

Fighting the power More than 1000 turn out for Dyke March

By [Laura Kiritsy](#)

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Media Credit: Marilyn Humphries
Alison Bechdel and Amy Rubin

Cartoonist Alison Bechdel pointed out that she is neither a performer nor an activist when she took the stage to deliver the keynote address at the Boston Dyke March on June 10. "But I am a big dyke," she told the crowd on the Boston Common. "So hopefully that will see you through."

That just about sums up the ever-evolving Boston Dyke March. While its reputation as a politically charged, patriarchy-smashing, grassroots rebellion of angry lesbians is well-earned, the truth is that many of those who took to the humid streets of Boston last Friday evening were simply looking to



Media Credit: Marilyn Humphries
Hasani Spann, Venus Harry & Tawana Spann

hang out with a huge of crowd queer folks. And just being a big dyke was enough.

That's essentially what brought Meka and Claudette, a Boston couple who asked that their last names not be used, to this year's event. "I feel it's a part of me, and I'm part of them," said Meka, 33, as she surveyed the gathering crowd from a bench by the Parkman Bandstand. "To me this is freedom, to walk and be proud of who I am today, not be ashamed of it."

"You see people of all races, creeds, sizes," said the 48-year-old Claudette. "And I just think it's a beautiful thing for all women to join together as one, no matter what color you are, no matter what background you come from. And I'm just looking around and I see all kinds of attractions. I won't say atrocities, I'll say attractions," she said, laughing. "Okay? It's a beautiful thing. It's a wonderful life."

That's not to say the Boston Dyke March isn't edgy, erotic,



Media Credit: Marilyn Humphries

entertaining and yes, political. "Fuck Bush" signs were aplenty, although it's unclear if those fell into the political or erotic category. Petitions to keep pro-choice justices on the Supreme Court circulated through the crowd. The Dyke March's political flair is what piqued first-timer Kim Libby interest in this year's event. "I've heard a lot in comparison to [Boston] Pride," said the 22-year old Jamaica Plain resident.

"I've heard that the dyke march is more political, I've heard it's better than Pride, that it has a far more political stance, that there's a lot of excitement."

But there were also shirtless tranny bois staking out their turf, a chick with a hula hoop, oversized lady puppets and fire-eating Lesbian Avengers. Scenester Aliza Shapiro hawked her "Faggy Tie Line," a brand of secondhand neckwear emblazoned with identifiers like "Wicked Queer" and "Dirty Femme." Piercings poked out of noses. Tattoos peeked out over low-slung jeans.

Indeed the dyke march has hardly lost its edge. But given the current battle for marriage equality that is being waged within the larger GLBT rights movement - particularly in Massachusetts - ultimately the political speech coming from the stage was less-than-radical. Arline Isaacson, who addressed the crowd before well over 1000 marchers took to the streets, made a plea for folks to get involved in the fight to defeat the proposed state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. "A lot of people I talk



Media Credit: Marilyn Humphries

Bechdel also had marriage on her mind, albeit with a caveat more suited to the dyke march crowd than the main stage at Boston Pride. While Bechdel acknowledged that nothing less than pursuing the right to marry will do in the struggle to secure full equality for GLBT people, she added that, "at the same time I want to argue that we also need to work to undermine this false equation of marital status with citizenship.

"No one should have to have a state-approved sex partner to be considered legitimate or to have access to certain social benefits. Conservatives love marriage - certain kinds of marriage anyway - not just for moral reasons but economic ones," she said. "They see it as a free social safety net. We don't need national healthcare or free day care, we don't need to address poverty, their thinking goes, because if people would just get married they'd be able to take care of themselves. It's a big privatization scheme. You think with that logic that they'd be delighted for gay people to get married but in their grand plan of course we're worth much more to them as a social weapon to distract people from questioning their even bigger privatization schemes."

Laura Kiritsy is the Associate Editor at Bay Windows. Her e-mail address is lkiritsy@baywindows.com.



Media Credit: Marilyn Humphries
Arlene Isaacson

to, gay folks and straight folks, they think that this is such a pro-gay state that we don't have to worry," Isaacson told the crowd. "They think that the Massachusetts legislature would never pass an anti-gay amendment. They think that even if they did and it went on the ballot in '06 this state would never vote for an anti-gay amendment. Well, sisters and brothers, I got bad news for ya. That is so not true."

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