



# LEATHER HALL OF FAME 2022 INDUCTION CEREMONY BIOGRAPHIES & PRESENTATIONS



WESTIN BONAVENTURE HOTEL  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
NOVEMBER 27, 2022

# 2022



**Prior Inductees**

**2009**  
Charles Renslow  
Tom of Finland  
John Willie

**2010**  
Tony DeBlase  
Don Morrison & Frank Olson  
Satyrs MC

**2011**  
Leonard Burtman  
Eulenspiegel Society  
Bob Milne

**2012**  
Guy Baldwin  
Irving Klaw  
Sam Steward

**2013**  
Mistress Monique Von Cleef  
Alan Selby  
Dom Orejudos

**2014**  
Chicago Hellfire Club  
Cynthia Slater  
John Embry

**2015**  
Felix Jones  
Jeanne C. Barney  
Pat Bond & Terry Kolb

**2016**  
Larry Townsend  
Jim Stewart  
James (Jim) Kane

**2017**  
Durk Dehner  
Peter Fiske  
MSC Hamburg

**2018**  
International Mr. Leather  
The Society of Janus  
Black Leather... In Color

**2019**  
Samois  
Fakir Musafar  
Leather Archives & Museum

**2020**  
MLC Munich  
Jim Ward  
Pauline Reage

**2021**  
SM Gays  
Jack Jackson  
Jack McGeorge



**The Leather Hall of Fame  
Induction Ceremony & Brunch**

**Location:**

Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles  
San Diego Ballroom  
Sunday November 27th, 2022  
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Brunch  
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Ceremony

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**LHOF Mission:**

*Recognizing individuals and groups of people who made substantial contributions to leather/BDSM/fetish communities, and informing and educating the world about their stories.*

leatherhalloffame.com

## Induction Ceremony

Sunday November 27th, 2022  
Westin Bonaventure Hotel  
Los Angeles, California

### Masters of Ceremony

Race Bannon  
Rostom Mesli

### Rex

Presenter  
Guy Baldwin

Recipient  
Durk Dehner

### SGSMA

Presenter  
Robert Bienvenu

Recipient  
Ted Heaney

### The 15

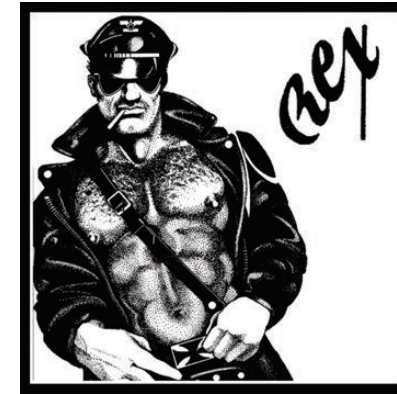
Presenters  
Danny Thành Nguêyn  
Austin "Whisper"

Recipients  
Peter Fiske  
Christopher Wood  
Jon Bumgarner

## REX

### In Lieu of a biography

REX is without question one of the most influential artists on the visual representations of gay male kink and leather in the post-Stonewall era — the period of dramatic institutional expansion, unapologetic self-affirmation, and exhilarating exploration that the AIDS epidemic will bring to an abrupt halt.



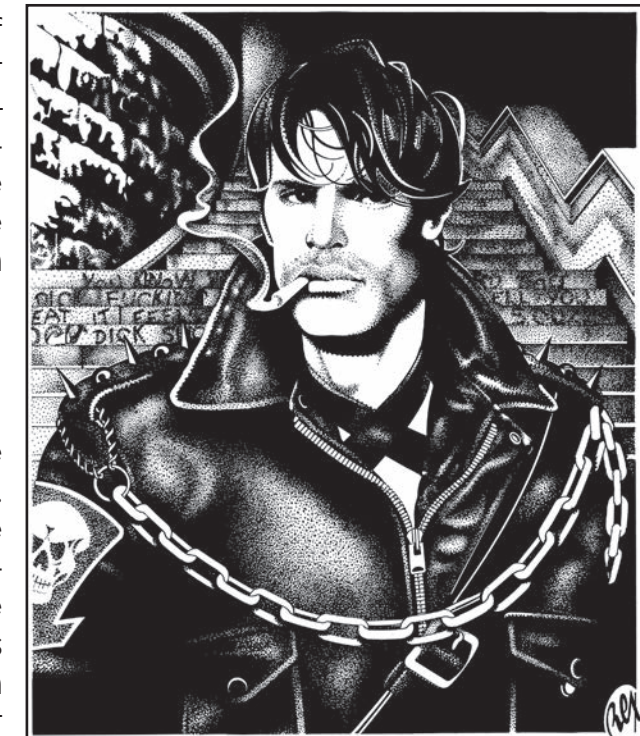
Put differently: after the generation of artists of the era of "classic leather" — Tom of Finland, of course, and Dom Orejudos aka Étienne, but also, often forgotten now though no less influential then: Steve Masters aka Mike Miksche, George Quaintance, or Chuck Arnett — he is part of the group of artists who will define the iconography of what might be termed "the golden age of leather" — with people like Bill Ward or Martin of Holland as well as The Hun or Al Shapiro.

He may well, in fact, be *the* most prominent of all.

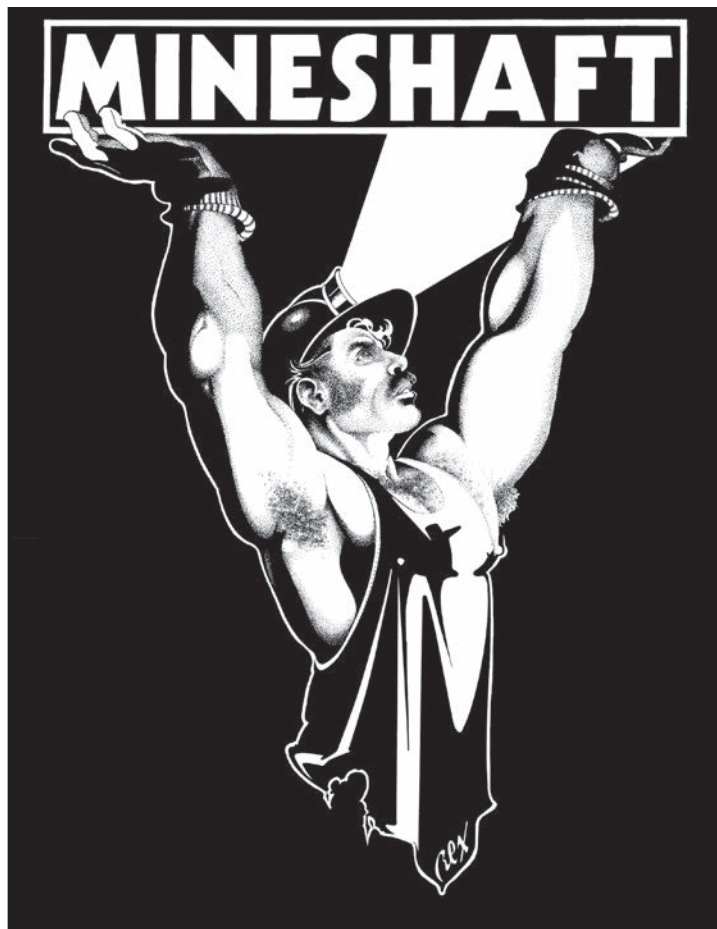
In unison with his generation, in his drawings, REX celebrates not just masculinity, leather, uniforms, rough sex and big dicks, but also — overtly, unapologetically — the joys of orgies and bathhouses, sexual exploration, and extreme, wild and kinky sex. Unwilling to sanitize kink to make it look harmless and acceptable, he often throws into sharp relief the fantasies and fetishes most would rather keep untold — perhaps because he remembers the great lesson of the Stonewall generation: that the path toward de-stigmatization starts with naming.

*Present everywhere*

For REX's work is one with the movement for kink affirmation. Most directly, his drawings are inseparable from the burgeoning of leather institutions in the late 1970s and early 1980s. His name may not have been known by the public at large at the time, but his drawings were.



"Chain Smoking", 1990



"Mineshaft", 1976

Starting in 1977, REX contributed very regularly to *Drummer* and, through the magazine, his work was noticed and admired by kinky men on both sides of the Atlantic (see the contribution by Ad Shuring). In San Francisco, as Gayle Rubin recalls below, his art was used in the advertising of many key leather institutions, and they immediately gained an iconic status as symbols of the kinky visibility of the Folsom neighborhood. Case in point: in 1980, a bakery in South of Market was advertising in their window a cake with the "Taste of Leather" design in icing. To which REX reacted jokingly: "You really know you've arrived when you see your art work copied on a cake!" (*Drummer*, 37, p. 64).

But it is through his association with the Mineshaft in New York City — without question the most notorious and legendary SM sex club in the world at the time and perhaps even since — that REX's work gained the most visibility. In 1976, manager Wally Wallace commissioned him to design a poster for the club. A hot, muscular, hairy man wearing a miner's cap and holding the club's logo be-

came its symbol. The poster was an instant classic. It immediately became a collector that patrons wanted to own. REX was now the House artist for the Mineshaft and thousands of copies were printed. A T-shirt followed. Over the years, three posters and T-shirts were designed by REX for the Mineshaft. They were sold exclusively at the club. And they sold in the tens of thousands, bought by people from all over the world.

The legend of the Mineshaft is inseparable from these three drawings. In 1978, throughout the video-clip of Queen's "Don't Stop Me Now," a song that combines images of ecstatic fun, speed and limitless power, Freddie Mercury is wearing one of those Mineshaft T-shirts. Throughout the years, the video-clip will be seen by millions, if not billions, over the world. A couple years later, in the infamous Cruising, the posters also appear in the decors built to replicate the atmosphere of the Mineshaft.

#### *Obscure beginnings*

The popularity and visibility of REX's drawings stand in sharp contrast with the humble and obscure beginnings of his career. REX was born in 1942, and was abandoned at birth. He grew up an adopted kid in the rural Northeast. Sometime in his teens, he fled from what seems to have been an extremely oppressive milieu and, in the mid- to late-1950s, the smalltown boy had turned into a runaway kid in the streets of New York City. There, a famous fashion designer noticed him, took him to his Manhattan penthouse, and kept him for 3 years: during that

time, he paid for his education at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School which had recently been renamed School of Visual Arts, and sent him to London and Paris to start a career in fashion illustration and commercial art.

In Europe, thanks to the introduction of his benefactor who believed in his talent, REX was introduced in the luxurious world of fashion designers, models, publishers, and fancy cocktail parties. He did not take to it. Instead, he developed an abiding hatred for a world he viewed as artifice, superficiality, and pure appearances. He did, however, enjoy spending long hours walking through European museums. He had a passion for the Italian, 16th century painter, Caravaggio.

While he loathed the glossy world of fashion, REX reveled in the gutter. In Paris, he discovered the pissotières, the public urinals, haunted by anonymous men who, without regard for social status, looks, sexual orientations, or other hierarchies, worshipped the same god. Is that the source of his fetish for uncut dicks? The story does not tell.... In any case, he experienced returning to the streets of New York City as a liberation. He held several jobs for the MAFIA, including boxing club manager. At some point, in a magazine shop on 8th street, he had the decisive encounter of his life: the drawings of Tom of Finland jumped at him. He never recovered.

Now, REX had found his calling. A few months later, he returned to the same shop to show some art of his own. The owner sent him to a publisher, an Italian man who immediately knew he had the new Tom of Finland in front of him. But first thing first: he needed a name. The young man looked around him. A film was on the desk with a three-letter title. REX was born.

He started doing illustrations for the Rough Trade series. Most importantly, in October 1970, he found *The Eagle*. The energy was not unlike what he had liked in the t-rooms of Paris and London: men, workers, bikers, sweaty, dirty, masculine, rough, unconcerned with good manners, bonding in an exclusively male space. Outcasts, if not outlaws.

One day that he was working on a sketch there, somebody recognized the illustrator from the Rough Trade Series. He was asked to help with the newsletter of a biker's club. One thing led to another.

The rest is history.

#### *The house is on fire*

July 1, 1981: REX opens his fist gallery, Rexwerk, on Hallam Street, in the Folsom neighborhood of San Francisco. The bock where he lives is home to many leathermen, including leather photographer Mark. I. Chester. It once housed the Barracks, a famous bathhouse that closed in 1976 and was then being converted into a hotel.

A month earlier, on June 5, 1981, in its *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, the CDC reported the first five cases of what would soon become the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

On July 10, nine days after the gallery's opening, a construction worker started a fire from the former Barracks. 27 buildings were engulfed. The gallery was in ashes. So were also all of REX's originals.

The fire was not caused by leather people. Leather people were among its victims. And they were further victimized by the hysteria unleashed by the fire as rescuers, media, and local politicians were going through the rubble, exposing their homes and vilifying their lives, claiming to smell "burning meat," expecting to find the remains of chained subs and slaves (which, obviously, were never found).

