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THE RUTGERS UNIVERSITY LESBIAN/GAY ALLIANCE 1969-1989 THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS†

BY

DAVID NICHOLS AND

MORRIS J. KAFKA-HOZSCHLAG

Mr. Nichols graduated from Rutgers College in 1975 and currently runs his own business.
Mr. Kafka-Holzschlag graduated from Rutgers College in 1987 and is an historian in New Brunswick, N.J.

Introduction

On June 27, 1969, the New York City Police raided the Stonewall Inn, an after-hours bar on Christopher Street in the Village. The Stonewall was a popular spot with the drag queens and the younger crowd. On an ordinary night the patrons of such an establishment would have reacted in a frightened, docile manner. This, however, was no ordinary night. The drag queens and other patrons were fed up with being harrassed and spontaneously fought back, shocking the police. Officers were pelted with bottles and stones while they waited, barricaded inside the bar, for reinforcements as a crowd gathered outside. Police began to drag employees and patrons of the Stonewall into a paddy wagon. Shouts of "Gay Power," cheers and choruses of "We Shall Overcome" rose from the crowd. A drag queen defended herself with her purse as she was shoved into the wagon and was clubbed by a police officer; the crowd became angrier.

† Rutgers Department of Special Collections and Archives is the depository for the Rutgers University Lesbian/Gay Archives, upon whose holdings much of this article is based.

The paddy wagon drove off but the restless crowd wouldn't disperse. A few police officers were still inside of the bar. Some young gay men pulled up a parking meter and used it as a battering ram; the windows of the Stonewall were shattered and the doors began to give. The police turned a fire hose on the crowd. The crowd dumped wastecans into the bar and squirted lighter fluid on the resulting pile of trash, igniting a fire in the Stonewall. The paddy wagon then returned with two fire engines. The officers began clubbing people again and the crowd finally retreated.*

For the next four nights that summer confrontations with gay people by homophobic mobs and the police continued in the neighborhood of the Stonewall. These events received national attention. Gay people were suddenly proud and ready to fight for their rights. Out of this historic confrontation the modern Gay Rights Movement was born. That same Autumn this new-found "Gay Pride" made its way onto the Rutgers College Campus with the founding of the Student Homophile League, the oldest college group formed as a result of the Stonewall riots.*

The Beginnings

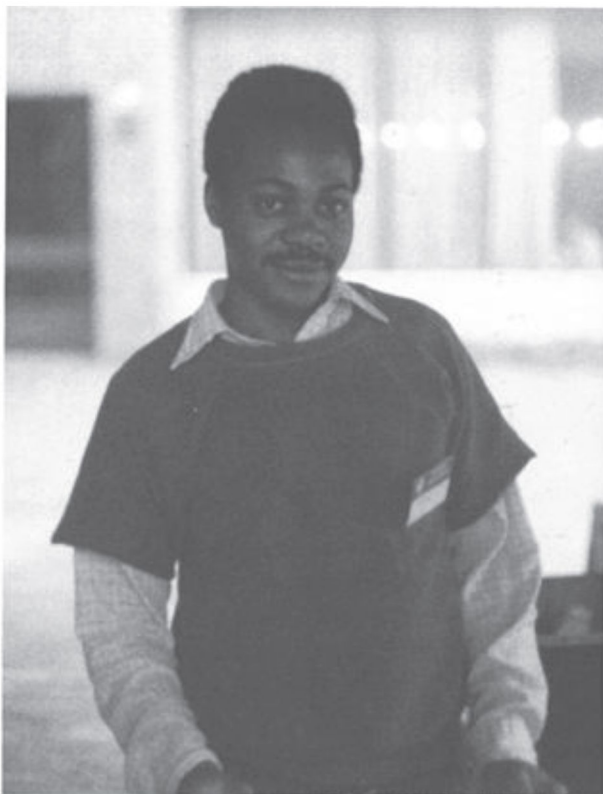
"Looking back, what strikes me as the the key to the Homophile League was that it was a personal growth organization that looked like a political one. By that I mean that it was a safe place to invent ourselves, to find identities and styles as Gay people in a way that would not have been possible otherwise, at least not for me and many others."¹ These are the words of one of the early members of the student Homophile League (SHL or simply "the League"), which was formed in the fall of 1969 by Lionel Cuffie. Cuffie, a sophomore from Keyport, New Jersey, began the group with the aid of his roommates and the members of the Student Homophile League of Columbia University which was recognized by the Columbia administration in April, 1967. The Rutgers SHL was the first post-Stonewall student gay group in America, with its first meeting held on December 2, 1969 on the Rutgers New Brunswick campus. Methodist minister John Wright, who had been counseling Lionel in regard to the draft, agreed to sponsor the group when asked to by Cuffie,² and supervised the first meeting. Wright recalls a need for a college group as an

* Sources for Introduction:

Laud Humphreys, *Out of The Closets* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 6.
Jonathan Ned Katz, "The Stonewall Rebellion," *The Advocate*, 527 (June 20, 1989), 39.

¹ Letter from Kevin Verrick to David Nichols, April of 1988.

² Interview conducted by David Nichols with Reverend John Wright, March 30, 1988, New Brunswick, New Jersey.



Lionel Cuffie
1949-1985
Founder of the Student Homophile League

alternative to Manny's Den, a local gay bar in New Brunswick, catering to an older, more conservative town crowd. A support system was also needed on the campus for those wanting to come out and those who were out. The gay campus community also required a focal point and a public voice, such as a newsletter.³

Cuffie was elected Chairman of the League by acclamation and stated in the student paper that "as Chairman of the organization he hoped that the League would ultimately aid in the breakdown of social and political persecution and discrimination directed against minority groups."⁴ The

³ Idem.

⁴ *Student Homophile League Newsletter*, Volume 1, Number 1, April, 1970. Page 2.



Patrick Mattiola, one of the founders of the Student Homophile League

others elected to office in the SHL were: Stanley Magnum, Vice-Chairman; Ray Smith, Secretary; and Patrick Mattiola, Treasurer. About fifty men and one woman attended the first meeting. Richard Levao, President of the Rutgers College Student Government Association, was in attendance to assist the group in drawing up its first constitution.⁵ Howard Crosby, Dean of Students, Rutgers College between 1965 and 1983, recalled that the League was just another of the many activist groups which formed in the late sixties. The administration was aware of the Columbia Student Homophile League and expected a gay group eventually to form on the Rutgers' campus.⁶

Cuffie's original idea that "the Student Homophile League is not a so-

⁵ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, November 1969, p. 3.

⁶ Interview conducted by David Nichols with Dean Howard Crosby on July 28, 1989, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

cial organization, but rather a civil libertarian and educational one,"⁷ was modified soon after the group's inception when it began to provide social functions for the lesbians and gay men on campus. By early 1970 the League had its office in the Rutgers' Student Center on College Avenue. Meetings were held weekly on the College Avenue campus with discussion groups and socials held on the Busch and Douglass campuses. (There was no Cook College at this time and Livingston College had just opened in the fall of 1969.) Twenty to thirty people, including only two or three women, attended those meetings on the average.

The ten-page SHL newsletter appeared in April, 1970, containing a manifesto on sexual liberation, news of the group, poetry, various articles on homosexuality, and a calendar of events. The results of a random survey of 250 students, conducted by the SHL on March 4, 1970, also were released. The survey showed an overwhelming awareness and approval of the SHL and of homosexual relationships.

On May 2, 1970 the first SHL dance, attended by about 150 people, was held on the New Brunswick campus. Among the crowd were heterosexual friends of the members and some people who just came to see what the dance would be like.

In an effort to fulfill the educational goals of the SHL, members participated in speaking engagements at several fraternities and dormitories. Charles Orr, a graduate student in social work, represented the League on the public television program "New Jersey Speaks" which dealt with the homophile movement in New Jersey on March 27, 1970.⁸

The SHL sponsored an exhibition of erotic art in the main lounge of the Rutgers' Student Center, May 6 through May 15, 1970. The exhibition, on loan from the Gallery of Erotic Art in New York, featured paintings, sculpture, engravings, tapestry, and a live human sculpture entitled "The Silent Soldier"⁹ which consisted of SHL member Patrick Mattioli hanging nude upon a cross, his back to viewers, for several intervals of one hour each. After the first day of the exhibit some visitors were so outraged that they attempted to pull the man off the cross, causing both gay and straight supporters of the exhibit to link arms to keep the angry spectators away.

Dean Howard Crosby's most vivid memory of the SHL was of this art exhibit. He negotiated with the group to move the "The Silent Soldier" to the music room, where people would only view it if they wished. In

⁷ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, November 25, 1969, p. 1.

⁸ See footnote 4.

⁹ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, May 5, 1970, p. 5.

return for moving the piece, he explained, the SHL would keep the support of the administration for its funding and continued existence. Dean Crosby received no phone calls of complaint regarding the art exhibit; however the Dean was aware that Dr. Mason Gross, President of the University, had received many calls from legislators about the exhibit and Dr. Gross stood his ground, supporting the group's right to hold the exhibit. Dean Crosby is certain that the SHL would have encountered far more problems in connection with the art exhibit, if it had not been for Dr. Gross's firm commitment to human rights and artistic freedom.¹⁰

To end the SHL's first academic year in existence, many members of the group marched in the first Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade in New York City, a celebration of the anniversary of the Stonewall riot.

Academic Year 1970-1971

During its first full year, the League's priority was educational as well as both political and social. The Group felt a strong need to educate the public about lesbians and gay men and to topple the common stereotypes. The League was attempting to educate homosexuals who had not come out as well as the general Rutgers community. The speakers bureau of the SHL developed formally at this time. The speakers bureau, via mailings, attempted to reach groups on and off campus.¹¹ This effort resulted in speaking engagements before parochial and public high schools, church groups, university classes, and even Trenton State's police training courses. To further educate the public, the SHL published several articles in *Targum*. Additionally a radical action caucus called R.U. Fags was formed to confront the status quo politically.

Feminist consciousness was developing at this time simultaneously with gay consciousness. Many women felt more oppressed as women than as lesbians, and therefore devoted most of their energy to the women's movement.¹² Barbara Lee was elected Chairwoman of the League in December, 1970¹³ and devoted her energy to the gay movement.¹⁴ Lionel Cuffie, founder of the SHL and in a similar position as regards the black liberation movement, held the office of Secretary.

