

1980

Whitman-Brooks, (1980?) an out growth of the Whitman Whitman-Radcliff foundation, had a very active chapter in the county that held raps in private homes. Jan Foster was the Director. The parent organization in Los Angeles held a conference each year, which had workshops on pertinent issues. More recently they held a yearly Youth Conference at Occidental College in Eagle Rock.

The Southern Chapter (Orange County/Long Beach) of Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) was formed. The formation steering committee included Margie Mullen, Bobbi Byers, Judith Doyle, Barbara Muirhead (nee Billedeaux), Lynnette Brown, Frankie Overton, and Karen Miller.

Fall – Local therapist Bob Thrasher MA, The Self Center-Orange, saw his clients were missing a community information link and self-published the first Orange County Gay/Lesbian Resource Booklet. It was a 34-page guide to the gay/lesbian community, with phone numbers and addresses for community, political, and help organizations, bars and inclusive churches. Some of the listed organizations are the Gay Community Center of OC, Gay & Lesbian Parents - El Toro, Imperial Court, Men's Collective, P-FLAG, Whitman-Brooks, SCWU/Southern Chapter, Newport Station, BAPA (Business & Professional Coalition in OC), Affirmation, Dignity, Emergence, and Evangelicals Concerned. A year (1981) later, on Saturday, February 7 Thrasher co-sponsored a resource day with OC P-FLAG. Organization representatives, a majority from the guide, provided information regarding their groups and Ivy Bottini was the featured speaker.

The Fun Lover's Bowling League was established and is the oldest gay and lesbian bowling league in California and maybe the United States.

Joanne Clark (aka Sister Mary Elizabeth) and Diane Saunders -- teamed with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to found the Southern California Transsexual Rights committee (1980-83). The first such committee in the history of the ACLU.

Dan Wooldridge became the first openly gay delegate to the Democratic National Convention

The Southern Chapter (Orange County/Long Beach) of Southern California Women for Understanding (SCWU) formed with a steering committee of 15 or more women from Orange County and Long Beach (Included were: Margie Mullen,

Bobbi Byers, Judith Doyle, Barbara Muirhead (nee Billedeaux), Lynnette Brown, Frankie Overton, Karen Miller)

September 13 - Andrew Exler (19, Loara HS grad) and his date Shawn Elliot (17) disco dance together at Disneyland on the Tomorrow Terrace. After refusing to "find female date," they are escorted to the security offices and ejected from the park. They file suit against the park nine days later. Exler is fired from his OC job after his supervisor expresses disapproval of his suit against Disney. He becomes the first known person to file a discrimination complaint against the county based on sexual orientation.

September 14 - Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove is dedicated. Gay architect Philip Johnson designed it.

April 13 - The Orange Court "Coronation 80" was held at the Buena Park Hotel.

1981

An electrical fire destroyed The Center building on Euclid after the office was moved to the second floor of the Cedarbrook complex. The hotline was housed at this location and the raps were held at the Unitarian Universalists Church on Santa Ana ST. in Anaheim.

AIDS was first identified in Orange County in two men who were contacts of the infamous "Patient Zero," who was later identified as Gaetan Dugan, a French-Canadian airline steward for Air Canada, one of the first North Americans diagnosed with AIDS.."

November - Activist Andrew Exler [AKA The Crusader] runs for a seat on the Fullerton Joint Union HS District Board of Trustees becoming the first openly gay candidate in Orange County. He loses.

1982

A Laguna meeting was held, which included Tim Miller, Andres Berner, Bob Gentry, Rodger Harrison and Henry Hampton to discuss the forming of a new Orange County organization. Because of the variety of interests shown by the participants the meeting gave birth to two organizations.

