

SECOND GENERATION

Gays/Lesbians/Bis who have Gay/Lesbian/Bi Parents

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A Message from our Founder -- by Dan Cherubin

Well, here we are nearing the end of 1995. I know, it's a bit later than I wanted the newsletter to appear, but jury duty, illness and new romantic ventures tend to put everything else on hold. I won't bore you with the descriptions of endless sinus infections or the adventure of long distance relationships (there's plenty of groups for that!) but, as a note to all you NYC residents: Bring lots of books, plenty of antibiotics, an appreciation of arcane law and a suspension of disbelief when going on jury duty. It certainly helps! Well, despite the delays, I hope nothing appears TOO out of date here!

I'd like once again to thank people who did contribute to and help with this newsletter, especially Stefan and the gang from COLAGE, who really do make this possible. Always good to have support from friends.

We seem to be growing even more as the months go by. More Second Generationers are making themselves known, and for this I say WHOOOOO!!! Do it!! Make your presence count! We are not just a fluke!

I would like to see more than just a show of hands, though. Our NYC meetings have stopped. Not put on hold, not on hiatus, just stopped.

Getting people to join me in doing that busy work like cold calling, envelope stuffing, or even schlepping to other groups' meetings is becoming more and more difficult. I'm glad everybody thinks it's great we exist, but it's hard to keep on existing if I don't get much help. I know this sounds like a re-hash of old newsletters, but it's more of a problem than

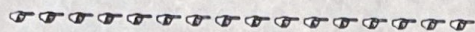
before. So, anybody, wherever you are, if you can help, let me know. I'll be eternally grateful. A few moments of your time. It's not THAT hard! (OK, now I'm sounding like Sally Struthers, so I'll stop!!)

What does this mean? (Not sounding like Sally, the part before that!) Well, just because the NYC crowd petered out doesn't mean that your town will. Spread the word. Make SG known. Sit down and write, phone or e-mail me and let me know what's going on. Share your activities, your ups and downs, your stories with us.

All right then, with some new CDS in the player (and a special thanks to Moon Records NYC for providing me the ska soundtrack I need in life!) let's move on. We have some tales of two different Gay Pride Parades, NYC and San Francisco. Now I know, there's lot more than those 2, so if you have any

experiences to share as an SGer at any Gay/Lesbian/Bi event, do contribute! [More unsubtle hints to follow.] We also have some other great letters and stories, so I hope you do enjoy it.

And with so much more to type, lets move on. Thanks again to everyone for their help. And I hope everyone has a good winter time, however you choose to celebrate. --Dan



**Revi's Story: Second Generation
by Revolutionary Hope Airborne**

*(The following was performed as part of
The Lavender Family Circus, a play put on
by COLAGE last September).*

My mother didn't come out until I was nine, and by then I was already a confirmed little femme. She, being the good Seventies feminist mother, always tried to liberate me from the trapping of feminine beauty in patriarchal society. All I wanted was to have long golden curls, red velvet dresses, and shiny black patent leather shoes with little silver buckles. In every picture of me as a little girl where I'm posed in a pretty dress, I'm smiling: well, if they're going to take photographs of me, I may as well be looking my best, right?

I can imagine now how this must have discombobulated my mother: her feminist daughter, growing up free and encouraged to do and be whatever she wanted, choosing lip gloss and crying herself sick over not being allowed Barbie dolls. After all, my mother at fifteen was forbidden by her mother to leave the house unless she was wearing a bra and lipstick, and she was always butch. Oops! That just slipped out -- my mother thinks butch/femme is heterosexual role playing, so I guess

you'll have to ask her why every single one of her girlfriends has been the kind of women who wears dresses at least once in a while, when my mother hasn't owned one in ten years.

Anyway, despite my unfathomable desires to be beautiful and have pretty things I did manage to grow up "liberated" -- and I've always called myself a feminist. But realizing my queerness was another story entirely. In high school in Ashland, Oregon I hung out with the arty liberals, of whom there were many, Ashland being a theatre town. As a group we were self-named "the drama fags", and while dating only boys I called myself bisexual. When I was asked why I would reply, "Because I don't believe in falling in love with genitalia, I believe in falling in love with another human being." A good arty liberal answer.