The first anniversary of the League was celebrated with a dinner and a

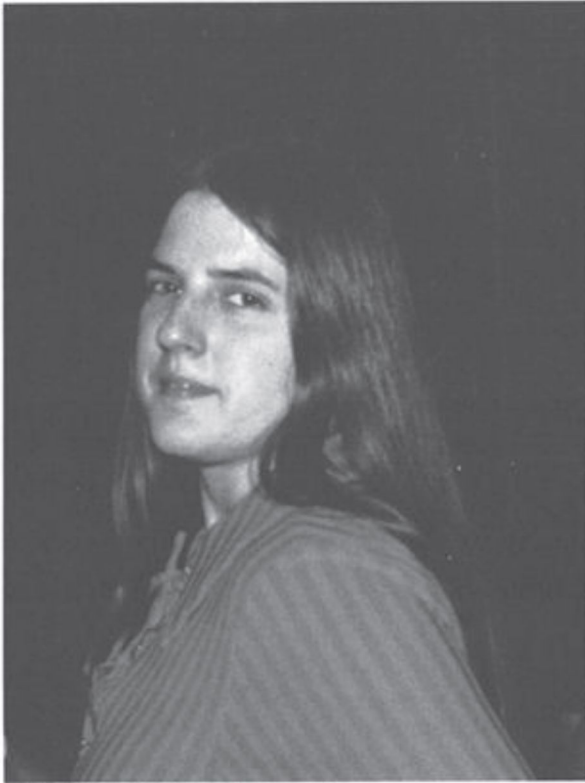
¹⁰ See footnote 6.

¹¹ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, September 30, 1970, p. 2.

¹² Gay Archives SHL letter of December 16, 1970 signed by Barbara Lee and Lionel Cuffie. Alexander Library.

¹³ *Idem*.

¹⁴ Telephone interview conducted by David Nichols with Barbara Lee, August 9, 1989. Somerville, New Jersey.



Barbara Lee, one of the original members of the Rutgers Student Homophile League

dance, which featured "The Looking Glass Band."¹⁵ Several other dances were held that year as a social outlet for the Rutgers gay community. Rutgers SHL held its first annual Conference on Gay Liberation April 30 through May 2, 1970, with Cuffie serving as Conference Chairman. At the time of the conference the League had elected Jerry Sprung, Chairman; Charles Orr, Vice-Chairman; Robert Andrews, Treasurer; and Robert McCarroll, Secretary. Even though the League was only one and a half years old, the conference featured the best known lesbian and gay men activists in the country. Conference presenters included Barbara Gittings of the Homophile Action League, Franklin Kameny of the Washington Mattachine Society, Barbara Love of the Daughters of Bilitis, and Isabel Miller, author of *A Place For Us*. Workshops covered political,

¹⁵ Rutgers Student Fund Check Voucher A 3911, December 4, 1970.

social, religious, and lesbian separatist issues. A barbecue and dance were held on Saturday night of the Conference. The concluding panel discussion on Sunday was changed to an open microphone discussion on sexism in the gay movement. This was because Martha Shelly led a group of women out of the conference to protest the elitism and male chauvinism among the other conference participants.¹⁶

In spite of the tension arising from these political differences, the conference showed that a college group could hold a major gay event, and established the high standards for the four conferences which followed.

The Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade was formally organized in New York City for the second Stonewall anniversary in June 1970. The SHL contributed \$25.00 for its participation in the celebration¹⁷ and made and marched under its first banner. The banner still exists today and can be found in Alexander Library Gay and Lesbian Archives.

Academic Year 1971-1972

The Leagues' next year was active and productive. The group was well-organized internally and presented a polished image to the campus and the public. The League also published an information pamphlet for the public to aid in education about homosexuality.¹⁸ The pamphlet included such topics as "Facts about Homosexuality," "Why Are We Gay?," and "What is the Rutgers Student Homophile League?" and was distributed at information tables set up at the Rutgers and Livingston dining halls. Sensitivity training sessions were held with the campus rapline staff on gay issues, and extensive speaking engagements were presented both on and off campus.¹⁹

The League took on the Rutgers Athletic Department over the definition of a "date." The Athletic Department defined a date as a person of comparable age and of the opposite sex, and with your student I.D., you and a "date" were admitted free to athletic events. The League challenged this policy as being ageist and anti-gay. The issue was fought over several years and never really resolved.

The League was politically active in the gay community. Various representatives attended gay meetings and conferences in the tri-state area.²⁰

¹⁶ *Gay Magazine*

¹⁷ Rutgers Student Fund Check Voucher A 9806, June 17, 1971.

¹⁸ *Student Homophile League Newsletter*, Volume II, Number 2, March 23, 1972.

¹⁹ *Student Homophile League Newsletter*, Volume II, Number 1, February 18, 1972.

²⁰ Rutgers Student Fund Check Voucher A 9850, December 21, 1971.

The League also provided meeting space for the New Jersey Gay Coalition, a state wide umbrella group.

The officers elected mid-year were Robert Andrews, Chairperson; and Guido Loyola, Treasurer.

To celebrate the League's second anniversary, a four-page "Special Gay Liberation Supplement" appeared in *Targum* on December 7, 1971. The Supplement covered such topics as a statement of the purposes and accomplishments of the League, politics, heterosexual oppression, as well as comic strips and humor.

Meetings that year included such diverse speakers as Pete Wilson of the Eulenspiegel Society (leather and S&M), Jan Ruben of the Daughters of Bilitis, Lee Brewster of Queens Liberation, and the Gay Activist Alliance of New York on the introduction of the first gay rights bill in the New York City Council.²¹

The League published two newsletters in the spring semester. The newsletters included announcements of dances and meeting topics, poetry, the formation of such new groups as the Livingston Gay Men's Collective, and the SHL Black Caucus. The newsletters also provided a platform for the political stands of various individual members.

The Information and Education Committee of the League met with the Alexander Library Periodical Department to discuss why the Periodical Department refused to subscribe to gay related newspapers and magazines.²²

The "Way Out" coffeehouse, established in the basement of the Rutgers Student Center, was sponsored by the League on Friday nights during the school year and had a 25 cents admission charge. Entertainment was provided by gay performers and offered a social alternative to the local bars.²³ Many people took advantage of this relaxed atmosphere to make friends and become more aware of what the League had to offer.

On May 5 through 7, 1972 the League held its second conference entitled "Gay Cultural Exposition." Speakers at the Exposition included Isabell Miller, author of *Patience and Sarah*; John Francis Hunter, author of *The Gay Insider*; as well as many other individuals, gay business owners, and gay organizations.²⁴ The Exposition was one of the major gay events on the East Coast that year.

²¹ Idem.

²² See footnote 19.

²³ See footnote 18.

²⁴ Gay Cultural Exposition Program May 5, 1972.

Academic Year 1972-1973

Membership in the League was now over eighty men and women, and it was one of the largest student organizations on campus. Educational and political action were stressed along with the social aspects. To begin the year the officers were Jon Clayborne, Chairperson; Robert Przygoda, Vice-Chairperson; Michael Sitzer, Treasurer; and Sarajane Garten, Secretary.

A film strip "The Silent Minority" was purchased for speaking engagements and was used at many of the over thirty groups the League spoke before both on and off campus.²⁵

Politically the League continued to participate in the New Jersey Gay Coalition, and was in contact with other East Coast groups offering support and information. Basic human rights for homosexuals and repeal of anti-gay laws were top priorities of the League.

The League continued to provide a variety of social events for lesbians and gay men during the academic year 1972-1973. Monthly dances were held in addition to weekly meetings and the coffeehouse. Additionally Jonathon Katz's play "Coming Out" was presented in conjunction with the Student Center Program Board²⁶ and was open to all members of the New Brunswick community.

The third annual conference on Gay Liberation and Culture was held April 26-29, 1973. A broad spectrum of events held attempting to include both the straight and gay communities. Events ranged from an informal workshop on homosexuality for non-league members of the University community, a lecture on Gay Politics, a Gay Cabaret, ranging from a wide variety of entertainment reflecting gay life, a dance, a picnic, to a gay religious service. Sixteen workshops were presented which covered such topics as "Health, Self-help and the Lesbian" by Lee Lehman, the "Legal Aspects of Being Gay" by Dr. Franklin Kameny, and "Gays in the Arts" by Arthur Bell.²⁷

The 1973 conference drew an even larger crowd than the previous year and was again a major event for the East Coast lesbian and gay community.

Academic Year 1973-1974

In the spring of 1973 the League decided that officers should be elected each spring and hold office for the entire upcoming academic year. The

²⁵ Rutgers Student Fund Check Voucher No. 106502, November 15, 1972.

²⁶ Rutgers Student Fund Check Voucher No. 111695, October 30, 1972.

²⁷ Program of the Third Annual Conference On Gay Liberation and Culture.

election of officers for academic year 1973-1974 was hotly contested, with Marion Purcell and Susan Borkowski both running for Chairperson. This was unusual, as a single slate of officers was usually proposed and accepted unanimously. After a good deal of backroom politicking Susan Borkowski was elected Chairperson; Gina Cologero, Vice-Chairperson; J. Lee Lehman, Treasurer; and Jimmy Williams, Secretary.²⁸ Later in the year Charles Koppel became the Vice-Chairperson.

Energy in the League was running high. The office was kept open and informal meetings were held in members' homes over the summer. The official membership of dues paying (\$2.00 voting member — \$1.00 social fee) students reported to the University was over eighty people.²⁹ The actual number of interested people was much higher, with over one hundred attending some meetings.

In a continuing effort to educate the straight community by dispelling myths about lesbians and gays and their culture, the League maintained a very active speakers' bureau. Members of the League spoke before five hundred medical students at the Rutgers Medical School's sexuality seminar, various classes on all campuses, and many religious and educational organizations throughout the state. The speakers' bureau handled sixty to seventy-five speaking engagements that year.

In previous years most League events had been held on the College Avenue Campus. In an effort to include the other campuses a folk night was held at Douglass and a soul night at Livingston.³⁰

Regular dances were held the first Saturday of each month, with a \$1.00 admission if beer was served, and were open to both the University and New Jersey communities. The dances were a major source of fund-raising for the League with two hundred to three hundred people attending regularly.

