

# BRIGHT STAR

The Empress Theatre  
proudly presents



BRIGHT STAR

Music, Book & Story by STEVE MARTIN

Music, Lyrics & Story by EDIE BRICKELL





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### CONTENTS

Sponsors	3-4
OHPAA	5
Resident Staff	6
Production Staff	7
Show Director's Note	8
Cast List	9-10
Scenes and Songs	11
Upcoming	12
Theatrical Note	13-14
Thank You To Our Sponsors	15 -16
Cast Biographies	17-20
Band Biographies	21-22
Production Biographies	23-24

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For more information on how you can become a member and enhance your Empress experience, email [empress@empresstheatre.com](mailto:empress@empresstheatre.com), visit [empresstheatre.com/give](http://empresstheatre.com/give) or call us at 801-347-7373



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## Mission Statement of OHPAA

The mission of the Oquirrh Hills Performing Arts Alliance is to cultivate and advance the performing arts in Magna Township and surrounding areas. OHPAA will work to create a distinguished arena for nurturing local talent and to provide cultural and educational experiences for the entire community by maintaining high standards of family oriented, quality programs and performances.

## Board of Directors

Chairman: Marie Roe  
Vice Chair: Krystle Ricks  
Treasurer: Position Open  
Secretary: Position Open

Board Members: Barry Ricks  
Krystle Ricks  
Amanda Robison  
Sheay Neilson  
Jason Sabin  
Rachel Sabin





## Resident Staff

Artistic Director	Position Open
Assistant Artistic Director	Position Open
Audio Technical Director	Position Open
Lighting Technical Director	Sylas Fordham
Rental Manager	Cheryl Cripps
Marketing Director	Position Open
Staff Photographer	Beth Bruner

## Want to Get Involved?

Join us on the third Tuesday of each month.

Board meetings are held at the theatre  
at 7:30 PM. Members of the public are welcome and  
encouraged to attend.

Board Applications are available and reviewed on a rolling basis.  
We encourage all interested individuals to apply!

[www.empresstheatre.com/OHPAA](http://www.empresstheatre.com/OHPAA)

Director & Choreographer	Mindy Eckroth
Music Director	Laura Lewis
Band Conductor	Marie Buhler
Stage Manager	Candice Jorgensen
Assistant Choreographer	Chloe Coleman
Costumer	Ashley North
Wig Design	Cheryl Cripps
Projection Design	David Bates
Lighting Design	Sylas Fordham & Mindy Eckroth
Lighting Technician	Courtney Joseph
Sound Technician	Kylee Larsen
Projection Technician	Candice Jorgensen
Set Design	Mindy Eckroth
Set Construction	Hutch Jorgensen, Gary Kemp, Sonia Maughan, and the cast and crew of Bright Star
Dresser & Stage Crew	Maureen DeSisto





It has been an absolute honor to direct this show! So much passion and creativity has gone into bringing this powerful story of love and redemption to life by all involved in the process. The journey we take you on won't always be easy. If we have done our jobs right, it will make you feel something, possibly even a rollercoaster of emotions.

Bright Star was inspired by a true story and although it is not a historically accurate re-telling of the legend, it takes the tragic circumstances from the original tale and creates a completely new sequence of events that could have also transpired with a similar start. We are grateful to have our live bluegrass band playing the incredible Tony®-nominated score written by Steve

Martin and Edie Brickell. Everyone involved has poured their hearts into this show and my greatest hope is that you will not only enjoy the story but that it will inspire you as it has all of us.



*Mindy Eckroth*

DIRECTOR

NORTH STAR CAST

Performing September 15, 21, 23 (Evening), 28, & 30 (Matinee)

Alice.....	Ashley Bates
Jimmy.....	Austin Kimbell
Billy.....	Scotty Florell
Margo.....	Jennica Young
Lucy.....	Beck Skeen
Daryl.....	Sam Phillips
Mayor Dobbs.....	Brent Sloan
Daddy Murphy.....	Barry Ricks
Mama Murphy.....	Lisa Shortridge
Daddy Cane.....	Todd Taylor
Stanford Adams.....	Kaeleb Hunt
Max.....	Bradley Barker
Dr. Norquist.....	Shatan Duke
Spirits.....	Kayla Martin, Emma Simmons, Emily Jameson
Edna.....	Sarah Wright
Office Clerk.....	Crystal Ahlemann
Florence.....	Melanie Turner
Ensemble.....	Crystal Ahlemann, Stephanie Benson
.....	Trevor Noble, Makayla Porter, Heather Shelley
.....	Melanie Turner, Sarah Wright
Ensemble Understudies (Sept 15).....	Chloe Coleman, Laura Lewis

