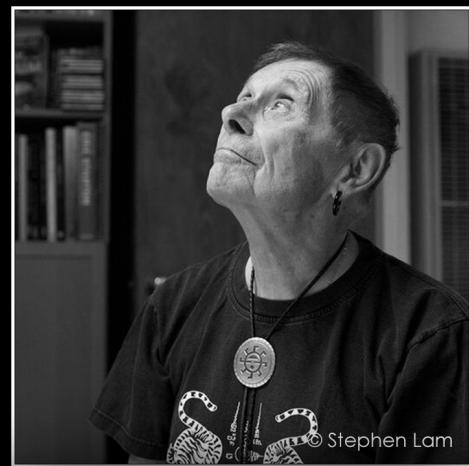




© Janet Ryan



© Stephen Lam



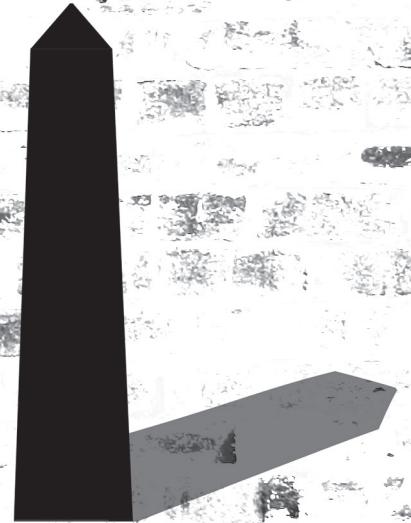
SAMOIS

FAKIR MUSAFAR

LA&M

Leather Hall of Fame

**INDUCTION CEREMONY & BRUNCH
THE WESTIN CLEVELAND DOWNTOWN
SUNDAY APRIL 28TH, 2019**



2019



The Leather Hall of Fame Mission Statement

Our Mission

The goals of the Leather Hall of Fame are to recognize those who have made a lasting contribution to the leather community and to provide a historical and educational reference for the community.

The Leather Hall of Fame represents all people in the modern leather community around the world, without regard to gender or sexual orientation.



Leather Hall of Fame

BOARD MEMBERS

The Leather Hall of Fame Board of Governors

Founder and Chairman

Robert Miller, Palm Springs, CA

Selection Committee

Guy Baldwin, Los Angeles, CA

Race Bannon, San Francisco, CA

Rob Bienvenue, Olney, MD

Gloria Brame, Athens, GA

Derek Cohen, London, England

Daniel Dumont, Brussels, Belgium

Nancy Irwin, Toronto, Canada

Viola Johnson, Philadelphia, PA

Gayle Rubin, San Francisco, CA & Ann Arbor, MI

Daniel Ruester, Aschau, Germany

Jim Taylor, Las Vegas, NV

Jeff Willoughby, Chicago, IL

leatherhalloffame.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Leather Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony & Brunch

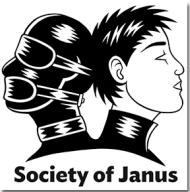
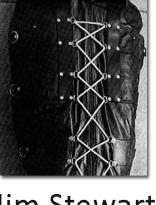
Location

The Westin Cleveland Downtown
Vanda - 6th Floor
Sunday April 28th, 2019
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Table of Contents

Prior Years Inductees	Page 4
Inductee Biographies:	
SAMOIS	Page 6
Fakir Musafar	Page 16
Leather Archives & Museum	Page 26
Acknowledgements	Page 36

PRIOR INDUCTEES

2018	 International Mr. Leather	 Society of Janus	 Black Leather in Color
2017	 Durk Dehner	 Peter Fiske	 MSC Hamburg e.V.
2016	 Larry Townsend	 Jim Stewart	 James (Jim) Kane
2015	 Pat Bond & Terry Kolb	 Felix Jones	 Jeanne Barney
2014	 Chicago Hellfire Club	 Cynthia Slater	 John Embry
		PRIOR YEARS INDUCTEES	

2013



Alan Selby



Monique Von Cleef



Dom Orejudos (Etienne)

2012



Guy Baldwin



Irving Klaw



Sam Steward

2011



Leonard Burtman



Bob Milne



Eulenspiegel Society

2010



Tony DeBlase



Frank Olson & Don Morrison



Satyrs MC

2009



Chuck Renslow



Tom of Finland



John Willie

SAMOIS

SAMOIS

1978-1983

As feminists, we oppose all forms of social hierarchy based on gender. As radical perverts, we oppose all social hierarchies based on sexual preference.
Samois, Our Statement, 1979

Samois has a unique place in SM and leather history. The group's formation in 1978 did not inaugurate an entirely new type of SM organization: Samois was inspired by groups such as the The Eu-lenspiegel Society (TES) started in New York City in December 1970 (LHOF 2011), and the Society of Janus, created in San Francisco around 1973 (LHOF 2018). Its founders were trailblazers for another reason. Most inductees in the Leather Hall of Fame have been recognized for an innovation they introduced, an event they established, or their role in improving or enriching the leather community. Samois and its founders created what was (in the current state of our historical knowledge) the first lesbian SM organization anywhere in the world. They did not simply change or enhance the social organization of lesbian SM: they began to construct a social world for lesbian SM where none existed. Samois took on a multitude of functions: the social, the political, and the educational. But its primary contribution was to create communities, articulate political visions, and give public voice to SM lesbians.

The structures of sexual subcultures tend to reflect the features of the larger society around them, and the SM world is no exception. Prior to 1970s, there were two major SM subcultures, strongly divided along lines of sexual orientation, and largely insulated from one another: heterosexual and gay male leather. Heterosexual SM reflected the prevailing relationships of gender power and considerable male privilege. These networks revolved around producers of erotica and the sex work industry. Commercial porn and professional domination catered primarily to male customers, while women tended to be service providers. Nonetheless, images of lesbian SM were common in "bondage" porn, and some pro dommes would see women for sessions, or play with them privately. Moreover, a certain amount of bisexuality, particularly among women, was tolerated or even cultivated, although there was considerable uneasiness about gay male sex in most of these circles. But some SM lesbians hung around, and found a place in, the predominantly "heterosexual" scene.

The worlds of gay male leather were more institutionally varied. Gay leather revolved around bars, motorcycle clubs, bathhouses, and private parties. And it was gay. But of course, gay male bars were not a fruitful site



© Janet Ryan

for women to find other women. This dilemma was eloquently expressed by Linnea Due, a Bay Area writer, who recalled that in the sixties, an SM world was "about as attainable as waking up in the middle of *The Story of O*. That didn't stop me from trying—since age seventeen I'd been storming gay male leather bars and being tossed out on my ear more times than I wanted to remember. Why was I so obsessed with Folsom Street? Perhaps because it was the only game in town for a budding leather queer."

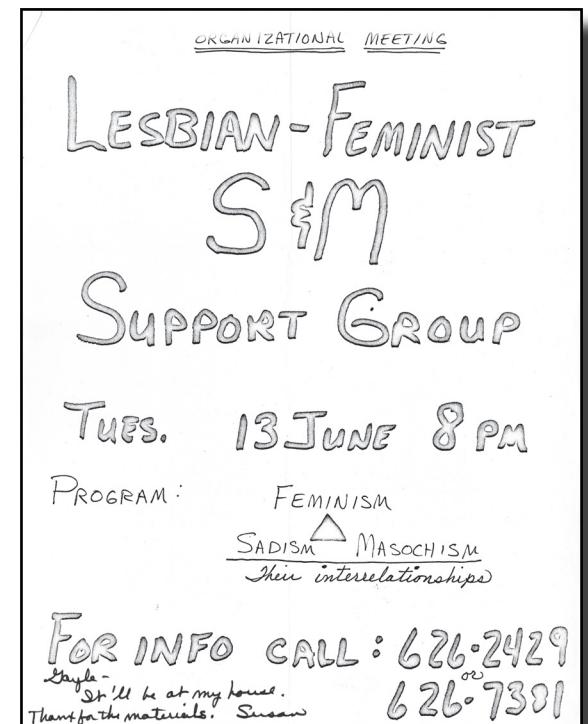
In the aftermath of World War II, both straight and gay SM worlds were shaped by the constraints of the 1950s US society. The social movements of the 1950s and 1960s opened up new opportunities for dissident communities and individual expression. TES and Janus were a new kind of SM organization, made possible by the civil rights movement, anti-war activism, the counterculture, women's liberation, and gay and lesbian liberation.

Women's liberation had attacked the sexual double standard and asserted women's claims to sexual pleasure and autonomy. In the SM world, there were many women who were fed up with routine forms of sexism. Moreover, although in different ways and to different degrees, women were among the key leadership in both TES and Janus. One of the founders of TES was a woman (Terry Kolb, LHOF 2015), and Cynthia Slater (LHOF 2014) was a founder and driving force of Janus.

Nevertheless, gender inequalities did not disappear in either organization. A Janus survey conducted in 1975 revealed that women comprised only 15% of the readership of the Janus newsletter. Gay and heterosexual men were almost evenly represented (37% of the member-

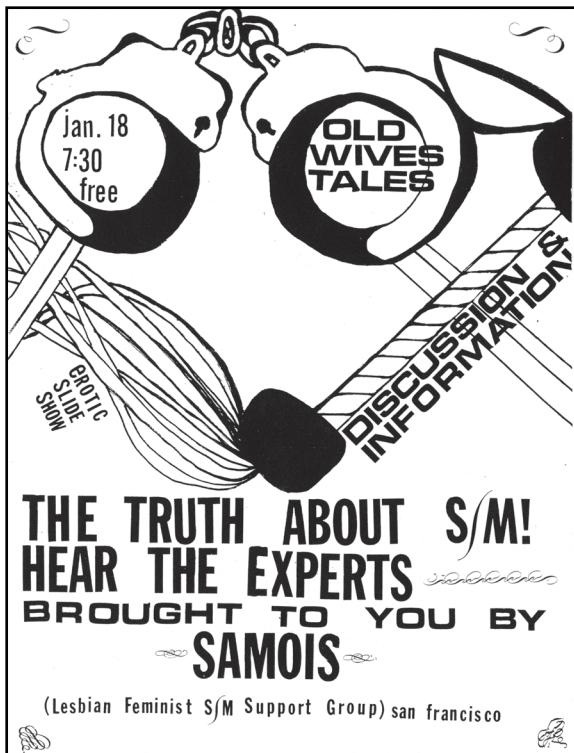


SAMOIS members at the Gay Freedom Day Parade, San Francisco, June 1979



Leaflet calling for the first meeting of what would become SAMOIS





SAMOIS PRESENTS LESBIAN PRIDE LEATHER DANCE

OLLIE'S RADCLYFFE HALL
4130 TELEGRAPH, OAKLAND
SATURDAY, JUNE 26
9:00 P.M.-1:30 A.M.

Sleazy Dance Music

Old And New

Rock And Soul

DJ Gayle Rubin

You MUST
Bring I.D.I



This Is A
Benefit For
The Second
Printing Of
'Coming To Power'
21 And Over ONLY!

\$5

A BUCK OFF IF YOU'RE
WEARING LEATHER

ship were gay men, 38% were heterosexual males), and 10% were bisexual men. Only 11% of the respondents were heterosexual women, and 3% reported bisexual identifications. Significantly, there were no lesbians.

