

THE SEAHORSE SOCIETY OF N.S.W. INC.  
March 27, 2009

RITE OF PASSAGE NO 7.  
SUMMARY OF DIRECTORY AND THE PUBLIC DIRECTIONS OF THE  
SOCIETY.

This document is to present the conclusion of a description of what is to happen to the directory of the National trans-community societies and clubs once it has been completed so far. One must remember that compiling the information for this directory will be an on going situation. As new programs and counselling services become known, it is hoped that they will register their information, so as to increase time availability and convenience for all to access.

Again I reiterate, that this directory is not designed, to force organisations to bind together as “one” unit, but to enable us all to provide wider services and information, by all of us participating in a communication network. It is also hoped that each organisation, society, club, counselling service, government department, etc. will have a copy of this directory on their database or files.

My own contact files at the Seahorse Society are continually growing almost daily and are able to be accessed by contacting me, and is available to be emailed to anyone who I have been in contact with in this networking. This is only as long as everyone is agreeable for me to do so. I do not wish to put this directory on our website, as I feel that there must be an element of professional respect and privacy maintained. However, I would like to see this although now as very basic directory grow into a wider unit of information for all of us to be able to use, for our own network communications.

To see how this idea of a communication directory has emerged already, please read the included enclosed documents, from the papers “Rite of Passage” which explains the concepts and describes the steps of how this was developed up to this now presentation.

The second part of this presentation is to discuss some of the positions and situations the we as a Society are attempting to correct and some of the needs we have as a Society of cross-dressers to move forward.

## STATEMENT

We have, for many years, seem to have had a problem with “identity”, concerning how we fit as a group of individuals moving within a larger general society. Most of us have lived our lives in a closet-type situation, venturing out into the public arena on rare occasions, or in stealth.

Our own fears that arise and are very real, born not only from our own personal perceptions, what if I get found out, what if I get attacked physically, what will my family think if this part of me is disclosed and so on.

From the other side of the coin, the people who identify, as supposedly who are normal, what ever that is, their perceptions are along these lines. “Are these people perverts?” “Are they gay men pretending to be women to pick up men for sex?” “Are they drag queens ‘goofing off?’” “Are they sexual predators?” “Are they are mad?”

Is it because we supposedly do not even fit into the normal understanding or perception of a description of a “transperson”, using the ‘box theory of expression. Just who are we and how do cross-dressers fit into either communities?

Once we show ourselves in public, as to who we want to be, we are really in a “no man’s land” to coin a phrase. We are not transsexual because we are not transitioning or wish to. We are not women because we are men in dresses. We are not “gay” or “pretend gays” because we have families and children. A big percentage of us, do not wish to live full-time presenting as a woman, even though some do live this way. So from perception comes the Why - why - why? Attitude.

At least by our communication networking over the last 2 years, others in the trans-community now know we exist and what we are on about. With general public attitudes we still have a long way to go.

As to behaviour protocols and legal ramifications to our public behaviour, we at the Seahorse Society have put into place, acceptable behaviour protocols and suggestions for our members

to abide by when venturing out in public in their other gender expression. This covers what bathrooms to use, what is acceptable behaviour tolerated by “real women”, presenting driver’s license ID to attain entry to a registered club as is required by law in N.S.W. or using your license at an RBT Police stop.

These protocols have been presented to some Police communities – and to some registered clubs, but, as we have found in N.S.W., most people associated and working within these communities, would not understand or be able to deal effectively with a situation created by the public presence of a cross-dresser.

We have only approached the tip of the iceberg. What about the larger groups other states and government reactions? I know the press have a field day’ when any situation arises about a situation concerning a male cross-dresser and normally the publicity is adverse and damaging to not only to cross-dressers, but also influences the general public’s perceptions in a very negative way. For example, ‘That we are all “loony tunes”, “freaks”, “perverts” and so on. We have had some success in changing this, but again there is a long way to go to change people’s perception, even in these enlightened times.

