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Tri-Ess is a non-profit educational, social and support group for heterosexual cross-dressers, their partners or spouses, and their families. It is international in scope with over thirty chapters in the United States and is a member of the World Congress of Transgender Organizations and the International Foundation for Gender Education.

History

The story of Tri-Ess and the growth of its movement owes much to the efforts of Virginia Charles Prince (born Arnold Lowman, 1912-2009) to an upper-middle class family in Los Angeles. Prince, who identified himself as heterosexual, had nevertheless begun wearing women’s clothes at the age of 12. He earned a Ph.D in biochemistry in 1939, started a career with the University of California medical school in San Francisco, and married in 1941. At first, his wife tolerated his cross-dressing but later divorced him on the grounds of homosexuality. Despite his exposure in the press as a transvestite, Prince married a second time. The consequent publicity led other cross-dressers to contact him leading to the formation and development of a support group in Los Angeles. In 1959, Prince founded Transvestia, a comprehensive magazine for cross-dressers, while embarking on a career to bring cross-dressing "out-of the closet" into the public eye. He established a national organization known as Full Personality Expression (FPE) in 1962

In 1971, Carol Beecroft, a former FPE chapter president, left the organization to form the Mamselle Sorority, an "open" group for cross-dressers which later merged with FPE in 1976 to become The Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess). Tri-Ess web site: http://www.tri-ess.org

Provenance

Tri-Ess donated its records to the Library’s Special Collections and Archives over a period of several years in 1994, 1997, 1998, and 2002. The records are part of the Vern and Bonnie Bullough Collection on Sex and Gender.

Scope & Contents Note

The collection contains the records of Tri-Ess and its chapters since its inception in 1976 through 2005. The collection consists of correspondence, directories, corporate documents, flyers, ephemera, newsletters, and photographs. There is considerable documentation on the initial organization of Tri-Ess and numerous publications about cross-dressing.
The latter part of the collection is primarily comprised of correspondence from cross-dressers with some from academics researching the cross-dressing movement. Correspondents with two or more letters are filed by name. Correspondents with only one letter are grouped together and filed chronologically.

Related Special Collections and Archives Research Collections
Vern and Bonnie Bullough Collection on Sex and Gender

Related Research Institutions
The Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction (www.indiana.edu/~kinsey)

Secondary Sources
These sources, among others, are available in the Oviatt Library’s general book collection:

The Bliss of Becoming One! : Integrating feminine feelings into the male psyche: / Rachel Miller (1996)
Boys will be Girls : The hidden world of the heterosexual male transvestite: / John T. Talamini (1982)
Everything you always wanted to know about crossdressing and did not know who to ask: / Virginia Charles Prince (1990)
From Man to Woman:/ Richard Docter (2004)
Crossdressing, Sex, and Gender:/ Vern Bullough (1993)

Organization


Series II. Executive Correspondence. Box 8-9. Subseries 1. Box 8. Correspondence from the Board of Directors (Jane Ellen Fairfax, Donna Martin, Samantha Walls,) and others towards establishment of
chapters and other organizational functions. Subseries 2. Box 9. Correspondence to the Board of Directors. Subseries 3. Box 9. Executive Directorship; Correspondence of Carol Beecroft (Executive Director) and Marlene Liston (Big Sister Program).


Box Listing.

**Series I. Corporate Knowledge. Subseries 1-4.**

**Subseries 1.** Box 1-2. Initial organization of Tri-Ess: constitutions, chapter by-laws, personal biographies of essential personnel.

**Box 1. (AS/RS 30700111102371)**

01-01. Academic research: medical, psychological, legal, inquiries, surveys, correspondence; 1988-
01-04. Big Sister elections.
01-05. Big Sister and Little Sister databases.
01-08. Congress of Representatives: constitution; bylaws of; n.d.
01-09. Constitution of Tri-Ess: articles of incorporation, bylaws, minutes of 1st mtg., waiver of notice, gov. docs..
01-10. Convention media policy: official guidance for dealing with the media, granting interviews for events, n.d.
01-11. Corrections regarding crossdressing: media guidelines for definition and suitability for discussion of crsdrs..
01-12. Cross-dressing exhibit: correspondence and notes at Airtel Motel.
01-16. Inside Stuff; newsletter for Tri-Ess leaders only; 1978.
01-17. Job descriptions: of Tri-Ess leadership positions; n.d.

Box 2. (AS/RS 30700111102389)

02-01. Membership Lists: minidirectory of members and chapter points of contact; 1991-93.
02-02. Non-profit status: IRS documents, application, correspondenc certificate of dissolution; 1985-
02-03. Philosophy and history of Tri-Ess.
02-04. Sigma Sigma Sigma vs. Tri-Ess: legal papers concerning lawsuit, consent decree, judgement, 1977-81.
02-06. Reimbursements: Samantha Walls correspondence, records of operating expenses, membership lists, 1991-96.

