



The 1990's Collection - ©Tucson LGBTQ Museum - All Rights Reserved (Text Format)

'There Is More Hunger For Love And Appreciation In This World Than There Is For Bread'  
Tucson "All Denominations" Church Spokesman in 1992



1990 Tucson

The Information Age of the 1990's in Tucson opened with a population of 402,155 living within its 157.5 square mile boundaries making it the 33rd largest city in the United States at the time, and by 1999 had reached 475,451 people within the 194.3 square mile city limits. In Tucson and other communities it was still a time of the huge everyday impacts of AIDS often leading to very spirited competition between local AIDS Services Groups for a limited number of grants and other funds as government at times 'changed its priorities' resulting in duplication of efforts & services offered to compete for grants as groups were often forced to scramble for constantly shrinking pieces of the pie and the community who had been donating hundreds of thousands of dollars asked for more information and that culminated into a Community Meeting that was held on Sunday November 7, 1993. By the end of the decade of the 1990's the majority of the AIDS groups had been merged into just one entity to cut costs, eliminate duplicity, and to ensure the long term survival of AIDS assistance locally.



In Tucson and other communities in the United States it was still not unusual to get pulled over by the police after you had just left a Gay bar. Officers would sometimes ask lots of questions, want to see your driver's license, know where you worked, where you had just left, and would look over your vehicle from bumper to bumper for anything illegal or not working such as any of the turn signals, the license plate light, head light dimmer, back up lights, brake lights, or the front head lights. Around the United States, and worldwide the 1990's were a decade of unprecedented gains as well as very disappointing losses in the ongoing struggle for Gay Equality.

On April 23, 1990 the Hate Crime Statistics Act was passed by the 101st Congress and was signed into law by then President George H. W. Bush Sr. as the very first federal law to extend federal recognition to Gays and Lesbians. In 1992, Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton actively courted the 'Gay Vote' by making campaign promises of increased civil rights for Gays and Lesbians. In Tucson the Tucson Shanti Foundation had a Grand Opening crowd of one hundred ninety four (194) people for previewing its expanded office space on Sunday February 18, 1990, sharing how it operated its free counseling, assistance AIDS / ARC programs, and fundraisers for those of the community suffering from the disease at their 602 N. 4th Avenue location. In the early 1990's historian John Boswell's research revealing that Christian same sex marriages pre-dated heterosexual ones by seven (7) centuries (700 years) became more mainstream.



1990's Movie The Birdcage

On the Television screens across America the scripts with available acting parts including Gays were becoming more frequent and the shows were receiving high ratings. Around town in 1990 the bars were jumping with fun and action. They included, Colette's West bar at 3143 E. Speedway Boulevard which featured live entertainment including all female rock and roll bands and closed going out of business on August 19, 1991, the classy Gay bar The French Quarter held its Official Grand Opening complete with a live band on Sunday January 14, 1990 under co-owners Michael Bennett (born under the sign of Aquarius) & Peter M. Sittig (a real estate agent) and offered a great brunch every Sunday from noon to 4pm advertising itself as 'Obviously Tucson's Alternative', Club Congress and its Rock & Roll Boy Bar and its Positively Queer Cafe with both located inside the hotel at 311 E. Congress was once again on as a Gay venue and hosted a Valentines Dance produced by the Wingspan group and the University of Arizona Lesbian/Gay Alliance, the group Club Hispano de Tucson held the 2nd Annual Miss Gay Latina Contest which later became a Pageant on Friday October 12, 1990 at the Joshua Tree bar, the Graduate bar at 23 W. University Avenue was always fun with activities under the ownership of Ronald D. Templeton until his death from the effects of both Cancer & AIDS on Thursday July 25, 1991 and at the reading of his will then bequeathed the bar to Arthur (Art) Lewis who later because of health problems sold the Graduate bar to Frank Schepis & David Huff in January of 1996 .

It's 'Bout Time (a.k.a. IBT's ) bar (at one time straight bars named the Balcony Bar & prior to that Mrs O' Leary's Cow Bar) under the ownership of Marilyn McCutchin until 1993 was home of the I.B.T.s Scream Girls and many other various performers at 616 N. 4th Avenue until later purchased by Frank Schepis & Dave Huff who both supported numerous community events, October 19-21, 1990 in Tucson was the Grand Opening of the 'New Finline' bar at 101 W. Drachman Street, the Joshua Tree/Back Pocket bar at 2921 N. 1st Avenue under the ownership of Bob Bishop Sr. was popular with its many shows & .50 cent draft beer specials until closing its doors forever on Monday March 2, 1992 and a short time later was the site of an Arson Fire which gutted the structures insides at 4:00AM the early morning of April 29, 1992. However soon new owners stepped forward and began a major reconstruction project of the building later quietly opening it as the Stonewall/Eagle bar on December 30, 1993 under the ownership of Gerry Geller & Ken Sullivan and having its official Grand Opening on Monday May 9, 1994 with both men later selling their business interests in the bar on December 3, 1999.



