



S.V.P.C

SALINAS VALLEY PRIDE CELEBRATIONS

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



JUNE-JULY 2022

**Interview with California
Senator John Laird**

**Paul Richmond Explains
"Don't Say Straight" Protest Tee**



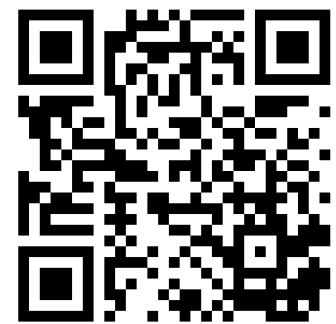
OCTOBER 2022

12th Annual

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**SALINAS VALLEY PRIDE
CELEBRATION**



DONATE TO OUR ORGANIZATION

Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations creates spaces for LGBTQ+ people through social events, community partnerships and a scholarship program with the goal of making the Salinas Valley a more inclusive place to live, work and visit.

You can donate online via PayPal at
www.salinasvalleypride.com/donate

Or send a check to:
1522 Constitution Blvd.
PO Box 222
Salinas, CA 93905



Have a birthday coming up? Instead of gifts this year, you can share a charity fundraiser on Facebook asking friends and family to donate to a good cause like Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations!
www.facebook.com/fundraisers

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PRIDE ISSUE

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A MESSAGE FROM SVPC PRESIDENT ERIC MORA



I have lost all sense of time during the pandemic. Between working from home and my toxic habit of overcommitting, the days just fly by. Lately I rely on my Outlook calendar notifications to tell me which Zoom meeting I need to log into next until I finish my day (grim, I know).

I knew Pride month was on the horizon when I started to receive emails from retailers peddling their rainbow-themed trinkets a few days ago (shoutout to Target for leading the fray this year with their "Celebrate Pride!" email campaign)

I'll be the first to admit that I have mixed feelings about Pride month. While I am grateful to live in a time when LGBTQ+ community members have greater visibility and representation than before, I resent that our acceptance is often contingent upon our spending ability. When our community is reduced to a consumer demographic, we lose so much of the promise our community held to create a world free of the shackles of oppressive forces.

However, Pride month also gives us an opportunity to gather in community and celebrate our collective history. Each year, I look forward to attending area Pride celebrations across Monterey and Santa Cruz counties. As I have gotten more involved in our local LGBTQ+ community, our area Pride celebrations have begun to feel like reunions between friends and I look forward to catching with our counterparts in Santa Cruz, Watsonville and Monterey in the coming weeks.

This special edition of our newsletter, which is devoted to Pride Month, features many examples of Pride at its best. I often tell people that the SVPC Scholarship Program—the only LGBTQ+ specific scholarship in Monterey County—is the greatest source of pride for our group and we're grateful to past SVPC Scholarship Recipient Ezra for sharing their experience with us. Paul Richmond reminds that Pride's spirit of resistance and activism is alive and well in Monterey County as he recounts his recent campaign "Don't Say Straight" against Florida's shameful House Bill 1557. CA Senator John Laird discusses his life and legislative accomplishments as an openly gay public servant, reminding us just how far we've come as a community.

CALIFORNIA SENATOR JOHN LAIRD

SPEAKS WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT OF SALINAS VALLEY PRIDE CELEBRATIONS



In the 1980's, John Laird served two terms as Mayor. He was one of the first three openly gay Mayors in the United States, all of whom were elected in the same year.

He currently represents District 17 in the California Senate which contains Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo Counties, as well as portions of Monterey and Santa Clara Counties.

He resides in Santa Cruz with his partner of more than two decades, John Flores.

**"TODAY, THERE ARE MORE OUT LGBT
ELECTED OFFICIALS IN THE
MONTEREY BAY AREA THAN THERE
WERE IN THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES
WHEN I WAS ELECTED TO OFFICE."**

Crystal (SVPC Vice President): Just last week, you were the keynote speaker for the Queer Youth Leadership Awards which you have participated in on multiple occasions. During your speech in 2007, you talked about how both you and your brother are gay, and how that affected your parents.