That event, combined with the early signs of the HIV epidemic, marked the beginning of a dark period in REX's life. His work continued to appear in various outlets for a while; he did several posters for the Saint, in New York City, but he soon stopped publishing for several years.

In the early 1990s, REX returned to New York City and opened The Secret Museum, a "by appointment only" private gallery. Another tragedy would bring this experience to a close: 9/11. By 2002, he had moved back to San Francisco. Eventually, disillusioned about what he perceived as increased political correctness and a suffocating atmosphere of censorship, he moved to Amsterdam in 2010. He still resides there today.

### Visible nowhere

Trying to write REX's life beyond this very broad sketch is an impossible task. There is a lot that is not known. His birth name is not known, nor is his last name. There is no photograph of him we could attach to this tribute: for over 50 years now, REX has consistently refused to have his photograph taken. He himself discourages any attempt to find out more. Some passages allude to a founding moment that started him as an illustrator, but REX won't say anything about it.

The reasons are unclear. Early on, it may have been a way to avoid legal persecution for his works. It may also be a remnant of the code of silence from the time when he worked for the MAFIA. It may also have worked to add an aura of mystery around his works. Or it may simply be a result of an extreme shyness, a feature his friends often mention.

### "No other truths out there"

Whatever its reasons, the secrecy is a hallmark of REX's career. His closest friends point to Wikipedia as the most reliable source. There, he is quoted as saying that his drawings "defined who I became" and that there are "no other 'truths' out there."

For that reason, instead of writing the impossible biography REX never wanted us to read, in order to honor him and his legacy, we take him at his word and let the work speak for itself. Some of the writers below have known REX for many years; others have only ever known his work. All share an abiding admiration and respect for this outstanding artist. We asked them to select a drawing of REX that has a particular meaning for them, and to write a short text about it to mark his induction into the Leather Hall of Fame.

Rostom Mesli,  
Managing Director and Editor, Leather Hall of Fame

### "Folsom Man", 1978

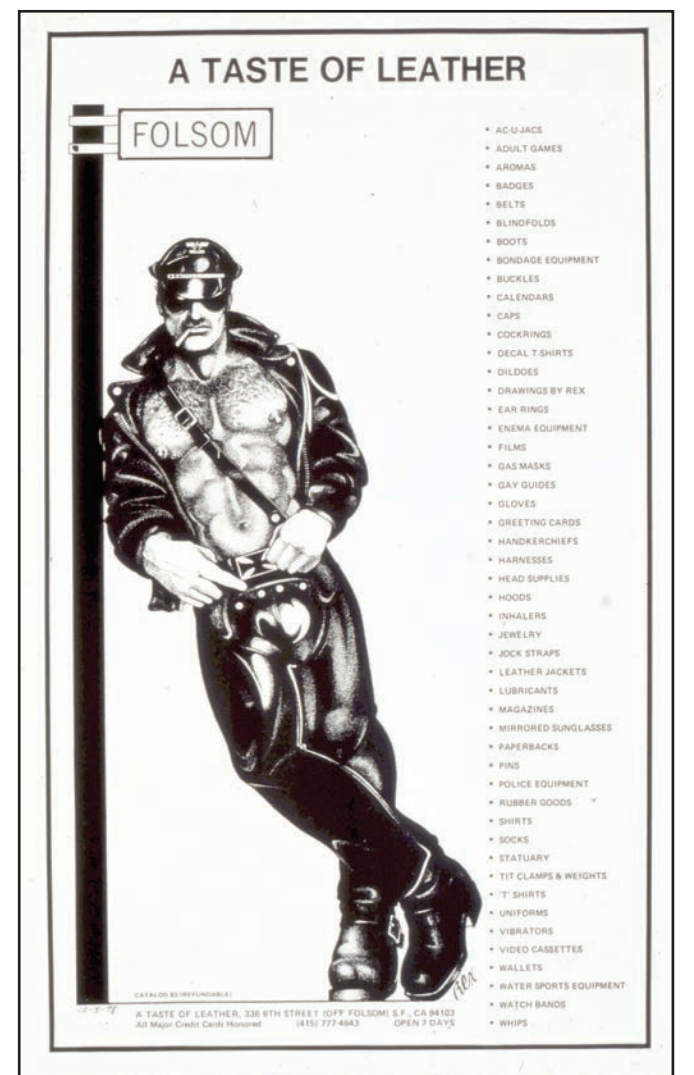
#### REX and the iconography of San Francisco Leather

REX created much of the look of San Francisco leather, especially during its heyday in the long 1970s. San Francisco leather bars and bike clubs had formed in the early 1960s. But from the late 1960s through the early 1980s, leather institutions proliferated and became a visible presence in the South of Market neighborhood, a formerly industrial and working-class residential district that was being emptied out by deindustrialization, suburbanization, and projects of urban renewal. Leather bars, sex clubs, retail shops, and bathhouses were able to take root in vacated tenements, small scale factories, and neighborhood bars and lunchrooms. Moreover, once Drummer relocated from Los Angeles to San Francisco in 1977, the local leather scene was featured in leather's major national publication.

REX's art was a major visual feature of this burgeoning community. He did illustrations for the catalog of the earliest leather shop, A Taste of Leather, and provided the imagery for the posters of several major bars. These included the Black and Blue (memorialized in Frances Fitzgerald's *Cities on a Hill*), the Brig (for many years the premiere local S&M bar), and later, the Lone Star Saloon (the first bar to focus on what was then the emerging bear subculture). REX's work was also often featured in *Drummer* itself.

But the most iconic image was a poster for A Taste of Leather: it depicted a man in full head-to toe leather regalia, from his biker cap to his heavy engineer boots. His shirtless, muscular, and hirsute torso was framed by the classic motorcycle jacket and transected by a Sam Browne strap, drawing attention to his belt and leather chaps. These framed a bulging basket, to which further notice was emphasized by the placement of his hands, with one finger pointing at his crotch.

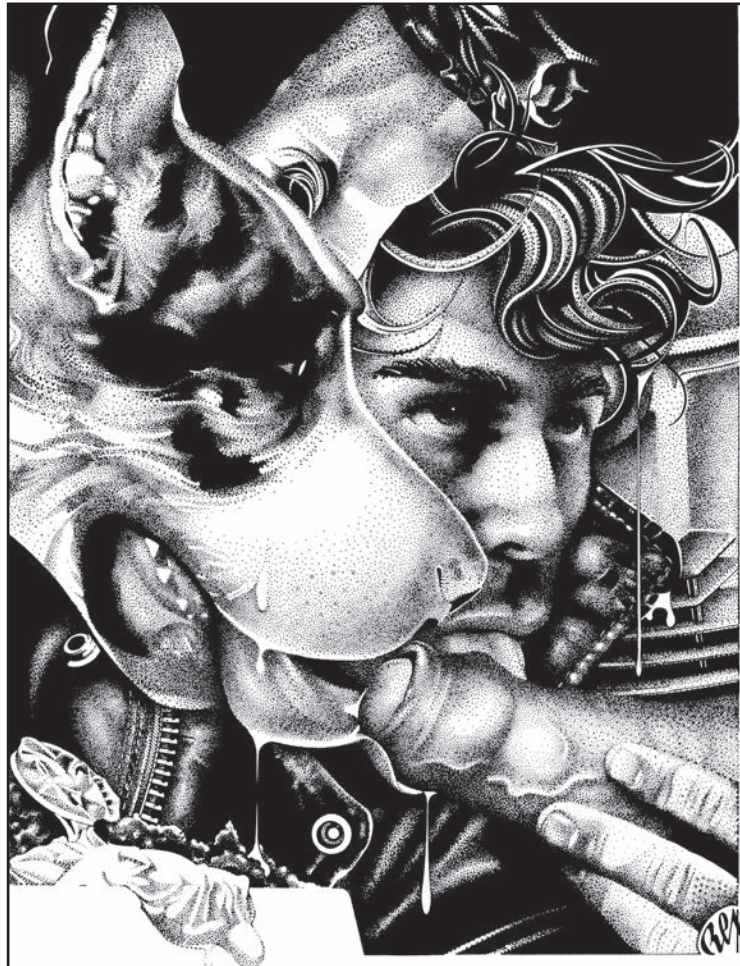
But the aspect of this image that makes it so utterly representative of San Francisco leather during this era is that he is leaning, nonchalantly, against a street sign that reads: Folsom. Folsom Street was the main boulevard of this leather occupation, so much that the leather area was often just referred to as "the Folsom." It had many nicknames, including the Miracle Mile, but that too referred to Folsom Street. Although there were leather bars and shops and sex clubs scattered around the neighborhood, most were either along Folsom Street or clustered nearby.



Folsom Man, 1978

If the Chuck Arnett mural in the Tool Box symbolized SF leather in the early 1960s, this poster by REX was the archetypical image of SF leather in the late 1970s, the period of its maximum expansion, visibility, and association with a particular neighborhood and a special street in the geography of the city.

- Gayle Rubin



"Dog Food", 1981

### "Dog Food", 1981

Around 1988, The San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery organized a show with this premise: A prominent Bay Area artist would pick another artist, who would then pick another artist, who would then pick another artist, and then all four would show one work at the gallery in Civic Center, across from City Hall. The performance and installation artist Tony Labat picked me, and then I picked REX, an artist whose work I loved and who was a star of the Gay Leather scene, but was, in my opinion, criminally ignored by the general Bay Area art world. REX in turn picked Mark I. Chester, another important Bay Area artist whose name would not have registered for most of the Art Commission's patrons.

Each of us was free to select which work we wanted to represent us in the show and while I have no memory of what I included, I'm pretty sure that this was REX's choice. If not this, he might have chosen its counterpart, where the dog and the greaser are attending to a steel toed boot while a dis-

carded jockstrap oozes a load onto the ground. In any event the picture brought the delights of one of San Francisco's most important communities into the center of its official civic life. The magic of REX's work is that it uses the precision of his compositions and the tenderness of his stippling to render his desires iconic and fascinating. The talent ensures that we can't look away, and once our gaze is held we can revel in the details that he weaves into each picture. His work is hot but never overheated, and he can make a biker piss orgy seem like the most elegant gathering on the planet.

The opening of the Arts Commission show was the first and only time we've ever met, but I'm grateful for all his drawings have taught me in the years before and since.

- Nayland Blake

### "ICONS", 1977

I first discovered REX on a play date. I was at a fist buddy's house and was looking through the books on his coffee table while he was finishing cleaning out. There it was. Icons: Drawings by REX. A dirty, raunchy collection of black and white images that immediately piqued my interest. As I skimmed through the pages, I saw men smoking, big hairy muscle asses, young boys, daddies, and dogs . . . each page with the name REX printed in the corner. The boy came out of the shower, and I unfortunately had to put the book down. But the name REX stayed with me, and his images were immediately burned into my mind.

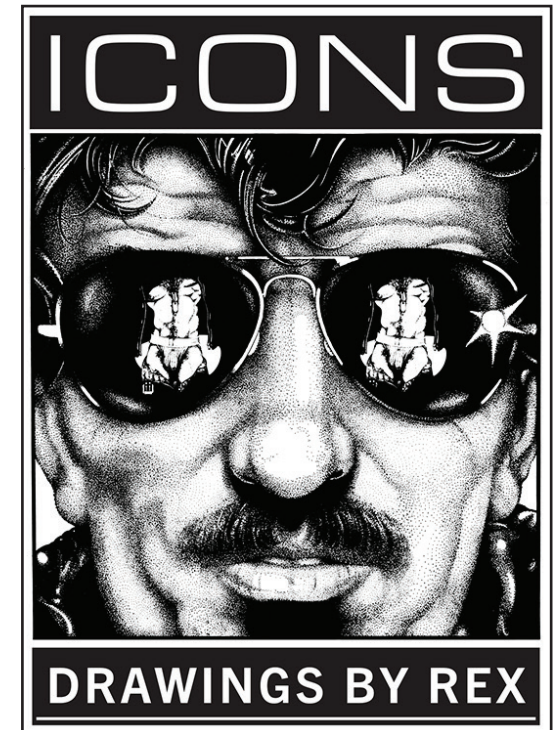
I started to notice more and more of REX's work around the city: in bars, in homes, and at Auto Erotica, a local store I frequent in the Castro that sells, as its name denotes, erotic art. Despite researching REX online, I was never able to find that book or much of his work available for sale. Perhaps it was out of print. Was REX a name, a set of initials, an acronym, or something else? I discovered that REX was a pseudonym chosen because it was non-specific and non-traceable by the police in a time where gay art at of this nature was criminalized. The sex was not legal; the art depicting it was not either. Despite laws and cultural attitudes changing, REX chose to remain in the background to let his art speak for itself, which to me it most certainly does.