1992 K.D. Lang

The Rainbow Room bar at 3455 E. Grant Road presented fabulous shows until sold on September 20, 1990 to new owners Lee Nordmark & Betty Campbell (a Tucson native) who remodeled late at night and soon operated as hOURS (a.k.a hours) bar at the same location with a Grand Opening held the weekend of October 12-14. Later Betty Campbell sold off her entire fifty per cent (50%) interest in the bar to Lee Nordmark on March 31, 1993, Rumorz bar at 2222 N. Stone Avenue was still packing them in with frequent shows and daily drink specials. The Venture-N bar started up while under remodeling with new ownership on December 9, 1991 and with its "Venture-N to Leather Store" on Wednesday March 17, 1993 at its location of 1239 E. 6th Ave after the buyout of the French Quarter bar on Monday December 9, 1991 by Jim Dondson who had been the founder-owner of the Venture-N bar in Houston, Texas from Ken Sullivan & Jerry Geller who took all of the bartenders with them to their other bar Rumorz located at 2222 N. Stone Avenue, hiring for the Club 2520 bar which featured three (3) bars inside one (1) under the co-ownership of longtime friends Michael Bennett a true gentleman and fatherly figure to some & Peter M. Sittig a real local showman and real estate agent began in September of 1991 and opened at 11am Thursday December 19, 1991 with its Grand Opening at 2520 N. North Oracle Road held later on the night of February 3, 1992 as Western Line Dancing became the rage.

Strangely some of co-owner Michael Bennett's items soon began disappearing from the Club 2520 bar including a branding iron and framed photos from his family's ranch causing him to run ads and secretly hire a private investigator to recover the items. As the club matured Lucinda's Boutique opened up inside offering various Gay themed items, shirts, pins, key chains, popular stickers, and more. Fundraisers were often held at the venue including one for Robert Strickland on August 4, 1994. After the untimely death of Co-Owner Michael Bennett from a heart attack on October 16, 1994 a "Michael Bennett Memorial Walk For Life" was held Sunday February 13, 1994 beginning at 1:00PM at I.B.T.'s bar at 616 N. 4th Avenue continuing to the Venture-N bar at 1239 N. 6th Avenue, then on to Rumorz bar at 2222 N. Stone Avenue, and finishing at the Club 2520 bar at 2520 N. Oracle Road, with the 2nd Annual Event taking place on Sunday February 12, 1995.



In time after the death of Co-Owner Michael Bennett the highly popular bar Club 2520 was later purchased by Al Benion & another investor simply called 'Bruce' in August of 1994 but shut down after a short run. The location was yet once again a Gay Venue opening on Thursday March 7, 1996 at 7:00PM as the PLUG Tucson bar with its Grand Opening held later on April 12-13-14, 1996 under the management-ownership of Brian Morris Kruger which had a three (3) year run before going out of business. Once again at the 2520 N. Oracle Road location yet another bar reopened later as Boom-Booms bar at 4:00PM on Friday March 7, 1997, and yet again another bar as the reincarnation of the Fineline bar was attempted however the neighborhood would not support the transfer of owner Dick Plowman's liquor license to the location.

On January 20, 1990 the social & service organization 'Partners' of Tucson' installed their new officers including Peter Panda and sponsored many fundraisers for AIDS, the **Persian Gulf War** between August 2, 1990 to February 28, 1991 referred to simply the **Gulf War** waged by a United Nations authorized coalition force from thirty four (34) nations led by the United States once again put the nation's Gay & Lesbians in uniform on the front lines serving proudly, and the Great Outdoors group continued to offer its great outdoors escapes. Tucson's first Gay & Lesbian theatre group 'One In Ten' performed their first two (2) big shows on February 9th & 10th, the Metropolitan Community Church located at 560 S. Stone Avenue in the old Stone Temple until it's later move in 1993 to 3269 N. Mountain Avenue where on the morning of Saturday January 9, 1993 members planted a Memorial Rose Garden which would thrive for the next 18 years until an unusual winter freeze period killed many of them off.

MCC Church offered its many gracious services to the LGBTQ community, often sponsoring Bake Sales fundraisers at many of the local bars. The lively Cornerstone Fellowship Church met regularly at 3333 E. Grant Road (later relocating to 2902 N. Geronimo Avenue) finished its Memorial Garden on March 21, 1997 to remember their loved ones and offer an area for memorials, Home Computers started to become more common in the 1990's as BBS (Computer Bulletin Boards) specifically just for the LGBTQ market began starting up along with their ads selling personal computers.

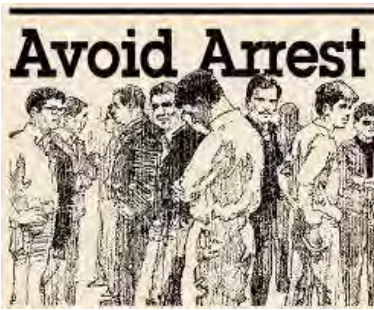


1990's Tucson Pride Festival

On February 16, 1990 James 'Jim' O'Malley the former co-owner of Jim's bar (see 1960's) bar located at 23 W. University Boulevard in Tucson from 1962 to 1967 (that would later become The Graduate bar) and the co-owner of the Sir James bar located at 4423 N. Oracle Road north of the city in Pima County (see 1960's) (see 1970's) died of a heart attack at his Palm Springs property, the People With Aids Coalition Of Tucson (P.A.C.T.) (Actually the 'Troy Stephenson Foundation DBA People With Aids Coalition' located at 151 S. Tucson Boulevard in Suite # 282 assisted those of the community with AIDS testing and monitoring, counseling, food bags, household items, and some medical supplies as well as cash at times (in January of 1992 it was located at 2579 N. 1st Avenue). Another organization in the same building at Suite# 252, the Tucson Aids Project (T.A.P.) also assisted its clients with various support services and programs for those with AIDS.

