

# **LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA**

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

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

## **Documents Online**

**Title:** *PA Rural Gay Caucus "Identifying the Rural Gay Caucus" Flier*

**Date:** June 5, 1976

**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](mailto:archives@dickinson.edu)**

## IDENTIFYING THE RURAL GAY CAUCUS

The term "Rural" is used to designate gay persons and gay organizations not resident in Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties. The designation originated when, in securing representation to the Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities, it became necessary to distinguish the Council representatives as from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, or Rural areas. The Caucus first convened at a State Conference in Harrisburg on October 18, 1975 to demand that representation of Rural areas be expanded from four to six representatives, as was done.

The Caucus has met monthly since, hosted each month in a different part of the State by one of the following organizations, and attended by a generous representation of the majority of these groups, all of whom have been represented at the Caucus:

LE-HI-HO (Lehigh Valley Homophile Organization, Bethlehem/Allentown)  
Susquehanna Valley Gays United (SVGU, Northumberland)  
Gay Coordinating Society of Berks County (G.C.S., Reading)  
Gay League of Lebanon  
Gays United of Lancaster (GUL, Lancaster)  
Gay Students at Shippensburg (Shippensburg State College)  
Gay League of Edinboro (Edinboro State College)  
Gay League of Indiana (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)  
Gay Students at West Chester (West Chester State College)  
Dignity, Central Pennsylvania (for gay Catholics, Harrisburg)  
Metropolitan Community Church, Harrisburg (MCC, non-denominational)  
Gay Community Services (GCS, Harrisburg)  
Gay Switchboard of Harrisburg  
North Eastern Pennsylvania Gay Association (NEPGA, Wilkesbarre)  
Homophiles of Penn State (HOPS, State College)  
Individuals who are unaffiliated (including at least one from Philadelphia whose identification is Rural) regularly attend the Caucus. Many groups who are eligible do not yet send representatives.

All of the above groups have the right to disassociate from any decision of the Caucus, and it cannot be taken that the Caucus represents them in all matters.

All of the groups listed have ratified, or have been asked to ratify this Statement of Purpose:

The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus is an Association of interested and concerned individuals and groups, formed with the objective of promulgating the concerns of gay people. This goal is to be achieved through such techniques as

- exchange of information,
- cooperation with other interested individuals and groups,
- action on the part of the Association,
- encouragement of action on the part of individuals and groups,
- and the sharing of resources.

(Adopted by the Caucus on June 5, 1976)

The Caucus is chaired by two elected co-chairpersons- one male and one female- who reside, coincidentally, in Sunbury.

Most of the work of the Caucus is done by Committees which currently include the following:

THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE- descendant of the Gay Lobby Day Committee which planned and had most to do with Gay Education Day on March 23rd of this year when over 100 gay representatives went to Harrisburg to meet with their legislators on the issues of gay rights. The present committee seeks "to promote the political participation by individuals and groups on federal, state, and local levels as an arm to the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus." (Adopted by the Committee on May 8, 1976)

THE CAMPUS COMMITTEE- which has already had effect on the manner in which gay persons are treated as students, teachers, or staff in the educational systems of Pennsylvania.

THE COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE- which has the responsibility of publishing the minutes, meeting notices, and other documents at the request of the Caucus, its Committees, or its members. This Committee is also responsible for setting up and maintaining a telephone tree for important or emergency situations, and in general for communications between Caucus groups or between the Caucus and other groups.

THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE- responsible for acquiring funds for the Caucus and budgeting requests.

The Liason Committee- an ad hoc advisory committee composed of one representative designated by each organization as Liason to the Caucus, which meets at the discretion of the co-chairpersons, as when they last met to consider questions of structure and purpose of the Caucus. Liasons also report the Caucus to their home groups, and vice-versa.

The Caucus has resulted in a close-knit (but marvellously diversified) unity of gay persons from all over the State. The average 40 or so persons who attend each Caucus are old friends meeting new ones, as they meet to consider the realities and issues of the rural gay.

Some of these realities in our predominately heterosexual world are lack of support groups such as religious organizations, women's groups, or <sup>gay</sup> liberation organizations; inaccessibility to centers of gay-oriented social and cultural life; and a public misunderstanding, even militant toward gayness. While metropolitan gays face the anonymity of big cities, we face the intimacy of small town, village, and country life.

Some of the issues we face are moral ones of religious prejudice, discrimination, and acceptance- and legal ones of harrassment, denial of civil rights, and unequal treatment under the law.

PREPARED FOR DISTRIBUTION BY  
THE PENNSYLVANIA RURAL GAY CAUCUS  
P. O. BOX 102  
DUNSMITHSBERG, PENNSYLVANIA 17057