Election Committee County of Orange (ECCO was founded (March 8, 1983) by those interested in politics. The initial directors were—Georgia Garrett-Norris

and Dan Wooldridge, Co-chairpersons, Dr. Mel Lewis, Tim Miller, Dr. Ross Conner, Kathy Miller, Pam Bigelow, Lisa Kay, and Arden Smith. It is a combination federal and state political action committee (PAC). Laguna Outreach (LO) was founded for those interested in social issues. Margorie Rushforth and Arden Smith were the first co-chairs.

Niles Merton became the first paid Executive Director of the Orange County Center where he along with other leaders brought The Center to new heights instituting many programs and working to bring men and women together by including Lesbian in the organizations name. He left in 1985 to become publisher of the Advocate.

Centers for Disease Control publish the first report that included cases in Orange County.

August 28-The first Gay Games were held in San Francisco.

1983

HIV was identified as the virus that caused AIDS.

Greg Louganis, Mission Viejo, won 2 gold medals in diving at the Olympics. He later comes out as a gay athlete who is HIV positive.

Bob Gentry is elected to the City Council of Laguna Beach (He later comes out as a gay man).

The Center got a state grant to offer AIDS education related programs and became a professional organization taking out additional space in Cedarbrook. The Center is the fourth largest in the nation.

The Orange County Visibility League was founded (Jeff LeTourneau).

March 8 – Election Committee County of Orange (ECCO) adopts their by-laws.

1984

The State funded the HCA to implement and AIDS Education Program in collaboration with the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center of ORANGE COUNTY (The Center). The following year only The Center program was funded and the AIDS Response Program (ARP) was established.

Dawn Baucom establishes the first openly all-lesbian softball team in Orange County—the Diamond Dusters. Laguna Outreach sponsored them and they played in a USSSA (United States Slo-pitch Softball Association) sanctioned local league.

Kathy Miller, “Pro-net,” was the moving force behind the first Orange County Challenge held at the county fair grounds in Costa Mesa. Patterned after a popular game show of the era, it pitted teams from local organizations in competitions such as tug of war, barrel racing, and other contests of questionable skill. A second event was held in 1985.

Bob Dornan moves to Garden Grove from Santa Monica and is elected to congress. He spends the next 14 years harassing gays and lesbians.

Don Hagan became the first Republican co-chair of ECCO and the first dinner was held.

The Gay and Lesbian Faculty and Staff Network (GLFSN) was formed at University of California at Irvine (UCI). It was designed to “provide a forum to discuss common needs and concerns.” During the same time period, Chancellor Dan Aldrich, established The Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on the Status of Lesbian and Gays (CACSLG). The goal was “to examine and consider the status of lesbians and gays in their relationship to UCI, as academic personnel, staff personnel, or students” and make recommendations to the Chancellor.

May 18 - Courts strike down the 27-year ban on same-sex dancing at Disneyland. Andrew Exler and Shawn Elliot's dismissal from the park is ruled a violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act. Their victory means that only Exler and Elliot can dance together. [*With the advent of the Videopolis dance club. and another suit, the ban is lifted totally in 1989.*]

The county Health Care Agency (HCA) receives a Centers for Disease Control surveillance grant and hires a full-time AIDS surveillance nurse and the county Health Officer declared AIDS-Related Complex (ARC) a reportable condition.

December 27 – The Red Cross cancels a lesbian blood drive for fear the public might think it was tainted with the AIDS virus.

1985

ACTION-AIDS a coalition to identify Orange County needs, chaired by Pearl Jemison-Smith, was formed. It was active until 1993.

Werner Kuhn, a native New Yorker, becomes Executive Director of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center-ORANGE COUNTY.

Chancellor Dan Aldrich at UCI created the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gays. The committee is composed of faculty, staff, students and medical school staff.

Rev. Lillian Lobb founds Christ Chapel of Laguna.

AIDS Services Foundation (ASF) was established by Pearl Jameson-Smith, Georgia Garrett-Norris, etal.

Al Roberts and Ken Jillson held "Splash-O-Rama," a backyard musical and synchronized swim show. A year later it became an event to raise funds for ASF. It was continued on an annual basis raising several millions dollars (discontinued 2001).

