

THE SEAHORSE SOCIETY OF N.S.W. INC.

OCTOBER 21ST 2008

RITE OF PASSAGE NO 3

SUMMARY TO ALL CONTACTS, RE: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
SUMMARY OF REQUESTS FROM OVERSEAS, RE: CONTACT AND
SUPPORT.

Good morning to you all.

It is that time of the month again. So I thought that I would send you a copy of my monthly letter that I send out to all my contacts every month. I wanted to bring you all up to date with some of the latest news and developments that are occurring at the moment, in both Australia and now New Zealand.

You may ask, why do I mention New Zealand. Well, over the last month, I have “blundered” or ‘waded’ into another of realm of movement that represents for all of us, a journey that we are on “the journey of future community acceptance and understanding”, to quote from one of my new friends out there.

I am not complaining. It is just finding the time to be involved and be a part of this very exciting movement forward. It is challenging and occasionally demanding. However, having said that, I am continually excited and encouraged by where all these communications are leading.

What I am finding is that “we”, as members of a greater world wide trans-community, have so much in common. Also, we are more or less all on the same path of direction to understand ourselves, and to try and achieve some boarder community acceptance and understanding of our phenomenon.

Again, I quote from an article in the Transceiver Monthly: “And what does the future hold for our vast community? If we continually hide ourselves and shy away from any form of publicity, then I don’t see how we can expect better acceptance and understanding. We need to stand proud of ourselves and show the world we are good people”. I could not have expressed this comment any better.

In both countries. Australia and New Zealand, and also as I was to find out in the last month, in Canada, England, Holland and Germany, all these governments, through their individual departments in the area of Human Rights, have now discovered that there exists in their own countries, a wider and more public expression of diversity of sexual and gender expression than they had been realised in the past.

Also, that these people, whether approaching some government departments (e.g. medical, health or legal positions) as individuals or through their organizations, they do exist, and that there are social problems and aspects of social recognition and support that need to be addressed.

What I find is the 'common threats' all these government departments have found and are attempting to find solutions for these people. To this end, they are formulating their own data bases and asking for input information from clubs, societies and individuals such as us, as to how we see ourselves individually as people, and how we exist in today's society, the who and what we are, and to express some of our needs, e.g. to achieve better understandings and tolerances from the wider communities. Even with the diversity of social cultures, background, language, history etc., the common directions taken forward and attempted by the members of the transcommunities are almost the same.

Just recently over the last month, in Australia, government legislation has been introduced to set up identification changes for those of us, who elect and proceed to have gender reassignment. I guess they had to start somewhere. Even though these changes are directed at the transsexual community at the moment, this start does, and can spin off into other areas.

At the moment, our government is looking at passports, drivers' licenses, and legal documentation, such as bank details: what name used (the male and female boxes on immigration cards, birth certificates and the like. One big change that is now directed to those who do intend to change their gender presentation from male to female, for example, is that they do not now have to have total reassignment surgery. All the other requirements stay the same, but there are even a few changes to the way this is done. I will leave

the further explanation of these requirements and how they work to the experts, but the information is now available.

A question. How can something like this be a spin off to the larger trans-community? One example, I can describe is that we, as the committee of the Seahorse Society are looking at the moment is the following. Take our photo driver's license - The obvious problem is that if I am out and about in my other gender presentation and I am pulled over while in my car by the police RBT. My appearance and photo will not match and the police person interviewing me may not be understanding or have the knowledge as to what to do in this situation and may feel very uncomfortable and confronted by this situation. I am not saying this is what normally does happen, but it could. I also am not saying or advocating, that we need to carry two forms of driver identification, such as a male and female photo license either. I definitely know that the RTA would not agree to it.

What we are exploring though is having a membership card, similar to the club card that we all use for our mainstream clubs here in N.S.W. that will identify us as a member of the Seahorse Society and, thus, a member of the Trans-community. We would then register this form of card to the State Government, the Police Force, and the Registered Clubs Association as a means of identification, particularly if I am out and about dressed as my alter-ego. This also serves as another way of joining us up publicly, with the rest of the wider community, because we would need to formulate how this would work and ask all the stated organizations stated above to assist us to put this into being. So to achieve this end, we are educating, as well as receiving support for our 'Rite of Passage' as I am calling our movement.

Finally, what I would like to suggest to you and invite you to join in these government enquiries, and to go on their enquirer's email list, so that you also can receive their information 'blurbs' that they produce and send out.

The Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity contact is Sarah Winter sarah.winter@humanrights.gov.au and in New Zealand, Jack Byrne transgenderinquiry@hrc.co.nz. The publication that his organization puts out "To Be Who I Am".

Also you may consider becoming part of an organization called 'Changeling Aspects' run by Kathy Noble, as she has been very instrumental in achieving some of the proposed changes, especially for the transsexual community. Her email address is knoble@iinet.net.au. If you would like me to give them your email address, I could do that too if you like. Either way, please may I encourage you all to be involved with this exciting movement?

All that we are doing is contributing to their databases, with our information of what we are doing as individual clubs and societies. Explaining how we are trying to support our membership with social activities, information resources, etc and how we see ourselves, fitting into the broad social structure of our main society.

Also, in describing what we would like to see happen, as to achieving our aim of realising, and again I quote "What does the future hold for our vast community?" By going into this two way street of communication, as we all have begun to do, I know that we can achieve this understanding and tolerance and an acceptance by our own communities, all of us as a trans-community, spreading out into the greater Australian Society, even to encompass the much larger world situation if we want to. Why not! We have the technology and resources at our disposal to achieve all of this. Let's go for it.

Thanks again for reading and listening, and keeping in contact with me. Say hello to everyone from all of us at the Seahorse Society.

With regards,

Phil/Julia
(President of the Seahorse Society N.S.W. INC. Australia)