To encourage a more female-friendly atmosphere, three Janus members formed Cardea, a female-only group. Cardea was open to all women, and most of its members were straight or bisexual. However, some lesbians joined Cardea. In 1978, Janus resolved to elect two co-coordinators every year: one male and one female. In June 1978, Janus elected its first female co-coordinator: a young lesbian who had joined through Cardea and who was destined to become a prominent SM writer and activist: Patrick (then Pat) Califia. But the increased presence of women, including a few lesbians, led to another problem: women in general, and lesbians in particular, resented the harassment they felt from straight men who often had no prior experience of socializing with women in sex positive environments. Complaints about poor conduct surfaced regularly in the pages of *Growing Pains*, Janus' newsletter.

In the spring of 1978, Gayle Rubin moved from Ann Arbor to the San Francisco Bay Area. She had previously met Califia, and soon met other kinky lesbians, including Susan B. Although she joined Janus and attended some functions of Cardea, Rubin was among those who felt a need for a specifically lesbian SM group. There had been an attempt at forming such a group in San Francisco in 1975, but it was short-lived. This failed attempt, however, was part of a growing network of kinky lesbians in the Bay Area. Some of these women met through Janus or Cardea, others through San Francisco Sex Information, and yet others emerged from the vibrant local lesbian feminist community. Having gotten tired of hearing complaints about the lack of a lesbian SM group, Susan B produced a flyer calling for a meeting to form a "Lesbian-Feminist S&M Support Group."

On June 13, 1978, seventeen women showed up at

Susan's flat on Potomac Street near Duboce Park in San Francisco, and started the group that would become Samois.

A month later, the name was chosen. "Samois" was a reference to *Story of O*, the 1954 French erotic SM novel written by Dominique Aury (under the pseudonym Pauline Réage). *Story of*



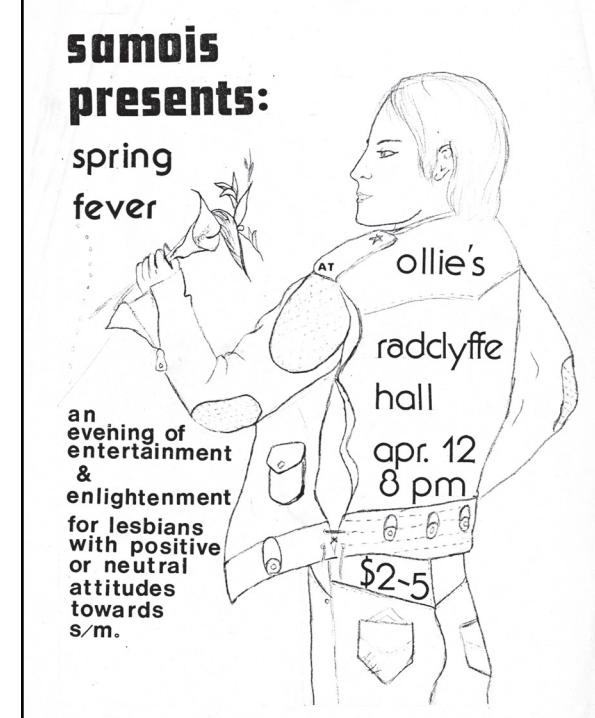
Rachael, winner of the very first Ms. Leather contest in 1981 (left) and Elixis (right)
Photo © Honey Lee Cottrell

encies. This was the case for two of the earliest homophile groups: the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis. Eulenspiegel and Janus, the SM organizations formed in the early 1970s, had similarly discreet titles.

Naming Samois in this way signaled that some of its members anticipated political and social challenges such as those faced by the early homophile organizations, as well as by TES and Janus. Using such a veiled name was also an indication of how stigmatized SM was, not only in the society at large but also within lesbian communities. And since *Story of O* had been written by a woman, and featured SM activities among women in the village of Samois, the name also signaled, if obliquely, the group's purpose and membership.

Ideologically, Samois inherited ideas from women's liberation, radical feminism, gay liberation, lesbian feminism, and the nascent "SM liberation" politics of Eulenspiegel and Janus. Situated at the confluence of women's liberation, gay and lesbian liberation, and SM liberation, Samois brought together women with different backgrounds and attitudes. Some hung out at Janus where they socialized with gay and straight men and women; others came through Cardea, whose membership was female but mostly heterosexual or bisexual. A few had been admitted to the gay male parties at the Catacombs, a legendary gay male fisting venue. Those women were used to playing among, and often with, gay men. Most identified as lesbians, but others were bisexual. Some even identified as heterosexual but still played with other women. Among the lesbians, there were

O was quickly hailed as a masterpiece of SM literature, and although most of the interactions in the book are heterosexual, there is a section in which O (the masochistic central character) is taken to Samois, a small town situated a little south of Paris, where she is placed under the control of a female dominant whose entourage is composed entirely of women. Samois was therefore one of the most prominent literary locations for female SM. Choosing such a name for the nascent organization was well within the traditions of queer and kinky groups, which had often, starting in the 1950s, gone by cryptic terms that did not immediately identify their aims or constitu-



Samois Presents
A Halloween Ball and Erotic Costume Contest

Oct. 29, Friday, 9:00 p.m. - 1:30 a.m.
Ollie's Radclyffe Hall
4130 Telegraph, Oakland




\$5
A Buck Off If You're In Costume



Register for the Contest at the Dance by 10:00 p.m.
Sleazy Dance Music by DJ Gayle Rubin





Sorry—No Drugs, No Sex, No Minors—Bring ID

advancement of all kinksters, including men (even straight ones). For still others, being kinky mattered more than being a lesbian. Along those lines, Patrick Califia famously wrote in 1979 about identifying more strongly as a sadomasochist than as a lesbian, and stated that "If I had a choice between being shipwrecked on a desert island with a vanilla lesbian and a hot male masochist, I'd pick the boy." The many varied backgrounds and political orientations within Samois resulted in periodic political conflicts. But despite the tensions, the group was energetic, productive, and extremely influential.

Samois' primary purpose and first task was to create a space for lesbian SM social life: a place where kinky lesbians could meet lovers, find friends and play buddies, support

also many differences of personal preference and political orientation. There were many different versions of lesbian feminism at the time, and these were all present among Samois' members. Samois itself had a very limited set of principles, and there was a great deal of political variation within the membership. But there were shared principles. One important goal, articulated in the Samois Statement of Purpose, was to "develop a lesbian-feminist perspective on SM." Another key conviction was that SM was not intrinsically antithetical to feminism. Samois never claimed that SM was, per se, a feminist practice; but Samois was adamant that there is no inherent opposition between feminism and kink.

Some Samois members were separatists and did not want to be around men at all, even at meetings, much less in play spaces. Some did not even want to share space with bisexual women. Others identified just as strongly as lesbians but felt committed to the liberation of all women, and some were committed to the

COLOR	LEFT SIDE	RIGHT SIDE
Red	Fist Fucker	Fist Fuckee
Dark Blue	Anal Sex, Top	Anal Sex, Bottom
Light Blue	Oral Sex, Top	Oral Sex, Bottom
Robins Egg Blue	Light S/M, Top	Light S/M, Bottom
Mustard	Food Fetish, Top	Food Fetish, Bottom
Orange	Anything Goes, Top	Anything Goes, Bottom
Yellow	Gives Golden Showers	Wants Golden Showers
Green	Hustler, Selling	Hustler, Buying
Olive Drab	Uniforms/Military, Top	Uniforms/Military, Bottom
White	Likes Novices, Chickenhawk	Novice (or Virgin)
White Lace	Victorian Scenes, Top	Victorian Scenes, Bottom
Gray	Does Bondage	Wants To Be Put In Bondage
Brown	Shit Scenes, Top	Shit Scenes, Bottom
Black	Top, Heavy S/M & Whipping	Bottom, Heavy S/M & Whipping
Purple	Piercer	Piercee
Maroon	Likes Menstruating Women	Is Menstruating
Lavender	Group Sex, Top	Group Sex, Bottom
Pink	Breast Fondler	Breast Fondlee

THIS FORUM IS A LIE ABOUT S/M

SAMOIS PROTESTS THE WAVPM FORUM ON S/M IN THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY BECAUSE:

1. WAVPM, without taking an "official" position on S/M has nonetheless promoted false images of S/M sexuality and helped to create a climate that is oppressive and dangerous to S/M-identified people. WAVPM's most obvious error is the equation of consensual S/M with violence. To anyone who is personally involved in S/M it is clear that WAVPM lacks correct information about S/M.
2. Susan Griffin, one of the panelists, stated in an interview:

"The gay community should realize that sadomasochism is not just a sexual choice but an illness . . . S/M is an internal scapegoating: playing out childhood hatreds against your lover . . . it is an illness and the most effective treatment is . . . to find the origin, the person's personal history." (The Advocate, 3/20/80)
- Other panelists have made similar public statements that equate S/M with self-destruction, male supremacy, fascism, misogyny, or mental illness. The anti-S/M arguments you will hear at this forum are as biased and bigoted as homophobic attacks on lesbians and gay men or right-wing attacks on independent feminist women. These arguments are based on biological determinism, conventional morality, and psychiatric notions of sexual perversion. We protest the promulgation of negative stereotypes of S/M.
3. Consensual S/M is not anti-feminist or anti-woman. S/M people are a stigmatized sexual minority, and as such are subjected to street harassment, job and housing discrimination, violence, and other forms of persecution.

WHY SAMOIS IS NOT SPEAKING TONIGHT

This forum was originally advertised as a benefit for WAVPM. Samois members were asked to speak. They refused to do so unless the proceeds were split between the two groups. WAVPM refused to do so. They then put out a leaflet advertising the forum which noted the refusal of pro-S/M women to participate, but did not give the reason for their refusal. This afternoon, Samois members were again asked to speak, with proceeds being distributed among the parties. Our speakers declined to participate in such short notice. At this time, it is unclear whether or not this event is still a benefit for WAVPM.

For nearly two years, WAVPM has consistently refused to meet with Samois to discuss their views and receive information about S/M in general and lesbian S/M in particular. It was presumptuous of WAVPM to schedule a forum on S/M when they have been avoiding the issue for so long. A few days before the forum, members of WAVPM finally agreed to meet with us. Although important dialogue was begun, this has all occurred too recently for it to affect our basic objection to this forum: The spread of misinformation about S/M will contribute to our oppression.

WE DEMAND THAT WAVPM CEASE EQUATING CONSENSUAL S/M WITH RAPE, MURDER, AND VIOLENCE; CEASE TO SINGLE OUT S/M EROTICA FOR PICKETING; AND EITHER ADMIT TO HAVING A POSITION AGAINST S/M (WHICH MAY THEN BE DISCUSSED) OR TAKE A POSITION SUPPORTING S/M BETWEEN CONSENTING ADULTS.

WHO WE ARE

We are a group of feminist lesbians who share a positive interest in sadomasochism. Some of us have been involved in S/M for many years. Others experience S/M primarily on a fantasy level.

