

WOMEN (from Scrapbook Database in computer)

March 28, 1978

Dear Member:

Some members of the Harvard Travellers Club have raised the question of whether we should relax the unwritten custom of inviting only male guests to our dinner meetings and lectures. That is, should we allow ladies to be invited to more meetings than just on the occasion of Ladies Night?

Your Council has discussed this matter and recognizes that such a change has a number of implications for the future character of the Club. The regular admission of ladies as invited guests will change the ambiance of a men's club. This can be interpreted as an improvement or as a detraction depending on one's point of view.

By this letter, I am informing all members of the change that has been suggested and I am proposing that, if the membership is willing, it be discussed further and acted upon at the Annual Meeting in May. The idea is to admit ladies as guests during the 1978-1979 season on a trial basis, with review and reconsideration of this change to occur at the Annual Meeting in May 1979. Specifically, a vote will be sought on the following three options for the coming year (with other suggestions welcome if received in time):

1. Stay as we are.
2. Allow ladies as guests for half of the meetings in 1978-1979.
3. Allow ladies as guests for all of the meetings in 1978-1979.

Neither option #2 nor option #3 requires a by-law change. Please reply to this letter whether or not you plan to attend the meeting in May. We need to have an indication of the wishes of all of the membership. Listed below are some of the more obvious arguments for and against the proposed change.

ARGUMENTS FOR CHANGE

1. More younger men who might want to bring their wives to some of the meetings would be attracted to the Club.
2. The subject of the talk on Ladies Night may or may not be one which interests the ladies. People have different interests.
3. Life in general is becoming more and more a mixed society, and we should keep up with the times.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHANGE

1. The all-men's character of the Club should be preserved since there are few such sanctuaries now.
2. The Women's Travel Club is available for ladies and is more appropriate for them.

A possible but not at all inevitable extension of the change is that, eventually, the ladies may be offered membership status in the Harvard Travellers Club. This, of course, would require a by-law change and is NOT what is being suggested here.

So please reply. Write your reactions on the bottom of this page if it takes less time than a separate letter and mail your preference to the Secretary-Treasurer by April 18, 1978.

Thank you in advance for your thoughts on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,
BENJAMIN G. FERRIS, JR., M.D. President
Harvard Travellers Club
Send reply to:

Dr. John O. Field
128 Glenoe Road
Chestnut Hill, MA 02167

PREFERENCE

1. Stay as we are.
2. Allow ladies as guests for half of the meetings in 1978-1979.
3. Allow ladies as guests for all of the meetings in 1978-1979.

Comments, other suggestions, etc.

Questionnaire regarding women, [Min3 p246]

"The Council decided not to raise at the Annual Meeting the issue of having ladies as guests on a regular basis. Seventy-five members responded to President Ferris' letter on this subject, with 38% voting to leave things as they are, 25% voting to permit ladies as guests at half of the meetings next year on a trial basis, 32% voting to accept ladies as guests at all of next year's meetings, and 6% offering other suggestions. Given that a large minority of those expressing their views opposed change, the Council chose to shelve the matter for reconsideration at a later date. Ladies Night is, thereby, preserved; and the Council also voted to permit members to bring ladies as guests informally at the November 1978 meeting."

Minutes of Council meeting, 23 May 1978. [Min3 p252]

"At its meeting on May 23, 1978, the Council voted not to raise at the Annual Meeting the issue of having ladies as guests on a more regular basis. Seventy-five members had responded to President Ferris' letter of March 28, 1978, on this subject, with 38% voting to leave things as they are, 25% voting to permit ladies at half of the meetings in 1978-79 on a trial basis, 32% voting to admit ladies to all of the 1978-79 meetings, and 6% offering other suggestions."

Notice flyer for 551st meeting, 3 October 1978. [Min4 p1]

Presumably the first 'Ladies' Night'

Ladies' Night notice card for 53rd meeting [Book2 p89]

"The meeting on Ladies' night was very well attended, 200 present."

Minutes of the 53rd meetng, 7 May 1909. [Book2 p80]

First Ladies' Night, at the Exhibition.

Notice card for 53rd meeting, Ladies'Night, May 7, 1909. [Book3 p119]

"She is the only woman to have addressed the Club in the thirty-eight years of its existence, and signally deserves that honor."

Mrs. Laura Boulton. "Africa in Sound and Film" Spelled Boulton in minutes, Bolton on Notice.

Minutes of 268th meeting, 16 January 1940. [Min1 p80]

"We discussed the Women's Night and we all seem to be in favor of free cocktails for the evening."

Minutes of Council meeting, 14 February 1956. [Min1 p213]

"The Secretary reported that the Club is not in violation of Federal law concerning discrimination by virtue of not admitting females, according to a recent IRS notice. The issue of the Club's sex-related policies will be raised as a future meeting of the Council."

Minutes of Council meeting, 8 November 1977. [Min3 p232]

"The Council considered the Club's policy concerning women and, after lengthy discussion, voted to recommend to the membership that women be permitted as guests at all meetings."

Minutes of Council meeting, 14 February 1978. [Min3 p241]

"The question of admitting women to all meetings next season was raised and discussed. The feeling that they should be seemed to [be] widely accepted..."

Minutes of Council meeting, 28 April 1981. [Min4 p81]

"The following motion was therefore MADE, SECONDED and VOTED that: Commencing with the first meeting in October that all meetings as a matter of course be open to women guests, that a notice be added to each meeting notice to the effect that 'by vote of the Council, women may be invited as guests', that the President will note this change in his Letter that will accompany the first mailing and that this new policy will be given a trial with evaluation at a later time."

Minutes of the Summer Council meeting, 13 August 1981, 2pp. [Min4 p87]

"By vote of the Council, ladies will be welcome as guests at all meetings during the 1981-1982 Season, except for the Annual Meeting in May, when this and other policies will be reviewed."
President 's Letter, September 1981. [Min4 p89]

"David Thorndike presented a proposed constitutional amendment to change Article III, paragraph 1 to read: The membership shall be composed of all who are interested in the object of the Club. By so changing it women would be free to become members. ... David agreed to table his proposal until the next meeting..."

Minutes of Council meeting, 23 February 1982. [Min4 p101]

"It was MOVED, SECONDED and VOTED to recommend to the membership that women be welcomed as guests of members at all meetings during the next season."

"It was MOVED, SECONDED and VOTED that women be welcomed as guests of members at all meetings, including the Annual Meeting, during the 1982-1983 season."

[Minutes of Council meeting, 25 May 1982. [Min4 p112-13]

"It was MOVED and SECONDED to recommend this amendment [The membership shall be composed of persons who are interested in the object of the Club] to the membership at the Annual Meeting. ... After other discussion, the motion was unanimously PASSED."

Minutes of Council meeting, 22 March 1983. [Min4 p177]

"The matter of the proposed constitutional amendment was then raised. The President reported that the Council had voted unanimously in favor of the change, i.e. That Article III, i, shall read: "The membership shall be composed of persons who are interested in the object of the Club." A motion to so amend the Constitution was MADE and SECONDED and discussion was invited. ... Following discussion the vote was taken by written ballot and the results announced: 40 in favor, 1 opposed and 2 abstentions. The motion, then, was passed."

Minutes of 590th meeting, 24 May 1983. [Min4 p183]

Katherine Bailey elected, first woman member.

Minutes of Council meeting, 4 October 1983. [Min4 p187]

Katharine Walters was invited to join the Council. First woman on the Council.

Minutes of Council meeting, 11 December 1984. [Min4 p213]

[Mary Blue Magruder elected first woman president that evening]

Minutes of Council meeting, 25 May 1993. [Min5 p94]