The fourth anniversary, in December of 1973, was a larger event than in previous years. A buffet dinner was served by the League for those in attendance, and entertainment was provided by a lesbian a cappella singing group, The Oral Tradition. The group was composed of four Douglass women (Kay Turner, Nancy Dean, Joanna Labow, and Paula Schorr) who used the names of people in the audience in their songs. The Oral Tradition was very campy and a huge popular success. A dance followed the entertainment and the event was very well attended.

The Fourth Annual Conference on Gay Unity was held April 19-21,

²⁸ *R.U.H.L. Newsletter*, Volume 3, No. 1, May 10, 1973.

²⁹ *Idem.*

³⁰ *Idem.*

1974. The League and the Graduate School of Education presented a "Symposium on Gay Liberation and Education." Speakers included: Dr. Joseph Cady, Department of English, Rutgers University; Barbara Gittings, Task Force on Gay Liberation, American Library Association; Dr. Bruce Voeller, Executive Director, National Gay Task Force; and Father John McNeil, a Jesuit Priest. Father McNeil's name could not be used in any of the publicity due to his problems with the Vatican. He said that he was a homosexual, but not practicing. Over ten years later he was defrocked by Rome.³¹

In conjunction with the Conference, the first Blue Jeans Day was held. The League advertised widely in the campus newspapers that Friday April 19, 1974 was National Gay Day and said that, if you wished to be counted as gay, just wear blue jeans. People were placed at strategic locations on the campuses and pretended to count all people who were wearing blue jeans. As blue jeans were worn by the vast majority of the student population at this time, many people were in a quandary over what to wear that day. Blue Jeans Day became the topic of concern and conversation on campus and many people took it very seriously. Blue Jeans Day was never intended as a serious attempt to determine the homosexual population of the University. The purpose of the event was to demonstrate that it was as ridiculous to be marked for wearing blue jeans as it was to be marked for living a lesbian/gay life-style. The League was both surprised and pleased by the student's reaction to Blue Jeans Day, and felt it was a successful exercise in raising the consciousness of the student body.

The sixteen workshops presented at the conference included such topics as "The Lesbian Mother and the Law," Anne Elwell; "Gays in Politics," Dr. Franklin Kameny; "Lesbian Separatism," Julia P. Stanley; and "Queens' Liberation," Bebe J. Scarpie. Vito Russo, the noted gay film critic, presented one of his early programs on "Homosexuality in Films." Jeanne and Jules Manford (founders of Parents of Gays) gave one of their first talks on "Gays and Parents."³²

The Conference itself was highly successful, drawing nearly three hundred people to the workshops and five hundred to the Saturday night dance. The Friday night cabaret and the Sunday picnic also drew large crowds.

³¹ Program of the Fourth Annual Conference on Gay Unity.

³² *Idem.*

Academic Year 1974-1975

The League membership was now approximately fifty people.³³ Officers were Paul Starkey, Chairperson; John O'Donnell, Vice-Chairperson; J. Lee Lehman, Treasurer; and Fred DeFalco, Secretary.

The speakers' bureau was still very active, giving forty to fifty presentations that year with many on and off campus groups now using this service on an annual basis.

"SO GAY," a radio program dealing with lesbian and gay issues, premiered over WRSU-FM in March of 1975. Paul Starkey hosted the program, and John O'Donnell was the executive producer. Programs covered a history of the League, religion and being gay, gay life as seen through the eyes of gays in different age groups and backgrounds, and the music and poetry of local lesbian and gay talent. The program aired twice monthly on Friday evenings and was rebroadcast the following Tuesday morning.³⁴

That fall a concert was sponsored by the League featuring Steven Grossman, a popular gay folk singer.³⁵ The concert was open to the entire Rutgers community and was successful.

Beginning in September the League published a newsletter called *The Gay Old Times*. The editors of the newsletter were Lorraine Grassano and John Waiblinger. The newsletter was published five times during the academic year and contained an events calendar, local and national lesbian/gay news stories, poetry, opinions, and short stories. This was the first time the League regularly published a newsletter.

The League held regular monthly dances as a social outlet and its fifth anniversary was celebrated with a dance featuring the all-lesbian band "Slip of the Tongue." Additionally, "A Very Natural Thing," a major gay motion picture, was shown at Scott Hall and drew a large crowd.

The Fifth Annual Conference on Gay Freedom was held April 18-20, 1975. A gay cabaret was held on Friday evening featuring a comedy show, local entertainers and a fashion show. Twelve workshops were offered on Saturday including: "Religious Experience and Gay Liberation," by Howard Gaas, a minister in the Metropolitan Community Church; "Gay In Straight Society — How do we Adjust?," by Dr. Ralph Blair, Director of the Homosexual Community Counseling Center; and "Sepa-

³³ *Scarlet Letter* 1975.

³⁴ Rutgers Student Fund Voucher No. 117867, September 19, 1974.

³⁵ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 17, 1976, p. 6.

ratism in the Gay Liberation Movement," by Barbara Gittings, Chairperson of the National Gay Archives.³⁶ The Conference concluded on Sunday with a brunch.

Academic Year 1975-1976

Membership was dwindling at this time as a clique of older students ran the League, and few new students showed interest in their agenda. Robert Przygoda was the chairperson for the fall semester, and Kevin Verricker was the chairperson for the spring semester. Several other people had check-signing authority, but what offices they held and for how long is unclear.

The speakers' bureau was going strong, but people wanting speakers tended to call specific individuals rather than the League. More than forty speaking engagements took place that year in the name of the League; however most of them were handled by a small group of former League members.

For several years the League had informally staffed the office in the evenings to handle drop-ins and phone calls from people requesting help or information. A gay switchboard was now set up with regular hours and formal record keeping.³⁷

Monthly dances were held and attendance was good, with an average crowd of 150 to 200 people. Weekly meetings featured speakers as Barbara Gittings and Franklin Kameny.³⁸

The sixth conference was announced, but no planning or follow up was done and the event never took place.

After skipping a year the League held a second Blue Jeans Day. The campus reaction this time however was quite different. An effigy was hung from a tree in front of the Delta Kappa Epsilon (DKE) fraternity on College Avenue. The effigy bore a sign which read "The only good gay is a dead gay — back to your closets homos."³⁹ The League failed to protest the effigy. A small group of feminists protested outside of DKE and eventually brought about the removal of the effigy.

The hanging of the effigy caused a furor on the campus, most of which was expressed in the pages of the *Targum*. Gay men, lesbians, and feminists were particularly outraged and called for action to be taken against DKE. DKE claimed innocence in the matter, but defended itself in *Tar-*

³⁶ *The Gay Old Times*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1975.

³⁷ *The Gay Old Times*, September 1975, p. 7.

³⁸ *Idem*.

³⁹ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 26, 1976, p. 1.

gum.⁴⁰ The University administration did remove the effigy after approximately four hours, but did and said little else about the matter.

The League's reaction can be summed up by Kevin Verricker, the chairperson, who was quoted in *Targum*: "If the sign had read 'The only good black is a dead black,' everyone would have been screaming. The idea of hanging a black in effigy is inconceivable."⁴¹

Academic Year 1976-1977

In an effort to distance itself from the failure of the League to formally protest the DKE's effigy hanging of the previous year, the group changed its name to the Rutgers Gay Alliance. The officers of the newly named Alliance were Kevin Green, Chairperson; and Greg Sobol, Treasurer.⁴²

Membership was now considerably smaller than in previous years. This is perhaps due to DKE's effigy hanging which expressed an increasingly intolerant attitude towards gays and lesbians on campus.

Regular meetings were held and guest speakers were invited.⁴³ Dances were still held as a social outlet for the gay and lesbian community, but attendance was smaller than in past years.⁴⁴

The Alliance held the third Blue Jeans Day on April 27, 1978. This year an effigy was hung from a second story window of DKE, its arms outstretched in the image of a crucifixion. The effigy had a sign on it which read, "Hi! I'm Ben Gay. Have a Nice Day."⁴⁵

Reaction from the Alliance and other outraged students was immediate this time. A protest was held in front of DKE and angry students went to the offices of Charles Coogan, Rutgers College Dean of Fraternity Affairs, and Howard Crosby, Rutgers College Dean of Students. After hours of unanswered demands by students, a phone call from Coogan to DKE condemning the action caused the effigy to be moved from the window to the second story porch and half its sign was removed. Since the effigy was on DKE property this year, instead of city property in front of the house, Dean Crosby's reaction was: "I don't believe that there is any basis at the present time on which we could tell them to take it down."⁴⁶

The Alliance, in *Targum*, demanded an apology from DKE and con-

⁴⁰ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 29, 1976, p. 4.

⁴¹ See footnote 37.

⁴² Taken from the accounting sheets of the Rutgers Gay Alliance 1976-1977.

⁴³ *Idem*.

⁴⁴ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 28, 1977, p. 1.

⁴⁵ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 29, 1977, p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Idem*.

demned the University's lack of action. Neither DKE nor the University Administration responded to the Alliance demand.

Academic Year 1977-1978

Kevin Hayes and Greg Sobol were the Co-Presidents of the Alliance. The speakers' bureau handled at least a dozen speaking engagements.⁴⁷ Regular meetings were held with speakers such as J. Lee Lehman, a former member, now director of the National Gay Student Center and ongoing rap groups were organized for members of the Alliance.

In a letter from Alliance member Robert Goodman to the *Targum*, mention is made of a National Gay Blue Jeans Day sponsored by the National Gay Task Force. The Alliance did not participate due to the emotional and ugly reactions which characterized the past two Blue Jeans Days. Goodman's letter goes on to call for cooperation between all groups on campus.⁴⁸

On May 2, 1978 the Alliance and the Rutgers Association for Poetry sponsored a lecture by poet and radical Allen Ginsberg. The event was a success with over four hundred people attending.⁴⁹

Academic Year 1978-1979

The officers of the Alliance were Robert Goodman, President; Patti Kosco, Vice President; and Jim Hennessy, Secretary/Treasurer. Later in the year Kevin Hayes became Vice President and Celeste Kolodin Secretary/Treasurer. Blue Jeans Day was held on Friday April 20, 1979. This year DKE did not hang an effigy, but hung banners out the windows which read "Sodomy is a pain in the ass" and "Anita — Deke loves you." "Anita Deke loves you" is a reference to singer Anita Bryant's anti-homosexual campaign of the time. The Alliance was prepared for such a reaction and had planned a rally at the Brower Commons for 2:30 that afternoon. After speeches, a group of about fifty protesters marched down College Avenue to the DKE house. One of the protesters, Gary Stein, was hit in the head by a rock and taken to the health center. The rock came from the DKE lawn, but the fraternity claimed it was thrown by one of the non-brothers who had gathered on their law to support DKE's anti-homosexual stand.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Interview conducted by Dave Nichols with Greg Sobol, April 21, 1989, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

⁴⁸ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 19, 1978, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, May 3, 1978, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 23, 1979, p. 1.

