

CONGRESS RULES TVs NOT HANDICAPPED

Questions of Law *

by Jan Elliot

Most people grow up believing that sex and gender are one and that one's "sex" is fixed for eternity. Protected by their ignorance, it is hardly surprising that when they are confronted by a reality that shakes their faith in unalterable verities many people lash out at the source of their confusion and fear. As a result, most cross dressers have encountered social rejection in the form of social rudeness or ridicule, discrimination, or even physical assault. Assault is clearly unlawful, and the victim may bring both criminal charges and a civil suit against the culprit (although such a right can hardly be reassuring to a victim afraid of family, community, and/or employment repercussions). Social disapproval, on the other hand, is disturbing but cannot be cured directly by the law. What then of discrimination? Among other possibilities, discrimination may take the form of a refusal to hire or to rent or sell housing. A number of court decisions have held that federal law prohibiting discrimination in hiring by sex does not apply to transsexuals in light of the Congressional intent to protect women rather than other categories of people. Another approach may be possible, however.

In *Blackwell vs. United States Dept. of the Treasury* 656 F.Supp. 713 (D.D.C. 1986), the plaintiff Blackwell had lost his job at the Treasury through a reduction in force. He subsequently applied for another Treasury opening and was entitled to a priority in hiring due to his prior termination. Although a self described homosexual and transvestite, 639 F. Supp. 289, it appears likely that Blackwell was either a TG or a TS. He had gone to work at the Treasury in a dress for eight years and had undergone breast augmentation surgery of some kind. When he was interviewed for the new position, he presented himself as a woman. The interviewer decided that Blackwell was a homosexual and was accordingly undesirable. The court found that he and others then arranged to abolish the job so that he would not have to justify rejecting Blackwell as a homosexual. Blackwell sued, claiming that he was "handicapped" within the meaning of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. Section 706(7)(B), which then defined a handicapped person as:

Any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits such person's functioning or one or more such person's major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The court wrote: There is nothing to suggest that Mr. Strange, [the interviewer] had any understanding (continued on page 3)

Editor's Corner

By: Wendi Pierce

This month I'd like to share two letters with you that were received during the past month. The first is from a sister in Texas. She and I have known each other for some time, but until recently, had never directly communicated. We both are outspoken members of this very talkative, to say the least, community, and we have not always agreed on everything, but, as I now am beginning to see, we are closer than I expected in our ideology and our desires to inform and help the gender community.

The second is an open letter, to the members of Alpha Zeta and A Rose, from a person who in past months has become a friend and kind of a significant other at large to both groups. She was introduced to our community through a member of A Rose who we have not seen for a while, a person who's company we enjoyed and a person who we hope will again participate. Enough said in introduction, here are the letters.

August 23, 1988

Dear Wendi,

I enjoyed your article, "The End of an Era". You certainly did not offend this Tri-Ess sister, Wendi. Your words were well weighed and evenly presented. Now I believe I understand where you are coming from. Your thought-provoking comments regarding Tri-Ess membership policies, your desire to compromise, your request for other options motivated me to write this letter. (continued on page 4)

TRANSSEXUALS AND THEIR PARENTS

By: Kay Metsker

PART TWO: PARENTAL REACTIONS

My heart was heavy, for its trust had been Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong; So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men One summer Sabbath day I strolled among The green mounds of the village burial place; Where, pondering how all human love and hate Find one sad level; and how, soon or late, Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meekened face And cold hands folded over a still heart, Pass the green threshold of our common grave, Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart, Awed for myself, and pitying my race, Our common sorrow like a mighty wave, Swept all my pride away, and trembling, I forgave!

John Greenleaf Whittier

Grieving is the normal response to the pain and anguish of loss. It is the process of healing after a disruptive loss occurs in life. It is uncomfortable and painful; a state of dis-ease. If it is not experienced, or if it is repressed, denied, and internalized, it can lead to serious emotional and/or physical disease. Knowing what to expect in the process of grieving for yourself and others helps you get through the process.

When parents are told by their child that he/she is gender dysphoric and is planning a change of sex, the parents usually experience shock, a sense of betrayal, and a sense of loss. They may be able to accept the change intellectually, but at the emotional level, (continued on page 2)

Parental Reactions continued...

there is a sense of having lost a son (or daughter).

