

It's Proud, It's Pink, It's Long Beach Pride

by Jared Cox

[Rage Monthly](#)

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Long Beach Pride is scheduled for May 21 and 22 and runs 11am - 10pm each day. This two-day event is preceded by many events weeks before Pride weekend. Here are some of my recommendations: Mr., Miss. & Mrs. Gay Pride Long Beach Pageant- hosted May 1, at 8pm by The Flux Bar on 17817 Lakewood Blvd., Bellflower, CA, the pageant raises money for the International Imperial Court of Long Beach Charities, a 501(c)3 Corporation.

Don't think I've forgotten about all the bears out there, The International Imperial Court of Long Beach is also hosting the Mr. Bear/Cub Long Beach Pride Contest at Piston's, 2020 E. Artesia Blvd., Long Beach on May 8, at 9pm. This fun evening will include various categories that each contestant will compete to become Mr. Bear/Cub of Long Beach Pride 2011.

Back again for this year is Laugh Till You Tinkle. Presented by Long Beach Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc., the Laugh Factory will be the place to be May 13 at 7:45pm, as an all headliner show will take to the stage. Hosted by Carlease, Laugh Till You Tinkle will feature Jason Stuart, Judy Tenuta, Andre Kelly and Annie McKnight. Pack an extra pair of undies and purchase your tickets online at longbeachpride.com or by calling

The Rage Monthly sat down with the Downtown Long Beach Associate's Marketing & Special Events Manager, Steve Sheldon for a Q&A session about The Pink Party well as his involvement in the Long Beach LGBT community:

How long have you been involved with The Pink Party and Long Beach Pride?

The Pink Party began four years ago as a private event on the rooftop of a Downtown restaurant when First District Councilmember, Robert Garcia, Miles Nevin, Sergio Carillo, Jose Solache and myself decided to create a kick-off event for Pride weekend that would raise funds for The Center Long Beach's Mentoring Youth Through Empowerment program. The event raised more than \$10,000 and drew a sell-out crowd of more than 250 attendees for an evening of fun entertainment and dancing-all for a great cause.

I've worked for the Downtown Long Beach Associates (DLBA) for about three and a half years. After the success of the first Pink Party and since our organization had identified a need to connect Pride attendees and the downtown business community, our board of directors voted to adopt the Pink Party as an official DLBA event. We moved it to an outdoor venue, closing down an entire city block, added a stage, lighting and festive décor to the street. The entire area is lit in pink including an elegant "pink carpet" photo entry area and a professional dance floor/lighting set-up that creates a dramatic atmosphere. The results have been phenomenal and the event has grown each year, drawing more than 2,000 to last year's Pink Party.

Do you and the DLBA work with the local LGBT community in any other ways throughout the year besides Pride?

We work on a number of events throughout the year in support of the LGBT community. In August we are very involved in helping St. Mary's Hospital's Comprehensive AIDS Research and Education (C.A.R.E.) program recruit downtown restaurants to participate in their annual C.A.R.E. to Dine event. Last year's event saw the most participation from downtown businesses in its history and raised more than \$40,000 in support of the cause. This past December we partnered with the City of Long Beach (Office of Mayor Bob Foster) and the Long Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau for the RED event to help raise awareness and support in the

fight against AIDS. More than a dozen Long Beach buildings and iconic structures throughout downtown were lit in red, with many businesses donating a portion of their proceeds that evening to AIDS-related programs and services in Long Beach.

Tell us a little about the DLBA and the focus of the organization.

The DLBA is a nonprofit organization that manages the business and property based improvement districts in downtown Long Beach. To make a long story short, we're charged with improving and enhancing downtown through a number of programs and activities, including economic development, advocacy, public safety and marketing and special events. We work to make downtown a better place to do business, to visit and to live.

New this year, Long Beach Pride has a special early bird special for the parade goers: show your pride by arriving at the parade "hot spot" by 9:30 and you could receive free admission to the festival, exclusive Long Beach Pride merchandise and a lot more. For general information and to find out where to meet for the early bird hotspot access, visit the Long Beach Pride website: longbeachpride.com.



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