The Alliance called for DKE to be put on probation, but this did not happen at this time. The administration, however, did react this year. Howard Crosby, Dean of Students at Rutgers College, issued the following statement: "Rutgers College is committed to providing an atmosphere where student, faculty, and staff can exchange philosophies and share ideas without fear of harrassment, retribution, or ridicule. The nature of the learning process mandates that all members of the community respect the beliefs, values, and life-styles of others. Acts of intolerance, bigotry or racism, for example, whether anti-semitic, anti-black or anti-gay are threats to the entire community."

University Executive Vice President Paul Pearson launched a full-scale review into the status of fraternities and sororities at the University. He cited among several incidents the harassment of gay students during a march as one of his reasons for the review.⁵¹

Academic Year 1979-1980

Robert Goodman was reelected President of the RGA for 1979-80. Kevin Hayes and Wayne Clawans served as the Vice Presidents for Fall 1979. Sean McKeon was Vice President for Spring, 1980. Gary Stein was Secretary, Steve Robba was Treasurer. The Events Committee and the Outreach Committee were the most active of the many committees.

The chair of the Outreach Committee, which handled the speakers' bureau, was Guillermo ("Bill") Camilo. He also chaired the Dance Committee.⁵² David Hill became involved in the speakers' bureau in Autumn 1979. The bureau provided 2-6 people to speak about "the gay experience" to psychology classes, dorm groups and community groups such as the Middlesex County Juvenile Reception Center and Damon House (a residential substance abuse program in New Brunswick). Hill became the Outreach Chair later in the year.⁵³

The group remained active over the summer. Five newsletters were published that year. Weekly meetings featured activists such as Phyllis Noble and Franklin Kameny.⁵⁴ Hill first heard about the Alliance in September, 1979 when he got a pamphlet during Orientation Weekend. Hill attended the Frosh Activities Fair as a transfer student and found the Alliance booth. He met Goodman there and attended the group's Wednesday night meetings. On October 14, 1979 Hill joined three busloads of

⁵¹ *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, April 26, 1979, p. 1.

⁵² Information in a letter to the authors, from Todd Hartman, NY, NY, Oct. 5, 1989.

⁵³ Interview with David Hill, New Brunswick, NJ, June 10, 1989.

⁵⁴ *Alliance*, Newsletter of the Rutgers Gay Alliance, New Brunswick, Oct., 1979

activists, including Goodman, Todd Hartman and Ingrid Wilhite (who acted as a bus monitor on Goodman's urging, in order to provide gender parity) for the march on Washington for Gay Rights. The group marched under the RUGA banner chanting "We R, R U?."⁵⁵ According to Hill: ". . . that gathering was the most life-changing sight I'd ever seen."⁵⁶ Hartman said:

I found myself marching proudly with the Alliance . . . that marked the beginning of my politicization as a gay person and solidified my interest in the Alliance as an organization.⁵⁷

The group celebrated its tenth anniversary this year with a lecture by gay author Allen Young, a gala anniversary dance, and an open poetry reading.⁵⁸ Major decisions were approved by a "Planning Committee," which was really an executive committee that met prior to the general meetings. The planning committee was open to group participation; officers and committee chairs were expected to attend.⁵⁹

While Goodman was President the group followed a set system to attract and maintain a sizeable membership. This system consisted of weekly programmed meetings, often featuring guest speakers and supplemented by frequent dances and other special events which tended to build up the group's periphery. Constant media publicity, including nearly daily ads in the *Targum* for the Hotline, large classifieds for meetings and dances, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, news articles, posters and flyers were also part of the strategy.⁶⁰

Meetings were intended to draw a crowd, entertain (and thereby encourage repeat attendance) and to educate. The ideological approach underlying the programming tended to support diversity; thus divergent and sometimes very controversial perspectives were provided in the programs, with the implicit message to attendees being: "you decide." At least one of the programs presented under this approach had a sexual content which was heavily criticized by Alliance members active in anti-pornography work. Nonetheless, the goal of producing high attendance through the presentation of provocative topics or speakers was effective. The largest attendance which Goodman recalls was when the North

⁵⁵ Information in a letter to the authors, from Ingrid Wilhite, San Francisco, Oct. 5, 1989.

⁵⁶ Information in a letter to Morris Kafka, from David Hill, Morristown, NJ, Aug. 16, 1989.

⁵⁷ Hartman.

⁵⁸ *Alliance*, Dec., 1979.

⁵⁹ Information in a letter to the authors, from Robert Goodman, Oct. 9, 1989.

⁶⁰ Goodman.

American Man-Boy Love Association spoke at a meeting. Even so, there were a number of goals other than simply stirring up attendance underlying programming; one major goal was aptly summarized by the title of Margie Nichols' frequently repeated program: "Developing a Positive Gay Identity." Such basic topics were staple programs early in each academic year when potential new members would be attending the meetings.⁶¹

It was Goodman's view that frequent, conspicuous publicity which projected the idea that there was a large, organized lesbian/gay community on campus would help the closeted lesbians and gay men on campus to see that they were not isolated and would thereby support them in coming out. To Goodman, basically interested in political issues, the dances were well worth the tremendous time and energy necessary to make them successful, because they were such an important tool in promoting the group's visibility. Hartman helped Camilo putting the dances together. Hartman remembers:

These dances always had great turnouts, were talked about favorably and enthusiastically, yet still always managed to be surrounded with controversy. Being held right by the Student Center in its annex [the graduate student lounge], individuals often had to endure jeering from straight students in this well-trafficked area of campus. There was also the constant problem of publicity, for the posters put up around campus were invariably torn down in homophobic reaction. Or, as in my senior year, [an] irate radical-lesbian/feminist separatist . . . tore them down in protest that our group was sexist in that it was too male dominated and male-aligned.⁶²

Although the RGA had been funded by Rutgers College since 1970, and also received occasional funding from Douglass College, the Fall of 1979 saw the beginning of a prolonged funding debate. Included in the group's newly swelled membership the year before were a large number of Cook College Students. The group had never been funded by Cook. As a result of this new growth the Alliance filed its constitution with the Cook College Council (CCC) and applied for Cook funding through the University-wide Fee Board. Before the summer 1978 vacation, the Fee Board had passed the Alliance budget, including Cook funding in proportion to the percentage of the group's membership at that college. Only much later did the Alliance learn that the CCC had voted to reject the group's constitution, making the Alliance ineligible for Cook funding.

⁶¹ Goodman.

⁶² Hartman.

The group had not been asked to send representatives to the CCC meeting at which this decision had been made, nor was the group notified of the decision. The stated reasons for the Cook action were the Alliance's refusal to provide a membership list, and its openness to participation by non-students. Both Livingston and Rutgers College had already recognized the Alliance and accepted the fact that the group did not keep a membership list in order to protect its members from harrassment.

A major campaign was launched by the RGA in order to have the CCC decision reversed. There were petitions, a blitz of articles and letters in the *Targum* and *Green Print*, and meetings with the CCC and Assistant Dean Locandro. The *Home News* even covered the controversy. The CCC, with the staunch backing of Locandro, refused to budge. The issue spotlighted the differences within the Cook student body between the traditional, and often apparently very homophobic "aggies" and the "New Age-type" environmentalists, many of whom were, according to Goodman "the most pro-gay heterosexuals" he ever met at Rutgers.⁶³

McKeon was one of the leaders of the Cook effort. He was then president of Environs Productions, the Cook College radio club. It was at the Environs studios in Bartlett Hall that a program then called Gaybreak, and today Gay Spirit, was first produced. The Radio Show was another means of providing visibility. It aired Monday evenings from 6:30 to 7:00 PM.⁶⁴ McKeon helped to build a variety of bridges between the Alliance and other progressive issues on campus, generating along the way a little tract called "Nuclear Power Is A Gay Issue Too." McKeon ran the radio show until 1982. He had a number of co-hosts including Ingrid Wilhite and Ron Ruppe. McKeon hosted the show until Fall, 1982. It was then taken over by Ruppe who was sometimes joined by a female co-host.

Despite the failure to win recognition at Cook, Goodman found the group to be very strong in the latter part of his second year as President: a successful men's Rap Group was meeting weekly along with the general group meetings; dances were monthly and very large; Outreach committee members were addressing audiences both large and small. Goodman remained on the group's Planning Committee and became the chair of the Political Action Committee. Camilo and Hill were the candidates for the next term.

David Feaster came to Rutgers as a Frosh in 1979 and lived in Demarest Hall. He attended his first meeting in January 1980.

⁶³ Goodman.

⁶⁴ *Alliance*, Oct., 1979.

The meetings I recall were usually artistic . . . Kevin Hayes' infamous poetry readings . . . Todd [Hartman] doing performance art and naturally Ingrid [Wilhite]'s movies.⁶⁵

Later that year he took over the Hotline. Feaster attended the 56 Place Counseling Center training to learn counseling skills. He then began to do "Gay Training" exercises for 56 Place's future trainings.⁶⁶

In April 1980 Hill won the Presidency and Camilo took the Vice-Presidency. William Radcliffe was Treasurer and Wilhite was Secretary. The new officers were almost immediately confronted by major, and unexpected challenges. First, in the early morning hours of May 1, 1980, Camilo was arrested for loitering by the New Brunswick Police Department during a crackdown on gay street activity. Then, at some time after 7:00 AM the same morning an effigy of a gay man was raised in front of the DKE Fraternity House. A placard on the effigy read: "Gay Life/No Life." When Hill had left his apartment earlier that morning he had passed by DKE without noticing anything unusual.

