

# *PANHANDLE ALTERNATIVE LIFE STYLES*

## MISSION STATEMENT

The group known as “Panhandle Alternative Lives Styles”, hereafter will be referred to as PALS. PALS provides forums for interaction between people accepting of BDSM, and those interested in the different aspects of exchanging power within their relationships (including, but not limited to; bondage, discipline, dominance, submission, sadism, masochism and fetishism). PALS will provide a safe, discreet environment to meet and discuss alternative lifestyles. We are pan-sexual, accepting of any adult-oriented fetish, and seek to help those interested in exploring this lifestyle in any way we can, within the parameters of our By-Laws. PALS is not a hook up group, nor a dating service. PALS adopts and pledges to support the BDSM creed of Risk Aware Consensual Kink (RACK). PALS will host meetings, munches, vendor fairs, demonstration events, picnics and parties. PALS does not sponsor public or private play other than for demonstration and educational purposes.

## ARTICLE I

### MEMBERSHIP

#### **1.01 Requirements to become a full PALS Member include the following:**

- a. Must be at least 21 years of age (proof of age is required).
- b. Must attend at least six PALS events within the past two years (these can be demos, munches, special events or a combination).
- c. Become familiar with the PALS By-Laws through attending the orientation/By-Laws class.
- d. Must pass board approval by majority.
- e. Must be voted in by the current PALS membership by over 75% of the votes that are cast.
- f. Must be sponsored by member who has been in good standing for twelve consecutive months. A member in good standing is someone who has paid their dues (see 1.04 b), is not under sanction and has no current complaints filed against them.

#### **1.02 Sponsorship**

- a. In order to be eligible to sponsor a prospective member the sponsor must have been a member in good standing for a minimum of twelve consecutive months.
- b. Sponsors may only sponsor a maximum of four prospective members per year.
- c. The sole responsibility of a sponsor is to recommend a person for membership.
- d. A sponsor must have known a person they plan to sponsor for at least three months.
- e. Once the results of the votes are in, the sponsorship is dissolved.

#### **1.03 Membership Process**

- a. Prospective members will contact the Secretary and inform him/her of their desire to become a member. Once the Secretary has verified all requirements have been met by the prospective member, the Secretary will refer the applicant’s request to the Board of Directors to either accept or decline the applicant (no time table is established for this process). Once a prospective member is approved by the Board, members will then vote on the prospective member via the usual voting process. If a prospective member is voted in by the current members, the new member will be sent an invitation to join the PALS Members Only Group after he/she pays his/her membership dues. Acceptance of an invitation to join the group will be an implied agreement on the members' part to abide by the By-Laws of PALS.
- b. An individual who was previously a paid member, but has not been a member of PALS for one year and one month or longer, will go to an orientation/By-Laws class and be voted on by the members prior to reactivating membership.

- c. An individual who was previously voted on by the membership over one year and one month ago or longer, but did not pay their dues and become a full member, will go to an orientation/By-Laws class, be voted on by the Board of Directors, and be voted on by the members prior to activating membership.
- d. A member who voluntarily resigns from the group may re-join the next fiscal or half fiscal year (in April or October).

#### **1.04 Membership Dues**

- a. Each person: \$30 for 6 months and \$50 for 12 months (which will be pro-rated to coincide with PALS' fiscal year-end in April and October). Memberships expire in April and October.
- b. Any member who does not pay their dues by the **next monthly demo meeting** after the due date will no longer be considered a "member in good standing". They will also be suspended from the PALS Members Only group until their dues are brought current, at which time their consecutive months count will restart at zero. During the month time period, from the membership expiration date to the next demo meeting, the member will maintain all of the privileges and responsibilities of membership. If a member pays their dues late, but by the next demo meeting date, the cost will not be pro-rated, since the member has maintained all the privileges of membership during the interim period.

#### **1.05 Benefits of Membership**

- a. Vote on By-laws or amendments
- b. Vote for members of the Board of Directors
- c. Vote on new members.
- d. Sponsorship of prospective members (after being a member in good standing for twelve consecutive months).
- e. Hold office on the Board of Directors (after being a member in good standing for twelve consecutive months).
- f. Members shall enjoy a reduced entry to PALS Annual Fetish Festival, PALS Annual Ample Samples, and/or special events.
- g. Receive membership cards recognized by other groups with reciprocal agreements designating member to be in good standing.
- h. Members may attend all meetings, functions or events of PALS. Costs of any function will vary based upon the type of function.

