



dec. 1972

The
Femme
Forum

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THE FEMME FORUM

In the last issue of the Forum I indicated that there were going to be some considerable changes made in the structure of FPE and in its procedures. Those of you concerned about Security (which is most of you) should not jump to any false conclusions. I am as aware of the need for security as you are (and in many cases more so). This will not be changed, but other aspects of the program will be.

As I have indicated before, Fran was the real mother of FPE. I gave it birth but she raised the kid. And just as there is no substitute for a mother's love and devotion in a family, so it is with FPE. Donna and I have tried to take on the task that Fran carried on with the help of her marvelous wife, but it just wasn't the same. Fran knew the people, the procedures and the system because she invented most of them herself. Someone else just can't do it the same way, so it becomes evident that something just has to be changed.

You will also recall that 3 issues back I raised the question of whether the membership wanted any changes in the basic policies of FPE and in the following issue I reported that the consensus was almost unanimous ~~to~~ to leave them alone. With that mandate and the obvious impossibility of carrying on JUST as it was, I have decided to make changes which can incorporate the benefits accruing to some of the other organizations while leaving the basic limitations on membership and the requirements of security intact, since these are what make FPE what it is. In this issue of the Forum--and it will be the last one I regret to say--I will outline the new plans in the hope that you will both understand and approve. It is really this or nothing because I am already at my wits end trying to keep going all the things I've started and to serve your interests as they ought to be served. So, the reasons for the change first----

- 1) As stated in the last issue of the Forum, there have been almost no contributions of material for the Forum. It became the work of Donna and myself alone.
- 2) Donna has a new job some distance from where she lives which takes up much time in commuting. In addition, the job itself is very demanding. When I first ap-

roached her about being Sect'y for FPE she was recovering from an illness, unemployed and under a doctors orders to take it easy. All that has changed. She informed me when we were putting together the annual report that she could be either a Sect'y. or an Editor but not both.

- 3) My own time is already in terribly short supply just trying to handle Transvestia and its requirements plus lectures, appearances, article writing, correspondence, etc. Mary can only help me one day a week.
- 4) As FPE was organized there was too much central effort required, too much to do at headquarters, but there was no other way to go if any kind of security was to be maintained. But the world is somewhat more tolerant these days than it was 10 years ago so that more can be done in the field and by the individual members. Decentralization is therefore both possible and desirable.
- 5) Finally, it has come to the point where the work is too much and it is not feasible to delegate it to others because of both security, distance and the fact that it would take longer to explain what to do than it would to do it myself. Thus I am faced with either allowing FPE to disintegrate or to try to arrange things to serve its original purpose of bringing FPs together socially and doing so with security but to do so in such a way that it requires less time, work and dedication at headquarters. This I think I have achieved after some months of considering, re-considering and talking it over with various members.

So here are the details:

FPE has been a non-profit though self supporting organization, the function of which depended on voluntary gifts of time, love and devotion to the cause by a very few individuals. From here on I am going to take it on as an adjunct of Chevalier Publications--as an owned business if you will. Moneys coming in will belong to me personally just the same as money paid for subscriptions to Transvestia. It will hardly make me rich but I hope it will at least pay its own way.

The fees involved will be \$12.00 per year which will be due and payable yearly on Jan. 1. The joining pro-

cedure will be based on the same security procedures as at present, namely subscription to 5 issues (3 for foreign members) of TVia in order for the prospective member to decide for herself whether she is one of the same kind of people. This will be followed by a request for the application form which will be the same as the one presently used. It will be returned to me for approval as at present.

Along with the application the applicant will receive an information form just like the one you received with this Forum. It asks for various bits of personal information but it will not be compulsory. How much information is provided will be up to the individual but every member and prospect will be expected to provide at least the femmename, age, city and state. No identifying names or addresses will be asked for. The rest of the information asked for is entirely to the advantage of the individual since it will allow others to pick persons for correspondents with whom they have something in common other than just TVism itself.