Also around Tucson, the Wingspan group operating out of a small one room office space located at 240 N. Court Street #A after a long dormant period put out a call for help through its financial crunch to the people of the Tucson Gay Community in October that Wingspan could not pay its November 1, 1991 rent and enough of the community responded to pay the rent for the group. The group then continued some of its core community services, events, and continued to expand into new ones which included plans to move. On May 10, 1992, the Wingspan group had completed their move to a new space at 422 N. 4th Avenue and was soon hosting an ever growing number of local LGBTQ organizations that were being formed throughout the 1990's who sought a meeting space as Wingspan like many other organizations and groups scrambled for funds.

After a 2 year crackdown-selective enforcement in Tucson that arrested 300 Gay Men in the cities local parks including one (1) man being charged with attempted murder by local officials because he had AIDS. The Police Chief Peter Ronstadt was quoted in an Arizona Daily Star newspaper article "We don't keep complaints in that category & the bulk of complaints come from Parks & Recreation." However, the Parks Director Jim Ronstadt stated to the press his office had only received 1/2 dozen (6ea) complaints, and they were all "Two (2) to three (3) years ago." A 'Kiss In' was organized at Himmel Park which brought out more than 100 Gays & Lesbians who openly "Kissed In The Park Publically."



In January of 1992 local Arizona Daily Star reporter M. Scot Skinner wrote an article named, "Cops In Parks Again" and he told the Old Pueblo Business and Professional Association at their meeting that the Tucson Police Department was once again scouting the city's parks and bookstores, entrapping & arresting Gay Men, and that the Police Chief Peter Rondstat had decided to basically withhold police reports from the press by making access rules for police reports virtually impossible.

In the ensuing controversy Police Chief Peter Rondstat resigned and was replaced with forty seven (47) year old Assistant Police Chief Elaine S. Hedtke as only the 2nd woman ever appointed to a major U.S. city's post of police chief on May 3, 1992. Six (6) months later Chief Elaine Hedke (a.k.a. known as Chief Headache by some of the police officers) resigned Monday November 15, 1993 to take over as assistant Police Chief in charge of the Human Resources Division and to be head of the City Of Tucson's Annexation Committee. At the campus of the Pima Community College students there began organizing the Pima Pride Club in February of 1992 despite some public resistance against a Gay group at the college. By 1993 the group PACT For Life (P.A.C.T.) had moved to 801 W. Congress Street. The P.A.C.T. organization held the AIDS Walk '95 on October 15, 1995 within just days of co-founder in 1987 (see 1980's) & director of the group the popular Jerome Beillard having resigned his post as director on Monday October 2, 1995 and then passing away from AIDS related health problems on Wednesday October 18, 1995.



1990's Free Beer At Tucson Pride Festival  
Local Bartenders Serving With Beer  
Provided by Tucson Gay Bars

A wake was held for Jerome Beillard in the Gold Room at the Quality Hotel located at 475 N. Granada Avenue (formerly the Ramada Inn site of many Gay Community events over past years) at 4:00PM on Friday November 3, 1995 and a 'Festival For Life' event was also held at the end of the decade on Sunday November 19, 1999, which became an annual event. In the 1990's the Long Distance competition between carriers and their resellers heated up in sometimes fraudulently attracting and later Phone Slamming of their service without permission with Gays targeted by sales pitches and getting their phone numbers and home addresses off of marketing lists.

Attempts in the 1990's to set back the Gay Rights & Progress that so many had fought so hard for were made such as Banning Gay Groups in schools & Banning Laws Protecting Gays were made by the "Traditional Values Coalition's" and its Arizona representative & Anti-Gay Crusader Frank Meliti however the movement lost its following along the way and could not gather enough financial support to continue.

The 1990's regularly saw members of Tucson Knight Owls (simply called T.K.O.) regularly meeting at the Graduate bar, having their monthly Beer Busts, sponsoring their annual Mini-Tacky Ball, and supporting the 'Make-A-Wish Program' among their many other fundraising events, while the Desert Leathermen group founded on October 2, 1985 (see 1980's) were actively sponsoring variety and other shows at various bars around town. Gay Skating Parties were the rage and were often held at Skate Country located at 2700 N. Stone Avenue including the "Skate For Shanti" fundraisers of the time period. Nationally the Madonna Fan Club was going strong and inviting new members to join.

LABELS ARE FOR  
CLOTHES, NOT  
FOR PEOPLE

#### 1990's LGBTQ Slogan

Wooing the show crowds all around town, and raising lots of money for Tucson's local AIDS and other programs were to name just a few: Candy Plastique (a.k.a. Cindy Trowbridge), Raven, Rhonda, Lucinda Holiday (a.k.a. Larry Moore), Lissett, Miss Vanna (a.k.a. Tim Barth), Adrienne Alexander, Penny Peters, Gina Who (a.k.a. George John Placencio), Madame X, Alotta Whoremones, Connie Lingus ( a.k.a. Paul), Jessica Blake, Dani Reid (a.k.a. Daniel E. Reid), Christina de Alexis (a.k.a. Luis José Gutiérrez Castañada), Deora Le Blanc , Mama Reyña (a.k.a. Ruben), Bunny FuFu (a.k.a. Mark Fetgatter), Margo Leigh (a.k.a. Lee Thompson), Gilda Fatale (a.k.a. Rodney Shanks), Ms. Candice Doolittle whose favorite line was "Charmed I'm Sure", Felice Reynard (a.k.a. Marshall Eric Taylor), Barry De Bone (a.k.a. .Beth Riddell, Aviva Diamond (a.k.a. David Wetstein), Miss Victoria DuPuis, Ajia Simone, Vannity, Tiffany St. Thomas, Marpessa, Miss Jade, Truly Fabu , Kimberly, Namoni Knight, and many many more.

