* and *After the Snow*, plus one or two new songs," he says. "Expect to hear 'I Melt With You,'

of course. If I can, I will be checking out most of the bands playing. Definitely Gang of Four. I haven't seen them play live for quite a long time now. Iggy Pop, of course, and the Bunnymen are on the list. But like most people going to Cruel World, I'm looking forward to seeing the return of Siouxsie. Our first ever gig was opening for Adam and the Ants and the Banshees in 1977."

Similarly, Bill Wadhams of Animotion has a set planned that has been pleasing crowds on the '80s gig circuit for years now.

"We'll be playing songs from our three '80s albums, and a few from our 2017 album, Raise," he says. "Over the years, we've shared the stage with many artists on the bill, so we'll be looking for acts we haven't seen in a while, like Siouxsie, Iggy, and Gary Numan. I'm a fan of Billy Idol guitarist Steve Stevens. My son, Will, insists I check out Boy Harsher. Will's currently on tour with his group - Nation - opening for Yves Tumor."

By the end of May, Cruel World and those Sisters shows at the Palladium will be over. For Ashm that currently means no more Love & Rockers or Bauhaus. But there's a lot more to come from the Cali-based Brit.

"I started this thing in 2019, a band called Ashes & Diamonds," Ash says. "It's Paul Denman from Sade on bass, and Bruce Smith from PiL on drums, and myself. COVID happened, so that stopped for a while. We were trying to



write from either ends of the country and even other countries, but there's nothing like being in a room just with

the three of us. So we got back together again and, long story short, we've got an album 99% done now. We'll be shop-

ping for a deal soon and then hopefully doing some live gigs in the autumn to Christmas. Some singles and an album. Maybe an EP or two first. I've got to re-learn how it's all done now."

The final word has to go to Eldritch, and the man is looking forward to touring North and South America outside of the US border.

"I was recently asked, 'What's the best thing about coming to America?' Or, more specifically, the U.S.A. And I said, 'it's on the way to Mexico, where they do things properly,'" Eldritch says. "Because, as I've previously mentioned, logistically, organizing anything in America is a fucking shambles. We're going to go to South America; we like being in South America very much. South America likes us being there. Then we're going to do our usual shtick of European festivals... and I might actually get to go home. I haven't been home for two years. So, I might get to go to my house and take my one remaining cat back to his house. And then we go on tour again and we're gonna play Europe for... forever, I think. It's nice being a troubadour. People say, 'Wouldn't it be nice to make records?' Yeah... maybe. 'Wouldn't it be nice to do this or do that?' Yeah... maybe. But we're good at being troubadours. And we're troubadour-ing until pantomime season when Ben, strangely, needs to disappear and do 'other work'."

Eldritch is gonna Eldritch! 🇺🇸

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# BACK TO THE FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

New bio-docs chronicling the lives of Michael J. Fox and Anna Nicole Smith highlight contrasting paths to fame

BY CHAD BYRNES

## **Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie (Apple TV)**

For most of the '80s and a good chunk of the '90s, Michael J. Fox was a dominating presence in film and television. *The Family Ties* and *Back to the Future* star's boyish charm, insouciant comic



timing, and diminutive stature made him one of the most likable actors of the era. That's one of many reasons why the actor's diagnosis of Parkinson's disease struck such a deep nerve.

In the Apple TV documentary, *Still: A Michael J. Fox Movie*, director Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*) lets his protagonist tell his own story. By placing a camera in front of the Canadian-born actor and simply asking him questions, Guggenheim unspools a narrative that pulls the audience into Fox's multilayered story with a pressing intimacy. In addition to the interview, the film interweaves family photos, television interviews, dramatic recreations, scenes from Fox's movies, and footage of his daily life with wife Tracy Pollan and their children. It creates a heart-felt mosaic of a man who refuses to be pitied even when the odds are stacked against him.