The burden felt by the parents is doubly great because the loss of a child and its accompanying feeling of powerlessness go against the most basic of parental instincts, that of protecting the offspring. Faced with such a catastrophic idea, the stunned parents all too often believe they should have been able to avert the "tragedy." When the feeling of powerlessness sets in, parents find themselves in a situation of having to deal not only with their shock, but also with their perceived inability to have prevented it. One of the basic things taken away from the parents is the conviction of possessing the ability to control and to have some say about what is happening in the world. Feeling that ability gone, parents must turn elsewhere to believe once again in themselves and to re-develop their sense of self-esteem.

Parents may think frequently about their mistakes or the things they didn't do, and now wish they had. They must realize that whatever happened in the past, they did the best they could at the time. Dwelling on the causes of the gender dysphoria and negative parts of the relationship will only delay the recovery time. Continually going over situations cannot change them. Parents should forgive themselves - if there is anything to forgive that is still unfinished. They should begin to think in positive terms of the good times in the relationship and give up the painful ones. Above all, they should stop punishing themselves!

Adjusting to and eventually accepting the reality of the change is a long, slow, and painful healing process. Studies by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and others have shown that definite stages of this grief process are encountered and must be resolved by each individual before they can reach final understanding. The stages are: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Guilt, Acceptance, and Renewal.

DENIAL - This is the first stage. A state of numbness and disbelief takes hold. Common thoughts are, "No, this can't be happening to me. I don't believe it. If I don't think about it, the problem will go away." After about six weeks, if a person is stoically fighting their grief and strong feelings, or is still feeling numb, they are denying their feelings and are headed for emotional trouble.

ANGER - Anger may be expressed outwardly as rage, or turned inward and be experienced as depression. Reactions such as, "Why me? Why not our neighbors? How could you do this to us?", may be expressed. Blaming others is a way of avoiding the personal pain, sorrow and despair of coming to terms with the fact that life is not always fair. We all have different reasons for feeling how we feel. People's feelings are a legitimate part of them; they shouldn't be ashamed of these emotions. Hiding one's anger won't make it disappear. A person will get past it more quickly if it is brought out into the open. People should also realize, if they become targets of this anger, not to take it personally because the anger must be expressed and worked through.

BARGAINING - Bargaining goes on to help buy time to accept the truth of the situation. "I'll come see you only if I see 'Larry' instead of 'Laura'. I'll have lunch with you if you wear slacks and no make-up.", are ways to try to postpone the inevitable.

DEPRESSION - Depression can result in feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and powerlessness. Other feelings

such as sadness, disappointment, and/or loneliness can occur. The person experiencing these emotions should ask for comfort and help when they want it. It is important to not resist one's feelings or to wallow in them. If a person is allowed to express their feelings, they will find final acceptance much easier. They will also be grateful to those who can sit with them during this stage of depression without constantly telling them that they should be more cheerful.

GUILT - Guilt comes from something a person did or said, something they wished they had not done; or from something that a person thought they should have said or done. Whenever someone finds themselves saying "should" or "ought", they are putting themselves in a position to feel guilt.

Guilt may be created unreasonably. If a person says to themselves or others, "He wouldn't have had this problem if I ...", guilt is created by their own self-talk. "If only" and "what if" are questions that can never be answered. The facts are not all available to know what else could have happened. They must rid themselves of the irrational "if only" thoughts. Those thoughts serve no purpose but to continue the guilt feelings which will slow down one's recovery. A person must accept the reality of what has happened. It cannot be changed, but people can change what they think about it and choose not to feel guilt. Feeling guilty over a prolonged time is a choice some may make.

Thoughts are thoughts; they cannot be felt. Feelings are feelings; they cannot be thought. Self-talk can create one's reality. A person can use self-talk to set up emotional barriers and feel completely helpless and emotionally impotent. Or one's horizons can be expanded to create positive change and growth.

*GOD grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things that I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.
The Commodore's Prayer*

ACCEPTANCE - Progress toward acceptance is made when the parents can think of their child without strong emotional feelings of longing and sadness for the way things were. The parents will not be stuck in the past, they will be living in the present, and making plans for the future. They will be able to live with the ambiguity of the never-to-be answered questions. This stage should not necessarily be mistaken for a happy stage, where total acceptance is achieved. It should be considered as the stage where the pain has gone and the struggle is over.

