

sac pride News

June 6, 2013

LGBTQ Issues & Lifestyle in Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Sutter & Yolo counties



SWEDE DREAMS: THE SACRAMENTO GAY MEN'S CHORUS TAKES US BACK TO WHEN ABBA RULED THE DISCO

CHECK OUT OUR GUIDE TO PRIDE, PAGES 4 AND 5

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Before there was IKEA there was ... ABBA! From left, Seth Benkunsky, Kris Farhood, Amy Jacques-Jones and Hal Dubiel.

Photo by Anne Stokes

Thank You For The Music

Summer concert marks a new direction for time-honored choral group

by **Amanda Caraway**

When the Sacramento Men's Chorus premiered in 1984, its name wasn't even out yet.

"When we first started we didn't want to seem political and some members were not out yet," says Frank Lawler, the current vice president and one of the founding members. "Eventually we changed our name, and now we are ambassadors working to bridge two communities with our music."

Today, the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus has grown into a true brotherhood with more than 70 members. But the chorus is more than just a musical group — it is a safe haven for young men who are struggling to fit in. Members can find a solid support system, and no one is eliminated based on skill. Placement auditions begin in the fall.

"I know we have parents of struggling gay kids in the audience," Lawler says. "I think it helps to see successful and happy gay men standing on stage. Perhaps it gives them hope that we don't need to hide in the shadows like so many of us did for years."

Corey Hubert, who joined in 2009, says the chorus is like a second family to him. "I think we foster a lot of goodwill in the community and challenge the stigma of what it means to be gay."

"I feel like we are helping open people's hearts to be more accepting and celebrate diversity."

Frank Lawler,
Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus vice president

Throughout the years, the chorus has sung at many prestigious events including Sacramento Kings games and the opening of the remodeled Crocker Art Museum. Members volunteer to sing at senior homes and assisted living facilities and regularly engage in fundraising for local charities.

This summer the chorus will perform its biggest concert ever, *ExtrABBAganza*, directed by new artistic director Steven Johnson. The show will be at 8 p.m. June 7 and 8 at the Crest Theatre. Johnson

has big plans for next season, too, which will be the 30th anniversary of the chorus.

"My goal is to take the chorus to the next level artistically so we can stand shoulder to shoulder with well-known gay men's choruses like San Francisco and Seattle," Johnson says. "I know they have the potential because these guys have a better connection to the artistry than any other group that I work with."

Lawler also feels that the chorus has a strong purpose to help facilitate positive change in the community. He sees it as a resource for newcomers to Sacramento and a place where young men can feel safe after coming out.

"I love to look out and see audience members being moved by our music," Lawler says. "I feel like we are helping open people's hearts to be more accepting and celebrate diversity."

Johnson agrees, "Music can inspire the souls of humanity."

SacPride News

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THERE'S A REASON TO BE PROUD AT SACRAMENTO PRIDE 2013.

Pride is a festival that celebrates LGBTQ culture and strides made in society — nationally and locally. Originally created 29 years ago to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall Riots of New York, the festival aims to bring LGBTQ community members out of the shadows and onto the streets of the state capital. Pride is produced by the Sacramento Gay & Lesbian Center and supports the Center's efforts to provide services, including HIV/AIDS prevention and peer counseling. Pride includes a free parade and a festival featuring food vendors, dance pavilions, a kids' zone and live entertainment.

Saturday, June 15

Parade

When: 11 - 11:30 a.m.

Cost: Free

Festival

When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: Capitol Mall near the Tower Bridge between 4th and 7th streets

Cost: \$10, children under 5 free

Tickets: www.sacramentopride.org

Volunteer

There are still many opportunities to help with this year's Pride. For more information or to fill out an application, go to sacramentopride.org/volunteer or scan the QR code with your smartphone!



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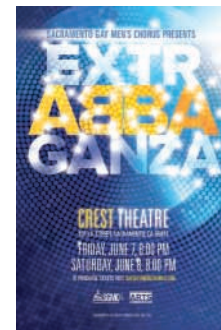
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EVENT CALENDAR



ExtrABBAganza

Join Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus at the Crest Theatre in downtown Sacramento on June 7 and 8 for an ABBAAbsolutely wild night, featuring songs from the '70s chart-topping group ABBA. Take a trip back to the days of disco (for those who survived it) or experience the magic for the first time (for those born since). There will be singing, dancing and costumes sure to entertain all. This show will be like no other presented in the 28-year history of the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus. Buy your tickets now in person at the Crest box office, from a chorus member, at The Gifted Gardner, or online at www.tickets.com.



Les Miserables

Cameron Mackintosh presents a brand new 25th anniversary production of Boublil & Schonberg's legendary musical, Les Miserables.

**May 29-June 9, \$24-\$91,
Sacramento Community
Center Theater, 1301 L St.,
Sacramento. (916) 808-5181.
www.tickets.com**

Art/Pride Mix

Art Mix helps kick off Sacramento Pride weekend with fabulous entertainment for the whole community. Note: Art Mix is designed with adults in mind.

**Th, June 13, 5-9 p.m. See web-site for costs. Crocker Art Museum, 216 O St., Sacramento. (916) 808-7000.
www.crockerartmuseum.org**

**Fr, June 14, 5-10 p.m. Free event. California State Capitol - west steps, 1315 10th St., Sacramento.
www.thegenderhealthcenter.org**

Sacramento Pride

Sacramento Pride consists of a parade and festival. The free parade starts at 11 a.m.; the festival is \$10 per person and is located on Capitol Mall near the Tower Bridge, between 4th and 7th streets. Sacramento's annual Pride event is always the year's best show-and-tell of good fun, great entertainment, and colorful memories. You don't want to miss this!

**Sa, June 15, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Free event. Capitol Mall Greens, 1300 7th St., Sacramento. (916) 307-5103.
www.sacramentopride.org**

Sierra Stampede Rodeo and Festival

Sacramento's Capital Crossroads Gay Rodeo Association is hosting the Sierra Stampede Rodeo and Festival in Rio Linda over three days. Family friendly.

June 7-9, Rio Linda Central Park Horse Arena, 848 Elkhorn Blvd., Rio Linda

Art On the Edge

Gender Health Center is hosting Art On the Edge as a part of Pride week festivities. Art On the Edge is a radically inclusive celebration of sexual and gender nonconformity. There will be an art walk starting at 5 p.m. at the State Capitol Building and live performances begin at 7 p.m. featuring our own Jovi Radtke performing poetry along with other live acts.

To have your event considered for the community calendar, please email event details and contact information to calendar@sacpridemedia.com.

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