

# Lesbian & Gay Caucus of Public Health Workers

In Official Relations with The American Public Health Association

Fall 1993

## Chair's Column

by Denice Dennis, MPH

**W**elcome to new and seasoned members! In addition to a new *member spotlight*, this newsletter is replete with information on Caucus activities for the upcoming meeting. Please pay special attention to the program agenda which is included. It is your guide to Caucus-sponsored sessions, as well as planned social activities.

Program sessions are one of the most visible activities of the Caucus, and this year's represent a broad array of public health concerns. Caucus members have worked very diligently to plan these sessions and social events over the past year, and their work is much appreciated.

This year's business meeting will include the election of Chair-elect, Program Chair, Program Chair-elect, and Treasurer. The Chair-elect will serve as the Caucus chair for the 94-96 term. (All terms begin and end at the Annual Meeting.) The Program Chair will be responsible for coordinating the Caucus program sessions for the Annual Meeting in 1994 with the Program Chair-elect for 1995. All new officers are assisted in the first term by their predecessors.

If you are interested in one of these positions, or would like to nominate another member, please complete the enclosed nomination form and return no later than October 11th. If you have any question regarding these positions, please don't hesitate to call any of the executive committee members. Elections will be held at the annual business meeting on Tuesday, October 26th, at noon. Mark your calendars now!

This year's business meeting will

also include discussion on two other issues, as well as procedures for addressing such. Information on the first issue, SPIG versus Caucus status, is contained in this newsletter. The second issue, changing the Caucus name to include lesbians, gays and bisexuals, is being proposed for discussion for consistency between our by-laws and our organizational title. Please take a moment to familiarize yourself with these issues prior to the annual meeting.

Advance tickets to the annual banquet are available through this newsletter. There are a limited number of reduced and complimentary tickets available for those members who are students or on a fixed income. Call or drop me a line if you would like to request one of these tickets.

In addition to the banquet, Caucus

social activities include the hospitality suite on Sunday and the two co-sponsored socials on Monday evening. In response to requests from Caucus members, a women's breakfast has been planned for Tuesday morning. (Final tour information will be available at the Caucus booth.)

For those of you who may have searched for and not found the Caucus at the March on Washington, my apologies. In light of the possibility that the Caucus may be undertaking a name change, it was deemed not feasible to purchase a new banner, and the current banner is not appropriate for such use. However, both the Caucus and APHA were listed as endorsers of the March.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in San Francisco! ▼

### Attention Caucus Members and Friends:

Tickets for the Lesbian and Gay Caucus Annual Banquet may be purchased by mail (see page 2) or at the L/GC Booth #447 by 5 p.m. Monday, 10/25. Tickets will not be available at the door.

Plan to attend the Caucus Business Meeting (Tuesday, 10/26). Key agenda items include:

- Election of the following Caucus officers: Chair-elect, Program Chair, Program Chair-elect and Treasurer (Nominations can be submitted prior to the Annual Meeting on the enclosed nomination form);
- Decision on whether to retain Caucus status, or become a SPIG (see pages 3 and 4); and
- Decision on whether to revise the Caucus name to include bisexuals.

Volunteers are still needed to staff the Caucus Exhibit Booth. Exhibitor badges are available in exchange for hours. See page 5.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT.....

## ... on Cynthia Gomez, Ph.D.

One of the most interesting membership drives I've ever experienced has to be the one the Lesbian and Gay Caucus of Public Health Workers (L&GC) pulled-off last year at the American Public Health Association Conference (APHA) in Washington, D.C.

It was my first year as an APHA conference-goer. I had heard through the grapevine that the best social event was going to be the L&GC party occurring at a private home. So I decided to be adventurous and show-up even though I wasn't going to know anyone. To assist my slightly anxious state, I got completely lost and it took me over an hour to find the place (apparently, a not so uncommon experience that evening).

By the time I arrived, I had my doubts as to whether this was such a great idea. "Do I dare walk in so late? The party was only supposed to last another half hour ... What if everyone is gone? What if I wake-up the host? What if it's only boys? Maybe I should just go back to the hotel!?! No, no ... just knock on the door." So I did.