Although this "everything but the kitchen sink" approach mostly works, the film occasionally falls off the tracks by using clips of Fox's movies to illuminate key moments in his life. There's a particular fondness for inserting scenes from 1987's *Bright Lights, Big City* to dramatize some of the actor's more challenging career moments. If you're familiar with that film, which is an underappreciated snapshot of a cocaine-addled writer in Manhattan, these moments feel clunky at best. One wonders why Guggenheim didn't simply use more personal photos or footage instead.

The movie works best when Guggenheim and editor Michael Harte rely on traditional tropes of documentary storytelling, cutting between old television interviews and Fox's current life in Manhattan where he works with his trainer, hangs out with his family, and goes to doctors' appointments. Though it all, Fox remains unrelentingly courageous and optimistic, even as he holds off the sporadic tremors that have a decimating effect.

Fox's origin story is one of classic Hollywood folklore. Faced with a life of working in construction, he drove to Hollywood where he exploited his "cute and elfin" looks to land supporting roles in several TV shows. Living in a single apartment, he subsisted on packets of jelly from restaurants between auditions. It's a brutal, desperate existence that almost sends him packing his bags when he auditions for *Family Ties* and lands the role as Alex P. Keaton, the Republican-leaning son of former-hippy parents. A few years later, he stars in *Back to the Future*, which makes him a pop culture sensation.

Although Fox admits that fame has its perks, he says the foundations of being a celebrity are made of "paper" not "brick and rock," admitting that he overworked himself to sustain an "illusion." Then, one day in 1990, he awoke to feel his pinky finger inadvertently quivering. It was the first sign of Parkinson's. From

there, his battles were with something much greater than his public image.

Although *Still* is a bit messy, especially when it relies on bombastic dramatizations and movie scenes, the actor's charisma glues it together. Even as he struggles with the disease's symptoms, he manages to crack jokes and smile through the pain. The movie also shows how his activism shed light on Parkinson's, which eventually persuaded politicians and the public at large to invest in finding a cure, which hasn't happened yet. For all his heroism and fame, Fox comes off as a grounded, self-effacing class act who constantly reminds us that the key to happiness is gratitude.

## **Anna Nicole Smith: You Don't Know Me (Netflix)**

While *Still* merely touched on the precarious nature of fame, Netflix's *Anna Nicole Smith: You Don't Know Me* pulls you into the deep and dark recesses of celebrity culture. Both a searing portrait of a lost soul and a cautionary tale of



the American Dream gone awry, director Ursula Macfarlane's (*Untouchable*) examination of the life and early death of Vickie Lynn Hogan, also known as model and actress Anna Nicole Smith, doesn't pull any punches in immersing us into the uglier side of stardom.

Harshly scrutinized by the paparazzi and the public during her rise and subsequent fall from grace, *You Don't Know Me* follows in the footsteps of other recent documentaries which have reexamined misunderstood public figures like Brittany Spears, Pamela Anderson and Whitney Houston. Like those documentaries, Macfarlane has a more compassionate and objective approach, while revealing why her heroine took a turn down a desolate path that led to her death of an accidental prescription drug overdose at 39 years old.

Without a narrator in sight, Anna Nicole's life is depicted through never-before-seen videos, media interviews, and news footage. Macfarlane also documents Smith's story in a linear fashion, which is a relief since so many recent documentaries seem to have a sporadic style, which seem to speak more to the filmmakers' egos than their subjects. This is a classy, traditionally spun, but insightful portrait of an authentic and charming ingenue who was blinded by the bright lights of Hollywood.

Born in an impoverished suburb of Houston, Texas, Vickie Lynn Hogan always dreamed of becoming a celebrity. Primarily raised by her mother before being sent to live with her aunt in Mexia, Texas, she rebelled against every authority figure before dropping out of high school. She got married at seventeen to a boy she worked with at a chicken shack. They had a son, Daniel Wayne Smith, before separating a year later. From there, she was determined to become famous.

