

PRIDE MONTH



The Stonewall Uprising

Today's joyful celebrations are rooted in riots and brutality

June is Pride Month, a celebration of the LGBTQ+ community. Today it involves parades, picnics, concerts, performances, art installations, bike rides and city-wide celebrations. It is made up of affirming events that include people of all ages.

It takes place in June because it commemorates the Stonewall Uprising, which took place in June 1969 in New York City.

LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION

There was a time when LGBTQ+ people faced even more widespread discrimination than they do now. They often suffered from violence and brutality from law enforcement and society at large. Police raids on gay bars were common and those who were arrested or harassed often faced public humiliation and other forms of mistreatment.

In New York City, it was illegal to solicit same-sex relationships and the New York State Liquor Authority would shut down any establishment that served alcohol to anyone who was known to be — or even suspected to be — gay. In 1966, the regulations regarding alcohol were overturned, but it was still illegal to hold hands, kiss or dance with someone of the same sex. Police harassment of people at gay bars was common.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

STONEWALL INN

Greenwich Village's Stonewall Inn, despite being owned by the Mafia, was an LGBTQ institution. It was large, welcomed drag queens and provided shelter for runaway and homeless gay youths. It was one of the few gay bars that allowed dancing.

On the night of June 28, police raided it, beating up patrons and arresting 13 people. Angry patrons began to gather. When a

police officer hit a lesbian over the head, she yelled at those nearby to act — and they did, throwing bottles, pennies and cobblestones at police.

This started a series of protests and riots that lasted for several days as LGBTQ+ people and their allies fought back against police brutality and discrimination. “The Village Voice” published an account of the riots, which led to more protests flaring up.

UPRISING'S AFTERMATH

The Stonewall Uprising was considered a turning point in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. It led to the formation of many LGBTQ+ organizations and advocacy groups. Activists across the country began organizing marches and demonstrations, advocating for greater equality and acceptance.

The first Pride March was held in New York City in 1970 on the first anniversary of the

Stonewall Uprising. Parade-goers shouted the official chant, “Say it loud, gay is proud.”

The parades soon became an annual tradition in many cities around the world, symbolizing the LGBTQ+ community's ongoing struggle for equal rights.

In 2016, President Obama designated the site of the uprising a national monument for its contributions to gay rights.

Pride Parades

Pride celebrations flourish worldwide, with spectacular parades taking center stage

From their New York origins following the 1969 Stonewall Uprisings, Pride parades have proliferated around the globe, each one taking on its own cultural personality. While many Pride parades are joyful and celebratory, others are political in nature with activism as the goal. Most combine the two. The parades have become an important part of Pride and a way for the LGBTQ+ community and their allies to come together, celebrate their identities and assert their presence and visibility.

UNITED STATES

It all started in New York with a June 1970 parade the year after the Stonewall Uprising and every year on the final Sunday of June the celebration continues. NYC Pride involves tens of thousands of people participating and millions coming out to join the party. Every year there is a theme — the 2023 theme is “Strength in Solidarity” — and participants deck themselves in rainbow flags, glitter and a creative assortment of LGBTQ+ symbols and attire.

On the other side of the country, the San Francisco Pride parade attracts hun-



© ADOBE STOCK

dreds of thousands of participants and spectators every year. The birthplace of the rainbow flag, the first San Francisco Pride Parade took place in 1970 and it continues every year on the final weekend of the month. The flamboyant celebration is part of a weekend festival that raises

money for LGBTQ+ non-profits in the community.

EUROPE

The London Pride parade takes place every July. Its roots can be traced to 1972 and the parade usually starts in Oxford Circus and winds its way through central London.

Like other parades, it features colorful floats, costumes and music. In recent years, the event has focused on promoting greater diversity and inclusion within the community, recognizing the importance of intersectionality and the need to support marginalized groups within the broad-

er LGBTQ+ movement.

The Berlin Pride Parade is titled Christopher Street Day after the street where the Stonewall Uprising took place. The parade attracts more than 500,000 participants and spectators and takes place in late June or early July. Each year, the event features a “Stonewall moment,” at the beginning of the parade. Participants pause for a moment of silence to honor the victims of homophobia and transphobia and to reflect on the ongoing struggle for LGBTQ+ rights and equality.

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

One of the earliest Pride parades each year, the Sydney Mardi Gras takes place in March, a two-week celebration that culminates in the Mardi Gras Parade, a unique blend of creativity, humor and political activism. It features a dazzling array of floats, costumes and performers. The parade is kicked off with a “Sissy Ball,” which is a flamboyant dance competition featuring some of Sydney’s best performers.