All members mailing in the forms and the membership fee of \$12.00 by Jan 31st of each year will be entered in a Directory of Members which will be published as soon as possible in February. It will then be mailed out to the members and only to members. As new members join--plus old members who did not make it by the Jan 31 deadline--a supplement will be put together quarterly and mailed to all. Members are asked to regard the Directory as their own personal property, not to be shown, loaned or given to another FP whether they are a member or not. I will honor security up to that point as I have in the past, but once it has been mailed out the responsibility has to be with the members. Cities in which there is a functioning group will be listed as will the names of the interviewers for that area.

The result of all this will be that members near a chapter can affiliate with that chapter and those in areas where a chapter does not yet exist can, by checking with the Directory, pick out those members who are within a reasonable distance and who seem to have other things in common. Members can then communicate with each other at least the first time through Contact as at present, paying the \$1 fee and sending the letter to be mailed in a

stamped envelope. Thus 2 or 3 people within 50-100 miles of each other can take the initiative to get together and form their own nucleus of a new chapter. When 5 members can get together with some degree of regularity they may ask for chapter status and designation. When this has been done they can decide among themselves who shall be the interviewer for the group to speak with prospective new members. It would be hoped that any new national member turning up in the area of a chapter and desirous of joining it would be interviewed promptly and hopefully accepted as a member of the chapter at least until some undesirable behaviour were to indicate her unfitness for membership in it.

Letters sent through Contact would come to a separate box set up for the purpose and which would be listed in the Directory. Security would be further protected since letters would only be forwarded from a member to a member and not from or to non-members.

That is the general outline of the procedure. What it will do is to maintain the security that all of you want, but by making a Directory of members and giving some information about them, other members can then select those they would like to contact based on their location, age, hobbies, etc. This will make FPE more useful to those in less populated areas which has always been a problem. It will enable new members to quickly see where the closest chapter is and who to contact about joining it and this in turn should help chapters to grow.

Hopefully then, this new arrangement will cut down on work, pay for what has to be done, facilitate making new acquaintances and maintain the required and desired security while getting some of the benefits of easier and more numerous contacts with others which is the main advantage of the other "open door" type of groups now in existence in various places.

I hope that all this meets with your approval and that you will both accept the arrangement and do what you can to make it more effective and to police it against misuse of the Directory and misrepresentation on the application. I have been told that we have some homosexual members in FPE, that is, some who have made sexual over-

tures to other members. (The fact that either one or both may be dressed at the time doesn't really change the situation any). Unfortunately I am not able to do much more than has been done in the past to select members that fit the nature of our group. Equally unfortunately, those who have been approached feel reluctant to turn in that information to headquarters as they don't want to be "Tattle Tales". I can understand their feelings but if an organization is to maintain the standards on which it was founded it must depend on its members to do so. I therefore request that such information be reported to me. It should be made clear, however, lest some of the more liberal minded members think that this attitude on the part of myself and/or the organization is bigoted, intolerant and old fashioned, that I do not condemn nor put down homosexuals. I know a lot of them, but I believe in letting them do their own thing without persecution and at the same time recognizing the rights of heterosexual cross dressers to set up their own organization for their own kind.

Now two other things: 1) The code numbers we have been using for 10 years will be changed for everybody for two reasons. First when I began assigning them 10 years ago, I gave them to everybody as they became readers of TVia. Later I only gave codes to FPE and Contact members. On top of that, lots of early readers and members have dropped out leaving their numbers vacant. Numbers can go on to infinity of course, but it makes for larger numbers than the active members warrant and is misleading. Secondly, many people have changed their state of residence since their code was assigned and are now stuck with a code that is not related to their residence. Finally, the last initial which was a convenience under the old system really has no utility now. Moreover, the PO has come up with a set of 2 letter abbreviations for each state which they didn't have 10 years ago. So, to avoid getting confusion between the number of the state and the adjoining number of the individual, I am going to simply number you in the order I receive back the information forms from you plus using the PO code. Thus the 10th person in California to register in January will be designated "Ca-10". The numbers will start with 1 for each state and will not be additive between states. Foreign members will have an "F"

before the initials of their country and then their personal number. You wont know your new number until you receive the first issue of the Directory! It will be given there. Please read that again so you wont be writing me letters saying "what is my new code number. You will recognize yourself in the Directory by your femmename and your city. Of course, if you want to send a stamped self addressed envelope when you return the information card and the dues, I'll assign you a number and mail it back to you. This will also serve as verification that the infomation form and dues were received.

