



**MOVIES** » 'Judas and the Black Messiah' revisits slaying of rising Black Panther leader; Dementia stalks longtime couple in 'Supernova'. **D4, D8**

# SonomaGo

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2021 • THE PRESS DEMOCRAT • SECTION D



LORI AUSTIN GALLERY

"Arched Lovers," a sculpture by Robert Holmes, is an example of love-themed art on display at the Lori Austin Gallery at the Barlow marketplace in Sebastopol.

Valentine's Day during the pandemic? Time to get creative

## Art of Love

By **DAN TAYLOR**  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

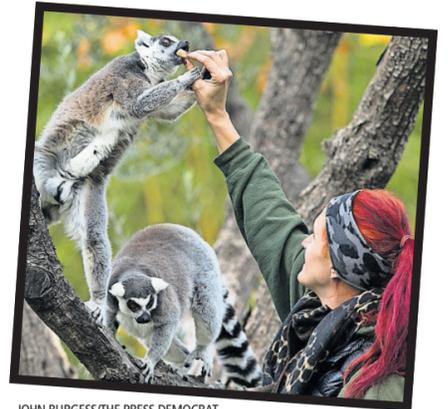
As we face our first Valentine's Day since the advent of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent shelter-in-place orders almost a year ago, the local arts community not only embraces the situation but waxes philosophical, even though many venues remain closed.

"We've been forced to step up and find a new way of looking at things," said longtime artist and arts advocate Barbara Harris of Sebastopol.

Despite the circumstances — and continued uncertainty — local venues offer a variety of entertaining ideas for this Valentine's Day weekend.

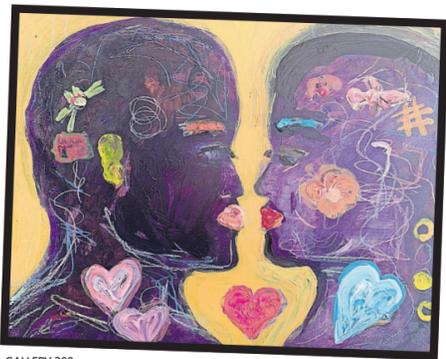
Closed on and off since early last year, the 400-acre Safari West wild animal preserve outside Santa Rosa will reopen Saturday and Sunday for its 21st annual "Wild Jungle Love Safari Tour," an adult-only socially distanced tour by open-air bus and on foot, with guides filling in guests on animal sex life.

TURN TO LOVE » PAGE D3



JOHN BURGESS/THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Learn about the love life of lemurs and other wild animals during the live "Wild Jungle Love Safari Tour" at Safari West.



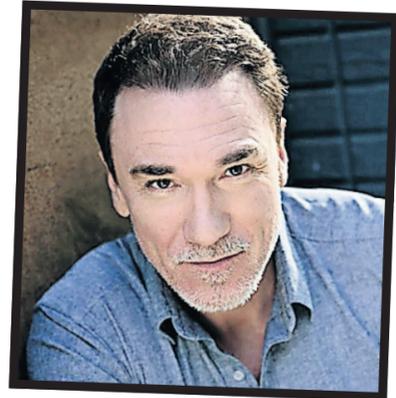
GALLERY 300

"Almost in Love," a painting by Jennifer Bec Hirshfield, is an example of love-themed art on display at Gallery 300 the Barlow marketplace in Sebastopol.



SEBASTOPOL CENTER FOR THE ARTS

This glass art by Valerie Adams is one of the pieces offered by Sebastopol Center for the Arts during its online "Open Studios Valentine's Pop Up" program.



6TH STREET PLAYHOUSE

Broadway actor and Tony Award nominee Patrick Page will be featured in "Love Is — A Valentine's Day Concert," to be streamed by the 6th Street Playhouse.



BETH SCHLANKER/THE PRESS DEMOCRAT



LORI AUSTIN GALLERY

"Mod Heart," a sculpture by Hap Sakwa, is part of the love-themed art at the Lori Austin Gallery at the Barlow in Sebastopol.



BOB STENDER

This necklace by Luann Udell is one of the jewelry pieces offered by Sebastopol Center for the Arts during its online "Open Studios Valentine's Pop Up" program.

