

MS2/KEVIN COHEE COLLECTION

Lavender Library, Archives, and Cultural Exchange of Sacramento, Inc.
1414 21st Street, Sacramento, California 95814

Kevin Cohee Collection

Papers, 1980-1998
(Bulk Dates: 1982-1996)

Manuscript Collection Number: 2

Accessioned: Gift of Kevin Cohee, 2002

Extent: .10 linear feet

Content: A poster, jokes, a skit, absolution documents, correspondence, flyers, investitures, programs, prom yearbooks and programs, certificates, tickets, logos and graphic designs, campaign buttons, brochures, exhibitor informational packets, advertisement layouts, dinner and auction programs, newsletters, newspapers and newspaper clippings.

Access: This collection is open for research.

Processed: 2007, by Ronald S. Grantz

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Biographical Note

Kevin Cohee may be most recognized from his roles with Sacramento's gay newspapers, having helped found both *Outword Newsmagazine* and its predecessor, *The Latest Issue*, but has been a mover and shaker in the city's LGBT community since 1981.

Kevin was born January 22, 1958, and was raised in a one-traffic-light town on the eastern shore of Maryland. He lived for a short time in Washington, D.C. before moving to San Jose, California, with his first partner in 1980. While attending Bartending School in Washington, D.C., he attended the very first gay "March on Washington" in 1979 and returned in 1987 and 1992 for the subsequent Marches. Bartending School led to a thirteen-year career in the hospitality industry.

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In 1981, Kevin moved to Sacramento to manage the first *Mountain Mikes Pizza* and established 'Gay Nights', offering friends a new venue to congregate and perform. Kevin became heavily involved in the *Court of the Great Northwest Imperial Empire (C.G.N.I.E.)*, the gay "royal" court system, where, out of a drag show performance troupe, he helped co-found the now ever popular dosie-doeing *Capital City Squares*, a square dancing group. He also worked hard as a volunteer for the now defunct *River City Rambler* (a notorious bar rag), and then went on to selling advertising for the first-ever nationally distributed *PATLAR Magazine*.

At this same time, meetings were being held to form a new organization to establish Sacramento's first gay community center, but it would take a few years before this would come to fruition. With the guidance and fortitude of Jerry Sloan, Tim Warford, and friends, and with financial backing by Terry Sidie, the *Lambda Community Center* was established in the mid-1980's. It was renamed the *Sacramento Gay and Lesbian Center* in 2007.

Also during this time, another group in which Kevin was instrumental was the *Sisters of IZOD*, a satellite group to the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, which performed a spoof on the polo-clad 'Castro Clone' and a tribute to the outrageous *Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence*. The crazy antics of these groups were made public in an exposé in the *Suttertown News*, a local newspaper that was published weekly before the *Sacramento News & Review* came to town and where Kevin worked as the Art Director while attending the University of California, Davis' extension program for Graphic Design.

In 1989, Kevin organized a new gay business group called *B.A.N.G.*, an acronym for *Business Alliance for Networking Gays*, but the name came under fire for being too sexually charged. The name was later changed to *L.G.B.A. (Lesbian and Gay Business Alliance)*. It lasted several years before taking on its current incarnation as the *Rainbow Chamber of Commerce*.

In 1984, Kevin met his partner of 8 ½ years, Ed Walker. The two men went on to produce numerous benefit variety shows and were active in various community organizations. Their relationship was inspiring to many, and Kevin was one of Ed's caretakers before he passed away of AIDS complications in 1993.

In 1994, Kevin attended New York City's '*Stonewall 25 Celebration*' that occurred simultaneously with the second ever *Gay Games*. Also that year, he joined the *Lambda Community Center's* Board of Directors. He accomplished one of the most successful singular fundraising events ever held for the Center: It was the movie debut of "Jeffrey" at the *Tower Theatre*, raising funds of just over \$5000. The very next year he took the sole position as Chairperson of the '95 Lambda Freedom Fair, one of Sacramento's most

memorable gay fairs ever held on the grounds of the State Capitol with New York City's headliner, *Black Box*. Days later, Kevin accepted the position of Interim Executive Director of the *Lambda Community Center*. He enacted the original grant for Lambda AIDS Project and was awarded the "Outstanding Board Member" award. In 2000, Kevin stepped up, and for the next five years, filled the role of Volunteer Facilitator for the Center's "Men's Coming Out" group. In 2003, the Lambda Awards Committee bestowed the prestigious "Lambda Timothy Warford Award" to Kevin in recognition of his contributions and leadership to the gay community. Along the way, Kevin worked as a marketing representative for several organizations including *CAP/PAC (California Capital Political Action Committee)*, the *Sacramento Men's Chorus*, and the *Sacramento International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival*.