Senator Laird: Yes. Sometime in the late 1970's I had been agonizing, and I finally sat down with my parents and told them I was gay, and my mother blurts out, "Geez, we never thought you were gay. We thought your *brother* might be gay." And I wanted to say, "Well, he is. He just hasn't told you yet."

I think one of the most wonderful things is that my two nieces and my nephew, they only have gay uncles on this side of the family. My brother's partner of over forty years is, I would guess, their favorite uncle.

It has been really wonderful to have somebody who just has the common experience of your entire life. There was one moment, I would guess twenty years ago, before there were substantial rights for domestic partners, my brother told me that, if anything happens to me before we get rights in place, he would be the one in the family to say be fair here. Not that I think my parents wouldn't have been fair, but he was going to advocate for me. When I was head of the AIDS Project, we had these horrible cases where somebody would be dying and the estranged family would swoop in and try to take half the property, exclude the partner from the hospital for the last days, and it would be a horrible thing. And it was all because there was a lack of civil rights.



Crystal: I can imagine how phenomenal, relative to your own experience, it was to see families coming together in support of their children at the Queer Youth Leadership Awards ceremony.

Senator Laird: It was very nice. There were many, many, many parents at the awards in Watsonville the other night. In my comments, I referenced a social scientist out of San Francisco state who did a study that found out that kids who were accepted by their family were much less at risk for certain things and much more likely to succeed, and those who were not accepted were at risk for homelessness, disease, and putting themselves at risk in any number of ways. It is something that we in the LGBTQ community all know every minute of the day, but the study was able to help parents learn and help influence parents in making sure their kids weren't excluded and were safe.

Crystal: Your district is going to be representing Salinas in 2023, is that correct?

Senator Laird: Yes. Redistricting happened. I am going to lose 300,000 people in Southern Santa Clara County and I am going to gain 300,000 people in Monterey County and San Benito County. Provided voters re-elect me in 2024 and December 2025, I will officially start representing Salinas. But there is a crazy thing, and that is that for two years, the Salinas Valley and San Benito County will not have a Senator. The Senate has a process to assign unrepresented areas to Senators, so the odds are that I will be assigned to represent Salinas starting this coming December even though I won't officially have them in the district until December 2024.

Crystal: Do you have any plans to attend Pride Events during Pride Month?

Senator Laird: I intend to be at Santa Cruz Pride on June 5th. I am disappointed that I will miss San Luis Obispo Pride but I have sent people and messages. Monterey Pride is going to be in the middle of July and I am hoping to get there. I try to attend all the Pride Celebrations across the district. I have spoken at Santa Cruz Pride for 41 years and I keep going to make sure I don't break the streak.

Crystal: Salinas Valley Pride's event takes place in October. We would love to have you attend. I understand you are fluent in Spanish, which will be great when you represent the Salinas Valley. Our organization is really trying to be as inclusive to the LatinX community as possible by including Spanish written materials and Spanish Speakers at Pride.

Senator Laird: I really want to come, so I am going to try to make it work. My spouse of almost 27 years is a water color artist, and he is in open studios for two weekends in October. He puts up with my crazy life in the legislature, so for two weekends a year, I do whatever he wants. I just hope your Pride Event doesn't overlap with that. I am going to do my best.



Crystal: Is there anything that you want your soon-to-be new constituents of Salinas Valley to know about you?

Senator Laird: Well, I think two things. One is that I have an amazing history. When I was first elected to public office in 1981, there were I think eight to ten open LGBT officials in the United States. When I was elected Mayor in 1983, I was one of the first three openly gay mayors in all of the United States. All three of us were elected in 1983. Things were really tough. That wasn't necessarily a recipe to electoral success. In 1985, there were exactly fifteen open LGBT elected officials in the United States, and we formed the International Association of Out Officials. Today, there are more out LGBT elected officials in the Monterey Bay area than there in the entire United States when I was elected to office.

If you look at my work as an early elected official and my work in the HIV epidemic, I just have an incredibly long history of working for civil rights. When I was in the Assembly, I authored five civil rights bills, some of which have led to Supreme Court decisions and have gotten great recognition. It was our dream when I was working in the epidemic in the early 1990's that people would live to old age - and nobody was living to old age at the time. We were really losing them every week. And now, more than 50% of people with HIV in California are over the age of fifty. So last year I did a bill that was signed into law that said that senior programs should include a real attempt to outreach to people with HIV as a category of special need. I was able to come full circle last year legislatively.