### MUSIC

## 'Back pOrchEstra' inspired by stay-home orders



TIM ESCHLIMAN

The Back pOrchEstra shown at the home of guitarist and singer Tim Eschliman, left. The band also features drummer Bowen Brown and violinist Candy Girard.

North Bay music scene veteran downsizes and thrives, records during pandemic

By **DAN TAYLOR**  
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Tim Eschliman's description of his newest band, Back pOrchEstra, may become a genre before long, if it hasn't already.

He calls it a "a shelter-in-place-inspired musical outfit."

"During the lockdown, I couldn't play with any of my bands," said the singer and guitarist who now lives in American Canyon in Napa County.

"I've always been a guy who preferred to have a band to play with."

A part of the Sonoma music scene for decades, Eschliman, 68, has worked with a long list of bands, including Mystery Dance, New Copasetics, Rhythm-Town Jive and the Left Coast Syncopators.

He also performed and recorded with the Christmas Jug Band, cofounded by the late Dan Hicks and featuring Country Joe McDonald.

During the pandemic shutdown, Eschliman wanted a smaller group that could record safely at his home studio, so he recruited violinist Candy Girard of Bodega Bay and drummer Bowen Brown of San Rafael to form the "SIP band" Back pOrchEstra.

Because he has played many styles of music, Eschliman was looking for material that would present a new challenge.

TURN TO INSPIRED » PAGE D2

**VIRTUAL AND OTHER EVENTS FOR ST. VALENTINE'S DAY**

**FRIDAY, FEB. 12**

**A Virtual Valentine Variety Show:** The Raven Performing Arts Center in Healdsburg presents a collection of romantic songs performed by the Raven Players. \$15 for single tickets. 7:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday. raventheater.org

**Date Night with LBC:** The Luther Burbank Center presents a date night experience featuring jazz artist Jonathan Butler and food from chefs at local restaurants. 6 p.m. online. Entertainment viewing is free with

dinner purchase or available by donation. The dinners are priced at either \$100 for two or \$150 for two based on the restaurant and winery the guest chooses. lutherburbankcenter.org/event/date-night-2021

**Galentine's Girl Therapy Virtual Expo:** Learn from three keynote speakers and participate in the virtual exhibit arena. Don't forget to preorder a wine package to go with the event. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. online. \$20. For more information, visit giritherapyexpo.com

**"Pinky, A Love Story":** Husband-and-wife local actors Mark and Julianne Bradbury perform this cute tale about a nerd who falls for the girl of his dreams and tries to sweep her off her feet with crazy schemes involving costumes, sword fights and treasure hidden at the mall. From Sonoma Arts Live and written by local playwright David Templeton. 7 p.m. Feb. 12, 13, 19 and 20; 2 p.m. Feb. 14 and 21. Donate what you can. Register before 6 p.m. at sonomaartslive.org on the day you want to

watch the performance.

**"Love Is a Valentine's Cabaret":** an evening of performances featuring love songs and streaming on demand Friday through Tuesday, presented by the 6th Street Playhouse. \$20-\$60. 6thstreetplayhouse.com/valentines-tickets

**SATURDAY, FEB. 13**

**"Pinot and Poetry":** Peter Coyote, the actor, author, director, Zen priest and Sebastopol resident, will team up with Ross Halleck, owner of Sebastopol's Halleck Vineyard, to co-host an hour of poetry and conversation via Zoom. 5 p.m. bhghsf.org/pinotand-poetry

**"Wild Jungle Love Safari Tour":** The Safari West wild animal preserve outside Santa Rosa will present its 21st annual "Wild Jungle Love Safari Tour," an adult-only socially distanced tour by open-air bus and on foot, with guides filling in guests on animal sex life. Tours at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. \$103 per person. bit.ly/20bygew

**LOVE**

CONTINUED FROM D1

"These are wild animals," said Nate Woodward, guest services and front office manager at Safari West.

"They're gonna do what they're gonna do. Our guides get turned loose and talk about the courting and reproductive behaviors of the animals.

"We will be following social distancing protocols for our event," he explained.

"Folks will have a chance to be appropriately distanced on the walking tour, and the vehicles have clear vinyl barriers between the rows of seats. The truck, of course, has open sides to allow an unobstructed view of all the animals."