We believe that S/M must be consensual, mutually pleasurable, and safe. It is therefore a direct opposite of rape, murder, or any other violence. S/M can exist as part of a healthy and positive lifestyle. Many approaches to S/M are possible. However, its basic dynamic is an eroticized exchange of power negotiated between two or more sexual partners.

We believe that sadomasochists are an oppressed sexual minority. Our struggle deserves the recognition and support of other sexual minorities and oppressed groups.

We believe that S/M can and should be consistent with the principles of feminism. As feminists, we oppose all forms of social hierarchy based on gender. As radical perverts, we oppose all social hierarchies based on sexual preference.

WHAT WE DO

WE ACQUIRE AND CIRCULATE INFORMATION ON S/M TECHNIQUE. One result of the suppression of S/M sexuality is that misinformation is common. Samois, like other S/M political organizations, feels an obligation to provide information on how to practice S/M safely, and to insist that neither physical safety nor emotional considerations need be sacrificed to mystique.

SAMOIS HAS A UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY TO DEVELOP A LESBIAN FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON S/M. This means identifying and criticizing heterosexist and male supremacist assumptions and practices whenever these are associated with S/M. It means distinguishing consensual S/M from popular misconceptions that S/M involves assault, rape, or other violence.

WHILE OTHER S/M ORGANIZATIONS SHARE THE GOAL OF DEMYSTICIZING S/M, SAMOIS PARTICULARLY WISHES TO INSTIGATE DIALOGUE AND DISCUSSION OF S/M WITHIN THE LESBIAN AND FEMINIST COMMUNITY. We have a double focus. We will work to promulgate feminist awareness among S/M people and we will struggle to end the stereotyping and stigmatizing of S/M among feminists.

WE DEVELOP A NETWORK OF PERSONAL SUPPORT FOR S/M LESBIANS AND A SAFE SPACE IN WHICH TO EXPLORE, UNDERSTAND, ACCEPT, AND ENHANCE OUR EROTIC IDENTITIES. Lesbian sadomasochists are isolated by the silence which surrounds our sexuality and the contempt to which it is subjected. Samois attempts to build community, lessen isolation, and sharpen consciousness.

OUR NAME

The name Samois (pronounced sam mwa') is drawn from a place name in Story of O by Pauline Reage, probably the most famous S/M literary classic. It is the setting connected with several lesbian episodes and a dominant lesbian character.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact us by writing to Samois, P. O. Box 2364, Berkeley, CA, 94702. We have published a booklet about lesbian S/M entitled "What Color is Your Handkerchief?" which is available for \$3.00.

Leaflet for the picketing of the WAVPM forum on "SM In the Women's Community," 1980.

one another, talk openly, share techniques and learn from each other. Samois began to hold monthly meetings that featured a wide range of educational programs for its members. The enthusiasm of the early organization was infectious; members wanted to share their excitement and extend education about SM to the wider community. This led to a series of public events, including a discussion and forum about lesbian SM held at Old Wives Tales, a local women's bookstore, and "Spring Fever," an evening of kinky entertainment at an East Bay lesbian bar. In 1981, Samois held the first Ms. Leather Contest, and what was planned to be an annual women's leather dance. There was a Halloween Costume Ball and Erotic Costume contest in 1982, and a Lesbian Pride Leather Dance and a Valentine's Day Uniform Contest in 1983. There were also women's play parties. These were initially in private homes. Later, Patrick Califia rented the Catacombs and began hosting play parties there until the venue closed abruptly in 1981. The last of these early women's play parties were held at another gay male club, the Cauldron.

Samois grew in visibility as it became a voice for SM lesbians and as SM became extremely controversial within the women's movement. In 1978, the Society of Janus had a contingent in the Gay Freedom Day Parade. This scandalized several of the parade monitors and the presence of an SM organization in the parade was denounced in some of the local gay press. The following year, a group proposed to ban SM and leather from the gay parade. Members of Samois organized to prevent such a ban from being enacted, and Samois members marched proudly in that parade, many wearing Samois' first official t-shirt. These shirts sported the Samois logo and the slogan "The Leather Menace," a deliberate reference to

the “Lavender Menace,” a famous phrase used by the activists who mobilized to protest the marginalization of lesbians and lesbian issues from the mainstream women’s movement in 1970.

Despite the successful effort to stop the proposed leather ban at the annual gay parade, there were many other instances of harassment and exclusion. There were many individuals who believed that SM was inevitably anti-female or anti-feminist, and Samois had to continually challenge such assumptions. In 1981, Samois had rented a room at the San Francisco Women’s Building to hold a reception for local SM lesbians and visitors coming to town for the annual gay parade. A few weeks before the event, the Women’s Building staff refused to confirm the reservation and insisted on a series of tense and unpleasant discussions about the ostensible “politics” of SM. The reservation was finally confirmed, and the fees paid, after which Samois was informed that there were “conditions” – insulting conditions not imposed on any other women’s group. The Women’s Building later adopted a formal policy banning SM groups from renting space there. This policy was finally revoked in 1989.

The most rancorous public disputes that engulfed the organization arose from two other Samois activities: its active program of publication, and the involvement of the organization and several of its members in opposing the early feminist movement against pornography.

Much of Samois’ impact resulted from its publications, which began quickly in 1978 with a tongue-in-cheek hanky code for women. Hanky codes had emerged in the gay male leather community in the mid-1970s, apparently initially among fisters sporting red bandanas in their back pockets. Soon bandanas of many colors were adopted to signal other erotic interests: black for SM, grey for bondage, yellow for water sports, and many more. As the colors proliferated and the schemes multiplied, bars and retail businesses printed hanky code cards listing the various bandanas and their presumed associations. Samois’ hanky code card for women was so popular that it required a second printing.

Most of Samois’ publications were handled by a committee dubbed, with flippant irreverence, the “Ministry of Truth,” or “MOT.” This was an explicit, if lighthearted, reference to

SAMOIS: Who We Are

We are a group of feminist lesbians who share a positive interest in sadomasochism. Some of us have been involved in S/M for many years. Others experience S/M primarily on a fantasy level.

We believe that S/M must be consensual, mutual, and safe. S/M can exist as part of a healthy and positive lifestyle. Many approaches to S/M are possible. However, its basic dynamic is an eroticized exchange of power negotiated between two or more sexual partners.

We believe that sadomasochists are an oppressed sexual minority. Our struggle deserves the recognition and support of other sexual minorities and oppressed groups.

We believe that S/M can and should be consistent with the principles of feminism. As feminists, we oppose all forms of social hierarchy based on gender. As radical perverts, we oppose all social hierarchies based on sexual preference.

George Orwell's 1984. At one of the early meetings, someone noted that for many of the members, "freedom was slavery." The humor stuck, and the Ministry of Truth was christened. MOT, and its publications, became one of Samois' most signature projects. MOT took on the editorial and production tasks of assembling *What Color Is Your Handkerchief? A lesbian S/M sexuality reader*. This 1979 pamphlet contained Samois' statement of purpose, a glossary of SM terms, a handkerchief color code for lesbians, an SM bibliography, and a resource list. It reprinted several key SM texts by both men and women, gay and straight, and included original articles by members of the organization. The booklet was so popular that there were five printings between 1979 and 1981. However, it also encountered resistance. Some feminist newspapers refused to run classified ads for it, and some feminist bookstores refused to carry it at all. Others, including A Woman's Place Bookstore in Oakland, CA, insisted on shelving the book only with disclaimer cards.

Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on lesbian S/M was a more ambitious undertaking. Published in 1981, the book contained over 200 pages of original essays, poetry, fiction, memoir, and photography. Once again, controversy attended its publication, with nasty reviews, rejected advertisements, and bookstores banning or hiding the book. Nevertheless, *Coming to Power* quickly sold out, and there were two subsequent editions, the last published in 1987. It was a landmark anthology, similar in its impact to Mark Thompson's 1991 collection, *Leatherfolk*.



Valentine's Day Dance and Uniform Contest,
1983



Valentine's Day Dance and Uniform Contest, 1983

Samois became embroiled in combatting a movement against pornography that had emerged within feminism in the late 1970s. The first feminist anti-pornography organization was San Francisco's WAVPM (Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media). Because many Samois members were active in feminist politics, they were quick to realize that SM was central to the anti-pornography analysis and program. Initially, those activists assumed that the antagonism to SM in anti-porn publications and rhetoric stemmed from lack of understanding of SM practice, and that more accurate information would lead WAVPM to focus



Valentine's Day Dance and Uniform Contest, 1983

political and social impact of the organization were due to an astonishing assembly of skills and talents of many individuals, most of whom were not public figures or who chose to remain anonymous in the SM world. Many of the women who came into Samois had experiences in publication. Some were professional writers. Others understood the process and business of production. They were conversant with typesetting and layout and knew the local printers. There were artists who provided visual material. There were people who knew how to produce events and where to book space. Many of the early members were deeply embedded in the Bay Area women's communities and feminist institutions, and they used their connections to get things done and to get the organization established. Samois benefited from all these individuals and from an exhilarating outburst of energy and joy.

Over time, new members came into the organization and others left. One of the initial founders—Susan B, who had produced the flyer that lead to the first meeting—moved away when she got a job in another state. There were internal disagreements that led to the departure of others. Fighting with hostile external forces was draining, as was the work of distributing *Coming to Power*. And over time, there was the exhaustion that often afflicts volunteer organizations. As the membership declined, custody of the book and concern that it have a stable future became the last challenges for the remaining leadership. That responsibility was met when the book was placed with a gay publisher (Alyson). In 1983, shortly after the paste up boards were finally shipped off to the press, Samois was quietly terminated. But in its meteoric five years, Samois left an indelible mark on feminism, on the lesbian community, and on the worlds of SM and kink.

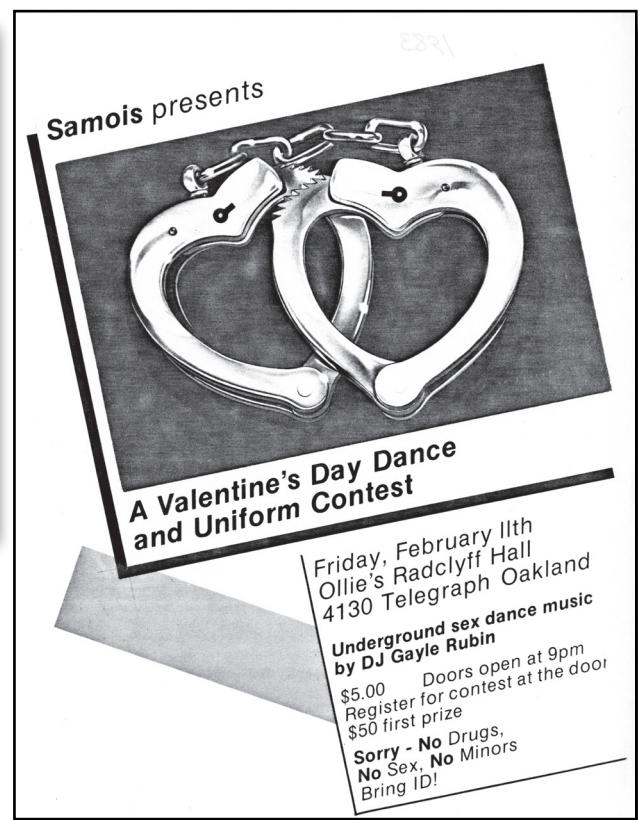
on actual violence rather than mere kink. This belief proved to be naïve, and Samois and WAVPM had a series of poisonous encounters. These culminated in a 1980 WAVPM Forum on "S&M in the Women's Community," which consisted of a series of denunciations of SM and SM practitioners. Some of the principals who spoke at the Forum were later instrumental in assembling the anthology *Against Sadomasochism*, published in 1982. Samois picketed the forum with a leaflet stating: "This Forum is a lie about SM."