Then there is the misunderstanding that cross-dressers have of themselves. It is a fetish! It is curable – like you have a disease! You’ll get over it. You will grow out of it! You have a mental disorder. It’s not normal, and so on. Then, rejection of family and friends: “Your no son of mine”. Family rejection is very similar to the ways that gay people are treated by their misunderstanding family members when they first come out.

Then throw religion into the mix! “You are demon possessed. It’s in the bible that men do not cross-dress” and so on. For some cross-dressers this becomes a real “Double Whammy” and a catalyst for depression that can lead to suicide and at least has devastating affects on adult men of any age, including young boys and teens.

We, on the committee, have addressed many of these problems for our members and found solutions by sharing with like-minded individuals and people in other transgroups, and from our own social interaction with each other.

Still, there are many more people approaching our society daily, seeking help, guidance and information. Although we are a small organisation in actual numbers, our diversity and contact range in N.S.W. and throughout Australia, is very wide. This is why we hold Outreach Seminars in country areas, not only for our members, but also for counsellors and professional organisations, and invite others in the trans-community to join us to receive information and support, so as to broaden their own service their own clients.

#### HOW DO I SEE THE SOCIETY AS A POSITION IN THE TRANS-COMMUNITY IN THE FUTURE?

At this time, because of what we are doing at the moment for cross-dressers, in that we provide the first social club for anyone who is trying to find themselves as a person, and identifying themselves as a cross-dresser. We also have people who identify that think they could be transsexual, or they are gay or they are bisexual, or born in the wrong body. By providing access to the resources of our collected information on cross-dressing, and utilizing the fact that we now have access to others in the trans-community (e.g. gays, transsexual, transitioning areas, and so on), we are able now to help people who approach us, and to not turn people away, because we only look after cross-dressers, which was the case in the past. We can now direct them to other like-minded people and professionals, who can support them and help them with information.

Many of our members go on to other clubs and organisations, as their social situation changes in their own individual life. Even though our member numbers average between 90 to 100 people a year, many visit us from other parts of the trans-community at our social events and members do come back into the society or they just continue to just pass in and out throughout their life.

So those who do go on to transition from male to female eventually “come home again”, even if only for a visit.

I see our Society, as being one of the first open doors or entry into the world of the trans-community, including an entry to the world of finding themselves as a cross-dresser or whatever they identify with, and learning how this phenomenon fits into the greater part of

their own life, and then, be able to accept and exist with this, as part of themselves.

As was said by a very wise person in NZ, "To be, who I am". Is it not this what we all strive to be?

Put this with the above concept, if we can find out and understand each other by sharing the diversity of our groups with each other in the trans-community, and then after reaching this point, with this self knowledge and acceptance, invite others to share, understand and tolerate each other outside our own community, surely we will all become a better people because of this.

In conclusion, this proposal of a directory is one way of creating and sharing our own perception of our identity. Sharing our lifestyles, resources, activities, directions and ideas with each other, as members of the greater trans-community. It helps us all understand each other's position, structure, information, and places us all in a position of mutual respect and understanding of our own individual needs and wants.

This will also provide the ability to describe directions that we may wish to pursue. By sharing our identity, we can also support each other's directions being able to have people who approach us all, instead of being rejected them in their time of need. This now will create the facilities to support immediately a person in need by referring them directly to those who work in any specific areas, whether it is a professional counselling situation or a socially based Society or club offering support. This person's distress and emotional needs then can be attended to quickly in a time-frame. We have the technology at our disposal; all we need is the data to act on it.

So, my wish to all of us, may we all find "who we are", and then follow on this path of enlightenment and truth, to achieve our "Rite of Passage" and to continue on our life's journey in peace and harmony which is everyone's dream of existence and our "Human Right".

PRESENTED AND WRITTEN BY

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(President of the Seahorse Society N.S.W. INC 2009.