02-07. Trip reports: Carol Beecroft's reports of trips to national chapters; 1995.
02-08. Tukinabuk: Fran Vose project to raise money; correspondence to Tri-Ess, 1994-95.
02-09. Virginia Prince: biography of; n.d.
02-12. Where We are Now: interim reports by JEFairfax, agenda 1992-93.

Subseries 2. Box 3. Executive administration, advertisements, Board of Director minutes and correspondence.

Box 3. (AS/RS 30700111102397)

03-01. Administrative services: correspondence and memoranda 1985-90.
03-03. Advertisements: promotional literature, conferences, conventions; 1985-90.
03-04. Board of Directors minutes: associated correspondence 1991-98.
03-05. Board of Directors: correspondence, reports, membership lists; 1992-98.
03-06. Born Free: certificate from support group; not dated.
03-07. Purchase of Chevalier Publications from Virginia Prince.
03-08. Society for the Second Self papers: correspondence regarding starting chapters in other states & countries.
03-09. Transfer from Carol Beecroft to the Corporation.

**Subseries 3. Box 4-5.** Chapter administration, correspondence with bylaws and charters.

**Box 4. (AS/RS 30700111102405)**

04-01. Chapter leaders master list: memo of dept. leaders; n.d.
04-02. Chapter membership lists: current chapter Membership lists; 1996.
04-04. Chapters 1/3: exec. correspondence re: chapter bylaws chapt. points of contact, dues status; 8/95-96.
04-05. Chapters 2/3; correspondence of Jane Ellen Fairfax, Samantha Walls, "How to make stone soup;" 1990-96.
04-09. Tri-Ess chapter and forming groups: Membership lists, newsletter. brochure for Tri-Ess chapter, 1991-96.

**Subseries 4. Chapters. Box 4-5.**

04-10. Alpha.
04-11. Alpha Chi.
04-12. Alpha Omega.
04-20. Delta.
04-21. Delta Omega Chapter: ltr. of status and application; n.d.
04-23. Gamma Chi Beta.
04-24. Fiesta Chapter: constitution of; Membership reqs.; n.d.

**Box 5. (AS/RS 30700111102413)**
05-01. Lambda Chi Lambda.
05-02. Lambda Iota Chapter.
05-03. Lambda Lambda.
05-04. Mu Sigma.
05-06. Omega Alpha.
05-07. Phi.
05-08. Phi Chi Chapter: memo, n.d.
05-09. Phi Epsilon Mu Chapter: chapter intro, copy of; n.d.
05-12. Sigma Beta.
05-16. Sigma Rho Gamma.
05-17. Sigma Sigma Beta.
05-18. Tau Chi Chapter: bylaws, brochure, memo; n.d.
05-20. Theta Upsilon Gamma.

Subseries 5. Box 6-7. Membership activities, directories, news clippings, memberships records, surveys, legal matters.

Box 6. (AS/RS 30700111102421)

06-05. Membership Records 2/2.
06-06. Membership Records: Survey forms for non-renewal; n.d.
06-08. Newclippings on Carol Beecroft.
06-09. Newclippings and conferences.
06-13. Surveys of Cross dressing Studies: surveys and correspondence Of Nina Barnes, Univ.
of MO/KC, Hilary Edwards Univ. of NC/Char.
06-14. SPICE: newletters, cancelled checks, flyers for 1/98 mtg..
06-16. Congress of Representatives:: bylaws, 11/93.
06-17. Univ. of Michigan: Comprehensive gender services program 6/97.

Box 7 (AS/RS 30700111102439)

07-01. CHIC: bylaws, newltrs., flyers, correspondence.
07-02. Donors: ledger of donated books by Tri-Ess to public libraries; 1995-97.
07-05. Instructor: "A guide to better leadership." n.d.
07-07. Literature about the organization: various pubs about transvestism and Tri Ess Membership
07-08. Library project.

Series II. Executive Correspondence. Subseries 1-3.

Subseries 1. Box 8. Correspondence from the Board of Directors (Jane Ellen Fairfax, Donna Martin, Samantha Walls,) and others towards establishment of chapters and other organizational functions

Box 8. (AS/RS 30700111102447)

08-01. Fairfax, Jane (Chair) 1/2: flow charts, ltrs., memos 1992-98.
08-03. Martin, Donna (National Membership Director) 1/2: correspondence, ltrs., memos 1992-97.
08-05. Walls, Samantha (Secretary and Treasurer) 1/2: correspondence to and from other exec; 1996-2000.
08-06. Walls, Samantha 2/2: correspondence 1995-98.

Subseries 2. Box 9. Correspondence to the board of Directors.

Box 9 (AS/RS 30700111102454)

09-02. Clarke, Rudy, n.d.
09-05. Estes, Fran, 1994-96.
09-10. Kieffer, Robin (nominating committee), 1992-95.

