

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

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**Title:** *PA Rural Gay Caucus Report*

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**Location:** LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

**Contact:**

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THE PENNSYLVANIA RURAL GAY CAUCUS  
P. O. Box 1505

Harrisburg, Pa. 17105

717-532-7027  
215-437-2642

The March meeting of the Rural Gay Caucus will be held at 3002 Marietta Avenue in Lancaster on Saturday, March 5, at 1:00 P.M. No directions are given for this well known location, home of Bari Weaver, and the Lancaster Gay Switchboard. If lost, call the switchboard at (717) 898-2376.

DATES FOR RURAL PEOPLE

March 7, Tuesday- Education Committee Meeting at 1136 Walnut Street, Allentown. The meeting is at 7:00 P.M., the apartment is on the first floor. Walk in and knock. (Exit from Rt. 22 at Allentown Exit marked 15th Street, and come in to one block past the Hotel Traylor. Turn left on Walnut and come up to Twelfth Street or the first traffic light. Park as soon as you can, 1136 is the gray half of the third building on the right.) Under discussion will be the incidents with Lebanon High School, and PDE.

12th + 13th Middle of March- the Reverend Troy Perry will be at State College

March 6, Sunday- 7:30 P.M., Gay Switchboard of Harrisburg. Call (717) 234-0328.

March 12, Saturday- 1:30 P. M., Legislative Committee Meeting at 344 North Broad Street, Philadelphia in Barry Kohn's office. Very important meeting as the Repeal Bill will have been introduced by then, and Lobby Day will be under discussion.

March 20, Sunday- G.C.S. Meeting at 147 N. 10th Street, Reading at 6:00Pm.

March 27, Sunday- LE-HI-HO General Meeting at The Unitarian Church of the Lehigh Valley, 701 Lechaweki Avenue, Bethlehem at 2:00 P.M. (Turn at the Mobil Gas Station on Broadway in the Fountain Hill section of Bethlehem. The Church is at the top of the hill.)

April 2, Saturday- Rural Caucus meeting in Reading, probably at the First Church of the Brethren in Wyomissing. See the April newsletter to be sure, or call the numbers listed above.

April 16, Saturday- Legislative Committee Meeting at 1717 North Second Street, Harrisburg at 1:30.

June 6, Saturday- Rural Caucus Meeting at 1001 North Spring Street, Apt I-2 Any Sunday Evening at 8:00, MCC services at the last named address.

FEBRUARY MINUTES

The February 5th meeting of the Rural Gay Caucus was held at 1001-I-2 North Spring Street, Middletown, Pa. The meeting was hosted by the Metropolitan Community Church of the Harrisburg Area.

The meeting was called to order by co-chairperson Mary Nancarrow at 2:20 P. M. Officers absent were Joe Burns, co-chairperson; Sam Edmiston, Secretary; Jan Sweat, Treasurer. Dave Leas was temporarily appointed to take the minutes. Mary read the minutes from the last meeting. There were no changes to be made.

Treasurer's Report

Mary gave the treasurer's report in the absence of Jan and announced a \$50.00 donation in the past month bringing the total to 137.05.



Communications Committee Report

Bob Woods, chair of the committee, reported that he had sent "media releases" to gay and alternative newspapers regarding the refusal of books donated by the Caucus's book fund to the Lebanon High School which Kenneth Meyers attended.

Education Committee Report

Mary who chairs the committee stated that they have not met in the past month. Mary has been communicating with the FDE in regards to making the book fund more effective. She stated that we will be getting support from the PDE having the books placed within the school libraries since the committee has been having trouble with the acceptance of the books.

Commonwealth Association of students held their convention today at Shippensburg State College. Tim Cweik, Jr. told how they were trying to obtain the cooperation of the 13 colleges who belonged to CAS on student issues. CAS passed a motion to support the addition of "sexual preferences" into the non-discrimination clauses within college administrations. Speakers have been suggested to the group from the Rural Caucus of the Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities.

Tim asked the group to pass a motion in support of the repeal of the Sodomy laws in Pa. The vote on that motion was scheduled for the following day. Gay students in the CAS were to speak on the repeal effort and SB 83 before the vote.

Mary stated that the committee would meet within the next two weeks.

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At this point in the meeting there were no reports from the Committee on Health Concerns, Social Committee, or Legislative Committee.

Martin Rock gave an update on the state of his employment. There is a list of conditions by which Martin can stay at his place of employment Martin who works for a church organization which deals with overseas relief work has had his job in jeopardy for the past two months since his employer found that he was homosexual.

