The Desert Sun
October 30, 2011

GREATER PALM SPRINGS PRIDE 2011 CELEBRATING

25

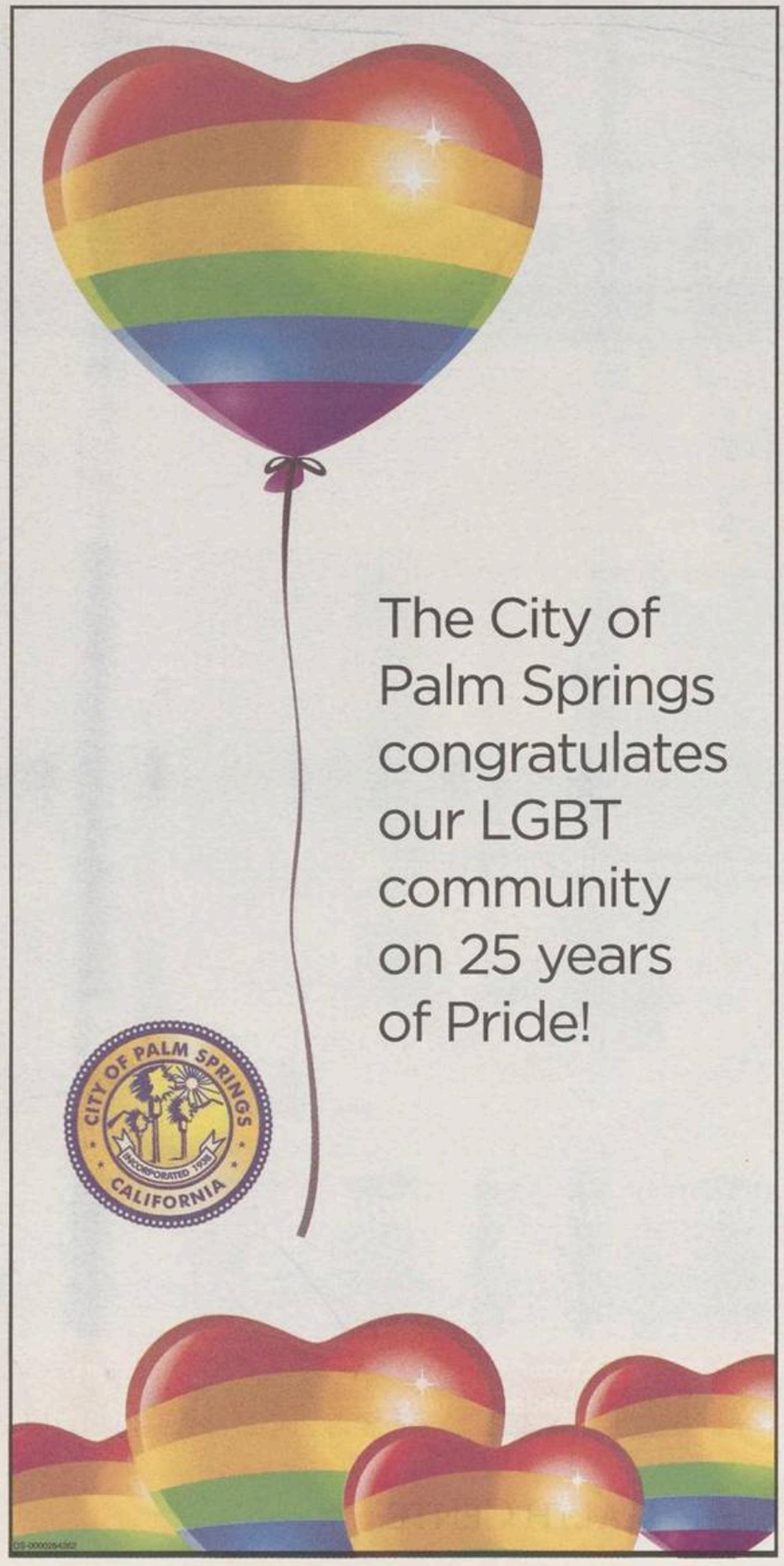
YEARS OF

PRIDE

IN THE DESERT





EDITOR'S NOTE

Happy 25, but it's just the beginning



WILL DEAN
EDITOR

The Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival is 25 this year — a significant birthday by many standards.

Well beyond its infancy and teen years, Pride is a fully grown event with all the responsibilities, challenges and renewed focus that implies.

One of the biggest responsibilities facing the Pride Committee and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents is reaching out and showing pride to the broader community.

"Pride isn't an event just for gays and lesbians," said Ron deHarte, executive vice president of Greater Palm Springs Pride. "It's for the community to celebrate equality, diversity. You want to celebrate diversity with everyone who lives in Palm Springs."

To that end, deHarte said, the 2011 Pride honorees and entertainers include straight champions of equal rights who support their LGBT family members, friends and neighbors in innumerable ways.

Their inclusion in Pride shows that the fight for gay rights is a community-wide movement. And it reminds LGBT citizens that we're stronger as a group with diverse talents and ideas moving toward the same goal.

Just as the battle for civil rights for African Americans was strengthened by non-African American allies who marched, participated in sit-ins and spoke out for equality, the gay rights fight can benefit from the support and contributions of our straight allies.

That was a particularly hard lesson to learn in 2008 when a majority of California voters approved Proposition 8 to legally ban same-sex marriage. Strategists and critics alike pointed to preaching the LGBT message to the choir, in part, as one reason for the setback.

It's a valid argument as well regarding Pride events, which on Nov. 5-6 are expected to have a variety of participants and attendees.

"You can't preach to the community and expect change from a broader base," deHarte said. "We communicated to the gays and lesbians. We only reached out to the gay establishments."

Broadening that base is an achievable goal. Pride repeatedly has adapted to the needs and interests of LGBT people throughout its history, from its national origin in response to the Stonewall uprising of 1969 to the inaugural Palm Springs festival in 1986 to raise awareness and rally support during the AIDS crisis.

Starting this year, community and full equality are a primary focus. So as we celebrate a quarter-century of Pride in the desert, make the festival and parade one to grow on.

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EISENHOWER HEALTH CENTER

THE ACTIVIST

Right man for the job often a strong woman

By K Kaufmann
k.kaufmann@thedesertsun.com

If you were in San Francisco in the 1980s — as many of Palm Springs' lesbian and gay community were — you could not help but know Jean Harris.

She was, it seemed, everywhere. At community meetings, at women's groups, wherever something progressive and political was happening, she would be there, a butch lesbian emanating power in a way that was exhilarating, uncompromising and, yes, often abrasive.

"She was tough as nails," recalled Palm Springs resident Hank Plante, who often covered stories in which Harris played a part during his years as a television reporter in San Francisco.


Jean Harris

"It comes down to who do you want on your side," he said. "Thank heavens she was fighting on the side she was fighting on."

Harris, who died June 25 of natural causes at her home in Palm Springs, will receive one of this year's Pride honors, recognizing a lifetime spent on the front line of political battles for LGBT civil rights.

"During the '90s we used to talk about LGBT people having a seat at the table," said her partner, Denise Penn. "Jean was one of the people who kicked open the door so we could get in the room. She would not take no for an answer."

