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Title: *PA Rural Gay Caucus Report*

Date: August 1976

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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THE PENNSYLVANIA RURAL GAY CAUCUS

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NORTHUMBERLAND, PA. 17857

The September meeting of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus will be held at the Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley, Bethlehem, Pa. at 1:00 P.M., Saturday, September 11. Any person not resident in Philadelphia or Allegheny Counties is eligible for voting membership in the Caucus by attending the meeting, and everyone who receives this letter is cordially invited to join us in this or any future event of the Caucus. Direction to the Unitarian Church are enclosed.

Letter From the Editor

Hello! It has probably been a while since you heard from the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus. For some, it has been a while since we heard from you. But, now that communications are open again, we hope that you will let us come to you by letter once a month. Hopefully, you will join us in vigorously pursuing the interest of activist rural gays in Pennsylvania. If you don't wish to be bothered by us, please drop us a note telling us you wish to be dropped from the mailing list.

In case you haven't heard, the Caucus has met monthly since its founding at the State Conference in Harrisburg on Oct 18th, 1975. Monthly meetings are conducted under the Co-chairing of Ruth Steek and Ray Stickle. The work of the Caucus is conducted through committees as explained below.

The Legislative Committee- chaired by Barry Lace of Mechanicsburg has an enclosure you are requested to fill out and return. This Committee began as the highly successful Gay Lobby Day Committee which sent many many gay people to Harrisburg to visit legislators on March 23rd.

The Campus Committee- under the chair of Mary Nancarrow of Shippensburg State College is actively and directly involved with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, helping the Department to carry out new directives from the Secretary of Education pertaining to gay persons in the Educational systems of Pennsylvania. These directives are far reaching, and a lot of help and support is needed in the effort. One very urgent request of this committee is that any one involved as a student, staff or faculty person write an anonymous, or a signed letter to them telling what it is like to be a gay person in a system of education geared toward preserving our predominately heterosexual culture. This documentation is desperately required in sensitizing the Department.

The Finance Committee - to be convened by Helmut Baerwald, Treasurer of the Caucus has already sponsored a Garage Sale to raise funds, and is planning a Hay Ride in Reading on Nov. 6th following the meeting of the Caucus in Reading on that date. They are also discussing plans for a major social event this fall.

The Communications Committee- under the Chair of Joseph W. Burns of Allentown is responsible for this newsletter, publicity and public relations, and a telephone tree for emergency communications. A number of sub-committees are being set up to handle the various responsibilities of the committee.

Membership on any of these committees is open to those who wish to involve themselves in their work, and others will doubtless be formed as the need arises. The concerns and efforts of the Gay Movement in Pennsylvania increase constantly and you are needed to help.

MEETING NOTES AND MINUTES- August

The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus held its regular monthly meeting on August 7th at Shikellany State Park and Look-Out, located across the river from Sunbury, pa. The weather was damp and rainy, but, 22 persons from across the state arrived for the picnic sponsored by Susquehanna Valley Gays United (SVGU), and the business meeting which followed. The congenial and informal atmosphere made a good time for all. Our thanks to SVGU for the event.

Mary Nancarrow, reporting the Campus Committee, told us that the recommendations of the in-house (composed of members of the Department of Education, representatives of the Rural Caucus and the Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities) Gay Rights Advisory Committee had been finalized, approved by the Secretary of Education, and sent for enactment to the Commissioners of Education. A bibliography on gayness, prepared by Barbara Gittings for the Department was included in the report. This bibliography, hopefully, will be used by the Department and schools in selecting library materials on gayness, and certainly will be used by the Campus Committee in soliciting books to be placed in libraries throughout the state. Inquire of the committee if you feel you could afford the small price of a great book. It has been suggested that these be given in memorium of gay persons, lovers, and parents.

Sensitization sessions for the top echelons in P.D.E. are beginning soon with Mary and Sam participating. Input and ideas for this supremely important work are gratefully accepted. A pamphlet is being prepared to facilitate this effort with the lower echelons of workers in-the-field as teachers, counselors, etc. And a lot help will be needed to see that the local levels of education are paying attention to the report.

Sam Edmiston reported at Bloomsburg State College. At a meeting with the Assistant Dean of Students and the Director of Counselling Services, sensitivity sessions for student personnel workers was tentatively scheduled for October. The possibility of a similar session with the president and Board of Trustees was also under consideration. Sam is to submit a brief outline of the goals and objectives of such sessions.

Barry Lacey stated that he would deliver a position paper on the Legislative Committee and Gay Rights Legislation at the September Caucus. This Paper will guide his committee and the Caucus in future work for legislation.

Sam Deetz made a small speech inviting interested persons to join the National Coalition of Gay Activists, a group more politically active than the National Gay Task Force. We may have a speaker from their organization come to tell us more of their activities. Sam has applications for interested persons.

