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Title: PA Rural Gay Caucus Meeting Minutes

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Penna. Rural Gay Caucus--January Minutes

Meeting called to order by co-chair Joe Burns at 2:00 PM

Jan. 8th in Hetzel Union, Penn State U.. 26 representatives from various sexual Minority organizations were present. A special welcome to new Homophiles of Williamsport, Pa. The call for agenda culled interest in the Steck letter to Lebanon High, talk of a Health Committee, and employment discrimination. Temporary secretary, Dave Leas, read the minutes of the last P.R.G.C.

The Committee reports followed ~~xxxx~~ and certain items arose needing our attention. Among them are: the refusal of Lebanon High to accept a memorial book re: Mr. Meyers (student); ~~xxxx~~ Sam Deetz's appointment as Legislative chair has expired and a permanent chair is needed; some communications problems with Lebanon High; the need for personnel on the newly formed Health Committee. The In-House Health Committee in Hsbg. also needs a gay community rep. so that our needs may be fully and objectively met in the field of health-care delivery. A new look at the need for a Social Committee also. The Treasurer, Jan Sweat, reported a balance of \$87.05.

NEW ADDRESS--Pa. Rural Gay Caucus, Box 1505, Harrisburg, Penna. 17105.

Speaker--Barry Kohn, State ~~XXXXXX~~ Att'y General's Office

He encouraged all gays to speak out when discrimination occurs and not be silent on gay issues. He addressed the liberal attitude of the Shapp administration in which certain sexual sanctions were reduced from felonies to misdemeanors.

Mr. Kohn stated that a new Sodomy repeal bill has been prepared and contains minor amendments to the Criminal and Minors codes. These amendments almost ensure passage of the entire bill and are beneficial to all of society, not just our minority opinion segment. Regional coordinators, for a lobby effort in the public sector, are needed. Direct support for gay rights may be given by calling the Governors Hotline toll-free at 800-932-0784.

We are hopeful of sponsorship of the bill by Sen. Craig Lewis who has been very supportive in the past. The bill to be submitted in late Feb. and followed by a second Lobby Day.

The bills salient features:

1. 16 years shall be considered the age of accountability for ones individual sexual activities.
2. The ~~sax~~ statutory rape age of 14 will not be considered as the age of sexual accountability re: homosexual encounters because of the distinction that people make between 'gay' and 'straight' sexual activities (pure stereotyping, of course)
3. The corruption of minors clause is to be changed to protect 'peer group' relationships (ie--in the case of a 17 and 18 yr. old being prosecuted at present, the 18 yr old would be subject to corruption charges since the 17 yr. old is considered a minor, yet ~~both~~ are considered to be of the same peer group by society at large.)

Press coverage of the bill will attempt to show it as a law enforcement bill rather than gay rights implications because it applies to all sexual conduct.

The ~~XXXXXX~~ need for a Social Committee and Social Chair was again discussed and a suggestion was made that persons from within the caucus could be responsible for social activity when the caucus met in their area. This would bypass the need for a Social committee at all. There is still a need for someone to coordinate Caucus fundraisers. Fundraisers need not be social activities of the Caucus, however.

Sam Deetz moved that 'somebody be ~~XXXXXX~~ appointed Social ~~XXX~~ Chairperson to coordinate social activities of the caucus. Fundraisers and P.R.G.C. socials are not linked together by this coordination'. It was seconded and passed by the majority.

Committee meeting dates were set for January.

An announcement was made that socialization and refreshments would follow the meeting. All interested persons could get together at Beaver Hill Apartments, Room 731.

The meeting was adjourned by co-chair at 5:00 PM.

Persons interested in the In-House Health Committee work should send a resume to Dr. Walter Lear, Box 90, Harrisburg, Pa., 17120.

Martin Rock gave a moving account of his problems with his employer in the area of job performance vs. gay lifestyle suitability. No logical reason ~~xxx~~ could be ~~xi~~ given why a homosexual should be barred from employment simply because she or he was gay. Martin kept his job.

The Lebanon High School pot continues to simmer as the principal states that the student who committed suicide ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ because of suspected homosexual tendencies was not in fact a student at his school/ he ~~xxxx~~ also says that the school administrates and practices non-discriminatory policies.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Discussion by Caucus suggested that the letter not be disseminated to other districts until conflicts are resolved. A review of student counselling procedures would seem to be in order to test the veracity of the non-discriminatory tone. Sexist polarization in the schools must also be eradicated so that all sexual activity can be dealt with objectively. A suggestion made that a second letter be sent ~~explaining~~ explaining the technical misunderstanding and restating P.R.G.C.'s position. Also in the area of refusal by the district of memorial books, it was suggested that the books be less explicit in sexual nature, and more explicit in the area of understanding and acceptance of gay lifestyles. Dave Leas moved that 'Education Committee not use the Steck letter as a form letter to other districts.' Motion seconded and carried, 3 abstentions.