Going forward, we still have major work to do. We may have won the marriage battle for now, and non-discrimination, and some of the things we dreamed about in the early years of my activism, but trans people are under attack, they're still bullying kids at school, and now some seniors who go into nursing homes go back in the closet because they fear for their safety when they are vulnerable. There is still a lot to do. If you look at the arc of history as you move forward in the struggle for civil rights, it is sometimes two steps forward and one step back, but the fortunate thing is that, until this current Supreme Court, the steps have generally been forward.



www.sd17.senate.ca.gov

Senator.Laird@senate.ca.gov

<https://twitter.com/SenJohnLaird>

www.facebook.com/SenatorJohnLaird

Arts & Culture

INTERVIEW WITH PAUL RICHMOND

DON'T SAY STRAIGHT

Renowned Artist Paul Richmond takes a stand against Florida's Parental Rights in Education Act with an ironic twist of words.



Straight rights have gone too far!! How can you think it's ok to talk to 5 year-olds about heterosexuality? I think most people would agree that children shouldn't be having discussions about this. Can't they be kids for just a while longer - color and watch cartoons? Then at 9 they can be taught about heterosexuality and stuff. Straight marriage needs to be revoked because it's never enough with you people. We must protect parental rights in education.

All of the above are direct quotes from comments on my Instagram page by people defending Florida's new Don't Say Gay legislation, with one switch - replace homo with hetero. - Paul Richmond



Crystal: The inspiration for this satirical t-shirt came from messages you saw on your Instagram page. Were these messages directed specifically at you?

Paul: Yes, they were. I have been making queer art for 20 years and have always been very outspoken about what I believe, so I get a lot of hate messages on social media.

Crystal: Do you remember what pushed you to the point of deciding to take a stand in this way?

Paul: I do a lot of work with young people - art mentoring, anti-bullying - so when I hear messages like what's

being said and what's happening in our country, I think of how damaging it is to a young person starting to figure out who they are. I lived in a don't-say gay world and I know that doesn't work. I grew up in the Midwest in the eighties. I didn't know what gay meant and had never heard the word trans, I just knew I was different. I stayed in the closet for the first half of my life because of that.



Crystal: One Instagram Post in particular accused you of "grooming" children. What is your response to that?

Paul: (Laughs) That is actually a throwback to anti-gay language introduced in the seventies. "Everyone needs to be afraid of queer people because we are trying to groom their children." Nobody can be groomed into anything that they're not. That is the irony of the language being used today.

My posts about the Don't Say Straight T-shirt are examples of how heterosexuality is so pushed onto young people, and if anyone is trying to groom society in a certain direction, it's them. You see stores that have pink isles for girls and blue isles for boys. They are pushed instantly into gender norms associated with those divisions.

I dream of a world where we stop imposing these ideas and stop assuming anything about anyone until they are old enough to say who they are and who they want to be, and take away the pressure and stigma so they feel comfortable identifying one way and discovering something else later. Part of being human is learning and discovery. We should all be constantly examining ourselves, our relationships, and our relationships to our community.



"What I like about doing wearable art is that I can raise money for the cause and simultaneously empower other people to take that message and carry it."

Equality Florida has joined the National Center for Lesbian Rights, Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP, Attorney Elizabeth Schwartz, and families in Florida in filing a lawsuit against the State of Florida over the newly-signed 'Don't Say Gay' law.

Crystal: Proceeds for your t-shirt are being donated to the organization **Equality Florida**. Have you worked with them before?

Paul: I don't have any prior association, no. When I designed the shirt, this Act began in Florida. Equality Florida is an organization that is actually taking legal action to try to overturn this legislation in their state.

Now that these laws have become a national issue, I am working with fashion designer Domini Anne. She is taking my design and turning into all of these different wearable art pieces - Don't Say Straight evening wear. There is a whole group of people wearing them to the **Champions of the Arts Gala** on June 18th. We are going to choose an organization dealing with this issue on a national level to donate the proceeds from those pieces.