RENEWAL - The psychologist Carl Jung said that part of being human involves having problems because human beings have a consciousness, as opposed to lower animals that operate their lives on instincts. Problems force us to a more developed consciousness, a fuller awareness of events and feelings. As Jung says, "Everyone of us gladly turns away from his problems; if possible they must not be mentioned, or better still, their experience is denied. We wish to make our lives simple, certain, and smooth. And for that reason problems are taboo. The artful denial of a problem will not produce conviction; on the contrary, a wider and higher consciousness is called for to give us the certainty and clarity we need."

For each loss, each person feels a different set of reactions, and must work through their grieving processes at whatever pace and time is necessary. There are similarities among those who

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manage their grief successfully - and similar blocking patterns for those who have trouble resolving their grief. Some never do completely resolve their grief and do not complete all the stages of the grieving process.

Parents must focus on their patterns of grieving, monitor their self-talk and emotions to help raise their consciousness and grow into stronger, more sensitive people.

It is important to remember that there is a balance in the universe. For every loss there is a gain. Surviving grief doesn't mean that parents will completely forget the past history of their transsexual child. That person is in their life forever, but his/her role in their life must, and will, change and evolve. The ideas expressed in this article will, hopefully, help to produce a better understanding for the parents who are learning to deal with the loss of an old relationship and the beginning of a new one.

Ed: This publication wishes to thank Kay for sharing her thoughts and the thoughts of all those she communicated with in writing this article. It takes a great amount of inner strength to deal with these issues. Kay's insight and her objective approach will undoubtedly help many others in this same situation.

More on CONGRESS RULES..

one way or the other as to the difference between a homosexual and a transvestite or that he focused on the fact that plaintiff's dress was somewhat more feminine than that of many homosexuals. To make matters more difficult, some transvestites are homosexuals. Yet, as a matter of statutory analysis, while homosexuals are not handicapped it is clear that transvestites are, because many experience strong social rejection in the work place as a result of their mental ailment made blatantly apparent by their cross-dressing life-style. That, however, did not end the matter.

The court continued: Plaintiff's handicap was not automatically apparent as is gender. In these circumstances one claiming under the Rehabilitation Act has a duty to inform a prospective employer of his handicap before being entitled to relief under that Act. Plaintiff did not do this, preferring to refer simply to his "life-style," which was clearly ambiguous. Thus while the failure to employ plaintiff is highly reprehensible, plaintiff cannot recover and the complaint must be dismissed. Hopefully wiser heads will correct the underlying injustice.

Accordingly, Blackwell lost and apparently never did obtain reemployment. Since the judge found that Blackwell had failed to meet a procedural requirement, the reasoning that a TV is handicapped was technically "dicta", that is material not required of the judge and not legally binding.

Notwithstanding the limited legal impact of Blackwell, the case proved to be unusually important. When the various far right groups lobbied heavily against the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, for example, (following the Supreme Court's decision in the Grove City case) many argued on the basis of Blackwell that its passage would accord protection to "homosexuals and transvestites." The Act was finally enacted over presidential veto. There was, however, no express language in it dealing in any fashion with cross dressers.

The passage of the Civil Rights Restoration Act did not end the right wing reaction to Blackwell. During August, 1988, Congress considered major amendments to the Fair Housing Act.

Senator Jesse Helms, declaring a need for "common sense," submitted an amendment to the Senate bill expressly declaring: "that Congress does not intend for transvestites to receive the benefits and protections that is provided for handicapped individuals." 134 CONG. REC. S10454, S10470 (daily ed. August 2, 1988) (statement of Senator Helms).

Opposing the amendment was Senator Cranston, who said on the floor of the Senate:

Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the pending amendment that would exclude from coverage under the Fair Housing Act a particular mental disorder, in this case transvestitism.

Mr. President, this amendment is not about whether or not this Senator or particular Senators approve of the conduct involved here. Rather, as a principal author of section 504, I see this amendment as a direct attack on the heart and soul of anti-discrimination laws, which protect individuals against discrimination based on stereotypes. In 1973 when section 504 was enacted, Congress recognized that a great deal of the discrimination facing disabled individuals is not the inevitable result of their handicapping condition, but, rather, arises out of the false perceptions and prejudices that others hold about individuals who have those conditions. The clear congressional intent was to sweep broadly -- to change attitudinal barriers which had served so unfairly to deprive disabled persons of the rights and opportunities afforded to other Americans.