BLUEGRASS BAND

Conductor.....	Marie Buhler
Cello.....	Ashley Joseph
Upright Bass.....	Isaiah Perez
Banjo, Long-Neck Banjo, Acoustic Guitar.....	Spencer Kellogg
Viola & Violin.....	Natalie Cardon
Piano.....	Stacy Mayren
Keyboard.....	Joe DeSisto
Fiddle.....	Kim Brown
Drums.....	JD Robison
Mandolin, Octave Mandolin, Manditar.....	Christian Porter
Acoustic Guitar.....	Brandon Kerby



# GUIDING STAR CAST

Performing September 16, 22, 23 (Matinee), 29, & 30 (Evening)

Alice.....	Heather Shelley
Jimmy .....	Trevor Noble
Billy.....	Bradley Barker
Margo .....	Stephanie Benson
Lucy.....	Makayla Porter
Daryl.....	Sam Phillips
Mayor Dobbs.....	Brent Sloan
Daddy Murphy.....	Barry Ricks
Mama Murphy.....	Emily Jameson
Daddy Cane .....	Kaeleb Hunt
Stanford Adams .....	Todd Taylor
Max.....	Scotty Florell
Dr. Norquist.....	Shatan Duke
Spirits .....	Kayla Martin, Emma Simmons, Lisa Shortridge
Edna .....	Sarah Wright
Office Clerk.....	Crystal Ahlemann
Florence.....	Melanie Turner
Ensemble .....	Crystal Ahlemann, Ashley Bates
.....	Austin Kimbell, Beck Skeen, Melanie Turner,
.....	Sarah Wright, Jennica Young

# BLUEGRASS BAND

Conductor.....	Marie Buhler
Cello .....	Ashley Joseph
Upright Bass .....	Isaiah Perez
Banjo, Long-Neck Banjo, Acoustic Guitar.....	Spencer Kellogg
Viola & Violin.....	Natalie Cardon
Piano.....	Stacy Mayren
Keyboard.....	Joe DeSisto
Fiddle.....	Kim Brown
Drums.....	JD Robison
Mandolin, Octave Mandolin, Manditar.....	Christian Porter
Acoustic Guitar .....	Brandon Kerby



# SONGS

## ACT 1

If You Knew My Story .....	Alice, Company
She's Gone .....	Daddy Cane, Billy
Bright Star .....	Billy, Ensemble
Way Back in the Day .....	Alice, Ensemble
Whoa, Mama .....	Jimmy Ray, Alice, Ensemble
Firmer Hand / Do Right.....	Daddy Murphy, Mama Murphy, Alice, Ensemble
A Man's Gotta Do.....	Mayor Dobbs, Jimmy Ray
Asheville .....	Margo, Ensemble
What Could Be Better.....	Jimmy Ray, Alice, Ensemble
I Can't Wait .....	Alice, Jimmy Ray, Ensemble
Please Don't Take Him.....	Mayor Dobbs, Alice
.....	Daddy Murphy, Mama Murphy, Stanford, Ensemble
A Man's Gotta Do (Reprise) .....	Mayor Dobbs, Ensemble

Consider snapping a photo and sharing on your social media with  
 #MeetMeAtTheEmpress and  
 #EmpressBrightStar

## ACT 2

Sun's Gonna Shine.....	Alice, Mama Murphy, Margo, Daddy Cane,
.....	Edna, Florence, Ensemble
Heartbreaker.....	Jimmy Ray
Another Round .....	Lucy, Daryl, Billy, Ensemble
I Had a Vision .....	Alice, Jimmy Ray
Always Will .....	Billy, Margo, Ensemble
Can't Wait (Reprise).....	Ensemble
So Familiar .....	Alice, Ensemble
At Long Last .....	Alice, Ensemble
Finale .....	Company



# SWEENEY TODD

THE DEMON BARBER OF FLEET STREET



## SWEENEY TODD

Performing

Oct 27 - Nov 11

## AT THIS THEATRE

The Empress Theatre started as a burlesque house where the Miners could come and spend their time after long hours laboring in the pit.