His employer has finally come to a decision regarding his employment. There are two provision by which Martin can stay there:

1. Dissociation from advocacy or promotion that would attempt to influence other toward sexual preference.
2. No involvement in sexual activities during the remainder of the (Church) contract.

(The memo to Martin followed): It is our understanding that your will reply to (supervisor) on these two points. We hope that you will find it possible to continue until July 13th, the end of his contract).

Martin reminded the caucus members of the formation of the Mennonite/Brethren Gay Caucus and that the information should be passed on to interested persons.

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Jerry Yoder from GCS Reading called on the phone to announce that GCS would be meeting with Sen. O'Pake from the Reading area in regards to the sodomy repeal effort. The meeting is scheduled on Monday, Feb. 8th at 4:30. Interested persons were asked to attend the meeting.

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Bill Horn asked the support of the Caucus in regards to his recent dismissal from the Ereadway Resort Inn in Lancaster. Bill explained that he was invited to attend a function at the Ereadway as the date of one of the employees of the firm that was having the function. He was given permission from his immediate supervisor to attend the function who knew that he would be dressed in drag.



The next day Bill received a notice of improper attire which is one of the restriction place on employees while on the premises whether on duty or not. The person who gave Bill permission was forced to sign the notice against his wishes saying that he wasn't given permission to attend. This was the second notice that Bill received. He received his first notice shortly after starting there for breaking a tray of dishes. The third notice was for arriving late to work even though he called to say that he would be late. After three notices you can be dismissed at any time.

The Caucus after discussing the matter suggested that letters be written to his employer criticizing them for their discrimination against Bill. Letters should be written to:

Patricia Dohn, Gen. Mgr.

222 Eden Road

Treadway Inn

Lancaster, Penna. 17601

Copies should be sent to: ( c/o of the Treadway Inn)

Tom Kelly; Food & Bev. Mgr. (Person who fired him)

Ted Ginsberg, Owner

Steve Solms, Owner

The Caucus adjourned at 3:20 for break when Joe Burns, Sam Edminston, and Drew Larson arrived.

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When the meeting was called to order at 3:45 Sam Edminston assumed the task of taking the minutes.

Bill Horn related an incident causing his loss of employment. He was given permission to attend a social function in feminine attire. Permission given by immediate super. After he attended, the permission was withdrawn due to a technicality in the dress code. Bill was fired. A motion was forwarded for P.R.G.C. to institute a letter writing protest to his supervisors and owners of the motel chain. The motion was seconded and affirmed.

Address: Lancaster Treadway Inn

222 Eden Road

Lancaster, Penna. 17601

Bari Weaver gave a moving account of some correspondence he has had with a prisoner on death row in a Fla. State Prison. A Governors Review Board meets in March to commute sentences or give pardons. There are usually 5 or 6 prisoners on death row under consideration. A clemency appeal is usually commuted to life imprisonment. The MCC of Harrisburg will contact the nearest MCC to the prison and get gay materials to the prisoner, who is gay. The members present at P.R.G.C. made a voluntary monetary contribution toward his immediate personal needs.

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Joe Burns -- SB 83 (anti-gay)

Urging a stronger and more impressive letter campaign against such repressive legislation. There will be a meeting of the Legislative Committee on 2-19 at noon. Address: 562 Cedar Hill Dr., Allentown, Penna.

Dale Masterson stressed the need for the P.R.G.C. to become active in the youth movement. The need for youth to have a positive label for their pains in 'coming out' could be met by making educational materials and positive counseling available in the high schools and communities. A motion was made to form a Youth Committee to study this problem and come up with some workable solutions. Seconded and affirmed by acclaim. \*\*\*\*\*

Drew Larson -- Social Committee

Definitely separated from Finance Committee. An ad hoc committee of interested persons to be handled by the co-chaes of P.R.G.C.



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March meeting of P.R.G.C. will 3-5-77, at 3002 Merietta Ave. Lancaster, Penna.  
April Meeting of P.R.G.C. will be 4-2-77, in Reading (address later)  
May meeting of P.R.G.C. will be 5-7-77, at State College in HUB. (college campus)  
June meeting of P.R.G.C. will be 6-4-77, at NSC headquarters in Harrisburg.  
All meeting will ber underway a 1:00 Pm.

We WELCOME LE-HI-HO back to the ranks and look forward to renewing old friendships and family ties.

