

LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA

**Located at Dickinson College
Archives & Special Collections**

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

Documents Online

Title: *Freedom Newsletter* (MCC)

Date: April 1983

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

Contact:

LGBT History Project
Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu



Freedom

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."
—Galatians 5:1

The Newsletter of the Metropolitan Community Churches in Lancaster and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Vol. 2, No. 1

April, 1983

A QUESTION OF FREEDOM - Colin Kreitzer

The City Council of Harrisburg, met in public session on March 8 to unanimously adopt Ordinance #8, extending anti-discrimination provisions to homosexuals, people 40-70 years of age, the handicapped, persons holding Gen. Education Development certificates in lieu of a high school diploma, persons with prior disabilities (e.g. an ex-alcoholic) and discrimination due to marital status.

City Councilwoman, A. Jane Perkins, sponsored the ordinance that was seconded by all councilmembers. She sat calmly throughout the attacks by fundamentalists of her Ordinance #8 and later the personal attacks by the zealous church members.

The meeting was opened with Council President, Earl Gohl, calling upon a Harrisburg pastor for the invocation and then opening the floor to the public. The first speaker began to attack Ordinance #8, equating the inclusion of homosexuals as advocating rights for the likes of murderers and rapists. He repeatedly decried that one provision of #8 with God's anger.

The attack was followed by Stephen Franklin's declaration that this was a civil and not a moral issue that the city was deciding. He went on to mark respect for the rights of those who opposed Ord. #8. He said, "You have a right to believe what you believe, but so do I. This is America and we do have that freedom."

Those in opposition repeated attacks upon homosexuality as sinful and frowned upon by God. The largest group of protestors identified themselves as members of the Calvary Assembly of God in Harrisburg. They offered invita-

tion to those present to join them at their church, with the clear message that homosexuals were only welcomed to "change". One of the anti-8's verbally attacked another speaker after the speaker revealed his homosexuality and Christianity. The attacker charged that he must have a "changed life" were he a born again Christian.

A lesbian mother stood to endorse #8 following a local woman who expressed concern for the welfare of her children if such a provision were passed. The lesbian mother pointed out the wisdom of such a law for all people and she said, "I promise not to attack your children".

Gary Norton, commended the city council for the ordinance and the freedom it afforded the people of Harrisburg. He said there were many men and women afraid to be at that council meeting; afraid of losing their jobs; afraid of losing their families; just afraid for being gay. Ordinance #8 could help to put an end to that fear.

When Jane Perkins was given the opportunity to speak on behalf of the bill she said, "I am not going to discriminate against someone because he is or is not a sinner. That is not a good enough reason for me." Later, Ms. Perkins, made reference to God as "She", that drew loud condemnation from the left side of the room. Her attacker claimed that she blasphemed the Holy Spirit and were she not to drop dead on the spot that God would "get her" someday.

Jane took the attacks in stride and continued to enjoy the evening, casting the 4th of the

continued on page 3

TROY PERRY TO COME TO HARRISBURG!

The Rev. Elder Troy Perry, founder of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, will address the congregations of the Metropolitan Community Churches in Central Pennsylvania. He will appear at the Friends Meeting House, 6th and Herr Streets, Harrisburg, on Wednesday, April 13, 1983 at 7:30 p.m.

Currently on a national fund-raising tour, Rev. Perry will lead a worship service and will show scenes from the upcoming UFMCC television special, "God, Gays, and the Gospel: This is Our Story." Monies raised at this meeting will go toward the completion of that special. It is hoped that we can raise \$1,000 through advance fund-raisers and the collection taken that night. The special is set to air during Gay Pride week, the last week in June.

Ads are now being solicited for a special program/bulletin to be distributed on the 13th as well as during Gay Pride Week. Interested parties should contact the Harrisburg church.

The event on April 13th is free, but this is a fund raiser, boys and girls, so bring your checkbooks! In any case, bring yourself.

GAY RAP NEWS

March 10, 1983, was the official opening date Gay Rap, a new organization for the Gay and Lesbian Community of Lancaster County. Sixteen men and four women attended this first meeting. This attendance was encouraging. The twenty was quite a cross section with a wide variety of interests and concerns.