After a couple of years, the venue was transformed into a movie house, showing silent movies on a large screen (If you'll turn your attention to the S row, you will be able to see the remains of the screen from 1930; the black rectangle above the S row). After showing movies until the 1950's, the theatre closed down and remained vacant for some time.

In the early 80's, the venue would be owned by Leo W. Ware. Leo worked tirelessly on renovating the venue. One of the most obvious places is the Green Room (not accessible during shows, if you would like a tour, please contact anyone listed as staff in the playbill), which was dug out by hand with a wheelbarrow and trowel.

Leo would spend the last years of his life renovating the Empress. In 2006, The Oquirrh Hills Performing Arts Alliance (OHPAA) was formed. OHPAA took the keys and finished the work Leo had begun, culminating in the first performance in over 50 years. The first production mounted was Forever Plaid. Leo was among those in the audience opening night. He passed away soon after, having seen his dream come to fruition.

Today we carry on the legacy Leo left behind. Our venue is run solely by volunteers and through funds raised by our generous patrons, volunteers, and board members. The dedication of all who walk through the Empress doors is a testament to true community theatre. As of The Pirate Queen, the theatre has mounted 142 productions in just seventeen years since reopening with no end in sight. OHPAA and the staff of the Empress hope to continue bringing quality, family oriented theatre to the citizens of Magna and the Greater Salt Lake Valley.







In early 2021, a local group of people formed an LLC and raised the required funds to purchase the Empress Theatre from Aileen Ware and her family. We are grateful to the Ware's for trusting us with their theatre for so long.

This change in ownership has culminated in the changes you see here today! Throughout the years, the Empress has ebbed and flowed, always staying on course with steadfastness.

We are pleased to continue the partnership into the future and remained committed to taking care of this wonderful building.



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# CAST BIOGRAPHIES

Crystal Ahlemann is excited to be back at the historic Empress Theatre performing in Bright Star! This is Crystal's first time in a dramatic musical production and she hopes to do it justice. Some of her favorite past performances have been Drowsy Chaperone, Freaky Friday, James and the



Giant Peach, and more recently Addams Family and Wedding Singer right here at the Empress. Crystal would like to thank her family for all their love and support while she plays with her friends on stage - love you!

Bradley Barker is new to Utah and has been performing for most of his life. This is his first show with Empress, but his forth show in Utah. Some of his favorite roles include Jack Kelly- Newsies Sweeney Todd-Sweeney Todd Jimmy Ray- Bright Star Prince Eric- The Little Mermaid.



He wants to thank Mindy for giving him this opportunity. The Production Team for always working so hard, his new friends he's become so close to, and his sister for always supporting him. Lastly, he'd like to thank you the audience for coming and hopes you enjoy the show!

Ashley Bates is honored to be able to tell this amazing story in her Empress Theatre debut. Ashley has had the pleasure of playing exciting roles, such as The Fairy Godmother in Cinderella, Fiona in Brigadoon, Helen Keller in The Miracle Worker, and Little Red in Into the Woods. She is in awe

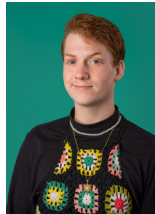


of the talent in the cast and crew and hopes that everyone can take away something beautiful or meaningful from this performance. Ashley would like to thank the amazing people in her life for their unconditional support and love as she sings and dances through it.

Stephanie Benson is excited to be back on the Empress stage as part of this beautiful, powerful show! Her last roles here were Fiona in Shrek the Musical and a Newsie in Newsies. When she is not performing or choreographing, Stephanie spends her time hiking with her dog, playing board games with friends and family, and working as a Marriage and Family Therapist.



Shatan Duke is very excited to be returning to The Empress stage. Appearing in previous shows such as The Pirate Queen as Tiernan and A Chorus Line as Greg, Shatan has loved working with the cast, crew, and The Empress Staff to bring one of their favorite shows to life, Shatan has also worked behind the scenes on a few different show here at The Empress, being one of costume designers for The Drowsy Chaperone as well as stage managing Tuck Everlasting. Follow Shatan on Instagram @shatanduke to keep up with their future projects!



