

THOM HANSEN
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May 26, 1999

Dear Friends and Fellow Courtiers:

I am writing to you about the By-Laws for ICNY. If you did not attend the last meeting, you will find a copy of the By-Laws enclosed. If you were there, you will receive only this letter.

Let me assure you that if I had any inkling that there would be any controversy, I would have certainly made sure that I was at the meeting to explain and discuss anything that may have come up. I apologize to our President, for having to face some very passionate people – it was unfair. Before I continue, I ask that you all put this in perspective and realize that we on the Board have met, 2, 3 and sometimes 4 or 5 times a month for meetings and committees for the past year. Our interest is in the Court. We are not perfect, and if we made a decision that some people do not agree with, be assured it was not the intention to screw anyone. From the responses that were made, one would think we were robbing the treasury. We're not. We are just drag queens and male friends trying to raise money for worthy organizations.

I will address 2 items in this letter now, and speak to other issues at the General Meeting.

There is a new article requiring the ratification of future By-Law changes by the membership. This is new and goes into effect with the adoption of these By-Laws. In the past, only the Board could make amendments. This new article was adopted in response to members requesting more direct participation in the process. The Board amends the By-Laws; the membership ratifies it.

The membership was extremely vocal in wanting more participation on the Board of Directors. There were nine members on the Board at any given time. Those of you, who have been on other Boards of Directors, know it is very difficult to accomplish business with too many people. That is why a small number are voted in as responsible representation of the membership, to attend to the business at hand. While everyone agreed that we should try to increase participation, there was a consensus that we could not increase the Board to too many – otherwise business would become very difficult. As it stands now, our Board Meetings have lasted as much as 4 and

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5 hours at a time. No one is complaining, but we are volunteers and we do have lives of our own. One way to increase the Board was to make the sole surviving Original Incorporator a lifetime member in addition to the Board – adding one position unless Coco is elected to an Office.

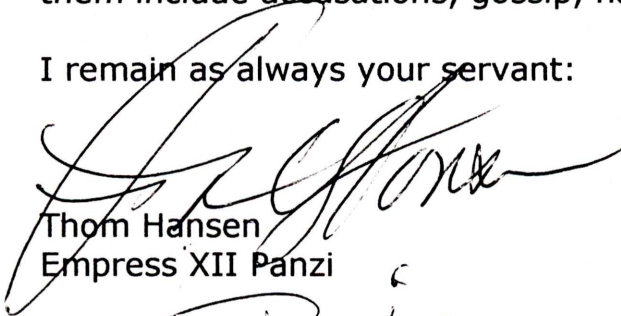
The other created the main controversy – and that was not to allow any two members of a self-identified couple serve on the Board simultaneously. Let me begin by reminding you that there is no right and there is no wrong on this issue. All opinions are valid, and unfortunately, the Board had to make a decision, and it did. This By-Law revision did not come out of the blue. It was suggested by the membership. We were mandated to discuss it and make a decision. It would have been easy to ignore it, but we on the Board are committed to this organization and do not need to take the easy way out. **Now ...**

The intention of this item, which is not at all unusual for organizations such as ours, is to acquire opinions and participation from as diverse a group of people in the membership as possible. Presuming that two people who share a life will generally have the same ideals, value systems and opinions, they may vote the same on any given issue. Although this item pushes people's discrimination button, it is designed to spread around the voting power, and to further promote democracy by ensuring a diversity of households represented. The people who are violently opposed to this need to step back and examine why they are. Is it for the good of the group, or because they personally feel discriminated against.

As I said earlier, there is no wrong or right in this issue – just two ways to look at it. It is and always will be impossible for everyone to agree on everything – impossible. But one thing is certain: we are here for the same reason and we all devote much time and money to the Court, and each and every one of us deserves the respect of our colleagues. Respect. Even if we disagree.

There are ways to agree, to disagree and to change minds, and none of them include accusations, gossip, name-calling, or rudeness.

I remain as always your servant:



Thom Hansen
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