Penn and others who knew Harris said she came by her hard-nosed approach to life and politics honestly. Raised in a conservative family in Orange County, Harris was a wife and mother when she came out as a lesbian in the late '70s. Family members testified against her in court to deny her custody of her children.

But she also had a softer side, Penn said.

"She was such an animal lover. She loved her dog," she said. "She was also very nurturing and caring."

Harris first surfaced as a force in the lesbian and gay community in the 1980s as an aide to Supervisor Harry Britt, the city's second openly gay supervisor, who was chosen to fill Harvey Milk's seat after Milk's assassination in 1978.

She led campaigns to establish the city's domestic partners law and was a key organizer in the 1990 "Lavender Sweep" election, when several openly lesbian and gay candidates were elected to top city positions.

Kurt Barrie, a campaign consultant, was in his 20s when he first met Harris during the domestic partners campaign.

"I had walked into a nightclub and they were registering voters," said Barrie, who recently returned to San Francisco after several years in Palm Springs. "I started talking to Jean; the next thing I knew she had talked me into registering voters."

He attributed Harris's long record of success in politics with her commitment to grassroots organizing.

"The way you do that is to inspire (people) to get involved, and give them responsibility so they have a stake in the process," he said.

In the 1990s, Harris moved to Oregon where she led a successful campaign against an anti-gay rights ballot initiative and became the first executive director of Basic Rights Oregon,

Please see HARRIS, P14

THE INNOVATOR

Creator celebrates all the colors of the rainbow

By Will Dean
will.dean@thedesertsun.com

When you see a Rainbow Flag during the Greater Palm Springs Pride festivities — and you will see it — consider that this widely recognized, international symbol of gay pride started with one man, eight swaths of Oxford nylon and a Kenmore sewing machine.

Gilbert Baker was 27 years old living in San Francisco when he designed the flag in 1978. It was the same year his friend, San Francisco County Supervisor Harvey Milk, was assassinated.


Gilbert Baker

Intent on finding an emblem that represented the gay pride Milk helped instill in their community, Baker turned to another force of nature for inspiration.

"It's a rainbow. It's magic. It's beautiful," he said. "That we took something from nature to express ourselves, it's invincible."

Baker, now 60, has been invited to lead the procession of a 400-foot version of his Rainbow Flag on Nov. 6 during the Palm Springs Pride parade. He is one of three people the local Pride Committee will recognize this year with lifetime achievement awards.

Ron deHarte, executive vice president of Greater Palm Springs Pride, hopes everyone who sees the flag leaves the parade with " a great feeling of pride and awareness of the diversity and strength of the LGBT community."

Baker's flag idea germinated for awhile before he designed it. He first noticed the power of flags around the time of the bicentennial in 1976, when U.S. flags were everywhere.

His first thought was that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people should have their own flag.

"We're more than a global nation; we're a tribe," he said. "A flag really said that, and they're really not like any other work of art. A flag is way beyond a logo. It becomes an idea that everyone who looks at it interprets in a personal way."

Motivated by a lifelong interest in fashion and costumes and his newfound freedom as an out gay man after two years as an Army medic, Baker bought the material and sewed his first Rainbow Flag at a gay community center.

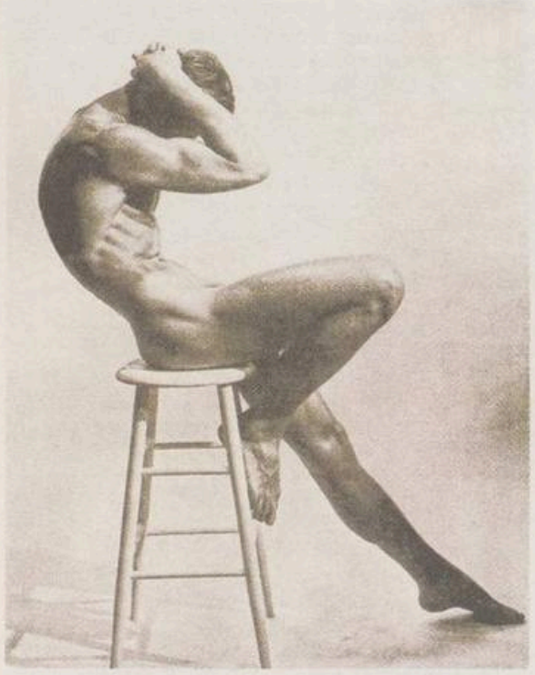
When he watched it being raised for the first time at the United Nations Plaza, "I knew right then and there that this is the most important thing I would ever do in my life."

The flag immediately caught on in San Francisco and gained momentum two years later in New York and Los Angeles, but it took about 10 years

Please see BAKER, P14

THE TRAILBLAZER

50 years later, 'obscene' photos become iconic art



This 1957 image of model Rick Conroy remains one of photographer John Palatinus' most popular works.
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John Palatinus

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Information: (760) 464-5978

By Will Dean
will.dean@thedesertsun.com

When photographer John Palatinus was on trial in 1961, facing a prison sentence for mailing nude "beefcake" photos, the judge made a prophetic statement.

"The judge said, 'By today's community standards,'" Palatinus recalled, "'these photographs must be considered obscene. Perhaps 50 years from now, they may be considered art.'"

Palatinus was found guilty of disseminating pornography but allowed to go free, having already spent a night in jail at the time of his arrest.

Fifty years later, his photos of the male physique are displayed in books, magazines and art galleries from Paris, Berlin and Antwerp to San Francisco, Los Angeles and Palm Springs.

In November, the Palm Springs resident will be recognized with one of three lifetime achievement awards during the 2011 Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival.

He's described in festival literature as a "revolutionary artist – a man persecuted for his art in a time noted for its repression of gay men and women."

"It's a fulfilling experience," Palatinus, 82, said about being selected for the award.

Some would call it a full-circle moment.

Palatinus began photographing male bodybuilders in 1954 in his native Indiana, after serving with the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers in the South of France during the Korean War. The subjects of his photos were usually friends who wanted to record their bodybuilding progress.

From the beginning, Palatinus saw more in the images than developing pectorals and biceps.

"I realized there was a certain amount of art in there," he said.

Alan Harmon, a collector of Palatinus' work and other beefcake photos from the 1940s through the '60s, said the photographer's skill was evident in his early photos and improved as he gained experience.

"He was a very straightforward artist," said Harmon, 46. "He didn't doctor things up with outrageous backgrounds."

Palatinus continued to photograph young men, often dressed in a posing strap or white pants, when he moved to New York City in 1956. He earned a living as a window display designer, but photography was his passion.

His photos were regularly published in Tomorrow's Man, a bodybuilding magazine with homoerotic overtones. It was popular among young gay men and those coming to terms with their orientation, at a time when homosexuality wasn't openly discussed and there were laws against sending explicit photos by mail.

Photographer Tom Bianchi of Palm Springs recalls seeing Palatinus' photos in Tomorrow's Man as a "kid who couldn't talk about gayness" with anyone. They were the "only images where maybe there would be someone I was attracted to," he said.

Palatinus photographed some nudes as well, which immediately grew his mail-order business. Because the men were pictured solo and never in sexual poses, he didn't expect the abrupt end of his photography in 1959.

A former Army buddy had spent the night with Palatinus, and they decided to go out for breakfast. As they left the apartment, they were surrounded by 15 New York City police officers and U.S. Postal Service investigators.