Mr. President, the premise of section 504 is straightforward - individuals should be judged on their abilities, not on their disabilities. If a disabled person can do the job and does not pose a significant health or safety risk to others, there is absolutely no justification for denying him or her a job. If he or she is otherwise qualified for an educational or other program receiving Federal financial assistance, the opportunity should not be denied. Likewise, an individual should not be denied housing on irrelevant grounds.

Mr. President, in this case the Senator from North Carolina has singled out for exclusion a disability that is considered by the American Psychiatric Association to be a mental disorder. Despite our efforts over the years to eliminate the stigma or mental illnesses, persons with mental illness are still frequently the subject of discrimination because some individuals have irrational fears about them and are made uncomfortable by them. Although section 504 has been very successful in helping individuals with physical handicaps to be much more widely accepted and integrated into society, the same degree of success has, unfortunately, not yet been achieved for individuals with mental disorders. This amendment would single out one category of individuals who are already being discriminated against and say to them, "Sorry you now have no protections. Congress has decided that it no longer cares whether or not you are cast out of our society."

Mr. President, it is ironic that nothing demonstrates quite as convincingly the continuing need for and the merits of section 504 and the Fair Housing Act as this amendment. It is an appeal to our worst instincts -- saying that we shouldn't have to associate with individuals who are different from ourselves because of the way they dress or their emotional problems. That

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is precisely why various anti-discrimination laws were enacted -- to protect disabled persons from irrational judgments and prejudices.

Mr. President, this amendment forsakes the basic principles of fair play, reason, and justice. If we were to start excluding one category of individuals from coverage, we would be threatening to undermine the very essence of anti-discrimination laws. This amendment could open the door to any number of attempts to exclude other disabilities from this and other anti-discrimination laws. I would stress again that the whole purpose of the Fair Housing Act and other anti-discrimination laws is to provide across-the-board, evenhanded protection, not to pick and choose disabilities we approve of and exclude the ones we don't. If we remove protections from one form of disability, who will be next?

Mr. President, the enactment of section 504 and of other important civil rights measures were proud moments in the history of the U.S. Congress. In passing those measures we were united in spirit with the founding fathers in moving forward to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity for the "pursuit of happiness" and to secure for many of our citizens the "blessings of liberty."

In stark contrast, this amendment, by proposing to close for some the doors of opportunity we opened years ago, promises a retreat from the historic principles embodied in our constitution and in our civil rights laws. I will not and can not sanction denying to some American citizens, those who may need them most, rights to fair treatment and to opportunities to prove themselves and to improve their lives.

Mr. President, the Fair Housing Act is designed to serve a very basic purpose -- to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination that arises out of ignorance and fear about individuals who are different from the rest of us. We should maintain the letter and spirit of that principle and oppose this amendment.

134 CONG. REC. S10454, S10470 (daily ed. August 2, 1988) (statement of Senator Cranston)

The amendment passed the Senate 89-2. Senator Kennedy, by the way, expressly noted that he had no objection, and Senator Heflin, who had missed the vote, later expressed his approval for it. As best as I can currently ascertain, the House accepted the amendment and upon signature not only will the Fair Housing Act exclude transvestites, but so will the Rehabilitation Act which gave rise to the Blackwell case. It is unclear whether the amendment will affect transsexuals. The amendment specifically refers to "transvestites," and there is some room, however limited, to argue that a TS would present a different case particularly as the amendment prohibits treating as handicapped a person "solely because that individual is a transvestite."

Even though Blackwell, a case of very limited import even at its best, has been statutorily aborted, it does point the way to one route for protecting the rights of cross-dressers, one that may be more successful at some state or local levels. Whether this route is desirable, however, is another matter. The situation is not unlike that of the criminal defendant who, claiming innocence, is told by her lawyer that the client can be gotten "off" through an insanity plea. The result may be desirable, but what a way to go.

What is particularly disturbing, of course, is not the result but the willingness of Congress to so quickly and readily

consign the interests of the gender conflicted to the trash can. It may well be appropriate to classify cross-dressers as non-handicapped, but some form of recognition of individual rights and dignity would certainly be appropriate.

Ed: "Questions of Law" is an occasional column written by Jan Elliot, an attorney and published legal author. The column discusses legal matters of interest to our community.

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Editor's Corner from page 1....