Many people have been asking for more organizations to be of service to our community. This group may be the answer for you.

Presently, the Gay Rap Group is meeting biweekly on Thursday evenings, at the Unitarian Center, 458 West Chesnut Street, in Lancaster. The time is 7 to 9pm.

For additional information concerning the Gay Rap Group, call 392-2729 or 397-0691.

Coming
APRIL
13
WED.

Rev. Troy
Perry to
Harrisburg

REV. DELORES BERRY TO VISIT CENTRAL PA!

On Thursday, April 14, the night after Troy's visit, Rev. Delores Berry, District Coordinator of our Mid-Atlantic District as well as Pastor of New Life MCC in the Norfolk-Newport News area, will visit with MCC-Lancaster for a very special worship service. It has been said that if you have not heard Delores Berry preach, you ain't heard preaching!

The service will be held at the Unitarian Center in Lancaster at 7:30 pm.

The very next night, the same Delores Berry will sing for a gospel concert at the Market Street YWCA in Harrisburg. It has also been said that if you have not heard Delores sing gospel, you have not heard gospel singing. Plan to be there.

YOU

You are called father.
You are called master.
You are called saviour.
You are called King of Kings.
You are called friend.
You are called lover.

You, Lord, are called by many names,
for in the voices of **Your** servants,
you are called alike
and yet differently

we call you as we relate to You.

I call you Doctor Jesus sometimes,
for You can heal anything in me.

Praise God!

-Al Johnson

by Fred Lawrence Guiles

7 unanimous "yes" votes. Council received a standing ovation following the adoption of the 2nd Pennsylvania ordinance to protect the rights of its gay citizens.

Absent from the meeting were the gallant words from Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey-Mollenkott, who wrote --

"... throughout history some group or another has been singled out as unworthy to be our neighbor. Some social category -- which one varies according to time and place -- we look down upon as less than fully human, and its members are robbed of respect, opportunity and sometimes life itself. We ostracize them, we assault their dignity, we tear down their pride. Because we keep them away from us and never listen to them. We never really try to understand and yet we hypocritically claim to love them."

We Christians need to learn a lot about love--and about those who need our love. The homosexual IS our neighbor, but we haven't acted like it; instead, we hold a stereotype in our minds. Of course we have done this also with other groups: Jews, blacks, Native American Indians, various other ethnic groups, the poor, women. We don't understand them, so we rush to condemn. We use the Bible to clobber people rather than to uplift them. Like Paul before he really came to know God through Jesus Christ, we hurt our fellow human beings, all the while claiming that we are doing the will and work of God." (from their book: Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?).

I read those words alone in my apartment after the city council meeting, having long postponed the reading in anticipation of not being able to put the book down. Reading the preface to the book, I thought offered the total solution to that battleground in City Hall. But so many defenders of #8 had presented such sound arguments and each

The death of Tennessee Williams diminishes all human beings on this planet, since he was the most articulate spokesman for the outsider and there are so many of us, in every country. But his passing is a particular loss to gays since Tennessee openly avowed his love for his companion, Frank Merlo, to everyone, and the theatre world knew that the death of Merlo in the early 1960s created a void in Tennessee's life which no professional success nor new friendship could come close to filling. It was no surprise to those of us who knew anything of his personal life that he was never to enjoy a major theatrical success again after Merlo's death.

It would be dishonest to say that Tennessee Williams, because he was out of the closet, was in any sense a gay activist. Such references as exist in his plays to homosexuality are mostly negative ones. On the other hand, his straights have an equally hard time of it (i.e. Blanche duBois, Maggie the Cat, Serafina and Alma, to name just a few). This partially explains the appeal of his plays worldwide, even in the Soviet Union where his popularity was greater than that of any other Western playwright. But he was a man in whom serenity was unknown; life itself was for his daily war, and when he won a skirmish, as he felt he had when he settled down with Frank Merlo, he was elated for a time but he clearly felt no lasting sense of peace. His war went on until he died.

one was totally ignored by the opposition that "claimed" the name of our Lord Jesus.