They arrested Palatinus, his roommate who worked with him, and all of the employees at the photo lab that printed his photos. His Army buddy was not arrested.

"I had never been in jail before," said Palatinus, who was 29 at the time. "I was scared ... of course. I didn't think I did anything wrong."

He was so shaken by the experience that he walked away from physique photography as a career and hobby. He was certain that part of his life was over until a friend saw his name mentioned in a blog in 2009.

Two of Palatinus' photos were posted in the blog written by Harmon. Out of curiosity, Palatinus visited the site (v-m-p.blogspot.com) and saw where Harmon had written that he wasn't sure the photographer was still alive.

Palatinus, who moved to Palm Springs in 2002, e-mailed Harmon that he was "very much alive" and would like to meet him.

Harmon, who happened to live in Palm Desert, met with Palatinus and showed the photographer images he had taken but hadn't seen in years. They remained in touch after the meeting, and it wasn't long before they were talking about putting a show together.

Since 2009, they have led a revival of Palatinus' work at galleries and festivals in the States and European capitals. "I've had a second act," Palatinus said. "It's been wonderfully rewarding."

THE LEADERS

Some folks know how to make things happen



Geoff Kors and James Williamson

By Will Dean
will.dean@thedesertsun.com

SPECIAL GUESTS

For nine years **Geoff Kors** led Equality California, the LGBT rights organization that's been instrumental in calling for marriage equality for all Americans. As executive director from 2002 to 2011, Kors developed a strategy to implement more than 70 pieces of LGBT rights legislation — many of which he conceived and helped draft.

But Kors' LGBT civil rights work didn't begin with Equality California. Prior to that he was a partner in a law firm and director of gay and lesbian rights and AIDS and civil liberties projects for the ACLU of Illinois.

Kors and his domestic partner, **James Williamson,** both of Palm Springs, are being honored as special guests of the Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival for their activism and community service.



Dana Adkins



George Zander

As a volunteer with many organizations, Williamson provided emotional support to people with the end stage of HIV/AIDS, served as treasurer for candidates seeking public office, and helped with the election campaigns of those who supported full equality and justice.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Singer, actress and TV host **Dana Adkins** of Cathedral City is among Palm Springs' favorite go-to performers for charitable events. She has provided her talent for the fundraising efforts of many organizations, such as AIDS Assistance Program, Palm Springs Animal Shelter and Desert AIDS Project.

George Zander has been on a mission to make a difference since his high school days in the early 1960s, when he helped to create the school's community outreach committee in Seattle.

He honed his community service skills in the Peace Corps and on LGBT rights and political campaigns. In 1999, he helped to found the Desert Stonewall Democratic Club.

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THE GRAND MARSHAL

Young advocate goes to bat for gay peers

By Will Dean
will.dean@thedesertsun.com

Caleb Laieski never went to prom or received a high school diploma.

Bullying denied him these once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

After he began freshman year, the name-calling and taunts that had followed him since seventh grade escalated. His family had moved to a rough community in western Arizona where the out gay youth said he faced bullying "at least a dozen times a day" from classmates.

Laieski, now 16, thought entering high school was going to be fun.

"It was going to be prom and all these awesome events, he said.

"Freshman year, I was there a few weeks and I was called fag; I had somebody try to run me over. It was dumb things like this that made me fear for my life and going to school."

Prior to coming out at age 12, he unsuccessfully tried to hide who he was and suffer in silence. The next year, he got busy and founded Gays and Lesbians United Against Discrimination.

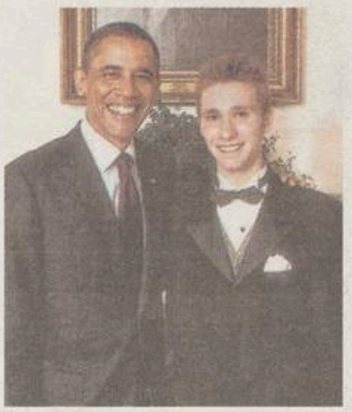
The organization provided statistics, demographics and stories about anti-gay bullying to legislators in all 50 states, and school administrators and teachers across Arizona and other states. The e-mails included solutions to bullying specific to each state.

With all that he had learned about bullying, Laieski decided in high school to tell teachers and administrators about the homophobic slurs and threats.

Some faculty seemed to care about bullying, many didn't know what to do about it, and others dismissed his fears.

"I brought it up to the administration one day that a kid threatened to stab me," Laieski said. "The assistant principal brushed it off, wrote me a pass to go back to class and said, 'We have no concern.' "

Laieski and a friend left school early that day. He dropped out, earned a GED certificate, focused on the anti-bullying activism that got him an introduction to President Barack Obama in June and earned him the title of grand marshal in this year's Greater Palm Springs Pride Parade on Nov. 6.



Caleb Laieski with President Barack Obama COURTESY PHOTO

Laieski was selected as grand marshal in part because of the potential of his work to reach youth across the United States.

"Here's this 16-year-old kid from Surprise, Ariz., who's having an impact on our community," said Ron deHarte, executive vice president of Greater Palm Springs Pride. "His efforts will affect youth in Palm Springs and beyond."

Laieski, who plans to major in political science in college and move to

Please see CALEB, PAGE 19

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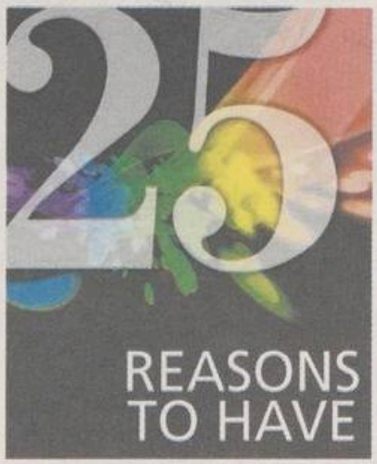
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By Will Dean The Desert Sun

A lot can happen in 25 years to challenge, refocus and advance a community, as it has for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender residents of Palm Springs and surrounding desert communities.

Here's a look at 25 achievements and contributions that have occurred nationally and locally since the first Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival took place in 1986.

VALLEY VICTORIES

■ Palm Springs has long had a reputation as a welcoming and accepting community for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, which is represented by a population of 40 to 60 percent, according to 2010 Census data analyzed by the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law.

■ Palm Springs' first openly gay mayor, Ron Oden, was elected in 2003. He was succeeded by Mayor Steve Pougnet, also gay, in 2007. There are now at least 12 openly gay elected officials serving in the Coachella Valley.

■ As a popular gay tourism destination, Palm Springs was a center of same-sex marriage ceremonies in 2008. More than 1,200 wedding ceremonies were conducted in the valley during the five months same-sex couples could marry in California.

■ Desert Business Association supports LGBT-owned and LGBT friendly businesses, and recognizes their efforts to create opportunities for economic development, employment and humanitarian aid. Membership, now at more than 250, has nearly doubled in the past 15 months.

■ The Palm Springs Desert Gay Tourism Guild, which for years has worked with businesses to promote the city as a destination for LGBT travelers, is 49 members strong.

PEOPLE AND POLITICS

■ Since 2004, six states and the District of Columbia have legalized marriage for same-sex couples.

■ President Barack Obama signed a memo in April requiring all hospitals that receive federal funding to give LGBT and all patients the right to determine who can visit them and who can make medical decisions for them if needed.