January 29 – Trish McGraw founded the Radclyffe Readers. Meeting monthly in private homes they discussed lesbian literature (disbanded in 1986).

March 4 - The OC Federation of L/G/HIV/AIDS Support Organizations, originally known as the "Lesbian/Gay/Feminist Leadership Federation of OC," began in Bob Gentry's living room after a meeting with than Lt. Gov. Leo McCarthy. The original steering committee, made up of Werner Kuehn (Center), Barbara (Billedeaux) Muirhead (SCWU), Arlene Sontag (ECCO), Frank Newman (LO), Pat Callahan (GLOES) and Karen Jones (LO), met August 6 at the OC Center and identified 23 issues or areas of interest for the Federation. The steering committee held monthly meetings and the Federation, made up of local non-profit organizations, met monthly with dinner being provided by the host organization.

Lorena Sikorski and Carl Becker formed an OC Chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Educator (G.A.L.E). This group lasted about five years and obtained a grant from the Chicago Resource Center to produce a brochure for every OC middle and high school principal to raise awareness of the gay and lesbian student population. Jackie Goldberg wrote the instructor letter. The feedback from the public school was they had no gay/lesbian students in Orange County Schools. Their newsletter was called Chalkdust.

May 10 - Owners of Mac's Landing, Garden Grove, file a \$2.7 million lawsuit against the city, alleging police harassment of customers. Police intimidate

patrons with walk-through, taking of photos, and stationing themselves outside the bar at night.

June - Orange County businessman and former Center Executive Director Niles Merton becomes publisher of *The Advocate*.

November 16 – Log Cabin Republicans of Orange County signed their first by-laws. The first board of directors was Alex Wentzel, President, Chris Nelson, Vice-President, Robert Helm, Treasurer, Drew Barras, Secretary, Daniel W. Behling, Ron Rudderow, Craig Benedetti, Fred Hodgson, Dennis Chappell, and Robert Crowder. The club was founded at the home of Robb Helms, and Rob Eisenthal by the priorly mentioned board and Leonard Saeger, Vic Scorzato, and Robert Crowder.

December 15 – A Different Drummer bookstore opened its doors in Laguna Beach. (It closed in 2002.)

1986

Proposition 64, the La Rouche initiative defining AIDS, was defeated.

LIFE (The Lobby for the Individual Freedom and Equality), a non-partisan, statewide advocacy group organized to promote positive legislation regarding AIDS, was formed through the efforts of a group that included John Duran, Georgia Garret-Norris, Marjorie Rushford, and Frank Newman.

Golden State Squares is founded. It is the oldest gay and lesbian square dance club affiliated with the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs (IAGSDC) in Southern California. They originally met in the DOK West a gay bar in Garden Grove. Founder Happy New Year (see 1974).

Ed Garren, a therapist, gathered together 30 people to create the original Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club (ERDC). This group operated loosely and shortly lost its initial momentum. It was not until John Duran stepped forward in 1988 that the organization finally took true form. With organizational assistance from Log Cabin Republican Club (LCRC) member, Borden Moller, and ECCO activists, Georgia Garrett-Norris, Jeff La Tourneau, and Sinee Smolowitz, they became a viable organization. In a show of solidarity, LCRC sponsored ERDC membership in The Federation. In addition to co-chair Duran, the founding board was made up of Carroll Leslie (Co-Chair), Lisa Kaye, Scott Westerfield, Mary Ann Spencer, Michael Feldman, and Bob Hodges.

March 16 – National March for women’s Lives/West Coast was held in Century City. Sponsored by the Gay and Lesbian Coordinating Committee. Co-Chairpersons- Jean Conger (SCWU) and Diane Himes (MECLA). Orange County committee members: Werner Kuhn (GLCSC-ORANGE COUNTY), Carol Adams (ECCO).