What I like about doing wearable art is that I can raise money for the cause and simultaneously empower other people to take that message and carry it. Conversations have started because they are wearing it. Conversations that need to be had.



Paul Richmond is the Executive Director of **Art Makes Us**. He hosts art mentorship classes every day with students of all ages and from all over the world, including England, Bermuda, and Australia.

"I have been teaching my whole life in various ways, and have always loved the energy of sharing the love of art with other people. I take pride in art because, when I was young, I didn't fit in with other kids, even feeling shame about aspects of my identity. I had a lot in my head that I couldn't talk about with people, but I could still express of of it - even in a very coded way - through art." - Paul Richmond

www.paulrichmondstudios.com

www.artmakesus.com

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

CHERRY BEAN GOURMET COFFEE HOUSE & ROASTERY

332 MAIN ST, SALINAS, CA 93901



Cherry Bean Gourmet Coffee House and Roastery is owned by Todd and Peter, and located in the heart of downtown Salinas.

This comfortable, casual coffee house is known for roasting their own beans. Their roaster is even located visibly just in front of their vast, hand labeled selection of coffees.

Stop by this charming roastery to pick up the latest copy of our SVPC Newsletter!

"Cherry Bean will always support Salinas Valley Pride."

-TODD EMPSON
OWNER OF CHERRY BEAN

MEET THE LOCAL LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

MONTEREY LGBTQ+ NETWORK

Host of a weekly LGBTQ+ Social Hour, run by members of Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations. Meet us every Thursday at 6pm at the Springhill Suites Bar in Marina, CA.

www.facebook.com/groups/MontereyBayLGBTQ

TRUE COLORS WOMEN'S MEET-UP

We exist to connect queer women in the LGBTQ+ community, create meaningful friendships and participate in common interest activities. If you'd like to have more queer local vibes in your life, look no further, you have found your people.

www.meetup.com/true-colors-queer-womens-meetup/

MONTEREY PENINSULA PRIDE

LGBTQ+ Events, resources, and education
www.montereypeninsulapride.org

PRIDE CLUB & STUDENT ACTIVIST LEAGUE

Hartnell College
Reaching out to the community and LGBT Youth through events as well as having a safe space for people to be themselves.

FORMER SVPC SCHOLARSHIP WINNER, EZRA, DISCUSSES THEIR WORK AT CSUMB

Ezra Lambert
They/Them
An SVPC Op-Ed

In 2020, I was honored to receive the SVPC scholarship. At the time, I was feeling the impacts of the pandemic and lockdown. So, having transferred to CSUMB from MPC, I had decided to take a break from community organizing endeavors serving as Co-Chair of Monterey Peninsula Pride and Secretary of the National Coalition Building Institute. The scholarship allowed me increased space to focus on my academics at CSUMB. Here, I conducted my senior capstone project titled: The Impacts of Law Enforcement on Marginalized Communities In Monterey County. My findings indicate that local transgender people have a higher rate of distrust of law enforcement. This is not a surprising finding considering the historical evidence of law enforcement overpolicing LGBTQ communities—and in particular Black and Brown LGBTQ community members—ultimately leading to many riots, and most notably, the 1969 Stonewall Riots on Christopher Street in NY.

Nationally, we are observing growing tensions due to emboldened acts of white supremacy resulting in police violence, mass shootings, the imminent overturning of Roe v. Wade, and anti-gay and anti-trans bills presented by policymakers. It is vastly important to understand the common threads of white supremacy and how it impacts intersections of Black, Brown, and Indigenous, Asian, Jewish, disabled, and LGBTQ people—and that at each of these intersections, there are community members that embody all. We must intentionally center those individuals.

2022

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED IN JUNE OF 2022

Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations created the SVPC Scholarship Award to honor LGBT students and allies who embody Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations mission to create community and increase LGBT acceptance.



