

RIP Chip Young's Cool, Cool World

We are stunned and saddened to report that Chip Young, environmental activist, rabble-rouser and long-time contributor to *Motif* and to Rhode Island journalism, passed away suddenly on August 24.

Chip and collaborator **Rudy Cheeks** have brought *Phillipe & Jorge's Cool, Cool World* to RI readers through various publications, including *The Eagle*, *The Newspaper*, *The Phoenix* and *Motif*, non-stop for the last 43 years. This issue represents Rhode Island's first month in 43 years not graced or garnished by commentary, sarcastic and heartfelt, from the larger-than-life characters, Phillipe & Jorge.

Chip's commentary, often incendiary, generally wry and barbed, helped shape RI's cultural and political landscape. In Chip's own words, describing the history of the column:

If there is a key to *Phillipe and Jorge's* success, we call on the legendary *Urinal* columnist and our longtime friend, **Bob Kerr**, who once wrote that P&J "had more of the truth and less of the facts." We stand tall with pride. And he was right.

The Cool, Cool World was hatched around a table at the legendary Leo's, full of lunatics and dozens of empty Rolling Rock beer bottles... We used the oh-so-continental-sounding P&J personal monikers to cover our asses, while old pal and artist supreme **Dan Gosch** came up with the "Cool, Cool World" title.

Since we knew our goal was to piss off people of the highest rank — we being just a couple of (well-informed) wiseasses — we decided to adopt the *personas* of gay men. This despite J's girlfriend of the time telling the media, correctly, that we were hopelessly heterosexual. But that didn't stop us from being very honored to be named grand marshals of the (then "Gay") Pride March in its earliest days, when the Providence police were still trying desperately to ban the parade.

Chip talked about sports a lot (and wrote a sports column on and off over the decades (yes, there's a pun in that phrase). The last entry, explaining RI sports to newcomers, appears in this issue), but he rarely spoke about his own sporting history. According to his close friend, **Jimmy Etchells**, who knew Chip since grade school and was a classmate at Brown, Chip was a real athlete back in the day. He played baseball, basketball and other sports at a varsity level, and excelled particularly in soccer. At Brown he was one of the most valuable players on a prodigious team, named All-Ivy for three years and All-American one year, and is in Brown's Athletic Hall of Fame. Chip played for the Pawtucket Rangers for over 10 years in the '70s. "He was really gifted," adds Rudy. "He had heart surgery when he was about nine years old, a new and radical procedure, and he would say that if not for that, he would have died in his twenties. He treated the rest of his years like extra time he was grateful to have."

At *Motif*, he was always a wise source of advice and support - a greatly valued contributor and a friend. He represented the old-school counter culture, and was one of the "grown ups" many of here were still somehow trying to impress. If you only knew him through his column, you might think abrasive, hard-to-please crusader; but if you knew him in real life, only the word crusader would carry over. He was always ready to help a good cause.

Chip's off-the-page passions were directed at environmental efforts. He was a long-standing PR Director for Save the Bay, President of the board at *ecoRI News* and senior fellow at the URI Coastal Institute.

For anyone who would like to share thoughts or memories of Chip, Rudy is compiling a tribute - send them to him or through our email at publisher@motifri.com. There was no formal service, but a memorial is being planned for October. Don't hold back. In Rudy's words, "Chip would want his obituary to be funny."

Here is a sampling of comments from social media and from Chip's memorial page at Quinn Funeral Homes, thequinnfuneralhome.com:

RIP, Chip. You found my typos, you introduced me to some really sweet weirdos, and you made me laugh so, so hard. What else is there? - Kathy Connolly

I always considered Chip Young and Bruce McCrae to be the watchdogs of democracy and decency in Rhode Island. They never shied away from anything they thought was unjust or out of line and they gave us biting humor as a bonus. - Robert Yeremian

He was a good man and always greeted you with a genuine smile. I loved reading his stuff. - Mark Cutler

When "ccworld" was in the PVD Phoenix, Chip would hold court @ Leos (the best ever bar in PVD). He'd whisper, "Did you think I was too rough on ____?" "No," I said, "Anyway, you can always blame Bruce for that one." - James Celenza

It was always great to see him and talk about sports, politics, humor, ecology, whatever. A genuinely nice man. - David Everett

RIP Chip. Thanks for all the engaging stories and the laughter they created. - Len Cabral

Chip was a pal you could depend on and a colleague you could admire and be grateful for. He was the Ying to Rudy's Yang and together they made wonderful commentary a precious gift. For non-profits Chip was always generous with his time as a volunteer for special events and he always added a wonderful note for the audience and for those in need who benefitted from his generosity of time, talent, and resources. - Mary Ann Sorrentino

He taught me that stuffing envelopes wasn't busy work. A clean fold and a neatly positioned stamp meant you cared about the letter and respected the recipient. Chip challenged me to write the first serious article of my life - a story about the threat of dioxins. I was so overwhelmed by the complexity of the subject that I ended up in tears before my fingers hit the typewriter keys. He found a way to make me laugh, he boosted my confidence, and sent me back to the trenches to try again. - Cindy Elder

I can hear Chip saying, "So what?" Never ever with callous disregard, and always with the goal to get to the heart of the matter - what is the essential truth that must be shared? ... He gave us this tip to help listeners focus on the most important information. Right before you get to your key point, pause, and say, "Here's the thing." That exercise forced us to be more disciplined ... and helped get some good legislation passed. So, here's the thing: Chip left an indelible mark on RI's environmental movement, and we are all better off because of his generosity and skill. - Sheila Dormody

I'm so grateful for the support Chip Young and Rudy Cheeks gave the LGBTQ community in the late '80s and early '90s, when a plug from them in their column (or actually joining us in a float) would boost attendance at the then tiny Pride Parade. When a "be there or be square" shout out from them made

Adam Bock's Gayboy Nutcrackers THE event of our holiday season. We will miss you, big guy! - Michael Guy

For the original announcement from Motif, [click here](#).