Regular tours at Safari West, where even wildebeest can fall in love, resume Feb. 27.

**The 6th Street Playhouse** pays tribute to romance among humans with "Love Is a Valentine's Cabaret," streaming on demand Friday through Tuesday and featuring recorded performances by Broadway actor Patrick Page, Tony nominee for "Hadesdown," and more than a dozen other performers.

"They are making videos of themselves performing at home, which we will then be editing in an evening of songs that people can watch," said Jared



JOHN BURGESS/THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

**Safari West wild animal preserve will hold its annual "Wild Jungle Love Safari Tour," a socially distanced tour by foot or open-air bus similar to the one above (but with adults only), with guides filling in guests on animal sex life.**

Sakren, artist director at the theater.

"All of them are connected with us through having performed before at the 6th Street Playhouse."

The one exception is Page, Sakren added. "He's an old college friend of mine."

"Valentine's Day means a lot to people," said Anne Clark, managing director at the 6th Street Playhouse.

"We can reach people even if they're home alone. We can be their valentine and let them feel the love all weekend."

Romance will be in the air online Friday during the **Luther Burbank**

**Center's "Date Night with LBC,"** featuring jazz artist Jonathan Butler. Food from chefs at six participating local restaurants can be ordered in advance and picked up before the show.

"We're doing Date Night for the first time," said Christopher Hunsberger, vice chairman of the board of directors for Luther Burbank Center for the Arts. "We've gotten a great response. We'll probably make this an annual event."

**The Sebastopol Center for the Arts** has gone online with its "Open Studios Valentine Pop Up" art sale program at sebartsvirtual.org, offering jewelry, glass

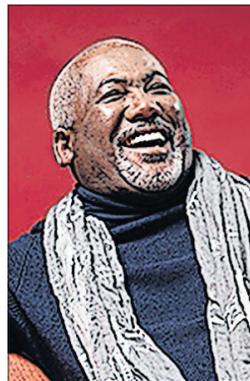
art, ceramics, fiber art and more for sale as unusual yet romantic gifts.

"You can choose something made by someone in Sonoma County," said Harris, who is offering her jewelry made with found objects, from buttons to bits of metal.

"You can find something that will be cherished because it's handmade. It's taking Valentine's Day to the next level."

The program also can help local artists overcome their financial losses due the cancellation of annual art tour events, Harris said.

At the Barlow shopping district in Sebastopol,



LUTHER BURBANK CENTER

**South African guitarist and singer-songwriter Jonathan Butler will perform at Luther Burbank Center's "Date Night with LBC."**

both the **Lori Austin Gallery and Gallery 300** are open for business, with limited capacity and social distancing protocols in place.

"Flowers and chocolates are lovely and traditional, but a thoughtfully chosen piece of art is the ultimate act of romance," gallery owner Lori Austin said.

"There are incredible pieces of original art you can find for under \$100. I just want people to know there is accessible art out there."

A gift of flowers is nice, but what will you put them in? **The Sonoma Community Center** is offering handmade vases by local ceramicists for sale online at scc-online-store-and-holiday-sale.square.site **Santa Rosa's Earle**

**Baum Center for people with sight loss**, long the home of the annual Earlefest music festival (which ended years before the pandemic), continues to offer classes in music and poetry online.

Founded in 1999, the center assists up to 1,500 sight-impaired people a year.

Named for blind farmer Earle Baum, it focuses on independent living skills, mobility and adaptive technology.

This year, the center decided to try something different and invited clients to write love letters to the agency. They got a strong response.

"I love the fact that **Earle Baum Center** is offering all its classes using Zoom so that I can stay safe in my house and still enjoy the services available there," one fan of the center wrote in a love letter.

"I miss everyone and all our activities together, but this is so great that they've adapted so well to our current reality."

The center staff drafted their own love letters to clients in return, **said Bob Sonnenberg, CEO of Earle Baum Center.**

"It's so important to maintain contact, especially for people with sight loss, because it's so isolating anyway," he said.

You can reach Staff Writer Dan Taylor at dan.taylor@pressdemocrat.com or 707-521-5243. On Twitter @danarts.

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