Brazil boasts the largest Pride parade in the world. Taking place in late May or early June each year, more than three million people turn out for São Paulo Pride. The route spans nearly four miles and the parade is heavily supported by the federal government with politicians frequently riding floats in the parade. Since its first year in 1997, it has repeatedly broken records for attendance and revenue.

The Rainbow Flag

The rainbow, a symbol of promise, has become the most recognized symbol of the LGBTQ+ world

Gilbert Baker was well-known in the San Francisco gay community. He excelled at sewing and created memorable and flamboyant drag costumes, political banners and flags. So it is of little surprise that people turned to him when they needed someone to create a flag.

In 1978, he and his friends were talking about the importance of coming up with a new symbol for gay liberation. Up to that point, the pink triangle was the most recognized symbol and it had its origins in the dark history of Nazi persecution. Harvey Milk, the first openly gay man to hold office in a major American city, appealed to Baker to come up with a more celebratory symbol to be unveiled at the 1978 Gay Freedom Day celebration. Something people could take pride in.

FIRST RAINBOW FLAG

Baker responded by designing and creating what is now known as the rainbow flag.

His initial design sported eight colored stripes. It was hand-stitched and dyed with the help of volunteers and friends. That first year, two inaugural rainbow flags flew in San Francisco's United Nations Plaza. It was 30 feet high by 60 feet wide.



© ADOBE STOCK

It would eventually be redesigned to have only six stripes — it was hard to get hot pink flag fabric and then Baker wanted there to be an even number of stripes so he dropped the turquoise.

In that same year, Milk was assassinated and the rainbow

flag became a galvanizing symbol that quickly spread around the world.

MEANINGS OF THE COLORS

Each of the eight colors had a specific meaning: Pink was for sex, red was for life,

orange for healing, yellow for the sun, green for nature, turquoise for art and magic, blue for serenity and purple for the spirit.

Since the 1970s, variations on the flag have developed with the colors taking on different meanings.

DESIGN VARIANTS

The Philadelphia Pride flag was introduced in 2017. It added black and brown stripes to represent LGBTQ+ people of color, a symbol of intersectionality and inclusivity. An evolution from this flag came about when Daniel Quaser added a white, pink and light blue stripe to represent the trans community. He also stated that the black stripe was both a representation of communities of color and an acknowledgment of those lost during the AIDS crisis.

In 1999, Monica Helms created the Transgender Pride flag which features five horizontal stripes, two light blue stripes representing baby boys, two pink stripes representing baby girls and a white stripe representing those who are non-binary, intersex or transitioning.

There are also specific flags for nearly every form of gender and sexual identity in the LGBTQ+ community along with a host of intersectional flags. In total, there are more than 20 different officially recognized Pride flags.

Many people have stories about the importance of the pride flag, how it helped them come out, how it helped them find community. These are stories many museums and organizations have started to collect while the Gilbert Baker Foundation tracks communities that have been banning the rainbow flag, leading an effort to fight back against these laws.

Alphabet Soup

With lots of labels it can be hard to keep up with what each initial means

The queer community has gone from using only the word “gay” to acknowledging more specific identifications. The proliferation of labels is empowering and celebrates people’s diversity.

While these terms, labels and acronyms can be challenging to navigate, doing so is respectful. Here is a guide to some labels, but keep in mind that they are always changing.

LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer, with the plus sign acknowledging there are many other identities. The acronym is an umbrella term that encompasses all gender and sexual identities.

A lesbian is a woman attracted to other women. Gay has been used to describe anyone who is attracted to the same gender, though it is sometimes used to specifically refer to men. Bisexual refers to a person who is attracted to both men and women.

Transgender is an umbrella term that describes a person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. Cisgender refers to people whose gender identity is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth.

Pansexuals are attracted to people regardless of their gen-



© ADOBE STOCK

der identity or biological sex. They might be attracted to someone who identifies as male, female, non-binary or transgender.

Intersex refers to people who are born with reproductive or sexual anatomy that does not fit typical male or female classifications.

Asexual (also called Ace)

describes people who do not experience sexual attraction, though it is a spectrum and some asexual people may engage in sexual activity. Demisexuals are part of the asexual spectrum. They only experience sexual attraction after an emotional or intellectual connection has been formed.

Polyamorous refers to people who have multiple consenting romantic or sexual relationships with the knowledge and consent of everyone involved.

Questioning refers to people who are in the process of self-discovery when it comes to gender or sexuality. This can be a short- or long-term identity.