An explosion of 1-900 Hotlines (charging rates from .99 cents upward to \$4.99+ per minute) could be found everywhere from Dial A Hunk & The Meet Mart to Psychic Hotlines to information about Puerto Peñasco that was often actually originating from real estate agents-brokers located in Phoenix, Arizona. Meantime, at the Tropicana Motel - a Warbux Production located at 617 W. Miracle Mile one could visit their adult arcade, buy an adult magazine, and or rent a hotel room for 2 hours for \$13.00 plus tax. Tucson's, the Lambda Democratic Caucus was regularly involved in local & national issues and conducted voter registration drives in the local Gay bars and other venues.

Tucson's Arizona Gay Rodeo Association (A.G.R.A.) chapter began forming on July 21, 1991 at Hours bar out on the patio located at 3455 E. Grant Road with organizers Michael Butrynoticz-Bill Darnell-Mark Miller. Tucson was officially granted its satellite Arizona Gay Rodeo Chapter status on Sunday August 11, 1991 electing its officers in February of 1992 and held the first Gay Rodeo in Tucson called the Saguaro Regional Rodeo on May 8-10, 1992 which was resounding success at the Old Tucson Studios located out at 201 S. Kinney Road with Natalie Perry as the events Grand Marshall.



1990's Tucson Pride Festival

The next year in 1993 AGRA Tucson Rodeo winners of the events were posted and all attending the celebration dance held in town had a truly memorable time. On Sunday October 22, 1995 the AGRA-Tucson group met in two meetings at the Ain't Nobody's Business bar (which had been under the ownership of Melinda Brown since Thursday August 18, 1994) located at 2900 E. Broadway Boulevard Suite #118 to become its own chapter and no longer be a satellite chapter of the Phoenix AGRA group. By early 1992 the Annual Community Awards Of Tucson (C.A.T.) Committee was floundering due to public and members apathy finally suspending the awards that year at their meeting on Saturday February 8 at which out of the thirty two (32) of its members only four (4) showed up to plan its annual event.

Formed locally in February of 1993 and affiliated with the men's group 'Cronies' until separating August 14, 1994 the local chapter of the national group 'Prime Timers World Wide' started up as the Tucson Prime Timers under the leadership of Chairman George D. Kaplan meeting on the 4th and later the 3rd Sunday of each month at Wingspan's location at 422 N. 4th Avenue. The group offered and extended an invitation to older Gay & Bisexual seniors and the ones who appreciate them to enrich their lives with many weekly lunch and dinner events, activities, along with both in & out of town outings. At the Rumor Hazbit bar at 2222 N. Stone Avenue in the mid 1990's on Thursday's where one could get draft beer at .50 cents a glass.

The Cornerstone Fellowship Church welcomed the LGBTQ community at 3333 E. Grant Road. On 4th Avenue at 616 N. It's 'Bout Time bar (I.B.T.'s) was the home bar of the group Partners group who were active in fundraisers with events such as Beer Busts & Bowl-A-Thons for Tucson's AIDS groups, and the Copper City Squares dance group met regularly at I.B.T.'s bar with long neck beers priced at .75 cents on Thursday nights, while the T-Squares Western Square Dancing group met at Club 2520 at 2520 N. Oracle Road. I.B.T.'s bar also continued its tradition of presenting a yearly student scholarship on Sunday February 12, 1995 to winner Jaime Ball.



1990's Tucson Pride Festival

Other groups such as the Tucson Arizona Levi Leathermen (T.A.L.L.) sponsored many activities including their very successful Beer Busts, the Sisters Of Sonora (S.O.S.) which had all started as just an inside joke phrase "What In The H\_\_ \_ Is SOS?" at the Graduate bar in 1984 (see 1980's) with the group known for its many charitable works and famous for their Hoedowns at rodeo time & many other fundraisers. The Sisters Of Sonora later officially disbanded the club at their meeting on Sunday January 5, 1992 at Hours bar, Fiesta de Mayo raised funds for the annual Pride Picnic, Salud es Poder – the Latino Men's Health Project which sponsored both the annual Miss Gay Hispanidad and Mr. Gay Latino Pageants in order to promote AIDS/HIV awareness with Latino men who have sex with men was also involved in many related events & activities.

Desert Voices choir (that had changed their name from Tucson Metropolitan Community Chorus) and their musical concerts were a local hit with James Gall as Musical Director, the men's social group Cronies for those men over 40 met at various locations for private events including video movies nights, the Uncircumcised Men's Group a social & support group that was part of a national group met locally each week, Lambda Car Club Grand Canyon Region regularly organized socials at various bars and went on tours of car museums along with participating in sponsored car rallies, University of Arizona Gay/Lesbian Alliance later re-named itself Lesbians, Bisexuals & Gays United and again later re-named itself BGALA met on Monday nights at the Student Union 2nd floor in room #250, the Paragon Night Club located at 144 W. Lester Street opened on Wednesday March 15, 1995 calling itself Arizona's Largest Gay Entertainment Club, Parents And Friends Of Lesbians And Gays (P.F.L.A.G.) remained very active with cookouts, fundraisers, and support and assistance around the community.

