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## Rock radio stations in salt lake city utah

By Kastalia MedranoUpdated on 6/21/2019 at 11:50amMehmet Dilisiz/Shutterstock Utah's first Gay and Lesbian Pride March, 1990, drew perhaps 250 people. It went more or less unchallenged. The biggest issue it ran into was that the route took marchers past a bunch of parked horse carriages, the kind tourists ride around downtown. We marched by, chanting and screaming, said Connell Rocky O'Donovan, the march's founder and a man who was introduced to me as the local gay historian. The horses, of course, were surprised - probably at the sight of a loud gay march in Salt Lake City, or perhaps at the ruck itself. It actually got really dangerous, O'Donovan continues. I really felt sorry for the horses. And the drivers and the police had approved the route, but then they said, 'Oh, shoot, this wasn't a good idea, it was.' But apart from the horse meetings, it was actually a pretty good idea. At the second march, in 1991, turnout roughly doubled. O'Donovan led protesters on a new road from the state capital down to the City Council building, where the Utah Pride Festival is held today. And this time they came to find a handful of neo-Nazis waiting. They had taken over the premises and they had not been allowed to be there, said O'Donovan. I was so angry that I had gone through all these hoops to get a permit and they just showed up. We went to the police, and the police said, 'They were here first. And I said, 'But they don't have permission to be here!' O'Donovan, bullhorn in hand, outwardly kept his composure as he blamed the message to his protesters that even the Nazis had the right to freedom of expression and assembly. Inside? I'm freaking out, he says, thinking if any of them have a gun they're going to shoot me. George Frey/Stringer/Getty Image NewsToday, Utah Pride is definitely one thing. This year, the parade drew well over 125,000 people over the weekend. And the run-up to the parade is stacked with events: an interfaith service; a youth dance; a 5K. When it's time for the parade itself, marchers carry rainbow flags the length of a block. Marriage is officiated from moving floats. As is the trend, this year's festivities featured Aja, a former contestant from RuPaul's Drag Race, and a queen who reemerged from the ashes of an unremarkable performance on Season 9 with a Season 10 debut so gag-worthy (i.e. excellent) that they made the whole internet look silly (myself included). To put it simply, Utah Pride was lit. Pride here is now so great and so commercialized that old people like O'Donovan can feel alien. (Its many, many sponsors include Goldman Sachs, which employs thousands in the city and that played a significant role in making the city more cosmopolitan.) It's a fairly typical dialogue around the nation's largest, most established Prides.What makes Utah Pride quite atypical, but is where it was set up. Over almost all metrics, you need to put Utah firmly among the conservative states in America. The last time its electoral votes went against a Democrat for president was in 1944, FDR's last term, and its longtime, Trump-loving senior Senator Orrin Hatch just left his seat this year. Since Karl Malone retired from the Utah Jazz - since 1979 the most ironic name in American professional sports, after the team moved from New Orleans - the state's national face has been Mitt Romney, a Mormon and private equity multimillionaire who tempts his faith's ban on alcohol and caffeine by enjoying the occasional coffee ice cream. Even if you're not a Mormon, and you'd like to enjoy as much as a Bud Light, things can get tough in Utah. If you want to buy beer with more than 4% alcohol in Utah, you have to buy it from a state liquor store, and no one can sell alcohol after 1 a.m. across the state. Until 2017, bartenders had to stand behind a frosted window called a Zion curtain to prepare drinks; The idea was to keep alcohol out of sight for people who didn't drink. In Salt Lake, the Pride Parade is free, but the festival itself has a fee to receive - the state's liquor laws don't allow Bud Light et al to sponsor free events (the proceeds go to the Utah Pride Center). Oh, honey, we're all ex-Mormons. The Episcopalians, the Unitarians- they're all former Mormons. It can skew a little tense, is what we say here. No surprise, Mormonism is a powerful theme in Salt Lake City's queer community. But it is that variable, and the state's unique religious identity, that has made the city's Pride so bold and so groundbreaking. It's also what has made it an inspiration to anyone who invested in seeing equal rights become the norm for queer Americans. Certainly for displaced people who grew up in a strictly religious environment, it has been a godsend. These tensions do not exist anywhere else in this exact way because no other city is home to LDS headquarters, and perhaps no other U.S. city salt lake city size (1.15 million metropolitan area) has so much power concentrated in its church. The original marching route, the one that frightened the horses, chose O'Donovan because it would take protesters past two sides of