November -- Proposition 64 (La Rouche Initiative), which would have allowed health officials to quarantine persons with AIDS antibodies, was defeated. ACTION (AIDS Coalition to Identify ORANGE COUNTY Needs) was established in June by Georgia Garrett-Norris, Lisa Kaye, Alex Wedge, John Good, Dan Brass, Don Hagen, Jim Boone, Borden Moller, Lee Podalak, and Max Schneider. Pat Callahan and Drew Barris were Co-Chairperson. Spokespersons: Don Hagan and Pearl Jemison-Smith.

November 20 – Eighty plus men and women met at 7:00 a.m. for a breakfast meeting with Fullerton Police Chief Martin Hairabedian regarding police harassment of users of Hillcrest Park and alleged harassment at Tricks a gay bar and restaurant on Harbor Blvd..

1987

Jeff LeTourneau, Robert Hanson, and Craig Martens founded the Orange County Visibility League (OCVL). It was a spin off of the Orange County March on Washington Committee. The Names Project and Orange County Culture Pride (OCCP) were sub-committees that later became organizations in their own right.

AIDS Walk Orange County was formed as a spin off of The Orange County Federation. It was decided that it would be more effective if it was not directly attached to the gay and lesbian community. Founding members include: Pearl Jameson-Smith, Werner Kuehn, Pat Callahan, Arlene Sontag, Art Baldarrama, Richard Frankenstein, M.D., David Sauleles, Susan Sullivan, George Chitty, Pat Baker, Randy Pasquial. Elizibeth Dornan-Parker was the first executive director.

Steve Peskind founds Laguna Shanti to provide free practical assistance, emotional suport and education for men and women living with life-threatening illness, grief, and bereavement.

David Engel sues Dan Worthington, Costa Mesa photographer, when he said it would be against company policy and not in “good taste” to include a picture of

a gay men with pictures of heterosexual couples. Worthington was doing a reunion photo for the Class of 1977 at University High School, Irvine. Orange County Superior Court said it was a reasonable and sound business practice. The District Court of Appeals overturned verdict, saying, "Sex is a protected category."

AIDS Services Foundation (ASF) receives first community-based contract for HIV services from the Orange County Health Care Agency.

February 2—The Los Angeles Times does a story, "An Uneasy Existence: Dealings with Garden Grove Police are Better, but Gays Wonder Whether It Can Last." It reported on the harassment of the owners of Mac's Landing that caused the closer in June, 1985. Police parked patrol cars in front of the bar and photographed customers entering and leaving.

February – The Laguna Beach AIDS Task Force was established by the Laguna Beach City Council. Made of of 16 local representative with Sindee Smolowitz and Richard Ammon representing Laguna Outreach (LO).

March – Pearl Jameson-Smith is honored by the Human Relations Commission as chairperson of the AIDS Coalition to Identify Orange County Needs.

April 11 – First ever Orange Community Gay and Lesbian Service Center fundraising dinner was held at the Alicante Princess Hotel in Garden Grove. Dr. Max Schneider was the honoree.

May—"Kill Foggots" bumper stickers removed from Huntington Beach surf shops due to efforts of the OC Human Relations Commission.

May 2—Laguna Outreach sponsored the First Lavender Limelight that was held at the Laguna Beach High School auditorium. Emceed by Keith Clark-Epley and Pat Callahan.

June -- The Alex Morgan Recovery Center, Morgan House, a residential facility for Homosexuals with additiions opened in Laguna Beach. Andrew Berner, Ph.D. is the board chairperson

Oct. 11 - Second March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights was held. This brought motivation, energy, and visibility to the movement with 500,000 attendees.

November - Vincent Chalk, an OC middle school teacher who was fired because he has AIDS, wins reinstatement in a wrongful-termination ruling.

The AIDS Reporting System was installed in the county for reporting resident AIDS cases.