UNDER THE TRANSGENDER UMBRELLA

Transgender can encompass people who in one way or another do not identify or act like the gender they were assigned at birth. Several different labels fall under transgender.

A trans man was assigned a female gender at birth and now identifies as a man. A trans woman was assigned a male gender at birth and now identifies as a woman. Someone non-binary does not identify as male or female.

A transsexual individual is someone who has surgically transitioned from one gender to another.

Genderqueer individuals may identify as non-binary or genderfluid, meaning that their gender identity may shift over time. They might identify as a combination of male and female. Gender non-conforming individuals may identify as male or female but express their gender in ways that do not conform to traditional gender roles or expectations. Someone who identifies as a man might wear dresses or makeup, for example.

A cross-dresser is someone who wears clothes that do not match their gender while a performer includes drag queens and drag kings. These individuals do not necessarily have an identity that is different from what they were assigned at birth, but they present in ways that are different.

Supporting LGBTQ Youth

Nonprofit group equips mothers to fiercely support their queer children

You've heard of mama bears who become unstoppable forces of nature when their children are threatened? For parents of LGBTQ youth, bears just aren't fierce enough. Mama Dragons is a group determined to support, educate and empower mothers of queer children.

Founded on social media in 2013, it became a non-profit in 2018 and offers resources to mothers and those in a mothering role so that they can better support and protect children who are LGBTQ+. On their website, it says, "We envision a world in which all mothers fiercely love, affirm, and advocate for their LGBTQ children."

Far more than just a support group, they offer important training, education and events to support parents.

SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING

According to The Trevor Project, LGBTQ youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers. They estimate that 1.8 million youth between the ages of 13 and 24 seriously consider suicide each year in the U.S. and at least one person attempts it every 45 seconds. In a 2022 survey, they found that 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered suicide in the past year, including half of transgender and non-bi-



© ADOBE STOCK

nary youth.

This is why Mama Dragons offers QPR Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention Training by certified instructors. It's something they recommend for every parent. It teaches parents to recognize the warning signs of

suicide and what to do about it.

ONLINE LEARNING

Mama Dragons has created Parachute, an online learning program for parents, families and communities. The goal is to provide the tools, knowledge

and resources needed to affirm, support and celebrate LGBTQ youth.

Courses cover such things as an introduction to the LGBTQ community, the coming-out experience, understanding LGBTQ labels and showing

affirmation with action. The courses can be bundled and are available in Spanish as well as English.

PODCAST

On the Mama Dragons website, there is a weekly podcast called "In the Den." It interviews parents of queer kids, members of the LGBTQ community and experts. It's meant to be an ongoing resource for parents who are taking the journey of raising healthy, happy and productive LGBTQ humans, according to the description.

Topics of past podcasts include the Family Acceptance Project, how to recover from mistakes, building and finding support, setting and keeping boundaries, navigating important family events, responding to anti-LGBTQ legislation, changing labels and the intersection of allyship and faith.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Other Mama Dragons activities include Facebook online support programs, the Embracelet program, a shop of supportive apparel and accessories, a blog of stories that parents share and ways to donate and volunteer.

The organization, which started with just a handful of mothers, now supports more than 9,000. It is a nationwide network that helps mothers to connect with other mothers so they can "learn accepting and affirming parenting practices that can help prevent LGBTQ youth suicide, depression and homelessness."

Transgender Soldier

More than a disguise, soldier lived entire life as a man

While hundreds of women disguised themselves as men to fight in the U.S. Civil War, for Private Albert Cashier, it wasn't just a disguise. Some suggest that today, Cashier would identify as transgender.

Born Jennie Rodgers on Christmas Day in 1843, he emigrated from Ireland and started dressing as a boy at a young age. Such actions allowed him to find work in Illinois as a farmhand and laborer. It also let him get a higher paying job at a factory according to the descendants of his brothers.

SERVING AS A SOLDIER

In August 1862, he enlisted in the Union Army's 95th Illinois Infantry as Private Albert Cashier, a name he had been using for some time. Cashier was the last name of his step father. While the shortest man in the infantry, the Irishman managed to hide the gender he was born with throughout his service. A quiet man, he was known as a brave and daring fighter who was always willing to accept dangerous assignments.

He fought in more than 40 engagements including the siege of Vicksburg, the Battle of Nashville and the Red River Campaign. In May 1863, he was captured while performing a reconnaissance mission as part of the Siege of



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Vicksburg. He escaped by overpowering the Confederate prison guard, wrestling a gun from him and fleeing to the Union lines. He served for three years until his regiment was mustered out in 1865.