At Auto Erotica, I encountered the largest collection of REXwerk that I have ever seen in person. It was here that I started to collect different pieces of his art: a couple postcards, a handful of prints, and a poster that REX designed for The Caldron, a local San Francisco fisting club. I also found one of my favorite REX prints to date. The print features a jock-strapped man standing over a boy pissing down his neck and back. The man's ass is covered in fur and his dick is uncut and leaking. You can practically smell the raunch through the image. As someone that is incredibly scent motivated, I find REX's work to be particularly arousing. In the print, you don't see either the boy or the man's face. The only identifying feature of the boy is a tattoo of a bat, a feature which I also identify with.

I love the raunchiness and the exhibitionism. Put simply, REX's images get my dick hard and my hormone monster raging. His decision to use different shades of black masterfully mirrors the darkness in the sexual scenes he depicts. There is a sense of moral ambiguity inherent in most of his work. Are these scenes depicted consensual? Are these men father and son? Wow, that's a big dog!

I love REX's work, enough to want to get it tattooed. I once tracked his email down and reached out, but he has since stopped taking commissions. I still keep an eye out for his books, hoping to find some for his work to add to my collection.

- Stephan Ferris

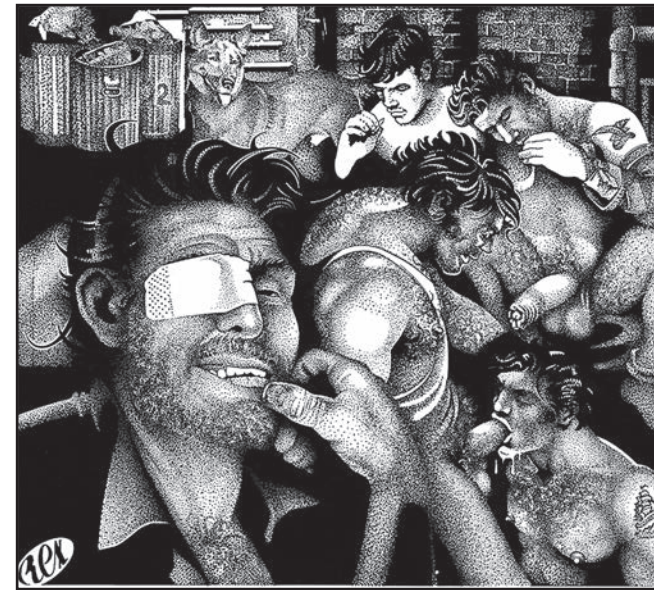


ICONS Cover, 1977

**"Arm Burn Down", 1987 & "Riddle of the Sphynx", 1987**



*"Riddle of the Sphynx", 1987*



*"Arm Burn Down", 1987*

The erotic work of REX stands out to me because it scours the secret world of raunchy man-to-man sex. His characters exist in a film-noir setting that is unashamedly raunchy, with that particular kind of urgency that other well-known artists simply couldn't capture.

One of the things I noticed in some of his works is that there is an onlooker, a voyeur. And in the instance of "Bum Town", the voyeur is more like a commentator. One could speculate all manner of things about the role of the voyeur, and that, of course is part of the fun in such a piece.

- Robert Robers, aka Mad Dog, tattoo artist

**"Trash Man", 1982**

REX's work is visceral and raw and frequently visualizes taboo kinks, and fringe interests rarely addressed in print. REX has been drawing queer theory before it had a name, and more importantly, REX works as a storyteller. Each illustration defines a facet of our kink culture, and REX chooses to tell it like it is, not how those outside the kink community would prefer to hear it. Fearless in his depictions, REX's drawings showcase gay male sexuality without omitting the darker aspects of our hunger for more, our lust for the extreme.

The drawing Trash men 11.30.1982 embodies a trifecta of taboos; grimy back alley sex, bestiality, and lust between two breeds of Alpha; man and dog. The image speaks to me on these obvious fronts but also carries profound meaning as a rite of passage. My chosen son and I wear mirror versions of the illustration as tattoos, expressing our pup play sex dynamic while showcasing our Father/son bond. As a subplot to REX's original story, wearing his work tells the world we are "other," outliers who dare to voice our desires as they come to us. The ability to find our own stories in REX's work distinguishes his drawings from all others. REX's

work is beyond mere illustration or "dirty drawings." It chronicles the depths of our kink culture, spoken without words, yet finds its power in the viewer's resonance with seeing their fantasies made real.

- Chuck Connor

**"Scorpio Boot Slave", 1990**

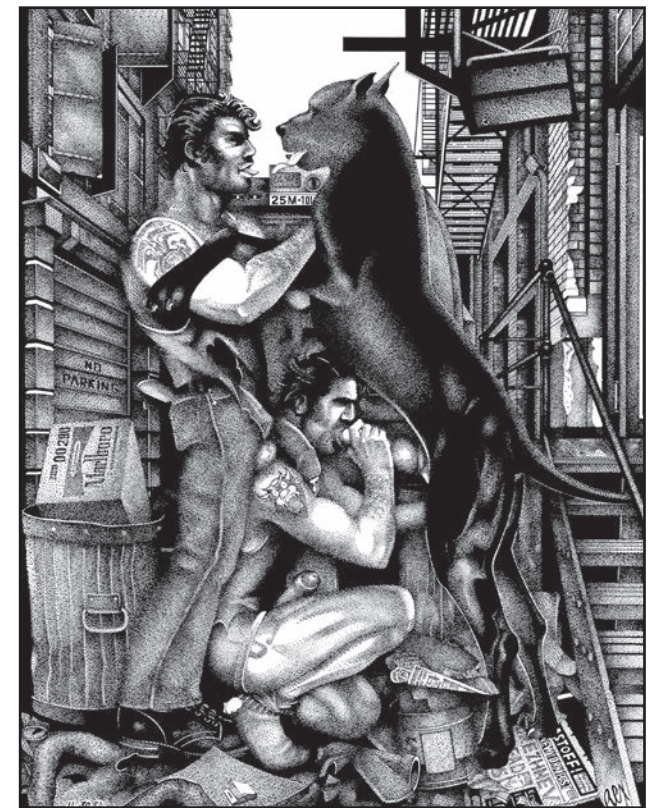
Like most young men, I masturbated a lot. I usually did it while looking at images and personal ads in Drummer magazine. Yes, personal ads. Reaching an orgasm is mostly an exercise of the brain. I learned to allow my imagination free reign, and personal ads left more room to include the increasingly extreme, twisted and horrible details I needed to get off.

Photographs and drawings too often depicted something that ruled out something else that my head wanted. Once that happened, it was hard to climax looking at that image ever again.

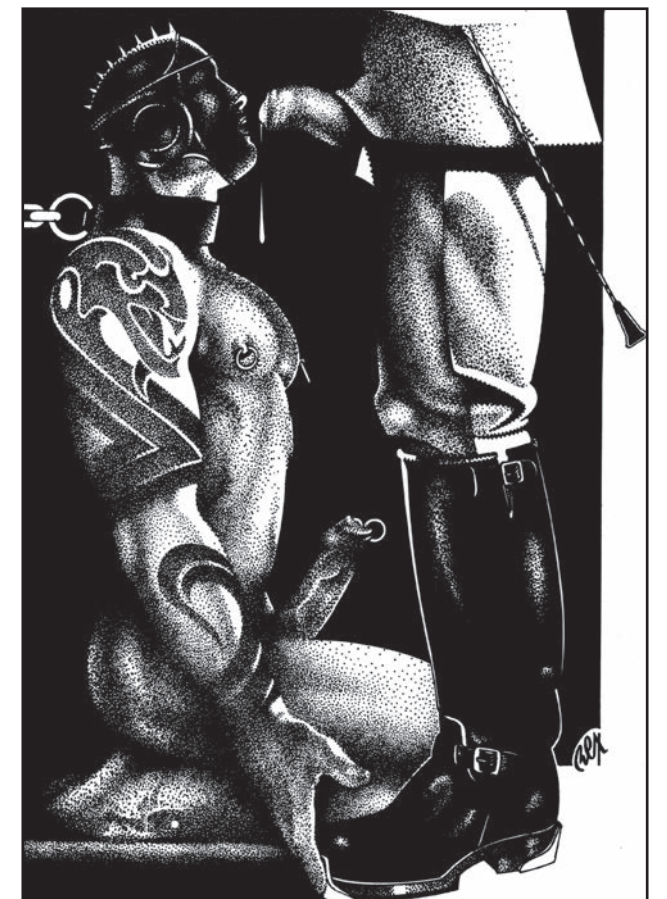
For that reason, I treasure this drawing by Rex. No photograph or work of art helped me shoot more reliably, and that compatibility never faded.

I was aroused by the power differential, so well depicted by the positions of the two men: his cock so close to my mouth, knowing the inevitability of him moving in even closer. I could feel the heavy neck and head bondage. My imagination had made that permanent keeping it in position for this perfectly entitled, masculine officer. I reveled in the joy and the anguish of being his property and victim. I could not help but love the cut of his uniform and the power of his black boots worn outside his trousers. I was proud that he held the crop as he did, knowing that he used it on me as often and as hard as needed, wanting him to use it to maximize his satisfaction.

But *the coup de grace* was on the floor. In almost all other similar pictures, the bottom's arms and hands are also bound, or the bottom is touching the top's legs or ass or balls, bringing him pleasure. For me, that bondage or that service would not



*"Trash Man", 1982*



*"Scorpio Boot Slave", 1990*

assure greater compliance or devotion. For me, this man is greater, and this art is more compelling.

Rex left my hands free so I would willingly put them in the place where the officer would trap my fingers with his heavy, hard, unfeeling boots, guaranteeing and certifying our mutual arousal. Rex knew this about me, and about others like me.

As the drawing shows, his cock proves his supremacy, and my cock confesses what he already knows. In my head he moved closer, naturally, his boots crushing more of me, enabling even more loyal service.

Outside the drawing, as my actual right hand stroked my actual hard cock, there was no way to evade or deny who I was. Rex showed the world what kind of man he had found in me. I was grateful to be locked here forever, and happy that my gratitude was unequivocal. With all this and more in mind, I reached one seismic orgasm after another, day after day, for years.

Thank you, Rex, for drawing my portrait so well.

- Bob Miller, Founder & Executive Director of the Leather Hall of Fame

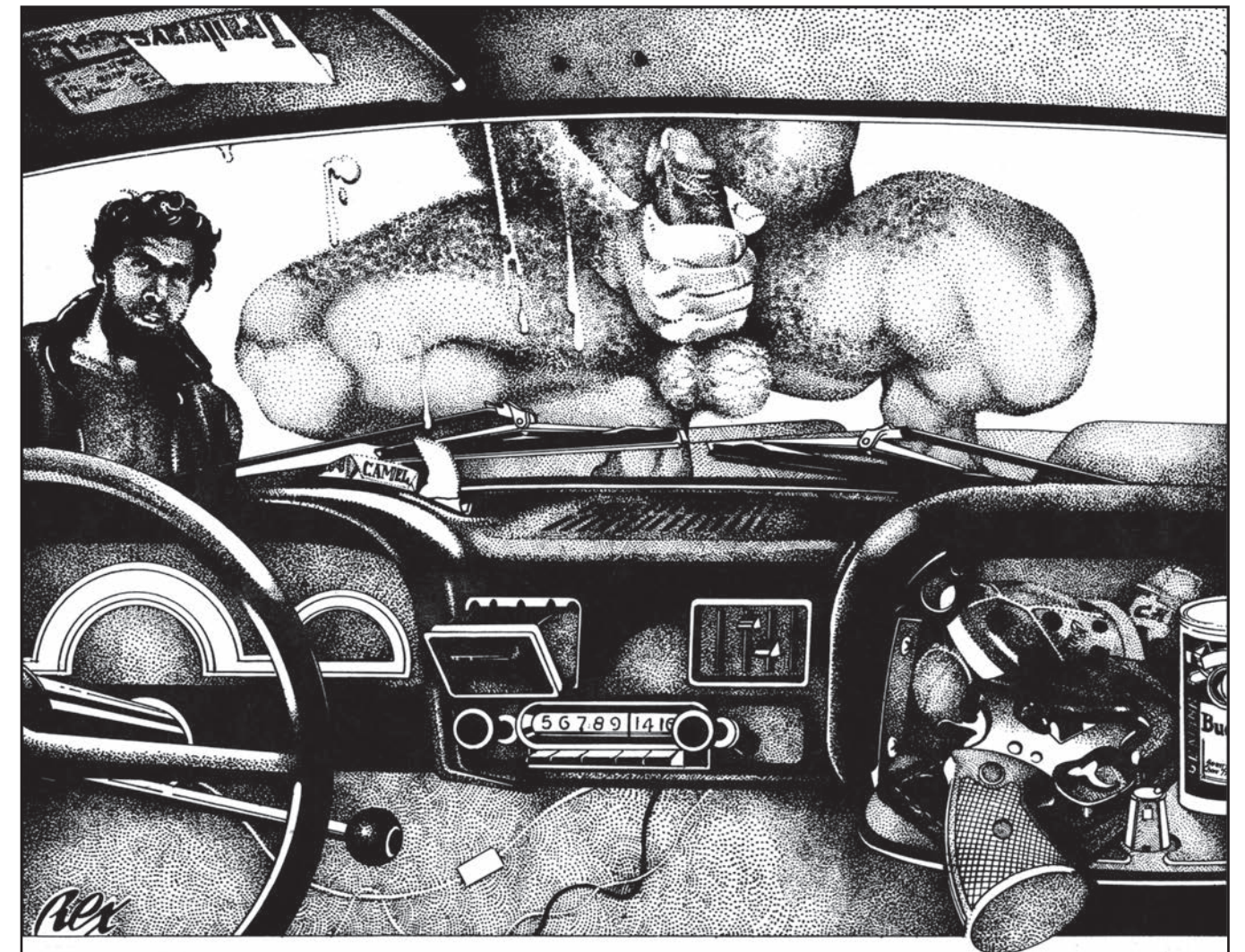
### "Trailways", 1977

This drawing takes me back to my college days, when I used to cruise the city park near my university. Of course, I never had a sublime hunk step on my hood with his giant dick hanging behind my windshield being the only part of him I could make out. There, instead, guys would leave their car in the parking lot and either walk up to your car, chat, and get into the passenger seat to suck you or take a walk into the bushes where I'd join them to get a blow job and give a fast fuck.

