

Boston Dyke March mixes it up



THE DYKE MARCH brought a mix of old-school activism and old-school fun to the streets of Back Bay. Photo: Marilyn Humphries

Diverse crowd takes to Back Bay streets

by **Megan Prock**
contributing writer

"If I wanted a cock I'd get a rooster," "This is what a lesbian looks like," and "Do ask, I'll tell," aren't

the latest bumper stickers or T-shirt slogans that local lesbians are sporting around town, but instead some of the colorful signs carried at the June 13 Boston Dyke March, where dykes, gays and queers of all stripes — along with those who love them — descended upon the city streets.

The Boston Dyke March is a grassroots event that serves as a non-commercial alternative to the traditional Boston Pride celebration.

"The Dyke March is more politically-minded and there's more

of a feeling that we are here because we are part of the queer community and we want to show our support," said Chris Hurley, a Dyke March Committee member. "It is made up of people with signs and good attitudes that want visibility for the community."

The dykes and their allies began congregating at the Boston Common's Parkman Bandstand around 6 p.m. A diverse mix of community organizations from the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual

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and Transgender Youth (BAGLY) to the LGBT Aging Project had set up booths along the grass and mingled with the crowd as Dyke March volunteers passed out home-made signs, noise-makers and stickers with labels like "Mom Dyke," "Single Dyke" and "Fat Dyke."

The anticipation steadily grew along with the crowd and by 7 p.m. the dykes were ready to go. Dyke March organizers estimated the crowd at about 2000, the largest in the Boston Dyke March's 14-year history. Emcee and local comedian/musician Faith Soloway called the marchers to attention and sent them spilling into the streets of Boston singing, "Oh, when the dykes go marching through the Common," to the tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In."

Marchers made their way around Boston Common and through the quiet streets of Beacon Hill with signs in hand, noisemakers blaring and gay flags cascading down their backs like Sapphic super heroes. Chants like "What do we want? Trans rights! When do we want it? Now!" and "1-2-3-4, open up the closet door, 5-6-7-8, don't assume your kids are straight!" could be heard for blocks.

Susan Shea, who sported a "Mom Dyke" sticker and took to the streets with her three-year-old daughter, appreciated the unique combination of political activism and community-inclusive fun that the Dyke March embodies.

"It's a little bit of fun and a little bit of political action," said Shea. "It's a reminder that Pride is not just about dancing and drinking, but is principally about dyke visibility."

Straight ally Bonny Carrol of Somerville, who went to the march with her youngest son Shannon, also appreciated the feeling of community and political activism represented at the event.

"I think [the Dyke March] symbolizes a freedom for everybody," said Carrol. "I admire the young people who are so brave and



JUST IN CASE you had any questions. Photo: Marilyn Humphries

welcoming and make a statement that they are going to do it differently."

The march made its way around the Common, down Commonwealth Avenue and back up Boylston Street, eventually re-entering the Common at the corner of Boylston Street and Charles Street.

Pedestrians who stumbled upon the scene had looks of confusion and amusement as they snapped pictures with their cell phones. Many showed their support by waving, clapping, honking and cheering the marchers on.

"I just sort of came upon it, but I think its lovely," said onlooker Pin Huang. "There's a lot of energy and a lot of people. It's nice to see people walking for something that they care about."

While the march was certainly something to see, it was the signs that ranged from political ("Support Your Local Dyke") to sexual ("New Dyke, Teach Me") to downright funny ("Avid Vagitarian") that seemed to draw the most attention.

Even the Boston police officers working the event joined in on the fun. One officer patrolling the Common stopped to pose for a picture with a woman carrying a sign that read, "I f*ck women."

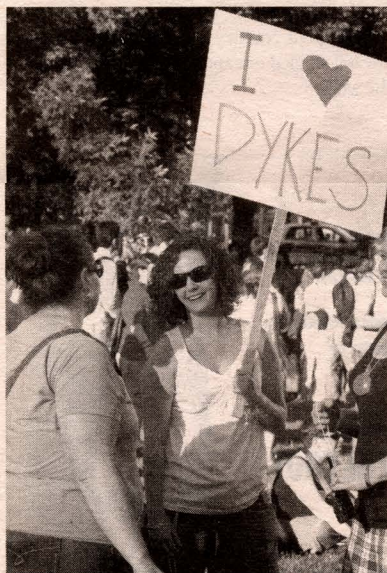
Back on the Common, Soloway kicked off the post-march rally with a femme dating game. The comedic take on the traditional dating show had three bachelorettes competing for the company of two dolled-up femmes in short gold sparkly dresses.

As the sun began to set, Zili Misik, an all-female performance group with powerful Haitian, Brazilian and West African rhythms, took to the stage and got the crowd dancing and swaying under the light of the moon.

Bassist and violinist Lyndell Montgomery followed Zili Misik with a mellow solo set that brought a harmonious end to the night's frenzied festivities.

The varied musical performances were just another reflection of the diversity represented at the Dyke March.

"I thought it was great. It's always great to see people come out and own their identity in a mixed group," said Alton Crocker, a first time Dyke Marcher from East Boston. "When we consolidate and operate in solidarity we have the opportunity to facilitate more change."



HOPEFULLY she met the woman in the above photo. Photo: Marilyn Humphries