Samois and some of its members were among the first to challenge the antiporn movement, and were key in mobilizing resistance to the antiporn agenda within feminism. As a consequence, antiporn partisans tended to call anyone who opposed them—and there were many others who did so, and for a wide range of objections—sadomasochists.

Some Samois members have been public figures, and the organization is often equated with them. But Samois was begun with seventeen individuals, and at its height, had over a hundred members. The actions, publications, public events, and po-



Valentine's Day Dance and Uniform Contest, 1983



SOURCES

Due, Linnea. "Blackbeard Lost." 8-14 in *Opposite Sex: Gay men on Lesbians, Lesbians on Gay Men*, edited by Sara Miles and Eric Rofes. New York: NYU Press. 1998. (quote p. 9)

Califia, Pat. "A Secret Side of Lesbian Sexuality." *The Advocate*. December 27, 1979. Reprinted in *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*, by Pat Califia. Pittsburgh & San Francisco: Cleis Press. 1994. (quote p. 158)

Califia, Pat. "A Personal View of the History of the Lesbian S/M Community and Movement in San Francisco." 243-287 in *Coming To Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M*. 2nd edition. Boston: Alyson Publications. 1982.

Rubin, Gayle. "Samois." *Leather Times*, 21: 3-7. Spring 2004.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20090327070824/http://www.leatherarchives.org/resources/issue21.pdf>

Rubin, Gayle. "The Leather Menace: Comments on Politics and S/M" in *Coming To Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M*. Palo Alto: UP Press. 1981.

FAKIR MUSAFAR

Fakir Musafar

"One night in a small house on the South Dakota plains, a boy later known as Fakir Musafar went down to the basement and lashed himself to a coal bin wall. His parents were away for the night, and a long-dreamed-of plan could at last be realized. First he hammered heavy metal staples into the battered wood, making the outline of a human body. Next, he tied his limbs and torso into the frame, laboriously immobilizing himself inch by inch until only his hands were free. Then he secured them, too, with the use of cleverly designed hooks. Finally, the gray room fell silent. The only sound the seventeen-year-old heard was his own heartbeat, as tides of numbness slowly advanced up his body.

"Minutes became hours. Dreamy sensations grew dark and suffocating until finally there was no feeling at all. Even the methodical thudding of blood stopped. The youth wondered if he was dying. Suddenly he was jolted by a snapping noise, followed by a high-pitched humming sound — and then nothing. That's when the visions began. He saw his own body hanging limply on the coal bin wall and realized that while inert, it was not dead. In fact, he was able to roam at will, a disembodied consciousness free of time and space. There was no fear, only joyous liberation. A flash of insight revealed time as being measurable only when one is in the body — but now he was outside of his.

"Experiment over, the intrepid teenager somehow managed to wrest loose of his bounds and collapsed onto the cold cement floor, where he lay motionless until dawn. He would never be the same again. Nor for that matter would the many people to pass through Fakir's life in the years to come, seeking and learning from the same kind of transcendent moment he experienced that night long ago."

Mark Thompson
introduction to SPIRIT + FLESH by Fakir Musafar

Roland Edmund Loomis was born August 10, 1930, in Aberdeen, South Dakota, on what had been Sioux tribal lands just fifty years before. The Loomis family lived near the Sisseton-Wahpeton reservation; the spirituality and respect for nature of the indigenous Dakota-Lakota cultures were formative influences on Roland as a boy.

His parents were individualists in their own quiet way. His father, Victor, was a barn-storming airmail pilot. His mother, Eva, defied her Minnesota family to attend business college in Aberdeen, where she and Victor met, fell in love, and raised four children, Roland being the eldest. His earliest childhood memories were of passing clouds spied from the back cockpit of his father's biplane.

His parents enrolled Roland in a Lutheran school, where he dutifully did as he was told, not wanting to be seen as different — which he quietly understood from an



early age he was. "My biggest problem as a child," he recalled in a 1992 interview, "was spacing out. I would literally go into trance states at the drop of a hat. It was very difficult for me, because I thought I was going nuts. Bells would ring, I'd have audio and visual hallucinations. I devoured books, that was my only escape. And I found out I was really interested in how other cultures lived."

He soaked up regional Native American lore about secret ceremonies and summoning spirits. He found himself drawn to *National Geographic* features that described and illustrated body modification and adornment practices in so-called "primitive" societies. When he first saw photos of people with scarification, tattoos and piercings, "instantly the light went on," he recalled. "Very often I could recognize that whatever they said about these people in the photo caption was not what was going on. I could look at them and feel how that person felt at the moment the picture was taken." He had few friends in school but made Indian friends on the nearby tribal lands. "They were treated very badly, worse than dogs. I found a kinship because I was a loner. I always felt I was on the edge, on the fringes of society."

His first experimentations with body play date to his early adolescence. He used a bag of his mother's clothespins and clipped them onto his skin, making fans of them. In the same years he also grew fascinated by piercing. "I desperately wanted to pierce my nose, but that would have been too visible. But I had another spot that nobody ever looked at and didn't exist as far as these people were concerned, and that was my cock." He performed his first self-piercing at the age of fourteen, with a nail driven through a clothespin clamped on his foreskin overnight, inspired by the New Guinea technique in *National Geographic*.

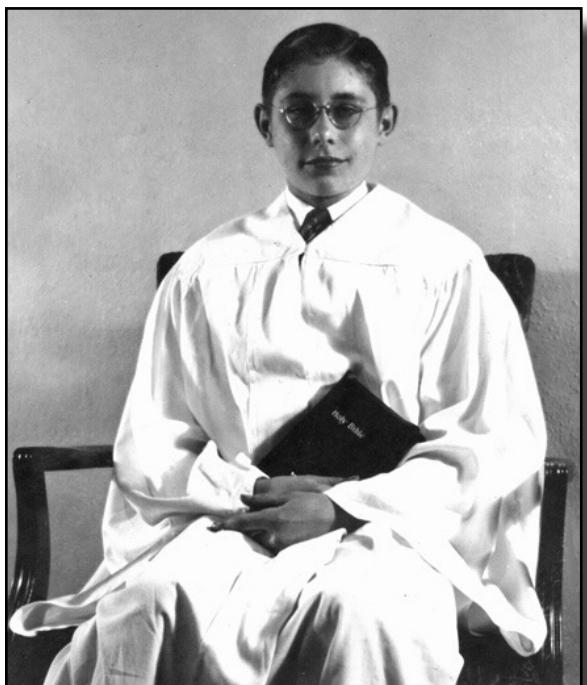
By the time he entered high school, the thirst for transcendent experience had become an all-consuming project. Every available moment was occupied alone in his mother's root cellar, where he set up a darkroom, using his genuine interest in photography to conceal the research he conducted on his own body. He gave himself a tattoo like those traditional among the Bedouins, by pricking his skin with a bundle of needles dipped in India ink. Another day was spent wrapped in heavy coils of chain to find out what effect that encumbrance might bring. He hooked rows of lead fishing weights onto his chest, again to discover the results. Other times he tightly corseted his waist with strips of leather, called *itaburi* in New Guinea, to see how narrow-waisted he could become. He recorded his adventures with an old folding vest-pocket camera an uncle carried in World War I. He taught himself to develop



Family Picture



Biplane ride



Lutheran confirmation, 1942



Rollie with his camera, 1948

treme waist reduction with belts, and prolonged dancing with weighted flesh hooks (later known as a "Ball Dance"), all of it documented with a secondhand Rolleicord camera. A timer or trip-switch released the shutter: another negative that, as far as he knew, might forever be shared with no one.

In 1957, in *Bizarre*, the magazine created by John Willie (LHOF 2009), he published a pseudonymous article about his emulation of the boys of New Guinea, whose waists were narrowed by the itaburi. In the late 1940s and 1950s *Bizarre* was an underground publication, published infrequently and only sold in the thousands. But it served as an outlet for social nonconformists, and contributed to what would eventually become the fetish fashion, kink-BDSM, and body-modification phenomena of today.

After two years in the U.S. Army — instructing others in the use of explosives! — he moved to San Francisco. He studied creative writ-

film by reading a book.

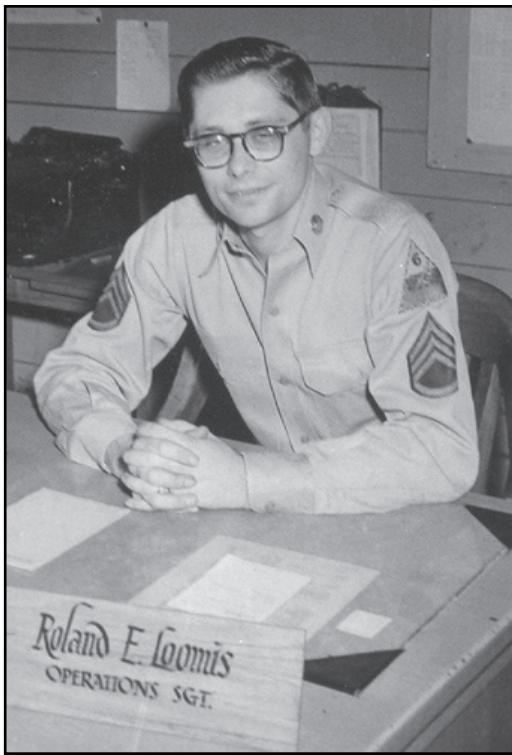
He learned about Hindu holy men, sadhu, who sewed coconuts onto their bodies, shackled themselves to weights for years, and performed any number of almost unimaginable acts of physical mortification. He learned about the Sun Dance, traditionally enacted by men from native tribes in his area until Christian authorities put an end to it. During this ritual, brave warriors pulled for hours, sometimes days, or hung from lodge poles or trees, attached by ropes tied to hooks pierced through the flesh of the chest or back, with the goal of connecting to an inner fire or sacred spirit. Sometimes the tribe was very hungry, and out of the agonizing reverie of the ritual, a vision of where the buffalo had gone would emerge.

It was by reading the newspaper one morning that Roland came across his future name. According to "Ripley's 'Believe It or Not,'" Musafar was a twelfth-century Sufi fakir who wandered Persia for many years with daggers, padlocks, and mirrors attached to his body. He tried to educate people about the visions and mysteries he had discovered but was spurned and died broken-hearted. Roland clipped the column of the paper and put it away, a foretoken of the long struggle and new identity ahead.

