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The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus will be held at 1001 North

P. O. Box 1505

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

The February meeting of the Rural Gay Caucus will be held at 1001 North Spring Street, Middletown, Pa. on Saturday, Feb. 5th at 1:00 P.M. Please note that the Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities will convene on the evening prior to the Caucus at State College in the Hertzell Union Building at 7:00 P.M. You are urged to attend this meeting of the Council, as the Council convenes only several times a year outside of Harrisburg with the specific intention of receiving the input of gays and other minorities when it is inconvenient to most persons to attend their meetings in Harrisburg.

Directions to the Caucus Meeting at Middletown (below Harrisburg) are printed on the back of this sheet.

Please note above the new address of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus. This change is permanent, and reflects the thought that the Caucus purports to be a statewide organization.

JANUARY MINUTES

The January meeting of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus was called to order at 2:00 P.M. by Joe Burns, co-chair (Mary Mancarrow was unable to attend) on Jan. 3th in Hertzell Union Building, Penn State University at State College. 26 representatives from various sexual minority organizations were present. A special welcome was extended to Homophiles of Williamsport in attendance for the first time. The call for agenda culled interest in the Steck Letter to the Principal of Lebanon High, talk of a health committee, and employment discrimination. Temporary Acting Secretary, Dave Leas, read the minutes of the last P.R.G.C.

Committee reports followed, and certain items arose which needed attention. Among them were the following: The refusal of Lebanon High School to accept a memorial book (re: Kenneth Meyers, student suicide); the appointment of Sam Deetz as convener of the Legislative Committee had expired without a Chairperson having been elected and Sam was reappointed convener; The Education Committee has not yet met with all the department heads in the the Department of Education, and is meeting with some resistance which it is finding ways to deal with, so that Mary expects soon to have met with all departments (incidentally, more Caucus people are needed to help with these meetings- please talk to Mary about new or continued interest in doing this.); the need for more personnel on the newly formed Health Concerns Committee of the Caucus. The In-house Health Committee working within the Department of Health in Harrisburg under the Chair of Dr. Walter Lear still needs gay community reps so that our needs may be fully and objectively met in the field of Health Care delivery. Drew Larson, in reporting the Social Committee asked that a new look be made at the need for a social Committee. The question was deferred to the business agenda following the speaker.

Jan Sweat, Treasurer, reported a balance of 87.05 in the treasury. And the new address of the Caucus was announced. It is- Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus, P. O. Box 1505, Harrisburg, Penna. 17105.

Our special Guest and Speaker, Barry Kohn, Deputy State Attorney General, Head of the Community Advocate Unit in Philadelphia, and representative of the Attorney General's Office to the Council for Sexual Minorities was introduced to address the Caucus.

Barry first read a letter of his own which declared to his boss, the State Attorney General, that Barry himself was openly declaring his bi-sexuality as he

felt able to do under the protections promised by the Shapp Administration. He thus encouraged all agys to speak out when discrimination occurs and not to be silent on gay issues. Barry noted that during the Shapp Administration, certain sexual sanctions were reduced from felonies to misdemeanors.

Mr. Kohn then addressed the new "Sodomy Repeal Bill" which had been prepared by himself in cooperation with the District Attorney's Office in Philadelphia and various segments of the Gay and other Sexual Minorities. This Bill proposes not only repeal, but other minor amendments to the Criminal Code, which amendments will aid the passage of the Bill. The Bill is slated to be submitted in late February, hopefully under the principal sponsorship of Senator Craig Lewis, who has been very supportive in the past. More sponsors are being sought by Regional Coordinators and others. These Regional Coordinators have been appointed by the combined Legislative Committees of the Caucus and the Council for the purpose of stimulating support for the Bill from every area of the State, and to enable the Lobbying efforts to be made by Gay groups and others. (If you have not yet indicated your interest in aiding the effort, please contact Joe Burns, Sam Deetz, Dan Maneval, or Ken Burke. Also, Regional Coordinators are still sought, not only in the east, but, especially in the Center and western end of the State.- Editor)

The salient features of the Bill are as follows:

- (1) Repeal of the Voluntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse Statute
- (2) Redefinition of Involuntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse as "Forcible Sodomy" PER S or PER ANUS, no degree of penetration nor emission required for proof.
- (3) Extending the time limitation for which one may begin prosecution for rape from its present two years to five years.
- (4) Lowering the age for corruption of minors from 18 to 16.