The second matter is the disposal of the present FPE treasury. This will be considerably reduced from the figure given inthe Annual Report after paying for the printing and mailing of that issue and of this one. In add tition, since new members who have joined late in the year have paid their \$17.00 but have not had value received for it, there will have to be some refunds made. Fran solved this problem by making the adjustment in the 2nd year but I'd like to start everything off evenly as of Jan 1, 1973. I will therefore have to refund the excess over that which can be credited to the new membership dues. The remainder of the treasury, such as it is, I propose to just take over personally to help get the new deal off of the ground as there will be considerable printing and mailing costs. I dont think many of you will begrudge what few dollars this may amount to in view of all of my unpaid time, effort and postage spent on behalf of FPE inthe past 10 years. In any case it would not be possible to prorate the excess from an operating treasury accumulated over a 10 year period. I hope this is acceptable to all of you. I'm not prying to get away with anything so I'm laying it out for you.

So there it all is. Now would you please fill out your information form, write your dues check for \$12 and get it in the mail promptly as there will be much to do in reducing all that information to simple Directory entries and getting it done in time to get it off to you by about Feb. 15. Positively, no registrations arriving after the mail of Jan 31 will appear in the first Directory and you wouldnt want to wait till May for the supplement would you? Even if you think you have some re-

fund coming please pay the full \$12 at this time so everybody can be treated alike to start with and save me work. The refunds will be calculated and repaid later after I get past the problems of getting under way.

Thank you
VIRGINIA

Since we are now organizing things in a different way I would like to request that each chapter or group of 5 or more send me the names of any persons the chapter is willing to use as Interviewers together with their town and current code number so that I will be able to list them in the Directory. As some chapters draw from a considerable area more than one Interviewer is a good idea. It is also desirable that anyone willing to act as an Interviewer have a cover name and address so that new people referred to them will not be given private information. Persons presently being used as Interviewers will continue in that capacity unless the chapter in question chooses to select a new one or ones. It is important that anyone selected as an Interviewer be serious about the job, have been a member of FPE long enough to be well acquainted with our purposes and procedures, be personable and able to make a good impression on the new member and particularly on her wife.

Remember that the rule has always been and continues to be that you are not eligible for local chapter membership unless you are a paid up member in good standing with the national organization. Thus members whose names do not appear in the Directory are not eligible for Chapter membership. So please see that yourself and the other active members in your group get dues and information forms back to me promptly.

It would be nice if one of the officers of the various groups around the country would send in a few lines about whats doing or recently has been done in their chapter in time for the Directory. If anyone provides any material of general interest I will try to include it in the Directory (space permitting). Cartoons, jokes, or other short items will be appreciated too. Commentary or useful criticism for the general improvement of the organization will always be in order.

VIRGINIA



"Marvin, I can't find my girdle!"



"John, I keep telling you, that's no way to get voice training!"

INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATES

When FPE was rather hesitantly put together ten years ago it seemed a somewhat monumental task to try to find enough FPs within the continental United States alone considering the great area involved but ambitions beyond were not part of the dream. Today you all know that we have a lot of members in a lot of states and a lot of going chapters. However, many of you do not know probably how much further the ideas and purposes of FPE have spread during these ten years.

In the beginning we began to get subscribers to TVia from various foreign countries by various means. Then, these people being lonely like all the rest of us here in this country wanted to become part of something larger and when we founded FPE here a number of foreign readers wanted "in" too. There were also a few who though foreign nationals were resident in this country for a time and who found us and joined FPE while here.