The first conscious crush I ever had on another woman was when I was sixteen. She as about twenty-eight, a cute little sport dyke actor friend of my mother's. I probably had a crush on her because she was kinda butch and kinda young, whereas the rest of my mother's friends were hippie country lesbians around forty. You know how most queer parents want their kids to grow up straight as if having heterosexual children proves they did a good job? My mother, always a separatist even when she couldn't live it, encouraged me mightily. I'm not sure how great she would have thought if something had actually come out of this crush, but unrequited love for another woman was a jump in the right direction: lesbianism. My mother always pushed me so hard to be a dyke that if she hadn't also taught me to think for myself, I'd probably be straight and married by now. Whenever I had trouble

with boys in high school, she'd mutter about how much better I'd be treated if I were with a woman. That mentality is just as pushy and judgmental as the narrow mindedness of homophobic straight parents.

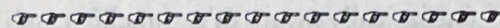
At college in Boston I was more of a deadhead than a dyke. Getting disillusioned with hippie culture was some of what sent me looking for something closer to home, so to speak. Mostly, though, becoming more and more an aware and vocal feminist made me think hard about the nature of relationships between men and women and women and women as I was experiencing them. It occurred to me that the only reason I sought men out was for sex; for everything else I turned to women. And men, at least the ones I was sleeping with, weren't even very good lovers, so --why not women for sex, too?

Meanwhile, my best friend was roaring out of the closet. We were still hippie chicks, so we would go dancing at the girl bars in our long dresses with flowing hair and sandals. In 1990 Boston, dykes did not wear dresses or have long hair. (I hear not much has changed.) I never met even one woman the entire time we went clubbing there. The attitude seemed to be, "What are these two straight girls doing dancing together in our bar?" Weird.

It took moving to San Francisco for us to realize we could actually be sexual with each other. People are far more comfortable here with variations in sexuality than Boston, Ashland or anywhere else. So I finally felt I could be myself, which was a dyke. I am not comfortable with the word lesbian

Being part of the Second Generation family, I will use this forum as a means to educate, dispel myths and

because for me it had connotations of separatism, which I am philosophically opposed to. Besides, I like the in-your-face-ness of dyke. Or better yet, "femme dyke" spoken by a voluptuous babe with bright red lipstick, a short flirty skirt, and heels. That's me: an in-your-face-femme dyke.



*A Letter to Second Generation--by
Darlena Bird Jimenes*

Dear Second Generation,

In the interest of erasing invisibility, breaking silence and raising consciousness on all levels, I must applaud your efforts and salute the Second Generation Family-- my family!! I am fortunate to be aware of and support Second Generation, and am excited by what changes we can make in the world. Even though I am an anomaly (from the Second Generation perspective) in that both my birth parents are straight (and unfortunately narrow), I consider myself a Second Generation daughter anyway; as I have been truly blessed with the wisdom, herstory and love of all my lesbian grandmothers and mothers in my life who provided the essence of my spiritual nurturing through their lives, words and actions. I am a queer girl who later on in life plans on being the lesbian mom "with the most" one day, by adopting a child or children that will be unconditionally loved and nurtured as Second Generation children - - in a family of love!!!

encourage thought and dialogue with our parents about our existence as lesbian and gay children.

In this respect, I was moved and empowered to take our movement even further, and make parents everywhere aware of our strength, beauty and power of our collective gay existence in all of its context. This demands that I address any concerns, fill in voids and open eyes and ears of our birth families and others in our lives to the full spectrum of human existence.

We gays and lesbians are intrinsically aware of our multi-everything, as diversity is part of our very makeup. Our image which is so perfectly exemplifies our awareness, celebration, pride and solidarity in difference also binds ever so closely in our sameness. It is the Rainbow Flag and we are the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender family. We are the Rainbow Family.

So wrapped up in am I in a blended beautiful life, that is my very being. In every aspect of my life, I am acutely aware of my complete self --- a multi-generationally multiracial, polyethnic, interfaith, globally conscious, creatively explorative, artistically expressive, radically voiced, proud, out lesbian of all colors!!! I felt it was time to make known my feelings to all parents and friends of lesbians and gays on behalf of my collective "family of the heart."

As we continue to survive and exist, we continually redefine and enhance the meaning of families, relationships, communities and human interactions. I would greatly appreciate (along with millions of others worldwide) to full inclusion of all peoples and aspects of our Family in its myriad of contexts. I am one whose voice is emerging and I know I'm not alone. In a true sense of togetherness, we can achieve a sense of understanding of each other that would allow us the strength to knock down any

barriers that are sure to be thrown up or that might be encountered along our journeys and our lives. Peace and Pride!!!

(Bird is a multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary post modern political arts performance activist, sexual minority youth activities coordinator and outreach worker, world-aware queer culture curator and invisibility-erasing advocate and educator who is quirky, absurdist, offbeat, free-spirited, in other words, "The Perfect Mess!")