LIVING AS A MAN

Cashier returned to Illinois where he continued to live as a man, working as a farmhand, church janitor, cemetery worker and street lamplighter. He collected a veter-

ing his leg. The town doctor discovered Cashier's secret, but he begged the doctor to keep it confidential, which the doctor did. However, Cashier's leg never healed and he was eventually placed in a rest home for veterans. Again, the staff of the hospital kept his secret out of respect for his military service.

While there he frequently welcomed his fellow regiment members, where they shared their tales of glory from the war.

EXPOSED

This lasted until he began to suffer from dementia and was placed in a state hospital for the insane. The staff there was not sympathetic. They forced him to wear a dress and leaked his secret to the press. While the government sued him for defrauding them, his old comrades in arms defended and supported him and he was able to maintain his veteran status.

However, the staff at the mental institution continued to force him to wear a dress, despite the protests at his treatment. At 67 years old, not used to walking in women's clothing, he tripped and broke his hip. He never recovered and spent the rest of his life bedridden.

However, he was buried in uniform with full military honors. His tombstone was inscribed with his male name.

Today, he is an inspiration for transgender youth who see in him proof that they have been around throughout history, even if their identities often were kept secret.

an's pension and voted in elections — two things denied to women at the time.

He did odd jobs for Illinois state Sen. Ira Lish, who one day in 1910 accidentally ran over him with his car, shatter-

Literary Pride

The LGBTQ community has always contributed to the literary landscape

Sappho is considered one of the world's greatest poets, an ancient Greek writer who lived on the island of Lesbos and wrote lyric poetry about love, often about love between women. She is just one of many literary giants who wrote about queer love and relationships.

NOVELISTS

James Baldwin was an American novelist, essayist and activist who explored themes of race, sexuality and identity. His sexuality is sometimes described as complex. Armistead Maupin is an American author and activist whose most famous work is a series of novels about the lives and adventures of a group of friends living in San Francisco in the 1970s and 80s.

In Great Britain, Sarah Waters writes historical fiction and Gothic novels that often feature lesbian protagonists. Jeanette Winterson's novels incorporate elements of magical realism and her "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit" is a coming-out novel about a young lesbian in a conservative household. Alan Hollinghurst writes about gay male sexuality and relationships, winning a Booker Prize in 2004 for a work that



James Baldwin

ALLEN WARREN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

explored the experiences of a young gay man in London in the 1980s.

Torrey Peters discusses trans identity and experience, with her debut novel, "Detransition, Baby," on the long list for the 2021 Women's Prize for Fiction. Akwaeke Emezi is a Nigerian-American transgender author whose debut novel was a semi-autobiographical exploration of gender and spirituality.

PLAYWRIGHTS

Some of history's greatest playwrights have been gay. William Shakespeare may have been bisexual. It's likely Christopher Marlowe was gay — Oscar Wilde and Tennessee Williams definitely were. Queer playwrights continue to enrich the modern stage.

Tony Kushner has written epic plays that explore themes of identity and the AIDS crisis.

Sarah Kane was an English

playwright known for her provocative and controversial work. Kane was bisexual and her work explored themes of sexuality, violence and mental illness.

Harvey Fierstein is an American actor, playwright and LGBTQ activist known for his many Broadway hits. His most famous works include "Torch Song Trilogy" and "Kinky Boots."

Terry Guest is a Black, gay,

Chicago-based playwright whose work explores race and identity, often incorporating Southern culture. His plays sometimes take historical figures and re-imagine them as Black characters.

Michael R. Jackson won a Tony and a Pulitzer Prize for "A Strange Loop," a musical about a big, queer, Black writer writing a musical about a big, queer, Black writer — all which Jackson is.

POETS

Walt Whitman, considered the father of free verse, openly wrote about his attraction to men and his poetry often explored sexuality and desire.

Audre Lorde was a Black feminist writer, poet and activist who explored issues of race, gender, sexuality and identity in her work. As a lesbian, she wrote openly about her experiences as a Black, queer woman.

Allen Ginsberg, one of the touchstones of the Beat Generation, was gay and wrote poetry about his relationships with other men, including his famous poem, "Howl."

June Jordan was a Black feminist poet and essayist who was bisexual and wrote about her relationships with men and women.

Richard Blanco is a gay Cuban-American poet who served as the fifth presidential inaugural poet for Barack Obama. His work explores themes of identity, home and belonging.