As you are probably aware, I am completely loyal to Tri-Ess and its principles. When I first joined Tri-Ess, I appreciated the emphasis on supporting not only the femmophile (FP), but also her wife and family. At first, I did not understand why transsexuals were excluded. Over the next three years I found out. As you know, some wives worry that their FP husbands are gay. Many more worry that they will opt for surgery. Within our chapter, which was "open" de-facto, I watched TS's dump their conflicts squarely on the wives. Wives do fear them, Wendi.

I firmly believe in the conservative, family oriented approach that is the hallmark of Tri-Ess. Our wives are of paramount importance to us. We want to give them a secure, supportive environment in which they can resolve their conflicts and grow together with their husbands. I strongly believe there is a productive place for Tri-Ess in the gender community.

This is not to say that I oppose "open" organizations. Far from it!. "Open" organizations bring various types of cross-dressers together. In time they realize that, despite philosophical differences, they are natural allies. My ardent hope is that groups of all persuasions will come together to work together for our common goals - education and ultimately acceptance by society. Does that sound familiar?

Now that you know my basic philosophy, I would like to address some of the interesting ideas you expressed in your article. It goes to my heart that you cannot affiliate yourself with Tri-Ess because of matters of conscience. Provided that certain principles are followed, I am open to your idea of compromise. Tri-Ess must remain an organization of FP's. Its emphasis on support for the family, especially wives, must be maintained. Violation of security, and behavior known to upset wives, should be punished severely. A compromise may be workable; the question is how? I don't particularly like your idea of the chapters waiving membership requirements. In my experience, that leads to an "open" group - and trouble. Perhaps "difficult cases" could be referred to the Advisory Board or the Membership Review Committee. You didn't say what your problem is with the philosophy of Tri-Ess, and I would rather not guess. I believe that the key word is "femmophile". Any FP should be able to join Tri-Ess.

I'd like to think on paper with you about two distinct classifications of crossdressers. Certainly I do not think that classical transsexuals or bisexuals should belong to Tri-Ess. What worries me is that neither group is homogeneous. Some FP's so love femininity that they elect to have their bodies made

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feminine by surgery. Some of these get through the medical screening process and have transsexual surgery. Their mindset is still FP - no surgeon's knife can alter what is in their hearts and heads. For these FP's, surgery is almost always a mistake. So, I wouldn't throw them out of Tri-Ess, provided they follow behavior standards.

The concept of bisexuality provides a more complicated analysis. Of course, in some minds it is easy to tar these people with the "Gay" and or "AIDS" labels. The whole question hinges on the FP's own self-image and self-expression. Who is the girl within? That is something each of us has to decide for herself. It does not seem illogical to me that a FP, especially if she lives as a woman, could fall in love with a man. In her feminine self, she sees herself as a heterosexual. Society's definition of "bisexual" is pitifully inadequate here.

In Tau Chi chapter, prospective members are screened by two members. We stress that ours is a heterosexual FP organization, and we don't ask the prospective member to state any sexual preference. We assume that they are heterosexual. In our opinion, what a person does in the privacy of their own bedroom is their own business. The aim is to include FP's and exclude non-FP's. Sure a "bisexual" FP might be admitted, but if she upholds the behavior code, and promotes the principles of Tri-Ess and Tau Chi, we consider her an asset.

While we are discussing Tri-Ess, it really hurts me to see our organization attacked the way it has been lately. Tri-Ess has tried hard to work side by side with "open" groups, to promote the cause of crossdressers of all types. Many of its chapters are represented within IFGE. Why are our allies assailing us? I ask that you, Wendi, in your position as IFGE chairman, stress solidarity to those who would cast stones over philosophical differences. Long ago, Jesus's disciples complained that man not of their group was doing God's work. Jesus replied, "He who is not against you is for you." need any more be said?

Until I hear from you, keep up the good work. To use your own trademark words - GO FOR IT.

Your sister,

Jane Ellen Fairfax

Ed: Jane's letter was condensed, with her permission, to fit available space in this extremely large issue.

August 22, 1988

Dear A Rose and Alpha Zeta,

I am a genetic female and what society would probably dub "normal". I have been a wife and a mother, am compassionate, nurturing, in touch with my emotions and usually dress the way our society expects a female to dress. My friends have included heterosexual and gay males and females. I didn't know any TVs or TSs, but I did "know" that men who dressed in woman's clothes were perverts.

Now my world has expanded. Meeting you ladies has been a humbling experience, and getting to know you has brought about profound changes in me. I have found no perverts. Quite the opposite. I have found human beings who are open, sincere, loving, supportive and psychologically sound. I feel a great deal of love for you, and I thank Melisa for introducing me to your world.