As of this writing in 2007, Kevin owns the event planning firm, named appropriately, **Do An Event**. Client events have included *IKEA's* 3-day job fair and holiday staff party; the 2001, 2003, and 2005 *Dream Home Showcases*; the *Center For Complimentary Care's* Grand Opening; *Ernesto's Mexican Food's* 5th Anniversary week-long celebration; the first *Breaking Barriers* Hoedown fundraiser; *McMartin Realty's* Grand Opening and their first Client Appreciation gala; *Mom Guess What's (MGW newspaper)* 2005 Media Kick-Off Campaign party; 2005 *Woodbridge Wineries* "PrimoVino" event; the 2005 *Sacramento Valley AIDS Run/Walk*; marketing stunts for *Interactive Male*; and numerous hi-brow privately held celebrations, to name a few, plus the 2007 *Susan G. Komen Sacramento Race for the Cure EXPO* for 26,000 attendees. He offers an internship program for college seniors, mentoring them in the event and meeting industry.

Kevin is a proud and active member of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, serving as the 2006 and 2007 Chairperson for the *River City Roundup*, Sacramento's Gay and Lesbian AA/Al-Anon conference. He has sat on the *Department of General Service's Small Business Opportunity Program* for the State of California and has a leadership role with his local event planners association, *IMPS*. He has spoken at the first-ever *Gay and Lesbian Press Summit* in Washington; D.C. held in 2000; has been a panelist on the topic of 'niche' marketing for the *Sacramento League of Theatres*; sits as a panelist for the *Certified Meeting Planner's* course at California State University, Sacramento; speaks at *Career Day* at *Florin High School's* Culinary Arts class; and is a member and volunteer for the *Non-Profit Resource Center* and the *March of Dimes*.

This Biographical Note was written by Kevin Cohee and edited by Ronald S. Grantz.

Scope and Content

The Kevin Cohee Collection: As is the case with many activities in the gay community, the papers of Kevin Cohee are intertwined social and business endeavors.

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In the early 1980's, Kevin Cohee was heavily involved with the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence and its Sacramento chapter, the Sisters of IZOD. The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, founded in San Francisco in 1979 by a group of gay men who dressed in nuns' habits, is a non-profit organization that serves the needs of the gay community. It is open to people of all genders and sexual orientations, has raised large sums of money for gay charitable causes, and has a worldwide network. Papers in this collection from the early 1980's include a poster, jokes, a skit, absolution documents, letters and newspaper clippings.

Another activity that Kevin Cohee was involved with throughout the 1980's was the Court of the Great Northwest Imperial Empire (C.G.N.I.E.), Sacramento Chapter, the gay "royal" court system, a non-profit organization founded for the purpose of fundraising for gay charitable activities. Its purpose is to encourage and promote human understanding and growth, and enhance the welfare of the human community. This gay "royal" court system, founded in San Francisco by José Sarria, has many chapters in California and around the world that have raised thousands of dollars for local gay and lesbian interests. Papers include the Articles of Incorporation, the Closet Balls, investitures, advertisement flyers, Lavender Heights Proms, "Debuts" graphic designs, campaign buttons, flyers and tickets.

The Rainbow Festival papers (1992-1994) included here are more business related, but it is an activity of the C.G.N.I.E. The Rainbow Festival was founded in 1985 and is a multi-day fundraising event that donates all profits to gay charity. It culminates in a lively street fair held in Sacramento in early September of each year at the corner of K and 20th streets. Kevin Cohee's papers of this period include logo designs, correspondence, informational packets, newspaper advertisements, planning packets, and other papers related to this yearly event.

The last group of papers relate to the California Capital Political Action Committee (CAP/PAC), a Sacramento political action committee formed in 1988 to work exclusively to protect the civil rights of lesbian and gay men, and for which Kevin Cohee was its marketing representative. Papers (1992-1996) include informational letters, dinner and auction programs, brochures, and committee activities and lists.

Other papers in this collection relate to Kevin Cohee's various business activities. These papers include flyers, newsletters, and programs covering the period 1982 through 1998.

Important Subjects

California Capital Political Action Committee

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Closet Balls
Court of the Great Northwest Imperial Empire
"Debuts"
Lavender Heights Prom
Logos and graphic design
Rainbow Festival
Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence

Important Names

Kevin Cohee

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Papers include a poster, jokes, a skit, absolution documents, Articles of Incorporation, flyers, investitures, prom yearbooks, certificates, tickets, campaign buttons, graphic designs, the Closet Balls, and newspaper clippings. Some materials are business related, arranged chronologically, Box 1

Series II. Kevin Cohee's business marketing activities, 1990-1998, with the Rainbow Festival, 1990-1994, and with the California Capital Political Action Committee (CAP/PAC), 1992-1996. Other papers include other business activities, arranged chronologically, Boxes 1-2

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Brochures, logo and graphic designs, correspondence, exhibitor packets, advertisements and advertisement layouts, dinner and auction programs, planning packets, flyers, programs, and committee activities and lists.

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Rainbow Festival
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Cohee, Kevin, 1958- - Manuscripts
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