

Homosexual Life in Charlottetown

The X-Press Chats With a Nice, Young Couple... of Lesbians

By Grace Kimpinski

As the GLBQ supplement deadline came closer, I tried to figure out what sort of article I should write. I finally decided to interview a lesbian couple I know. What better way to raise awareness of the homosexual community here on Prince Edward Island than to talk to two members of the community?

To protect their anonymity, I have changed their names to Terri and Lisa. Terri is in her fourth year at U.P.E.I. and has known that she is a lesbian since she was 18 years old. Lisa, a part-time student in her first year here at U.P.E.I., realized that she was a lesbian when she was 17 years old. The two women met through a mutual friend, and have been together for over a year now.

How did you realize that you were lesbians?

Lisa - When I was with a guy nothing clicked, I didn't feel very comfortable doing anything. I was best friends with a girl, and we always felt comfy and happy. One day we were watching television, and she grabbed my hand, and it was like 'OOOHHH'. At first I thought that I should not do this, but I wanted to. When I was with a girl, I felt comfortable.

Terri - It was basically the same way for

me. I always thought that I was different, you know? My friends would go on about guys, and I just didn't feel the same way about them. It took a long time for me to put a name to it, I just didn't know what it was that was so different about me. I just always thought that a male was supposed to be with a female, and that is why I had boyfriends, but it just didn't feel right. When I had the opportunity to be with a woman, it felt right, and that is when I realized that I was a lesbian.

How is sex and a relationship with a woman different than it is with a man?

Terri - Well, for us, being lesbians is what feels right to us, having sex with a man doesn't feel good to us. We have the same sort of intimacy, contact, fondling in our relationship that two straight people would have in their relationship. The only difference is that there is no penis involved. We still have intercourse, foreplay, and all of the same elements, just there is no man!

Do your families know that you are lesbians?

Lisa - Yeah. They think that it is sinful, and terrible. They think that it is just a phase that I am just going through. My step-father said that he thought something was up, and it didn't really surprise him. My

parents said I could change if I wanted to.

Terri - My mother wasn't surprised, she said whatever makes me happy. She doesn't support me, but she is not against me. She is concerned because she knows that I am in for a hard life, she just wants me to be happy.

What do you think or say when people say that being lesbian or gay is morally wrong, or that you have just chosen this lifestyle, and bitch to you about it?

Lisa - I just say that I'm happy the way I am, and I just wish that you would just let me be happy. I try not to be bothered.

Terri - Yeah, there are people who say that it is a choice, and that I can change tomorrow, but it is not a choice. Why

would I choose to live in secrecy, or choose to always be lying, and charging stories saying "he", or "him and I". No one would ever choose that, why would anyone want the hassle? I could lie to myself and try to live the heterosexual lifestyle, but I would just not be happy.

What about coming to your friends, how did that go over?

Terri - Um, I started telling a small group of friends in high school. It's not like I'm out, I don't scream it, but my good friends know. I let people assume what they will, I don't hide it any more. Then of course, I don't flaunt it either, Lisa and I don't make out in public or anything like that.

Do any of your friends treat you differently, have you lost any of your friends since you have told them about your homosexuality?

Lisa - Yeah, the first person I told stopped hanging around with me, lately, we have started talking again.

Terri - I had a close friend in high school, and she did not want to have much to do with me after I told her. You get to a point where you know how to choose your friends, you get to know them, and after a while you tell them.

How big is the gay community here in Ch'town?

Terri - It is a lot bigger than most people think. I have been to house parties where there has been a turnout of over 100-200 people. I have been to a few, and I meet different people every time.

So what is it like being a lesbian here on P.E.I.? It is not like Halifax where there are gay bars to go to. How do you meet women?

Lisa - Sometimes I find it frustrating.

Terri - It is pretty difficult. The [gay/lesbian] community isn't huge, but if you keep really close contact with them, you will hear of a house party or a dance or something going on in the gay community. If someone is lucky, they might meet a single woman. As far as going out to a bar, it is really restrictive.

How do you deal with homophobia?

Lisa - I feel hurt. I try to live with it. I think that P.E.I. should be a little more open to people who are different.

Terri - It used to bother me a lot, but I realized that nothing I can do is going to change someone's mind, so I just walk away from it.

Do you find that there are more women

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