Sorority, a group for male & female Transsexuals - Transvestites - Gay Cross Dressers met bi-monthly using meeting space at the Wingspan Center located on 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Front Runners Of Tucson offered numerous weekend non-competitive runs, Old Pueblo Business & Professional Association (O.P.B.P.A.) hosted numerous events and guest speakers on many various timely local and national subjects paving the way for the group that would come later in the decade named the 'Community Business Association' (C.B.A.), the 40's & Better group for women offered members many social events including picnics & hikes in the local areas, in the later 1990's the youth groups Gay Young Men's Project and Queer Voice were very active locally and beyond often meeting at the Rainbow Planet Coffee House and other venues, offering dances-cyber cafe chats-condom distributions and the Gay Positive Mural Project in 1996 created by Corby Baker & the Queer Voice group on the east side wall of the Graduate bar.



1990's Tucson Pride Event

The Gay Asian/Oriental Club members met regularly for social-educational-cultural exchange and met at different venues around Tucson. Arizona/Sonora Proyecto S.I.D.A. an AIDS assistance and prevention group was located at 801 W. Congress Street, the group Wingspan and the Wingspan Youth Support Group was located at 422 N. 4th Avenue offering the LGBTQ community support sessions, a welcome reception desk and visitor sign in book during the daytime depending on 1 or 2 volunteers, free coffee and often donated snacks-sodas, special weekly Men's & Womyn's nights, hosting meetings of many groups including the Lesbian Avengers, the At Ease Again Men's Discussion Group and American Gay & Lesbian Atheists groups along with many others, a gay themed library section, a telephone hotline, and a monthly newsletter all from and in its large one room store front-space on 4th Avenue . Around Tucson, 1993 saw 4 bedroom houses for \$89,000 and nationally the enactment of the Don't Ask - Don't Tell federal law after very heated debates in both the House and Senate that led to the overruling of then President (1993-2001) William Jefferson Clinton and became military policy.

Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (T.I.H.A.N.) announced to the Gay Community on July 5, 1995 that two (2) 'CareTeams' were available as a combined part of the local Gay friendly religious communities under the leadership of the Saint Francis In the Foothills United Methodist Church with its church member Scott Blades as the coordinator providing non-medical support and fundraising for those with AIDS/HIV and soon the group was searching for a Director. One of its programs, the very popular POZ CAFE offered a great lunch meal, socializing, and acceptance for many of those suffering with AIDS/HIV. Think Positive Project a program of the Shanti Foundation was very popular with locals putting the AIDS prevention message into timely comic strip formats. Tucson's first 'All Gay' men's chorus, Reveille Gay Men's Chorus began forming in February of 1995 and presented its first public debut concert performance on Friday June 2, 1995 at 8:00PM in the Southwest Center for Music located at 2175 N. 6th Avenue with director James Gali along with its twenty two (22) founding singing members.





1990's Tucson Pride Festival

Monday May 22, 1995 Tucson's Mayor and City Council voted unanimously passing a Hate Crimes Ordinance within the Tucson city's limits. Project TEAM/COPE opened a HIV/AIDS Community Center amidst some criticism for taking away clients from other organizations, with Project Director Edgar Rivera located at 732 N. Stone Avenue on July 3, 1995 and its Grand Opening held on August 20, 1995 providing a part time space for social-recreational-and some educational activities. The Frensdorff House opened on September 10, 1989 and continued to offer accommodations for up to six PWA's (Persons With AIDS) featuring shared kitchens for those living with AIDS/HIV and rent on a sliding scale depending on a person's income. The Gay Men's Health Project (G.M.H.P.) began in 1996 as only a one (1) year research project, but was later given State of Arizona Grants to continue as a resource for AIDS Prevention for men who frequented Tucson's Gay Bars. The Community Business Association formed on February 15, 1996 with founders Brad Sensenbach & Greg Hollman to fill the gap left by the passing of the Old Pueblo Business And Professional Association (O.P.B.A.P.A.) which had shut down.

On Sunday May 14, 1995 Wingspan's Executive Committee notified its Board Members and soon after the Tucson Gay Community of the embezzlement of One Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five Dollars (\$1,425.00) of the groups funds by Wingspan's Board Member Werner Wijnant and then quickly moved back on to its core mission again. During June downtown at Wingspan located at 422 N. 4th Avenue, the center featured local photographer Danny (Moose) Pagel's gallery show "Men Of Moose" along with its other activities. Wingspan expanded its community involvement and expenses in August of 1995 and by the end of the 1990's in 1997 Wingspan had expanded its operations, funds, and services relocating to rent the property at 300 E. Sixth Street with its first Paid Staff Employees in 1998 working along with some of its original unpaid volunteers. Groups such as the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Veterans Of America had a local chapter form locally in the 1990's, and the Gay Lesbian Straight Educators Network (G.L.S.E.N.) that first began organizing on October 14, 1998 and formed in a meeting at the Wingspan Community Center at 300 E. 6th Street, Wingspan on Thursday May 28, 1998 held their Grand Opening of the Wingspan Domestic Violence Project to the local LGBTQ community and announced having hired an Art Curator for their group, the drug Viagra and its use became mainstream, the Men's group Bears Of The Old Pueblo (B.O.A.) originally began organizing on September 8, 1992 with the leadership of Steven Zepp holding its Kickoff Party on Saturday September 19, 1992 at the Venture-N bar out on the patio until well after midnight and staying very active during the decade.



Bringing Español speaking readers in the LGBTQ community up the latest medical information Dr. Eleazar Garcia M.D. regularly wrote his weekly sexual health related articles in Español, the Southern Arizona Aids Foundation (S.A.A.F.) located at 151 S. Tucson Boulevard Suite #211 was legally born on Tuesday July 1, 1997 under the leadership of Anne Maley being formed in the merger of the Tucson Shanti Foundation, People With Aids Coalition Of Tucson (P.A.C.T.), Tucson Aids Project ( T.A.P. ) and its successful Salud es Poder - Latino Men's Health Project which sponsored many local events, and the Tucson Shanti Foundation which had been located at 602 N. 4th Avenue.

