



post-gazette **NOW**
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pride Week here continues to raise awareness forty years after the Stonewall uprising

Monday, June 08, 2009

By Elham Khatami, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



Robin Rombach/Post-Gazette

Marchers carry a rainbow parachute down the Boulevard of the Allies during the Gay Pride Parade last year.

Forty years after the Stonewall police riots marked the beginning of the nation's gay rights movement, the Delta Foundation of Pittsburgh will mark the incident with its Pride Week Celebration, which kicks off today to celebrate and raise awareness for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

In 1969, the Stonewall Inn, a small bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, "was the only place where gay folk gathered, and it used to get raided on a regular basis. On that particular occasion the people decided to fight back," said Cassandra Buncie, director of marketing and development for the Delta Foundation.

"Almost every city now has a pride event to commemorate the uprising at Stonewall."

Pride festivals in Pittsburgh started with small gatherings in Mellon Park. The celebrations have grown steadily over the years. Last year, the Delta Foundation expanded the festivities to a weeklong celebration taking place in various locations Downtown, with a comprehensive schedule of activities. Pride Week drew nearly 17,000 attendees in 2008.

This year, Pride Week organizers expect an attendance of 20,000 to 25,000 people.

"In Pittsburgh, you don't really see a gay community unless you're looking for it," Ms. Buncie said. "This is our time to be out there."

The celebration runs through Sunday, under the theme "Your Rights, Our Rights, Human Rights." Signs commemorating the Stonewall riots will be displayed Downtown "to remember where we were and where we're going," she said.

Several businesses and organizations participating in Pride Week will set up information booths throughout Downtown, where the 10-day Three Rivers Arts Festival is being held at the same time.

Throughout the week there will be dance, spoken word and drag performances, a block party, pub crawl, and activities and games for kids.

C; [Pittsburgh steeler jersey](#)

Buy Pittsburgh Steelers jerseys Free Shipping
on all Jerseys

[Pittsburgh Caskets 80% Off](#)

Ground Freight Free. Get in 9 Hours Open
Nights & Weekends. Buy Now!

h, beginning at noon Sunday. It will start at Grant Street and the
Street and end at the PrideFest entrance at Liberty Avenue and
Several Street. The event, which includes 100 vendors, two stages of entertainment and children's activities, will run from 1 to
6 p.m.

All events are free.

Susan Haugh, artistic director of Dreams of Hope, a performing arts group for gay youth that has participated in Pittsburgh Pride events for six years, said the celebration will help increase visibility of the gay community.

"I remember going to marches Downtown in the late '80s that were relatively small with no audience," said Ms. Haugh, who has taken part in Pride festivities for more than 20 years. "There just wasn't a lot of knowledge or acceptance."

The main goal of the event, Ms. Buncie said, is to "celebrate all that we are."

"Most of us define ourselves as 'a part of me is gay, not all of me is gay,' " she said. "It's not just one label that defines you. We all wear many, many hats."

A schedule of all Pride Week events can be found on www.pittsburghpride.org.

Elham Khatami can be reached at ekhatami@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1478.

First published on June 8, 2009 at 12:00 am