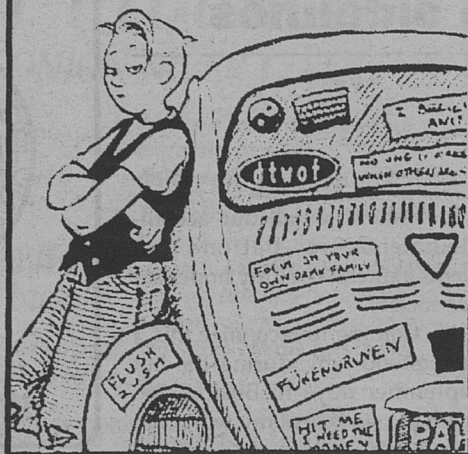


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PROGENY

Erin Gluckman: One of Our Daughters—Out and Proud

by Barbara Dozetos



This month I went off in search of an adult child of a queer parent to chat with. I connected with several, but one in particular stands out. Erin Gluckman, a Rutland native, is a promising, articulate star in the future of our community.

Erin was ten years old when her mother came out to her. Soon after that her mother's partner moved in with them. Rather than feeling deceived up until that point, Erin says that things suddenly got clearer. "It made some sense out of why my mom and dad got divorced."

Now a student at Hampshire College, Erin recalls a distinct dichotomy in her daily life, "I was closeted until I was sixteen years old. I didn't invite any friends over and rarely did I talk about my home life around my peers at school." She remembers being torn between a loving supportive family and a culture that said that her family was evil and perverted.

Since she has come out about her mother's sexuality, her friends haven't always understood why she felt it necessary to hide it in the first place. "I tell them about how, when my mother marched in the Halloween Parade under the banner of the Rutland Gay/Lesbian Alliance, people threw

eggs and how none of the 'fag' jokes that circulated in my high school shed a particularly positive light on homosexuality."

Erin was caught between what she knew in her heart to be correct and images she encountered on a daily basis. "We learn fear fiercely. I couldn't equate my mother and her lover with those fag jokes but I also couldn't stand up to them."

The moment of truth arrived when a conservative group challenged the placement of the book Daddy's Roommate in the Rutland Free Library. Erin was 16 and had left the public school system to self-educate by this time. Her self confidence and self-awareness had increased to the point where she was able to take action. "I understood how close the issue came to my family and that to not speak would do a disservice to the community and the women who raised me."

At the public hearing held to discuss the placement of the book, Erin made herself heard. She came out in front of the Board of Directors of the library and a room full of the general public. She proclaimed herself the daughter of a lesbian and began the integration of the dichotomy she had been living. "That feeling was like water after so many years thirsty."

Erin notes that one time just doesn't finish the job where coming out is concerned. Time and again she has to tell the story of her family and the more she does it, the more comfortable she becomes with the task. "They say that the very act of defining who you are is political, so I guess I am a fiercely political creature."

In the years since that fateful hearing, members of the lesbian community that raised Erin have adopted two Chinese babies. She met the new Vermonters at a baby shower when she was home after her first year in college. "It felt like a rite of passage to me, to leave that community for a bigger one and to be present to usher these two young girls into this life."

She is both nervous and happy for these children at the same time. She knows first hand the love and care that these women she grew up surrounded by are capable of. "They took care of me when I couldn't give anything back, they have taught me the power of good food and laughter and perseverance in the face of adversity. I owe them my life."

Erin is spending this summer in San Francisco as an intern for COLAGE (Children Of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere). This fall she returns to college, but her long-term plan is to return to Vermont, probably Rutland. "Rutland didn't feel like a safe place for me to grow up, but I also love it and feel very attached to the place and the people." She wants to put her own experiences and the training she is receiving into development of services for youth. She envisions a safe space for families, queer youth and children of GLBT parents.

This winter Erin intends to investigate the organizations and agencies that are already in place around the state in the hopes of making some more concrete plans about her future. There are executive directors and volunteer coordinators all over the state just waiting for this young woman to look their way.

The Mostly Unfabulous Social Life of Ethan Green

by Eric Orner

Panel 1: Ethan is sitting at a table. A sign on the wall says "2 Ships Passing... With Ethan Green..".

Panel 2: Ethan is talking to a woman. She says "hey... hey... WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE?". He replies "HAH BLANBIAH".

Panel 3: Ethan is in a hotel room. A sign on the wall says "A MEETING ON THE PHONE LINES LEADS TO A MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, IN-PERSON RENDEZVOUS AT A DOWNTOWN HOTEL..".

Panel 4: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "Yikes! ETHAN GREEN!". The man replies "OH WOW.. JASON CHANG.. THIS IS A LITTLE EMBARRASSING". Ethan says "I'LL SAY..".

Panel 5: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "SO... Where's DOUG?". The man replies "..KIND OF A LONG STORY.. Where's TIM & CARLOS..?".

Panel 6: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "..NOT SURE I FEEL LIKE TALKING ABOUT IT.. ..Y'KNOW, YOU'RE KIND OF A GOSSIP..".

Panel 7: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "DON'T TELL TODD ABOUT THIS..". The man replies "OF ANYONE ELSE, I GUESS..". Ethan says "YEAH..".

Panel 8: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "SO, REALLY, WHAT'S UP WITH YOU?". The man replies "Jeez, I DUNNO, JUST HORNEY & BORED. DOUG'S OFF VISITING HIS PARENTS AGAIN.. HE HAD THIS HEART NERVOUS BREAK DOWN AFTER OUR REALTOR DRAGGED US TO A DOZEN OPEN HOUSES LAST WEEKEND.. WE'RE THINKING OF BUYING A PLACE..".

Panel 9: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "HOW ABOUT YOU? LAST I HEARD YOUR THREE-WAY UNION WAS PRETTY BLISSFUL..".

Panel 10: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "IT USUALLY IS—EXCEPT FOR WHEN TIM'S OF CARLOS'S FAMILY ARE VISITING. A MARRIAGE BETWEEN 2 MEN THEY CAN HANDLE—BETWEEN 3 MEN IS A LITTLE MORE "PROGRESSIVE" THAN ANYONE CAN STAND... So... I'M KIND'A HOMELESS UNTIL SUNDAY NITE WHEN THE BAPILLAS ~ CARLOS'S PARENTS ~ RETURN TO SAN ANTONIO. WELL, NOT HOMELESS EXACTLY—TIM PUT ME UP HERE AT THE WESTON ~ BUT I GOT PRETTY LONELY—SO I STARTED WORKING THE PHONES..".

Panel 11: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "SO TIM'S PICKING UP THE TAB FOR ALL THIS?".

Panel 12: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT HE'S PAYING, HE'S LUCKY I WAS WILLING TO GO AT ALL!".

Panel 13: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "..AND SO, ABANDONED BY THEIR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS, HOWEVER TEMPORARILY, THE GUYS CHOOSE THE ONLY OPTION LEFT AVAILABLE..".

Panel 14: Ethan is talking to a man. He says "Hello ROOM SERVICE, WE'D LIKE A COUPLE OF STEAKS, FATS, AND A NICE MERLOT, BECAUSE I, OH, AND COCONUT LIME CAKE AND VISTERS".