Yet how do I wish some hot hairy dude would have jumped up on my hood to jerk off while I was jerking off watching him... or, better yet: had done so while I was fucking in the bushes, only for me to find him on my hood as I was walking back to my car!

What throws this one over the edge for me is the guy to the side watching/being an audience to what's happening: is he walking back to his truck and, in a twisted way, the intended audience for the hunk jerking? Or is the intended audience in the truck, which would then put the guy in the background in a position of voyeur, walking into a scene he was not supposed to see (as we, viewers of the drawing, all are) but in which he is nevertheless welcome? If he is in fact the owner of the truck, is he turned on by what he is seeing? At least amused? Or is he enraged and ready to grab the gun in the truck to teach the hunk a lesson?

That's what I like most about REX – his way of putting you at the intersection of hot and dangerous, often without telling you for sure on which side you'll end — perhaps because the two are inseparable? And his way of making you witness things you did not expect to see,



"Trailways", 1977

you may not have wanted to see, and yet things that are unquestionably about you and that welcome you.

I've had many satisfying jack-off sessions to REX's drawings - I'd like him to know that and I thank him for it.

- Gary Keener

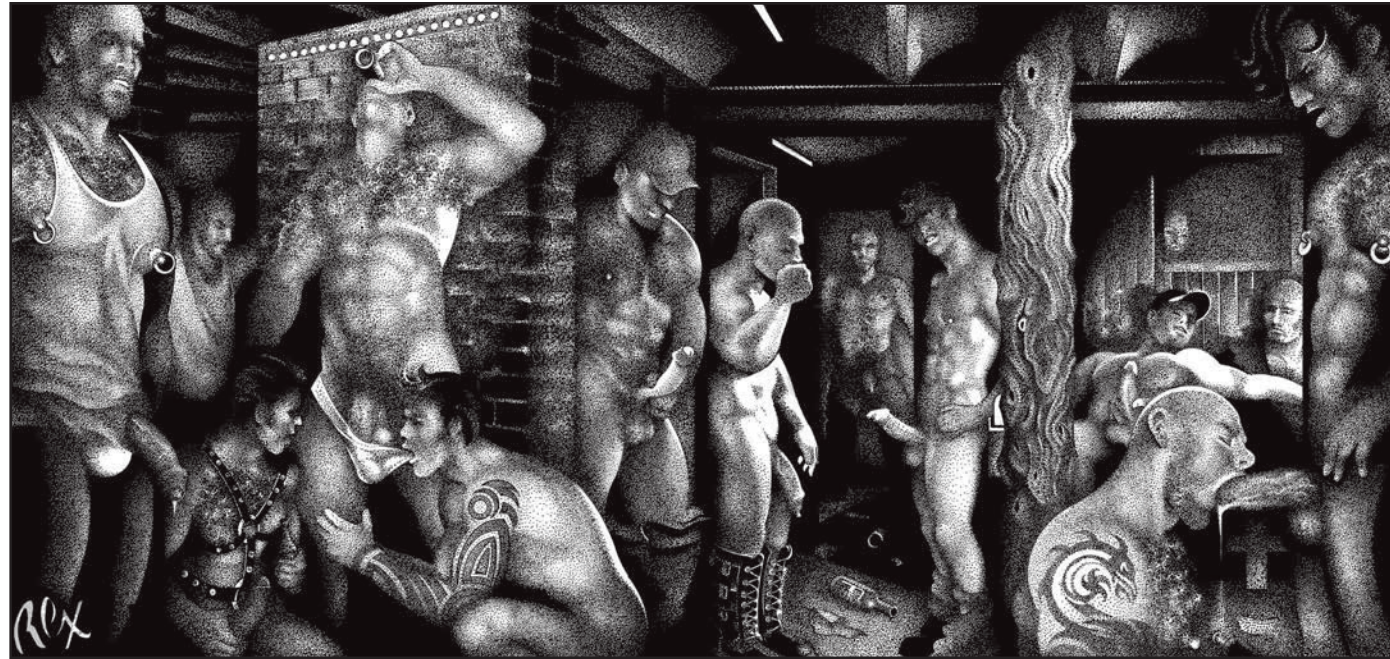
When REX was living in New York City, he had a boyfriend who owned a horse that was kept at a track stable in New Jersey. One day REX took a Trailways bus over to New Jersey to meet up with him. REX waited for his boyfriend in his truck while he tended to his horse. This is when REX envisioned this drawing.

Everything inside this 50s truck was real including the gun, the pack of Camels, the can of Budweiser, and REX's Trailways ticket over the visor. The boyfriend appears through the windshield.

- Clyde Wildes



Rembrandt's "The Night Watch", 2015



Rembrandt's "The Night Watch", 2015

I visited REX in Amsterdam in the Summer of 2019. After I admired this drawing, which is REX's version of Rembrandt's The Night Watch, REX took me to basement darkroom of the Cuckoo's Nest bar (<https://www.cuckoosnest.nl/english.html>) at Nieuwezijds Kolk 6, Amsterdam. This is where he envisioned the scene depicted in this drawing.

If you visit the darkroom, look around at the bottom of the stairs and perhaps you too will recognize this scene. Of the 13 faces in the drawing, which one is REX? He drew himself as one of the horny men in this scene.

- Clyde Wildes

"Adoring Eyes", 2015

I cannot remember when I first got to see REX's drawings, but I guess that must have been in the early 1980s, at an adult bookstore on Haarlemmerdijk. I used to go there and leaf through the mags (mostly without buying). Drummer was my favorite: not only because it explored the outer edges of kinks and made me feel at ease, confirming I was not alone and there was an abundance of pigfags out there; but also because it featured a bunch of brilliant illustrators and visionaries of that underworld. On the occasion that I did buy a copy, it was primarily for the drawings of REX and Bill Ward.

Bill Ward and REX worked in black ink. REX in particular had mastered a technique that allowed him to overcome the limitations of budget printing of those days. By painstakingly doing the shade-gradation himself with millions of tiny inkdots, he took out the need to raster the

images, still emphasizing amazingly suggestive lit or dark spaces, and even more fantastic body, ass and cock shapes.

A few years later, I got to know the two main Dutch artists, Willem Kok (aka Dorus) and Martin of Holland, main illustrators of *Centurion*, the most extreme Dutch gay S&M magazine. I also got to know their friends Bastille, the Hun, Rick Castro, Axel, as they came to Amsterdam and exhibited at RoB and MrB. Willem Kok's place became my Amsterdam pied-a-terre whenever I worked in Amsterdam. And that is how I started posing for him whenever he needed someone in an anatomically impossible position for a leather of fetish poster. I still feel the cramps. I would never have tried these poses on my own, but they felt surprisingly comfy when it all was done for art's sake.

A submissive model was born!

Through Willem and Martin, I also met Durk Dehner. We both had the experience of being a model (he had been the muse of Tom of Finland), and we shared a passion for promoting queer artists. At one of the Tom Foundation's art fairs I visited, I learned that REX was planning a move to Amsterdam and was asked if I could help him find his way through the city.

That was too good to be true: assist my porn-art hero, WOW !

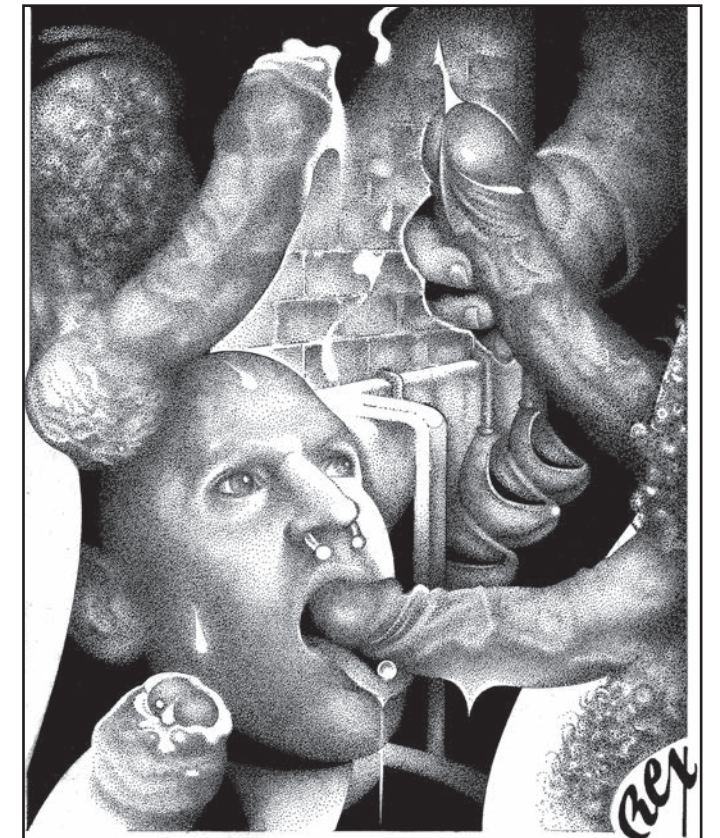
REX and I immediately became friends and, as I had been asked, I helped him get settled and, over the years, worked with him when he had to appear at cultural events or in local media.

We had our share of intense conversations and passionate disagreements, but remained loyal to each other: keeping our friendship apart from any business and commercial entanglement, had a lot to do with it.

Early on, REX asked to visit his own hero, the equally uncompromising scat pioneer Martin of Holland, then at the very end of his life. He managed to make it to den Haag just in time.

More fun was touring him around the Dutch countryside, on my motorcycle, showing Den Haag's Parliament, our sea defences and, more importantly, our nude beaches, cruising areas, clubs and bars.

For his first months in Amsterdam he stayed at the Anco Hotel, a landmark of leather history. Posing for him there felt natural. As for the portrait, he set up a scene in one of our favorite darkrooms at Cuckoos' Nest.



"Adoring Eyes", 2015

No longer for art's sake; I was at home, immortalized by REX, slobbering cum and piss, determined not to miss one drop; that felt just right!

Sadly, shortly after, REX felt his hand was losing its stability: he had to drop his pen and retire. The portraits of Jaques Zonne, coat-check/host guy of the Web Bar, and myself are probably his last drawings.

Although his work, notably for the Mineshaft and Drummer, was seen by millions (for example when Freddie Mercury wore a REX t-shirt) and made him one of the foremost visionaries of kink, he had firsthand experience of censorship and repression, starting his art career in NYC in the 1960s, a time when the city was largely under MAFIA rule. Two decades later, he lost everything he had: business, apartment, all his original drawings, in the 1981 Folsom street fire. The leather panic that ensued and further victimized the victims of the fire was another instance of wild bigotry that he experienced.

That probably helps explain why he has so consistently stayed out of the spotlight his work enjoyed. He is exceedingly weary of appearing in public: only very reluctantly did he accept to attend the recent exhibitions he had in Amsterdam, Berlin and Antwerp. He much prefers to just be approached through the contact form of his website than in person. The spotlight spooks him; he even asked me to accept the lifetime achievement award of the Tom of Finland Foundation on his behalf.