■ In July, Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill making California the first state to require teaching gay history in public schools.

■ In June 1999 President Bill Clinton issued the first national Lesbian and Gay Pride Month proclamation. Most participating cities host their Pride celebrations in June, while Palm Springs, which is intensely hot that month, and a handful of other communities celebrate during other times of the year.



■ On Aug. 4, 2010, federal Judge Vaughn Walker declared the California same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional, and said the state had "no interest in differentiating between same-sex and opposite-sex unions."

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is reviewing Walker's conclusion and whether opponents who appealed the decision were eligible to do so.

■ The Don't Ask Don't Tell Repeal Act went into effect in October, officially ending a ban enacted in 1993 against LGBT servicemen and women openly serving in the military.

■ The Obama Administration announced in February it would no longer defend in court the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage as between one man and one woman, and later called for a legislative repeal of the federal same-sex marriage ban.

■ In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Lawrence v. Texas that sodomy laws are unconstitutional based on a person's right to privacy and equal protection under the law.

■ In 2009, hate crime laws were expanded making it a federal crime to assault people based on their orientation, gender and gender identity.

■ A small but growing contingent of openly gay politicians at the federal level includes U.S. Rep. Barney Frank of Massachusetts since 1980, Rep. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin since 1998, Rep. Jared Polis of Colorado since 2008 and Rep. David Cicilline of Rhode Island, who was elected in 2010.

■ With the rainbow flag as its international symbol of pride, the LGBT population is among the most diverse segments of society, comprised of every race, ethnicity, region and socioeconomic background.

CULTURAL CHANGES

■ The Rev. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire withstood conservative members' protests and threats to leave the Episcopal Church and was consecrated in 2003 as the denomination's first openly gay bishop. In May 2010, the Rev. Mary Glasspool of Los Angeles became the first openly gay woman confirmed as an Episcopal bishop.

■ Nine million Americans identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, according to study results released this year by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. That's more people than in the state of New Jersey.

■ Before she chatted and danced her way into the hearts of talk show fans, comedian Ellen DeGeneres made headlines in 1997 by publicly coming out as a lesbian on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and then on her own sitcom. Other celebrities followed suit: George Michael, Rosie O'Donnell, Lance Bass, Ricky Martin and Chely Wright among them.

■ Chaz Bono, son of former Palm Springs mayor and U.S. Congressman Sonny Bono, shone a spotlight this year on the issues and challenges facing transgender Americans through his memoirs and documentary about becoming a man, and by channeling Rocky Balboa on "Dancing With the Stars."

■ Celebrity alliances and advocates such as rugby star Ben Cohen, comedian Margaret Cho and wildly popular entertainer Lady Gaga continue to lend their voices to the cause of equal rights for LGBT and all citizens.

■ The stories of LGBTs continue to entertain and enlighten on TV and movie screens, ranging from the groundbreaking "Brokeback Mountain" and "Will and Grace" to "Glee" and the creation of the Logo TV networks — though the stories aren't as consistent and diverse as many viewers would like.

■ The constitutional validity of legal rulings and laws is increasingly challenged by LGBT citizens, such as the Berkeley lesbian couple and Burbank gay male couple who took on Proposition 8 in a federal lawsuit.

■ Writer and sex advice columnist Dan Savage stepped up in September 2010 to raise awareness about bullying and show LGBT youth alternatives to suicide, through the "It Gets Better" book and video campaign featuring professional athletes, politicians, entertainers and everyday citizens.

■ California is among at least nine U.S. states and the District of Columbia that permit LGBT single- and joint-parent adoption.

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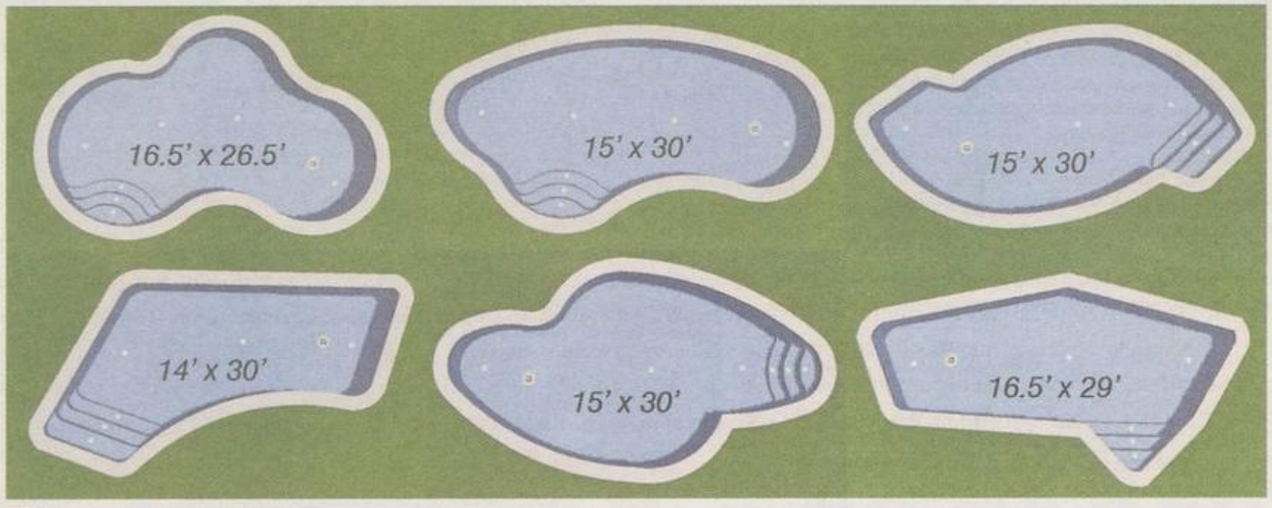
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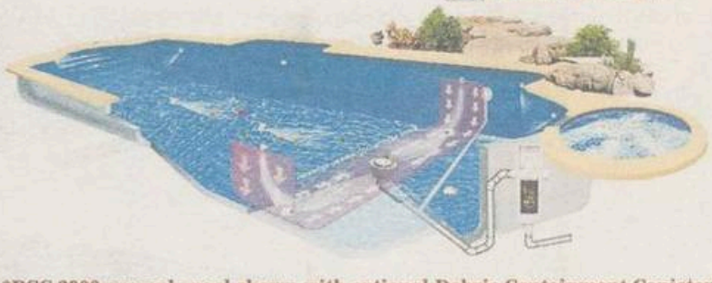
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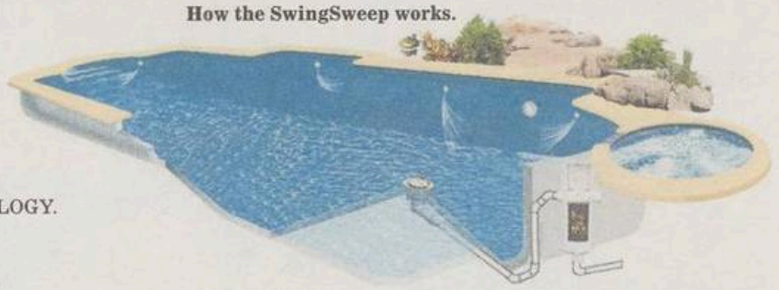
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In this 2003 photo, then-Palm Springs City Council candidate Ginny Foat (left) reacts to viewing election results with her partner Pam Genervino, campaign strategist Jean Harris and field operation manager Kurt Barrie at the Blue Coyote restaurant in Palm Springs. DESERT SUN FILE PHOTO

HARRIS

Continued from P4

an LGBT civil rights organization.

