



Top Trans Events This Pride Season

TransNation

By Jacob Anderson-Minshall | 6/19/2008 | 12:00 AM

June has become the month for Pride celebrations, and for trans folks, this year offers more venues than ever to show your pride or protest the current political environment. A few events (past and future):

[New England Trans Pride March](#)

With their slogan ("Remember Stonewall? That was us!") recalling the 1969 New York City riots, the First Annual New England Trans Pride March ushered in the Pride season June 7th when Northampton, MA—the town best known as "Lesbianville, USA"—played host to a thousand trans and ally marchers.

The following rally featured trans entertainers and speakers like folksingers **Joe Stevens** (of **Coyote Grace**) and **Cathy Worthley**, and activists **Gunner Scott**, **Monica Roberts** and **Donna Rose**. One of the event's organizers, **Bet Power**—Director and Curator of the Sexual Minorities Archives—urged lesbians and gays to "intensify their support of the transgender community."

[Fresh Meat Festival](#)

Years before the debut of dedicated trans marches, San Francisco's Fresh Meat Festival provided an annual outlet for transgender artists and their supporters. Launched in 2001 by choreographer **Sean Dorsey**, Fresh Meat Productions supports established and emerging trans and queer artists. Seven years later, they're still the only festival of their kind in the US, but they've gained such a following they've had to move to a larger theater.

Fortunately, the relocation to Project Artaud Theater now accommodates ensemble performances like the Transcendence Gospel Choir, the country's only all transgender choral group (featured in the documentary *The Believers*).

"The Transcendence Gospel Choir does exactly what Fresh Meat is all about," Dorsey contends. "[They] inspire, affirm, open hearts and minds—all while making really good art. People are moved to tears. [It's a] joyful, powerful, deeply moving articulation of the beauty, talent, courage and strength of our community."

This year Fresh Meat had the financial wherewithal to commission five pieces by groups creating "cutting-edge work in traditional art forms," like gospel music, hula, folkloric dance, and classical music. Dorsey admits, "I want to have trans and queer communities... see ourselves reflected onstage in traditional culture, to reclaim our place in history as important culture bearers and leaders."

The 7th Annual Fresh Meat Festival runs June 19-22. This year's performance include the festival's first opera, trans performers **Scott Turner Schofield**, **Yoseñio V. Lewis** and **Ryka Aoki De La Cruz**, trans girlband **Lipstick Conspiracy**, award-winning **MC Katastrophe** and trans rocker **Shawna Virago**. During the festival the Fresh Meat Gallery will exhibit work by transgender and gender variant visual artists.

[San Francisco Trans March](#)

The Fifth Annual San Francisco Trans March will be held Friday, June 27th, with the theme, "Marching for a Gender Inclusive ENDA." Festivities start by 3 pm in Dolores Park where thirty trans and gender-variant bands, artists and performers will be featured on stage, and former HRC board member Donna Rose will give the keynote speech. Nearly 7,500 people came out last year, and organizers are expecting over 10,000 participants in the march, which begins at 7 pm.

[Trans Day of Action for Social & Economic Justice](#)

On the opposite coast, New York City will be celebrating the fourth annual Trans Day of Action for Social & Economic Justice June 27 at City Hall Park. Although the Northampton Trans March has been lauded as, "the first transgender march in the Eastern United States," that mantle really belongs to the New York march organized by the Audre Lorde Project's TransJustice project.

Aiming to develop solidarity with other civil rights movements and social justice organizations, the Day of Action organizers call for an end of discrimination, demanding (among other things) equal access to employment and education opportunities, and proclaiming, "We stand in solidarity with all prisoners... We call attention to the criminal injustice system... We oppose the Bush Administration's 'War on Terrorism' as an excuse to legitimize the expansion of the US. We demand justice for the many TGNC people who have been beaten, assaulted, raped, and murdered."

Trans Day of Action (myspace.com/transjusticenyc) organizers say they want to let the world know, "The Stonewall rebellion is not over and we will continue fighting for social and economic justice, raising our voices until we are heard."

[Twin Cities Trans March](#)

On Saturday, June 28, Twin Cities Trans March organizers hope to avoid last year's snafu, when 200-250 marchers were stopped by Minneapolis police, who insisted the marchers disperse or face arrest—despite a permit authorizing the event. The stand-off reportedly lasted forty-five minutes before organizers agreed to suspended the rally.

Supporters view the second annual march, (1 p.m. in Stevens Square Park), as an alternative to Pride festivities they criticize for "commercialization [that] draws attention away from vitally needed activism and political education. We protest transphobia within the queer community, particularly within the Twin Cities Pride Festival."

An all ages after-party at Pi Bar will feature entertainers like "queernercore" band **Tough Tough Skin**, drag performers **Esme Rodrigues** and **Kysa Bong and the Androgyny Kings**.

Although Trans Marches have hardly spread across the land, you can find them on either coast and in a sprinkling of locations in between, where they serve as inspiration for future events. Expect even more options for supporting transgender pride next June.

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Fresh Meat Artistic Director Sean Dorsey
Photo courtesy of Fresh Meat Productions

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