

Roberts' Ramblings

“ A funny thing happened on the way to the NASW conference. NASW stands for the National Association of Social Workers. In brief, IFGE wanted to mount an exhibit at the 1994 NASW conference, but there wasn't any money in the coffers.

Jane Ellen Fairfax, Chair of the Tri-Ess board and also a member of the IFGE board, suggested to me (I was an IFGE board member at the time) that our respective organizations should each chip in an amount large enough to put up a Community display at NASW. So, right there at the Be All in Pittsburgh, the chairs of AEGIS, Tri-Ess, Outreach Institute and several members of the Renaissance board pledged to donate money to IFGE so we could have a Transgender Community display at the NASW conference. We did it and we're justifiably proud that we were able to work together.

In fact, the cooperation was so satisfying that the organizations wanted to find a way to continue working together. In the words of Jane Ellen, "This is how we should work together every time." Dallas Denny, Executive Director of AEGIS, and Alison Laing, Chair of Outreach Institute, both prepared resolutions to pledge cooperation. I wordsmithed these two resolutions into a single resolution that any organization affirm.

The result is being called the Transgender Alliance for Community, or simply The Alliance. The partners in the Alliance have pledged to work together sharing and exchanging services, information, and resources for community projects or programs.

Any organization can participate in the Alliance by simply presenting the following Pledge to its board for endorsement:

"We, the (name of organization), in the spirit of cooperation, caring, and community, pledge to participate in the sharing and exchange of services, information and resources, where possible, with other transgender organizations in order to develop a greater sense of true community among all transgendered people of the world."

Signed: (name of the organization)

To date (Dec '94), Renaissance, AEGIS, and the Outreach Institute have taken the Pledge. Jane Ellen is working the Tri-Ess board for an endorsement and may well have received it by the time you read this. Phyllis Frye, Executive Director of the Law Conference (ICTLEP) was sent a copy of the resolution, as was Linda Buten, Chair of IFGE. The resolution and Pledge were published on the front page of the December '94 issue of *Renaissance News & Views*.

This Alliance is inclusive. All non-profit and not-for-profit organizations are invited to participate. This Alliance is committed to diversity in that all organizations, regardless of founding philosophy, are welcomed. Diversity and Inclusion are not buzzwords to be used as exclusionary measures. We need to create unity, not uniformity. In my humble opinion, the only workable "umbrella" for this community will be the one we all erect together.

Please, if you represent or know of organizations that would benefit from participation in this Alliance, have someone contact any of the partners mentioned above for more information, and let me know if your organization takes the Pledge.

Current plans call for a gathering of Alliance partners at the Be All in Cincinnati this June. They'll be discussing future cooperative projects like NASW 1995 and AAMFT 1995.

Benjamin Franklin said if we don't all hang together, we shall all hang separately.

JoAnn Roberts