Returning to California, she became executive director of the California Alliance for Pride and Equality, now Equality California, a position that turned her into a major player in Sacramento.

"She had this incredible data base," said Palm Springs Councilwoman Ginny Foat, who met Harris at a women's music festival more than 30 years ago.

"Anytime she could get information on any lesbian, she'd put them in the computer," Foat recalled. "She could send out a mailing in your district."

Foat said Harris pestered her for years to run for political office and walked precincts for her first City Council campaign in 2003.

The Palm Springs award follows a Woman of the Year award from the Long Beach Lambda Democratic Club in October.

Barrie said the posthumous honors are fitting because Harris "wasn't the type of person that wanted the accolades and the attention.

"She never stopped and enjoyed her successes," he said. "When you live like that, the attention doesn't come to you. You're already on to the next thing."

BAKER

Continued from P4

before it was widely recognized, Baker said.

He's tweaked the creation during the years, reducing the number of colors from eight to six.

"There wasn't a way to mass-produce eight colors," he said. "There wasn't pink nylon being mass-produced.

"It really wasn't about the number of colors. It was about the visceral impact of a Rainbow Flag. Everyone knows somewhere in there is their color."

Fewer colors didn't mean less flag, for Baker.

In 1994 he created a Rainbow Flag one mile in length to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City. Nine years later, he made a one-and-a-half-mile flag that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean in Key West, Fla.

The Florida project took three or four people about four months to help sew it and required about 10,000 people to carry the 8,000-pound flag. The 400-foot flag that will be carried during the Palm Springs parade was a part of his largest flag.

Now an artist living in Harlem, N.Y., Baker creates fine art based on the Rainbow flag and collects what he likes of the countless merchandise items that bear the flag image. He owns "every gay T-shirt ever," jewelry and handmade crafts.

Because the Rainbow Flag is considered public domain, Baker doesn't get royalties from the sale of any of the items. But he doesn't mind so much, saying it's "awesome" the flag now belongs to the world.

ADVERTISEMENT

Fiat of Palm Springs supports community, donates new car to cause.



Photo by Shary Bowman

AIDS patients across a broad swath of Southern California will get a huge boost from FIAT of Palm Springs, which recently made a unique donation to the Desert AIDS Project.

Car to Support Desert Aids Project

Supportive car dealerships usually give the project cash or in-kind donations, says J.P. Allen, Desert AIDS Project fundraising and special events manager. They have never given cars.

"This is the first time a dealership has made an outright donation (of a car)," he says. "That's very significant."

The car is a red FIAT 500 Pop, which starts at $15,500. Project staff will continue to display it at community events until Febuary 11, when the car will be auctioned off at the Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards Gala, the organization's largest fundraiser of the year. The event draws scores of celebrities and raises about $1.4 million. This year, it will be held at the Palm Springs Convention Center and feature performances from Queen Latifah and Wynonna Judd, among others. Actress/comedian Joan Rivers will be the host, and more than 1,400 people are expected to attend.

Proceeds from the sale of the FIAT will benefit the Desert AIDS Project's services. These include medical, dental, pharmacy, job-placement and food-distribution services for about 2,300 clients, Allen says. The service area encompasses 11,000 square miles.

With that much ground to cover, it's understandable that some Desert AIDS staff may want to take the FIAT out for a "test drive."

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The interior is metro retro, with lots of circles and overlapping gauges that don't crowd the dash. Depending on the model, options can include glass roofs, convertible tops, Bose sound systems, sporty 16-inch wheels, unique front and rear fascias, satellite radio, and more.

Going beyond the refreshing and trendy features the 2012 Fiat 500 has been named a Top Safety Pick in the mini-car category by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. This title really set the FIAT 500 appart from other compacts.

In a January column about the new FIAT, *Car and Driver* magazine's Jared Gall touted the vehicle's cute look and overall offerings, and how they fit in the increasingly popular small-car segment. "FIAT is re-entering the U.S. market in a sector that is booming and the opposite of boring, and into which its infiltrator fits perfectly."

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Pride helped change a community

By Denise Goolsby
denise.goolsby@thedesertsun.com





DESERT SUN FILE PHOTOS

Scenes from past Palm Springs Pride Parades along Palm Canyon Drive. The event is now in its 25th year.

In the 25 years since the first Palm Springs Pride event was organized, the focus of the annual festival and parade has changed as LGBT Americans have won rights and continued to fight for equality. With the changes come new challenges.

After scoring major victories in recent years — including the long-awaited repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell — local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender leaders worry the community will become complacent. They say it's more important than ever to maintain a strong presence and a united front at Pride events to ensure hard-won gains during the past quarter-century are not lost.

The early festivals could be considered the desert community's coming out. The events provided a safe environment where LGBT residents could publicly celebrate their lives and introduce themselves en masse to their Coachella Valley neighbors.

The first Pride presentation was "Sizzle," a no-holds-barred variety show and fundraiser held in the Grand Ballroom of the Riviera Hotel in Palm Springs during the Ronald Reagan Administration — at a time when AIDS was killing thousands of gay men.

There were few, if any, protections for LGBT people in the workplace or in any number of social settings and situations at that time.

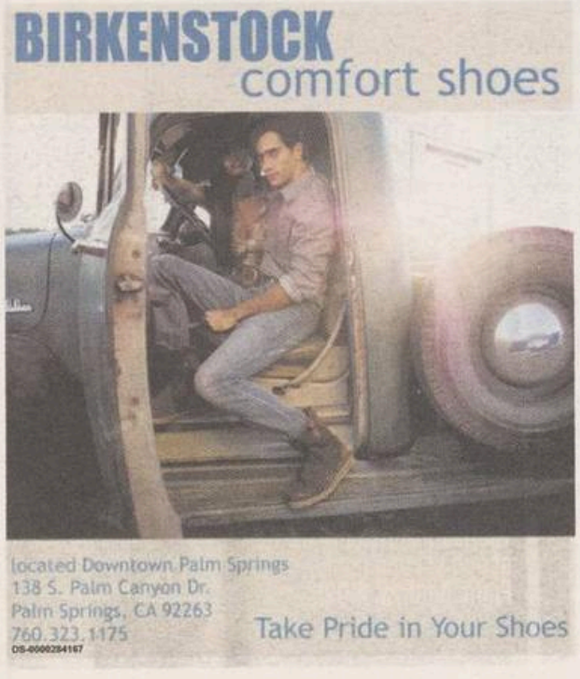
"We have seen our issues evolve from AIDS, fighting ballot measures, electing openly gay officials, pushing for inclusion in the military and now for full equality in marriage," said Greg Pettis, Cathedral City councilman and Palm Springs Pride co-founder. "Pride has changed and evolved because our country has evolved.

"AIDS had just come into view when we began Pride, and it was partly a response to the homophobia driven by the illness as well as a desire to show the Coachella Valley that gays and lesbians were here," he added.