1988

Janet Avery joined with Mercury Merilla, and Bob Hansen to begin making the Orange County Culture Pride (OCCP) a reality. A fundraiser was held at the home of Drs. Drew Barris and Don Hagan.

The Center negotiated for more space and moved down stairs at the Cedar Brook Complex (6600 ft).

February 26-28 The War Conference was held at Airlie House in Warrenton, Virginia. Over 100 gay and lesbian leaders from around the country gathered to form an action plan that would address the homophobia that the community faced daily and the leadership void that the AIDS epidemic was creating. Local attendees were Pat Callahan and Dan Wooldridge,

May 7 - Orange County Visibility League (OCVL) participates in the March on Sacramento to end discrimination.

July 12-The City of Irvine passed a human rights ordinance giving gays and lesbians protection against discrimination and almost immediately the opposition moved to have it stricken by initiative. The No on N campaign (Irvine Citizens United) led by Lisa Kay (Take a Stand Coordinator), Jim Boone, Paula Werner, Rev. Fred Plumer, et al., attempted to mobilize, but their efforts were unsuccessful when the ordinance was stricken in the November 7, 1989 election. The Yes on N campaign was a fear and smear job utilizing the Colorado rhetoric and materials. Yes organizers said gays are welcome in Irvine as long as "they don't flaunt it."

August 20--The Orange County Center hosts the first annual "Country Western Night" at the Center to raise funds for a sound system, TV's and a VCR.

September 18 - Sallie Dornan created a furor when, at a town hall meeting, she shouts, "Shut up fag," at Jeff LaTorneau.

The legislative persecution continued in California, as Proposition 69 (a re-work of 64) was re-introduced by Rep. Dannemeyer and again defeated by a two to one margin, through a focused community effort. It would have eliminated anonymous testing, required mandatory tracing, removed civil rights protections of infected persons and allowed for insurance testing. Proposition 96, allowing nonconsensual HIV testing of an arrested person when requested by emergency workers, passed.

Some gay Republicans came out of the closet, i.e. Frank Richiazzi (Laguna Beach) to lobby for the Republicans.

October 7 – The first gay night at Knott’s Berry Farm is held. It is sponsored by Odyssey Adventures.

October 11 - As a personal National Coming Out Day pride-statement, Brein Mason (aka Albert Lopez), a Tustin actor, “came out” to over 100 people while standing alone on the steps of Civic Center Plaza of Flags in Santa Ana.

Eric Hubert, Christopher Drake and Jeffrey Stable Jr., UCLA students, sue Disneyland contending a security guard violated their civil rights by reportedly telling them the “touch dancing is reserved for heterosexual couples only.”
[*The suit was dropped Oct. 1, 1989 when the park pledged not to discriminate based on sexual orientation.*]

1989

Janet Avery, establishes the California Assoc. of Pride, Inc. (CAPI), a cooperative of the state's Pride event producers and served as the first President (1989-90).

Michael Anthony established the Orange County Design Alliance to Combat AIDS (DACA). The organization was established to raise funds to fight the disease. When the disease took his life one year later, Bart Story took up the reigns within months. The organization reached new heights when it joined the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS (DIFFA) collective. Funds raised supported ASF, Laguna Shanti, and Stop AIDS Now OC.

March 11—Bob Gentry is honored by the OC Human Relations Commission for his work in stopping discrimination regarding AIDS/HIV in Laguna Beach.

April—Laguna Outreach meets with the police Chief Purcell to discuss the hiring of openly gay and lesbian officers. Carol Leslie, Lagune Outreach Chair and a local business owner, arranged the meeting.

June -- The Board of Supervisors refuses to adopt a HIV Anti Discrimination Ordinance and makes Orange County the only urban area in California to reject plans to outlaw discrimination against people with AIDS in housing, employment and public services. Supervisor Tom Riley and Harriett Wieder voted for and Supervisors Roger Stanton, Don Roth, and Gaddi Vasques, current Director of the Peace Corps, voted against.