That does not mean, however, that he is indifferent or not grateful. At the time, he did write an acceptance note that he asked Sharp and myself to read at the ceremony. His words remain just as relevant today, as he is inducted into the Leather Hall of fame:

*"Against prejudice, violence, threats and bigotry we defiantly took pride in openly depicting our counterculture lifestyles and rituals to the world a half-century ago. Mine was the first generation that came out of the closet to the art world, the decade before Stonewall.*

*We paid a heavy price in those early days for drawing dirty pictures as they were then called, sacrificing our lives, our health, our jobs, our families and homes for daring to depict "The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name."*

*Our art was burned and destroyed in raids by civil and postal authorities, condemned and spat upon by church and state, and especially despised by the art world itself for whom we were rude intruders, storming the gates of their conservative ivory towers.*

*Therefore, it is with great humility that I accept this award on behalf all those artists of my generation who did not survive our epic battle to give gay art the prominence it currently enjoys in the world today.*

Thank you, REX"

All the art work is printed with REX's permission. The Leather Hall of Fame thanks him for his generosity. You can support REX's art at [rexwerk.com](http://rexwerk.com).

## GAY-MALE-S/M ACTIVISTS

By Brian O'Dell,  
With Ted Heaney and Thor Stockman



From its start in 1980 to its demise in 2009, Gay Male S/M Activists (GMSMA) was the most influential organization for gay male S/M practitioners in the Metro-New York City area. GMSMA was the 4th organization of the SM Liberation movement and, like its predecessors, it was not primarily about sex; instead, it was meant to provide alternative modes of interaction among SM people and to that effect, it adopted from The Eulenspiegel Society (TES), founded in 1971, and the Society of Janus, founded in 1974, the triple purpose: social-educational-political. Also, unlike these two, but like Samois, the first lesbian SM organization in the world, started in 1978, GMSMA sought to cater, not to a pan-SM community, but to the distinct needs of specific segments of the community: in this case, gay men.

But the truly distinctive feature of GMSMA was its openness: its founder, unlike those of TES and Janus, but like those of Samois, used his real name: Brian O'Dell. In addition, GMSMA was the first organization for which members were not screened: meetings were public, newcomers were able to attend and later join if they so wished. Finally, and most importantly, whereas the previous organizations had all felt a need for discretion and secrecy — with names cryptic and legible only by those in the know — GMSMA was the first organization to proclaim its SM purpose in its name.

Here, Brian O'Dell tells the story of the founding of the organization for the first time.

Letter to the Editor, *Gay Community News*, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1980:



Letter to the Editor<sup>1</sup>

I grew up in suburban northern New Jersey. I'd known I "liked boys" since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, though I kept it a secret because I knew my parents, friends and society wouldn't accept that. In my Junior year in H.S. (1974) I came out to a few close friends, my parents and my pastor. I was a young homosexual who had no idea what it was to be a gay man; I had no LGBT friends to talk to.

It wouldn't be till 1976 that — with boldness and daring — I'd move to NYC at age 19.

<sup>1</sup>"Gay Power, Gay Politics" was a documentary about the gay voting influence in San Francisco, but which also stigmatized the entire LGBTQ+ population by showing inflammatory images of SM that aired on April 26, 1980.

GMSMA



Brian O'Dell

Living in 1976 New York City was a heady, exhilarating experience – partying in a different gay bar almost every night (with a drinking age of 18 then!), at the height of the sexual freedom era. Unfortunately, I knew of only THREE organizations for gay men. They were Identity House (a peer-support counselling group), Mattachine Society (the homophile group that was so important in the 1950s but had by then become mostly a discussion group for discreet, older men of the pre-Gay Liberation era), and finally, the Gay Activists Alliance of New York (GAA/NY). I was immediately attracted to these older 20-something GAA/NY guys who lived to fight gay oppression with their “in-your-face” tactics of embarrassing zaps of bigots where they lived and worked. These were handsome, committed and fearless men who I learned to emulate quickly, thinking “Activism Is Sexy.”

When I first visited The Spike and The Eagle (on a weekday night, to just get a feeling for the scene), I must have stood out amongst the men present. (Surely, I was oblivious to

weird looks or chuckling, being completely wide-eyed and awed looking at all these handsome, bearded, 30+ men in studded black leather, showing off their hairy chests and asses.) Only when I visited the Mineshaft the next Saturday night did I find out that my sneakers, flared corduroy pants and a striped, button-down shirt wouldn't allow me admission to the “Dante's Inferno” of men's sex clubs. (I was given the option to check every offending piece of clothing, leaving me standing bare-foot in my “tighty-whities.” But being so young, I just “knew” that would lead to being gang-raped on the pool-table!) Instead, I left, dejected. The next day I bought the (cheapest) black-leather jacket, construction boots, studded belt, straight-leg, button-fly Levis, flannel shirts, black baseball cap, and paisley handkerchiefs (dark blue, grey, and yellow). THAT night the Mineshaft doorman didn't “blink an eye” as I passed through the door!

I'd been going to The Spike and The Eagle for four years, yet the closest I had ever gotten to experiencing kink, S/M or bondage, was servicing tops at the Mineshaft or in the shadows of the trucks around the corner. I had read Larry Townsend's *Leatherman's Handbook*, cover-to-cover, but being shy – at that time – I knew of no one to “teach me the ropes.” Convinced that if I went home with the wrong Leather Top, I could be hurt mentally and/or physically, or – worse yet – left gagged, tied-up, stabbed, and for dead.

The late 1970s was a time long before personal laptops, the world-wide web (including online dating sites) and smart phones. If you were a leatherman interested in S/M, bondage, kink or fetishes, the only way to meet other similarly-inclined partners were: (1) in the leather bars or sex clubs, or (2) through placing/answering “snail-mail” personal ads in publications like *The Village Voice*, *The Advocate* or *Drummer Magazine*.

A 3<sup>rd</sup> way to meet an experienced, knowledgeable S/M top (or bottom) was through a ‘personal referral’ given by another (hopefully!) experienced, knowledgeable S/M top (or bottom). I quickly learned through the gay grapevine that there were *at least* 5 bottoms for every 1 top, so – supposedly – anyone who wasn't muscled, hung, handsome or boyish had a lot of competition. Being “chosen” to be played was even more difficult for S/M novices – like me – who were shy.

Leathermen had been a discrete component of the gay subculture since the end of World War II when the subculture was born in major metropolitan areas at the intersection of those veterans who, often after being dishonorably discharged for homosexual conduct, decided not to go home, and the subcultures of bikers. The 1953 movie *The Wild One*, featuring Marlon Brando, popularized the

rugged and rebellious biker as a sexual icon and quickly became a cultural symbol. GMSMA board member Ted Heaney recalls that “I started looking for the leather scene as early as 1968. In 1972, I went on a 3-week tour of the ‘Leather Capitals of Europe’ where I first learned about S/M play. Moving to NYC in 1979, it wasn't any easier for novice tops to find experienced S/M Masters or bondage experts to learn the ‘how-to’ from.” S/M groups were difficult to find and gain access to: members were on their guard as they feared the heavy social stigma and disastrous repercussions, legal and otherwise, of being outed. A shy, novice top could have as much difficulty striking up a conversation with another – experienced(?) – man in a Leather bar.

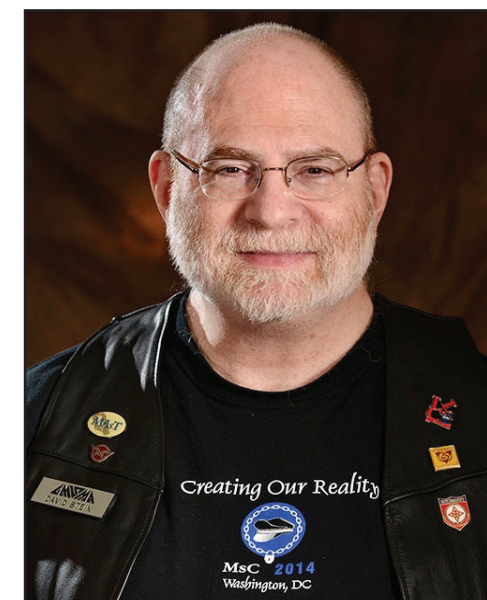


“GMSMA officers Ted Heaney (center) and Michael Horowitz (right) at the 1992 Pride Parade. Photo: Chaparro. From the GMSMA Collection, Leather Archives & Museum, Chicago”

When I wrote the letter to *Gay Community News*, I intended it primarily for men politically-aware and active in the “gay movement”: these were the audience of the newspaper. Not so surprisingly, the only written response was a letter from David Stein, a fellow New Yorker, who self-identified as an S/M bottom and slave.

In the presentation he gave on himself in the “About Me” section of his now-defunct website *boycar.us*, Stein wrote about his interest in bondage at a young age: “Perhaps because I was granted too much freedom as a child and was largely ignored by both parents until I was off to school – I made an unconscious association be-

tween bondage (or any kind of restraint/constraint) and love. (It was only a few years ago that I realized this.) For me, to be bound is to be loved; to be confined is to be wanted.” Coming out in his late 20s, David moved to NYC in 1977. He came out, in the words of Anne Nomis, desiring to live in the “era of Old School Code of the leathermen, [where] leather-wearing was ‘earned’, and David sought to honor this by wearing denim when he attended the Spike.”



David Stein (or slave david stein, as he liked being called) cofounder of GMSMA

His ideas, enthusiasm, some experience in S/M, and energy, were more than I could ask for, from a Co-Founder, with me, of Gay Male S/M Activists. (Having never done S/M or bondage, *at that time*, I identified as a kinky bottom into fetishes and roleplaying.) David and I spoke many times and he sent me articles on S/M practices and Master/slave relationships which he felt extremely attracted to. He became the chairman of the steering committee and, over the years, served in many roles in GMSMA, including President and Program Chairman.

Looking back, it was important for David and me that this new organization be explicitly about S/M (the pleasure-pain connec-



Marching



Marching

tion), bondage, Master-slave relationships, and forms of kink which were misunderstood. Stein understood that since the 1950s, gay male S/M and leather had been fused because most guys into S/M fetishized leather, and leather provided a way of signaling interest in, and practice of, SM without explicitly saying so. However, with the 1970s "clone" subculture, leather was adopted by many gay men as a symbol of masculinity, without any interest in S/M necessarily. It wasn't clear whether the person wearing leather meant S/M or was just seeking a masculine partner. GMSMA's President Geoff Ferguson added that at best, meeting a potential partner in a leather bar could result in an "enduring trial and error with people who usually knew little about good S/M play. One risked meeting an 'experimenter' and learning unsafe and unhealthy practices." While many GMSMA members did wear leather, it wasn't essential; an interest in S/M etc. was what bound us together. "GMSMA aimed to be more about SM and less about leather. . . . As David Stein put it: "there was leather, leather everywhere, but hardly any S/M in sight."

The first months of GMSMA's meetings were small enough for David Stein's apartment, and then we moved them to the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force office on Fifth Avenue. Ferguson remembered, "The initial meetings were

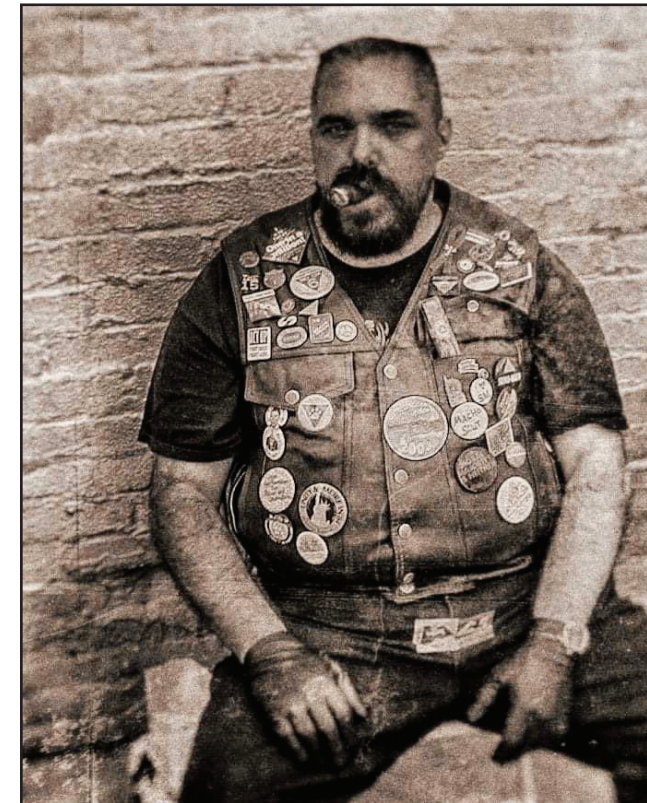
lengthy and heated discussions involving defining S/M, the needs of S/M men and prioritizing goals. . . . The text-book definitions [of S/M] lacked the personal intimacy present in S/M sex play. The labels of Sadist and Masochist carried a lot of psychological baggage which [were] negative and hostile. Discussion turned toward soliciting personal feelings among participants. . . . Everyone had their [own] ideas on what was 'real' S/M, that being 'in the eye of the beholder/participant.'"