And what a party it was! I was greeted by warm and friendly faces, immediately engaged in fun and interesting conversations, and before I knew it had signed up to be part of the L&GC Social Committee for this year's events in San Francisco. What a way to bring in a new member! No one ever noticed how late I had arrived.

My work in the public health arena began in the mid-seventies as a community outreach worker in a poor urban neighborhood. I went on to pursue a doctorate in clinical psychology and continued working in public/community health settings. For the past two years I have been working as a scientist at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS), at the University of California, San Francisco. This shift from front-line work to behavioral science has emphasized the importance and challenge of bridging scientific study with the day-to-day realities of community-based needs and interventions, a bridge that may be foremost in our abilities to prevent and combat

disease.

The L&GC party reminded me of how important it is for us to balance our hard work with opportunities to play and relax. It is something I originally embraced from my Latino cultures.

Born in California, second generation Mexican, I was raised in Ecuador and then in Puerto Rico, returning to the U.S. to attend college. Within these three similar yet distinct cultures, the hard work, hard play motto could always be found: a "parranda" (all night serenading from one home to another), a "siesta" at mid-day, or the never-ending "salsa" dance. Later in my career, I also observed the importance of play from my psychotherapy work with children. Children always provide a great example of how play can help with coping - perhaps the grown-ups can take note of such wisdom.

These are stressful time for all of us. The lesbian, gay and bisexual community has been devastated as the AIDS and breast cancer epidemics continue to take the lives of so many. Finding time for those long walks on the beach, celebrations of life with friends, and that romantic dinner with the one you love are sources of nourishment necessary to go on. So, remember when you come to San Francisco in October: "hard work, hard play!"

See you at the L&GC party! ▼

### L/GC Annual Banquet Advance Ticket Purchase

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (please print)

Yes! I am requesting \_\_\_\_\_ ticket(s) at \$35 a piece for the Lesbian and Gay Caucus Annual Banquet on Wednesday, October 27, at Ivy's restaurant. (Tickets may be picked up at booth #447 in the Exhibit Hall prior to the banquet, or at the door of the restaurant.)

I am enclosing \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be applied towards the cost of a banquet ticket for a student or low income caucus member.

Yes! I am willing to assist at the booth or at the caucus socials. (Please include home telephone number and contact information in San Francisco, if known): \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL NO LATER THAN OCTOBER 11th TO:**  
L/GC, 1345 North Hayworth #310, Los Angeles, California, 90046.  
Make checks payable to The L&G Caucus.

This newsletter is published biannually by the Lesbian and Gay Caucus of Public Health Workers. Forward all correspondence, submissions, address changes and membership inquiries to: L&GCPHW, 1345 North Hayworth #310, Los Angeles, California, 90046.

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Denise Dennis  
Cheri Pies  
Paul Moore  
Cynthia Gomez  
Jonathan Goldman

Don't miss out on the fun. Cut and mail today!

# To SPIG or not to SPIG?

The following comments stem from a discussion at last year's Caucus business meeting about changing the Caucus to a SPIG. The topic will be revisited at the upcoming business meeting in San Francisco.

## Pro-

### Jonathan Goldman

This caucus has existed in varying strengths for over a decade and currently is at a reasonable level of stability and viability. A consistent challenge has been the struggle to find and nurture its leaders from its membership. Our membership has never really reached its potential, due in part to the low profile of caucuses within the APHA structural organization. A caucus is not an integral part of the Association - but merely "in official relations."

One method to attain greater visibility would be to become a Special Primary Interest Group (SPIG) which is akin to a section but without full status advantages (formal budget, Governing Council representation, etc.) Our members are women and men from around the country; some of whom are active in other sections or state affiliates, some who work providing health services for gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender persons, and all, I believe, are identifiable as same-sex romantically-inclined. (I don't know everyone, but members I have met have not "come out" as bisexual or transgender). All are also interested in promoting equal access to health care for everyone, regardless of sexual orientation.