Pettis was the first — and only — openly gay elected official in the valley at that time. Now, there are at least 12.

Pettis said Pride events played a big role in improving the public perception of gays and lesbians. As a result, the events have become more mainstream and inclusive – and have helped foster positive relationships between LGBT and straight residents.

"By being 'out,' by letting others get to know who we are in all areas of our lives, society changes," he said.







"Our valley has changed. I remember being afraid to be seen in a gay bar for fear of being arrested by the Riverside County Sheriff to now, the chief of the La Quinta sheriff's detail is openly gay."

Geoff Kors, who served for nine years as executive director of Equality California, a statewide LGBT rights organization, said a "sense of community" is something Pride events will always provide. However, it's "important for Pride festivals to grow and evolve to meet the changing times, as Pride is also an opportunity to educate the public about who we are and the issues that impact us," he said.

Greater Palm Springs Pride will recognize Kors, and his partner James Williamson, with the 2011 Spirit of Stonewall Special Guest award for the couple's activism, volunteerism and community service.

"LGBT rights and the harm caused by injustice, discrimination and bullying are receiving increased attention by the media and the public, and this year's Pride festival is an amazing opportunity to bring awareness to these critical issues," Kors said.

Melinda Tremaglio, who served on the board of directors of Greater Palm Springs Pride from 1997 to 1999, said gays and lesbians must remain vigilant and visible.

"I think the focus is good this year," Tremaglio said.



Palm Springs resident Jack Beneville walks in the 2009 Pride Parade
MARILYN CHUNG/DESERT SUN FILE PHOTO

"I was thrown out of the military for being gay," she said. "The justice is coming about after all of these years of work ... we are still in a civil rights struggle. We have to still raise awareness for people to 'get it.'"

Ron de Harte, executive vice president for Greater Palm Springs Pride, said although the festival is inclusive of all people, he'd like to see the LGBT community out in force to send a statement to those who may be just coming out of the closet and people who make legislative decisions that affect their lives.

He wants LGBT residents, particularly seniors who have been on the frontline of the rights battles for years, to remember how they were affected when they first went to a Pride parade or festival.

"Those were incredibly powerful moments for everybody, said de Harte, who is serving his second year as an organizer. "We forget those moments."

Although out-of-towners flow into Palm Springs during Pride weekend, many celebrate with private pool parties, going out to dinner or cooking at home with friends, he said.

There's nothing wrong with people celebrating that way, he added, but it's important for LGBT people to show up in force at the festival and especially along the parade route on Palm Canyon Drive.

It shows "the power and strength that comes with the LGBT community," de Harte said. "That's a form of activism. It's two, three hours of your day. On Nov. 6, create a message that's going to be heard all year long."

"To stop being counted now as we grow in our senior years, that's not the message we need," he said. "We need to be as strong as we were in our 20s, 30s. To not be seen is the detriment."

2011 PRIDE FESTIVAL

Where: Palm Springs Stadium, 1901 E. Baristo Road
When: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Nov. 5-6
Admission: $10 per day. Children younger than 12 get in free when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
Information: www.pspride.org

2011 PRIDE PARADE

Where: 1 mile along Palm Canyon Drive, from Ramon to Alejo roads in downtown Palm Springs
When: 10 a.m. Nov. 6
Admission: Free
Information: www.pspride.org

Pride Parade route

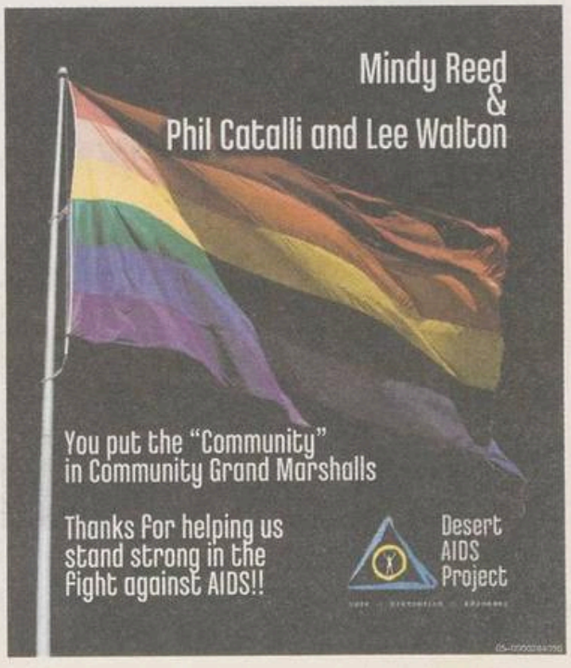
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SOURCE: Greater Palm Springs Pride
THE DESERT SUN







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Stand up, smile and celebrate your pride

The Desert Sun

Gay pride festivals and parades have been a phenomenon in the U.S. since June 1970, when the first Pride marches took place in New York City and Chicago. The events marked the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall riots, an uprising of gay citizens against police discrimination in New York.

The traditional Pride celebrations born out of that historic event present an interesting juxtaposition of public shows of unity and support with a variety of individual expressions and styles.

To find out what "Pride" means today, we randomly asked a few Palm Springs residents to share their thoughts on the topic.

HOW DO YOU SHOW PRIDE IN YOUR LIFE?



"I get up, I go to work and I do my job."

— John O'Connor



"I show pride every day by being what God created — which is one-of-a-kind and unique — not by what man or society deems I should be. We're all one of a kind."

— Wes Rankins



"I show pride in my everyday life by being true to myself. I'm very open and unapologetic about my sexual orientation. I feel really connected to the gay community and I feel very proud to be gay."

— James Harmon



"I show pride by being myself every day and encouraging other people to be who they are, and by smiling whenever I see a rainbow flag."

— Brian Patrick Healey

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE PRIDE CELEBRATED?



"One of the things I really appreciate when I go to other cities' Prides, there's a great deal of excitement for those in the parade. We have to celebrate those people who've paved the way and made great accomplishments."

— John Taylor



"I like the Pride parades and shows, but I like them with dignity."

— Russ White



"They're doing such a good job already. I wouldn't change a thing. It's so well-organized. It's incredible."

— Jack Reising



"I would like to see it celebrated more like Sydney Mardi Gras.

"I would like to see more civic pride also. Because I don't drink, I feel out of the loop. It seems like the only place to exchange information is a bar or nightclub."

— Billy Hand

THE GRAND MARSHALS

Thank you, friends, for your support, kindness

By Tamara H. Sone
tamara.sone@thedesertsun.com

Joining Caleb Laieski in the Greater Palm Springs Pride Parade as grand marshals this year are five desert residents who show daily support for LGBT causes.

COMMUNITY GRAND MARSHALS



Mindy Reed

Mindy Reed, owner of Zin American Bistro and Zini Cafe Mediterrano in downtown Palm Springs, is an active supporter of equal rights and community events.

Reed frequently hosts fundraisers for service organizations and participates in events such as the Palm Springs Food and Wine Festival, Dining Out for Life and Restaurant Week.

In 2010 and 2011, Reed participated in the AIDS LifeCycle Ride and was named a top 25 fundraiser for the event, raising more than $24,000.

When **Lee Walton and Phil Catalli** moved to Palm Springs in 1997, they were surprised at the lack of athletic organizations geared toward the LGBT community.