After working as a stripper while raising her son in Dallas, she was discovered by *Playboy* magazine in 1992. Changing her name to Anna Nicole Smith, fame came quick and intense. Landing *Playmate of the Year* in 1993, Smith eventually replaced Claudia Schiffer as a more full-figured, mainstay model for Guess. She also got small parts in a few movies like *The Hudsucker Proxy* and the third *Naked Gun* comedy. Smith was considered one of the most enticing and sexy public figures to grace billboards and magazine covers in years. She also became tabloid fodder due to her exuberant personality, a series of romantic trysts, and her marriage to 87-year-old billionaire J. Howard Marshall.

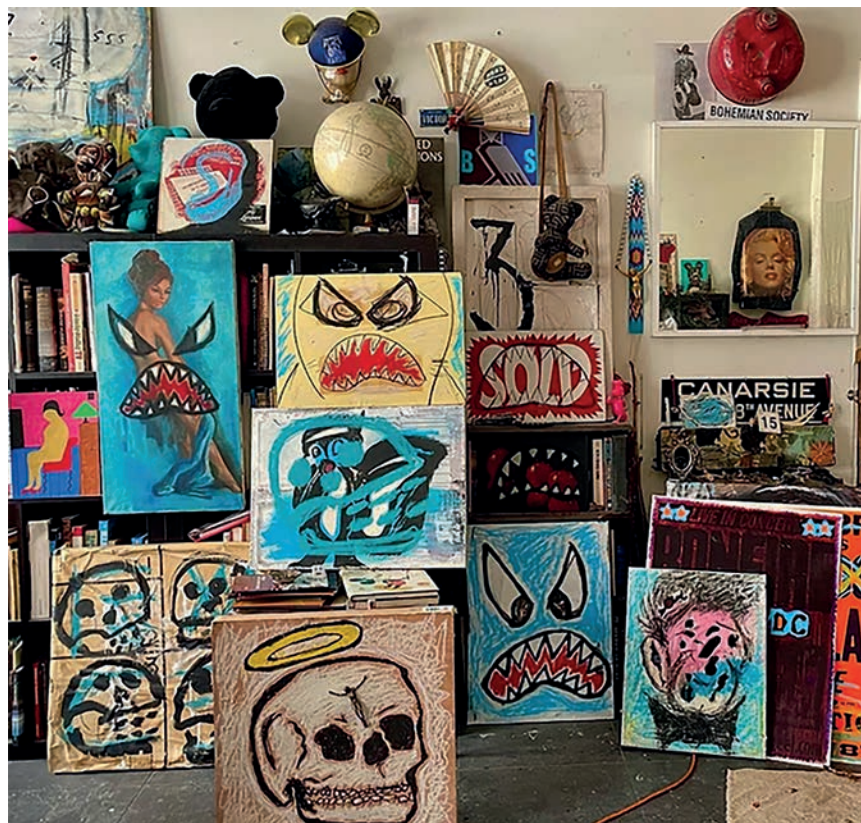
Although Macfarlane covers all the bases regarding Smith's personal life, her main concern seems to be with Hollywood's tendency to sacrifice its darlings. One moment you feel like a shining star, the next minute you're a public joke. Unfortunately, this witty, original and intelligent girl from Texas bought the lie wholesale. After a series of maladies, including a well-documented hearing to secure her husband's fortunes and an unflattering reality show, Anna Nicole simply quit fighting to be defined by her image, and ultimately lost her life.

Totally, the movie feels overwhelming, even stifling at times. A threatening undertone seeps through the narrative; we can feel the end looming near. At times, you want to save Anna Nicole and tell her to get out while she still can. For that alone, Macfarlane has made a very compelling portrait of a celebrity-driven universe where the stakes were higher than anyone ever knew. [A]

ART

# MEET MERCURIAL MATERIALS ARTIST VICTOR WILDE

BY SHANA NYS DAMBROT



Artist and fashion designer Victor Wilde is inspired by the potential of mercurial materials as he applies a process of scavenge, salvage, destruction, reconfiguration, redemption, appropriation, and transformation to the vast inventory of textiles, faux pelts, parachutes, used and vintage garments, accessories, street posters, fashion district tchotchkes, paints, purloined street posters, flags, model weapons, flamethrowers, polymers, and more that fills his DTLA studio. He applies this post-punk creative mode equally to clothing and fine art, believing the two to have in fact always been inextricable. Painting on clothes, printmaking on found images, sewing works

on paper, affixing garments to canvas and photographs to garments, making narrative plushies and crafty homespun weaponry out of leftovers, lambasting authority and late-stage capitalism with a caustic *arte povera* wink and a flair for the dramatic—it's all one big idea.