Later that morning many other students saw the effigy and called Hill's house continuously, leaving numerous messages regarding the effigy with Hill's landlord. Unable to reach any of the current officers of the group, the students were finally able to contact Celeste Kolodin. Kolodin had been the Treasurer of the group for 78-79 and was still visible in the Gay community. At the time of the effigy hanging Hill was at Police Headquarters attempting to get Camilo released. Goodman was out of town. Wilhite, Kolodin and Hayes were part of a crowd of fifty or so, including lesbian and gay students and apparently a number of straight couples who rallied in front of Dean Harold Crosby's office at Milledoler Hall to demand action against the fraternity. Hill arrived at the protest at about 1:00, after Camilo's hearing, without ever actually having seen the effigy. It had been removed sometime between 10:30-11:00 AM and Kolodin had already met with Dean Crosby.

Hill, Kolodin and other student activists met at a Fraternity Disciplinary Board Meeting regarding this issue. The meeting was chaired by two students on the Fraternity Council. Although the effigy had been hung outside of the DKE Vice President's room and nailed to the house, he claimed he hadn't heard anything and didn't wake up. He said he didn't see it until he was leaving for class sometime before 8:00 AM and couldn't

⁶⁵ Information in a letter to the authors, from David Feaster, Southfield, Michigan, Sept. 29, 1989.

⁶⁶ Feaster.

remove it until after class. Because the effigy was seen by members of the fraternity but allowed to remain for hours, it was evident to the majority of observers that DKE members endorsed and had in actuality hung the effigy.

The effigy hanging came as a shock, both because it was unrelated to any "provocation" such as the annual Blue Jeans Day, and because representatives of the Alliance and DKE had been actively meeting during the year before in an attempt to improve relations between the groups. The Alliance had even agreed with DKE not to hold Blue Jeans Day.⁶⁷ As a result of the charges filed against DKE, the Rutgers Fraternity Council Board of Control finally officially banned further anti-gay displays and threatened DKE with a prohibition on all social activities should the ban be violated. DKE was put on probation and eventually removed from campus for several incidents.

It was at about this time that an openly gay member of one of the fraternities, who had served as a liaison to the Alliance, was severely beaten by fraternity brothers and suffered broken ribs.

Camilo's case was soon taken on, free of charge, by prominent New Brunswick attorney Jack Wysocker. The case also received the attention of the ACLU, Arthur Warner's National Committee for Sexual Civil Liberties, and the New Jersey Gay Coalition. The *Home News* published a letter critical of the New Brunswick police by Robert Tanksley, the University Coordinator for Religious Affairs. A group of New Brunswick lesbians and gay men organized to attend Camilo's trial. Camilo left New Jersey in February, 1981 and the case never came to trial.

During Hill's administration the group remained unfunded by Cook, which continued to insist that there were no gays on their campus. Once again they demanded a membership list to prove that the Alliance was serving Cook students. The RGA didn't need the money but decided to continue the battle with Cook for recognition. The debating provided a good forum for Alliance members to explain homophobia to the various audiences at the different hearings.

The Rutgers Gay Alliance marched in Manhattan at the annual Gay Pride Day in June, 1980 under their banner, as was the norm. This was usually the only organized activity during the summer break. During this summer the *Home News* also did a positive three-part series on the Alliance. With the coming of Fall, new problems were to arise at the RGA.

⁶⁷ [author & title] *The Rutgers Daily Targum*, May, 1980.

Academic Year 1980-1981

In the Fall of 1980 Hill resigned and Camilo took over. During the 80-81 year the group had a good budget, which had been hard-fought for with the school's bureaucracy. The RGA had been receiving funding from Livingston College until this year, when one of the Livingston Student Senators used the same argument as Cook had in demanding an RGA membership list to fund the group. Once again the group had to explain that they wouldn't accept the assurance of the Dean that such a list would be safeguarded and that such a list would scare off potential members of the group. The lack of a membership list was an issue in some way almost every year. Hill went along with several RGA members and finally convinced Livingston to provide funding.

Goodman remained active in the group and helped to organize two demonstrations during the Fall 1980 semester against Jerry Falwell. Wilhite attended one of these in Trenton and remembers that Tsilka Perlman, who later became the Co-Chair of the RGA, got into a shouting match with a fundamentalist.⁶⁸ The other protest was at the Rutgers Athletic Center, where Falwell spoke at a fundamentalist convention. In October 1980 Goodman organized a statewide conference sponsored by the New Jersey Gay Coalition and held at the Rutgers Student Center.

In the spring of 1981 the titles were changed from President and Vice President to Co-Chairs. These titles shifted back and forth without formal discussion on the matter during other years. Tsilka Perlman joined Camilo as Co-Chair. Hartman took over the Dance Committee and worked regularly at the speaking engagements of the Outreach Committee. Hartman also wrote the Alliance ad copy for the *Targum*.⁶⁹ The *Targum* published its gay-related news on Friday, its lowest readership day.

As during the Goodman Administration, ads containing general group information and announcing upcoming events were placed in the school paper two or three times a week. Three or so profitable dances were held each year. There was all-you-care-to-drink beer. Albee, a disc jockey from The Den, New Brunswick's gay bar, was usually hired to provide music for these events, which had an average attendance of 150-200 people. Rap Groups were held off-again, on-again throughout the term. Regular meetings were held on Wednesdays. Dr. Charles Silverstein, co-author of *The Joy of Gay Sex* was a featured speaker at one of the meet-

⁶⁸ Wilhite.

⁶⁹ Hartman.

ings. Even though Goodman's formula for the group continued, there were some major changes in the group. Hartman remembers:

While Goodman had roused the Alliance to political awareness and action, Camilo expanded on the group's potential by creating a more cultural and social atmosphere at the weekly meetings. Bill often took a back seat to allow others to "run the show." I had my own meeting, which I entitled "Tawdry and Friends." It was a potpourri of music, theatre, poetry, group games and met with very favorable response.⁷⁰

According to Hill, the group was relatively exclusive of non-students during this era. The treatment of non-students within the group, however, fluctuated frequently.

Wilhite was one of the more active women in the RGA at this time. One of the reasons she had chosen to come to Rutgers from Boise, Idaho, was because of the Alliance's fame as one of the oldest and most active collegiate gay organizations. Like Hill, she found the RGA booth at Frosh Orientation and became involved in her first semester in Fall 1979.

I was happy as a clam to be amongst all those throngs of "out" queers, and plunged into the Alliance's activities immediately . . . separatism [between gay men and lesbians] was the norm. . . . [T]he social lives of most lesbians revolved around the Rape Crisis Center . . . or the Douglass Feminist Collective [DFC] . . . I . . . was quite happy with being a so-called token woman at the Alliance.

Wilhite used to show her "homo movies" at Alliance meetings. These were Super-8 pastiches of little skits dealing with homosexual themes that she had made with gay friends in Boise, and later at least one made at Rutgers with future RGA President Todd Hartman called "No Way Out."⁷¹

Among the number of women's groups which have had ties to the Alliance over the years was the Livingston Feminist Coalition (LFC). The LFC was formed through the Livingston Women's Center due to the need for a separate women's group. Although this group waxed and waned, the LFC worked together with the RGA, cosponsoring dances and meetings. When the LFC membership dropped, the RGA co-opted the group, which continued to exist only on paper for some time. Events were advertised as being cosponsored by the two groups. Then the women's influence on the Alliance became stronger and there was a renewed move

⁷⁰ Hartman.

⁷¹ Wilhite.

for women's space. Since the RGA had made no special time or place for the women, the LFC was reactivated as a separate rap group that shared Alliance functions. The LFC faded out at about the time that the DFC was being formed.⁷²

The DFC was founded by two lesbian separatists who were lovers. The group was divided up into two task forces and created a Lesbian Rap Group and a committee to discuss politics and issues. During its first semester the Task Force established a good relationship with the RGA and some activities were jointly sponsored. The next semester the separatist attitude became stronger and the ties were weakened. Nonetheless, the founders of the group felt that it wasn't radical enough for them and left it in a fairly inactive state. At the same time, the radical College Avenue Feminist Terrorists [. . . and Women's Sewing Circle] (CAFT), which was not part of the RGA, but was closely associated with some RGA members during Wilhite's years at Rutgers, became active. CAFT staged various stunts to protest sexism; the most memorable being a bomb threat that they called in when a fraternity showed pornographic movies as a fund-raiser. They also spilled ammonia at a pornographic film showing at Scott Hall.

An annual fall celebration of lesbian culture, "Amazon Autumn," is yet another of the many women's events such energies produced. Some of the same women also formed a band called the "Celibate Sluts" which was the forerunner of the "Frozen Concentrate" band. CAFT was made up of a small group of lesbian-feminists living in the Demarest Hall Dormitory. After the DFC was left inactive and CAFT was abandoned, the lesbian community was very weak, with virtually no organization.⁷³

Demarest was known as the "hotbed of homosexuality." In order to live in Demarest one had to be a member of a special interest group, such as artists, filmmakers, or the Women's Section. Wilhite remembers the confrontations with the DKE Fraternity:

As usual, they burned a "faggot" in effigy, and had been throwing things at suspected gays when they walked by the DKE house. I was a member of the committee that went to the Dean's office to lodge a complaint, along with Dave Hill, Celeste [Kolodin] and I forget who else.⁷⁴

During the spring semester of 1981 Camilo announced that he was no longer a student and resigned. Although many of the RGA members were

⁷² Information in a letter to the author, from Robin Wagner, NY, NY, Oct., 1989.

⁷³ Wagner.

⁷⁴ Wilhite.

not Rutgers students, it was stated in the Alliance Constitution at this time that the officers of the group must be students of the University. Perlman also resigned. Hayes managed their positions, as well as taking the new position of Cultural Arts Coordinator. Wilhite was Secretary and Bill Radcliff was Treasurer.

