



PRIDE CALGARY

By Sean McLennan

That time of year has come around again, and Calgary is prepared to show its pride colours in true western fashion, thanks to the efforts of the dedicated and hard-working board of the Pride Calgary Association. Let's give credit where credit is due and acknowledge them by name:

John Skorka, Chair and sponsorship coordinator

Mike Espeseth, Treasurer

Brox Anderson, Secretary and Street Gala Coordinator

Tawde Clark, Media, Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator

Angelina Re, Sponsorship, Pride Rights Summit Coordinator

Sharon Boutiller, Pride Parade Coordinator

If you happen across any of them (undoubtedly, they'll be looking a little harried) give 'em a smile, or "thank you" or little hug. Let 'em know they're appreciated!

Continuing the recent trend, Pride is increasingly more than the parade, and with the participation of many of Calgary's GLBT organizations, clubs, and businesses, there are a multitude of events planned over the course of Pride Month. Our enthusiasm just can't be contained in one day! There's more going on than can be summed up accurately here, so surf on over to pridecalgary.ca for your up-to-the minute updates about what's going on, times and locations, and so forth. Nonetheless, here are some of the highlights of Pride Festival 2007.

June 2, Pride Kick-Off Party:

The official start of Pride Month—a not-to-be-missed party presented by Pride Calgary in conjunction with local arts, cultural, and community organizations to be held at The Backlot beginning at 4PM.



June 8, Military Ball:

Once again, the Calgary Eagle will host a hot evening of the city's uniformed finest (or at least hot guys uniformed as the city's finest!). Whether your inclination is to command or take orders, you're likely to find a role to play.

June 10, Pride Parade and Street Gala:

The unequivocal centerpiece of Pride Festival, the parade, will again be following the new route down Eighth Avenue, through Stephen Avenue. The end of the parade will kick-off the rest of the afternoon of entertainment and frivolity at the Street Gala in Olympic Plaza, the termination of the parade route. There will be vendors, performers, live music, a beer garden, The Family Zone, and more.

After the Parade and festivities you can also head to the Backlot for the annual tradition of their post-parade party.

June 16, Come to the Music

The Calgary Men's Chorus will hold their Pride concert at the Grand Theatre at 8PM. Tickets \$20 at the Grand Theatre or from chorus members.

June 16, Xist 2007

The ever-popular pride dance—this year entitled "Forbidden Fruit"—will continue to push the envelope with a fusion of performance—a little drag, a little dance—with a rave-like environment of audience participation. This year it will be moving to the more intimate and central Jack Singer Concert Hall lobby in the Epcor Center.

This year's theme is "One: Celebrating Diversity By Unity". According to the Pride Calgary Chair, John Skorka, the idea behind the theme is to recognize that which we have in common—that draws us together in spite of the differences that enrich the GLBT community. Certainly a good message to put forward in this day and age!

The Parade and Street Gala are expected to draw 2000 people or more—similar record-breaking numbers to last year, which was the first year the parade was moved to its new downtown route. Although some were sad to see the parade leave Seventeenth Avenue, the new location seems more fitting, has better visibility, better accommodates the crowds, better potential for growth, and interferes less with city traffic. According to John, it's also (perhaps surprisingly) easier and cheaper to run.

There was a minor kerfuffle over the date of the parade—originally it had been scheduled for June 3. It turns out another major event was going on at the Telus Conference Center and the city became concerned about the potential traffic chaos of the two events colliding. Even so, John says the situation was handled professionally, and only caused a minor inconvenience.

All in all, it should be an exhilarating day—let's hope it doesn't snow! And keep in mind that parade day is just the tip of the iceberg of a whole slew of events month-long—keep an eye out for the ARGRA rodeo, events from GLCSA and Apollo, and a fashion show intriguingly called "Kinky Boots". There have also been rumours of a John Wort Hammond concert and even a Calaway Park "Gay Day" a la Disney Land. At the time of writing, lots of details, dates and venues are still being finalized, so be sure to check out pridecalgary.ca before making your Pride plans! ▼

Sean McLennan is a native Calgarian with (nearly) a PhD in Linguistics and Cognitive Science from Indiana University, where he was heavily involved in GLBT education. He currently has a full time gig in software for mobile technology.

Photo by Outlooks staff

THE BACKLOT
OPEN DAILY 2PM - 2AM

HOLD ON TIGHT!
Join us for our
Annual After the Pride Parade BBQ
Starting immediately after the pride parade featuring BBQ Burgers and drink specials!
209 - 10TH AVE SW CALGARY 403.265.5211