Wilde last grabbed headlines for Bohemian Society's radically inclusive L.A. Fashion Week presentation a few years ago (aka pre-Covid), but his newest foray returns to the world of art, as he opens Wilde America at REN Gallery this week. The show is a sophisticated but rough-edged suite of large mixed media (to say the least) paintings, sculptures, and bricolages objects that have all been through the treatment and were



exclusively made from found materials and remnants—with unexpectedly emotional, even beautiful results.

**L.A. WEEKLY:** When did you first know you were an artist?

**VICTOR WILDE:** I made my first piece of art when I was six years old. I was nosing around my grandfather's garage and was fascinated by his collection of random objects. While he was distracted I grabbed a few small cans of car paint and applied them to a traffic cone. Gravity took hold and the paint wound up in a puddle on the pavement. Grandpa wasn't thrilled but he thankfully didn't scare me off either. The day I discovered my passion for the creative process, ultimately growing into a compulsion—an addiction even. The process and method remains with me to this day. Finding inspiration in utilizing what is available to tell my story. Found objects—I am obsessed with them. Tchotchkes, trinkets, knickknacks, ornaments, and junk fascinate and inspire me. My grandmother called me Victor Hands. I'm compelled to touch, play, experiment, learn, combine what is not meant to be naturally combined—objects of all kinds.

The object is something that presumably exists independent of the subject's perception of it. In other words, the object would be there, as it is, even if no subject perceived it. Hence, objectivity is typically associated with ideas such as reality, truth, and reliability. In and of themselves they are inanimate but once placed in one's hands, they are subject to the objective of the one who wields them. In my hands they become *objets d'art*.

**What is your short answer to people who ask what your work is about?**

Freedom.

**What would you be doing if you weren't an artist?**

I'm sorry, what?

**Did you go to art school? Why/Why**



**not?**

I actually went to art school for a few years, yes. I was thrown out—twice.

**Why do you live and work in L.A., and not elsewhere?**

I've come to love Los Angeles. In the time I've been here it's only become a better place to live. As an American, currently, I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

**When was your first show?**

That's tricky. Does performing at my aunt's house for a Christmas display as a bear count?

**When is/was your current/most recent/next show or project?**

*Wilde America* opens on May 20 at REN Gallery in DTLA. It's a show about what it means to be American, the inventiveness of ad hoc, *arte povera*, prison yard craftsmanship and the aesthetic of punk couture as it manifested in the context of post-War American art. We'll have programming throughout the run of the show (through June 25) including talks, issue-based fundraising, film and video, excerpts from the documentary *United We Stand*, about my cross-country journey as a street performer two weeks after 9/11, plus fashion happenings, music, workshops, and maybe even a little poetry.

**What artist living or dead would you most like to show or work with?**

All of the Ninja Turtles. (Michelangelo, Donatello, Raphael, and Leonardo!)