Our first meetings attracted mostly submissive guys: many were novices, but there were also bottom men well-experienced in S/M practices. While it might seem counterintuitive, on the rare occasion that an S/M Top would come to a GMSMA meeting, he would often feel intimidated by the abundance of eager bottoms and would never come back. This all changed when S/M Top by the name of Ray Matienzo joined our group. An experienced high school teacher, he was immediately drawn to GMSMA's mission of educating men in the art of S/M practices. Matienzo convinced all his Top friends to attend our programs en masse, be on discussion panels, and show their S/M expertise and bondage handiwork at our Dungeon Demos. He did much to lessen the belief — held by many "Old-Guard" tops who came out into the leather-S/M-biker scene of the 1950s and 1960s — that public S/M education would ruin the dark, dangerous mystique of the scene. As well, Ferguson remembers that

GMSMA "[had previously] risked turning off numbers of experienced practicing S/M men who would feel insulted by being 'taught' their own craft."

Other S/M-Bondage groups across the country had screening systems for new members: one had to be 'sponsored' by 1-2 current members to be admitted to their events. But GMSMA was different — we felt it necessary that we be open, and that admission not be based on who you already knew. As long as you were a male<sup>2</sup>, at least 21 years old, you could attend our programs and other events. In an article he wrote about GMSMA for *The Advocate*, writer Arnie Kantrowitz best described the men who came to our programs: "Leathermen have gathered together primarily in sexual situations, usually in darkened bars or parties, sometimes on motorcycle runs. It might be that the fluorescent lights of a meeting hall would shatter the frail mystique of the sexual image, which seemed to depend on

darkness, alcohol, drugs and desperation for its believability. But the men at these meetings look good, not at all like a collection of social misfits. Some of them are self-assured, some of them shy, some in full leather, most in flannel and denim with some touch of the super-butch, like a leather vest or dangling keys, and a few wear neckties or sport shirts. (Not all leathersex involves actual leather. It's the attitude that counts.) There are men of all ages. . . . A GMSMA meeting is a good place for cruising, for getting to know yourself and others like you. But most of all it is a good place to learn about S/M." To become a member, one only had to attend 3 out of past 4 program meetings and pay a low membership fee, which gave a discounted admittance to events."



Thor Stockman

The GMSMA Board of Directors codified **Gay Male S/M Activists Statement of Purpose:**

"GMSMA is a not-for-profit organization of gay men in the New York City area who are seriously interested in safe, sane and consensual S/M. Our purpose is to help create a more supportive S/M community for gay men, whether they desire a total lifestyle or an occasional adventure, whether they are just coming out into S/M or are long experienced.



Thor Stockman Membership Card, 1984

Our activities attempt to build a sense of community by exploring common feelings and concerns. We aim to raise awareness about issues of safety and responsibility, to recover elements of our tradition, and to disseminate the best available medical and technical information about S/M practices. We seek to establish a recognized political presence in the wider gay community in order to combat the prevailing stereotypes and misconceptions about S/M while working with others for the common goals of gay liberation."

Gay Male S/M Activists was the first S/M organization — definitely in the USA, perhaps in the world — that in-

<sup>2</sup>i.e. said you were a "male," as there was no genitals checking! (This being a time before FtMs were open in large numbers.)

cluded the phrase S/M in its name. Ferguson wrote: "Each element of the name had significance. The group declared it is gay, for males only, deals with S/M, and composed of [those] who are forthright in their preference and affiliation as S/M-ers." Even those who weren't political, "liked the name. For them, the 'personal is political.'" GMSMA board member Thor Stockman adds "[Our] programs and events helped remove a lot of the guilt and shame that society, the gay community, and even ourselves associated with [S/M]."

Within the first 1-2 years, GMSMA's emphasis was three-fold: educational, social and political (the latter being that we'd find ways our members – voluntarily – could work with other leather groups, locally and nationally, as well as be a visible and accepted presence and voice in the wider LGBT community.)



The mainstay of GMSMA's scheduling were our twice-monthly Wednesday evening **Programs** – attracting 150 men on average – first held in a member's warehouse, which we outgrew, then the gay-affirming Church of the Beloved Disciple that had long hosted the meetings of The Eulenspiegel Society, and finally the auditoriums of the New York City LGBT Community Services Center. There were panel discussions and guest speakers (sometimes with S/M-friendly doctors, psychologists and lawyers), with a Q&A following. Programs were preceded by a half-hour of *alcohol-free Socializing*. Stockman notes "that once a year, in the spirit of learning and camaraderie, GMSMA held a joint program with the lesbian Sex Mafia (LSM) which was open to all men and women." Programs, in the hundreds, well-planned and executed, include this small sampling:

- "What's My Fetish" Game Show
- Altered Consciousness & Catharsis in S/M
- Endurance Bondage
- Fisting
- Hot Wax
- Master/slave Relationships
- Oral Histories: Leather Sex & The Scene in the 1950s
- S/M and Hypnotism
- S/M Trivia Game Show
- Verbal Abuse & Humiliation
- Abrasion
- Coming Out as a Sadist
- Erotic S/M Art
- Hot S/M Poetry & Prose (A Reading)
- Japanese Rope Bondage
- Mummification
- Novice Tops
- S/M in the Movies (with film clips)
- Temporary Piercing
- Whips, Cats, Crops & Canes



Our Board Members were very opinionated and adamant about presenting an honest, balanced, and perhaps too safe image of S/M. Concerns about HIV were high and we were extremely cautious in our approach to S/M sex. In an attempt to come up with safe strategies to have S/M sex in the early days of the HIV

*In 1992 celebration its 12th anniversary, GMSMA remembers its main events in 1894-1985 and 1988-1989. Photo by Gil Kessler, a president of GMSMA. From the GMSMA Collection, Leather Archives and Museum, Chicago.*



*Leather Pride Night Flyer*

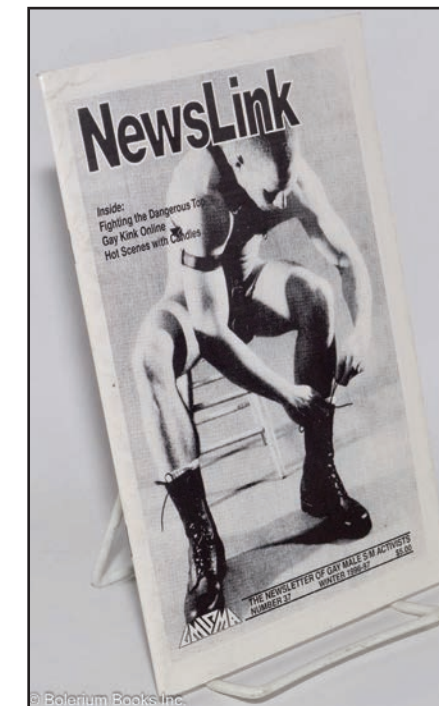
epidemic, verbal fantasy roles were promoted as an alternative to sex involving exchanges of fluids. When, at some point in the 1980s, a proposal arose to have a program on "Sleaze" – featuring a panel of participants talking about the joys of playing with bodily fluids, safely of course, as well as a doctor – there was strong opposition from some on the board who said: "We can't be 100% sure how AIDS is transmitted, so sweat, spit, blood, watersports and especially rimming are probably UNSAFE practices not to be promoted, especially at the LGBT Community Center." A heated argument ensued, and in the end the program was approved. But this anecdote is telling, as I remember the 300 men sweating profusely who packed the Center with no air-conditioning that night and made "Sleaze" the largest-attended program in the entire history of GMSMA.

Other GMSMA activities were alternating monthly **Dungeon Demonstrations** (opportunity to see 'experts' in their field practicing their craft) and **Socials** (ample time to cruise, meet and talk to each other). The demos, especially, drew on the skills of men outside of the Metro-NYC area. I remember that many GMSMA members were also part of the nationwide network of 'associate members' of the Chicago HELLFIRE club, considered the premier national men's S/M organization.

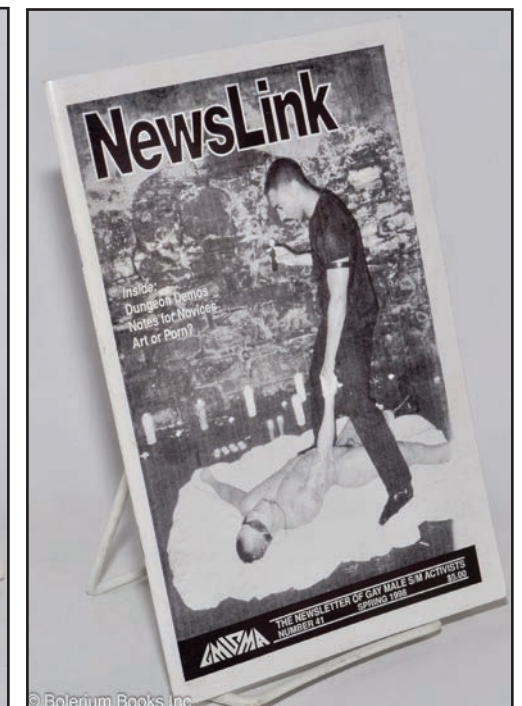
Many programs were held in the privacy and intimacy of a member's home. There were monthly **Workshops** on rope bondage or steel restraints, for example. **Affinity Groups** ran for 4-8 weeks for *Novice Bottoms/Tops "Coming Out" into S/M*, and *"The Next Generation"* (limited to S/M practitioners in their 20s and 30s). When visited by out-of-town men with known expertise in an S/M area, we sched-



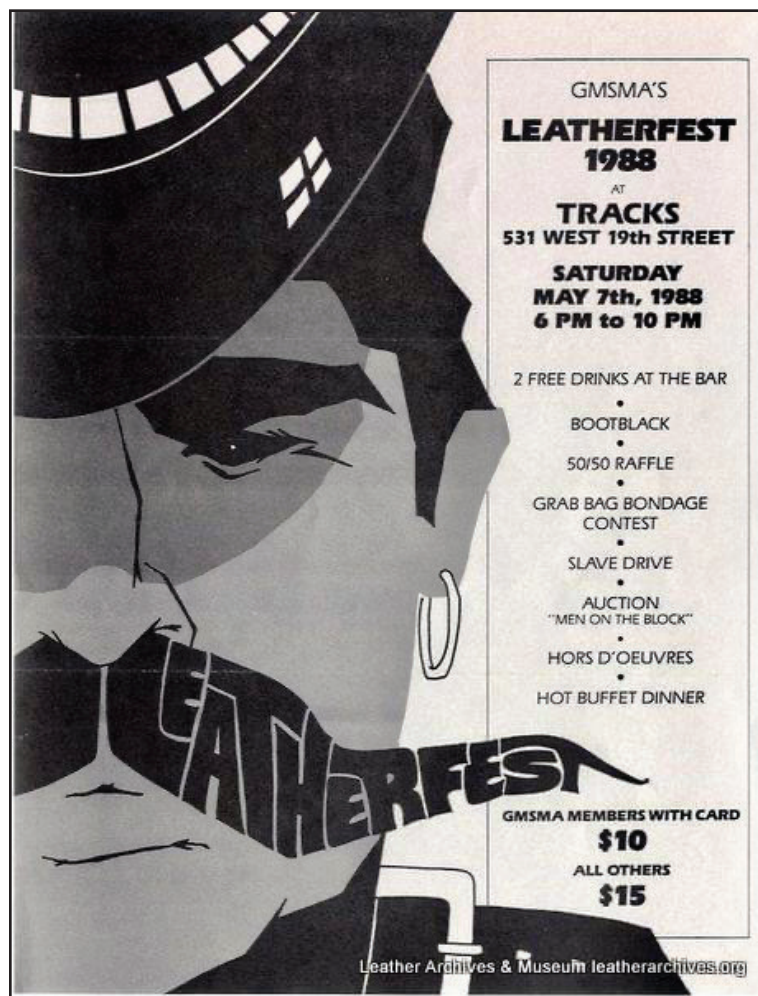
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Leatherfest Poster

uled a **“Master Class” program** (i.e. hands-on training for a limited number of Tops for an entire day).

**Special Events** included our annual October “Leatherfest” social; a colorful “Bondage Fashion Show”; a “Better Homes & Dungeons Walking Tour”; and a “Masters Auction” fundraiser, where masochists, slaves and boys bid ‘big bucks’ on the top man of their dreams.