The consolidation move of merging those AIDS Service Organizations together ensured the preservation of AIDS services in the future and fundraising quickly took many innovative formats including the "SAAF Investment Program" and Special Government Grants leading to hiring more employees with many of the grants soon reduced or later eliminated completely as governments cut their grant spending. Also on July 1, 1997 for the first time the employees of the City of Tucson were offered health insurance coverage for their Domestic Partners. Pima County Employees received Domestic Partner benefits effective on April 26, 1998, while also in April of 1997 Tucson's Gay & Lesbian bars were lovingly invaded by the highly successful "Condom Brigade Program." After winning the presidential election on Tuesday November 3, 1993, President William Jefferson Clinton pushed through the enactment of a "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy" for Gays & Lesbians serving in the United States Military. Unfortunately, the policy only ended up further silencing all of those military Gays and Lesbians that were serving.

Throughout the 1990's a constant back and forth battle was waged in the very liberal state of Hawaii for the government recognition of Same Sex Marriage under the existing governments system of marriage, divorce, and property settlement laws. The effort resulted in Gay Marriage being legal for just one day there before it was overturned by state judges.

1993 saw the Hollywood movie 'Tombstone' filmed out at Old Tucson Studios with some of the Tucson LGBTQ community answering the call for positions as Movie Extras, and found work on the film. Local Gay and Lesbian union and non-union movie and stage technicians were also called out on the production. In 1994 the highly advertised Pride Tour of Puerto Peñasco that was set for the weekend of September 10, 1994 turned into a Class Action Lawsuit when its promoters claimed not enough tickets were sold however did not refund any of the monies already paid to them by all the individuals and groups. The Tucson Greater Softball Association (T.G.S.A.) held its First Opening Day Ceremony on June 26, 1994 offering both players and fans plenty of action packed fun filled ball games and other activities but later in the decade cancelled the 1998 season for lack of interest from the community. In November of 1998 the City of Tucson formed the Tucson Commission On GLBT Issues by order of Mayor George Miller as a task force which then began meeting regularly.



1993 Tombstone Filmed  
At Old Tucson Studios

By the close of the decade in 1999, Tucson's LGBTQ community would see numerous changes, consolidations, closures, new faces that had moved in from other states, and new startups. The Gay Pride Picnic had become more of a Festival and had been moved from its original place of Himmel Park held in June and changed to a new time and place of October at Gene Reid Park for the cooler weather, larger space & to coincide with National Coming Out Day which had quickly gained in popularity, while the organization and production of the event had been formally taken over by the Tucson Lesbian/Gay Alliance (T.G.L.A.) group. On April 7, 1993 the Tucson Lesbian/Gay Alliance group announced they did not charge for booth spaces but that the City of Tucson and Pima County Government Officials had revised the rules on booths in parks wanting to get their share of the events money and that their fee would be "Minor." The Sunday June 20, 1993 Gay & Lesbian Pride Picnic XVI (16) held at the N/E corner of Himmel Park was highly successful, despite the last minute attempts by the Tucson Police Department & The Arizona State Liquor Board (and whatever groups or individuals who had convinced them to do so) to deny the permit to hold the event there in the park that day just before the event was scheduled to open.

The possibility of being denied a Pride Picnic that early morning caused a near riot as those waiting for the event to open began picking up rocks-sticks-bottles-cans and anything to throw at the government officials as they listened to the events Co-Chair Jack Stockslager make the announcement and only began dropping the items when Stockslager announced the event would be held. The next year's 17th Annual 1994 Pride Picnic with its record setting 18,000+ people in attendance was held for the first time on October 8, 1994 and for the first time at the larger with more available parking Reid Park under a change in leadership as the previous leaders of the Tucson Lesbian/Gay Alliance stepped aside and fresh faces from other states began taking over the event. Under the leadership of T.L.G.A.'s new President & event Co-Chairman John R. (Big John) Haase and Sandra Lightner.



1990 Miss Gay Tucson Pageant

Curiously, both of Tucson's largest newspapers the Arizona Daily Star & Tucson Citizen failed to cover the event both prior or during the event that year. At the 1994 event the admission and beer was still free or attendees could bring their own beer only in aluminum cans with no hard alcohol allowed due to state liquor laws. Security for the 1994 Pride Event was provided by trained volunteers from within the LGBTQ Community & a few Tucson Police Officers paid at Police Union Scale Wages who for the first time had a recruiting booth at the event & had no arrests or problems that day. The 1994 events attendee's tents were allowed to be set up along the outer perimeters for free.

One spin off from the 1994 Pride Event that year was the separation of the Annual Fiesta de Mayo Pride Picnic Fundraiser, the major Gay Pride Week fundraiser, as no longer being a Tucson Lesbian & Gay Alliance event but instead became solely owned by Minnie Minerva a.k.a Martin Gastelum.

Later in 1996 the Pride Event would for the first time no longer include free beer & soda's (the 1994 event had seen 1,500 attendees consume 48 beer kegs ...that's 7,970 twelve (12) ounce glasses of beer) as the events funding structure was changed away from the various LGBTQ Community Fundraisers held throughout the year as in the past. Soon locals saw the events management and others riding around on golf carts, chain link fences placed around the event, and ever increasing admission, booth, park & permit fees to help cover the events ever rising costs to produce.