**Do you listen to music while you work? If so, what?**

Music is very important to me. My taste is expansive. It's immeasurable

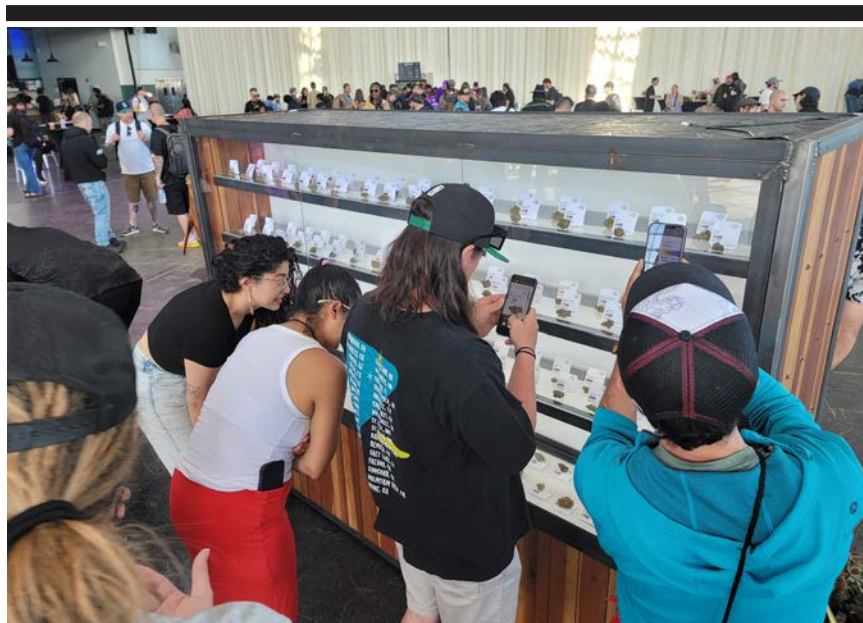
**Website and social media handles, please!**

thebohemiansociety.com  
instagram.com/victorwilde  
instagram.com/bohemian\_society  
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# EMERALD CUP PICKS CALIFORNIA'S FINEST CANNABIS FOR 2023

It was the year of the repeat at the Oscars of weed

BY JIMI DEVINE



The Emerald Cup was back for 2023 last weekend and repeat champions weren't in short supply.

This year would see the Emerald Cup's award show move to the Bay Area for the first time after a long stint in wine country before the pandemic and last year's show at The Montalban in Hollywood. While nowhere in the state worth having the cup could be considered neutral territory given how many competitors dot the state from north to south, the Bay is one of the better spots to have it because it's essentially halfway between L.A. and Arcata — most of the state's cannabis enthusiasts and businesses lie between that two points, too. The venue at Richmond's Craneway Pavilion was undoubtedly the most gorgeous the cup has seen since it left the redwoods in the early 2010s for bigger venues closer to population centers.

But the most beautiful sights to behold on the water's edge were the glass cases filled with this year's entries. As the judg-

es, contestants and special guests entered the venue, they were greeted by the cases. The flower entries were the most packed, as people wedged in tight to get pics of all the pretty buds for the social media adventures.

As the award show kicked off, it was like the final countdown to the big categories at the end began. After making its way through some of the more niche photography and product categories, it was on to the social justice awards. In one of the coolest moments of the night, Luke Scarmazzo came on stage to accept The Social Justice Award on behalf of his good friend Weldon Angelos.

Angelos was released in 2016. He was originally sentenced to serve 55 years over a cannabis conviction with a mandatory minimum sentence but only served 13 years. After his release, Angelos began advocating for others who remained in the circumstances he was able to escape, eventually founding The Weldon Project. One of the people Weldon has helped get out of prison was his



close friend Scarmazzo.

As he took the stage, Scarmazzo noted he was celebrating 100 days since being released from prison after serving 15 years over medical cannabis. The news received one of the loudest ovations of the night.

Other awards would include The Pioneer Award going to Amber Senter for her work on Social Equity and The Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award going to Mila Jansen for her contribution to the world of hashish over the last 50 years as an entrepreneur, smuggler, and inventor.

From there we started into the big dog categories of flower and hash. This year's theme was champions still crushing it. The rest of the evening would feature a carousel of repeat winners or those returning to the podium after a year or two off.

One of the biggest returns was Ridgeline Farms. After being the only mixed-light cultivator to qualify for the Zalympix finals, the LANTZ hype rolled on this weekend with Ridgeline taking top honors.

Founder Jason Gellman shared the experience with *L.A. Weekly*.