During 1981, Wilhite's last year in Demarest, she remembers numerous clashes between the dormitory's large and visible gay population and the homophobes who also lived there. According to Wilhite:

This small group [of homophobes] was philosophically incompatible with the majority of creative/sensitive types — read “gay” — who lived there, and they resented the reputation Demarest had as the “queer” dorm. I remember one of them having written “die, faggot” on Mark Zegarelli's door. This went on for quite some time, and despite meetings about it with the R.A. [resident advisor] and all the involved parties, despite speaking engagements in the dorm by the Alliance's Speakers Bureau (of which I was a panelist), despite all of our best efforts to try to get through to these people, the issue never resolved itself until the offending parties moved out.⁷⁵

Academic Year 1981-1982

In Autumn 1981 Mark Zegarelli was Co-Chair with Wilhite, who soon found the position too taxing and left the post. Hartman resumed his position as Dance Coordinator and *Targum* liaison but took Zegarelli's position in Spring 1982. Hayes served as the unofficial Co-Chair both semesters. Keith Daniels was Secretary and a woman named Chris was treasurer. David Feaster was the Outreach Committee Chair.⁷⁶ Wilhite confined her activities to volunteering on the Hotline, cohosting the radio show with Rupee and McKeon, and helping to organize dances and other social functions. She also drew a comic strip for the Douglass College paper called “Feminist Funnies.” Hayes and Rupee acted as the Alliance representatives to the New Jersey Gay Task Force. An RGA newsletter which Goodman had written during several previous semesters lapsed this year.⁷⁷

The *Targum* did an interview with the officers of the group about being gay on campus this year. Hartman's interview started off the article with front-page coverage and the quote: “we are surrounded by blatant heterosexuality.” This quote triggered off a number of derisive letters to the

⁷⁵ Wilhite.

⁷⁶ Hartman.

⁷⁷ Wilhite.

Editor by straight students, one of which referred to Hartman as a “gay propagandist.” There were also a couple of eloquent favorable letters written as well.⁷⁸

Hartman remembers the usual meetings, engagements and dances, etc. as well as some small-group social functions. Most notable of these was a trip to the Hunterdon County home of an openly gay Rutgers Russian professor who had spoken at one of the meetings. About 10 members went:

. . . it was such a bonding, uplifting experience for us young novice queers to see two men living together, happily and enduringly (i.e. in a working love relationship).

Hartman also attended a group picnic with about 30 other members, including David Feaster, in Johnson Park. His last Alliance activity was marching in the annual NYC Gay Pride Parade in June, 1982.⁷⁹

In Summer 1982 Wilhite and Hartman left Rutgers and moved to San Francisco. About 10 or 12 other members of the RGA from this period also moved there at about the same time; more former Alliance members continued to move to San Francisco and most of them manage to keep in contact, calling themselves the “Rutgers Gay Alliance West.”⁸⁰

Academic Year 1982-1983

For 1982-1983 David Feaster was Chair and Robin Wagner was Co-Chair. Although most of the Alliance activities were functioning Wagner felt that they were not reaching and serving most lesbians and gay men in the community nor educating the heterosexual community:

Many of the functions had been occurring as if they were automatic with no purpose, energy or soul. Dances and meetings which had once been highly successful were now poorly attended and mostly by men . . . I knew there was no shortage of lesbians and gay men in the University and I wondered why we only attracted men. It was an opportunity to clarify our goal and set our direction, to be creative and responsive to the true needs of the community.⁸¹

Also, in the beginning of this school year the Rutgers Governing Association (also known as RGA, not to be confused with the Alliance),

⁷⁸ Hartman.

⁷⁹ Hartman.

⁸⁰ Wilhite.

⁸¹ Wagner.

required that all student organizations revise their charters. In addition, the group's budget, which had simply been a copy of a previous budget from many years ago resubmitted annually, was hopelessly outdated. It was an opportunity for change. Wagner set the following goals: 1. to create a feeling of support, family and community, 2. to widen the group's scope of service, 3. to make the group's services more responsive to the expressed needs of the community (more social than political/radical), therefore drawing more people out, 4. to increase the number of people who attended, 5. to actively reach out, advertise, and encourage people to participate in any way they wanted to, 6. to explore the reasons that the lesbian and gay male communities were separate and heighten awareness and bring them together around common issues and projects (Wagner wrote a paper on this subject in 1983), 7. to celebrate the art and culture which is as important a part of the community as the political, and 8. Wagner's pet project, which was to have successful dances.⁸²

Meetings were held on Wednesday nights. Feaster remembers someone throwing some "roadkill" into one meeting and running. Feaster hosted the National Gay Task Force at one meeting. The New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition did an "Update of AIDS" with a doctor from the school health service on January 2, 1983. The L.S.M. (The Lesbian Sex Mafia or Lesbians for S & M) spoke at another meeting. Feaster was promptly chastised after this meeting by the radical feminists for promoting violence against women. William Burrows spoke at one meeting. Allen Ginsberg spoke for a second time at Rutgers, and Hayes threw a party for Ginsberg after his reading. On another occasion Hayes brought in Depeche Mode's first album to demonstrate "pseudo-gay pop tunes" to the group.⁸³

During Feaster's year in office the group had the Student Center showcase twice. The first exhibit featured conceptual and political art; the second exhibit featured the works of local gay artists including tie-dye, painting and sculpture. One man's drawings looked like tiny abstract designs but actually included sexually explicit scenes.⁸⁴ During the week of the show these were removed one at a time as students noticed the subject matter and complained. At a September meeting the members of the group created masks for the Halloween dance. These masks were then hung in the showcase booth with labels such as "Straight," "Son," "Fa-

⁸² Unpublished paper, *Lesbians and Gay Men Working Together*, New Brunswick, Dec. 14, 1983.

⁸³ Feaster.

⁸⁴ Wagner.

ther," "Sister." A banner with the question "Is it easier to hide behind a mask?" was posted and a mime from Princeton performed in the booth for several hours at a time, acting out the roles suggested by the different masks.

The Halloween party known as the "Dance of the Masked" was at the Ledge Student Center, a large open room with plate glass windows. The party was poorly attended, at least partially because people felt uncomfortable in this exposed place. The hired disc jockey didn't show up and Feaster filled in, in costume as Grace Jones.

As part of Wagner's pet project, no expense was spared on the dances. Impressive posters for most dances were designed by a bisexual Cook College artist. They were printed and hung repeatedly when they were torn down. The group became known for its "fagulous" posters. Advertising was extensive and began at least one month in advance. Arrangements were always made for a professional disc jockey, a light show and plentiful healthy refreshments. Wagner worked at networking with other lesbian and gay groups in the state. These dances always paid for themselves and usually attracted 200-300 people.⁸⁵

A calendar of events for 1983 shows a variety of meeting topics, from "Love, Sex and Oppression" to "Gays as Parents," a lecture given on March 16 by Bill Derbyshire, who was the faculty advisor to the group. An assistant of Harvey Milk (the openly gay San Francisco Councilman who was assassinated along with the mayor of the city by fellow Councilman Dan White in the late 1970's) spoke at one meeting. The lesbian and gay awareness week was held with events on all five campuses this year.

During this year a feminist/lesbian bloc was determinedly attempting to dissuade other lesbians from being a part of the RGA. They were motivated by their perception that it was a sexist, male-oriented group. A group of "Lesbian Terrorists," perhaps members of CAFT, would wait outside the Alliance meeting room to try to stop women from attending the events. Feaster explains that there was a rift between the sexes; the women thought that the group was too passive by trying to work with the system. They wanted instant change, and the factions argued frequently. The less radical lesbians still attended the meetings. Among other issues, their efforts prompted RGA to begin to rethink its structure.

A controversy erupted over the summer when the female secretary of the group took a male lover. When she returned for the fall semester she expressed concern about how her bisexuality would affect the group. One

⁸⁵ Wagner.

of the more militant lesbians insisted that she should resign because she no longer provided a good role model. Although the group's secretary still wished to fulfill her duties, the debate dragged on for over two months and the Alliance essentially had no secretary for that time period; hence the quality and quantity of group advertising diminished. Other internal problems this semester included the RGA lacking a treasurer, and a lack of consistent planning meetings.

Many of the Alliance members would socialize together after the meetings:

. . . we would frequent the Den, and on Mondays large groups would go to Charlies West in East Orange [another gay bar] because they had "Punk Night" . . . The student center often showed cult films, the John Waters films were always well attended by Alliance members. Group members also attended the Arts Cinema in downtown New Brunswick, where they showed *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Pink Flamingos* every Friday and Saturday night, complete with floor show.⁸⁶

Ron Rupee took over the Radio Show from McKeon and ran it until 1986. When Feaster became Chair he was interviewed by Goodman one night on the show. Songs like "Johnny Are You Queer" by Jane Cotton and "Homosapien" by Pete Shelley were popular on the air.

In Spring, 1983 Feaster was active on the Speaker's Panel and went to a few colleges, some Rutgers classes and a synagogue. A Rutgers professor teaching the course "Homosexuality and Society" joined the panel and dramatically came out as a lesbian to the entire synagogue. The same professor also organized a trip to see "Torch Song Trilogy" on Broadway. As usual, the group marched in the annual NYC parade. Feaster remembers that once the group didn't have a banner and marched with The Den. There were several picnics during the year and a camp-out with Trenton State from May 6-8. The campers brought televisions, video games and hair dryers to the campsite and served spaghetti dinners with wine.⁸⁷

On May 8, 1983 the Alliance and friends celebrated the marriage of Feaster to his lover Craig. About fifty people walked from Demarest Hall over the Raritan River to Highland Park, flowers in hand, to the house of a friendly Rutgers professor. The wedding ceremony was performed by New Age Priest Ernie Paller, who had been involved in the original Homophile League.

⁸⁶ Feaster.

⁸⁷ Feaster.

Academic Year 1983-1984

The 1983-1984 year was active with the reintegration of the formerly separate LFC into the group and the changing of the group's name. Julie Murphy became the President of the group. Michael McCullough was the Vice-President. McCullough remembers the regular meetings and some dances. One of the most notable events of the year was the discussion that the executive committee and the interested members undertook regarding the change of the group's name to include lesbians. The word "gay" was not universally accepted as being inclusive of homosexual females. After much discussion the group took a vote and agreed upon its current name, the Rutgers University Lesbian/Gay Alliance (RULGA). It was hoped that this change, along with a new awareness of the lesbian input, would encourage a more active lesbian presence.