Stockman adds, “GMSMA created the phrase **“Leather Pride Night”(LPN)** a fundraiser for Heritage of Pride, the new organizer of June’s PRIDE March, years before corporate sponsorship and city funds grew their budget immensely. LPN later included other NYC-based leather groups, with tens of thousands of dollars raised not only for the March, but also for national leather-S/M groups, and local health-related charities.” In addition, our “Leather County Fair”<sup>13</sup> held in the depths and roof of the Mineshaft, was the first time that straights and lesbians into S/M could visit New York’s most infamous men’s sex club. The following year, the fair would change its name to **“Folsom Street East”** (in reference to the San Francisco event), get a city permit, take over a public NYC street, and become the largest, best-attended leather event on the East coast. It is still going – 25 years strong!

GMSMA published **Newslink**, our quarterly magazine (with a mailing list of over 500 people), as well as a variety a pamphlets and chapbooks to accompany many of our programs.

GMSMA established our **Hocutt-Ferguson Fund** – named after GMSMA’s first two presidents, Geoff Ferguson and Richard Hocutt, who died from AIDS. The fund made one-time \$500 disbursements to leathermen in our community who needed assistance in paying their rent, utilities or medical expenses. The generosity of our NYC leather community allowed us to distribute tens of thousands of dollars. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, GMSMA established a **Speakers’ Bureau** staffed by trained members. Stockman notes that “This came about after a college professor asked us for knowledgeable men to speak to his Human Sexuality class. We also did well-received presentations for other gay groups that helped educate and demystify what S/M was all about.”

**Safe, Sane, Consensual:** “Hundreds of thousands of kinky men and women all around the world, many of whom have no idea what ‘GMSMA’ stands for, know ‘Safe, Sane, Consensual’ (SSC)” remarked David Stein. It was GMSMA which popularized the combination of these three words, in that order. After long-discussions in committee and the Executive Board, Stein remembered, “These words were the best sound bite to distinguish the kind of sexual expression we were in support of from the typical association of S/M with harmful, antisocial, predatory behavior” and to articulate the view that “we

<sup>34</sup>Featuring a traditional – if not especially macho – bake-off for the best cakes and pies, and contests, like ‘Best Pig in Show (two-legged, of course), and Best Homemade S/M Equipment’” (Arnie Kantrowitz, The Advocate, May 29, 1984.) Also the first – and last! – “Pie Your ‘Favorite’ GMSMA Boardmember” Auction which was extremely popular, for obvious reasons!

### Falling Under His Spell

Text: Elliot J. Cohen / Photo: Bryan Jordan & tom chang



Your eyelids are growing heavy with sleep. You are getting sleepy,” intones the hypnotist to his powerless subject. “Sleepy...sleepy...sleepy...zzzzzzzz.” The subject drops off into a deep trance, leaving the hypnotist in total control. We’ve all probably seen this moment in hundreds of motion pictures, television shows, and

lounge acts; yet nothing prepares you for the real thing. And the real thing is what members of GMSMA and their guests got at our March 13 meeting.

The presenter, who goes by the name of “HypnoDaddy,” began the evening by sharing how he came to incorporate hypnotism into his life and play. He also explained some of hypnotism’s basic principles. To illustrate his points, HD led the entire group in a simple, but surprisingly effective, relaxation exercise which showed how potent a tool hypnosis could be for focusing the concentration and for opening oneself to both sensation and suggestion. I was then one of five people HD chose to take part in the rest of the demonstration.

What an interesting experience it was. In some ways the Lerner Auditorium at the LGBT Community Center wasn’t an ideal setting for the session. Although being in a room full of GMSMA members felt safe and supportive, the acoustics in the room made it difficult to



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weren’t serial killers, spouse beaters, and child abusers” — without assuming that “it would be the last word on the subject” or that it “defined S/M,” or that it devalued ‘edge-play.’ For GMSMA, Safe – Sane – Consensual S/M is “the kind of S/M we stand for and support.”

Of course, SSC was partly influenced, as Stein put it, by the media’s exhortation, “Have a safe and sane Fourth of July.” Stein remembers also reading an unsigned essay by Tony DeBlase that included this sentence, “Responsible S&M has become more popular and less feared in the gay community and Chicago Hellfire Club continues to serve its community – striving always to educate and promote *safe and sane enjoyment of men by men.*” [emphasis added]<sup>4</sup>

GMSMA influenced LSM (Lesbian Sex Mafia) in joining the Eulenspiegel Society (Straight/Bi practitioners of S/M), as well other fraternal leather clubs to march as a unified S/M-Leather-Fetish contingent in the annual **NYC Pride March**<sup>5</sup>, two different **Marches on Washington for LGBTQ rights** (1987 and 1993), and the **March on the United Nations for LGBT Rights** (1994 on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion). The “Safe, Sane, Consensual” slogan was solidified into BDSM history when it was emblazoned on banners and t-shirts for all these marches. . . and these were later taken back to local Leather communities world-wide.

Looking back to the first 15 years of my involvement, there remains no other group which had such a critical mass of well-educated and street-savvy men, both creative and artistic, and extremely knowledgeable as both S/M tops and/or bottoms, as businessmen, teachers, lawyers, doctors, or their craft in leatherwork and dungeon construction. Our members were dedicated and extremely open to teaching those individuals who showed seriousness in learning. I’m convinced that had the AIDS crisis not taken at least a third of our members in their 20s to 40s, GMSMA would still exist today.

GMSMA was a strong supporter of the **New York City LGBT Community Center** (through helping to ‘rehab’ the original rundown but historic Food and Maritime Trades High School (c.1861) as well as our donation of hundreds of folding chairs). We were recognized as one of many contributors to the Center on a plaque in their building’s lobby.

Our group has received the **PANTHEON OF LEATHER (Los Angeles)** Large Club of the Year Award in 1990 and 1995, and the Large Event of the Year Award in 1993, produced by GMSMA, Excelsior MC, LSM, NLA: Metro NY and the Eulenspiegel Society.

<sup>4</sup>Chicago Hellfire Club’s Inferno 10 (1981) run book.

<sup>5</sup>When wearing leather in the June heat is a sign of true dedication to the cause.” Arnie Kantrowitz, The Advocate, May 29, 1984

Largely existing before the internet, little of GMSMA's history and accomplishments can be found on the web, though some of GMSMA's archives can be found in the **Leather Archives & Museum (Chicago)** as well as **The LGBT Community Center National History Archive (New York City)**. Ted and I fully agree with Stockman's assessment that, "In our 30-year history, GMSMA made S/M safer in so many ways from the closed bar scene that preceded it. We helped remove the stigma of interest in kinky activities that many people had viewed with shame and guilt. GMSMA may no longer exist, but in large part it's because it achieved everything it set out to do. GMSMA made history, and along with many others – some of them already inducted in the Leather Hall of Fame and others who will join them soon – we changed the world."



1<sup>st</sup> from the left is Michael Horowitz, a president of GMSMA; 3<sup>rd</sup> from right is Barry Douglas who, on behalf of GMSMA, was responsible for the organization of the Leather Contingent for the 1987 March on Washington.



Lenny Waller, legendary manager of the Hellfire Club, a BDSM sex club in the Meatpacking District, with Lou Maletta, media executive and founder of Gay Cable Network. Photos by Gil Kessler. From the GMSMA Collection, Leather Archives and Museum, Chicago."

Photos from the Leather Archives and Museum and from the personal collections of Brian O'Dell, Ted Heaney, Thor Stockman. The Leather Hall of Fame wishes to thank all of them for their generosity.

For inquiring minds:

Geoff Ferguson: "Gay Male S/M Activists: A Short History," GMSMA Collection at the LA&M, 1982.

Annie Kantrowitz: "Minority's Minority Steps. From the Shadows. Gay Male S/M Activists," *The Advocate*, May 29, 1984.

Anne Nomis: "RIP David Stein. One of the Original NY Gay Activists Who Helped Develop SSC (Safe, Sane & Consensual)," <https://historyofthedominatrix.com/blogs/blog/rip-david-stein>, accessed on October 12, 2022.

## The 15 Association

Peter Fiske and Christopher Wood



On Friday, February 25, 2000, San Francisco City Hall was abuzz with excitement. Mayor Willie Brown had invited representatives of The 15 Association to his second floor office on the occasion of the club's 20th Anniversary to publicly thank them for all they had done for the City. At 2:00 p.m., over 25 men, dressed in their full leathers, gathered in the Conference Room just to the left of his private office to see "Da Mayor."

Club members didn't have to wait long before he strode into the room. They introduced themselves, and Mayor Brown shook each of their hands. He then said, "Welcome to City Hall. I want to publicly thank you for the work your association has done for the gay community here in San Francisco. You have been strong leaders, raising money to fight AIDS, making San Francisco a national leader in helping gay men and women live their lives with dignity. The work you've done promoting safer sex and safe S&M has saved many lives."

He smiled, clearly relishing the moment. "This is a first for the City. I'm certainly the first mayor in America, and probably in the world, to invite a gay leathermen's group to his office. I hope none of you will do anything to disappoint me."

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### 15 Association turns 20

by Liz Hightleyman

This weekend, the 15 Association, a social and sexual fraternal organization for men in the leather/SM community, will celebrate its 20th anniversary with a series of events.

Tomorrow (Friday, February 25), Mayor Willie Brown will present a community service proclamation to the club at a City Hall reception at 4 p.m. According to Peter Fiske, former chairman of the 15 Association, this is believed to be the first time a mayor of any U.S. city has personally received a leather/SM organization.

Following the reception will be an anniversary dinner at the Cliff House restaurant. Other weekend events include an anniversary play party on Saturday evening and an afternoon play party on Sunday followed by a buffet dinner. Fiske said many out-of-town guests are expected, including several members of the Chicago Hellfire Club.

The 15 Association was founded in 1980 and currently has 140 members throughout the U.S. and in four other countries; most members live in California. The name comes from the fact that the club has a maximum of 15 full voting members. The 15 Association is a leather/SM club, but is based on a motorcycle club model. Several of the founding members of the 15 Association were involved in the mixed-gender, mixed-orientation Society of Janus, which celebrated its 25th anniversary last year; the 15 Association was started by men who wanted a club specifically for men. While some of the club's social events welcome women, play parties are open to men only. For nearly 20 years, the 15 Association has held a play party each month, with an average attendance of 60-100 men.

Over the years the 15 Association has become well-known for its extensive fundraising. The club has raised many thousands of dollars for the AIDS Emergency Fund. The group has also provided computers for the Positive Resource Center, funded scholarships for gay students, and raised money for the Leather Archives and Museum in Chicago. The 15 Association also has its own fund, named after founding member Alexis Sorel, that provides grants to people living with AIDS. In addition, the club has been active in promoting safer sexual and SM practices, and was one of the first sponsors of the SM Sex... Safely booklet produced by the Stop AIDS Project.

Fiske said that members of the 15 Association are active not only in the club but also as individuals, noting that "some of the gay male SM community's most active members are in our club."

For more info about the anniversary events, call the 15 Association hotline at (415) 673-0452.

The Bay Area Reporter announcing the celebration of the 15's 20th birthday and the reception by the Mayor. (B.A.R., 24 February 2000, p. 16)

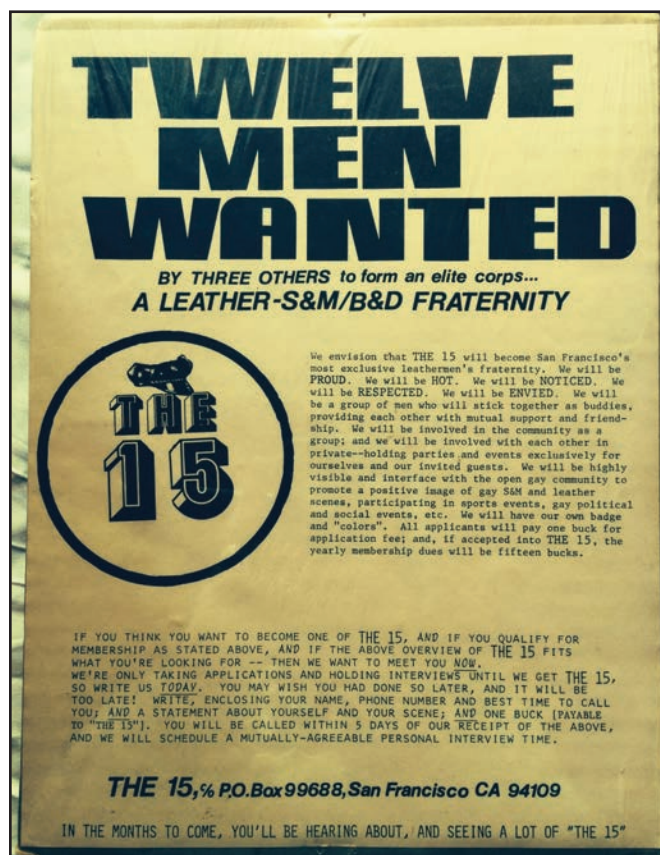
THE 15 ASSOCIATION

"Come with me." The mayor steered them down a hallway lined with portraits of all the past mayors of San Francisco and back through the reception area, where a dozen lobbyists, dressed in thousand-dollar Brioni suits, sat with their mouths agape as the club members marched past in their black leather attire. The mayor, clearly enjoying the unconventional visit, then ushered them into his private office for a more relaxed dialogue.

