

# Despite change in Pride Committee leadership, group of lesbians will still stage separate march

by Loren King  
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Despite the efforts of the new co-chairs of Boston's Pride Committee to have one, all-inclusive Pride parade, there will be a separate Dyke March again this year.

But unlike last year when the Dyke March joined up with the larger parade, the Dyke March will be completely separate this year. However, organizers have planned for the march, which starts at 10 a.m., to conclude in Copley Square just as the official Pride parade is getting underway so that participants may then march in the official parade.

The first-ever Dyke March last year, pulled

together by an ad hoc coalition of lesbians, drew about 500 women to the march. Organizers say they want a separate event because the Pride parade has lost its emphasis on political protest.

"Pride is just not political anymore and it's nice to have a separate space for lesbians to be political. That's gotten lost in Pride," said Andrea Plastas, who plans to participate in the Dyke March again this year. "This is a grassroots event; it's more like the spirit of Pride 25 years ago."

"This is a place for dykes to be visible; we are not always visible in Pride," added Kathy Brucker. "I have friends who say they have not marched in the Pride



PHOTO: MARILYN HUMPHRIES

*A scene from last year's Dyke March.*

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# Separate Dyke March planned

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parade in years because it's not political and they don't feel visible."

But the new co-chairs of Boston's Pride Committee are disappointed that the Dyke March organizers still want to be separate from the official Pride parade, since they have a clearly stated goal this year that Pride be more inclusive. The name change alone—"Pride Without Borders: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies"—reflects the revamped committee's desire to bring more diversity to the march.

"It's a big loss. We wanted the dyke marchers in the Pride parade," said Sabrina Taylor, co-chair along with Gregg Fraker, of the Pride Committee. Taylor met with Dyke March organizers to try to convince them to be part of the larger parade this year. "I told them, 'Yell whatever you want while you are marching.' My job is just to make sure they are walking down the street."

Although Taylor could not convince the Dyke March organizers to participate in the official Pride parade, she said she will march with the lesbian group to show solidarity, then join the Pride parade in Copley Square. "Greg and I wanted to make sure there was no dissonance this year," said Taylor. "We did all we could."

Taylor also disagrees with the lesbian marchers' assertion that Boston's Pride parade is not political.

"The fact that Pride even happens is very political," said Taylor, adding that as an African-American lesbian co-chairing the event, she sees political action intertwined with the celebratory nature of Pride.

Dyke March organizers also took issue with the fact that the Pride Committee charges groups and floats to be in the parade. That was one of their gripes last

year, when the former Pride Committee charged fees ranging from \$100 to \$500, they said. But this year, Taylor and Fraker have reduced the parade fee to \$50. Still, the lesbian marchers objected.

"No one should have to pay to protest," says Plastas.

Taylor said she would like to see the fee eventually reduced to \$5, but assembling a march the size of Boston's Pride event requires city services such as police, since streets are blocked off, and permits, all of which costs money.

But money is not the main reason Dyke March organizers want a separate event. Trotz, who first attended a Pride march in 1978, says Pride began as a political event but at some point it "turned into a parade and became more mainstream." The Dyke March, says Trotz, protests all oppressions and connects issues of racism and sexism with homophobia. It is a more grassroots effort that "demands our visibility not be pushed aside," she said.

Beth Ochsner, who moved to Boston this year and joined the Dyke March planning group, said she'll probably march in the larger parade, too, but the Dyke March has become a more exciting event among her lesbian friends. "There's a phenomenal feeling of unity and energy and empowerment," she said, "that can only really come from seeing people within your community and identifying with them."

*(The Dyke March begins at 10 a.m. at the Ruggles station entrance of the Orange Line. The march will proceed up Tremont Street to Massachusetts Avenue. From there, it will turn right onto Commonwealth Avenue and then onto Clarendon Street where it will end at Copley Square where the Pride parade begins.) ▼*