I don't yet understand about crossdressing. In my narrow world, I have always believed that clothing has nothing to do with one's masculinity or femininity. I hope you will help me understand. Right now, I have decided to try to be aware of any

changes in how I feel - or if my feelings change - depending upon what I wear. This isn't something I've ever considered before. I have explored both my feminine and masculine sides and feel comfortable with myself. I refuse to accept the feminine stereotype of our society. You refuse to accept the masculine one. Perhaps this is why I feel an affinity to the groups. All my life I have fought stereotyping. Whether it pertained to race, religion, sex, or any other categorization. Each human being is capable of an enormous range of characteristics, and stereotyping robs us of our human potential.

I like your feminine sides. I know I would also like your masculine sides. I hate the masculine stereotype - the macho strong man who can't cry, have tender feelings or be soft. You are human beings with the courage to explore the male and the female in each of you. I see you as people who want to live with a full range of human characteristics, rather than being limited to a narrow piece of the spectrum. I want to understand and hope you accept me as a supporter. Having been a female for a long time, maybe I can be of some help to you as you explore your femininity. Please don't hesitate to ask.

I thank you ladies, for your loving acceptance and for giving me quite a shove in my growth as a caring human being. You yanked me right out of a narrow thinking mind into a beautiful new awareness. Now my world includes some of the warmest, most loving, accepting and aware male / female persons I've ever had the opportunity to know.

With love,

Dee

In closing I just would like to say thanks to both Jane and Dee. I know Jane's comments will undoubtedly again be voiced at the Tri-Ess meetings during the Holiday En Femme, hopefully steering the organization to update its by-laws in a more workable direction. In Dee's case, I hope that the members of our Arizona groups will accommodate and continue to welcome her at our gatherings. If all in the community at large were even 1/4 as accepting and willing to try and understand us as she is we would not have the problems that each of us has faced in our quests for the gender identity of our choice. Until next month, GO FOR IT, girls!

The First Lady's Notebook

By: Terri F.

I have recently taken the "next step". I don't feel compelled or obligated to share with you just what it was, because it really is only significant to me alone. It will not change the course of history, solve our traffic problems or even help our Cardinals win a football game, but it has accomplished one goal: it has made me happy.

One year ago, I would have never even considered taking this step, but then, one year ago things were different. I am happy to say that I have grown within myself, gaining in confidence and acquiring a new attitude as I find myself being able to handle new challenges and to take on new responsibilities. I could take this next step without any second thoughts or reservations because I believe in myself. That's the way next steps are. They may be long in coming, but once you've taken them you never look back, only forward to the next one.

The big trick about "next steps" is knowing when to take them. It takes thought and preparation, weighing the pros and

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cons and considering the possible repercussions that could be a product of steps too hastily taken. "If it's right for me, then it's right", is a positive, self affirming declaration, but an impetuous credo to live by. If there will be others directly or indirectly involved, this should be taken into consideration.

Sometimes a "next step" may look appealing, but may in essence prove to be counter-productive. Too often you can find yourself swept along with the current, into something you didn't want to do in the first place. I remember in seventh grade, getting metal cleats put on my shoes, "because everybody did", only to be slipping and sliding through the halls, and nearly wiping out a nun when I finally fell. You've got to make sure that the next step is one you want to take.

I know that this essay has been generic, but we are all in different stages of our growth, and therefore, have different "next steps". There is no time frame. There should be no pressure. Just take your time, think, and let your "next step" be your own.

Alpha Zeta Monthly Meeting

By: Terri F.

The September meeting will be held Saturday the 17th at Cindy's house. We are hoping to have a few new faces present, so please come to welcome them and show your support. The program is not definite as yet, but we are considering several options. Maps will be made available to those who require them.

Alpha Zeta News

by: Terri F.

The August meeting was held at Shelly's house. In attendance were, Terri, Erika, Shelly, Rosalind, Nicole, Cindy, Lynda & Jackie, and invited guest Dee. Terri announced that Cindy and Shelly have officially joined Tri-Ess, and also stated that the grace period for joining Tri-Ess in order to maintain Alpha Zeta membership, will expire at the end of September. All members are asked to bring their updated Tri-Ess membership card to the next meeting, so that an official roster may be made up. We will also be contacting all current Tri-Ess members living in this state, in an attempt to bring them into the fold. Lately, we have received several letters from the Tucson area, inquiring about our chapter.