"With all the competition going on these days, The Emerald Cup to me is still the most prestigious and authentic. The judging is taken seriously by a talented group hand-picked for their dedication to the plant," Gellman said. "As our small cannabis communities have taken a giant hit from the challenges of the industry, it's as important as ever to stay relevant. I take lots of pride in growing the best herb possible, so when I submit my entries I always feel they have a chance to win."

After the near-perfect farming conditions up north for most of the last year before monsoon season hit, it was expected Southern Humboldt would be very competitive. Most of the years that a NorCal farmer didn't win the cup it

had something to do with mother nature. Gellman was proud to see what the county did this year.

"This year, Humboldt County showed up big. Winning is huge, but it's more about us representing our community as a whole than just one of us," Gellman said. "Ridgeline took home multiple awards including first in mixed light with my new strain LANTZ, but what we were the most proud of is winning the Breeders cup."

Gellman had been working on creating this strain for over four years.

"Lots of time, energy, money, fails and finally one giant win," Gellman said. "I knew LANTZ was the one, but this just solidifies it. The cup was a giant success this year and was great to see so many real heads in the game. Overall, it was a great day in the bay."

Rebel Grown took home top honors in the Full Sun. After regularly gracing the top 10 and top 20 over the years, this time they were able to take first place with their Double OG Chem.

In indoor, Fig Farms would remain the only indoor farm to ever win The Emerald Cup after now winning both renditions of the contest since the category was added last year to make the cup more inclusive to the whole of California. The Blue Face that won the indoor category was also the first-ever indoor flower to win The Emerald Cup's prestigious best-in-show award.

"The love we received at the Emerald Cup has elevated to a new level," Keith Healy of Fig Farms told *L.A. Weekly*. "Two years at the top spot for indoor flower, and this year going a step further by receiving Best in Show. Fig Farms's Blue Face is the first indoor flower to receive the Best in Show award, which has been given exclusively to Sungrown flower until now. I am so proud of our team, and truly honored in a way that cannot be put into words."

Read all the winners at [laweekly.com](http://laweekly.com).

# LA WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

## EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

**Business Development Director** Req. BA in Bus. Admin., Marketing or rel. Wage \$100,000/YR Mail Resume: Comma, Inc. 12629 Hiddencreek Way, Cerritos, CA 90703

**International Artwork Center, Inc. seeks Dir. of Art Mktg & Sales.** Oversee int'l art mktg., devel. plans to achieve sales targets. Salary \$65,853/yr. Worksite: City of Industry, CA. Mail resume to: 17890 Castleton St. #106, City of Industry, CA 91748.

**General Laboratory Supervisor:** Prime Healthcare Services - St. Francis, LLC dba St. Francis Medical Center seeks a General Lab Supervisor to supervise daily operation of section. Reqs: Bachelor's in Chemical, Physical, or Biological Sciences; Clinical Lab Science; Medical Lab Technology, or rtd fld + 1 yr exp. Jobsite Lynwood, CA. Salary range: \$94,078 to \$125,798.40 per year. Mail resume & ad copy, Attn: Ilknur Caki, PHMI, 3480 E. Guasti Road, Ontario, CA 91761

**Sales Manager** - Retain & grow revenue, generate new sales strategy, research global markets. Min Req: Bachelor's degree or foreign equiv., in Business Admin in Accounting, Accounting, Management, Finance or related. Salary \$65,853/yr. Mail resume to: Hermozo Textile, LLC 3300 Bandini Blvd., Vernon, CA 90058 Attn: Keyvan Malekan

**Human Resources Manager** - Devel organizational strategies, facilitate employee orientation. Min Req: Bachelor's or foreign equiv., in Psychology, Human Resources, Business, Communications or rel. Salary \$85,550/yr. Mail resume: Caregiver Services & Homecare, Inc., dba 1Heart Caregiver Services, 18455 Burbank Blvd., #210, Tarzana, CA 91356 Attn: Belina Calderon-Nernberg

**HR Specialist:** Orient new hires with HR policies, address employee issues. Min Req: 2 yrs exp., as an HR Specialist, HR Coordinator or related OR Bach. Degree or foreign equiv., in human resources, business, communications or related. Salary: \$48859/yr. Mail resume: Stone Supplies, Inc., 2302 S. Sepulveda Blvd., LA, CA 90064 Attn: R. Nejathairm