Providing a solution to the problem, Walton and Catalli founded the Palm Springs Front Runners and Walkers to promote fitness and social activities.

With more than 1,500 members, the group often raises money for nonprofit organizations such as Desert AIDS Project, Animal Samaritans and Gay Associated Youth.



Lee Walton and Phil Catalli



Bill Feingold and Kevin Holmes

CELEBRITY GRAND MARSHALS

Voted "Best of the Valley" radio personalities by The Desert Sun readers two years in a row, **Bill Feingold** and **Kevin Holmes** spotlight LGBT community events and organizations through their show on 94.3 KNews FM.

Representatives from organizations such as the Desert AIDS Project and McCallum Theater have gotten mic time with the duo, as well as Lily Tomlin, Robert Wagner, Johnny Mathis and other entertainers.

Feingold and Holmes can also be found emceeing various events and galas throughout the Coachella Valley.

CALEB

Continued from Page 8

D.C., hopes to someday influence people and policies on a larger scale. He said his career goal is to be the first openly gay U.S. president.

He shares his thoughts on leaving school and what school leaders can do to prevent other students targeted by bullies from making that decision or taking a more drastic step.

QUESTION: How did you feel about dropping out of school to earn your GED?

It was one of the most exciting days of my life. I dropped out January 7, the day I turned 16. I wasted no time. I was excited just to move on with that part of my life.

A few months later there were days when I did miss going through the normal experience that most kids go through. I can never think about how prom would be.

Did suicide ever cross your mind?

No, not until I became an advocate for other youth. When I started taking other people's problems for my own there were days when I thought, "We're making no progress." It can be difficult helping people and taking on their problems.

"I have thought about it a few times, but honestly I'm too strong. I tend to keep up that wall between my emotions and the world. It's what keeps me strong but at the same time it makes you even weaker.

What would you say if you could to Jamey Rodemeyer, Tyler Clementi and other gay youth who were bullied and took their lives?

I would give them my phone number and tell them that they're not alone – and that I'm here to talk. That sounds really really small, but I've done it to a lot of youth and it does save lives.

What's the most important thing a teacher or school administrator can do when a kid is being bullied for being gay?

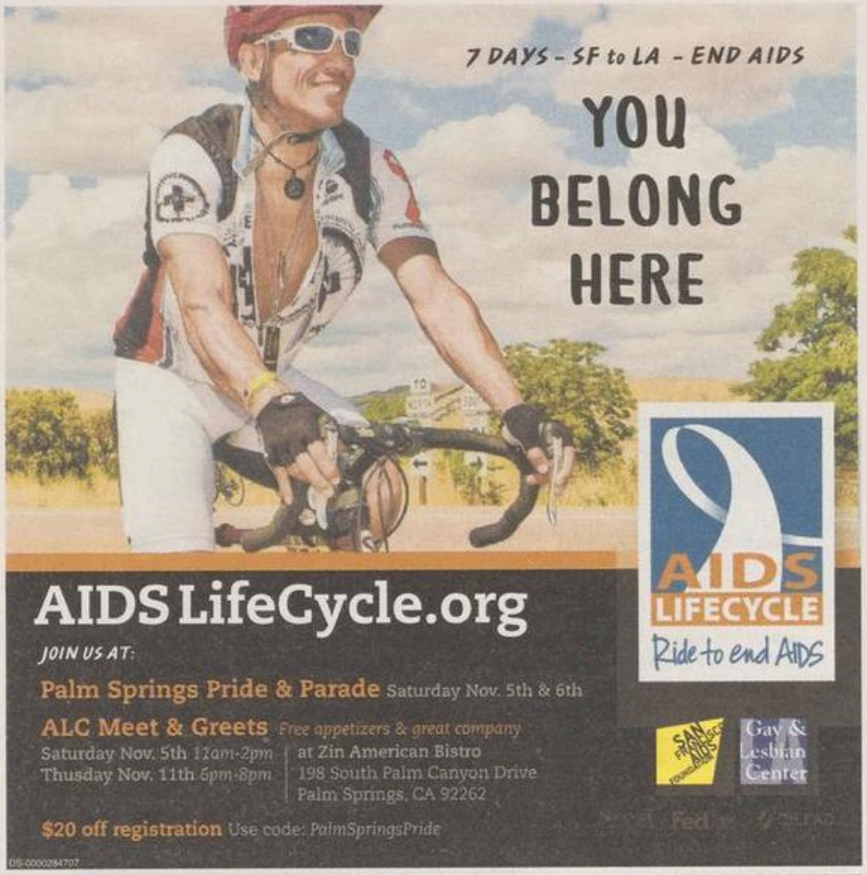
The most important thing is when you see bullying you stop it and you tell the student it's not right and it's not cool. Every time you see it, you do it. You may be considered the mean teacher, but you also become the teacher that saves a child's life.













THE DIVA

Pride's a sweet song for Frenchie Davis

By Sonya English
sonya.english@thedesertsun.com

It was in the gay clubs of Washington, D.C., that Frenchie Davis' powerful voice first roused crowds.

About a decade ago — before her season 2 "American Idol" run, before her starring role in "Rent" on Broadway and long before her top-eight finish on NBC's "The Voice" — tip money from her performances helped support her in college.

And the support she received from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community never missed a beat.

"The clubs, the Prides, the directors, choreographers on Broadway — there seems to always be a gay man somewhere fairy-godmothering my career and cheering me on," she said.

We know her big voice has its way with a dance beat, but we wanted to hear what Davis had to say about her recent TV experience, Pride and her diva peers.

Is it true that you landed your audition on "The Voice" through a performance at a gay club?

Yes. The casting director for "The Voice" was having drinks at a boy bar in the gay-borhood. I happened to be singing that night. She told me she wanted me to audition.

Were you eager to take your career to another television competition?

In all honesty, I was really apprehensive about it because I was still a little traumatized from my "Idol" experience. But after lots of soul-searching, I decided to take a chance.

How do you celebrate Pride Week?

It's so important to unapologetically own who you are. I think Pride Week is a celebration of that and I celebrate with a gathering of friends.

What do you feel are the biggest challenges facing gay people in America today?

One of my observations is that there is sometimes a lack of unity. The fight for equality cannot be won if there is any divisiveness in the community.

Let's get your opinion on another beloved gay icon: Lady Gaga. Do you think her affinity for gay fans changed the way other divas relate to their gay fans?

Not particularly. I think that any diva who is beloved by the gays openly embraces them. Bette Midler sang in bath houses for God's sake! Cher, Madonna, Patti Labelle, Liza Minelli… I could go on. Performers who are beloved by the gays are well aware that they are a friend of a friend of Dorothy. From what I can tell, we all embrace it. Openly.


Frenchie Davis

IF YOU GO

FRENCHIE DAVIS IN CONCERT

Where: Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival's main stage, Palm Springs Stadium, 1901 E. Baristo Road
When: 3 p.m. Nov. 5
Information: www.FrenchieDavis.org

THE VIDEO KING

Hip-hop and HOT

Cazwell brings his sexy dance tunes to Pride's Block Party

By Will Dean
will.dean@thedesertsun.com

With more than 3 million YouTube hits on his "Ice Cream Truck" single, Cazwell may be well on his way to bringing back music videos as a creative art form.

