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Title: PA Rural Gay Caucus Meeting Minutes

Date: December 1976

Location: LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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The december 4th meeting of the Rural Caucus held in Marietta, Pa. was called to order at 3:00 pm by chairpeople Mary Nancarrow and Joe Burns with a quorum of ten people attending.

It was announced that Chris Poorman will not be able to hold the position of Secretary due to personal difficulties and would be submitting her resignation in the form of a letter within the upcoming week.

The chairpeople were given permission to write a letter approving the opening of a bank account for the Rural Caucus to Jan Sweat (Treasurer).

Mary Nancarrow announced that a permanent mailing address would be established in Harrisburg. (Joe, please make note of the address in the newsletter)

Committee reports were then given by their respective spokespersons:

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Sam Deetz, convener of the Legislative Committee of the Rural Caucus, gave his committee's report. Sam announced that a joint meeting of the legislative committees of the Rural Caucus and the Governor's Council for Sexual Minorities was held on November 20th in Lancaster and that there will continue to be joint meetings as well as Rural Caucus legislative committee meetings in the future. We were reminded that positions needed to be filled within both these committees and that for positions on the Legislative Committee of the Governor's Council to please write Tony Silvestre enclosing a resume. Write to: Tony Silvestre, chairperson; Pennsylvania Council for sexual Minorities; 238 Main Capitol Building; Harrisburg, Pa. 17120.

The first priority of the legislative committees in the future will be the repeal of the Voluntary Deviate Sexual Intercourse Statutes commonly referred to as the sodomy laws. Sam stressed that "By Pennsylvania law we are criminals!" Barry Kohn (Deputy Attorney General of Pa. and head of the Community Advocate Unit in Phila.) has drafted a new bill that is more suitable for repealing the sodomy statutes than previously written drafts. A budget has been prepared for the repeal effort which includes a paid full-time position for a coordinator of the effort as well as allotations for traveling expenses, phone bills, lodging, and postage. This position is open and anyone wishing to ^{apply} should send a resume to the Legislative Committee; Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities; (above address).

Sam outlined the strategy schedule that is being considered by the legislative committees for the repeal effort. The next joint meeting of the legislative committees will be held at the Persad Center on Dec. 18th at 226 Shadyside Center, 5100 Centre Avenue, Pittsburg, Pa.

The state will be divided into 8 sections with a person coordinating the effort in that area. Sam Deetz will over-see "Lobby Day" which will be one segment of the schedule being used.

Sam asked for the support of the Caucus for the repeal effort which was given unanimously. The chairpeople were given permission to invite Barry Kohn to the next caucus meeting to speak on behalf of the legislative committees' work at Sam Deetz's request.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Joe Burns announced that Bob Woods was elected chairperson of this committee at their last meeting. It was also announced that the "telephone tree" was ready to be compiled and put into operation. There will be two purposes for the telephone tree which would be to (a) obtain a consensus of Rural Caucus members on emergency matters and (b) as an alert system for general use involving gays in the general population of the state.

The structure of the telephone tree was presented. It will operate on the

three levels that follow: (1) The Caucus chairpeople and approximately 2 others will initiate the tree by calling persons in individual geographical and organizational areas. (2) These individuals will in turn contact individuals in surrounding areas. (3) They will contact persons assigned in their specific region.

The assignment of phone numbers will take place soon. Any person who wishes not to have their # distributed should contact the communications committee and it will be deleted. Also those whose number is not yet on file and wish that it be, should contact the committee immediately.

Sam Deetz moved that "the definition of voting members shall ^{be} applicable to the telephone tree for a consensus." The motion was passed.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mary Nancarrow gave the report of the Education Committee. She announced that the "book fund" is being implemented. The committee is using the fund in order to buy pro-gay books and distribute them to the public school libraries in the state. These books are being dedicated in the memory of Kenneth Myers.

Mary also stated that the committee will soon meet with the Commissioners of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, though at this point they are still "getting the run-around". Mary and Dave Leas spoke with the "inservice" staff members of the P.D.E. and another meeting is scheduled in December. The committee has discussed making copies of former co-chairperson Ruth Steck's letter to the principal of Lebanon High School in regards to the recent suicide of one of its gay students, ^{Kenneth Myers} They plan on sending these copies to the administrators of the high schools in the state.. Mary said that this would be done in the near future.

The caucus tabled discussion concerning a member's ~~job~~ employment until the next meeting when he could be present.

It was announced that the Pa. Department of Health has requested a person from the caucus to work with the in-house gay task force within the department. Expenses will be paid by the department for that position. Persons interested in the person are requested to send a resume to Dr. Walter Lear.

Tom Karrington moved that "we convene a caucus committee for health concerns." The motion passed and a temporary convener for that committee will be appointed within the next few weeks.

There was discussion on the need for a record keeper for the caucus. Dave Leas moved that "the chair appoint a temporary record keeper for the caucus." The motion passed and a person is expected to be appointed soon.

An announcement was made saying that the Gay Alholic Anonymous group in Harrisburg has been threatened by a group of militant "straights". They have warned that if the group meets again at the present location (Friend's Meeting House), they will vandalize the building. The Gay AA groups has decided not to meet until another meeting place can be found. Discussion on the topic ensued...

It was decided by the caucus that we send a letter to both the Gay AA group and the Friend's Meeting House voicing our support and suggesting that they hold another meeting at the same location. A letter to the National AA organization was found to be deserving. We will also mention an offer to patrol the area if necessary during the meeting hours if results cannot be obtained through the usual channels, i.e. police.

Nominations were opened for the position of Secretary. Sam Edmiston was ^{the} only name accepted at the meeting. Elections for this office will be held at the next caucus meeting. Nominations will remain open until that meeting.

Discussion then followed on ways to increase membership and participation within the caucus. Some of the suggestions made were as follows:

- (1) Placing meeting dates in both the gay and straight press.
- (2) Holding socials after the general meetings.
- (3) Making a concerted effort to attract new members.
- (4) Contacting members who haven't been attending meetings recently.

The next meeting of the Rural Cacus will be held in Room 217, Hetzel Union Building (HUB) in State College, Pa. at 1 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Leas
Temporary Secretary

N.B. Many thanks to Marlin McConnel, proprietor of the Railroad House, for making his establishment available for our meeting.