The housing crisis is one issue where we see many of these intersectional identities be disproportionately impacted. Nationally, 40% of unhoused youth identify as LGBTQ, and we must all work together and advocate at the County level on their behalf so that no one has to resort to sleeping outside, unsheltered. I am blessed to be part of the Epicenter team, where we have a Youth Council which is a youth-led foster program, and the Our Gente program which creates safer spaces for LGBTQ youth in schools and the greater community. My role here as Drop-In Services Support Staff is to connect any community member who drops in with resources, whether it be housing, employment, social services, counseling, or any other expressed need. I also engage in outreach with our unhoused neighbors, which enhances our community-based mutual aid work.

As I write this, I am planning my graduation celebration, and I am thinking about what is next for me. I know that I will always serve my community as it is a part of my life practice and journey toward liberation. In movement, let us work together to build networks of care and support. Let's embody anti-racism and anti-imperialism, challenging ableist and racist structures that we too often take part in. How can we build systems that serve those left out by capitalism? Our community becomes stronger when we create and hold spaces for our people whose identities intersect with common oppressive systems and also are in solidarity with the infinite ways we can and do exist under the rainbow. Marsha P. Johnson said, "No Pride for some of us without Liberation for all of us."



LGBTQ+ VOLUNTEER DAY AT FORT ORD DUNES STATE PARK

Join California State Parks and the Monterey Bay LGBTQ Network in the historic Fort Ord Dunes for a morning of volunteer work!

Together, we'll work to rescue the rare Monterey Ceanothus (*Ceanothus rigidus*) from encroaching ice plant. Help us open up space for this beautiful native shrub in the northern portion of Fort Ord Dunes State Park.



For more information or to RSVP, visit the "Monterey Bay LGBTQ+ Network" Facebook Group or email Samuel.Winter@parks.ca.gov

WHO:

LGBTQ+ FOLKS AND ALLIES. ALL AGES AND ABILITIES WELCOME!

WHEN:

SATURDAY, JUNE 25TH
9:00AM

WHERE:

FORT ORD DUNES STATE PARK MAIN PARKING LOT (END OF 8TH STREET IN MARINA)

WHAT TO BRING:

WATER, SNACKS, CLOSED-TOE SHOES, AND SUN PROTECTION. TOOLS, TRAINING, AND GLOVES PROVIDED!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



June 5th - HIV Long-Term Survivor's Awareness Day

This day honors long term survivors of the HIV epidemic and raises awareness of their needs, issues, and journeys. #HLTSAD

www.hiv.gov/events/awareness-days/hiv-long-term-survivors-day

June 12th - Pulse Remembrance Day

On this day, we honor the senseless loss of 49 innocent lives taken during the mass shooting attack on the gay nightclub, Pulse, in 2016 in Orlando, Florida. It is the deadliest incident in the history of violence against LGBT people in the United States as well as the deadliest terrorist attack in the U.S. since the September 11th attacks.

www.onepulsefoundation.org



June 28th - Stonewall Riots Anniversary

In 1969, a series of violent confrontations between police and gay rights activists at the Stonewall Inn in New York City gave way to the birth of an international gay rights movement.

www.civilrights.org/2009/06/22/stonewall-riots-the-beginning-of-the-lgbt-movement/



June 6th - Omnisexual Visibility Day

Omnisexuality is a sexual orientation where one is attracted to all genders or any gender, while having a preference. Often confused with pansexual, omnisexual does have attractions to any and all gender but with a certain preference. Pansexual is attraction to any and all gender without preference.

www.sexuality.fandom.com/wiki/omnisexuality



July 14th - International Non-Binary Day

The idea that there are only two genders is sometimes referred to as "gender binary." This week is dedicated to those who do not fit into the traditional gender binary as either a man or a woman. Non-binary identity encompasses a range of experiences, regardless of biological sex, sexual orientation, or even gender expression. #NotHeNotSheJustMe

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/10-ways-step-ally-non-binary-people>

July 16th - International Drag Day

Today we honor the art of drag from Drag Queens to Drag Kings.

While a drag performer's main purpose is to entertain, it is also a self-expression and a celebration of LGBTQ+ Pride.

Stay tuned for drag performances in Monterey County during this pride season!

#Don'tBeADragJustBeAQueen

www.facebook.com/intdragday/
www.internationaldragday.com





HAPPY PRIDE MONTH



Email: info@salinasvalleypride.com



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