

ASTORIA PRIDE

THE LOWER COLUMBIA Q CENTER PRESENTS
THE INAUGURAL LGBT PRIDE CELEBRATION IN
DOWNTOWN ASTORIA JUNE 9, 10 & 11

By REBECCA SEDLAK

Gay pride is coming to Astoria. The Lower Columbia Q Center is organizing the first Astoria Pride event Thursday through Saturday, June 9 to 11.

“Astoria Pride is a time when we all get to come together and celebrate who we are as a people,” says Marco Davis, chairman of the Lower Columbia Q Center, which serves the local lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex and asexual community.

“In a lot of ways, it’s like the Scandinavian Midsummer Festival: All the Scandinavians get together. This is an opportunity for us to celebrate where we’ve come from, who we are,” Davis said.

“Sometimes I don’t think we celebrate enough; we spend so much time fighting and rallying for things. This is that one time a year when we can actually, really celebrate.”

ASTORIA PRIDE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, June 9

“The Madness of Lady Bright,” 8 p.m.
KALA, 1017 Marine Drive, 18+, \$10

Big Fat Gay Movie Night: “Purple Rain,”
10 p.m., Columbian Theater, 1114 Marine
Drive, donations accepted

Friday, June 10

Astoria Pride Gala, 7 p.m., Astoria Armory,
1636 Exchange St., \$10 general admission
Mezzanine, \$20 general admission main
floor, \$120 premium table for eight w/
champagne

Tickets on sale at A Gypsy’s Whimsy, 1139
Commercial St., the Astoria Pride Hub

The festivities

The lineup is full of events for LGBT individuals, friends and allies to show their pride. Gender-fluid pop icon Prince will be remembered at a showing of “Purple Rain” at 10 p.m. Thursday at the Columbian Theater.

Friday evening’s Pride Gala will feature a glamorous array of performances in the Armory. With general admission seating on the mezzanine and main floor as well as premium tables, attendees will enjoy drinks, appetizers by local restaurants and entertainment galore. Local “Dragalution!” cast members will lip-sync and dance, three guest drag queens — Shitney Houston, Annie DePressant and Anya Allnight — will perform, and Portland band Seven Cake Candy will raise the roof.

Work Dance Company, a hip-hop and jazz/funk dance troupe from Eugene, will teach a free, all-ages hip-hop dance workshop at Astoria Arts & Movement Center

annex next to the Columbian Cafe at 1114 Marine Drive in an annex, or at the door

Saturday, June 11

AIDS Memorial Quilt Viewing, 9 to 11 a.m.,
Astoria Armory, free

Riverwalk Gay Pride Parade, 2 p.m., Bay
Street to 11th Street, free

“The Coast is Queer” art exhibit, 6 p.m.,
KALA, 1017 Marine Drive, free

DJ Dance Party, 9 p.m. KALA, 1017 Marine
Drive, free

Hip-hop dance workshop, 6 p.m. Astoria
Arts & Movement Center, 342 10th St., all
ages, free

Dance party with DJ Ali Aht, 9 p.m., Astoria
Arts & Movement Center, 342 10th St.,
all ages, free



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The last display of the entire AIDS Memorial Quilt was in October of 1996 when The Quilt covered the entire National Mall in Washington, D.C. Two blocks of the quilt will be on display at the Armory during Astoria Pride.

at 6 p.m. Saturday, followed by a free, all-ages dance party. With Astoria Pride in its fledgling year, organizers have received encouragement and support from the larger LGBT communities in Eugene, Portland and Seattle.

“We have so many people coming from out of town who want to celebrate,” Davis said.

The celebration culminates in the Riverwalk Pride Parade at 2 p.m. Saturday. All are welcome to join the parade or watch the walkers and bikers start at Bay Street under the Astoria Bridge and make their way to 11th Street. Emcees Dida DeAngelis and Portland drag queen Poison Waters will be on stage at Buoy Beer to entertain the crowd and announce notable parade participants and groups who have signed up in advance.

In an effort to represent different aspects of the LGBT community, the Astoria Pride parade will be led by three grand marshals: HIPFiSH monthly publisher and activist Dinah Urell, who is a lesbian; longtime LGBT activist Tessa James Scheller, who is transgender; and Washington state Democratic Sen. Marko Liias, an openly gay member of the Washington State Legislature.

“We did three grand marshals so that we kind of are encompassing everything, other than just a gay white male,” Davis said. “These are the things that you think about when you’re working in a diverse community: How do you honor everybody’s voice?”

“That’s really why we’re calling it

Astoria Pride,” Davis said, “because it’s not just for ‘the gays.’ It’s for everyone. We’re nothing without the people who support us.”

Honoring struggles of the past

Beyond the celebration, Astoria Pride will also honor the history of the LGBT community.

Two blocks of the AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at the Armory. Managed by the NAMES Project Foundation, the AIDS Memorial Quilt aims to foster healing, heighten AIDS awareness and inspire HIV prevention. Started in San Francisco in 1987, the full quilt now numbers 48,000 3-by-6-foot panels that commemorate the lives of people who have died from AIDS.

“It’s such a visual and tangible part of our history and how terrifying the AIDS pandemic was,” Davis says. “It’s an aspect of our history that a lot of the up-and-coming LGBTQIA community aren’t aware of.”

The quilt is the largest community art project in the world. By visually illustrating the number of people lost to AIDS, the quilt aims to humanize statistics. Sections are continuously on display in schools, churches and community centers around the country.

Visitors can view the quilt blocks during Friday’s Pride Gala, during which there will be a moment of silence, followed by the Lower Columbia Q Center Choir singing “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” The quilt will also be on display from 9 to 11 a.m.