After high school Roland enrolled in Northern State Teachers College in Aberdeen. He enjoyed his studies in electrical engineering and in education, but they could not displace the centrality of his basement investigations, the self-applied tattoos, temporary and permanent piercings, branding, ex-



Self-portrait



Army Sergeant

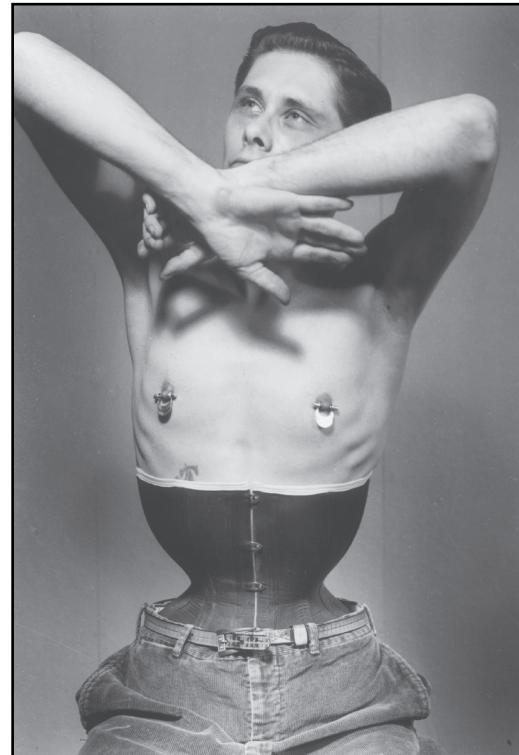
ing and theater at S.F. State and became a costume designer. He longed to revive the hourglass corset but found historical patterns unsuited to modern bodies. So he set about creating new patterns and techniques and founded the Hourglass Corset Company. Advertised in the "girlie" magazines of the day, it had some success among corset-fanciers, whose number however was insufficient to support a corseting business. Meanwhile Fakir systematically reduced his own waist to 19", and pierced his nipples too.

He corresponded guardedly within a narrow underground of fetish publications. He traveled quietly to Japan to observe a culture with its own styles and fans of body modification, especially large all-body allegorical tattoos. At a bookseller's in the Kanda section of Tokyo, he found and bought a treasure: a leather-bound original copy of George Catlin's 1867 edition of *O-Kee-Pa: A Religious Ceremony and Other Customs of the Mandans, with Thirteen Illustrations*.

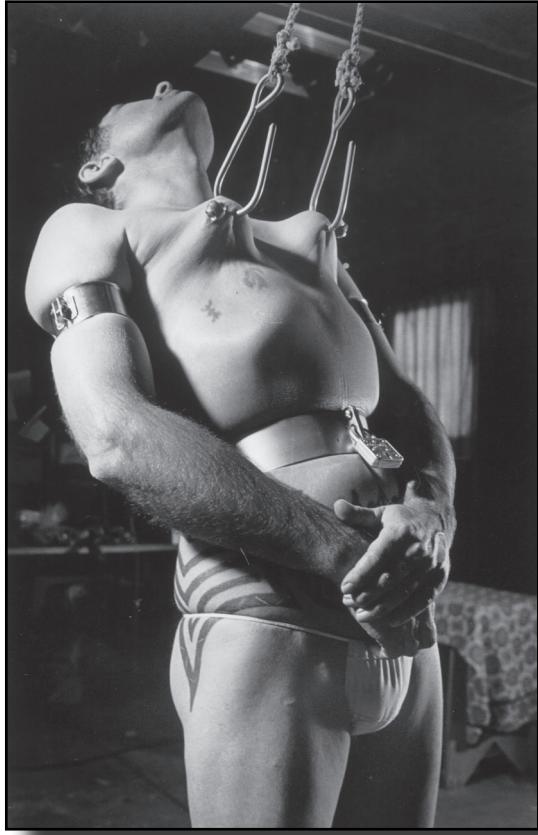
How did this rare book get to Japan? In some nineteenth-century missionary's trunk? Roland's heart raced at the illustrations of men suspended by body piercings. The text documented what he had long suspected. This was a deeply spiritual body ritual, initiation, and a journey to unseen worlds, similar to the Sioux Sun Dance with which he was familiar, but with a physical and psychic guide called a Ka-See-Ka.

In 1963, in Oakland, California, Roland met Davy Jones, the official tattooist for the Hell's Angels — at last a tattoo artist who understood his desire to get the large blackwork tattoo he had seen in his visions since he was seventeen. Like Roland, Jones believed tattoos are more than decoration: they are magic marks that can both record and participate in profound changes in one's life. Over a three-month period, Jones gave Roland his tribal blackwork tattoo. "As far as I know, it was the first tattoo of its kind in 20th-century Western culture," Roland wrote. "Turns out a similar magic tattoo was recorded in a watercolor painting by Karl Bodmer in 1883. It was on a Yanktonai medicine man in Eastern South Dakota, about ninety miles from where I was born."

Roland pleaded with Jones to help him experience the O-Kee-Pa suspension ritual, to be his Ka-See-Ka. Since there were no pure-blood Mandan Indians or culture left, they had to improvise and recreate the ritual based on the description in Catlin's book. With the sun just rising, Roland pierced two deep holes in his chest. In an empty garage fitted to their best-guess semblance of a Mandan initiation lodge, Roland stood on a stool and Davy hooked his chest piercings to a rope in the ceiling. Inch by inch he lifted Roland up until he was on tiptoe. With about eighty percent of his weight on the piercings, the sensation was so intense Roland knew he either had to give up or swing free. He took the gamble, stepped off the supporting



19" waist, Hourglass Corset
self-portrait



O-Kee-Pa Suspension Ritual
Photo by Charles Gatewood

Roland supported himself as an Arthur Murray dance teacher, then as a Silicon Valley advertising executive, still keeping his "body play" research private. But with the advent of the 1970s, the sexual revolution brought on a movement for gay liberation, and suddenly people and things once branded queer no longer seemed so odd. Roland was emboldened. In 1972 he connected with a fetish group in Southern California eager to try some of his practices: small waist training in corsets, bondage, body piercings, tattoos and branding. On one of his visits a curious, eccentric man showed up: Doug Malloy. He too was a proponent of body modification for the transformation it could initiate, not the visual and artistic aspects, and he and Roland hit it off.

"Doug Malloy" was the pseudonym of a kinky multimillionaire who'd made a fortune inventing Muzak and became the godfather/patron of the body-modification movement. What had been the secret obsession of a few blossomed into an underground network. The growing demand soon obliged them to hold private group piercing sessions in Los Angeles and San Francisco. In 1977, with Doug's vision and financial help, the first body piercing studio anywhere opened to the public on Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles. This one-

stool, and let his entire weight hang on body piercings. "No more pain," he wrote later of that moment. "Only a warm, pleasant, floating sensation. I looked above and saw a blinding white light. It spoke to me: 'Hello, I am you and you are me and I'm as close to God as you'll ever be.'" Roland came to call this his second transformative experience. (The first one is recounted in the quote that opens this biography).

Later that same year, 1967, he asked Davy Jones to again be his guide, his Ka-See-Ka, for a Hindu body ritual: taking the Kavadi. He had long been transfixed by a photo in an old *National Geographic* of Kavadi-bearing: men locked in portable cages with hundreds of long iron spears pierced into their chests and back. Davy agreed to put him in a Kavadi, if one could be made — but wanted a signed statement releasing him from liability in case Roland was injured, or worse.

They settled on forty-eight long spears. After an hour or so, the hot sensation of so many rods pierced into his body transmuted to euphoria. Roland started to float and fly and danced in a joyous frenzy. The spears rattled in their sockets and thrust themselves deeper into his flesh. "I lost all track of time," he wrote. "I was totally engulfed in flame, a ball of fire. My consciousness floated up into the rafters of the building. I watched my robot body trapped inside the Kavadi cage running around in crazy circles below. A friend of Davy shot pictures. I danced like this for two hours."



Kavadi Ritual
Photo by Michael Rosen

of-a-kind shop was called the Gauntlet and was operated by the legendary Jim Ward.

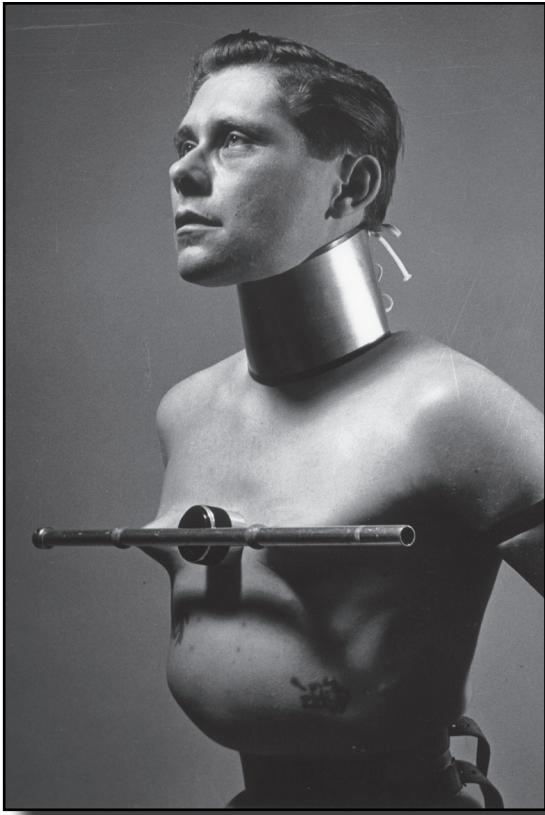
That same year, encouraged by new friendships and the zeitgeist, Roland increasingly shed the carefully polished persona of "The Perfect Gentleman" (the title of one of his most iconic self-portraits) to reveal himself as his namesake, Fakir Musafar. He came out publicly at the first international tattoo convention in Reno in 1977, dazzling crowds with his repertoire of skillful tricks. He had various-sized piercings in his body by then. He inserted daggers through holes in his chest, he lay on beds of nails, he balanced his entire weight on the edge of a machete. As colorful to spectators as any sideshow — and doubtless just as disreputable to some — Fakir's act was redeemed by the sincerity of his convictions. More profound transformations were taking place beneath the surface of these amazing feats than most viewers could imagine.

Fakir, Jim Ward and Doug Malloy started a publication called *Piercing Fans International Quarterly*. Fakir wrote extensively on his pet "body play" subjects with photos of his own adventures and those of the handful of friends he dubbed "modern primitives" in a 1978 issue. Deemed obscene and banned in some countries, confiscated by postal customs authorities in others, PFIQ survived till 1997 when the Gauntlet was sold. (It failed under the new ownership and closed the following year.)

