

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

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## **Documents Online**

**Title:** History of the Lavender Letter

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**Location:** LGBT-022 Lorraine Kujawa Collection

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**This packet contains ten years of the Lavender Letter published for the Central Pennsylvania Gay Women's community from 1983 -2003.**

Narrative:

In the fall of 1982 it became obvious to some of us in the Harrisburg PA area that once a gay woman became single her world became smaller. Connecting to other gay women was relegated to meeting at the "D-Gem", the only women's bar in Harrisburg, located on Front Street.

A friend and I decided that a newsletter would be a great help connecting with like minded people, for surely they were out there. We discussed that it must be a simple newsletter to prevent burnout. We had had the experience of a lack of longevity with publications before. We took out a rental of a mailbox at the down town post office, that then sat empty until March of 1983 while we decided how to proceed. When we realized that we needed to do something before the rental on the post office box ran out, we called a meeting. I connected with energizing women from as many areas of interest I could find: sports, politics, socializing at the D-Gem and several other areas. Mary Nancarol, Cindy Mitzel, myself and several others decided it was a great idea to create a monthly newsletter, and gave ourselves a week to collect information on what was happening in the Central PA area for gay women. They channeled that information to me so I could type it up and have it printed. We had collected \$20 and used it to have 100 copies printed for distribution. We took on the name, "The Lavender Letter".

We met again as a group and began the process of circulating the "LL" as it became known, and used our mailing address at the post office so people could send information for a free subscription. People began sending us money. With that incentive we printed more newsletters each month.

When we saw at times that there were not enough activities for the next newsletter, we made things up. Many a potluck, movie and picnic were attended only by the staff and one or two new people. In time the idea caught on that any activity was welcome to become part of the "LL". People began to talk about all that was going on in the community and participation was on a roll. The "Lavender Letter" continued being printed monthly for the next twenty years until the Internet took its place.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Kujawa