This is Scotty Florell's first show at Empress and he is excited to be joining the cast, band, and crew of "Bright Star"! He has previously done theater at Intermountain Christian School and Desert Star Youth Theater. He would like to thank his family and friends for helping to keep him involved in theater after high school! IG: @Scottacious



Kaeleb Hunt has a theatre history that started with Shakespeare, but quickly moved to musical theatre thanks to his grandmother, Peggy Hunt. He is opera trained, and while his goal is to pursue opera professionally his dream is to play Tevya, in Fiddler on the Roof. Recently, Kaeleb was in the Harry Potter fan series The Noble House of Black, The Sound of Music, and toured Europe with the Draper Philharmonic and Choral Society performing in King of Kings and Lamb of God, in Paris, Vienna, Bratislava, and Prague.



Austin Kimbell is thrilled to be making his Empress debut as Jimmy Ray Dobbs in the North Star Cast! Austin is a High School Theatre Teacher at Kearns High School. He is thrilled to bring this story to life. Some of his favorite roles include Link Larkin in Hairspray, Cinderella's Prince in Into the Woods and Jetsam in The Little Mermaid. Austin thanks the directing team for believing in him and to his husband Nick for always supporting his dreams! Enjoy Bright Star!



After a long hiatus to grow her family, Kayla Martin is thrilled to be back on the Empress stage. You may have caught her performance as Ursula in "The Little Mermaid" back in 2018. She has taught Junior High Theatre teacher for 11 years and is a mom to 3 human-kids and 2 fur-babies. A huge thank you to Mindy and her team for allowing me to be part of this journey. It feels so good to be home.



Trevor Noble is ecstatic to be at the Empress performing as Jimmy Ray! He is so excited to be bringing this wonderful story to life, and he hopes you all love the show as much as he does! Favorite roles he's been in include Christopher in Cinderella, Clopin in The Hunchback of Notre Dame, and Sam Carmichael in Mamma Mia!



Barry Ricks is excited to be back on the Empress stage again. Barry was recently the Big Bad Wolf in Shrek and the Mayor/Nunzio in Newsies, as well as Angus Tuck in Tuck Everlasting. He loves being on the stage and is so excited to be in Bright Star. He would like to thank his supportive and amazing wife and family. Thanks babe, I love you.



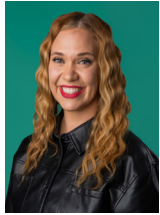
This is Sam Phillips' first show at Empress and also their first show in 3 years. They are so excited to be performing again! Some of their favorite credits include: Tarzan (Kala), A Murder is Announced (Bunny), and Aladdin (Genie). "Thank you so much to my loved ones for always supporting me and loving me through everything!"



Lisa Shortridge is excited to be work with such a talented team at The Empress Theater. Most recently she played Poole in Draper Historic Theater's production of Jekyll and Hyde. She also performed as Mary of Bethany in the Lamb of God this past Easter. For many years she has spent most of her time being a wife and mother of 3 children and is thrilled to show her children that it's never too late to try something new.



Makayla Porter is excited to be making her Empress Theatre debut with such a talented group of people! She loves to be on stage, and has been performing in some capacity her whole life. A few of her favorite roles include Joy (Cinderella), Ado Annie (Oklahoma!), and a Silly Girl (Beauty and the Beast). Her favorite roles off the stage are wife, Dog Mom, Jazzercise Instructor, and Massage Therapist. "Big thanks to my husband, family, and friends for their support and encouragement!"



Emma Simmons has been in love with theater her whole life. Before graduating from Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts in 2021 she was in too many shows to count! Including Into the Woods and Heathers at Desert Star Playhouse. After graduation she decided to take a break from theater to work on finding herself and save up money to go to cosmetology school. This is her first time back on stage and is so honored to be involved in this wonderful story and can't wait to share her love for the theater with you!