#### **1.06 Expulsion of a Member**

- a. Members who disregard the PALS By-Laws may be removed by a majority vote of the current PALS membership with over 50% of the votes that are cast.
- b. Members who intentionally disregard Article V (d)(e) of the By-Laws or who have been proven to be dangerous to individuals (such as documented stalkers) can be removed by a majority vote of the Board, without a vote of the membership. If this occurs, the Board will announce to the membership within one week that this was done and will provide an explanation; Board members votes on this type action will be made public.
- c. All alleged violations (or complaints) will be sent to the President, who will then inform the Board of Directors. The Board will determine if the alleged violation warrants a vote of the membership. If the Board determines that a vote is required, the alleged violation and any arguments the accused member has made in defense will be made available to the membership. Members, upon receipt of notification, vote through the usual voting procedure. Once the results are in (via membership vote or Board vote), the President will inform the member if his/her membership has been revoked. If the violator's membership is not revoked, the issue is resolved. If the membership is revoked, the Board will determine the length of time of the expulsion, which is based upon the severity of the act; no future Board can overturn this action, without a vote of the membership.
- d. All complaints will be resolved within ninety days of written notification to the Board.

## ARTICLE II

### GENERAL

#### **2.01 Meetings.**

Meetings are held twice per month - on the first Saturday and on the third Monday. The first meeting shall consist of a discussion (and/or a demonstration) segment, and will be held in a pre-determined place. The second meeting shall be a munch, to be held at varying locations within the panhandle area of Florida.

#### **2.02 Age requirements.**

No one under the age of 21 may attend meetings, munches or any other PALS event.

#### **2.03 Banning of an individual.**

Members and Non-members can be banned from meetings for offenses identified by members or non-members. Non-members can be banned permanently; members only temporarily without first meeting the expulsion requirements (see 1.06). A permanent file (paper and/or electronic) with information regarding banned persons will be passed onto future boards. Bans of non-members will be indefinite, and no future Board can overturn this action, without a vote of the membership.

#### **2.04 Other Sanctions**

Members and Non-Members may have sanctions such as verbal reminders and short term dismissal from meetings imposed by the Board for minor infractions.

#### **2.05 PALS Website Hosting Company**

- a. The PALS website hosting company cannot be owned or managed by any current PALS Board member, nor by any member who plans to run for election.
- b. The Hosting company will ensure that all Polls used for elections, By-Laws voting, new member votes and general votes do not display how members vote. The Hosting Company will ensure that no Board member or other administrator accesses any information about how individual members vote. Other surveys or databases may display how members vote as long as the members are aware that their vote will be known.
- c. The Hosting company will remove all Board members' administrative privileges during elections. Once elections are over, the hosting company will give administrative privileges to the new Board. Full administrative privileges will be given to the Board member(s) primarily responsible for administration of the site and "Editor" level privileges will be given to the remaining Board members.
- d. The Hosting company contract will expire each year in September. Each year, the contract will continue to be renewed until another company willing to abide by the provisions in the By-Laws is found and has signed a contract which includes the provisions. If the Hosting company does not wish to renew the contract, the Board will find another company willing to abide by the provisions. If a company cannot be found, the full PALS membership will be informed and a comparable solution will be substituted.

## ARTICLE III

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### **3.01 Purpose and Responsibilities**

- a. The purpose of the Board of Directors is to represent and respond to the members of PALS and ensure the continuation of the PALS Group. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the goals of the Members are achieved.
- b. The Board of Directors may create committees, either standing or temporary, and a Director will chair each committee. The Committee Chairman may seek volunteers from the membership.
- c. Each member of the Board of Directors shall be equal and all will share in the responsibilities to the membership.

- d. Any member may bring any issue to any Director. That Director shall forward the issue to the President, who shall then put the issue before the Board. Once the issue has been discussed, a motion will be asked for and, if received and seconded, the issue will be formatted and voted on. To pass, there must be a majority vote of the Board. The Board of Directors will determine if the issue warrants a vote of the membership. All issues will be resolved within ninety days of written notification to the Board. Once an issue is resolved, written notification will be provided to the person who brought it to the Board. (see Article IV, Voting)

### **3.02 Board of Director Meetings**

May be requested by any Director, but must be called by the President of the Board. All attempts will be made to have that meeting at one of the two scheduled monthly meetings (see Article II, General, defining meetings). If the issue is of an extreme emergency nature, the President or his representative shall contact each Director by the most expedient means possible, and schedule a Special Meeting as soon as practical for the majority of the Directors. A special meeting may be held at the discretion of the President, with the place and the time to be announced as far in advance as possible, by the most expedient means possible. There will be at least one mandatory Board of Director meeting quarterly.

