

LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA

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Documents Online

Title: *Pride Conference Speaker Correspondences and Information*

Date: 1975 to 1978

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

Contact:

LGBT History Project
Archives & Special Collections
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DEAR MS. NOBLE,

~~AS PER~~
"PRIDE '78" AS, THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE GAY
CONFERENCE OF JAN. 21-22 HAS COME TO BE CALLED
WILL CONVEGE ~~IN~~ ~~THE~~ AT HOWARD JOHNSON'S MOTOR
LODGE IN ~~THE~~ DELAWARE WATER GAP, PENNSYLVANIA.
THIS PLACE IS THE LAST OF OUR CHOICES FOR SITES,
BUT HAVING BEEN REFUSED IN THE FINAL STAGES
OF NEGOTIATIONS ~~WITH~~ BY ~~THE~~ THREE OTHER
SITES, WE HAVE NO CHOICE. THE REFUSALS WERE
~~THE~~ SIMPLE, GLARING DISCRIMINATION, AND THE
PUBLICITY WHICH RESULTED FINALLY BROUGHT US
THE INVITATION TO HOWARD JOHNSON'S, WHICH ^{LODGE} HAD
RECENTLY HOSTED GAY BIKERS FOR A WEEKEND
IN OCTOBER.

OUR FAILURE TO COMPLETE OUR ARRANGEMENTS
WITH YOU UNTIL NOW IS SIMPLY THAT WE HAVE ONLY
NOW ~~BEEN~~ ~~BEEN~~ BEEN FINALLY CERTAIN OF WHERE ~~THE~~ ^{THE} ~~CONFERENCE~~
CONFERENCE WOULD BE. THE NEAREST AIRPORT IS
A.B.E. (ALLENTOWN-BETHLEHEM-CASTON), AN HOUR FROM THE
CONFERENCE SITE, OR WILKES-BARRE-SCRANTON, ALSO
AN HOUR FROM THE CONFERENCE SITE. CONNECTIONS
TO BOTH ARE POSSIBLE DIRECT ^{TO} FROM BOSTON, OR VIA
PLANE CHANGES, ROUND TRIP FROM BOSTON TO A-BE.
IS \$100 INCLUDING TAX.

OUR AGREEMENT WITH ^{YOU VIA MS. FARRAR} ~~MS. FARRAR~~ OF YOUR
OF YOUR STAFF WAS TO PROVIDE \$150 IN TRAVELLING
EXPENSES AND \$250 HONORARIUM. ~~THE~~ TRAVELLING
EXPENSES HAVE BEEN ~~FORWARDED~~ SENT TO OUR
CONVENTION TREASURER FOR FORWARDING TO YOU.
~~THE~~ ~~THE~~ CHECK FOR \$150 WILL ARRIVE IN A FEW
DAYS, AND THE HONORARIUM WILL BE PRESENTED
UPON YOUR ARRIVAL AT THE CONFERENCE. TRANSPORTATION

~~PRICE~~ WILL BE PROVIDED TO AND FROM
THE AIRPORT ^{OF YOUR CHOICE} ~~WITH~~ ~~BY~~ A COMMITTEE
MEMBER AND ~~REMAIN~~ THE SAME TRANSPORTATION
MADE.

MARK SEGAL - ^{NATIONALLY FAMED GAY ARTIST,} AND PUBLISHER OF THE PHILADELPHIA GAY

NEWS STRESSED THAT GAY RIGHTS ARE LESS IMPORTANT IN AND FOR THEMSELVES THAN THE PUBLICITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING ^{FOR THE COMMUNITY PUBLIC} THAT MAY BE GENERATED BY THE CONTROVERSY OVER RIGHTS. THIS ~~WAS~~ THOUGHT HAS DOMINATED THE ACTIVITY OF THE PHILADELPHIA MOVEMENT

January 4, 1978

Dear Mr. Burns -

Please sign the enclosed contracts and return 4 copies to me, send along with them the check to cover the air fare.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call - I will send you her plane reservations soon.

Thank you,
Santa C. Fareri

Sf



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON

ELAINE NOBLE
6TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

COMMITTEES:
RULES
EDUCATION
TEL. 727-2584

January 31, 1978

Joseph W. Burns
1136 Walnut Street
Allentown, PA 18102

Dear Mr. Burns:

Thank you for your note of January 12, 1978.

I was sorry to hear that the Conference was postponed. I look forward to it being rescheduled.

I hope to be hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Noble".

ELAINE NOBLE
State Representative

EN/1

NGTF

National Gay Task Force

80 Fifth Avenue • New York, New York 10011 • (212) 741-1010

Board Officers

Betty J. Powell
Gary J. Van Ooteghem
Meryl C. Friedman
Joseph Norton, Ph.D.