Beck Skeen is back for more at the empress while playing Lucy in the North cast and Ensemble in the Guiding cast!! Some of their featured roles include Ellie Blake in Freaky Friday, Grace O'Malley in the Pirate queen here at the empress as well as Buttons in Newsies, the Narrator in Puffs, an Aerialist in Tarzan at East High in 2018, Pippin, Lion King at Draper Historic Theater, rock of ages and Big Fish here at the empress. They are beyond excited to share this show with you and can't wait to come back for more.



Brent Sloan is excited to join this talented cast and production team in this special work by Steve Martin and Edie Bricknell. Thank heaven we live in a society today that treats an unwed 16 year old with more compassion! Enjoy this thought provoking story story of heartbreak and redemption.



Todd Taylor is thrilled to be making his on stage debut at the Empress playing Daddy Cane! This character has been so fun to get to know. His favorite roles include Lionel in "Cinderella" Lord Farquaad in "Shrek the Musical" the Waiter in "First Date the Musical" and Lumiere in "Beauty and the Beast."



Melanie Jayne Turner had recently been seen in OBT's Suessical the Musical and Titus Productions Theatre Co's The Scarlet Pimpernel. Her last performance here was Addams Family . She is so excited to be back on the Empress stage and working with Mindy Eckroth again. Melanie is grateful to be working with this amazing cast and wonderful production team. Join us on the journey of love sorrow, and forgiveness that is Bright Star.



Sarah Wright is so excited to be doing her first sho at the Empress! Though Sarah's love for the stage began in high school in Beauty and the Beast, she didn't really explore it until 10 years later in Best Christmas Pageant Ever and Littler Mermaid. However, she had to take a hiatus as she changed careers, started a Masters Degree, got married, and had a baby. She came back to the stage earlier this year in Cinderella and now in Bright Star!



My name is Jennica Young. Theater has been such a significant part of my life since I was four years old and absolutely love it! Some of my favorite roles have been Susan in Calamity Jane, Joy in Cinderella, Marmee in Little Women, Chutney in Legally Blonde, and Wendy in Peter Pan. Other than theater I enjoy camping, white water rafting, reading, watching TV, and playing any kind of game with my family. I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of this production and hope everyone falls in love with this story as much as I have.





# BAND BIOGRAPHIES

Kimberly Allred is so excited to be playing Fiddle for Empress's Bright Star! She grew up playing fiddle and violin for several years in Northern California where she lived half of her life. This is her first time performing in a pit orchestra for a musical but she's absolutely thrilled to be sharing the beautiful music and story through her instrument. She'd like to thank her amazing husband Aaron who supported her in this and her beautiful baby, Lyla who always listened to her practice and didn't let it interrupt her precious nap time.



I am Natalie Cardon and I love musicals and I'm excited for this opportunity to participate in my first show at the Empress. I primarily play violin and have played with the West Valley Symphony for 16 years. I thank my husband Nathan for supporting me.



Joe DeSisto is a relative newcomer to Utah, having directed shows and taught technical theater for 24 years at Renbrook School in his native Connecticut. Since arriving he has served as musical director for "Joseph..." and "Forever Plaid" at Draper Historic as well as several shows in various technical positions. While this is his first show with Empress, he certainly hopes it will not be his last.



Hi! I'm Ashley Joseph and I am the cellist for Bright Star. I have been playing cello for around 8 years. This is my first show at The Empress. I am 21 years old and I love music, reading and writing.



Spencer Kellogg is excited to be playing banjo for BRIGHT STAR! Spencer is a multi-instrumentalist specializing in woodwind & guitar families. He has been playing in pit orchestras around the valley since 2017 and has been a part of the music world in Utah since he moved here in 2000. During the day you'll find him working at the School of Music at the U of U. He lives with his lovely wife and energetic puppy.



Brandon "Buck" Kerby: a bluegrass enthusiast with deep roots in North Carolina and Georgia, Buck grew up in Magna, Utah and teaches Spanish at Cyprus High, his alma mater. Buck is a passionate bluegrass guitarist and has been playing guitar since he was young. When not playing the guitar, he immerses himself in video games, board games, travel, learning languages. Buck's greatest joy is his family. He has five daughters and also plays bluegrass music with his wife. He's immensely thankful to his family for their support playing in his first musical theater production.