Other events included the Gay Men's Health Crisis of New York being brought in to cosponsor a program with the Rutgers Department of Health Education in the Fall of 1983. Together they gave the controversial first in-depth talk about the new threat of AIDS to a huge crowd at the Alliance.⁸⁸ During the November 1983 state elections Volunteers from the Alliance worked with Robert Goodman in the successful reelection campaigns of Assemblypeople David Schwartz and Angela Perun. One of the by-products of this effort was the emergence of a group of lesbian and gay non-students who had worked together in the election, which was to become the nucleus of a new, separate group called Lesbian and Gay Men of New Brunswick.⁸⁹

In Spring 1984 Pauli Price was Co-Chair with Geoffrey Maugham. The always controversial Blue Jeans Day was held during the annual Awareness Week. This was also the year that the legal drinking age in the state changed from 19 to 21. Liquor could no longer be served at the dances, and their popularity diminished. The change in the drinking age gave the Alliance a new challenge: for the first time a majority of students were too young to go to the clubs and bars, and alternatives for socializing had to be developed. This year meetings, socials, dances and outreaches to the larger community continued on a regular basis, but the group was not as energetic as it had been in the past. The regular Monday night meetings were only drawing 20-40 people and all the dances, except for

⁸⁸ Information in a letter to the authors, from Michael McCullough, Denver, Sept. 27, 1989.

⁸⁹ Goodman.

the Halloween Dance, lost money. The dances were thought of as a social service rather than a fund-raiser at this point.

Academic Year 1984-1985

For Autumn 1984 Geoffrey Maugham and Bill Mann were Co-Presidents. For Spring 1985 Wayne Clawans ran the Hotline and Derbyshire continued as Faculty Advisor. The Alliance provided rap groups, coffee socials, outreaches and trained peer-counselors for drop-in and evening Hotline services during these semesters. During Awareness Week the group sponsored several educational events. There were dances on alternate months. Participation in all areas of the Alliance was low. This may have been at least partially due to the apathy generated by the conservative political climate. With Reagan in the middle years of his Presidential office, the focus for college students appeared to be more on succeeding as young professionals than on fighting for causes, as it had been during a more liberal era. It was no longer "in" to be liberal and left-wing, and the Alliance was feeling the results of this change in attitude.

Academic Year 1985-1986

For Autumn 1985 Steven Capasuto was the elected Co-President, but Rob Caramico also acted as Co-President. Lisa Johnson was elected as Co-President with Caramico for Spring 1986. The position of bisexuals in the group and the visibility of women in the group were ongoing issues. Johnson was encouraged to run for office because she was a woman and was not bisexual. Bill Mann was Secretary for a time, Ralph Passante then became acting Secretary. Vonda LaPage was Treasurer for 1985. Robin Renee was the Treasurer for a portion of Spring 1986, but Martha Diaz took over this position during the semester. Cheryl Clarke began her first term as the faculty advisor.

Johnson and Caramico worked on programming aimed to dispel myths about lesbians and gay men through speakers, movies and outreaches. Margie Nichols spoke once again on sex and romance, Nicholas Quene talked about sexually transmitted diseases, David Edelman from the Anti-Defamation League lectured on "Gay Bashing" and bias-related violence, Heidi Jones from Educare spoke about internalized homophobia, Dr. Susan Cavin spoke about her book *Lesbian Origins*, the Metropolitan Community Church spoke on gays and religion and showed a movie, Linda Mark talked about lesbian and gay youth and Luz Marie Umpiere and Cheryl Clark presented their poetry.

Getting people to work on the Hotline or to participate in any committee was increasingly difficult. Clawans ran the Hotline and training was needed for the volunteers, but not always available or received.⁹⁰ During the Spring Semester a Group calling itself New Jersey Citizens Against Gays (NJCAG) spread anti-gay propaganda including posting a flyer with a circle within which were depicted two stick figures of gay men in a sexually explicit position. A slash was drawn across the circle and the text read "Americans, Help NJCAG, RU Fagbuster Rally!! Friday, April 4, 3:00 PM at Demarest Courtyard. Speaker: Archibald J. Cox, Founder of NJCAG" and written in script across the bottom "Bring your baseball bats." Although the Alliance braced itself for the event, it never actually occurred and the NJCAG was eventually written off as the homophobic hoax it had been suspected of being all along.

Lisa Stolzer, head of the Publicity Committee, was interviewed with Caramico in the January 28, 1986 *Rutgers Review*. The article discussed the political action the group was undertaking for gay rights in New Jersey by supporting Assembly Bill A/1721 which would add the words "Sexual and Affectional Orientation" to the laws which bar discrimination in the state.⁹¹ On April 3, 1986 the *Home News* published a favorable article on the Alliance featuring interviews with Renee and Caramico. Caramico spoke of the historical tension between the bisexuals and homosexuals in the movement and noted that in recent years the arguing factions were beginning to work together more than in the past.⁹² In March of that year the officers of the group went to the third annual conference of the Northeast Lesbian/Gay Student Union at Brown University. The topic was how to run lesbian/gay organizations at the University level. They learned a great deal, including the idea of writing the trip to the next year's conference into the budget.

The Lesbian/Gay Awareness week included the showing of films on all five university campuses and a series of religious speakers. The most memorable outreach of the year was an AIDS conference funded by the Health Center and attended by all preceptors and many other straights and gays on campus.⁹³

⁹⁰ Information in a letter to the authors, from Lisa Johnson, Highland Park, NJ, Oct. 1, 1989.

⁹¹ John Michael Koroly, "RULGA Coming Out Strong," *Rutgers Review*, January 28, 1986, p. 5, col. 2.

⁹² Frank Argote-Freyre, "RU Gay community seeks to dispel myths," *New Brunswick Home News*, April 3, 1986, p. A2, col. 1.

⁹³ Johnson.

Academic Year 1986-1987

Lisa Johnson continued as Co-President for 1986 and was joined by Ralph Passante. During Awareness Week that year a couple of Alliance members were staffing an information table in the lobby of the Brower Commons on College Avenue when a student who was asking them questions stepped aside and a young man regurgitated on one of the staff members. This student was identified and a complaint was filed. During the summer the victim pressed charges of harrasment due to sexual orientation at the Middlesex County Courthouse. Although the Judge ruled that this specific case did not involve repeated persecution of the victim and was not technically harrasment, the attacker was given a suspended sentence and fined for aggravated assault type charges. This decision was a County-wide first for the gay rights movement.

During the summer of 1986 Clawans created a new banner for the Alliance. A number of group members took the train into NYC together, with others meeting up in the city and RULGA marched proudly behind their new banner in the parade. In the Fall of 1986 the Alliance was well integrated among the sexes and minority groups. The Hotline had eight trained peer conselors, four of whom were women. The group had an active membership of about 70, of which 40% were women. In the Spring of 1987 Nova Morgan took Johnson's place as Co-President. Morgan had acted as secretary for Autumn 1986. T. J. Trinidad and Karen Dittman both served as Treasurer for part of the year. Clawans took over the Radio Show. Paul Pavese and Moe Kafka co-chaired the Hotline in the Autumn, with Kate Butler taking Pavese's place in the Spring. Rich Carrington and Vonda LaPage led the rap group both separately and together for portions of the year. Chris Connelly ran the Outreach. A major concern this year was the split that was again growing between the men and women in the group, as well as between minorities and white students. The officers tried to address these issues to bring a greater diversity to the main group, while encouraging separate rap groups and coffeehouses for different needs. There were outreaches to several dormitories and to Fairleigh Dickinson College, which later formed its own group, as well as to Middlesex County College.

The group attended the forth annual Northeast Lesbian/Gay Student Union Conference at Columbia University in Manhattan on March 27-29. During Awareness Week that spring a couple of homophobic articles regarding Blue Jeans Day appeared in the *Targum* on April 3. A number of responses were written the same day by RULGA members, but not

printed until April 23, after Kafka had met with editor Shawn Peters to demand fair coverage of the issue.

The Spring 1987 semester also saw the release of the results of the Rutgers Sexual Orientation Survey, conducted by Dr. Cavin's Homosexuality and Society class. A resulting report made it clear that a majority of lesbians and gay men at Rutgers found harassment a fact of life and felt that they were unable to be themselves as a result of the homophobic atmosphere.

The following speakers appeared this semester: Charles Silverstein returned, this time stirring up controversy talking about his book *Man to Man*, Albert McMeen talked about gay fathers, Brad Lutz talked about Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE), Barry Sorkin from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation spoke with the group and helped to set up a phone-tree, George Ayala did a two-part workshop on Sexism, Racism and Homophobia, and Bill Mann and Lisa Johnson did a workshop on building bridges between gay men and lesbians. Fran Goodhart of the RU AIDS Task Force spoke. Movies that were shown included "Entre Nous," "Lianna," "A Different Country," and television videotapes. There were three dances each semester this year. There was a fight at one dance, and the group was required to pay a police officer to be on duty at the dances when they were held at the Douglass Student Center, which was the usual location.

Academic Year 1987-1988

For Fall 1987 Dan Kaufman was Co-President with Dittman. Susan Billmaier took over for Dittman in October 1987. James Guerrina was Secretary, and Mark Wilson was Treasurer. For Fall 1987 Butler and Kafka continued at the Hotline, and in Spring 1988 Debbie Cohen took over. Joe Kline ran the rap group, Karen Smith was in charge of Outreach, Ed Scheer wrote a RULGA Newsletter and Clawans ran the Gay Spirit Radio Show.

In the Fall, 1986 semester Kafka had written a paper on the history of the group for Dr. Cavin's class on Homosexuality and Society. A version of this paper, dedicated to the group's founder, Lionel Cuffie, was published in the *Targum* on April 16, 1987.

By 1987 the chronic shortage of Hotline volunteers had become a critical issue. The Hotline was getting more callers and visitors than ever before, while working with a skeletal staff and no budget whatsoever. Butler and Kafka requested a separate office and phone line for the Hot-

line to help give it a sense of separate identity and help it to function more effectively. Although the need was obvious, the request was put on hold.