Co-Executive Directors

Jean O'Leary
Bruce Voeller, Ph.D.

BRUCE VOELLER - BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

- Co-Executive Director, National Gay Task Force
- Former President, Gay Activists Alliance of New York
- Member, Board of Directors, Gay Rights National Lobby
- Former Professor of Biology, Rockefeller University
- Member, American Association of University Professors
- Member, American Association for the Advancement of Science
- Author, five books and numerous articles on genetics and biology
- Divorced, father of three children
- ~~Lives with male lover (plaintiff in celebrated U.S. Supreme Challenge to Sodomy Laws).~~

no more!

THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

Thurs., Nov. 6, 1975

LIFESTYLES

GAY

He Waited For 20 Years But Feelings Didn't Change

By BOB WISEHART

News Staff Writer

When Bruce Voeller was "29 and some months," he vowed he'd have a homosexual experience by the time he was 30.

For Voeller, now 41, that decision came after years of soul-searching and conflict — and after an 11-year marriage that spawned three children he loved very much.

IT ALSO MEANT the end of 20 years of doubt and indecision for Voeller, then a biology professor at Rockefeller University.

"I knew I was a homosexual since I was 10 or so," he said. But after seeking help from his family, his minister and a doctor, Voeller became convinced someone as smart, popular and athletic as he was couldn't be a "a faggot."

"They told me those feelings would go away," Voeller said. "They said it was a stage I was passing through. They said I should wait. So I waited. I couldn't be one of those disgusting people."

So Voeller waited 20 years. But by the time he was "five or six years into the marriage I knew I was stuck."

Then his marriage began to fall apart (for reasons other than his homosexuality) and Voeller decided



BRUCE VOELLER

to find out if his long-stifled feelings could stand the test of action.

Now, in his own words, Bruce Voeller has come out of the closet.

As executive director of the National Gay Task Force, Voeller travels the country, helping others deal with the kinds of problems he knows only too well. Voeller spoke at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte this week as part of the "Gay Liberation Revolution '76" symposium on the UNCC campus. Voeller was one of five scheduled speakers.

Voeller belies the stereotype of the homosexual. Tall and slim, his blond hair swept back off his forehead, Voeller could easily pass for being in his late 20s or early 30s. He blends with the college-campus atmosphere. A wrinkled brown jacket, pullover shirt, scuffed boots and blue pants with only a memory of a crease give him a rumpled, professorial look.

THE HANDSHAKE is firm and Voeller smiles often under a bushy mustache and speaks with quiet candor.

His experience left no noticeable emotional scars, just a desire to help those who might be undergoing problems similar to his.

"If you want to play with numbers there are some 60 million people in this country concerned with this (Homosexuality) in a very personal way," he said.

According to the original 1948 Kinsey Report, some 10 per cent of the population is exclusively homosexual, he said. "We're talking about 20 million people there. Add two parents for each one and that's quite an astounding number of people."

Voeller currently lives in New York City with his lover. Divorced from his wife, Voeller considers

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He Waited But Feelings Didn't Change

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himself married to this man and wears a gold wedding band.

He has visitation rights to his children — two boys and a girl ages 10, 13 and 14. Voeller is fighting a legal battle in the New Jersey court system to allow his children to visit him overnight, which they cannot do now as a result of his lifestyle.

Voeller admits he was astounded at how easy it was to switch from what, on the surface at least, was "the essence of the very straight lifestyle" to being a crusading homosexual.

"The first people I told were my three children," he said. "I was surprised at how well they handled it." In fact, he said, it has given him a rapport with his children he would not have had otherwise.

"They see me as a person with

conflicts and doubts," he said. "I'm not just dad laying down all kinds of authority. Gays, we're told, are supposed to be something less than real men. The kids know that's nonsense."

MORE HOMOSEXUALS are coming forward publicly, and Voeller sees that as good, not only in terms of public acceptance but good in that it provides "role models" for all homosexuals.

"Now, it is obvious that people of accomplishment can be homosexuals too," Voeller said. He said he knows "probably 50 relatively well-known athletes" who are homosexual but conceal it because they fear public reaction.

"Nobody tells you that Michelangelo, Tchaikovsky, Keynes the economist and many, many others were homosexual. When you go to a concert to hear Tchaikovsky's 'Nutcracker Suite,' parent's don't say, 'Let's go listen to the fairies dance to the faggot's music!'"

Voeller said homosexuals indulge in stereotyping just as much as anyone else. "I was geared for all kinds of difficulty when I set about telling my friends and family," he said.

Voeller's best friend was a "Don Juan type who had to have two different women every week," he said.

"I expected him to be appalled. Instead, he looked me right in the eye and said, 'Look, I don't care if you make love to boys, girls or cantaloupes. You're still my best friend.'"