Stacy Mayrén has been performing since she was a toddler; the theatre is definitely her happy place. This is the 20th show Stacy's been involved in at the Empress, and she's very grateful for the opportunity to be able to help bring beautiful stories to life. Peace, love, music!



Isaiah Perez is the bassist in Bright Star at Empress Theater. He has played in the Granite Junior Youth Symphony and is currently in the Utah Youth Symphony. Isaiah is a sophomore at Granger High School and has played bass for two years.



Christian Porter has an extensive background in music, graduating from Utah State University with a Bachelors of Science in Music Therapy. He performed with the Cache Chamber Orchestra from 2007-2011 as a violist and has performed many times at Whysound and at the Wanlass Performance Hall in Logan, UT. He has a passion for bluegrass music and if an instrument has strings, he can probably play it.



J.D. Robison has been playing drums since the late 1900s. He regularly plays with the West Valley Symphony as percussion section leader. He was previously seen in A Chorus Line, where his wife, Amanda was the conductor. He is survived by his wife and 2 children, a dog, a cat and a chinchilla named Xavier. He'd like to thank Dr. Pepper, Doritos Spicy Sweet Chili chips, and Zelda (and his family, I guess) for helping to get him here today.



## MINDY ECKROTH DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER



Mindy Eckroth has been involved in over 100 productions over the past 25 years working as a Director, Choreographer, Performer, Producer, Costumer, Stage Manager and more. Mindy previously

directed The Addams Family in 2021 here and it turned out to be one of her favorite directing experiences of all time so she was thrilled to return to The Empress to direct Bright Star. Mindy would like to thank the creative team, cast & band for pouring their hearts and talents into this production and for being so wonderful to work with!

## LAURA LEWIS MUSIC DIRECTOR



Laura Lewis grew up in a very musical household. From a young age, Laura trained in voice, music composition, audio production, and danced with a national grand-champion dance team. Laura loves being a part of

theater in any way she can because it helps her do the things she loves to do most — singing, dancing, and performing — all while making new, amazing friends. Laura would like to thank her husband and children for all of their support, her brothers and sisters for their constant encouragement, and her mom who instilled a love of music and theater in her life!

## MARIE BUHLER BAND DIRECTOR



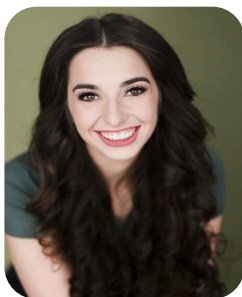
Marie Buhler is excited for her first show with Empress as director of this wonderful bluegrass band! Previous shows with Herriman include: "Night at the Library" as Cinderella and "Joseph, and the

Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" as ensemble/wife. She played French horn in the orchestra for "Mary Poppins" and "Cinderella" and directed the orchestra for "Chitty, Chitty, Bang Bang" and "Freaky Friday". She also played Queen Constantina in Cinderella with Draper Historic Theater. She got her BS in Music Ed. at UVU, sings with Cantorum Chamber Choir, and teaches school and voice lesson

**CANDICE JORGENSEN**  
**STAGE MANAGER**

This is Candice Jorgensen's first show at the Empress as Stage Manager. She has performed on and off the stage for many years here. She was last seen in Freaky Friday. Favorites Empress roles have been The

Drowsy Chaperone and Sister Mary Patrick. Thank you Empress for being a safe second home. Thank you Mindy for letting me join this amazing production. And most importantly, thank you Hutch, Perrin, Atticus & Cecily for letting mom play.

**CHLOE COLEMAN**  
**ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER**

Chloe Coleman is delighted to join the production team for her first show at the Empress Theatre. Usually found on stage instead of backstage, Chloe is enjoying her

experience being a part of the backstage and rehearsal magic. Chloe's most recent shows include The Little Mermaid and Cinderella at Draper Historic Theater; and Into the Woods and Guys & Dolls with Lehi Arts Center.

January 27

*The Pirate Queen*

February 11

May 12

**FREAKY FRIDAY**

May 27

July 28

*CINDERELLA*

August 12

October 27

**SWEENEY TODD**

November 11

April 7

**COMPANY**

April 22

July 14

**SUESSICAL<sub>®</sub>**

July 22

September 15

**BRIGHT-STAR**

September 30

August 26

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