In the past decade, this interest has grown into a specialized area of health services known as Lesbian and Gay Health Services and Promotion. I suggest this be the focus of a SPIG.

Perhaps with the status of a SPIG and its inclusion on all APHA membership forms, more people would become aware of our existence and join. It often takes several years and attendance at an Annual Meeting or two for people to get involved with the Caucus. Of course, the primary focus of our SPIG would not exclude others from joining or participating if lesbian/gay health services was not in their professional domain, and it would be expected that the Annual Meeting scientific sessions would be continued in their breadth and depth.

Yet there are other particulars needing analysis prior to a decision on this issue in San Francisco. Among them are: (1) How many current members could change their primary section affiliation to the new SPIG? (2) How would the dues be restructured to reflect those members paying "second section" annual dues? (3) How would other caucuses feel being left behind? (4) As a SPIG would we really get increased visibility and more members, or is it all an illusion? (5) Should we instead seek closer ties to the Medical Care Section as a committee within that group? (6) Would a forward-moving balance be attainable between those serving lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender clients and lesbian and gay members in other fields? (7) What about the NLGHEF? Is there room for two groups of similar purposes? Are we and they mutually exclusive, or do we need to collaborate and both exist? (8) Who cares?

## Con-

### Paul Moore

My reasons for recommending that the Lesbian and Gay Caucus remain a caucus and not seek SPIG status are two-fold. First, the official APHA definitions for caucuses and SPIGs highlight my major concern. A SPIG is defined as "groups of self-elected APHA members sharing a common occupational discipline or program area of interest," while a caucus is "a group of 15 or more APHA members, partisan of a particular position on an issue important to APHA, who pursue a desired result within the Association."

In my view, most caucuses are person-oriented while SPIGs are content oriented - who you are versus what you study, or what you do. Few of us in the Caucus work on and/or study lesbian, gay or bisexual issues. We are all lesbians, gay men or bisexuals interested in lesbian, gay and bisexual issues.

The Caucus by-laws define our goals in broad terms of mutual support and education; advocacy for improved health care for lesbians, gay men and bisexuals; and education of others regarding lesbian, gay and bisexual health care and public health issues. We do not define ourselves as students of lesbian, gay and bisexual health issues, nor as persons who provide health care or health education to lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals.

Second, under the labyrinthine structure of APHA, a member can affect policy decisions of the Association most effectively through sections and affiliates (geographic, usually statewide organizations). Neither SPIGs nor caucuses have votes in the Governing Council. (Note: While SPIGs are usually viewed as sections in formation, it is not required that a SPIG become a section.)

Individuals are allowed to be members of one Primary Section and as many Secondary Sections as desired, however an individual can vote for officers only in their Primary Section. Membership in Secondary Sections either does not count or is greatly discounted in the allocations of funds to sections. Thus, individuals are rarely effective participants in their Secondary Section(s).

SPIG membership can substitute for Primary or Secondary Section membership, but to be an effective SPIG member, an individual would need to choose the SPIG as a Primary Section. Thus, if the Caucus were a SPIG and I wanted to be effective in the SPIG, I would be faced with moving my primary membership from the Social Work section.

I feel that I have a great deal of influence the Social Work section in terms of recommendations for APHA officers, positions on policy statements, and program content. Further, my active participation in that section gives me support and credibility in APHA as a whole, especially in seeking an appointment in membership deployment to various boards and committees.

I would not want to give up an effective position in a voting section for membership in a non-voting SPIG even with the perceived enhanced recognition and the scheduling preference SPIGs receive.

In summary, I am content to remain a Caucus member along with my American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, and Latino brothers and sisters.

**APHA GUIDELINES**  
for  
**SPECIAL PRIMARY INTEREST GROUP (SPIG)**

**Definition**

A "special primary interest group" (SPIG) is an open group of self-selected APHA members sharing a common occupational discipline or program area interest, and electing no primary section affiliation. SPIGs may include groups or members which, (a) may ultimately apply for section status, (b) desire some relationship to the Association but do not wish to assume all of the responsibilities of a section, or (c) have been disestablished as a section but wish to maintain a recognized identify within the organization.