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jennifer DeMarco, SG member (a lesbian of lesbian moms) and author, is looking for contributions for her company, Pride Publications. As she puts it:

"We're looking for writers of any genre - as long as it's wild, but most especially *artists* for book covers, comics, trading cards and more. We pay very well and are a national company so anyone in the country (or anywhere else for that matter) is welcome. It would make me feel very good to hand some of these jobs to other SGers."

If interested you can contact Jennifer at **Pride Publications, PO Box 148, Radner, OH 43066-0148**, or call at **(614) 494-2479** or fax **(614) 494 2793**.

Jennifer's recent books, "At the Edge" and "Fall Through the Sky", as well as a piece of hers in the anthology "Listen Up: Voices of the Young Feminist Generation" are available at all better bookstores.

Have anything you'd like to share? Let me know!

PARADE MEMORIES

New York City -- Dan

At first, the plans for this one seemed to go a lot smoother than last year. First, unlike last year, my best friend wasn't getting married the day before (like last year, where I was the "man/maid of honor"), so there as no "day after" effects going on in my head and body. The parade had also returned to it's traditional route of down 5th Ave. and into the Village. It was a warm day, but not the scorcher it was the year before. And here was Second Generation, making it's 2nd appearance! All systems seemed go!

Then, after many calls and plans, I found that no one was a "definite show". This presented some problems. How could last years banner be carried? Well, a last minute change of plans ensued and I ended up carrying a large sign on a pole. (Special thanks to Miss K for helping with design and cutting!)

So, there I sat on the subway, lodged in with a Gay/Lesbian marching band from Minneapolis. I had started to worry. Would people show up? Would we have problems with any other groups like last year? Would my moms make it after a big day at the Dyke March the day before?

Eventually, I got to the starting point. There, lodged in between the leather groups and the religious groups (someone on the planning committee has a very warped sense of humor!) was the Family/Youth groups. And somewhere nestled in that congregation was Second Generation. The wait began.

Unfortunately, the only ones who showed this year were myself, my two moms, and their straight friend, Nirra. It was a smaller group than last time. But we were ready.

As we started walking other people did stop and walk for a bit, including an SG couple! The Connecticut L/G/B/T Youth group behind us spilled over into our space for a raucous, fun, dance filled time (love that drummer!), but we were still kinda small.

My mom, Margaret, was thoroughly enjoying the contingent of infants from the NJ lesbian mothers group in front of us (Time to start looking for those "Lesbian Grandma" pins!) and kept pushing me towards supposedly eligible men. My other mom, Tina, danced her butt off to the kids behind us. We still inspired those bizarre reactions from the crowds (not to mention the protesters in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral!). Some people were incredulous, some cheered wildly, some came up to kiss us. And some people ignored us. One member of one of the gay parents group around us said to me, "Well, my kids really shouldn't march near you." Say what?!? Was I "catching" or something? And her kids looked absolutely mortified.

Now before I go off again on my usual tirades, let me say that there were indeed some positive moments, too. A special thanks and a hug to Wayne Steinman and April Martin (and their respective partners). Here is a set of gay dads and a set of lesbian moms who were really nice to us at SG. I'd like to see more parents just not care what a child's sexuality might be, gay parents as well as straight.

While it is always nice to see support from all sorts, it would have also

been nice to see other SGers at the parade with me and my moms. I would really love to see a huge group of us in the future, taking up a huge block of space (and maybe a float), just cheering down the street.

Well, maybe one day.

San Francisco – by Hope Berry

[This originally appeared in CTN Magazine]

The San Francisco Freedom Day Parade is always a special event. Freedom Day in San Francisco is the largest lesbian and gay celebration in the country and already twenty five years old. A special honor is always bestowed on several people, the title of Grand marshal and a position at the start of the parade in a bright new convertible. This year it was an extra special event for me because my girlfriend, Drago Renteria, a member of our very own Second Generation, was given the title of Grand marshal.

[Drago Renteria is a Deaf Chicana Dyke who has worked for the last three years as the Director of the Deaf Gay and Lesbian Center in San Francisco. She is nationally known for creating and publishing the only magazine for the Deaf Lesbian and Gay community, CTN Magazine (for information write to PO Box 144431 SF, CA 94114, or e-mail CTNMAG@aol.com)]

When we first found out that Drago had been selected we were very surprised, we had no idea she was even being considered! She got an e-mail telling her the news. At first we just looked at each other and started giggling.

We both knew what a big honor it would be and how it had the potential to bring some visibility to the Deaf gay and Lesbian community, on top of all this she was the first deaf Grand Marshall in the history of the parade. But, why Drago? How did it happen? The title itself is so awe inspiring, it sounds so serious. We started thinking of all the Deaf people who were older and those who died of AIDS who also deserved this honor. We waited for more information, we almost couldn't believe it!