### **3.03 Elections and Terms of Office.**

The Board of Directors shall be made up of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and one Event Coordinator. Nominations for officers will be solicited from members from March 1st until March 10th. All nominations will be submitted to the President with a carbon copy to each of the Board members. Verification of nominations will run from March 11th until March 12th. The names of Nominees will be posted on the Members only site on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Campaigning will start on March 13th and will run until March 19th. Voting via the usual process will begin at 12:01 AM on March 20th and ends at 12:01AM March 27th. The Term of Office for all Directors shall commence on the first regular demo meeting in April and terminate on the first regular demo meeting in April of the following year.

### **3.04 General Requirements and Expectations of a Director/Board Member**

- a. To become a Director, an individual must be a member in good standing for at least twelve consecutive months and must remain a member in good standing for their entire term. If a complaint is filed against a Board member, the other Board members will decide if the nature of the complaint warrants the member temporarily stepping down.
- b. A person must be a Board member in good standing for at least twelve consecutive months within the previous five year period before becoming Vice President or President.
- c. When a vacancy occurs on the Board, the President shall conduct a special search to fill that position. Once an eligible person is found, the President will appoint that person for the remainder of the term of office.
- d. Directors of PALS are not bestowed any special considerations and are expected to follow all of the PALS By-Laws.
- e. Directors must conduct themselves at all PALS functions as their station requires (keeping in mind that PALS is a BDSM social group).
- f. Any private information obtained through virtue of being a PALS Board member will be kept confidential and will only be shared with other Board members if the information is deemed to affect PALS or individual members. The only exceptions to this would be cases in which other BDSM groups or individuals in the BDSM community may need to be warned about proven stalkers, those who intentionally out community members' information or for the purpose of references.
- g. Board members must agree to abstain from any vote in which they have a clear conflict of interest.
- h. Board Members must agree that they will make independent decisions regarding issues related to PALS; they will not allow their significant others, regardless of their D/s relationship, to influence their decisions as a PALS Board Member. If an incoming Board Member cannot agree to this requirement, they must not

accept the position. If a current Board Member cannot agree to this requirement or can no longer agree due to a change in circumstance, they must resign from office.

### **3.05 Board Transition**

- a. All work products (paper, electronic and tangible goods) created on behalf of PALS belongs to the PALS group. All PALS documents (electronic and paper), office supplies, event supplies, demo and vender contact information and ownership of the FetLife, Yahoo and any other electronic sites, will be turned over to the new Board on or before the April meeting following the election.
- b. All money belonging to the group will be turned over on or before the April meeting following the elections. All bank statements, account history and ledgers (if any) will be turned over to the new Board on or before the April meeting following the elections. A list of any outstanding debts and current membership dues status will be turned over on or before the April meeting following the elections.
- c. Any Board Member who does not turn over all PALS property will not be allowed to renew or will not have their membership renewed until the situation is resolved. If at the end of July, documentation has not been turned over in full, this member is banned for the life of the group. The only exceptions to this are fire and/or theft which must be documented to the current board within three months.
- f. The outgoing Board will ensure that at a minimum, the demos and munches from April through June will be set-up and advertised at the usual sites prior to the elections.
- g. All incoming Board members are required to sign a copy of the By-Laws (with their legal name) indicating that they have read, understand, agree to abide by and uphold the By-Laws of PALS to the best of their ability. The original signed documents, as well as a copy of each Board members ID, will be kept on file by the Secretary of PALS and a copy of each will be scanned and uploaded to the Board members website.

### **3.06 Treasurer**

- a. The Treasurer will post a financial statement on the PALS Members Only group a minimum of quarterly.
- b. Bank statements for the PALS account will be posted to the PALS Board site a minimum of quarterly and will be provided to any Board member within one week of any request.
- c. The PALS bank account must have at least two unrelated (by blood or D/s or romantic relationship) Board members as signatories on the account. Which Board members are chosen to be on the account will be decided by the full Board.

### **3.06 Expenditures**

Any single expenditure over \$50.00 requires a majority approval of the Board. PALS funding can never be used to purchase membership, which is exclusive of refunding memberships.

### **3.07 Impeachment**

If the Board of Directors determines a Director has been deemed as impeachable, the Board will determine if the impeachment warrants a vote of the membership. If the Board determines that a vote is required, the impeachment documents and arguments will then be made available to the membership. Members, upon receipt of notification, vote through the usual voting procedure. The President will inform the Director if his/her Directorship has been revoked. The impeached party will no longer be a Director but may retain general membership. If it is the President who is being impeached, all Presidential duties will fall to the Vice President. If the Directorship is not revoked, the issue is resolved.