The Alpha Zeta constitution is in the process of being reworked by a committee consisting of chapter officers. It will be ready for review by all members in the next few months when it will be voted on and ratified.

The Phoenix Little Theatre will be staging "La Cage Aux Folles", starring Penelope Poupee'. Performances will start on September 8th and run through the next month, with two shows on Saturday and Sunday. If there is interest in attending as a group, please contact Terri, who will have more information by the beginning of the month. This promises to be a great event, and will be a lot of fun to share with your sisters!

Rosalind passed around a newly published book by Dr. Richard Docter, entitled: "Transsexuals and Transvestites". It is a very comprehensive and informative textbook, one which we all hope will appear on all library bookshelves. It's available through IFGE for \$29.50 plus shipping. Contact Diane or Wendi for more information.

The program for the evening consisted of two videotaped TV programs, A Sally Jesse Raphael show featuring three guests, a hermaphrodite, a pre-op transsexual and a person with

Klienfelter's syndrome. The second video was a Phil Donahue show featuring female impersonators, including mimics of Joan Rivers, Diana Ross, Cher, and a very remarkable Marilyn Monroe.

VIRGINIA PRINCE TO VISIT

by Diane Ingram

Virginia Prince, will be in Tempe on Monday, October 3rd to address the students of Arizona State University. The program is co-sponsored by Alpha Zeta, A Rose and the A.S.U. Sociology Department. She will address a faculty group at noon, then is scheduled to address the students at 7 P.M. Both presentations will be held in the Social Sciences Building. All members of Alpha Zeta and A Rose are invited to these presentations. Plans are also in the making for a reception for Virginia, hosted by our two organizations prior to the evening presentation.

Virginia Prince has been an outspoken authority on the subject of crossdressing for over 30 years, she is a well published author, and has appeared on many talk shows. She was also the editor of "Transvestia" magazine. She was a co-founder of Tri-Ess and is currently the national treasurer. She has greatly influenced our crossdressing community, and has helped to start crossdresser's support groups across the country. Don't miss this opportunity to spend an evening with Virginia Prince.

"Another Soapbox"

by: Diane Ingram

Following my review of an article by JoAnn Roberts, which appeared in the 8/88 edition of the Femme Forum, I decided to come out or the closet. I'm not coming out in terms of crossdressing, but in opinion. I've tried to stay away from the bickering that has been going on in the crossdressing community lately, but a few things she mention in her article entitled "Soapbox" are very deserving of reaction.

I have three very simple points to my position. First, I feel the attacks against Tri-Ess are provocative and demeaning. She attacks the heterosexual nature of Tri-Ess and unfairly criticizes Alpha Zeta, Tau Chi and an anonymous chapter of Tri-Ess. It's true that Tri-Ess is a support group for heterosexual transvestites, but Tri-Ess also reinforces the crossdressing community as a whole and networks with other groups across the country. Tri-Ess is often the first contact many crossdressers have when coming out of the closet, and it may be seen as standing nearest to the closet door. We are all members of a large crossdressing community, but many of us have clustered around various types of support groups based on common needs. That's why some organizations provide a specific type of support, whether it be for transsexual, gay, heterosexual or open memberships. We just have to learn to be tolerant and respectful of the unique needs served by other support groups in our community.

Second, I feel that JoAnn's efforts to lash out at Alpha Zeta and Tau Chi Chapters are abusive. The split in Alpha Zeta over enforcement of a policy that Tri-Ess chapter members belong to national generated some disappointment, but that's understandable. A Rose offered members another option if they decided not to join national Tri-Ess. By the way, A Rose was actually founded independently of Alpha Zeta to fill the need for an open group in the Phoenix area. This was at least a year before there was any talk of a split in Alpha Zeta. When A Rose was just forming, Alpha Zeta gave it support, shared its newsletter and

(continued on next page)

helped it grow. The two groups are sister organizations which share a number of members and often plan joint programs. Tri-Ess is strongly represented in both groups, but each group has its own objectives and provides support in its own way.

Finally, I strongly feel that JoAnn's article was really no more than an aggressive volley into the controversial and uneven seas surrounding the current state of the crossdressing community. This is a time when the leaderships of Tri-Ess is under fire. JoAnn seems to be taking advantage of this to build some sort of platform, albeit at the expense of others. Tri-Ess networks with other groups as a means of coming together and working together, not for lashing out and offending other organizations. If that's what networking is all about, then I want none of it! Criticism is fine, and needed, but vicious attacks on other groups in our crossdressing community, such as in JoAnn's article, are provocative and detrimental to our community as a whole.