The Education Committee has forwarded the Caucus Report to the Dep't of Education.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 Pm. Party afterward a Jonathan Smith-Cousin's home on Second St

Respectfully ,

Sam Edminston - Sec.

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There are no reports on groups this month, we had no time to visit any.  
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### SENATE BILL #83

On Tuesday, February 22, Senate Bill #83 passed in State Government Committee by a vote of 8 to 3 and is being returned to the Senate Floor for consideration. The history of that day follows.

Harry Langhorne of Philadelphia was the person who tipped off the Pa. Gays that the Bill could be considered at the Committee meeting on the 22nd. He had contacted Senator Smith the Thursday before about a planned demonstration at Smith's Philadelphia office against SB #83. During the call, he asked to be informed when the Bill would be considered by the State Government Committee which Senator Smith chairs. Within an hour, Smith called back to tell Harry that it was scheduled for Tuesday. The Senate Committee had not yet even announced the meeting to its own members.

Hearing of it, the Caucus initiated, as best it could, the emergency telephone alert by asking gays to write last minute letters and cards to committee members, sponsors of the Bill, contact committee members at their homes on Monday (a state holiday) and again to call the Governor's Hotline about the bill. Also it was arranged to have a Caucus membership beyond the meeting.

On Tuesday morning at 11:00 o'clock, the Senate State Government Committee convened and a lot of gay people were there to attend the proceedings. Many were members of the Council for Sexual Liberties, some were from the Rural Caucus or other Gay groups, and some were friends of gays from the government, NOW, etc.

Smith left #83 till last, and would not invite the gays to speak. Because of this, a disturbance broke out among the gays present. Smith did allow three persons to address themselves to the bill. They were Jerry Breann, who represented himself as



a state worker who would lose his job because of the bill. The second speaker was the president of Harrisburg NOW, a non-gay woman who read two statements against the bill. The third person allowed to speak was Harry Langhorne of Philadelphia.

The disturbance created has become a subject of controversy. It appeared to turn off many observers, both gay and straight, and even those Senators who opposed the bill. However, the technique had important effects. Some gays were allowed to speak, for one thing. But far more important, Senator Cianfrani, a member of the State Government Committee, but, also the Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee became disquieted enough by the disturbance to offer to try to draw the Bill into the Appropriations Committee when it returns to the floor. He addressed Mark Segal directly in saying this. Needless to say, Senators Nolan and Chairperson Smith were quite upset with this break in the ranks.

Also during debate on the bill, our friend Senator Louis Hill offered an amendment to have the word, homosexual, removed. This motion lost along the same lines as the final vote. Senators Louis Hill, Paul McKinney, and Edward Howard voted for the motion, which lost. Also, a motion to remove probation officers from the persons included in the bill passed by unanimous, and mysterious consent of the committee.

As it stands, therefore, the bill is being returned to the full Senate. Mark and Harry have visited Cianfrani to be certain that he would take it into Appropriations if the Senate votes that way, and to firm up Cianfrani's offer to have hearing on it there. Our job, now is to contact our own senators by mail and phone to make sure they understand that taxpayers are concerned for the costs of the bill, as it could cost much to investigate the sexuality of each applicant.

The look of the meeting in Harrisburg was that Senator Nolan was proving his power and it was quite a demonstration of it. Had not Cianfrani, who constitutes something of a rival faction not broken, the story might have been very different, and we would have no hope. Get those letters and calls in. Urge hearings on the bill. If we don't make the effort, no one will.

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Our very sincere thanks to those who have cooperated in the effort to have the sponsors of SB 83 deluged with letters. We have received perhaps thirty-five copies of letters actually sent to the sponsors. These letters came from gays, straights, bisexuals, women, men, young old, ministers, state workers, and many other descriptions of persons. It has been marvelous to act as witness to this nothing out of concern. Thank all of you, brothers and sisters.

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Enclosed with this newsletter is a card bearing the XXXXX number of the Governor's Action Line. Please place it near your phone and use it, especially when there is something to said for gay rights. Also included in many letters are cards bearing the names persons who have volunteered are to contact for the "telephone tree". Please note the two lists of these cards. The first, Consensus, means that the persons on that list are voting members of the Caucus who must be contacted when there is a matter which must be decided by the Caucus membership. The other list marked Alert is the full list of those who should be contacted when the Free is used for a media alert or a legislative alert as the one last week. Finally, some persons have received the cards bearing the name of the person who is responsible for contacting them in either or both cases.