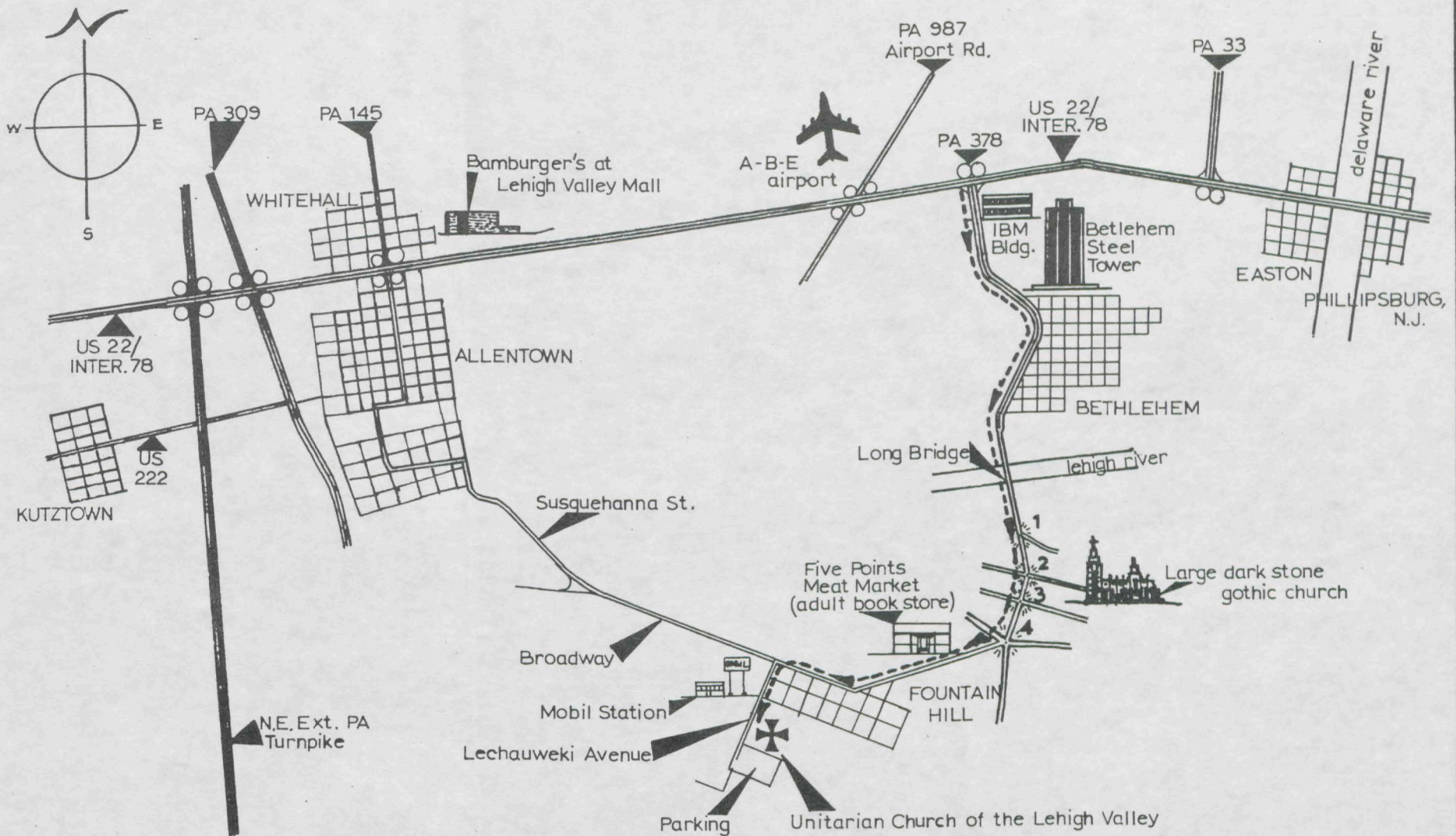
Joe Burns reported some feed back from the letter sent by the Caucus to the Legislators. A few Senators and representatives have made their views clear on the subject, and as a side light, a person connected with one of the newspapers to whom the letter was sent asked to attend a Rural Caucus Meeting out of personal and professional concern. This alone made the effort of the letter worth it.

The party went on at the home of a local Caucus member following the adjournment at \$4:40.

Respectfully submitted by

Sam Edmiston-Recording Secretary

How to find the Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley



Although it is possible to approach Lechauweki Avenue from the west (Allentown), we suggest you follow the route shown by ----> if you are not familiar with the streets of Allentown. When approaching from US 22/Interstate 78 on PA 378 heading south get into the right lane before the first traffic light (number 1 on the map) to proceed straight, then get into the left lane before the second traffic light (number 2 on the map) to proceed straight, then make a soft right turn at the fourth traffic light (number 4 on the map) around the Five Points Meat Market Adult Book Store onto Broadway, approx. one mile to Lechauweki Ave. (at Mobil Station), left turn and three blocks uphill to the Church at number 701. Phone 866-7652.