The subject is so very complex. But with God's help and His loving instruction we will witness the freedom from fear that shackles too many gays AND fundamentals. Let us pray for an love those who hate and spitefully use us. The rewards are great.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 1 - Good Friday Service, MCC-Harrisburg at FMH, 7:00 pm
- April 3 - Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!
 - 6:30 am - Sunrise Service, MCC-Harrisburg. Along the River near Front and Hamilton. Breakfast follows at the FMH.
 - 1:00 pm - Easter Service, Williamsport Parish Extension
 - 5:00 pm - Easter Service, MCC-Lancaster at the Unitarian Center
 - 7:00 pm - Easter Service, MCC-Harrisburg at FMH
- April 7 - GAYRAP, a rap group/discussion group continues in Lancaster at the Unitarian Center, 7-9:00 pm
- April 10 - Lehigh Valley Parish Extension meets. Call 717-238-3746 for details.
- April 13 - Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry visits Harrisburg to push "God, Gays and the Gospel: This is Our Story." FMH, 7:30 pm.
- April 14 - Rev. Delores Berry visits Lancaster for a special worship service. Unitarian Center, 7:30 pm.
- April 15 - Gospel concert with Rev. Berry and others at the Harrisburg YWCA on Market Street, 7:30 pm.
- April 21 - GAYRAP at the Unitarian Center in Lancaster, 7-9:00 pm.
- April 24 - Lehigh Valley Parish Extension meets. 717-238-3746
- April 30 - Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus at Madison Square Garden in New York City to benefit the Gay Men's Health Crisis battle with AIDS
- May 5 - Word Is Out, a film that interviews several gay people in all walks of life, will be shown at the Unitarian Center in Lancaster, 7:30 pm. Discussion follows. Free with a love offering.
- May 21-22 - Mid-Atlantic District Conference hosted by MCC-Nova at the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge in Alexandria, Virginia. Register now! Call your church for registration forms and other details.

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH...

MONDAYS — 7:00 p.m.: Men's Rap Group, Friends Meeting House of Harrisburg

TUESDAYS — 7:30 p.m.: Evangelicals Concerned Bible Study, 1318 Penn St., Harrisburg

WORSHIP SCHEDULES

Harrisburg:

Sunday Evenings
 Friends Meeting House
 6th & Herr Streets
 Harrisburg, Pa.
 7:00 p.m.

Williamsport:

1st Sunday, 1:00

Lehigh Valley:

2nd & 4th Sundays

717-238-3746 for info.

Lancaster:

Sunday Evenings
 Unitarian Center of Lancaster
 538 W. Chestnut Street
 Lancaster, Pa.
 5:00 p.m.

GAY SWITCHBOARD OF HARRISBURG

234-0328

6:00 to 10:00 pm
 Monday - Friday
 Your gay connection
 in Harrisburg!

LANCASTER GAY/LESBIAN HELP LINE

397-0691

Tuesday, Wednesday,
 Thursday, and Sunday
 6:30 to 9:30 pm

FREEDOM

Vol. 2, No. 1
 April, 1983

FREEDOM is the newsletter of the Metropolitan Community Churches in Harrisburg and Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It is published monthly and mailed from Harrisburg on the Monday prior to the first Sunday of the month.

MCC-Harrisburg
 P.O. Box 3897
 Harrisburg, PA 17105
 717-599-5042

MCC-Lancaster
 P.O. Box 863
 Lancaster, PA 17603
 717-392-2729

Worship Coordinators:

Rev. Patricia Lichty Arthur C. Runyan, II
 Editor Philip Holt
 Artwork Colin Kreitzer

Manuscripts submitted for publication should be typed, single-spaced, with a column width of no more than 3 1/4 inches (19 1/2 picas). Manuscripts will not be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is included. Manuscripts should bear the name of the author.

The views expressed in the articles are those of the writers and not necessarily those of MCC-Lancaster, MCC-Harrisburg, or the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Publication of the name of any person, business, or organization should not be construed as indicative of the sexual orientation or ideological stance of that person, business, or organization.

The Metropolitan Community Church is an ecumenical, Christian church for all people with a special ministry to the lesbian and gay community.