Alpha Zeta Treasury Report

Balance as of 7/29/88	136.74
Paid Out	50.00
Income	12.00
Interest	0.85
Ending Balance as of 8/31/88	99.59

A Rose Events

There has been a slight change in our schedule for the remainder of the year. Our October gathering will be at Charlotte's home, but the theme has been changed. We are now planning a **swap meet**, with the proceeds helping our treasury. Now's the time to get rid of all those shoes, dresses, accessories, etc. that looked so good in the store but now are taking up precious closet space. Your unwanted items can now be put to someone else's good use, or at least take space in someone else's closet, girls. Charlotte also has a pool and welcomes you to bring along your suits. The date is **Saturday 10/1** and the evening will begin at **8:00pm**. Call our hot-line if you need directions. As usual, an early **RSVP at 860-9056** will be greatly appreciated. Also, the **\$3 per person or \$5 per couple** event charge will be collected. In addition, here's the current schedule for future gatherings:

Date	Location	Theme/Activity
10/1	Charlotte's	Swap meet
11/5	open	The Last Halloween Party
12/3	Wendi's	Holiday Pot Luck
1/7	open	After New Year's Party
2/4	open	Valentines Day Party
3/4	open	Roman Toga party ????

If you would like to host one of the open dates please contact us.

A Rose Update

By: **Wendi Pierce**

This month's gathering was changed to Jackie's home, due to some schedule conflicts with Gwen. Anyway, our 60's party came off as planned, with 15 or so in attendance, thanks to some quick work, and Jackie's gracious hospitality. We welcomed two possible new members, Marie and Deana, and a pleasant evening was had by all. The evening ended up with Wendi, Terri, Judee, Dee and Cindy having a 2AM breakfast at Denny's.

On another subject, we have been working to make some minor changes to our by-laws. A revised set will be available shortly and we would like to have all interested members comment on the changes. We will be calling a formal meeting at the October gathering to discuss and approve the changes.

A Rose Treasury Report

Balance as of 7/31/88	462.04
Paid Out	0.00
Income	70.00
Interest.*	1.88
Balance as of 8/31/88 *	533.92

* Due to a bank policy, interest is only posted quarterly. Therefore, this is an approximate number.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Fantasia Fair

In October, the 14th annual "Fantasia Fair" will be a high point. This gathering promises to be a repeat of years past. This event is well worth the trip. The dates are October 14th through the 23th and the mailing address is:

Fantasia Fair
 Lincolnia Station, POB 11254
 Alexandria, Va 22312
 Attn: Eve Goodwin

Holiday En Femme

Chi Chapter / Tri-Ess will host the 1988 Holiday En Femme. The weekend will be held in Chicago on Wednesday, Nov. 16th through Sunday, Nov. 20th. For further information contact:

Naomi Owen
 Chi Chapter / Tri-Ess
 Po Box 342
 Chicago, Ill. 60690
 Chi Chapter "hot-line" (312) 364-9514

First Annual Texas T Party

The Boulton & Park Society wishes to announce this event, a three day weekend "En Femme" to be held February 24th to the 26th 1989 at the beautiful Sheraton Seven Oaks Resort & Conference center in San Antonio, Texas. The event will have a full program of fun, self improvement, outings and just visiting and being a girl. Registration is \$75, The hotel should be contacted direct at 800-346-5866. For more information contact:

Boulton & Park Society
 Atten: Janice Rupard
 Po Box 169652 (T)
 San Antonio, Texas 78280

S F '89

The I.F.G.E wishes to announce it's Third annual "Come Together" convention. This event will be held April 4th to the 9th, 1989 in San Francisco. Activities include bay tours, dining at fine restaurants, a new and expanded convention program, west coast hospitality, and a beautiful city to explore. For more information contact:

IFGE
 Atten: Convention Chairman
 Po Box 367
 Wayland, Mass 01778
 (617) 894-8340

SF '89 c/o ETV
 Po Box 6486
 San Francisco, Ca. 94101

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A Rose
Po Box 4351
Scottsdale, Arizona 85261
(602-860-9056)

Alpha Zeta
PO Box 8425
Mesa, Arizona 85204

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