**Construction Manager:** Monitor and coordinate project progress & activities, create detailed work plan. Min Req: Bach. Degree or foreign equiv., in Architecture, Const. Management or Engineering. Limited domestic travel 1-2 wks a month for 1-2 days each wk to client sites in L.A. Metropol. Area, as assigned. Salary: \$73486/yr. Mail resume: Hi-Tech Builders, Inc. 5435 Balboa Blvd., #200, Encino, CA 91316. Attn: David Lahyani

Sr. Site Reliability Engineer needed by Disqo, Inc in Glendale, CA **(Telecommuting is optional benefit o employ't & employee may live anywhere in U.S. Must be able to attend occasional in-person meetings at Glendale reporting office)** to automate infra creation & pipeline work with tools like terraform & Jenkins, Gitlab etc. Reqs: Master's of Digital Sci., or Comp. Sci., or rel., plus 2 yrs. exp in job offered, or as Site Reliability Engr., DevOps Engr., or equiv't engineering roles. Exp. must include production exp. with AWS or other Cloud provider, hands-on exp. in Infrastructure-as-Code & Configuratio mgmt. tools & technologies such as Terraform, Helm, AWS CloudFormation, Packer, Chef, Puppet, Ansible, etc., hands-on exp. with application monitoring tools such as (New Relic, DataDog, SumoLogic, Prometheus, Grafana, ELK, etc.), hands-on exp. in Linux architecture, microservices & container orchestration (Docker, Kubernetes, etc.) Salary range \$110K to \$170K. Send resume to Disqo at anthony.fabiano@disqo.com

## Lion's Spa



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213.436.8804

**Software Developer, Front End** needed by Disqo, Inc in Glendale, CA **(Telecommuting is optional benefit o employ't & employee may live anywhere in U.S. Occasional work at HO maybe required)** to analyze information to determine, recommend, & plan installation of new frontend system application. Reqs: Master's in CIS, Comp. Sci., or rel. 2 yrs. of exp. in job offered, or as a SW Engr., SW Developer, or rel. Must have exp./knowledge with Angular, Typescript, Javascript, Node.js, Nix.js, HTML5, CSS3, SCSS, Angular Material, Rxjs & exp. with Frameworks. Salary range \$110K to \$130K. Send resume to Disqo at anthony.fabiano@disqo.com

Capture the League seeks: **eSports Head Coach (ME034)**: Scout for, develop, coach and supervise front-facing analytics for professional League of Legends team. Salary \$170K-\$180K/yr. **eSports Assistant Coach (ME030)**: Assist with development and coaching of professional League of Legends team. Salary \$115K-\$125K/yr. Worksite: Culver City, CA. Travel Required. Email resume and ref job code to: competitive@flyquest.gg

Globalink Securities, Inc. seeks **Fin. Analyst. Mstrs.** in Fin. or rel. field eqd. Conduct fin. analysis of inves- tments. Salary \$114,483/yr. Worksite: Pasadena, CA. Mail resume to: 3452 E. Foothill Blvd #1040, Pasadena, CA 91107

Ray Liu Associates, Corp. seeks a **Senior Project Engineer** to perform bldg. structural analysis and prepare plan docs in Pasadena, CA office. Must have a Master's in Civ. Eng. plus 6 months rel. exp. Mail resume (no calls/ emails) to Attn: HR, 3452 E. Foothill Blvd., Suite 620, Pasadena, CA 91107



# LA WEEKLY Bulletin

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## SECURITY GUARDS NEEDED

Rio Gentlemen's Club - 13124 S Figueroa St, Los Angeles, CA 90061 \$18 to \$20 an hour. Outside security needed for patdowns, ID checks and monitoring parking lot of the club. Please contact Dave Carlson at [Rmckinney@jjmfirm.com](mailto:Rmckinney@jjmfirm.com)

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