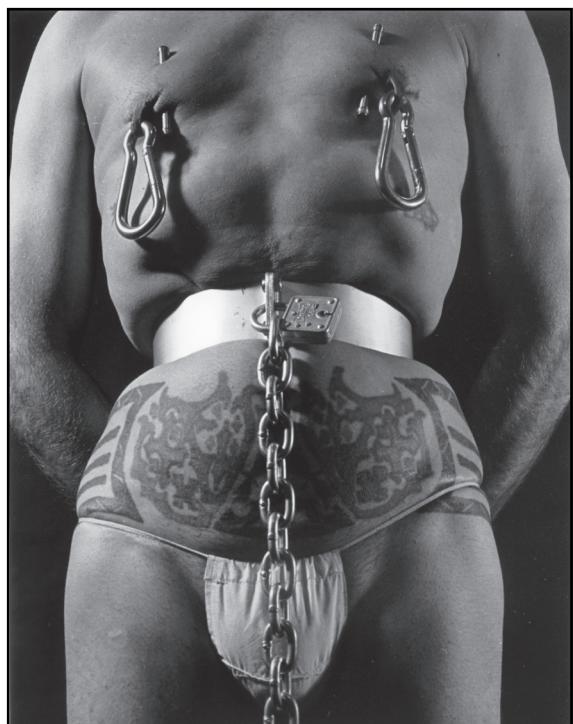
In 1981, Fakir met film producers Mark and Dan Jury, who were planning a documentary about American subcultures with anthropologist Charles Gatewood. The team wanted to include Fakir's work in the still unnamed film. In the summer of 1982, Fakir took a month off to prepare for the fulfillment of an old vision: to do a Sun Dance and Oglala style suspension (an outdoor variation of the Mandan O-Kee-Pa ritual) as close to the tribal versions as possible. He scouted remote locations and was drawn by a sense of the sacred to the Thunder Basin National Grasslands, near Devils Tower and Sun Dance, Wyoming.

Jim Ward and Fakir did the Sun Dance together: "We were joined by blood," Fakir wrote of that day. The Jurys came away with some sensitive and remarkable film. And Fakir had a third life-changing transformative experience, which he described as "a trip to and through the physical sun and out into the cosmos." It took three years to edit the film, titled *Dances Sacred and Profane*. It premiered at the Roxie theater in San Francisco in 1986, was shown in film festivals worldwide, but was too far ahead of its time to become a commercial success.

Attending the film's premiere was an acquaintance, Carla, whose nom de kink was (and is) Cléo Dubois, educator, mystic, and sometime dominatrix. She had known Fa-



"The Collar"
Self-portrait



Self-portrait



*Sun Dance and Oglala Suspension,
Photo by Charles Gatewood*

Leather Wings' (a leather offshoot of the Radical Faeries) rituals and annual Gathering.

Sexual orientation is another category, like gender, that simply made no sense when applied to Fakir. Asked if he was a gay man, he would unfailingly answer yes — but then, what was he when he was Fakiki? And when he was Roland Loomis, madly loving and devoted husband of Carla Loomis?

Sexuality only figured as one of Fakir's preoccupations because of its power to mediate inner, other-than-sensory experience. He stood comfortably astride the expanding "alternative" realms of body modification, gender exploration, and leather/BDSM, seeing a unity among them which it seems only in this new century have we begun to see ourselves. He never conformed to the über-masculine image leathermen once cultivated so assiduously, but leatherfolks always recognized in him a fellow-traveler for whom sensory experience was a vehicle to something greater, a larger Self, a spirit unbound. Many influences have shaped the evolution of leather over the last forty years; Fakir and the trends he helped to launch are among the most significant.

kir through the Society of Janus, where he was popular for his talks on Body Play, and in San Francisco's gay leather, pansexual kink, and body-modification circles. That night, watching the film "I saw him hanging by flesh hooks," Carla remembers, "and I fell in love with him in that moment." They married and remained together until his death from lung cancer on August 1st of last year (2018).

Your body belongs to you, Fakir witnessed over and over again to people, so do what you want with it! Every ecstasy, every departure from the body that contained him advanced his transformation into a technician of the sacred, which is what a shaman is. His photographs documented it all. Fakir refined his craft when he was eighteen, shooting weddings and school events. His skill in the darkroom was honed by necessity, but also by the sheer pleasure of watching images arise ghostlike from the bottom of his developing trays. Over the years, his technique kept pace with his intent. His pictures are in a lineage of male confessional photography, spanning from F. Holland Day to Robert Mapplethorpe.

But he also used his camera to record his lifelong gender explorations, beginning in his early teens. He felt assigned to no fixed spot on the gender spectrum. He loved and honored his female personae, perhaps the most public and best-loved being "Fakiki," a frequent attendee of Black



Carla and Fakir 1990 Wedding



With Annie Sprinkle
Photo by Charles Gatewood

is a guide and the bottom, or the masochist, is the one who takes the trip. But unlike the way some people practice SM, to really be a Ka-See-Ka, you're not just an operator, you're not just the manipulator, you have to go on the trip too."

In 1989, after sifting through twenty-seven hours of interviews with Fakir and several hundred of his photographs, V. Vale and Andrea Juno published *MODERN PRIMITIVES: Tattoos, Piercing, Scarification — An Investigation of Contemporary Adornment & Ritual*. Fakir had suggested the book, even the title, to them in 1982. The first print run sold out in a matter of months; it has been reprinted many times. Its impact on contemporary culture is incalculable. By the 1990s, Fakir was being invited all over the world to conduct workshops, to speak, to lead conferences.

He kicked off two new projects in 1991. First was a magazine called *BodyPlay & Modern Primitives Quarterly*. Second was a body-piercing school, to pass on what the founders of the contemporary body piercing movement had learned by trial and error. For the next nine years, the magazine documented and photographed the body modification/body ritual movement. News outlets and television came knocking at Fakir's door, not wanting to be left out. And then came the internet.

An interviewer asked him: How much does body modification have to do with sexuality? With love and belonging? "Basically all shamanic tradition is through the body-first way," Fakir responded. "[Sexual energy] builds and builds and we can go into altered states of consciousness. It's like always being on the edge of orgasm. And as the arousal level goes up, your feeling or response towards physical sensations goes down. You don't experience pain in the same way."

"A society that functions by trying to make things as painless and as comfortable as possible might be missing the boat because a lot of what we're here to learn in life may be locked away. There are people who realize the value of hardship and people who climb up cliffs. There's a validity in doing this other than getting up the wall. I can't speak too authentically on what goes on and what went on in these so-called primitive cultures. Remember, there aren't many left and most of the things that I used as role-models no longer existed when I found them."

"What we do know is that when young men were initiated, usually each one had a guide, a mentor, a Ka-See-Ka. I liken that to SM. We have a sadist and a masochist, we have a top and a bottom. Under the best conditions, this gets to be a shamanic trip and the top



"The Bird" with Cleo Dubois
Photo by Michael Rosen



Leather Family, Folsom 2013.
Photo by Mark I. Chester

By the turn of the millennium, Fakir knew that what he had started was not just a fad. But as the practices he pioneered spread rapidly through the culture, it pained him to see them diluted and diffused. What he had done with Jim Ward as a spiritual ritual in Wyoming devolved into a novelty, something to amuse a crowd in a night club, a carnival act designed for shock and awe.

To counteract this trend, Fakir focused his energies on education and the training of protégés to carry the torch. He gathered together a core group of devoted instructors to pass on the techniques, common sense principles and spiritual aspects of the body piercing and body branding. He established the institution known as "Fakir Intensives," organized and self-sustaining even if Fakir himself is no longer there to guide it.

Perhaps his crowning educational innovation was his "Spirit + Flesh" workshops. These day-long events include background on the cultural origins of the rituals, contemporary adaptation, spiritual intent, physical exercises, psychic purification and invocation, and the ritual dance itself, with tribal drumming. "Spirit + Flesh" workshops continue to be held. The torch has been passed. And since his death, Fakir's archives have found a home in the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley.

"Why was I obsessed to modify my body?" Fakir wrote. "In retrospect, probably for the same reasons early explorers risked the hazards of sailing uncharted seas, seeking rewards of some kind, treasure or knowledge. In my journey I sought to explore the seas of consciousness, my own inner self. The most personal and accessible vehicle was my own body."

"Body is the Door to Spirit!"



Photo by Mark I. Chester



Photo by Mark I. Chester



Photo taken by Cleo Dubois, 2014



Fakir and Cleo, Folsom 2007.
Photo by Mark L. Chester

SOURCES

Bean, Joseph W. "Magical Masochist: A Conversation with Fakir Musafar." 303-319 in *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice*, edited by Mark Thompson. Boston: Alyson Publications. 1991.

Leland Carina, "Interview with Cléo Dubois." *Leatherati*, September 19, 2012. <https://leatherati.com/interview-with-cleo-dubois-7aff0720b012>

Mike Featherstone, editor, *Body Modification*, London: Sage Publications. 2000.

Fakir Musafar, introduction by Mark Thompson, *SPIRIT + FLESH*, Arena Editions, 2002.

Fakir Musafar, "Epilogue. Body Play: My Journey," in *Bodies Under Siege: Self-Mutilation, Non-Suicidal Self-Injury, and Body Modification in Culture and Psychiatry* by Armando Favazza, M.D., The Johns Hopkins University Press, 3rd edition, 2011.

Musafar, Fakir, V. Vale, and Andrea Juno. "Fakir Musafar [Interview]." 6-24 in *Modern Primitives*, edited by V. Vale and Andrea Juno. San Francisco, CA: Re Search Publications. 1989.

Rebecca McClen Novick and David Jay Brown. *Voices from the Edge: Conversations with Jerry Garcia, Ram Dass, Annie Sprinkle, Matthew Fox, Jaron Lanier & Others*. Brainchild Productions, 2013.*

Daniel E. Slotnick. "Fakir Musafar, Whose 'Body Play' Went to Extremes, Dies at 87." *New York Times*, August 13, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/13/obituaries/fakir-musafar-whose-body-play-went-to-extremes-dies-at-87.html>

Carolyn Zinko. "Couple Brought Bondage and Body Piercing Out of the Dark." *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 22, 2017.

*edited and condensed for clarity

Leather Archives & Museum

The LA&M is one of the most significant accomplishments of the late 20th century movement for the rights, dignity, improved status, and self-acceptance of the leather and kink populations. Although formally established in the early 1990s by Chuck Renslow (LHOF 2009) and Tony DeBlase (LHOF 2010), the idea of a repository for the history of leather had been percolating for many years. As is often the case, what seemingly appeared overnight had been contemplated for decades.

As recently as the 1970's, collecting, compiling, and documenting leather history was a more or less unthinkable project, in part as a consequence of the pervasive stigmatization of the community and its assortment of sexual practices. This general disreputability was largely responsible for the way knowledge about these sexualities and its practitioners was produced and circulated. Because many individuals involved in leather and SM often did not consider their papers, art, literature, and artifacts to be worth preserving, much primary source material was discarded. In scholarly literature, since SM and fetishism were classified as psychological disorders, these were mainly addressed in the psychiatric literature. At the popular level, most writing about leather, SM, and fetishism was published as porn. There were rare exceptions, such as William Carney's *The Real Thing*, published in 1968 by a mainstream press, and *The Story of Harold*, published in 1974 by Terry Andrews (a pseudonym for a very successful, award-winning, author of children's literature who recounts the sexual adventures of an... author of children's literature!). Some key texts were produced by publishing houses situated in a kind of netherworld between pornography and avant-garde literature. Pauline Réage's *Story of O*, then one of the most notable works of (predominantly) heterosexual SM erotica, appeared in English and in French in 1954. The English translation was published by Olympia Press, whose catalog included Nabokov's *Lolita*. Grove Press, which published a new translation of *Story of O* in 1965, also published Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. In 1972, the Olympia Press would go on to publish *The Leatherman's Handbook*, by Larry Townsend [LHOF 2016], albeit in their pulp porn imprint, the Traveller's Companion Series. However, even the fiction of Phil Andros (Sam Steward, LHOF 2012), extremely well honed and filled with erudite literary references, was produced and marketed as porn. So was *Drummer*, the most significant of the leather magazines.