The days of the event when attendees could bring in their own favorite home cooked foods or their water, be misted with a fire hose's fine mist spray compliments of Michael Bennett Co-Owner of the Club 2520, or play on the wet Slip & Slide in their swim suits or short pants sliding down the hill in the encompassing heat of Tucson's late June weather, or having a BBQ with their friends as the event had originally started out in 1977 (see 1970's) had passed into history.

However, it was no longer 1977 (see 1970's) as each new year seemed to bring new added Government & Parks Department Regulations as well as new increased Fees while at the same time there was always new excitement, new faces, new events, new shows, and new experiences as an ever growing and ever changing Tucson LGBTQ Community as thousands moved into Tucson and the world marched into the future. New ideas for events, and fundraisers were held as what had once been a one day Pride Picnic evolved into more than a week of activities including for the first time including the immensely popular 'Gay West' Pride Week Fundraising Event held out at Old Tucson Studios for the first time on Saturday June 26, 1997 beginning at 6:00PM.



1990 Christmas At The Graduate Bar In Tucson, Arizona

On February 15, 1996 after twelve (12) years (see 1980's) as a printed weekly publication bringing local, state, national, and international Gay related news to Tucson, the Southern Arizona LGBTQ communities, and beyond the *Weekly Observer* came out online to the world. Within days the *Weekly Observer* website had been 'Hacked' into and had to be switched to a different host bringing it soon back online. The first web page to be hosted by the *Weekly Observer* for another LGBTQ business in Tucson became the It's 'Bout Time bar (a.k.a. I.B.T.'s) on March 2, 1996. In the entertainment world, talk show host Ellen DeGeneres made headline news by being the first major television star to come out as a Lesbian, both on the screen and off in her own personal life. Ironically, DeGeneres talk show simply called *Ellen* was canceled a year after her character's Coming Out.

Toward the end of the decade of the 1990's, Valentina's Cocktail Lounge located at 3455 E. Grant Road opened at 11:00AM on Wednesday November 3, 1999 providing its patrons a welcome cocktail lounge styled atmosphere with lively shows, the Stars bar located at 536 N. 4th Avenue calling itself 'A Place For Romance' provided live entertainment for a just short time however on November 27, 1999 no longer welcomed LGBTQ customers. The Ain't Nobody's Bizness bar located at 2900 E. Broadway Boulevard Suite #118 and the Woody's bar located at 3710 N. Oracle Road which opened on Monday November 8, 1999 and had its Grand Opening later on November 20-21-22, 1999 under the ownership of the Post-Graduate Corporation with its principal officers Frank Schepis & David Huff were the new Gay Bars in town toward the end of the decade. World AIDS Day 1995 was observed in Tucson on December 1, 1995 with six (6) local agencies taking part in planning the various activities along with various others held each year during the decade of the 1990's.

The highly successful men's group Men's Social Network (a.k.a. M.S.N.) began as the idea of Ray Evans who served as the first chairperson & represented men in the 50's age group, along with Gerald (Jerry) Curl who handled the public relations, and Les Elliot who wrote the newsletters as a purely social group with an informal structure along with friends organized and held its first start up meeting at 7:00PM March 4, 1995 with forty nine (49) men in attendance at the Cornerstone Church Fellowship Hall. "M.S.N." as the men's group became known quickly began putting out a Monthly Newsletter and started offering many varied alcohol free events in private homes, public venues, hiking & recreational areas, along with monthly potluck dinners held first at the Cornerstone Church Fellowship Hall and later down in the somewhat castle like fun atmosphere of the basement at the old downtown Masonic Hall/Scottish Rite Temple located at 160 S. Scott Avenue.



1998 Matthew Shepard  
Murdered Because He Was Gay

Nationally, on October 6, 1998 and into the next morning a 21 year old Gay student attending the University of Wyoming as a political science major, Matthew Shepard was lured out of a Gay bar by two (2) young men posing as Gay Men who then robbed, beat, pistol whipped, tortured, and murdered the young Matthew Shepard leaving him out in a rural area tied up to a rancher's wooden fence to die. The incident sent shock waves internationally and led to a push for passing more hate crime legislation on both the state and federal levels. Well over 800 people in the Tucson community attended a Memorial Candlelight Vigil for Matthew Shepard at the west end of the University of Arizona Mall starting at 6:00PM the evening of Thursday October 15, 1998. Locally in Tucson, a May 1998 robbery that according to reports started with the theft of a VCR and TV then ended with the murder of a mentally retarded and cerebral palsy physically disabled local Gay man, Mark Truesdell, twenty nine (29), who was viciously stabbed to death twenty six (26) times in the chest in his North Campbell Avenue apartment by Ronnie Gene Sartin Jr., thirty (30), who was tried and later convicted on a first-degree murder charge sent shockwaves through Tucson's Gay Community.

The public access channel show THE "G" WORD hosted by local graphics artist with the Weekly Observer Gary Neil Clark along with his many guests provided the LGBTQ Community with comedy-news-hijinks and more each week on Thursday nights at 8:00PM, the first Gay & Lesbian Awareness Class taught at the Tucson Police Academy began at 8:00AM on the Thursday morning of February 16, 1995 with a very lively group of police students, Dignity, a group for Lesbian & Gay Catholics and their friends met regularly for services and socials, the MCC Church which had been using the phrase "A Lighthouse In The Desert" had instead later replaced it with the phrase "Water Of Life" added to the front of its name, the Cornerstone Fellowship Church which had started up in 1986 (see 1980's) after some members had split off from the MCC in time located their church services to 2902 N. Geronimo Avenue. In the latter 1990's a Tucson chapter of the Log Cabin Republicans was formed holding its first meetings at Wingspan's offices at 300 E. 6th Avenue.