Eleanor and Bill Cyr, P-FLAG parents, spoke at the Santa Ana City hall in favor of a pride festival and parade in the city. They were the only "for" speakers as the rest were Rev. Lou Sheldon's recruit.

June 29 – Congressman William Dannemeyer, Orange County, read excerpts from the 1978 NIMH report into the "Congressional Record" emphasizing references to sodomy and frequency of sexual contact.

July 29 -- Thomas Riley, County Supervisor, honors Don Hagan and Drew Barris, Laguna Beach activists, at the Disneyland Hotel for their work on AIDS and against discrimination of homosexuals. Over 700+ attendees were at the black tie event.

September 9-10--Inspired by Bob Hanson and Mercury Marilla (September 1988), the first Annual Festival and Parade, Orange County Cultural Pride (OCCP), was held in Santa Ana. Over 2,000 persons were in attendance. A parade was held on the circle road within Centennial Park which erupted into a "mini" riot when the Santa Ana Police Department let the protesting "religious zelots" cross the street and confront the marchers. Six persons were arrested and two received minor injuries. Rev. Lou Sheldon, protest organizer (who did not attend), was unsuccessful in stopping the festival. . [Original board of Directors: Janet Avery, Pres., Mark Raddatz, V Pres., Terry Carlson, AJ Kane, Connie Long, Tom Heilman, Judy Jones, Christina Mallory, Rob Helm, Treas., Steve Mittman, Kelli Arakaki-Bond, Kari Ericson, Kris Overton, Michael Johnson, Ron Kerns, Denise O'Hoyt, Cheryl Nassar and Lorraine Prieto.] The second Pride Festival moved to University of California at Irvine (UCI), Aldrich Park. The parade was held on the outer circle road on campus. The University of California at Irvine, Gay and Lesbian Student Union, sponsored the relocation of the event.

September 16 - Nine years after he was ejected from Disneyland for dancing with a man, Andrew Exler (aka Crusader) returned. Exler, 28, went dancing with a group of eight male couples.

October 1-- P-FLAG Orange County holds its first fundraiser at the La Cage Au Folle Supper club in West Hollywood.

October 8--The Anaheim-based California Coalition for Traditional Values holds a seminar at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Anaheim. The featured speaker, US Civil Rights Commission Chairman, William B. Allen spoke on the topic, "Blacks, Animals, Homosexuals,--what is a Minority?" 80 protestors disrupted the meeting with chanting, whistles, and clapping. 39 were arrested.

October 11 – Werner Kuhn, Jeff LaTourneau, and John Duran head up a group staging a National Coming Out Day celebration at the Santa Ana Civic Center's Plaza of the Flags. The two-hour event featured coming out stories and the singing of "love" songs.

October 21– The City of Santa Ana adopts an ordinance prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages, the use of fencing, and the charging of entrance fees, in all city parks.

November--The Orange County Business and Professional Alliance (BAPA) is formed. The board includes-Craig Jeffers and Diane Hines, co-chairs, Dennis Jones, sec., Mack Guillod, treas., Brian Barnett, newsletter, Ken Koehler, program chair. They hoped to unite community businesses and individuals together for their mutual benefit as well as working to heal the entire community.

November 3—Gay Ex-Marine, Link Schrader founder of the gay and lesbian club at Rancho Santiago College (nee Santa Ana College) was elected homecoming king.

December 1—The Orange County Visibility League (OCVBL) sponsored a World AIDS Day demonstration outside the County Board of Supervisors office to draw attention to the lack of support provide by the elected officials regarding discrimination against AIDS patients. .

The Federation establishes the Leadership Training Program (Committee members were: Lisa Kaye, Julie Tanet, Libby Cowan, Arlene Sontag, Joe

McCleary, Mac Mc Carthy, and Jerry Falabella). Libby Cowan and Michael Nielsen were the first training coordinators.