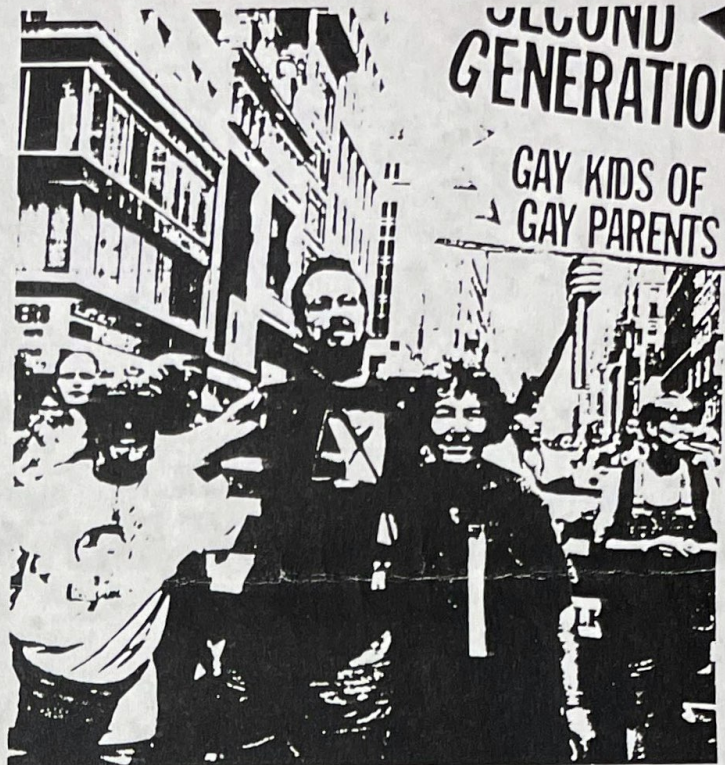
We came to find out that this year's theme was "A World Without Borders" and that there were several people on the Parade Committee who were familiar with Drago's work, mostly with the Deaf Gay and Lesbian Center and also with CTN Magazine. That's how she was nominated. We also found out that there would be a press conference and the opportunity to say something from the stage the day of the parade. This was when it really started to sink in and we started to tell people. Well, in truth I started telling people. We both found out quickly that, "Hi, how are you? Guess what!? I am the Grand Marshal this year!" isn't something that people with even a healthy dose of self-confidence just walk up to their friends and say. So it was left up to me to spread the news!

I enjoyed this part, having an excuse to brag about the woman that I love and have seen work so hard on so many great endeavors, was a lot of fun!! And the reaction was terrific. Deaf and hearing people alike were thrilled that Drago was being recognized and moreover that there was FINALLY A DEAF GRAND MARSHALL (the first ever!!)

The weekend of the parade there was a press conference, giving Drago a chance to meet the other Grand Marshalls, Pratibha Parmar, Candace Gingrich and Jose Serria. Drago gave a great speech about the under-representation of the Deaf Gay and Lesbian Community in the mainstream gay press, ironically enough it seemed the press was there only to cover the story about Candace so the other Grand marshalls didn't receive much attention. This was disappointing, yet soon forgotten when the next day at the main stage after the parade was over, Drago gave a rousing speech about standing up in unity and being empowered to the huge crowd that included members of the Deaf Gay and lesbian community who were positioned in front of the stage.

The most incredible memory of the weekend for me was riding down Market Street as hundreds of thousands of people waved and cheered! The morning of the parade there was a bright red convertible with a big banner that read "DRAGO RENTERIA GRAND MARSHALL" waiting for us. Lots of friends from the Deaf community came over to wish her luck and congratulate Drago. Then we got in the car and rode down Market Street, as hundreds of thousands of people waved and cheered! What sight!! It was amazing how, in such a large crowd, many faces are recognizable. Faces of people we work with, play with and care about. Many of those faces should be Grand Marshalls, too. "Hopefully," Drago and I said to each other, "this won't be the LAST Deaf Grand Marshall."

(Hope Berry is a founding co-director of COLAGE, and is an SG member with a gay father and lesbian mother. She works as sign language interpreter.)



Dan and his moms, Tina and Margaret, surrounded by lots of Connecticut l/g/b/t youth at the 1995 NYC parade [photo by Kevin Winkler]



Grand Marshall Drago Renteria (left) at the 1995 SF parade with Co-Grand Marshall Candace Gingrich. [photo by Hope Berry]