His father reacted in much the same way. "He's a conservative Taft, Ohio Republican. He has a real machismo thing and used to take me to boxing, wrestling and football. I told him and he was absolutely fascinated. He started quoting Kinsey."

"I didn't lose a single friend over this," Voeller said. "My mother

was a bit of a disappointment. I thought she would take it better than she did. But even she is able to handle everything all right now."

Still, Voeller said, he is often confronted with the feelings among the parents of homosexuals that, "What the neighbors think is more important than the mental well-being of my child."

DEAR BRUCE,

WE ARE EXTREMELY PLEASED THAT YOU HAVE ACCEPTED OUR INVITATION TO PENNSYLVANIA. WE FEEL THAT YOUR PRESENCE WILL ADD VERY MUCH TO THE CONFERENCE. SHOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN A FULLER PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE THAN YOUR ADDRESS ON SUNDAY, AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ROB SHOULDERS WITH THE GAYS OF PENNSYLVANIA, WE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH FOR YOU.

AS TO THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS WE HAVE AGREED TO AN HONORARIUM OF \$150. DOLLARS PAYABLE ON YOUR ARRIVAL IN ALLENTOWN AND TRAVELLING EXPENSES, INCLUDING AIRLINE TICKETS WHICH WILL BE FORWARDED TO YOU ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1ST. AS TO OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS, SHOULD THEY BE IN YOUR PLANS, WE ARE MOST ~~DESIROUS~~ SOLICITOUS FOR YOUR COMFORT & CONVENIENCE AND WILL OFFER SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES. REGRETTABLY, WE ALSO DO NOT KNOW IF YOU WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY A COMPANION, BUT ANY ARRANGEMENT WILL ALLOW THIS POSSIBILITY, OTHER THAN ~~EXPENSES~~ EXPENSES.

YOU MAY CHOOSE (1.) TO STAY AT THE AMERICUS
WITH ~~THE~~ IN A HOTEL ROOM PAID FOR BY
THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE WHICH WILL SERVE
~~IN~~ ^{DURING} THE DAY ~~TIME~~ AS A WORKSHOP ROOM. (2)
STAY AT A HOTEL/MOTEL OTHER THAN THE AMERICUS
AT OUR EXPENSE, (3) BE THE HOUSE GUEST (S) OF
AN ALLENTONIAN. IN ADDITION, A ~~DRIVER~~ ^{DRIVER/LIMOUSINE} WILL
BE PLACED AT YOUR DISPOSAL FROM THE TIME
OF YOUR ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT UNTIL YOUR
DEPARTURE. ~~THE PERSON ASSIGNED WILL BE~~
YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT YOUR
HONORARIUM HAS IS BEING DONATED BY A DEEPLY
CLOSETED GAY WHO ^{IS} ~~NONETHELESS~~, IS A STRONG
SUPPORTER OF NCTF.

WE HAVE NO PLANS FOR ~~THE~~ ^{STRAIGHT} MEDIA
COVERAGE OF THE CONFERENCE FOR REASONS
WHICH WILL BECOME CLEAR AS ~~WE~~ ^{THE} BACKGROUND
OF THE CONFERENCE IS EXPLAINED. SHOULD
OUR DECISION CHANGE, WOULD YOU BE
~~AVAILABLE~~ ^{AMENABLE TO} FOR INTERVIEW BY LOCAL MEDIA?

THE CONFERENCE ~~THEN~~ WILL BE HELD
AT THE AMERICUS HOTEL ~~IN~~ ^{HAMILTON} 6TH ST &
MALL & 6TH ST ALLENTOWN ON JANUARY 20-
21-22. FRIDAY EVENING WILL ~~BE~~ OPEN AT
9:00 WITH REGISTRATION AND A HOSPITALITY
SUITE OFFERING ENTERTAINMENT. (PENNSYLVANIA

IS A LARGE STATE WHICH MAY TAKE AS MUCH AS 8 HOURS TO TRANSVERSE.) THE CONFERENCE WILL OFFICIALLY OPEN ON SATURDAY AT 10:00 WITH THE OPENING SESSION, SATURDAY WILL CONSIST OF THIS SESSION, WORKSHOPS IN THE AFTERNOON, A BANQUET HONORING THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE FOUNDED THE GAY GROUPS IN PENNSYLVANIA WITH ~~A~~ ^{SPEAKER} AFTER DINNER, AND ~~BEER~~ BEER BUST / ENTERTAINMENT IN TO THE NIGHT.

SUNDAY WILL BEGIN AT 10:00 WITH BOOR ADDRESS ~~BEHOLDEN~~ ^h AT APPROX. 10:30 WITH AN HOUR OF QUESTION OF ANSWERS.