downtown's Salt Lake Temple — an astonishing, Gothic castle-like so clean and upright in design it looks like a 3D puzzle, almost digitally atop its surroundings. About half of Utahns are affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the American religious group that Gallup has found is most likely to identify as conservative. The LDS Church follows a law of chastity stating that the only acceptable sex is straight sex, and those on edicts show in state politics. In 2004, Utah voters, by two to one margin, approved a state constitutional amendment that withheld legal recognition from same-sex marriage and domestic partnerships. Obviously something had to give. Mehmet Dilisiz/ShutterstockGay pride in Utah (before Gay Pride in Utah)At the end end the various factions of the Utah Queer community were loosely organized under an umbrella organization, the Gay and Lesbian Community Council of Utah. Through the democratic process, each group across the state could vote to send three members to what amounted to an LGBT summit to represent their vote on various issues of the gay agenda, so to speak. It was in this way that the Council appointed O'Donovan as its public relations manager. I chose to interpret that title very broadly, O'Donovan says now. And used it to organize the first march. It's a term distinct, he points out, from a parade, which is more festive. The march carried more overtones of political time. I wanted to do a march - 'we're here, we're visible, we exist' - that had never been done before in Salt Lake. O'Donovan was the one who applied for a city permit, hired security, planned the route, went to the police to get the necessary permits. Thus it was that in 1990 he led the first Gay and lesbian pride March, the precursor to what would later become Salt Lake City pride parade. Between the 1990 and 1991 marches, O'Donovan had founded the activist group Queer Nation Utah to help radicalize the Salt Lake City community, and its members had taken non-violent activist training with a local Quaker church. O'Donovan instructed the Queer Nation to form a line in front of the neo-Nazis - who wore swastikas and chanted Sieg Heil, some of them in full Nazi party uniform - and keep them away from the protesters. The state's unique religious identity has made the city's Pride so bold and so groundbreaking. Also present were some additional protesters who didn't seem to be Nazi-affiliated, but who milled around with signs denouncing homosexuality in general (oh, you know, AIDS is God's punishment for, stuff like that, O'Donovan says). It's good to remember this rule of thumb in life: Even if you can't consider yourself a Nazi, if you find yourself standing on the side of the Nazis, it's time to commit to some self-reflection. The first two years of March were held on June 27, in honor of the anniversary of the Stonewall riots. O'Donovan moved, and for the next two years, no march took place. Then, in 1994, a small handful of activists stepped forward to continue where he had left, and the Gay and Lesbian Pride March was reborn as the Salt Lake City Pride Parade. In the 1990s, the queer nation of Utah proved crucial in galvanizing and integrating Salt Lake City's LGBTQ community. Today, the Pride Parade coexists with Dyke March, Transgender March and Interfaith March. The impact an event that Salt Lake City Pride has on the community is powerful, said Sara Grossman, communications director at the Matthew Shepard's Foundation. The foundation's name honors an LGBTQ+ student who has been the victim of a deadly hate crime, so Grossman understands how important it is to recognize the impact Pride has on young people. This that gay pride is for, after all. Not those of us who have lived in NYC or LA or SF, and have had no trouble being our true self because we were safe, but for those who live in places like Salt Lake City or Laramie, WY, or any other red dot in America. Mehmet Dilisiz/ShutterstockSalt Lake City is a liberal island in a sea of redThe first Pride festivals actually date back in the '70s and '80s, and they were met by Nazis, people throwing stones; it was a nasty time, said Wyatt Seipp, Utah Pride Festival media director and volunteer at the Utah Pride Center. Now Salt Lake has a reputation for being one of the friendliest places for homosexuals. People who don't live here always think they know what Salt Lake is like, and then they actually come here and find out it's very different. Salt Lake is to Utah what Austin is to Texas: a very liberal island in a very conservative state. Tensions remain, but the overall vibe today is super-supportive. Seipp says. Even with the 30,000+ people showing up each year - this year topping the previous record, with 60,000 participants - the Pride parade is only the second largest in Utah. The largest, which takes place each year on July 24, is Days of '47, commemoration of the day the first Mormon settlers came to the Salt Lake Valley. If you were to attend both, you'd notice one a little more dour than the other, with lots of pioneer cosplay and handcards and such. Ours is as over-the-top and colorful as you'd expect, Seipp says. And on a Sunday