One of the largest impediments to developing any sort of credible leather history was the scarcity of primary source material. With few exceptions, such as the Kinsey Institute, the kinds of research libraries and archives that make serious historical work possible did not collect leather and SM materials.

During the 1970s, new kinds of organizations such as The Eulenspiegel Society (LHOF 2011), the Society of Janus (LHOF 2018), and Samois (LHOF 2019) emerged, with increased attention to SM and leather knowledge and education. In 1982, New York's GMSMA (Gay Male SM Activists) hosted a panel on SM in New York City in the 1950s. This panel discussion featured some of the founders of the New York leather scene, including Bob Milne (LHOF 2011). Other key founders, including Frank Olson and Don Morrison (LHOF 2010), were in the audience. The program was recorded and transcribed, and remains an invaluable document of early leather life in the US. That same year, a GMSMA program featured Louis Weingarten speaking on the history of SM art and leather artists. From 1976-1980, Weingarten ran Stompers, a boot store and leather art gallery in New York's Greenwich Village. Weingarten's knowledge of leather art was encyclopedic, and the gallery was leading a resurgence of interest and visibility of gay male leather art in the late 1970s. Stompers hosted some of the earliest exhibits of artists such as Tom of Finland, Steve Masters, Kenneth Anger, Quaintance, Blade, Colt, Brick, Rex, Olaf, Domino, Brick, Lou Rudolph, and Etienne.



Chuck Renslow (LHOF 2009) and Joanne Gaddy, former Administrative Secretary for the LA&M, and known as "Mistress of IML" during the 10 years that she ran the IML's on-site office.



The entrance of 6418 N. Greenview Ave. in Chicago
Home to the LA&M since 1999

Despite these few programs and exhibits such as those at Stompers, the primary source material for knowledge of the leather past – documents, art, and artifacts - was sparse and largely inaccessible. Most of what did exist was in private hands. Although some art graced the walls of private homes, much documentation was stored away in garages, attics, trunks, and dresser drawers. And that was just what people had kept. A lot of irreplaceable documentation had already been discarded, or was considered an embarrassment to be kept out of sight.



Jakob VanLammeren, who, in 2013, became the first LA&M archivist and collections librarian

the first was the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA), inaugurated in 1974, and housed for many years in the New York City apartment of Joan Nestle and Deb Edel. In 1985, the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Historical Society (GLBTHS) was founded in San Francisco by local researchers who had been accumulating source material founded — including one who was doing dissertation research on gay male leather in San Francisco and is a co-author of this biography.

Research on leather histories was even more challenging than work on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered populations. SM was severely stigmatized and extremely controversial even in GLBT contexts. There were fewer collections of primary documentation. Moreover, much of the history of leather social events then was recorded in objects, such as commemorative pins from motorcycle runs, matchbooks from leather bars, and, during the early heyday of fisting, emery boards advertising events, places, and publications. There were important publications, such as *Drummer*, *DungeoMaster* and *PFIQ*, but these were not generally available in libraries.

Although the early GLBT archival institutions were underfunded, poorly housed, and extremely unstable, they provided a role model for the embryonic collections of leather and SM research materials. It was clear that if these communities did not collect and preserve their own source materials, no

This situation was not an unfamiliar one for researchers working on gay and lesbian histories. Like sadomasochism and fetishism, lesbianism and male homosexuality had long been classified as psychiatric problems, so most of the scholarly literature consisted of medical texts on the diagnosis and treatment of these ostensible “diseases.” There were also pornography, pulp fiction, and some serious literature. The homophile, gay liberation, and lesbian feminist movements had all engaged in major efforts to assemble libraries and archival source materials. By the 1970s, activists began to establish rudimentary institutions in which to house such community-based collections of documents, art, and artifacts. One of



Chuck Renslow and Tony DeBlase



At the LA&M. Standing from left to right:
Queen Cougar, Thom Domkowski, Vi Johnson, & Marcus
Hernandez aka Mister Marcus. Front: Jill Carter

one else would. It was equally clear that it was not enough for individuals to undertake the work of accumulation. Durable institutions were required to guarantee the long-term survival, preservation, and usability of such collections. Furthermore, such institutions would require money: for operating funds, buildings, supplies, and staff. It became increasingly apparent that Leather needed its own community-based archives, similar to those that had begun to spring up for LGBT collections. Among the early agitators were Tony (Anthony F.) DeBlase (Leather Hall of Fame 2010), who was the publisher and editor of Drummer, and Gayle Rubin.

Tony DeBlase was a leather visionary, whose many accomplishments included the introduction of the leather pride flag and the establishment of leather pride week in San Francisco. Tony had a PhD in mammalogy, with a specialty in bats. He had co-authored *A Manual of Mammalogy*, and his book *The Bats of Iran* was published by the Field Museum of Natural History. Tony had worked in natural history museums as a graduate student and was employed by the Field Museum in Chicago after acquiring his doctorate. He understood the importance of research collections as well as the practical aspects of their management: cataloguing, storage, and access. He also thought deeply about leather knowledge and its transmission.

When Tony began to actively pursue his interests in SM and leather, he turned his well-honed scholarly habits to an intensive study of SM practice, ethics, and technique. And once he acquired considerable expertise, he began a long career of teaching those skills. He came up with the idea of the "SandMutopia University," a fantasy college of all things kinky. He conducted and organized countless workshops and classes, and began to publish *DungeonMaster*, envisioned as a kind of professional technical journal of sadomasochism. In 1986, Tony and his partner Andy Charles bought *Drummer* magazine.

That same year, a feisty group of activists in Seattle founded the National Leather Association (NLA). The NLA kicked off a new era of national leather political and social mobilization. Through



Archives Room



Two visitors in the Teri Rose Memorial Library

its "Living in Leather" weekends, the NLA pioneered the format of the "leather conference," with workshops, plenary sessions, and dungeon parties. Such conferences – later dubbed "leatherathons" – were something new. There were of course SM educational groups, but these were mostly local and generally held meetings once or twice a month. The gay motorcycle clubs sponsored weekend bike runs featuring socializing, entertainment, and plenty of partying. And there was the Chicago Hellfire Club's legendary annual Inferno. But Inferno was by invitation only, was restricted to men, and the educational workshops (of which DeBlase was also a major organizer) were

adjuncts to the main event, the elaborate dungeon party. By contrast, anyone could register for Living in Leather, which was open to both men and women, and whose workshops were as important as the parties.

DeBlase began to actively promote the NLA in the pages of *Drummer* and to actively participate in the organization. At the third Living in Leather (Portland, 1988), he joined Geoff Mains, Sheree Rose and Rubin for a panel on the "History of Leather/SM Organizations. The description read: "What are the historic roots of our current organizations? Who were the founders, what were the goals then, and have they been achieved?"

The emergence of the NLA did not go unchallenged. Regional rivalries quickly surfaced, and the competition for leadership of the emerging national leather constituency led to the acrimonious meeting in Dallas, Texas, in the winter of 1988. Much of the conflict in Dallas consisted of a debate over what entity could represent the national leather population: the already existing NLA, or a new organization proposed by GMSMA. Instead of supporting either the NLA or the GMSMA plan, the Dallas meeting produced another organization, dubbed SSCA (Safe Sane Consensual Adults). The SSCA was doomed from the outset. Its structure was an attempt at a compromise of the competing visions, but the result was a clumsy hybrid that pleased no one. With the eventual collapse of the com-



At the Grand Opening of the LA&M

promise, SSCA was absorbed into the NLA.

However, SSCA had formalized a statement of purpose that included an explicit commitment to leather history, and this goal was injected into the official program of the NLA. Back in Dallas, when it became evident that a new leather organization was going to be formed, a group including Rubin and DeBlase was sitting in a Denny's trying to salvage the situation and preserve the hope of national leather political unity. They drafted a statement of principles for what became SSCA, and it read as follows:

This organization is dedicated to the following purposes: To help build, strengthen and defend those groups and individuals involved in SM, Leather, and other fetishes; to promote the right of adults to engage in all safe, sane, and consensual erotic activities; to promote increased communication and cooperation among our organizations, individuals, and businesses everywhere; to promote education about safe, sane, and consensual behavior within our own communities; to convey an accurate, positive image of our interests and lifestyles; to unite against threats to our freedom of expression, our right to free association, and our right to equal protection under the law; and to preserve a record of our history, traditions, and culture (emphasis added).

When SSCA was incorporated into the NLA, so was much of this language. The clause on leather history was included verbatim in the NLA International statement of purpose, and so the preservation of leather history had become a formal item on the national leather agenda. By 1991, DeBlase and Rubin had been elected to the Executive Committee of the NLA where they attempted to operationalize that history clause. And although the NLA did not ultimately form an archival institution, it did play a critical role in the process that led to the Leather Archives & Museum.

Tony DeBlase coordinated the educational programs for NLA's Living in Leather VI, held in Chicago in October 1991. He arranged a workshop called "Preserving Our Leather Past," appointing Rubin as chair and rounding out the panel with Woody Bebout, that year's Mr. Drummer, and Chuck Renslow, whose own career made him one of the most consequential leather figures in the 20th century. The workshop description read: "A re-



Mister Marcus with Thom Dombkovski
in the Archives Room



Chuck Renslow setting the
mortgage on fire at the Mortgage
Burning event, 2004.



The Archives Room

port on the need for, and the movement towards, preserving a record of our past and the establishment of a national Leather Archive. Thoughts on the preparation of wills and other methods of seeing that historically important documents, works of art, and other items are preserved.”

Tony must have known that Renslow had, two months earlier in August 1991, quietly filed incorporation papers for a “National Gay and Lesbian Archives” in the state of Illinois. Tony undoubtedly favored a more focused “leather archives” and used the occasion of that workshop panel to shift Renslow’s objectives. So it was that Renslow announced, from the stage of IML, in 1992, the formation of the Leather Archives and Museum. By July of 1992, the incorporation papers were amended to reflect the new name and new scope of the institution. Renslow and DeBlase began to assemble the first Board of Directors, which included Gayle Rubin, Barry Johnson, Albert Kraus, Gary Chichester, and Judy Tallwing-McCarthy.

During the early 1990s the LA&M was still an “idea struggling to take form.” In the decades since, that struggle has produced a permanent building, a stable operating budget, and paid staff. Many people have made these accomplishments possible: countless staff, volunteers, donors, board members, and fundraisers. Initially, Renslow and DeBlase kept the idea afloat and helped the LA&M grow. Renslow provided most of the organizational stability, operational funding, and the first physical location: a storefront adjoining his bathhouse, Man’s Country. DeBlase applied his professorial background to developing the collections, and used his publications and considerable reputation to cultivate community support. In addition, he ultimately brought Joseph Bean to the organization.



