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LGBT Community Gears Up For 38th Annual Heritage Of Pride March

June 23, 2007

The line is drawn, the barriers are ready to be built, and both grand marshals are in town. All that's missing now is the parade.

"They're all going to be marching tomorrow together down America's main street to tell the world that I'm gay and my family's gay and that we're celebrating ourselves," said Dennis Spafford of Heritage of Pride.

More than 300 organizations are expected to march down 5th Avenue, with some 500,000 onlookers, from 52nd Street to the Village.

"In 1971, I traveled to New York just to make a pilgrimage here to see where the place was at," said Co-Grand Marshal Bishop Troy Perry.

Marchers will pass the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street, where in 1969, bar patrons including drag queens, students and others resisted a police raid, sparking a riot which became a watershed moment in the gay rights movement.

The parade began the following year, to mark the anniversary of the riots. It has since grown to become one of the oldest and one of the world's largest LGBT events – the culmination of Pride Week in the city.

"It's an honor to do it with the Reverend Perry and the other religious groups – Christian, Muslim, Jewish – gathered together to say we stand united for equality," said Co-Grand Marshal Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum.

One of the organizations marching on Sunday is the LGBT Community Center whose float, when finished, will take on a special meaning.

"This year, the center's theme for Pride has pride equals a variety of things, pride means different things to different people," said Alex Kent of LGBT Community Center. "The main part of the float will have all of these signs – pride equals all of these different things. And on the back of the float there will be this big giant mirror for everyone to see themselves in."

It's a reflection of this year's theme – "United for Equality." A moment of silence is also planned to honor those who have died from AIDS.

- *Dean Meminger*

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