Press coverage of the Bill would attempt to show it as a law enforcement bill rather than as a gay rights bill. And attempts will be made to defuse the expected conservative-religious backlash.

Barry also noted yet another attempt to undermine our Civil Liberties. Senate Bill #83, introduced just the week before by the leadership of the State Senate is a carbon copy of past bills which seek to bar the employment of homosexual persons as State Police, prison guards, in work with mentally ill and retarded or handicapped persons, juveniles, etc. We must muster another front line attempt to contain the elements which link job performance with sexual preference. Opposition to this bill may be recorded by calling the Governor's Hotline toll-free at 1-800-932-0784. (PLEASE RECORD THIS NUMBER AND PUT IT BY YOUR TELEPHONE FOR LATER USE. ALSO- AS WHEN WE ARE ABLE TO RECORD OUR SUPPORT FOR GAY RIGHTS AND THE BILL TO REPEAL SODOMY!!!!- Editor) These calls would be of the utmost importance, as in reality, our legislators hear very little about the legislation they must consider, and therefore, they pay particular attention to the input on the Governor's Hotline. Any letters you may care to write to your own Senate, or to the Committee considering the bill would be of particular value. But, if you write, also call- you will more than double your effectiveness.

Following the Address by Mr. Kohn, the P.R.G.C. recessed for fifteen minutes.

After the break, Sam Deetz made a motion that the P. R. G. C. endorse and approve the bill drafted by Barry Kohn. This was seconded and passed by the majority (2 abstentions.)

Elections were held for Secretary (permanent) and Sam Edmiston was elected by unanimous vote.

It was reported that the In-House Health Committee of the Department of Health had its first meeting on December 15th, with only one representative from the Gay Community present (officially). This meeting produced the ensuing recommendations. Information and materials should be provided by health care agencies in reference to the gay lifestyle. Treatment Centers should respect the dignity and needs of their gay clients and those of other sexual minorities.

There should be wider dissemination of V.D. literature among gays directed to gays. A special pamphlet on V.D. has been in preparation by the Department for some time now. Persons interested in the InHouse Committee work should send a resume to Dr. Walter Lear, P. O. Box 90, Harrisburg, Pa. 17120. This report was given by Martin Rock, member of the InHouse Committee.

Martin also gave a moving account of his problems with his employer in the area of job performance vs. gay lifestyle suitability. (Many Caucus members wrote and called his employer on this issue.) So far, Martin has kept his job. (We understand since then, however, that they are imposing certain conditions on his continued employment, and are again writing his employer about the situation-editor.)

The Lebanon High School pot continues to simmer as the principal states that Kenneth Meyers, who committed suicide rather than face harassment about his being gay, was not, in fact, a student at his school, having been matriculated the year before in the Junior High School. Discussion by the Caucus suggested that the letter written by former Co-chairperson, Ruth Steck, not be disseminated to other school districts as was planned the Education Committee of the Caucus. Ruth offered a second letter to be written in the knowledge that it would be widely disseminated. Dave Leas moved that the Education Committee not use the letter in question as a form letter to all school districts. The motion was seconded and carried with 3 abstentions. Also, on the issue of refusing the memorial books (Lesbian Woman, and the Gay Mystique had been selected and presented), it was suggested that the books chosen be less explicit in sexual matters, and more explicit in the area of understanding and acceptance of gay lifestyles.

The need for a social committee for the Caucus was again raised and discussed. The suggestion was made that persons from within the Caucus could be responsible for social activities when the Caucus met in their area, thus by passing the need for a social committee. But, it was pointed out, there is still a need for someone to coordinate fundraising activities for the Caucus, and this had been one of the original charges of the Social Committee. Fundraisers, however, it was countered, need not be social activities of the Caucus and always paying to have fun is a turn-off. Sam Deetz moved that 'somebody be appointed Social Chairperson to coordinate the social activities of the Caucus- Fundraisers and social activities are not linked together by this coordination.' The motion was seconded and passed.

An announcement was made that socializing and refreshments would follow the Caucus at Drew Larson's apartment.

After appropriate thanks were given, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by

Sam Edmiston, Secretary, P.R.G.C.

REPORT ON THE TELEPHONE TREE?

