Family Secrets

Equal access to parental amnesia.

What is it about lesbian moms? Shouldn't they, of all people, be sensitive to unspoken truths? Weren't they ever young and full of hormones? Don't they remember anything?

"Tess is a hottie," my friend Deb commented about her teenage daughter when we met in the produce aisle last week.

Sharon, Tess's other mom, chimed in, "And she is totally boy crazy." She tossed a jicama into their cart. "She doesn't talk to us much."

I attended Sharon and Deb's Pope-unsanctified wedding 20 years ago. Tess, one of the first A.I. babies in our local lesbian community, is deep into the surly, uncommunicative stage, which according to Doctor Spock typically lasts from ages 12 to 40. I grabbed a sack of organic russets and asked, "What kind of birth control is she using?"

"Oh, she isn't having sex yet," Sharon assured me.

In response to my raised eyebrow Deb added, "We would know."

Yeah, right. Is the next Homosexual Agenda item "Equal access to parental amnesia?"

My family invented *Don't Ask Don't Tell*. I routinely sneaked out my bedroom window. Not yet aware becoming a lesbian was even an option, I expressed my budding sexuality with my boyfriend, a soft-spoken, attentive kid with a big motorcycle. In those days, he was the closest thing to a butch dyke I could lay my hands on.

One night, my crowd got invited over to a rich classmate's house in a luxurious country club. His parents were away and he was supposed to be staying with a buddy, which in teen-speak meant, "Par-tay!"

We did. We ransacked the liquor cabinet, abused the beds and desecrated the swimming pool. We dropped mescaline and drove his parents' golf cart into the lake. We dug the word "LOVE" into the neatly-groomed sand traps.

When the host offered me a ride home, I hoped I had come down enough to make my curfew and slink away unscrutinized. He delivered me to my gate, which I latched quietly behind me. Our swimming pool seemed huge. The pool light made the water glow aquamarine in the black desert night. I stopped at the steps, mesmerized by the almost-phosphorescent, shimmering sea in my own yard. I reeked of spilled tequila and sex. If my parents busted me, I'd be grounded for life. I was hot and sticky all over. The turquoise water beckoned. I peeled off my clothes and plunged in.

I swam a languid underwater lap. What a glorious feeling to be alone in that private world where my hair became flowing seaweed and caressed my bare skin. I pulled my arms through the liquid coolness. Fat air bubbles glugged past my ears. I pushed off the bottom and surfaced in a dolphin leap, filled my lungs, and dived down for another lap. What was that odd, screeching sound? I disregarded it and resumed my mermaid glide. Again, the muffled squeal.

When I came up for air the sound was unmistakable. My mother, in full screaming rage, towered over me, the whites of her eyes huge and menacing. Her neck veins bulged. Mom shoved a beach towel at me and demanded I get out of the pool and into the house that instant. Not until I turned toward the door did I notice my father, and a patio full of guests, sitting poolside – fully-clothed – in stunned silence.

Exposing myself had exposed my parents' lack of control over me, a huge embarrassment in front of their friends. The whole truth of my evening's activities surfaced. Did I want to broadside my friends that way now? Maybe Tess's surliness serves some necessary purpose. She and her parents will come to their own epiphanies in their own time.

I gently set a carton of crimini mushrooms into my grocery cart's empty child-seat. I hugged my friends goodbye. "You're probably right," I said. "I'm sure Tess is fine."

Thank God(dess) they don't have a swimming pool.

Writer Sally Sheklow grew up in Palm Springs, Calif. She teaches magazine and essay writing classes in the community education program at LCC downtown. For details visit www.lanecc.edu.

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541.484.0519 • (fax) 541.484.4044

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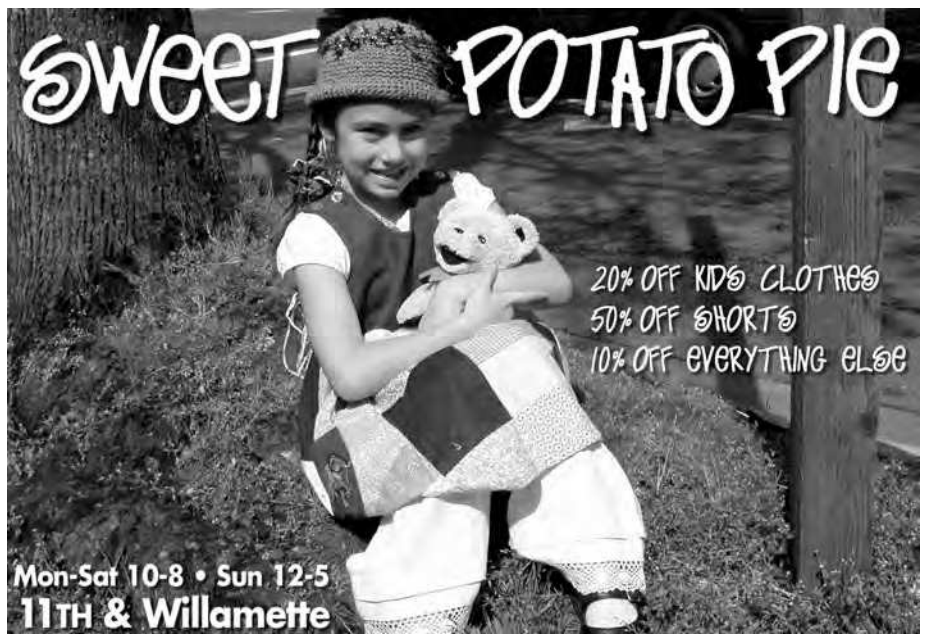

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