1993-94 Miss Gay Tucson Pageant

By the end of the decade the AIDS assistance groups P.A.C.T., Tucson Shanti Foundation were gone forever and together reborn as S.A.A.F., a number of Tucson's Gay bars were also gone on December 31, 1999 at 12:00PM including The French Quarter bar which had been sold by its original owners, Colette's West bar, FineLine bar, Rumors Hazzit bar closed April 7, 1994, Hours bar which closed on Sunday September 26, 1999. The Club 2520 bar which had later closed not long after the death of its co-owner Michael Bennett, the PLUG Tucson bar, Boom-Booms bar, and the New FineLine bar all at the same address as original Club 2520 had all shut down only lasting a short time due to financial, management, and or permit problems.

The Graduate bar along with its plastic air separation curtain at the entrance affectionately known to some as the "Shower Curtain" at the entrance was gone forever when it closed on Sunday June 6, 1999 after its lease had not been renewed, and held an auction of its memorabilia before being demolished to build an apartment complex development for college students, along with The Rainbow Room bar that had all closed their doors forever. With it, they had all taken their very special unique Tucson atmospheres, their countless hosted Gay Community Events and Fundraisers, and even some of their Colorful Patrons and Employees with them into history. But, in the minds of many who paid their dues back during those times, who had come together so very closely for their common defense against the sometimes Rampant and Violent Homophobia, the memories were etched very deeply forever into their minds.



1998 Tucson 'Outoberfest'  
Pride Festival Poster

Nationally, even though the case for same sex marriages in Hawaii was later lost in 1999, there were several of the important benefits that were retained for those couples. In another state in the United States, Gay Marriage won a resounding victory in 1999 in Vermont, with the winning the right to Civil Unions that conferred virtually all of the same rights, benefits, divorce, child support, alimony, and property settlement laws being accorded to the Government Regulated Heterosexual Marriages. In Tucson, during the 1990's the *Observer* publication (a.k.a. *Tucson Observer*) the staff included Editor/Publisher Robert (Bob) Bailie Ellis, in Art & Graphics Gary Neal Clark and assisting Gary in the early 1990's was the very talented graphic artist Lance Penny who would later go on to be murdered in San Diego in a Gay Hate Torture Crime, and a host of contributors/columnists/staff writers including photographer Danny (Moose) Pagel who had been chosen 'Bartender of the Year' in the 1993 C.A.T. Awards, and providing weekly articles the popular and in depth POLITICS column by writer Mark Kerr winner of the 1996 Arizona Press Club Award who later in the 2000's (see 2000's) went on to become the publications managing editor.

At the end of the 1990's gone were **Ryan Wayne White** a teenager from Kokomo, Indiana who became a national poster child for HIV / AIDS in the United States, after being expelled from his middle school because as a hemophiliac. Ryan became infected with HIV from a contaminated blood treatment and later died of AIDS on April 8, 1990 just one month from graduating from his high school, openly Gay actor Thomas (Tom) Louis Villard who died of AIDS complications on November 14, 1994, also early pioneer Tucson Gay Bar and Private Gay Men's Club owner and newspaper publisher of the *Tucson Gay News* (see 1970's) George E. Rederus died peacefully in his sleep on the night of Monday November 13, 1995, Activist and founder in the 1980's of the Tucson Shanti Foundation Michael Griffin (see 1980's) died on Monday December 30, 1995, early technology pioneer & P.A.C.T Wellness Program collaborator Jeff R. Glasser made his transition peacefully on February 23, 1996 while in the arms of his partner, the longtime Gay & Lesbian Civil Rights Activist Bella Abzug who was the first Jewish Congresswomen in United States history died March 31, 1998, Tish Tanner a.k.a. Garry Magnum a prominent Arizona Female Impersonator who entertained literally thousands of audiences including many shows in Tucson died in his sleep at home the night of November 7, 1999, openly Gay storyteller & writer of the highly popular book *The Naked Civil Servant* Quentin Crisp died on November 25, 1999, the founder of the Washington D.C. chapter of Act Up (a.k.a. AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power) Steve Michael died 11:12 am Monday May 25, 1998, local Tucson Gay Clubs favorite D.J. & computer whiz Jeffery A. Strickler died on April 4, 1996, comedian-singer & actor George Burns born as Nathan Birnbaum half of the comedy team of "Burns & Allen" died of heart failure on March 9, 1996 at age 100 at his home as Hollywood lost many of its 'royalty' during the decade.



1996 Tucson Pride Festival Board Of Directors

The Information Age of the 1990's in Tucson had opened up with a population of 402,155 living within its then 157.5 square mile city boundaries making it the thirty third (33<sup>rd</sup>) largest city in the United States at the time, and by midnight December 31, 1999 had reached 475,451 people within the expanded 194.3 square mile Tucson city limits from annexation of additional Pima County land areas.



Margo Leigh - Tucson Drag Performer

For Tucson, the 1000's millennium was ending, and the new 2000's millennium was soon to be right on everyone's doorstep. Many thought that with the new dependence on computers and those computer systems everywhere in homes, stores, military, stock markets, loan companies, government offices, banks, and other venues that the computers would not switch over to the year 2000 and would leave everything in the world instantly in chaos after midnight in Y2K.



The 1990's Collection - ©Tucson LGBTQ Museum - All Rights Reserved (Text Format)

Tucson LGBTQ Museum Archives  
1990s.1.15.GR11333K4B