

### Dyke March Planning - Sarah's thoughts only!

**Date and time of march:** We've found the best time to have the march is on the Friday evening before Pride. Around 7 is a good time - after rush hour.

**Route:** Key things to remember when choosing a route-

- accessibility. Walk the route at least once to ensure that there are ramps on and off sidewalks, the roads are relatively pothole free, and that there are no major inclines. It also helps if the gathering places at the beginning and end are close to the T.
- gathering place for the beginning and end. You need a spot for 500-1000 (if not more) women to gather.
- the march must go in the direction of traffic; you can't go the wrong way up a one way street. This is especially important if motorcycles are going to be involved.
- length - you want the march to take about 30 min - hour to walk.
- visibility - obviously you want an area where you will be seen!

**Police:** We've always had police clear the streets for us. Our contact is Maureen Parlin at the Boston Police Department (343-4300) Maureen has worked with DM organizers since 1994. Call her with the date and route information as soon as you have it; she'll make arrangements to have the streets cleared, etc. She's very nice and accommodating. The last two years we haven't had to actually meet with her - we've just called and she's made arrangements. The police have asked things like 'will there be nudity?'.... we've always replied something like 'we aren't planning on nudity, but we're not planning on enforcing women to put their shirts back on.' However, because of the controversy last year you may want to get legal counsel about this issue. I would not be confrontational with the police about this issue (They're getting pressure from other places...); holding a march without the police requires many, many, many more women **and** better peacekeeping training. Also, it's important to have one or two people be the police contact.

**Day of the march:**

- It is important to have a group of six or so women (we always called them the point people) be responsible for the day of the march decision making and logistics. Sometimes there is a need for a quick decision - these women will be the designated decision makers and the rest of the planning group should feel comfortable having these decisions made for them.
- There are also a lot of tiny details involved with the day of march planning (transportation for things like stickers, banners, money buckets, megaphones, etc.; who will be responsible for cleaning up the initial gathering place, who will be the police contact, who will be the media contact, etc.). It's a good idea for the last meeting of the planning group to concentrate on going through the march from set up to clean up.
- You will need people to make announcements at the beginning of the march in both English and Spanish if possible.
- tip: put the stickers on a sheet so it's easy to clean up as the march begins.
- It's a good idea to have chant sheets with the march route on them (as well as any other information you want to share) - we've also translated these into Spanish (though not the chants themselves).

**Peacekeeping:** You will need a group of at least 10 peacekeepers – who are **not** the same as the point people. Peacekeepers walk along the edge of the route and keep an eye out for trouble spots (both inside and outside the march). When a trouble does occur, the peacekeepers help keep the march moving forward and alert the nearest point people to the problem. It helps to have the peacekeepers identified a few weeks ahead of the march – though this is not always possible. It is also **essential** that all point people, other planners, and as many peacekeepers as possible receive training in peacekeeping. (I don't have the name of our past trainer with me – I'll see if I can find it). It's a good idea to schedule this training early on...

**Media and publicity:** Obviously you want to blanket the city as much as possible. Develop a good press list and fax a release and do follow up calls. Be prepared to answer questions about the bed (from 1996 and 1999). You can call me or Beth if you have questions about the bed from 1996. We've tried to encourage people to be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and have also tried to do some posters in Spanish. Try to get other groups involved in publicizing.

**Theme of march:** We've sometimes had themes and sometimes not. Personally I'm not convinced that a theme is always a good thing mostly because I'm not sure that the time spent on researching/publicizing/etc. is worth what comes across in the media/etc. Whatever you decide I'd be sure to be clear about your message and your goals.

**End of march:** This has always been the hardest part of planning the march. You want to do something that will continue the energy from the actual march. We've had speeches, fire eating, etc. Obviously if there's a theme you want to have something directly related at the end of the march.

**Pride:** In the past the DM has had an uneasy (an understatement for some years) relationship with the Pride Committee. Pride has in the past tried to co-opt the Dyke March (though direct and indirect means). My personal feeling is that I'd like to see the DM remain independent from the Pride Committee. I don't object to them adding us to listings of pride weekend events; I would just hate to see us become part of or a subset of the committee.