A Board retreat, 2000.

Bean was an accomplished artist and writer when Tony hired him in 1989 to edit Drummer and its affiliated leather publications. After Drummer was sold, Bean became the manager of Mr. S Leather in San Francisco. Joseph subsequently edited International Leatherman and its group of leather and bear magazines. When that business foundered and Joseph became available, Tony and Chuck jumped on the chance to hire him as the LA&M’s first executive director in 1997. Bean brought to the Archives a formidable set of skills and a reservoir of contacts developed through nearly a decade in high-level leather managerial



An exhibition at the LA&M

was inaugurated. There were many milestones during Storer's administration, but two deserve special mention. Renslow had often talked about the importance of owning your own space in order to be sustainable, and in 2004 he and Storer led a fundraising campaign to pay off the building's mortgage. In 2013, Jakob VanLammeren became the first full-time professional archivist hired to manage the expanding and increasingly significant collections of documents, art, and artifacts.

2017 was a year of significant changes for the Leather Archives & Museum. In the spring, Storer announced his departure from the LA&M, after 15 successful years of significant growth in the organization. Renslow passed away in June of that same year. The loss of Renslow, while not unexpected, was a big adjustment for the LA&M as Renslow had been its fiercest champion since its beginning. His busi-



Rick Storer, executive director of the LA&M from 2002 to 2017 (right) with his husband Jeffrey Storer, Operations Manager from 2003 to 2017.

positions. In 1999, along with Renslow and DeBlase, Bean was instrumental in moving the LA&M to its current home in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago.

After Bean retired in 2002, longtime volunteer Rick Storer became the second executive director. The LA&M continued to grow under his leadership. Its budget increased, as did its visibility. The gallery space was enlarged and more exhibits were installed. Storer worked to professionalize the LA&M as a research institution by cultivating relationships with academics, and by making the collections more accessible. During his tenure, a program to fund visiting scholars



Tony DeBlase and Chuck Renslow



The leathers of Jim Kane (LHOF 2016)

Executive Director and selected Gary Wasdin, a co-author of this piece, to lead the organization. Gary brought a formidable portfolio and new perspectives as a librarian and library administrator. He has also been active in fundraising, outreach, identifying potential areas for growth, and continuing the great work of his predecessors.

No one should underestimate what a stunning achievement the LA&M is, and how much effort has gone into establishing it. Building institutions is no small task, and building stable institutions out of marginal sexual communities is nearly impossible. Due to the commitment and hard work of countless individuals and organizations, the LA&M houses irreplaceable records of leather histories and cultures. A small sample of the notable collections includes individuals such as Tony DeBlase, Chuck Renslow, Coulter Thomas, Fakir Musafar, Glenda Rider, Sarah Humble, Guy Baldwin, Jack McGeorge, Jan Hall, Jim Kane, Joseph Bean, Justin Tanis, Leonard Dworkin, Michele Buchanan, Midori, Joanne Gaddy, Peter Fiske, Philip Rubin, Robert Davolt, Robert Guenther,

business acumen and sheer determination had been a driving force in bringing the Archives into existence and sustaining it for over a quarter of a century. However, Renslow did his best to assure that the organization would continue to thrive by assembling a Board of Directors who were dedicated to the LA&M's future, and by the creation of the Renslow Charitable Trust, which would ensure that the annual International Mr. Leather contest would continue to support the work of the archives well into the future.

The LA&M continues to develop as a professional research organization. VanLammeren did major work to process and professionalize the collections, improving access and setting new standards for storage and care. After his departure in 2016, archivist Mel Leverich joined the LA&M. Leverich has continued the critical work of professionalizing practices, putting the collections catalog online, and making the holdings more accessible to artists and researchers. In addition, Leslie Anderson was hired, bringing her skills in museum conservation to care for and preserve the leather collections. In late 2017, the board conducted a national search to find a new Executive Director and selected Gary Wasdin, a co-author of this piece, to lead the organization.



An exhibition dedicated to transgender leather folks.

Sailor Syd, Spencer Bergstedt, Susan Wright, Vi Johnson, and Wally Wallace. There are key organizations such as the Tar Heel Leather Club, Conversio Virium, the Chicago Hellfire Club (CHC), Folsom Street Events, Gay Male SM Activists (GMSMA), the National Leather Association (NLA), International Mr. Leather, International Ms. Leather, the Lure, the Society of Janus, the Exiles, the Empire City Motorcycle Club, the Thunderbolts MC, and Womanlink. There are many publications and artists represented, including Drummer, Bound and Gagged, Black Leather in Color, Chuck Arnett, Dom Orejudos, Steve Masters, and David Levinthal. There is an irreplaceable collection of oral histories instigated by Chuck Renslow and conducted by Jack Rinella. The LA&M maintains a library of over 7000 books and periodicals related to leather, kink and fetishism. It has a large auditorium for events and meetings, and hosts year-round exhibits that display many aspects of BDSM and leather life.

The LA&M has become a central institution of the leather and kink populations. It is an indispensable resource for all of those who share common experiences of leather, kink, and BDSM, despite the many different ways of naming them. The Leather Archives & Museum provides a permanent repository for the kinds of materials that would once have deteriorated in garages, been forgotten in attics, or would be consigned to dumpsters for lack of awareness of their historical and cultural significance. As these collections accumulate, they form the foundations necessary for in-depth, reliable, and detailed research into leather histories, cultures, individuals, and institutions. Without documentary and artifactual evidence, leather history would mostly consist of leather legends: sometimes satisfying narratives, but unverifiable and often misleading. Communities that fail to preserve their records cannot even know what they have lost. The LA&M is a crucial institution for safeguarding leather pasts, providing knowledge of the leather present, and for anticipating leather futures.



An exhibition featuring International Mr. Leather



The preservation of historically significant fetish gear is one of the missions of the LA&M.

SOURCES

VanLammeren, Jakob and Jose Santiago Perez. Leather Archives & Museum: 25 Years 1991-2016. Chicago: Leather Archives & Museum. 2016

THANK YOU

The Leather Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony & Brunch

Acknowledgements

Founder & Executive Director

Bob Miller

Managing Director & Editor

Rostom Mesli

Lead Academic Advisor

Gayle Rubin

Inductee Biographies

SAMOIS

Rostom Mesli

Fakir Musafar

Patrick J. Mulcahey

Leather Archives & Museum

Gayle Rubin & Gary Wasdin

With the contributions of

Robert Bienvenu,

Cléo Dubois,

Gayle Rubin,

Aunt Sadie,

Jim Vopat,

& Laura

For their assistance with the photographs,
the LHF thanks Guy Baldwin, Mark I. Chester,
Cléo Dubois, Joanne Gaddy, Viola Johnson, Mel Leverich,
Michael Rosen, Gayle Rubin, Janet Ryan.

The Leather Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony & Brunch

Induction Ceremony Presenters

SAMOIS

Tyesha Nicole Best

Fakir Musafar

Danielle & Skyler Hergenrader

Leather Archives & Museum

Robert Bienvenu

Recipients

For SAMOIS

Gayle Rubin, cofounder

On behalf of Fakir

his beloved wife, Cléo Dubois

For LA&M

Gary Wasdin, Executive Director

Induction Ceremony Emcees

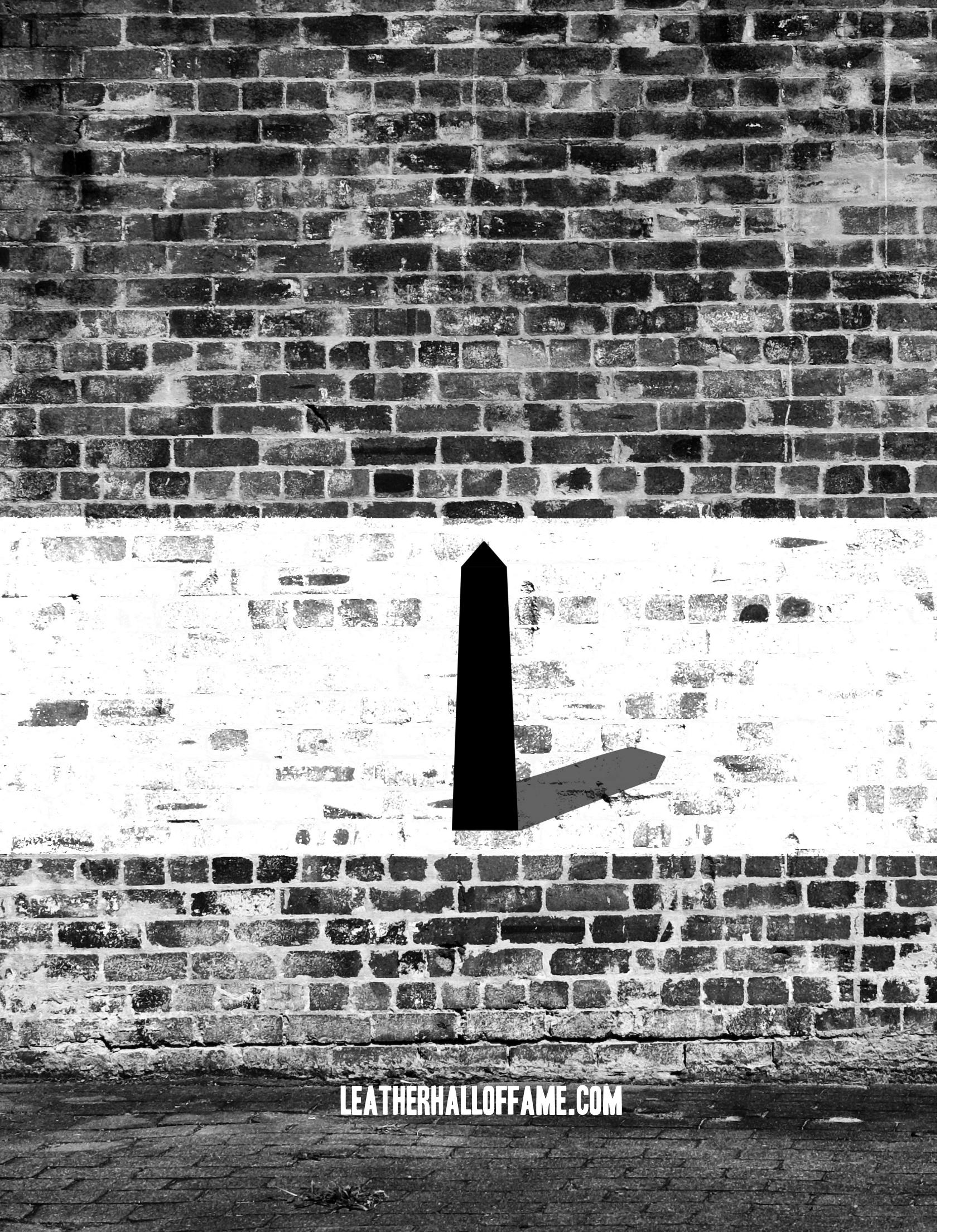
Issa Arden and Ralph Bruneau

LHOF Website

One Web Company

LHOF Logo

Jon Stoa



LEATHERHALLOFFAME.COM