

# 'The envelopes, please ...'

## Arts DEVO hands out his awards for 2022

Welcome to the 15th edition of Art DEVO's annual local arts and culture awards ceremony. The envelopes, please ...

by  
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### Best news:

#### The scene is back

How good did it feel to order that first pint or cappuccino, sit down with others likewise imbibing and just be normal? If you're like me, then the first few post-COVID-restriction events were dicey as you tried to navigate socializing and breathing with others again, but it appears most of us are back in playing shape.

The producers have been producing something fierce, with full schedules at Chico State (**Chico Performances, School of the Arts**), **JMax Productions**, **El Rey Theatre**, the community theaters and local galleries. The independent promoters kept Chico's clubs stocked with touring and local acts—**Outpatient Records** at Argus; **Valley Fever** at Duffy's and Naked Lounge; and both **Chico Concerts** and **KZFR** at Chico Women's Club.

It's devastating to have lost some of the key community outlets—**Maltese Bar & Tap Room**, **La Salles** (final day Dec. 11), **Tin Roof Bakery & Cafe**, et al.—and there's still no word as to when live music will return to the **Sierra Nevada Big Room**. It's also a huge bummer to hear that **The Yule Logs**, the hardest working band in snow biz, have called it quits.

But it is heartening to see so many new or revamped businesses providing food and/or fun! **Om Foods** (now **Om on the Range**) has a new, bigger home, and joined **Naked Lounge** and **Secret Trail Brewing Co.** in building a new stage for live music. **Gnarly Deli**, **The Roost**, **Sicilian Cafe** and **Music Connection** all moved downtown. The **Farmers Brewing Co.** pub is open; **Winchester Goose** re-opened in new, bigger digs; **Bill's Towne Lounge** turned into the Asian/fusion cocktail lounge **The Bowery**; and a bunch of new restaurants—**Lili's Brazilian Bistro**, **Halal Boss Smokehouse**, **Savor Ice Cream**, **DeMilio's Italian Deli & Bakery**, etc.—have broadened the local palate.

### Best feel—really-good story:

#### Pat Hull

One minute, Chico's favorite musical son was on the soccer pitch; the next, he was in the ICU fighting to recover from a subarachnoid hemorrhage. A month later, he was almost completely back on his feet, and this fall he was back with his band and back on stage celebrating the release of a lovely new album, *et al.* (available at pathull.bandcamp.com). Here's one (out of context) line from the subdued piano song "Tailspin": *I lived and died, and*



*lived again, cursed myself, and sang a sigh/ Oh to see the small delights.*

### Best local artist:

#### Chloe Brandii

If you release two albums (*People* and *People Pleaser*), star in lead roles of sold-out musicals (Ariel in *The Little Mermaid*; Maria in *West Side Story*) and garner millions (!) of TikTok views of your singing, you are doing something right. If you do all that by your 18th birthday, you just win.

### Best way to honor a local legend:

#### Charlie Robinson Friends and Fans

The local guitar legend has had health issues as of late, and the music community that's been inspired, and often trained, by him is supporting him in multiple ways: a tribute show (Dec. 2 at Chico Women's Club); a remastering of his various recordings (by local engineer/guitar stud **Dave Elke**); and a donation drive and social-media campaign on Robinson's behalf. (For more on the man and the plan, see "Just play music," page 25.)

### Best local album:

#### Beyond the Gate, Henry Crook Bird

The best kind of folk music—telling moving stories with twangy plainspoken vocals and impressive acoustic guitar finger-picking. [henrycrookbird.bandcamp.com](http://henrycrookbird.bandcamp.com)

### Best local songs:

"Clear," by Scout; "In Between," by Madde; "Race the Sun," by Henry Crook Bird

### Best live theater:

*Death Clock Paradox*, the garage production of an "original play with music" by local playwright Wade Gess; Legacy Stage's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, bringing Shakespeare back into Bidwell Park; and *Dracula: A Musical with Bite*, Amber Miller's reworking of the classic vampire tale with a cast of local musicians and a sold-out run at Theatre on the Ridge.

### Best art shows:

*Sisko Lives* at MONCA; *Chikoko's Pod* at 1078 Gallery

### In memorium:

**Jeff Wozena** (1/3/22), local musician  
**Jim Walker** (6/18/22), former Chico vice mayor; parks commissioner  
**Tom Nickell** (7/19/22), former Chico vice mayor; CARD board member; parks commissioner  
**Dan Grover** (7/27/22), accessibility advocate; live music fanatic  
**Reed Applegate** (8/29/22), art collector/patron; MONCA benefactor  
**Randal Ahlswede** (9/21/22), local musician  
**Carey Wilson** (9/27/22), Chico's drummer



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