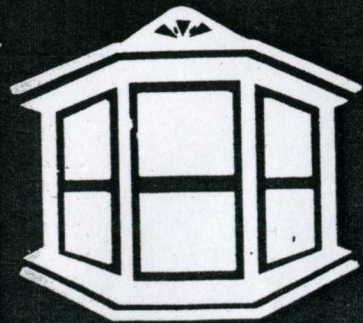


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Bay Windows

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READY OR NOT, HERE IT COMES

Boston's 28th annual Pride celebration expected to draw more than 200,000

by **Beth Berlo**
Bay Windows staff



More than 200,000 people are expected to participate in this year's 28th annual Boston Pride parade, which is set to kick off Saturday, June 13 at noon from Copley Square, and wind its way through the Back Bay and South End neighborhoods before culminating on the Boston Common.

As in years past, "Moving Violations," the lesbian motorcycle organization, will roar open the route and lead more than 120 organizations, floats, and a sweeping spectrum of gay and lesbian people and their supporters through the streets of Boston before breaking off for a sundry of celebratory street dances and barbecues.

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Boston Pride prepares to celebrate its 28th year of parades, politics

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What used to be celebrated in a day, has grown to include events through a week. On Friday, June 5, Sabrina Taylor, co-chair of this year's Boston Pride, along with Eric Pliner, helped raised the rainbow flag in Government Center in front of Boston City Hall. The flag will fly throughout the month of June.

"Boston Pride is the largest gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender pride celebration in New England and among the top 10 largest in the world," Taylor said. "We are thrilled to once again be producing a strong and exciting week of events designed to celebrate the true diversity of our communities."

This year's theme is "Retro Pride: Celebrate the Past, Create the Future," Taylor said.

On Tuesday, June 9, the Pride Lights celebration lit the South End in pink strings of lights as business owners and residents

decorated their windows and storefronts with variously arranged pink lights. Most striking is the tree in front of the Boston Center for the Arts in the heart of the heavily gay neighborhood.

The Dyke March, organized by Sarah Shreeves, and which has been held separately from the Pride Parade in previous years, is set to take place on Friday, June 12, the night before the parade. Women are expected to gather in Copley Square at 7 p.m. in front of the Boston Public Library, and step off at 7:30 winding their way up Dartmouth Street, down Commonwealth Avenue, to Gloucester Street, back on to Boylston Street and to the Boston Common, where there will be a small rally, Shreeves said.

"I don't like to think of it as a separate march," Shreeves said. "I like to think of it as an addition. People can do both. I think in the beginning, we were inspired by the New York and Washington Dyke Marches. It was

really nice to see the energy in those places, and we wanted to replicate that here in Boston," she said.

"We want women to come out. We have to think more about how issues are interconnected. Last year, our focus was health care access. This year, our focus is about getting women out there, but we don't have a real explicit focus this year," she said.

Participants last year were upset that the march was pushed back a week after the pride parade took place. "We've always wanted to hold it on the Friday night before," Shreeves said, "so that it doesn't conflict with the parade. It's really our own separate day, and maintains its integrity."

On Saturday, the Boston Pride Festival will take place immediately following the parade, from 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. Sandra Valls will host this year's wide variety of performers, some of which include: the dance-hit sounds of LaBouche, retro pop singer Laura Branigan, comedian Kate Clinton, a with

Catie Curtis, Toshi Reagon, Sweet Black Molasses, Wildest Dreams, and Helena Handbasket among others.

The parade's grand marshals this year are: Leslie Feinberg, author of "Stone Butch Blues," local activist Leah Eckelberger, Thomas Leavitt of the Fenway Community Health Center's board of directors, Nancy Nangeroni, local activist and host of "Gendertalk," the Reverend Irene Monroe, and Artistic Director of Theatre Offensive, Abe Rybeck.

Remaining Pride events are an after-dark screening of "The Birdcage," hosted by Kandi Kane, which will feature live performances before. It takes place on the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade, Thursday, June 11 at 7 p.m. On Friday, three different Pride Harbor Cruises will leave Long Wharf at 7 p.m. for three hours. One of which will be a youth cruise. GLBT youth will also have a dance.

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Boston Pride enters its 28th year

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"BUMP," at 8 p.m. Saturday at the Cyclo-rama on Tremont Street next to the BCA. The annual TRYST dance for women this year, will take place at the School of Museum of Fine Arts on Huntington Avenue. TRYST, "the pride party for women of all colors" is being produced by The Boston Pride Committee in association with Assata, ToolBox Productions, and Hanarchy Now Productions, featuring DJ Mary Mac, and Boston's "Sistahs of the Yam." For tickets, call the TRYST line at (617) 824-4273.

This year's Pride Committee members include: Bill Berggren, Susan Day, Judah Abijah Dorrington, Eric Farkas, Joe Fischer, Imani Henry, Shawn Jacobs, Jeff Mosier, Regan Scherer, Richard Sobel, Juliet Warrington and Myke Weiskopf.

Co-chairs Pliner and Taylor said they do not want to forget all the people whom,

decades before, fought to make this day possible, stating, "Remember the activists whose sacrifices made [gay and lesbian] visibility a possibility, appreciate those whose efforts enabled us to march down the street with Pride. Think back to where we've come from, and think ahead to where we're going. And have fun."

Sgt. Norman Hill, gay and lesbian liaison to the Boston Police Department, asked to remind everyone that "not only is this the largest parade in New England, it's the largest in Boston, and it's also the most peaceful. We had one arrest last year, and it was a vendor who hadn't registered, and [who] gave the police a hard time," he said. "You will be at one of the most well-attended and safest parades in the city, and police will be out in numbers enforcing the law. But mostly, we just hope everyone enjoys themselves and has a great day," Hill said. ▼

