

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

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## **Documents Online**

**Title:** *PA Rural Gay Caucus Letter from the Editor*

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As is now common gossip in the gay liberation movement of Pennsylvania, the Rural Caucus at its last meeting was struck by some unfortunate events, with serious consequences now threatening the very existence of the Caucus. We who have prided ourselves that we would avoid the divisiveness which marks the movement in the cities have suddenly been witness to personal invective in debate impugning other members of the Caucus, and in the days since the Caucus, we have witnessed the incipient growth of factionalism, which if brought to the floor of the Caucus would surely divide, perhaps destroy it. Undue action and the rumored reaction of other quarters has mired the justice of any cause in impurities. Decisions of the Caucus in these matters would satisfy no one.

One damaging response to the Caucus has been the decision of the Governing Board of LE-HI-HO to withdraw its official liaison, and through him their support of the Caucus. While leaving open their option to rejoin, the Board cited the "immaturity" of the Caucus, and the fact that in their view the Caucus had engaged in no great purpose since Gay Lobby Day. Several other groups are contemplating withdrawal, but are waiting to see how the Caucus proves itself at the next meeting. A waiting attitude of suspended judgement seems to pervade among Caucus participants.

We cannot believe that so many who have invested so much in the Caucus, traveling half the state several times each month to accomplish the Caucus, will not choose to meet this crisis with the will toward unity and fulfillment of the future the Caucus offered at its beginnings.

The recent months of organizing the Caucus were intended to provide the base for a new era of dynamic and unified action through this congress of dedicated leaders in a State where we are on the verge of major breakthroughs.

On Friday, the 17th of September, The Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities, meeting in Philadelphia, heard two important announcements concerning the Rural Caucus. The first was that the Legislative Committee of the Council intended to ask the Caucus to plan a Gay Lobby Day again in March. The other, made by Dr. Lear, Chairperson of the Health Committee, invited the Rural Caucus to take a seat on the in-house committee working with the Pennsylvania Health Department. These requests, it would seem, were born of respect for the abilities of the Caucus.

Other persons have suggested that the Caucus organize another State Conference which would seek to unify the efforts of the movement in Pennsylvania behind the leading efforts of the Council on Sexual Minorities. Our own Campus Committee has demonstrated the desperate need for this, as Mary Nancarrow has pleaded, often in vain, for real and active support for the superb work of the in-house Committee of the Department of Education.

As I see it, interest in the Caucus at Shippensburg will be dramatically high. It is then that the Caucus will decide whether to silently forgive and forget as it unifies behind new and great purposes to absorb its tremendous energies and abilities, or whether the Caucus will dissolve in recriminations and petty attention to the details of organization which have so absorbed us that there has been no time for the accomplishment of real liberation.

My sincerest hope is that all those who have ever had to do with the Caucus will come to Shippensburg with a heart determined for healing our wounds, and the dedication to commit "Yes" we will work to fulfill liberation.

Joseph W. Burns, editor

There is room for one announcement we are pleased to be able to make, Ken Burke, Chairperson of the Governing Board of Le-Hi-Ho and rural gay has been elected as Chairperson of the Legislative Committee of the Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities.