

# PROGENY

by Barbara Dozetos

I beg my readers' patience and my daughter's indulgence as I use yet another experience with Courtney as a jumping off spot for this month's 'Progeny.'

Ever since I came out to Courtney she has insisted that everything is fine. She has nothing she wants to talk about, nothing to ask me about my being a lesbian, no problems with it. Everything is just fine.

Although she says that she doesn't see our family as a source of embarrassment or something to be kept a secret, she is still unsure of how revelations will be received by her peers and even other adults. For instance, she went to Visibility Day at the Statehouse recently. Before taking her out of school, I wrote a note to her teacher telling him what I had planned and what was going on in Montpelier that day. Apparently, Court watched his face closely for a reaction as he read the note. She wasn't at all sure that he knew that I was a lesbian before that moment, and his casual acceptance and approval meant the world to her.

Then she actually met the daughter of another lesbian. The dam burst. Driving home from dinner the night we introduced the girls, Courtney couldn't stop talking. "Did you say that her mom is a lesbian? I thought so. That's so cool. We could really be friends. I think we could be like sisters."

Suddenly, Courtney is asking me questions about Tina, my girlfriend of eight months, and I met. Did someone introduce us — like a blind date? How did we know that we were more than friends? I'm thrilled, no — overjoyed. The door is open for essential communication between the two of us. It's as if seeing others in families similar to hers and receiving acceptance and support from the rest of the world has made it all that much more OK in her

mind.

So, this is a long way around to the subject at hand. We must get our kids together. I suspected this was important even before these events took place recently, but now I am certain. It seems that every queer parent I encounter agrees with me, but for some reason, our children have not found each other yet.

Amongst the many press releases that come through the OITM office, I recently discovered a brochure for a camp for the children of alternative families. Children of queer parents spend time together. "They laugh together over the silly experiences that having a gay parent can bring and support each other with the hard ones."

Mountain Meadow Camp is funded by a volunteer collective based in Philadelphia and Ann Arbor, Michigan. This summer will be the sixth session and organizers expect around 60 campers and 28 staff members. The camp is located in southern New Jersey, about 45 minutes outside of Philadelphia. New this year is a teen leadership program for young people aged 13-16.

The collective is intent on making the program available for anyone who wants to attend, offering tuition assistance if needed. More information is available at the camp's web site [http://nimbus.temple.edu/~h Ashley/meadow\\_home.htm](http://nimbus.temple.edu/~h Ashley/meadow_home.htm). Their e mail address is [isbasl@aol.com](mailto:isbasl@aol.com). Then there is the old fashioned way of communication: Mountain Meadow Camp, c/o Rachel Milenbach, 35 West Mount Airy Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19119 215-848-7566.

This is a great idea and Courtney and I are looking into it. However, we need to do something locally. In order for our children to find one another, we parents need to find each other first. In the interest of our privacy, school counse-

lors or teachers or administrators are unable to create the very groups our children aching for. In know of a school principal who told one gay parent recently that she knows of at least 11 children of gays and lesbians in her school that she would love to be able to connect. But, her hands are tied. Because we aren't out to one another, let alone the straight world, our children are choking on all number of feelings.

So what do we do? I know there are a couple of parents groups around the state. There is one for gay fathers listed right here in our own "Source." There is a very motivated woman in the Springfield area with the resources to lined up to start a group there. I know there is a mother's group that has been operating for a long time in the Chittenden County area and another coed groups appears to be forming. What I don't understand is why we don't all know each other.

Because this newspaper is the most consistent form of communication between the queer population of Vermont, I'm volunteering this column as a clearinghouse of sorts. In the June issue, (the one to be distributed at Pride) I'll report on every group, fledging or well-established, I can locate in the state. If you are part of a group or want to start one or know of one I should spread the news about, please share the information with me.

I can't stress enough how vital it is that we do this for our kids. Sure, we need to support each other and socialize with other parents, but the children need each other. They need to be reminded that we really are everywhere.

"Progeny" is a monthly column. Barbara Dozetos can be reached by e mail at [wordsrus@together.net](mailto:wordsrus@together.net) or by phone message through the Out in the Mountains office 865-9294.

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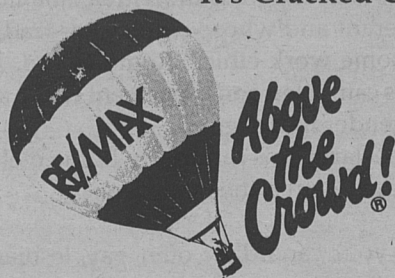
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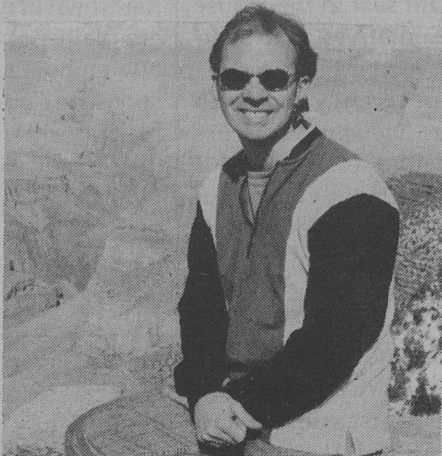
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