**Membership**

Each SPIG will be provided annually a list of those APHA members who have designated the SPIG as their preferred APHA membership affiliation (in lieu of primary affiliation with a section). Initially there will be no minimum size requirements, however, the Executive Board reserves the right to impose size requirements at a future time.

**Name**

The official name of each SPIG may be self-chosen, but should be descriptive and succinct, and must avoid confusion with APHA constitutional labels.

**Organization**

SPIG will not be required to establish and maintain elaborate organizational structure and function. As a minimum, it will be necessary for each SPIG to designate a contact person to APHA annually. This individual will receive all official APHA announcements to the SPIG, and will be viewed by APHA as the ultimate spokesperson for the SPIG. Each SPIG should afford the opportunity for participation of its members in its collective actions, including selection of its leadership. As a minimum, it should schedule an open business meeting for its members in conjunction with each APHA annual meeting, announced in the printed convention program.

**Activities**

Each SPIG, particularly with regard to the special concerns of its occupational discipline or program area interest, acts within the Association:

- (a) to provide input to public policy development,
- (b) to assist implementation of public policy positions,
- (c) to participate in annual meeting programs,
- (d) to work cooperatively with sections and other association units in tasks of mutual concern,
- (e) to give advice and counsel to the EB, AB and PDB,
- (f) to aid other association program efforts as appropriate,
- (g) to recruit and retain members of APHA and the SPIG, and generally
- (h) to provide a focus within APHA for the special interest it represents.

**Governance Participation**

APHA members who choose primary identification with a SPIG are constitutionally classified as "unaffiliated" APHA members and will be eligible to vote with all other "unaffiliated" APHA members to elect representation to the Governing Council. Procedures for election of these Governing Council representatives of the "unaffiliated" membership will incorporate an opportunity for each SPIG to nominate an individual for such office. SPIGs (like sections) will be annually invited to submit nominations during the regular Association processes for national officer election, membership deployment, and awards selection.

**Finances**

SPIGs will not receive discretionary funds from APHA, nor may they impose dues on members. SPIGs are free to invite and receive nominal contributions for individual members on a strictly voluntary basis to support "section-like" activities, e.g., a newsletter to all SPIG members.

**Public Policy**

SPIGs (like sections) will be encouraged to participate fully in the regular APHA processes for development and implementation of the Association's public policies. SPIGs (like sections) are not free to independently take positions or make pronouncements on public policy issues. Policy issues and actions of special interest to SPIGs should be brought to the attention of the Action Board, which is responsible for coordinating public policy implementation by all APHA units.

**Report**

Each SPIG will annually forward to the Association the name of the "contact person" and any other leadership positions they may have selected, e.g., program planning chairperson and/or political action chairperson.

## WANT TO MEET INTERESTING PEOPLE?

Interested in meeting people from different cities or foreign lands? Staff the Caucus booth (#447) at the Annual Meeting and that's who you will meet! A sign-up sheet will be posted at the booth on the opening days of the meeting. You can also indicate your desire to help by checking the appropriate box on the pre-meeting banquet reservation form on page 2 of this newsletter.

There are a limited number of exhibitor badges available for persons willing to staff the booth for a minimum of eight (8) hours over the course of the meeting. Call Bruce Reeves, Booth Coordinator, at (801) 466-6010 for more information.

Don't forget to stop by the booth for your pink triangle!

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

Last year the Caucus went into an Annual Meeting with a positive bank balance for the first time in its history. In order to repeat that achievement this year and put the Caucus on firm financial footing, it is necessary that members insure that their dues are paid before the Annual Meeting in October. (Note: Dues are for the membership year which runs from the end of one Annual Meeting through the next meeting. Thus, 1993 dues are for the period 11/13/92 through 10/28/93, and 1994 dues will cover 11/1/93 through 10/31/94.)

