

Gay marchers' participation didn't trouble Irish planners

Group welcome in Cork's parade 'just like everybody else'

By Des O'Sullivan
SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE

CORK, Ireland — Irish-Americans may be tearing themselves apart over whether to allow gays to march in their St. Patrick's Day parades, but it is an issue that raised no problems with the organizers of the parade in Cork.

The second largest city in the Irish Republic will include representatives of the local gay and lesbian community in the St. Patrick's Day parade on the country's national holiday Tuesday.

It is the first time that gays as a group are to take part in a St. Patrick's Day parade in Ireland, and it came about directly as a response to the problems gays have had with parade organizers in the United States.

However, Cork's lord mayor, Denis Cregan, will not be in the viewing stand to take the salute. He is scheduled to lead the parade in New York.

Kieran Murphy of the Cork Junior Chamber, which organized the parade, said a group calling itself the Lesbian and Gay Collective sent in an application to take part in the parade and that it was given a place in the lineup "just like everybody else."

"I suppose you could say we are fairly progressive down here in Cork. The Junior Chamber, as the organizers of this parade, recognize that this group is a part of our society and has as much right to march as anybody else," Murphy said.

"As long as they don't plan any protests during the parade, we don't have any difficulties. As an organization, we have no political affiliations and we don't allow any political messages in the parade."

Murphy anticipates some reaction from the thousands of people expected to line the streets, but does not see why it should be adverse. "We have had the AIDS Alliance for the past few years, which I suppose is similar but dissimilar in a way, and there have been no problems there," he said.

Donal Sheehan, spokesman for the Cork Lesbian and Gay Collective, said it is difficult to predict what the reaction on the streets will be, but he does not anticipate major problems.

"Irish people are much more tolerant in their own country than they are given credit for," he said. "The gay community here has much less hassle than one might imagine. In a city like Cork, if it came to a crisis, I think it would not be acceptable in any way to ban people from marching because they are gay."

The idea of taking part in the parade arose, he said, from the rumpus that had erupted in cities like Boston and New York. "It is not," he explained, "in any way a political protest."

"But we do want to demonstrate to the people in the United States that not everybody in Ireland agrees that marchers from gay and lesbian groups should be banned from taking part in parades in US cities."

St. Patrick's Day parades traditionally take place in every sizable town in Ireland. The largest parade is in Dublin, but Cork is the only city planning a gay entry.

Organizers are planning a Mardi Gras-type float with the theme: "We are everywhere." The 15 or so people taking part are planning to costume themselves — partly to avoid any embarrassment in a relatively small community — in specific guises such as doctors, chefs, farmers, priests and nuns.



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JOANNE RATHÉ

reads the VIP Chorus in a...
at the Boston Park Plaza, a...
of Boston's Catholic Charities.

Parade officials about safety

be arrested.
"The most effective strategy is to work with the community," said Roache, speaking at a press conference in South Boston.

Foremost in the minds of Lyons and other officials yesterday was the public perception of South Boston, which suffered badly in the eyes of many during school busing in the 1970s.

"We want to put the parade back in focus; pay attention to the other 80,000 people marching," said Lyons.

Said Flynn: "This is what the courts decided, and the people of the community respected the decision."

The Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Pride Committee will march toward the end of the procession, which is expected to take more than two hours to pass by and will be viewed by an estimated 500,000 people.

Some, including City Councilor James Kelly (South Boston), have threatened to turn their backs when the gays march past.

But yesterday, there was little talk of dissent, and many pleas for harmony.

"The only thing we are concerned about Sunday is the weather," said Hurley. "We can do a lot about any situation, but only one guy controls the weather."

New England News Briefs

Wellesley dean to head Wheaton

NORTON — Dale Rogers Marshall, a political scientist and academic dean at Wellesley College, was named yesterday as the sixth president of Wheaton College here. She succeeds Alice F. Emerson, who stepped down last November to become a fellow at the Mellon Foundation in New York. Marshall, who specializes in urban issues, served as acting president at Wellesley in 1987-88. She is a former vice chancellor and faculty member in the University of California system.

Man guilty in drive-by shooting

LOWELL — A 19-year-old man was sentenced to 15-20 years in prison yesterday after being convicted in the shooting last summer of five people on a basketball court, in what authorities said was a drive-by revenge shooting stemming from

Religious

Mid-Lent ENCOUNTER

with the Right Reverends



Eric Kemp
Bishop of Chichester
England



Michael Marshall
Episcopal Director
Anglican Institute

Feast of St. Joseph
THURSDAY, MARCH 19th
All Saints Church, Ashmont
7:00 p.m. Choral Evensong with Sermon
Bishop Marshall
7:45 p.m. Lecture "Ecumenism & Peace"
Bishop Kemp

SATURDAY, MARCH 21st
Church of Our Saviour, East Milton
7:30 p.m. Report on Anglican Institute / "Spearhead"
Archbishop of Canterbury's Initiative
for Anglican Renewal & Evangelism
followed by Piano Concert
Bishop Marshall

SUNDAY, MARCH 22nd