Since the last Caucus, the occasion arose when it became necessary to consult the voting membership of the Caucus as is constitutionally required before action can be instituted by the Co-Chairpersons on behalf of the Caucus. To wit, we had been asked to sign a letter urging people to take action against S.B. 83. The action asked for in the letter was to write to your Senator, the members of the committee considering the bill, to call the Governor's Hotline about the bill, and to urge ten friends to take the same action. We called other members and asked them to call other members- for about five days. Thank God the situation was not more urgent. We gave permission with a bare majority, and everyone we consulted said yes. What happened that some were not reached? A lot of things besides not being home when the calls were made. At this stage we have only twenty returns on our mailing for the telephone tree. Notable for their lack of response have been the organizations who were asked to publicly

Names and telephones for contact persons from their organization, for their organization to be contacted on alerts. We could assume that most of the regular members of the Caucus would cooperate, and would use the post card we enclosed for better purposes than telling us what we already assumed. But, my friends, it is hard to work in a vacuum of response. Enclosed, where appropriate, are cards for those who responded or whose response was assumed, listing the calls they are asked to responsible for. I thank those who responded, and patiently await any others who may care to do so. -Joseph W. Burns

OTHER GROUPS - BETTER DAYS

We are saddened to report that the group known as Gays United of Lancaster (GUL) no longer meets. It is recalled by many of us, that in the days when the Caucus was young, what dynamite the united purposes of the various members of this group were. The dynamite is still around devoting itself to the offspring of GUL, specifically, THE GAY ERA, and Gay Switchboard of Lancaster. Indeed, perhaps for the excellence and consistent performance delivered by these latter two, it is worth the cost of GUL. Even willing not to be maudlin though, wouldn't it be fun to a year younger and going again to meet in Lancaster with GUL as we did a year ago in February?

Another group quiet is the Gay Coordinating Society of Berks County (G.C.S., Reading). Not to be counted out though, the Council, which carries the weight of the organization still shows up for meetings and still plans and carries out the famous social activities for the gay community they serve. Gay Skating parties, hay rides, picnics, and parties sponsored by G.C.S. have become an enduring part of the Reading scene. But the great old ideas like having the City Council pass an ordinance on Gay Rights, originating a gay Commemorative Stamp, art shows in the local bars are losing out with the dearth of people available to support and carry out grand schemes. They are, I think, willing to put up past the slump which affects a lot of organizations just past their second birthday. One is never quite sure whether enduring success comes to gay organizations as a function of simply growing older, or whether the accumulated knowledge of organization has something to do with it. At any rate, the present leadership is sapped by the many directions it takes and the multiple responsibilities it carries. One expects that the infusion of new blood is most of what it takes to get G. C. S. going again.

We are pleased to report that the Governing Board of LE-HI-HO vote unanimously to rejoin the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus. As a gesture their intentions they have asked for a liason from their group to the Caucus within their organization. The liason reports directly to the Board the activities of the Caucus, and again to the general membership of the organization at the regularly monthly meeting. As of yet, the official liason has not been appointed. We are very glad to have their support.

All persons are reminded that membership on any of the Caucus Committees is open to anyone. Convenors or Chairpersons of the present committees are Mary Nancarrow, Chairperson of the Education Committee, Sam Deetz, convenor of the Legislative Committee, Ray Stickles, convenor of the Health Concerns Committee, and Bob Woods, Chairperson of the Communications Committee. If you are interested, or merely wonder more about what the committees do, speak to these persons or direct an inquiry to the Caucus Address for them. The amount of work accomplished is directly proportionate to the number of people doing it. Please help.

Directions to Meeting in Middletown, Pa.

Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Harrisburg
Arnold H. Hutchings, W.C.
1001 North Spring St., I-2
Middletown, Pa. 17057
Phone: 717/944-1574

From anywhere North of Harrisburg

Take 81-83 South

Take 83 South [do not get on New 81 South]

Off 83 South on to 283 Bypass [Towards Highspire]

By turnpike take 283 towards Lancaster, Pa.

** First exit off 283 [Rt 441. keep right don't go on new road follow 441 South]

Follow this around [Middletown Area High School on right]

Fry Village will be on left

Take next right turn [If you see the cemetery you passed the turn]

Go to Yield Sign

Take Right into Campus Manor Apts.

Building I Apt. 2

From York

Take 83 North [towards Allentown]

Off at Highspire Exit on 283 Bypass

Take 283 Bypass to Turnpike

Then follow the directions above [**]

From Lancaster

Take 283 Towards Harrisburg

2nd Middletown Exit [not Vine Street]

Go to Stop Sign

Take Left - To next Stop Sign

Go straight [Gaylay forward]

Fry Village on Left

Next right Turn go to Yield Sign [If you see the cemetery on right you passed the turn]

Right into Campus Manor Apts.

Building I Apt. 2