Currently 64 members have paid their dues for 1993. Our budget, adopted in Washington assumes 71 paid members. In addition, donations of \$50 have been received towards the unbudgeted cost of pink triangle stickers.

A full report and proposed 1994 budget will be presented at the Caucus Business Meeting in San Francisco in October.

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## CONGRATULATIONS BRIAN AND PAUL

Two former Caucus Chairs have been appointed by APHA President-Elect, Dr. Eugene Feingold, and the APHA Executive Board to positions on the APHA Action Board.

Brian A. Dobrow, who last year ended a term on the APHA Executive Board, has been appointed as a Member-at-Large, and Paul Moore, currently Caucus Treasurer, has been appointed as the Social Work Section Representative. Both appointments are for three years effective as of the end of the 1993 Annual Meeting.

In his appointment letters, Dr. Feingold states that "the APHA Action Board is charged with the implementation of Association public policy positions, including development and pursuit of an annual legislative program."

Congratulations Brian and Paul!

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## LODGING REQUESTS

Caucus members interested in sharing accommodations with other members at the upcoming Annual Meeting are encouraged to add their names to the Shared Housing List as soon as possible. Contact Marc Wynne, Caucus Secretary, at (213) 654-3615 for more information and a copy of the list. This is a name exchange service only; accommodations are not being arranged by the Caucus.

## Lesbian and Gay Caucus Executive Committee 1992-1993

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## ~REMEMBER~

bring your camera to  
the Annual Meeting  
so you can submit  
your photos for next  
year's newsletters!

**1993 A.P.H.A. PROGRAMS SPONSORED BY THE  
LESBIAN AND GAY CAUCUS OF PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS**

(Check program schedule for last minute location changes)

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24**

12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Exhibit Hall, Booth #447, Moscone Center  
CAUCUS EXHIBIT BOOTH OPENS

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Westin St. Francis, Bayview Suite, Rm. #1425  
LESBIAN AND GAY CAUCUS HOSPITALITY SUITE

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 25**

7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. 3161 Mission Street, telephone: (415) 282-2928  
WOMEN'S BREAKFAST AT CAFE COMMONS

12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Marriott, Golden Gate Room, C-2  
YOUTH AND HIV: CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE FIELD

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Marriott, Golden Gate Room, C-2  
HEALTH CARE REFORM: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LESBIAN AND GAY COMMUNITY

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Marriott, Golden Gate Room, C-2  
METHODOLOGY AT THE MARGINS: RESEARCHING LESBIAN HEALTH

6:30 p.m. Check Program for Location  
JOINT SOCIAL OF THE RAINBOW COALITION

7:30 p.m. Check Booth #447 for Location  
JOINT RECEPTION WITH THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26**

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Moscone Center, Room 304  
SEXUAL PRACTICES, HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND HIV: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Marriott, Sierra Room I  
LESBIAN AND GAY CAUCUS ANNUAL MEETING (brown bag lunch)

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Moscone Center, Room 122  
LESBIAN AND BISEXUAL WOMEN AND HIV: A DISCUSSION OF METHODS AND STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Check Program for Location  
LESBIAN AND GAY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER CONCERNS: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27**

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Moscone Center, Room 309  
TOBACCO ADDICTION IN THE LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL COMMUNITY: THE SILENT EPIDEMIC

12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Moscone Center, Exhibit Hall D  
LESBIAN AND GAY CAUCUS POSTER SESSION: HIV, SEXUAL RELATIONS, AND VIOLENCE ISSUES

2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Moscone Center, Room 309  
HIV AND TAKING RISKS: ADDRESSING ISSUES OF SAFER SEX, SELF-DISCLOSURE, AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO HIV EDUCATION

4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Moscone Center, Room 309  
WOMEN AND HIV: HIDDEN VULNERABILITIES AND RISK BEHAVIOR

7:30 p.m. Ivy's Restaurant (check booth #447 for directions)  
LESBIAN AND GAY CAUCUS ANNUAL BANQUET