Subseries 3. Box 9. Executive Directorship; Correspondence of Carol Beecroft (Executive Director) and Marlene Liston (Big Sister Program).

09-19. Liston, Marlene (Big Sister Program): 1/2; correspondence 1993-03.
09-20. Liston, Marlene (Big Sister Program): 2/2; correspondence 1993-03.
09-21. Liston, Marlene 2/2: Big Sister assignments, 1999-03.
09-22. Undated Membership inquiries.
09-23. Unusual correspondence To execs: 1/2.
09-24. Unusual correspondence To execs: 2/2.


Box 10. (AS/RS 30700111102462)

10-01. Advertisements for products and services, 1/2
10-02. Advertisements for products and services, 2/2
10-03. Announcements, bulletins, events, registration forms.
10-04. Artwork, cartoons, drawings, etc.: 
10-05. Atlanta Action '95: program schedule, 3/95.
10-06. Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus: flyer, n.d.
10-09. The Betty Page (from forum magazine): n.d.
10-18. The Clarion 1/2: #1,2,3,5,7,8; n.d.

Box 11. (AS/RS 30700111102470)

11-02. Crossdressing fun facts: brochures, flyers, etc.
11-03. Cut to the Joy: reg. form 10/95.
11-06. Do you live a crossdresser?: flyer n.d.
11-08. Echo productions: catalog,n.d.
11-12. The family doctor (article): n.d.
11-15. Feminizers: order form;n.d.
11-17. Fantasies in lace, catalog; n.d.
11-18. Feminine hormones by post; order form, n.d.
11-34. Ivan Stormgart books: catalog #8,22,23; n.d.
11-35. Jokes, humor, manuscripts, prose: as described; n.d.
11-38. Magic Inc.: order forms; n.d.
11-40. Masquerade bookstore: catalog, order form; n.d.
11-41. Medical, legal, and workplace issues: reg. form; n.d.
11-42. Media kit for display advertisements: 1996.
11-44. Moonlight in Manhattan: reg. forms; 1993/94.
11-47. The Naughty victorian: catalog #1, order form; n.d.

Box 12 (AS/RS 30700111102488)

12-01. Paperback parade: catalog; n.d.
12-03. Petticoat punishment quarterly: magz., #1; n.d.
12-05. Tri-Ess poems: poems; n.d.
12-07. Playhouse guide: game instructions, gift shop; n.d.
12-09. Psychare northwest center for sexual health: brochure; n.d.
12-10. Publications and magazine order forms: various sources and dates.
12-11. Queen cushion shoes: catalog; n.d.
12-19.  Sixth annual fall harvest: newsletter, 10/95.
12-25.  Take a walk on the wild side: brochures (2); n.d.
12-26.  Transgender tapestry: magazine (2); #104, 106; n.d.
12-29.  Touche: newsletter, v.3, #1 and #2;1996.
12-32.  Transexuality: transcript; n.d.
12-34.  A video adventure in bondage and discipline: brochure; 8/93.
12-35.  We must do it now: questionnaire; 1991.
12-36.  The world of gender: catalog; n.d.
12-37.  You are here: brochure; n.d.


Box 13 (AS/RS 30700111102496)

13-01 – 13-36.  A – G

Box 14 (AS/RS 30700111102501)

14-01 – 14-31.  H - L

Box 15 (AS/RS 30700111102512)


Box 16 (AS/RS 30700111102520)

16-14. Undated and ephemera (b).
16-27. Undated and ephemera (a).
16-28. Undated and ephemera (b).
16-41. Undated and ephemera (a).
16-42. Undated and ephemera (b).
16-55. Undated and ephemera.

Box 17 (AS/RS 30700110439923)

17-14. Undated and ephemera (b).
17-27. Undated and ephemera (a).
17-28. Undated and ephemera (b).
17-41. Undated and ephemera (a).
17-42. Undated and ephemera (b).
17-55. Undated and ephemera (a).
17-56. Undated and ephemera (b).

Box 18 (AS/RS 30700110439931)

18-14. Undated and ephemera (b).
18-27. Undated and ephemera (a).
18-41. Undated and ephemera (a).
18-42. Undated and ephemera (b).

**Box 19 (AS/RS 30700110439949)**

19-27. Undated and ephemera (a).
19-29 – 19-40. 2002
19-41. Undated and ephemera.

**Box 20 (AS/RS 30700110439956)**

20-01 – 20-12. 2003
20-14 – 20-27. 2004
20-41 – 20-43. 2006

**Series V. Audio-Visual Materials. Box 21, OV Box 1.**

**Box 21 (AS/RS 30700110439972)**

01-01. Eye on Tampa Bay, November 1993 (VHS tape)
01-02. Tapes (3 cassettes: Heterosexual Crossdressing, Behind Closed Doors, The Playhouse Revealed)

**OV Box 1. (AS/RS 30700110439964)**

01-01. Photograph albums (2 albums)
01-02. Calendar photograph.