## ARTICLE IV

### VOTING

#### **4.01 By Membership**

- a. The following voting procedures are established for:
  - Changes in the By-Laws
  - Elections (additional procedures will be put in place for elections)
  - New Memberships
  - Expulsion or Banning (those which require a vote of the membership)
  - General Votes (such as voting to buy the hosting facility new couches)
- b. Voting will be done electronically, anonymously and will last for seven days.
- c. In the event of a tie vote, the parties involved will be given 24 hours to restate, in the members' only site, their positions. Then a new poll will be put up again for a 48 hour vote. If there is another tie, a coin will be tossed at the next PALS meeting (munch or demo).
- d. If anyone is found to have violated the secrecy of the vote, they will be banned from PALS indefinitely.
- e. During annual elections, all administrative rights to the PALS voting site will be removed by the contracted hosting company. Once the election is over, the hosting company will give administrative privileges to the new Board. Full administrative privileges will be given to the Board member(s) primarily responsible for administration of the site and "Editor" level privileges will be given to the remaining Board members.
- f. If a member is not satisfied with a decision of the Board, they may post the issue on the Members Only site. If 40% of the members agree, and post in the Members Only site that an issue needs to be voted upon by the membership, the Board will post a poll and the issue will be voted upon. The Board will abide by the poll result.

#### **4.02 By Board of Directors**

- a. All Board members must be informed of all issues prior to a vote of the Board.
- b. The Board must reach a majority decision to pass all issues.
- c. In the case of a tie, the President will have the deciding vote.

## ARTICLE V

### DISCRETION POLICY & PRIVACY

- a. PALS members and event attendees understand and embrace their obligation to safeguard members' privacy to the very best of their ability. Cameras, tape recorders, or any other type of recording devices are NEVER allowed at any PALS function without consent of a Board member, then the recording must be reviewed by a Board member. Discretion is absolutely necessary. Members' family, friends and/or jobs may be threatened if the details of their activities within the lifestyle were to become known. Members and event attendees' privacy and identities are to be protected by all PALS members as well as attendees at PALS functions. Use your common sense; don't approach people you have met in the lifestyle in public without their prior agreement.
- b. No vanilla names or other identifying personal information will be used on social networking sites such as FetLife without express permission of the person involved.
- c. No FetLife names or Lifestyle names will be used in a vanilla environment without express permission of the person involved.
- d. The PALS Members Only groups/sites, shall NOT be shared with non-members.
- e. Disclosure of a member or event attendees' lifestyle choices or sexual identity to anyone outside the lifestyle; without permission from that person, may be grounds for expulsion, banning, or other sanction.

- f. Disclosure of a member or event attendees' personal identifying information (such as their job title or last name), to anyone; without permission from that person, may be grounds for expulsion, banning, or other sanction.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **BY-LAWS**

- a. The PALS By-Laws shall be reviewed by the Board of Directors after elections, between April and December. If the Board determines that changes are necessary or beneficial, a By-Laws committee shall be formed to discuss the changes deemed necessary and make recommendations to the Board. The changes shall be submitted to the members for approval through the usual voting process.
- b. The PALS By-Laws shall not be changed or amended between January and March of any year.
- c. All PALS members will familiarize themselves with membership approved changes to the By-Laws. Any year in which substantial changes are made to the By-Laws, all PALS members will be required to attend a By-Laws review class within three months of the changes being approved by the membership. During those three months, the By-Laws class will be offered at least four times.
- d. Any time ratified changes are made to the By-Laws, the Board may choose to implement some or all of the changes over a period of time. All ratified changes to the By-Laws will be completely implemented by the next April meeting. An implementation schedule of the By-Laws changes will be published on the Members Only site within one week of ratification of the new By-Laws.
- e. If, after ratification of the By-Laws, minor mechanical or grammatical errors are found in the document, they may be fixed so long as the meaning or intent is not changed in any way. The Membership will be informed if any corrections are made to the By-Laws within twenty-four hours.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **DISCLAIMER**

- a. PALS does not recommend that members or attendees at PALS functions assume that people who attend functions are suitable for social interactions solely based upon their membership or attendance at public PALS functions. Additionally, PALS encourages everyone to assure themselves of another person's suitability and compatibility before private social interactions occur.
- b. Neither PALS, the Board of Directors, PALS members, nor any agents, successors or assignees of any of the foregoing shall be held liable to any attendee for injury to person or property incurred as a result of attendance at any PALS function.