

# Gay in Charlottetown: Two People Speak out

## Male Point of View



I am a 21 year old gay male in Charlottetown. The reason I am writing this column is so that you, the reader, may have a better understanding of what it is like to be me in everyday society.

First of all, let me clear something up. I did not chose to be this way. It was how I was born. I didn't sign any papers to say I am, or win any raffle that would entitle me to be gay. It is who I am and who I will always be.

Let me also say that, besides different attractions, I am not set apart from anyone else on Earth. I wake up in the morning, eat breakfast, shower, dress, go to work and party just like anyone else. There are no specific jobs, foods or clothing st aside for gay people.

These days, life for a gay person is somewhat easier then twenty years ago, but there are still people out there who make it hard as hell. I am still getting stares and jokes, and there is still a rude remark, here and there. Sometimes it makes me sad and I feel pity for these people for their close-mindedness, but more often it makes me angry.

I often wonder if, as being one in the part of the gay community of Charlottetown, I will ever be entirely accepted, or if there are still people thinking that someday they will find a ship big enough to carry us off to a deserted island to fend for ourselves.

For those still in the closet and struggling, I hope someday you come to terms and feel comfortable enough to come out. Believe me, I know what it is like and we are all here for you.

I must say that i have had a happier ending then many, I met someone special and we are going to be married. I also have family and friends who love and accept me and my fiancee.

In closing, I will say that I am an openly gay person. I hope that you realize that it is not important what you sexual preferences are, you are an important contribution to society. I am gay, but that is not all I am, I love who I have become. For those of you out there who have not yet come out, I wish you the best of luck.

## Lesbian in Prince Edward Island

I am a lesbian. I live on P.E.I. I take alot of pride in both yet cannot do so simultaneously. I've lived on P.E.I. since I was a year old and am only now realizing the extent of close mindedness I've been brought up around. Fortunately I have not succumbed to the ignorance but that of others greatly affects my life. It gets very frustrating at times but eventually I will venture off to a big city like so many others where the anonymity will let me be open about my sexuality. It is not only the attitudes of islanders that drive gays and lesbians off island though. Gay and lesbian life (or lack thereof) can get very dreary at times. The sad part of the whole issue is that it doesn't seem to be improving.

It's been around six months since I came out to myself and my close friends (who are homosexual and heterosexual). Coming out has been extremely positive for me thus far. My friends are very accepting and supportive which means the world to me. That is as far as I've gone though.

The next step would be to tell my

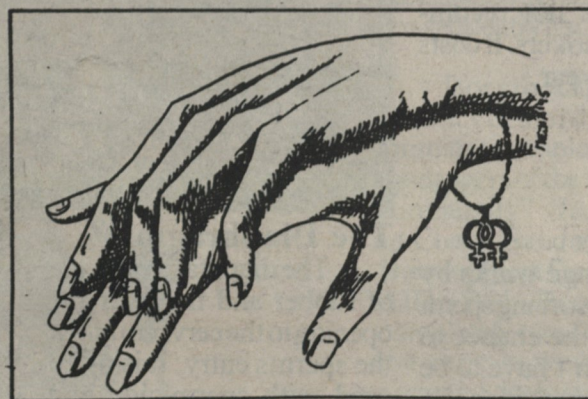
family. This is where I run into problems. My family are from here and many of them are very ignorant. I've realized alot of this seems to come down to religion.

The island has a strong religious background and it is evident when it comes to homosexuality. The Bible describes it as an abomination. Does the Bible not also teach us to love and accept all? The hypocrisy sickens me. Because of these beliefs gays and lesbians are discriminated and hatred circulated. I have met so many wonderful people in the gay community, I don't understand how they could be unaccepted because of their sexuality.

Of course there are other rea-

sons for the island's closed mindedness. Perhaps the most prevalent, in my case at least, is the obliviousness people have to homosexuality. They have no idea what goes on and how many there are of us around. There are no gay bars, establishments, or organizations, that would make the public aware that there is somewhat of a gay community. I've been to other cities in the Maritimes as well as Montreal and Toronto, all of which have bars, stores, clubs, groups, bookstores, etc. The bigger cities often have a section of town that is predominantly gay. This openness shows that there is not a thing different about being gay, nothing to keep hidden from those leading a heterosexual lifestyle.

Sometimes I am lead to think that we are caught up in a vicious circle on P.E.I. People are very closed minded therefore making it hard for homosexuals to be open. On the other hand the ignorance of



CUP GRAPHIC James Mejia, *The Link*

many heterosexuals is due to them not being exposed to homosexuals. Where will it end.

Regardless of the covering up and the lack of lesbian life I am

happy being who I am. Keep in mind that not all islanders are homophobic. I've met alot of great people who are gay friendly, it's just too bad everyone couldn't be comfortable. It certainly would make life for us homosexuals. There really is nothing to be afraid of, we don't bite. I once came across this quote on the net: "Heterosexuality is not normal, just common." Think About It.