On October 6, 1987 the *Rutgers Review* ran an article headlined "No, Homosexuality Really Is Immoral." Two days later, On October 8, Kaufman wrote a letter to University President Edward Bloustein in response to Bloustein's personal campaign to fight discrimination against members of the community who were of "differing beliefs, conviction, race, nationality or gender." Kaufman's main point was that "sexual orientation" had been left out of Bloustein's policy. At the same time openly gay Dean James D. Anderson also sent a letter to Bloustein addressing the same omission.⁹⁴

On October 11 RULGA sent a contingent to the March on Washington. Wilson remembers:

. . . the awesome size of the March made me feel for the first time that our movement was strong, and that as a part of that movement even RULGA, a small, underenthused college group with what seemed like minimal student-body support, could accomplish something. My clearest memory of that day is standing up on a park bench . . . looking back over a sea of people that stretched all the way to the horizon . . . We came back from the March energized. We wanted to accomplish something. And we did.⁹⁵

For a month there had been no response to Kaufman's letter to Bloustein. Ron Nieberding, Chair of the Rutgers League of Graduate and Professional Lesbians and Gays, suggested that Kaufman write another letter, with direct recommendations and demands, which would bring the needs of the lesbian and gay community to Bloustein's attention. After more than twenty drafts and several readings to the Alliance, a final version was approved. This version included a clear outline of what the group had determined needed to be done by the administration in order to address homophobia. These needs included a full-time openly gay or lesbian staff member to work combatting homophobia in the college community, the inclusion of the lesbian/gay community in University policy statements addressing bigotry, funding for RULGA commensurate with other minority groups on campus, sensitivity training of faculty and staff, increased library holdings of lesbian/gay related materials, and better facilities for the Hotline. Many of these independently-determined recommendations were similar to those outlined in the report that resulted from

⁹⁴ Unpublished paper by Dan Kaufman, *The Rutgers Sexual Orientation Survey*, New Brunswick, Dec. 2, 1987.

⁹⁵ Information in a letter to the authors, from Mark Wilson, Sept. 23, 1989.

the Sexual Orientation Survey. The letter was signed by a number of Alliance members and widely distributed both within the College community and to the outside media. A week later the local papers all ran unusually large stories on RULGA's claims of harrassment on campus and of University inaction.⁹⁶

Bloustein responded to the first letter on November 6. He said:

Surely, I believe bigotry and prejudice directed at persons because of sexual orientation is intolerable . . . I am sorry that a specific reference to the concerns that you address was not made. . . .

The Associated Press picked up the story from one of the newspaper articles that appeared as a result of the Alliance's second letter. By November 17 the Alliance was swamped with calls from local and national newspapers, radio and television stations. Suddenly lesbian and gay harrassment on college campuses was making headlines. On December 1 an open meeting was held with David Burns, Assistant Vice President for Student Life. At this meeting Burns found himself defending University policy to 200 disgruntled students who vocalized their problems with homophobia and harrassment. Many issues were addressed, but little concrete action was taken on the part of the administration to meet the needs outlined in the group's letter. Later that month Kaufman and Neiberding met with Burns again and sent a third letter to Bloustein. After winter break, on February 3, 1988, the group received a letter from Bloustein where he made public a series of substantive responses, including the appointment of The President's Select Committee on Sexual Orientation (later to be renamed the President's Select Committee for Lesbian and Gay Concerns), to be chaired by Associate Dean James Anderson of Rutgers' school of Communication, Library and Information Studies.

The committee, a diverse group of 33, representing faculty, administrators, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, and alumni, was appointed and organized into a number of task forces this semester. Bloustein also agreed to most of the points requested in the original letter. Kaufman, Billmaier and Burns then attended a successful meeting with Bloustein. A press release was promptly written and a press conference was held at the student center later that day. The first meeting of the Select Committee occurred on May 6, the last day of classes.⁹⁷

The group marched on Trenton on June 5 to support assembly bill A-678 for lesbian/gay rights. That summer an unusually large number of

⁹⁶ Wilson.

⁹⁷ Kaufman.

students gathered to march in the annual NYC parade. The group also marched through New Brunswick by dark for "Take Back the Night."⁹⁸

It was also during this year that founding member Dave Nichols came to speak on the history of the early years of the Homophile League at a general meeting of the group. After his talk he met Morris Kafka. They were concerned with the apparent lack of awareness about the history of the group and decided to work together to record and preserve the history of the Alliance by forming the Rutgers University Lesbian/Gay Archives Project. Over the years much of the information and archival materials pertaining to the group had either been accidentally lost or never recorded or saved in the first place. This unfortunate occurrence, coupled with the fact that minority histories tend to get only minimal attention and coverage in the media, proved to be very frustrating for those attempting to trace the history of the group accurately. Working with Ruth Simmons, head of the Department of Special Collection and Archives at Rutgers' Alexander Library, Nichols and Kafka have created a Lesbian and Gay Archives at Rutgers for the purpose of collecting, organizing and preserving the archival materials of the group in order to prevent further loss and to foster new understanding about the group. These archives have become the repository for all materials generated by the group and for any items relating to New Jersey lesbian/gay culture which have been or may be donated in the future.

Academic Year 1988-89

For the 1988-1989 term Gina Rosich and Mark Wilson were Co-Presidents. Steven Capsuto was Secretary. P.J. Carlino was Treasurer. Roberto Font took over Hotline, and Kline continued running the Rap group. Kaufman was in charge of Publicity and Clawans continued the Radio Show. Rosich remembers being given an impassioned speech by Pavese convincing her to take on the position of co-president. RULGA's problems included a smaller than usual budget, preventing a substantive Awareness Week or 20th Anniversary Year celebration. Things were being stolen from the group, and RULGA's recent high-profile political activities and a lack of on-campus recruitment and awareness were factors which contributed to the dwindling membership. The group was also working to get the Hotline reorganized. One activity that did thrive was the General Rap Group, a weekly get-together for frank and open discussion of non-political problems, issues and joys of gay life. Klein coordi-

⁹⁸ Information in a letter to the authors, from Gina Rosich, October 1989.

nated the group in 1988-1989, training several others to lead the group on an alternating basis. The Rap Group addressed the real needs of peer support and provided a social outlet. Members met new people and went out as a group for pizza afterwards. The dances did well also, usually attracting 200-300 people and making a small profit.

There were a number of guest lecturers on the calendar for the "Lesbian and Gay Culture Series." Historian Martin Duberman spoke about reclaiming lesbian/gay history. Jeff Levi, Executive Director of the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force talked about the upcoming presidential election. Marilyn Hacker recited her poetry, Sara Citron, a Jewish Lesbian comedian from Brooklyn performed. Karen Thompson came to speak about herself and the famous case of her lover Sharon Kowalski, who was disabled after a near-fatal auto accident and was kept away from Karen by a homophobic father. Singer/songwriter Joe Bracco performed. There were also a number of successful dances this year.⁹⁹

Rosich called the 1988-1989 year the year of "Consciousness Raising." According to Rosich, a milestone for the group this year was the fact that, although bisexuality had been a burning issue in the Alliance for years, when she came into office as a generally acknowledged bisexual,

it became nothing of an issue. Today there are more open bisexuals in the Alliance than before. We are widely accepted and not ridiculed. . . .

Rosich attributes this change to the number of vocal, active bisexual women in the group who were unwilling to tolerate inappropriate treatment and brought awareness of this discrimination to the forefront.⁹⁹

Harrassment was not ignored. An obscene call left on the Hotline answering machine in Fall 1988 was investigated by the Rutgers Police. In December three Livingston students admitted that they had made the call and pleaded guilty to charges of harrassment in New Brunswick municipal court.

By 1988-1989 the Hotline was unable to meet the ever-increasing demands being placed on it. Hotline had always been informally run by Chairs chosen at a group meeting, often without a vote, as there was little competition. The Chairs were then left to recruit volunteers or staff the Hotline themselves. The Hotline was located in the back of the fourth floor of the Rutgers Student Center in the small, windowless, office of the Alliance. The Hotline phone was also the office phone. Staff and visitors had to deal with a lack of privacy. If a "drop-in" client came in they might

⁹⁹ Rosich.

have to be assisted while another staffer was busy on the phone in the same room. Alliance members and officers would come in and out of the office at all times to socialize or take care of business. The group decided that separating the Hotline from the Alliance would better serve the community. The Hotline would then be able to more easily attract counsellors and better funding. In the spring, Rosich, Font and Wilson, with the help of the RCGA leaders, split the Hotline off from the RULGA as the RU Lesbian/Gay Peer Counsellor-Infoline. The groups now have separate spaces and phone lines.

The Select Committee sponsored an open forum on February 1, 1989, at which Livingston Junior Dan McCaffrey announced the formation of the Rutgers University Heterosexual Alliance (RUHA). McCaffrey and his group objected to University support for activities against his "moral and religious convictions" — especially by using his student fees. RUHA has hitherto failed to attract enough members or energy to be a real threat to progress against heterosexism at Rutgers and failed to receive any funding.¹⁰⁰

The group joined in the Pro-Choice march on Washington in April 1989. The Lesbian/Gay video project, produced by Tony Heriza of the Office of Television and Radio, came to fruition as a thoughtfully created outreach-on-tape. During the summer of 1989 the group marched with pride as one of the early and continuing powers in the lesbian/gay rights movement at the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in NYC. The Rutgers Gay and Lesbian Alumnae/i (GALA) organized as a cohesive group this summer. GALA's original impetus came from committee member Nate Cotler and an article by William David Burns in a 1988 issue of *Rutgers Magazine*.¹⁰¹

Academic Year 1989-1990

For Autumn 1989 Susan Billmaier and Jay Herrera are Co-Presidents with Susy Balona as Secretary and Sharice Richardson as Treasurer. Screening of the lesbian/gay outreach video for classes, residence halls and other groups began this semester. The GALA produced its first event on Monday, October 21, at The Den in Somerset, where a successful Homecoming reception for Lesbian/Gay Alumnae/i and friends was held. The success of GALA and the Archives Project have helped to validate the Alliance as an established organization.

¹⁰⁰ Wilson.

¹⁰¹ *Rutgers University President's Select Committee for Lesbian and Gay Concerns 1988-89 Program Report*, New Brunswick, June 21, 1989.

As the twentieth anniversary year of the group draws to a close, the Alliance is taking the time to look back at its varied and colorful history. The group is actively acknowledging the many people who have lent their support towards the common goals of the acceptance and celebration of the many lesbian, gay and bisexual life-styles, the end of oppression of minorities, and the challenge of helping themselves and others in times of crisis.