Since its release in summer 2010, the sexy dance tune with the nursery rhyme cadence has been Cazwell's biggest Internet hit. Not bad for a song he wrote in 45 minutes after being hounded by a friend who needed an original song for the movie "Spork."

Many other tunes preceded and followed "Ice Cream Truck" during his decade-long career, including "Get My Money Back," "All Over Your Face" and "I Seen Beyonce at Burger King." His latest single is a collaboration with Peaches called "Unzip Me."

Cazwell plans to perform all of them Nov. 5 at the Greater Palm Springs Pride Festival's block party on Arenas Road.

Each song showcases his talent for writing and performing dance tracks with fun, clever lyrics, such as, *The cockroaches in hypnosis; sippin' what's left of spilled mimosas* from "All Over Your Face."

Cazwell's music stands on its own, but it becomes a whole 'nother entertainment experience in his energetic, "In Living Color"-esque videos.

Since the early days of MTV in the 1980s – before teen mom angst and other "reality" ruled the airwaves – it's rare that an artist's raw, unvarnished video concepts have been displayed so boldly.

The 34-year-old New Yorker frequently dances shirtless, and like that other male singer with the hip-hop sensibility and self-mocking humor, he just may bring sexy back with his videos.

Here's what Cazwell has to say about making music, performing with Gaga, and Pride.



Cazwell

IF YOU GO

ARENAS ROAD BLOCK PARTY DURING PRIDE FESTIVAL

Where: Arenas Road between Indian Canyon Drive and Calle Encilia in Palm Springs
When: 6 to 11:30 p.m. Nov. 5
Price: Free
Information: www.pspride.org

For a complete listing of Pride Festival entertainers, go to mydesert.com

How do you describe your music?

I think a lot of people associate my music with dance. Some people might associate it with hip-hop. I can't really think about it when I'm making something.

When I first started my career I was actually in a rap group in Boston. At the time it had a real hip-hop-centric community. It was rappers with tremendous talent like Virtuoso, 7L.

I was always out (as a gay man). All I wanted to do was find a way to be accepted by the hip-hop world. I would submit my music and do shows all the time.

I came to the realization that no matter how talented I am, straight people, particularly in hip-hop, really don't want to associate themselves with gay people. Once I realized that, I stopped trying. That's when everything happened for me.

It had not even occurred to me that I should make music *for me*. I was so busy trying to be accepted. It goes to show, you can lose your focus trying to appeal to other people.

How do you come up with a video concept?

Every one is different. Ultimately, my goal is to make sure the video looks however the song sounds. For example, with "Beyonce" I knew I wanted the video to be super-cute. When I did "Get My Money Back," I was just really inspired by the movie "Fight Club" and the idea of a gang of guys who live together communally in a big space.

Does performing at a Pride event hold special significance for you?

There's a different vibe at Pride events. There's definitely a little bit more feeling of unification than just playing a regular club. Gay people aren't typically gathered at one spot.

Other than your own music, what are you listening to these days?

I'm listening to the new Cool Kids record, the new Beastie Boys record. I listen to Diplo a lot. I like MEN, CSF. I listen to a lot of Bowie, some Michael Jackson. I make a mix tape once a season.

I listen to Lady Gaga sometimes. I like her song, "Bad Kids." I performed with her a couple of times before she got huge – like when she was first pushing "Just Dance." I rapped on it for a DJ remix... She has always been really sweet and supportive. I think she's great.



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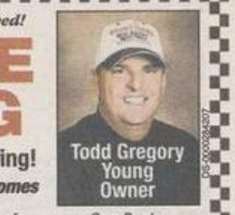
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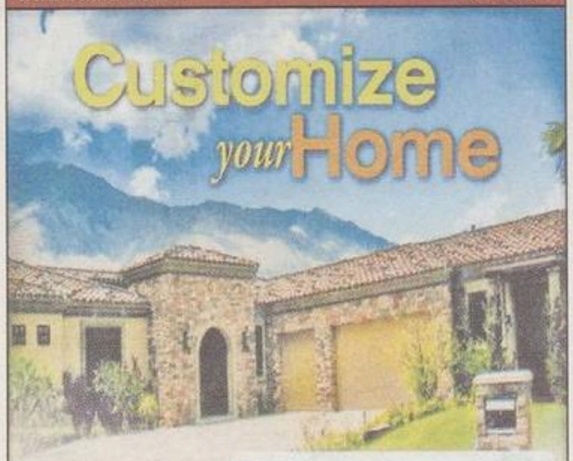
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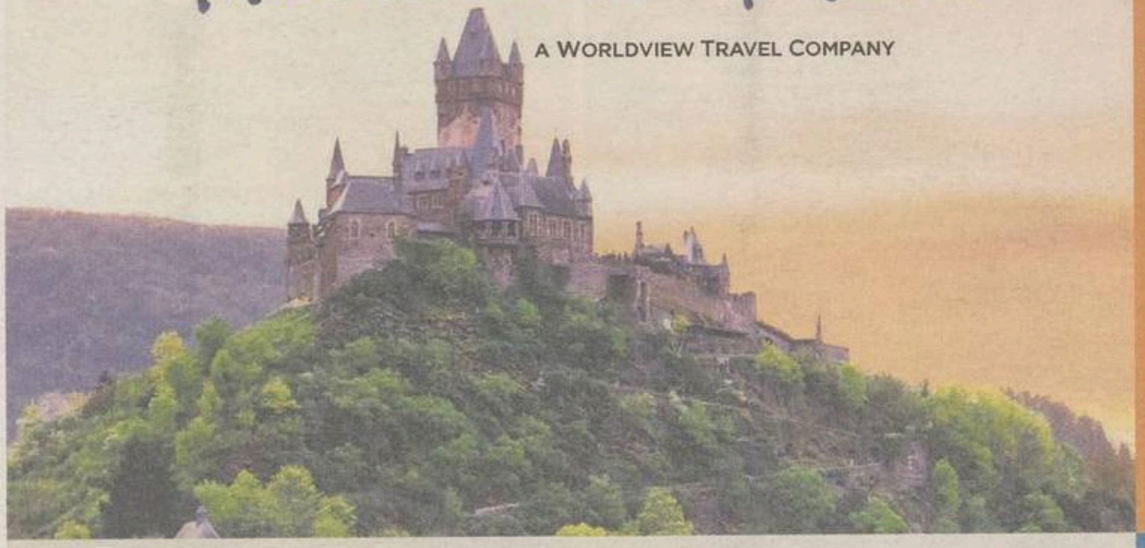
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Mon,	Jul 16	**Cochem** - excursion to Reichsburg Castle Scenic cruising the Moselle wine region **Koblenz** - leisure time [B,L,D]
Tue,	Jul 17	Scenic cruising the **Rhine Gorge** and pass the legendary rock of the Lorelei **Rüdesheim** - visit Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum; leisure time in the Drosselgasse [B,L,D]
Wed,	Jul 18	**Miltenberg** - guided sightseeing tour & local baking demonstration [B,L,D]
Thu,	Jul 19	**Würzburg** - guided walk and visit to the Bishop's Residenz, a UNESCO Site [B,L,D]
Fri,	Jul 20	**Bamberg** - walking tour of the medieval UNESCO Site, cathedral & Old Town Hall [B,L,D]
Sat,	Jul 21	**Nuremberg**, Germany; disembark [B]

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