

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

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## **Documents Online**

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

**Date:** October 1977

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

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The Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus

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The November meeting of the Pennsylvania Rural Gay Caucus will convene on Saturday, November 5th, at 3002 Marietta Avenue in Lancaster at 1:00 P.M. This meeting should, according to the by-laws, be the meeting at which new officers are elected. In a frustrating set of circumstances, the Caucus did not achieve a quorum at the last meeting, and no nominations were made. The by-laws state, however, that nominations made be made by self or others at any time prior to the elections. Please understand that the very existence of the Caucus is threatened by the present conditions. Following the meeting, the Caucus is planning to remain for the weekend, simply to rest from our travails in the atmosphere of good fun and fellowship. The Caucus, in the rare moments when it has not found itself at work has provided a supportive, mostly non-sexist, relaxed and warm atmosphere. Those remaining for the weekend, are requested to bring sleeping bags or bed rolls, and to make a small donation of several dollars to the kitty for food, beverage, etc. for the weekend. The weekend will not be structured beforehand, so that we may agree to do almost anything together.

Conference Hotel Cancelled

The Americus Hotel, with whom we have been planning to hold the state conference planned for January, has refused to host the conference. It is without doubt the most open and glaring example of discrimination against gays we can document in this state. Under private, unincorporated ownership, without the existence of a written contract, and without a gay rights amendment in the local or state government, their discrimination is legal.

The Conference Committee has conducted a thorough investigation of alternative sites among whom they will choose before the November meeting. This time, the qualifier is knowing they will not cancel a gay group. While we could find no hotel who would be willing to discriminate against gays, we did find many sites already taken in the two months it has taken the Americus to decide to discriminate. We had no warning that the refusal would be given, except that the manager with whom the verbal agreements were made was absent with a cold on the several days we had appointments to go over final details prior to drawing up a contract. On the last occasion we were to meet with him, we found that he no longer worked for the Americus. The refusal was made by the owner, Mr. Hoffa.

Since gay rights enactment is being sought in Allentown, the case will become a "cause celebre" locally. In the face of unscrupulous, unprincipled, and threatening opposition to gay rights in Allentown, The Director of the Human Relations Commission in Allentown leaked the case to reporters of local newspapers. As they have not yet chosen to print the story, it may never come out, except when used by us for documentation of local gay discrimination before City Council.

Allentown gay rights

The situation here has become intense and heated. Beginning with the formation of a group called Citizens Organized for Rectency (C.O.R.) which came into existence specifically to oppose gay rights, now joined by the Citizens Caucus which is self-identified as politically conservative, the drive to defeat gay rights is on. On Monday, October 24th, the Citizens Caucus ran an ad headed "gay rights or perversion permit" in the local papers. Citing Anita's campaign, the ad continues "while we do not believe that private conduct of consenting adults should be regulated



regulated, we reject the view that homosexuality is a civil right. On the contrary, it's merely a form of personal conduct, freely chosen, which is morally offensive and frankly obnoxious to the vast majority of local citizens. City Council is not being asked to protect the rights of a wrongfully oppressed minority, but rather to grant a permit for homosexuals to publicly flaunt their perversion" The ad provides spaces for the coupon to be signed for forwarding to City Council, and space for donations to support the Citizens Caucus and their efforts to defeat the gay rights Ordinance.

Before the evening paper was printed, a reporter had visited city hall and quoted the mayor as saying that gay rights would not be an administration sponsored ordinance, and that that he had spoken to City Council members, all of whom were unwilling to sponsor such a bill. The effect of the ads by the Caucus was mitigated, since the issue of gay rights publicly dead.

However, behind the scenes, a lot of action is growing around the issue. An organization has been formed in support of gay rights, called the "Lehigh Valley Coalition for human rights". This group is quietly gathering support statements, probing Council members for their support, monitoring the opposition, and preparing for the effort to introduce gay rights soon after elections. Should we find that rights are surely lost if introduced, we might spend two years developing constituency, and not make the effort at this time.

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The very existence (as mentioned before) of the Caucus will depend on whether a quorum is present at the next meeting, Nov. 5th. If a quorum is not present, elections cannot take place and, therefore, the Caucus will be without officers. And because few more than officers are coming to the meetings, the organization will, if the by-laws are followed, necessarily fold. We who are involved ask you who are not, not to abandon the Caucus but to bring it to a new vigor, a once familiar face, a new friend - in other words to really support the Caucus and give it direction. You might find that, in the long run, the direction you give it might clear the way for your very own.



# N O V E M B E R

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
M.C.C.-every Hbg. Sun. worship service-8:00 pm at new building		1	7:30pm-L.V.C.H.R. 2 M.C.C. Hbg. every Wed. 8:00pm-prayer meeting 8:30-C.R. @ new bldg.	3	4	M.C.C.-special dedc Hbg. 8:00pm @ new bldg-10:00pm 5 P.R.G.C. Lancaster-1:00 pm welcome to spend the weekend
6	7	8	9 ACLU of Hbg. 7:30pm	10	H.O.W. meeting 8:00pm	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24 H.O.W. meeting 8:00 pm	25	26
LE-HI-HO meeting 7:30pm						
27	28	29	30			