In due course these individuals became the nuclei for groups in their own countries. These nuclei existed under the umbrella of FPE International during their "gestation" period and when they became large enough to be self sustaining were changed into autonomous national groups. They remain affiliated with FPE-US because of our common interests and we feel secure in extending to members of foreign groups more friendship and help by virtue of their membership than we might just to a sister FP from across the seas.

In Sweden it was Annette whom I met when she was on a trip around the U.S. She went back to Sweden and with the help of Yvonne got a Swedish group started. In Denmark, Erna who was an early subscriber to TVia and a Cover Girl back on issue #35, got in touch with Annette after joining FPE International and started putting the group together in Denmark. This group was called "FPE of North Europe" because it could be a contact point for members in surrounding countries which as yet did not have their own national groups.

In England a group was started by Pamela, an early subscriber to TVia. Into this group came Alga and Sylvia who were members of FPE International. Sylvia had joined FPE-US when she was in Philadelphia for a year and became active in Delta chapter where I first met her. When Pamela had to drop out of action for domestic reasons Alga and Sylvia stepped in, took hold of the group and remolded it along FPE lines--i.e. for hetero cross dressers only. This group was named The Beaumont Society and has been wonderfully successful. Being a "tight little Isle" it has been possible to organize it very effectively with a series of "Representatives" (analogous to our counsellors) in each of the counties or districts. Alga herself is in Ireland but operates as President of Beaumont from there. I have reported in past issues of TVia on my visits to England and with Beaumont members and their annual dinners. They have now grown so that they have inaugurated a second annual dinner in the northern part of England to provide the same pleasures for the northern English and Scottish sisters who are unable to make the long journey to London. There are probably about as many members in the United Kingdom as in the U.S. group.

In Australia, Rosemary in Sydney and Susan in Melbourne have pulled together groups in both cities and other members from other cities in Australia to form the "Seahorse Club"--an appropriate name I think. This group is growing all the while because they have found means of advertising there. Respondents are then referred to Chevalier and after getting and reading 3 issues of TVia are given the name and address of the Seahorse Club. Thus the same security screening that we use in the US is used there tho only 3 rather than 5 issues because the differences in the exchange rates which make TVia a bit more expensive than it is here.

At the moment our New Zealand sisters are affiliated with the Seahorse Club in Australia but efforts are underway to gather together enough members to make an N.Z. group independently.

Word has just come in as I've been putting this together that the sisters in France have organized

themselves as the "Beaumont Organization of France" and have 25 members. Congratulations to them. I understand that their vice president is a non-FP straight attorney (for legal reasons) and that they are an incorporated body registered with the authorities. That is apparently a peculiarly French arrangement. I doubt we could do that in the U.S. with our overlapping city/county/state/federal jurisdictions. Registration or recognition by one would probably cut no ice with the others.

Canada is, of course, so close to the U.S. both geographically and culturally that there isn't much need for an exclusively Canadian group. US-FPE has a number of members in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec and other smaller cities many of whom become members of the nearest US chapters.

Mexico has a small group going but has difficulties in locating new members due primarily to the machismo (hypermasculinism) aspect of the culture. To show any degree of femininity there is much more destructive for a man than the same thing in the U.S. However, Ann, formerly of Atlanta Ga. has taken a job down there and knowing her drive and dedication I'm sure she will find some ways of finding more "senoritas".

Although Chevalier has subscribers in a great many foreign countries most of them are isolated and unable to find and gather together with their sisters. But if the future is anything like the past we will be seeing other national groups emerging regularly.

I think I can justifiably take great pride in this spreading of the purposes and principles which I set up originally when there was only the founding Alpha chapter of FPE in Los Angeles. Many people have come and gone during these ten years but they have mostly dropped away because they finally obtained what TVia and FPE set out to give them in the first place--self acceptance and peace of mind. With most of their troubles behind them they felt able to swim alone and have done so. My felicitations to them. I miss them but I'm proud that I've helped them be able to do so.

VIRGINIA