morning, when all our LDS friends are in church. The Church will still only accept self-identified queer members if these members have promised to be celibate. Festivals and parades are ultimately the sum of the people who are in them; Salt Lake City Pride is an outstanding phenomenon because the city's population also is. Oh, honey, we're all ex-Mormons, O'Donovan says. The Episcopalians, the Unitarians -- they're all former Mormons. I'm a little flippant, but yes, I can't think of any of my fellow activists or colleagues at the time who didn't have a Mormon background. Ninety-nine percent. Most left on their own, or they came out and then got kicked out. The newer guard, he says, is more religiously diverse. That includes the city's current (since 2015) and first openly gay mayor, Jacqueline Biskupski, who grew up Catholic. In 2016, she married her fiancée Betty Iverson on the day the Mormon Church saw a mass resignation - more than 100 people - because of its anti-LGBTQ policies. Such departures are common enough that organizations like QuitMormon have grown up to help manage the transition. For many who leave the Church, its refusal to accept its LGBTQ members has been central. I was in and out of [the church] for a long time, O'Donovan says. It's such a part of your conditioning and your sense of identity. I'd get mad and go, and then I'd find a cool congregation and attend for a while, and then they found out that I was gay and it would be, become, problem, and I would leave. It took four or five years to actually leave. Brent Olson / Shutterstock Mormons Building Bridges is a model for allies everywhereO'Donovan requested excommunication in 1990. But while large contingents of Salt Lake City Pride Parade attendees were born in the Mormon Church, it's not that all of them have left it - several different active LDS groups are now marching every year. The most visible of these is MormonBuilding Bridges, which has sent a float and hundreds of active LDS members to the parade every year since the group's inception in 2012. It was a big moment, when you first had 350 Mormons in their Sunday best march at the Utah Pride Parade, said Mormon Building Bridges co-founder Erika Munson. And I think it indicated, hopefully, to Church leaders that members wanted to use the principles of their religion to initiate LGBT outreach. Because of their religion. Not in spite of his religion. We want Mormons who are not part of the parade to see us march on a Sunday in our church clothes and say, Oh, those people are my family. I may have taken some distance, but it's my family. Utah has one of the nation's highest youth suicides, and that specter hangs lowest over the state's Mormon LGBTQ youth. It's on everyone's mind here, Sepp says. Partly it is because of the dominant religion here teaching that being gay is wrong. Mormon's Building Bridges is now joined by an increasing number of active Mormon groups such as Affirmation, a queer Mormon support group, and Mama Dragons, a network of Mormon mothers who advocate for their LGBTQ children with a particular focus on suicide prevention. Munson (who is straight) says it's dangerous to blame the LDS Church for suicide - and suicide experts want to warn that such rhetoric is dangerous for those at risk - but that it's something the church needs to count on honestly. Regardless of LDS policy, Mormons will continue to have gay and trans children. Salt Lake is to Utah what Austin is to Texas: a very liberal island in a very conservative state. True to its name, Mormon Building Bridges has applied for a float in the Days of the '47 parade in each of the last five years. Days of '47 have rejected them every time. Munson says they patiently look forward to the time when Days of '47 recognizes their common and accepts them. We have seen initiatives from the Church that have helped, says Munson. We've seen church speakers being loud and clear about, 'Don't kick your gay kids out when they come out to you.' But at the same time, there is no doubt that they are sticking to [their stance] that there is no place in Mormon theology for same-sex couples. It is no longer the Church's view that one can and should ask homosexuals away. And yet, in 2015, the Church adopted a massively controversial new policy exposing same-sex Mormon couples to banish and prevent their children from baptism until they turned 18 (Mormon traditionally baptized at the age of 8). Working for LGBT acceptance within the church, it's about learning to live, in a healthy way, with dissonance, Munson says. But I'll tell you, commit yourself to a faith community where many have different perspectives than you? It's an amazing spiritual experience - it's amazing how much you can learn about faith, about patience and loneliness and connection. That's what I see in gay and trans Mormons now. Sign up here for our daily Thrillist email and subscribe here for our YouTube channel to get your fix of the best in food/drink/fun. Kastalia Medrano is Thrillist's Travel Writer. You can send her travel tips on kmedrano@thrillist.com, and Venmo tips on @kastaliamedrano.

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