

Parade of Pride



Dan Coyro/Sentinel photos

Santa Cruz Gay Pride March places diversity out front

Gay & Lesbian
By **DONNA JONES**

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Sure the Radical Faeries were there Sunday morning, costumed in elaborate drag on a float shaped like a swan.

And two women marched up Pacific Avenue arm-in-arm, scantily clad in garland-draped thong bikinis.

But the 28th annual Santa Cruz Gay Pride March also featured moms pushing strollers draped with rainbow flags and dozens of T-shirt-and-jean-garbed marchers representing a spectrum of religious, social and political groups and government agencies.

"It's a very hometown parade," said Bob Correa, executive director of The Diver-

AIDS bike ride/A12

sity Center of Santa Cruz County. "It represents various groups and various interests. ... That's what's so exciting and what we want people to see."

The march and the rally that followed at San Lorenzo Park aim to raise awareness of the gay, bisexual, lesbian and transgendered community, he said. It's a political statement, as well as a celebration.

Both elements were evident in the march.

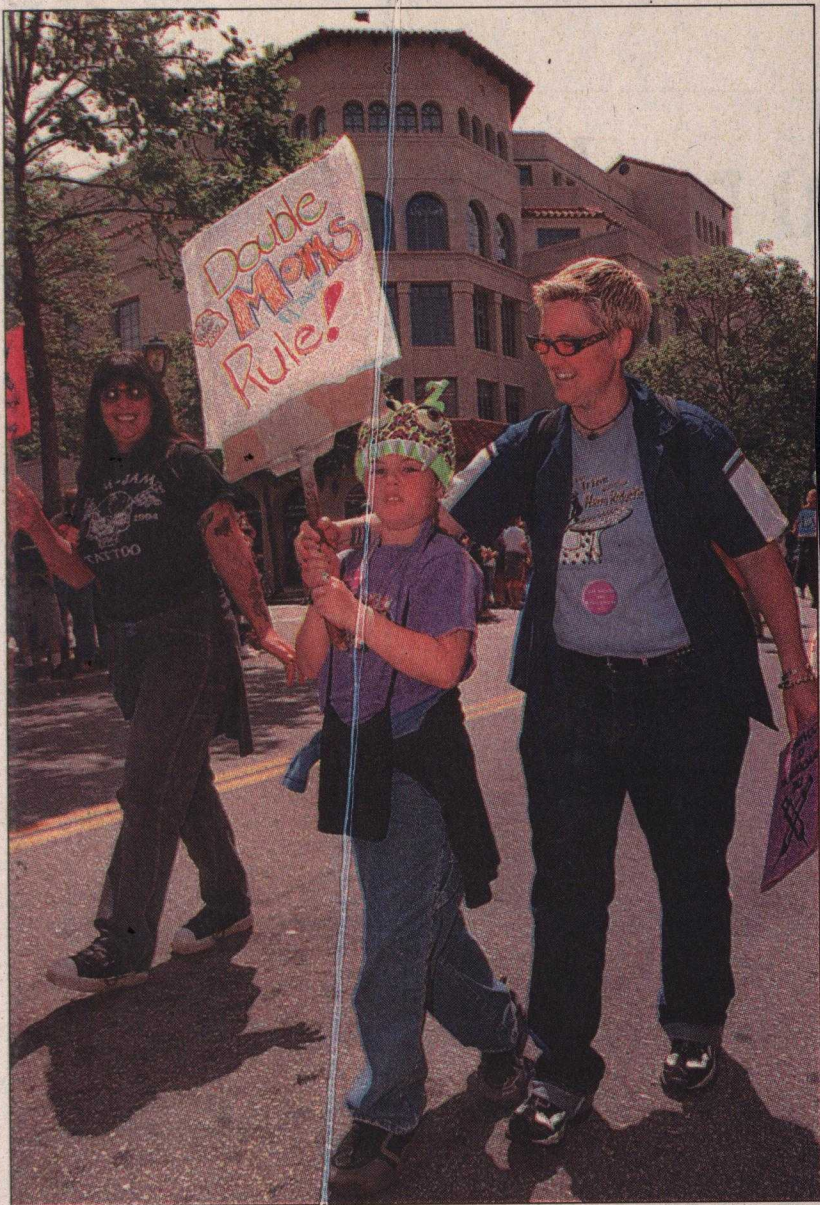
From the sidelines, watchers whooped, hollered, applauded and waved as the

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ABOVE: San Francisco Cheer squad hurls teammates into the air above Pacific Avenue on Sunday during the Santa Cruz Gay Pride March.

LEFT: Members of the Radical Faeries ride downtown on a swan-shaped float.



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

A lesbian couple walks with their son during the Santa Cruz Gay Pride March.

Pride

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acrobatic San Francisco Cheer performed stunts, the Hawaiian-shirted Bay Area Gay and Lesbian Ensemble played ABBA's "Dancing Queen," and a truckload of chanting teens, the "Rainbow Kids," rolled by.

They also enthusiastically greeted groups like the one from Temple Beth El, whose banner read "Twice blessed." A woman, who gave her name only as Michelle, held up one end of the banner.

In a world of anti-Semitic and anti-gay bigotry, "we're turning it around and saying we're lucky to be both Jewish and gay," she said.

Sandralee Watters, riding in a contingent of motorcycles and scooters at the head of the parade, carried a nearly life-size Pink Panther on the back of her large purple bike. Even in liberal Santa Cruz, she has been hassled, particularly by "radical teen-age boys," she said.

But the march offers a kinder view.

"Everybody's really supportive and having a good time," she said. "It gives me a great feeling inside."

Erica Templeton-Dunbar propped the doors open at the Warehouse at Church Street and Pacific Avenue, where she was working, so she could enjoy the celebration. She said she was glad to see that the marchers included

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SANDRALEE WATTERS

a contingent from the support group Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

"Then I saw my church go by, and that was even cooler," she said.

San Franciscans Andy Zimmerman and Daniel Killar came down to Santa Cruz to walk with friend Jennifer Curci and her two sons, James, 3, and Aaron, 14 months, in the Lesbian Mom's Group. Zimmerman contrasted Sunday's parade with the larger and more flamboyant San Francisco event.

"This is more personal," he said. "To share this with the kids, it's a whole different way to experience gay pride."

Shannon McCord and daughter Madison, 3, also marched with the support group. Madison rode a tricycle bedecked with rainbow garlands and flags. She had more garlands wrapped around her chest, bandoleer-style.

As they dressed for the event Sunday morning, McCord said Madison asked her, "So what are we proud of?" I told her we're proud of our family."

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