They all gathered around the centerpiece of the office, President Kennedy's Oval Office desk on loan from the White House. The mayor turned toward Arturo Salazar, the chairman, and handed him a certificate, signed by him and all the members of the Board of Supervisors. "I'm pleased to present you with this certificate, proclaiming today, February 25, 2000, as The 15 Association Day in honor of your 20th anniversary." The group then chatted informally, telling the mayor about their organization. They informed him that The 15 had over 125 members, and that their monthly parties often sold out. He generously allowed them to take photos with him before again thanking them for being a positive influence in San Francisco. At the end of the visit, Peter Fiske, a co-author of this biography, said, "We hope to see you at the San Francisco Eagle. We know you'll be out campaigning, and you have a lot of friends in the leather community."

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Let us take a step back in time. December 1979, San Francisco. A poster called "SM Identity" appears in bars along the Folsom Miracle Mile inviting men to join a new club for men into SM and leather. This was truly revolutionary.



Recruitment Flyer

"What was revolutionary about this?" you might wonder. After all, there were and had been venues for gay men into SM before The 15: there were leather bars, there were motorcycle clubs. Precisely: The 15 was neither a leather bar nor a motorcycle club. Many SM practitioners were leather fetishists and/or passionate bikers. But others were not. Most importantly, leather and bike were often used as a euphemism to indicate or signal SM (as we said then; or BDSM or kink as we more commonly do nowadays) without saying it in so many words. What was revolutionary about The 15 is that in this club, the "SM identity" was not alluded to or signaled between the lines: it was proclaimed; they were open about it and proud of it!

Peter was not among the six founders of The 15 Association. These were **David Lewis, Alexis Sorel, Jim Lansdowne, Jerry Jansen, Dick Kaufman, and Roy Richard.**

But he was the first member to join.



From right to left: Alexis Sorel, cofounder of The 15; Les Farnak, longtime Chairman, who, for many years, hosted parties in the basement of a building he owned; Strap and Bill, longtime members. Folsom Fair, 1989. From Peter Fiske's personal collection.

In February 1980 Alexis Sorel, one of his best friends, called to tell him that he and five other men were creating a gay leathermen's club dedicated to BDSM play in San Francisco. "You should join, Peter. It'll be a leather brotherhood where we'll support each other and have play parties." A week later, Peter was first in line when the founders held interviews for new members.

Two months later, The 15 held their first play party. It was called Scene 1. It was held on June 16th, 1980. Peter remembers the date distinctly because it was also his 35th birthday. The party was hosted in a dungeon rented from some pro-Domme lesbian friends, in the Mission District. "I

was thrilled to see the dungeon packed with men, eager to play. These men, like me, dared to be sexual and kinky with each other in public," Peter remembers. Over the next few months, these men formed a close-knit brotherhood. Over the next many years, they had a lot of fun together. And they stayed together through thick or thin: the brotherhood would help them survive through the darkest days they didn't know yet were ahead.

In the gay community, the creation of The 15 was received with mixed reactions – and even with hostility, in particular from the biker community. The group's foes objected to the fact that they were open and unapologetic about their "SM identity": many members wore leather, and others — or the same — did ride motorcycles; but they didn't use those as proxies for BDSM; they were an SM group! The LGBT Pride Committee tried to hide them by relegating them to the end of the Gay Pride Parade. That, however, backfired when members appeared en masse and their large contingent at the end of the parade closed it with style — making their presence much more visible than if they had marched in the middle of the parade. We never back down and have always refused to become invisible.

A most direct source of inspiration for the 15 Association came from the Chicago Hellfire Club. Formed in 1971, the CHC was the very first gay male organization that proclaimed its SM purpose without using the euphemisms of leather or motorcycle. In September 1976, CHC hosted "Inferno 5," a long weekend of play at a remote campground, named 5 in reference to the anniversary of CHC this was intended to celebrate. Inferno 5 was in fact the first iteration of what would soon become the world-renowned, notorious and exclusive SM party for gay men. It was upon returning from Inferno that, 5 years later, Alexis Sorrel, David Lewis, and Jim Lansdown (known as "Chump") decided to form what they initially imagined as a West Coast branch of Hellfire. Leaders in the Chicago group shared their experience and knowledge, offering guidance and support. The condition for success, they said, was that the men



who started this project knew and trusted each other. In the end, it was agreed that it was better that the San Francisco group be autonomous.

One of the distinct features of The 15 Association — one the group shares with the Chicago Hellfire Club — is that we were then and have always remained a group dedicated to SM play. We have alluded to what distinguished The 15 from leather bars and motorcycle clubs. But, of course, there were other organizations — which emerged in the wake of the sexual liberation of the 1960s and 1970s — that were as open and unapologetic about their SM purpose. The Eulenspiegel Society, founded by Pat Bond and Terry Kolb in New York City in 1971; the Society of Janus, started in 1974 by Cynthia Slater and — to a lesser extent — her partner Larry Olsen, in San Francisco; Samois, the first organization for SM lesbians in the world, started in the Bay Area, in 1978, by 3 women, including Patrick (then-Pat) Califia and Gayle Rubin; and just a couple months before The 15, Gay Male S/M Activists, or GMSMA, started in August 1980, in New York City, by Brian O'Dell and David Stein.

These organizations existed and they were unequivocal about their SM purpose. But they served that purpose in very different ways than The 15 did. They were all attempts to offer to SM practitioners new modes of interaction — specifically, modes of interaction that were not primarily sexual. They were venues where SM folks were able to socialize, learn from one another, and organize politically. At the 15, no one doubted that these goals were important and worthwhile. Many members had contacts with members of these organizations, and some were also members of Janus.

But The 15 Association had a distinct purpose. What these other organizations did through social, educational, and political activities, The 15 did through play: our purpose has always been to promote brotherhood through BDSM play. To be sure, over the years, we did hold educational programs. Nevertheless, sharing information informally at the play parties is our preferred mode: it is what we do. While membership meetings, committee work, or consciousness-rais-



*The 15 at the Pride Parade. From The 15 Collection.*



*Flogging demonstration*

ing groups were the backbone of these activist organizations, the backbone of The 15 has always been the play parties.

The first "scene," on June 16, 1980, was a success, and most of the 70 men present who hadn't already joined, did so. During the next 6 months The 15 held three other dungeon parties before opening our first clubhouse on Ritch Street. That is where club members celebrated New Year's Eve and welcomed 1981.

Roy Richards, one of the founders, rented a house where he and his partner lived upstairs. The 15 Association sublet the ground floor, with its kitchen, bathroom, and lounge. The basement was turned into a play space where crosses and bondage tables were built. An inspection by the Police and Fire Commissioner had been arranged a few days before our party. What they did not expect was to see the inspectors show up with 6 of the 11 San Francisco Supervisors! One of the brothers playfully suggested that the Supervisors were welcome to come to the club's first play party. Club members were even more surprised when three of the Supervisors (two men and a woman) did show up at the party! For a while, they stayed on the ground floor, casually socializing with members. But there was already activity in the basement, where play had begun. Eventually, one of the two male supervisors asked if it would be ok to go down and watch the play. "Of course, you're welcome to go down and observe!" someone said.

Throughout 1981, The 15 Association held monthly play parties and by the end of the year, the membership had risen to about 150. In those same few months, unfortunately, what was not yet known as the "gay plague" started to make itself felt. The first sign of what was to come appeared when, in July, Tony Tavarossi — an icon of the local leather community who, in 1962, had opened the very first leather bar of the city, the Why Not, in the Tenderloin — died of a mysterious illness.

The fraternal brothers of The 15 Association voted to shut down the clubhouse on May 1, 1982. The "gay plague" had begun to devastate the membership. At the same meeting, members also voted to rent dungeon space from the Knights Templar for monthly play parties. They were determined to keep the brotherhood alive and vibrant, both by raising money to fight what was not yet called HIV/AIDS and by continuing their activities as much as possible. At a later meeting, chairman Charles Durham suggested that the club hold a weekend encampment at Abdul's Chicken Ranch in Petaluma.

"I'm pretty kinky, but playing with chickens isn't my thing," someone quipped. After the laughter subsided, Charles said, "The chickens



*Bootcamp 2008, From The 15 Collection*

are gone, but we can play in the underground bunkers where they were. Abdul is a friend of mine who is willing to rent his ranch to us quite cheaply." Like for Inferno, the weekend was modeled after the motorcycle runs that were popular in the 1960s and 70s, though BDSM play would now be central. Everyone brought their own camping gear, but the food was included in the attendance fee. There was a barbecue one night and burgers the next. Toast and muffins were offered for breakfast, and sandwiches for lunch.

One of the great things about leather runs is that the play is not limited to brief scenes or restricted play spaces, and play outside is possible. Peter remembers being tied by Dick Carlson to a tree and then whipped with a bullwhip, next to a scene where Strap, a popular Top and fraternal brother in The 15 Association, was beating a cute young boy's ass with a leather tawse.

The 15 Association is a club dedicated to SM play. One might think that this makes it a sex club in the conventional sense. But because we are a club in the same sense that "club" has in "motorcycle club" rather than in the sense it has in "dance club," The 15, as it turns out, is much more than a conventional sex club. Throughout its existence, The 15 has been a cauldron of intense BDSM play that allowed many of us to experience the magics of power exchange so many of us found cathartic in ways that we could never have in other places. We are a brotherhood of gay leathermen who support one another. And this allows us to show ourselves at our most vulnerable in a space that provides intimacy and protection for our safe, sane, consensual — and extreme — play. "I can say that — for me, anyway — this play, this space — this play in this space — purifies me; it even seems to make me a better person," Peter says.

Between 1982 and 1985, AIDS killed half of the club's membership. It went from 150 to 75, and the leadership was devastated. In 1982, our first Chairman, David Lewis, got sick. The brotherhood raised enough money to send him back to his home, in British Columbia, to be with his family. In late 1983, our second chair, Charles Durham, became ill with Kaposi Sarcoma, the rare form of cancer that usually signaled the onset of AIDS. Knowing that this was a death sentence, he hired a taxi to take him to the Golden Gate Bridge, where he jumped to his death. Charles was the first of three Black men to become chairman of The 15 Association (a position held by 13 men, including also one who was Latino).

Although HIV/AIDS devastated the membership, the disease paradoxically gave the brotherhood a renewed sense of purpose. Partners and friends of men dying of AIDS desperately needed each other's support. As more was learned about the virus, the parties became saf-



*Longtime member and former Chairman Steve Gaynes and his boy, Robert Callbeck, a current fraternal. From The 15 Collection.*

er. As for those for whom it was already too late, club members cared for them and helped them in any way they could. They also raised money to fight the epidemic. The leather community was at the forefront of this effort. Leathermen gained a new sense of respect from the broader gay community; they were no longer the weirdoes and the perverts and started being seen instead as the ones leading the fight against a disease that was killing indiscriminately.

In 1989, the club started Bootcamp, at Rancho Cicada, in the Gold Country. Peter was the founder of the run. The club had no problem reaching the limit of 40 attendees in the first couple of years and only had to turn away a few men. By the fourth and fifth years, however, too many men had to be turned down. That's when Bootcamp moved to Saratoga Springs Resort, where we can accommodate a bigger attendance and have better facilities — and where we have remained since.

Bootcamp 6 was an instant success, and around 80 men attended. Over time, Bootcamp has grown to the new camp's limit of 100 to 110 men. Two of our members, Harold Cox and Bob Reite, bought a 20- by 40-foot surplus tent from the Korean War, like the ones in the popular television series MASH, and they set it up as our dungeon — with St. Andrew's crosses, bondage tables, and a spanking bench. Over the years, members have set up stocks, crosses, and even hoists in other outdoor areas. Now we use the lodge as our main dungeon space.

In September 1992, after long-term Chairman Les Farnak left the U.S., the Fraternal met and elected Peter as their chairman. The AIDS epidemic accelerated in the early 90's. Members only had so much energy and decided to prioritize raising money to help support those suffering in our community. The club had beer busts at the Eagle, manned booths at community fairs, and held bake sales. Bootcamp was kept going and anniversary dinners were held where silent auctions of donated leather jackets, boots, whips, crops, and paddles, raised money for the AIDS Emergency Fund. There was no dungeon party from August 1992 until the beginning of 1995, when the club opened another dungeon on 14th Street. Having been able to keep The 15 Association alive during these dark times was a privilege that Peter treasures and is particularly proud of.

Following Peter's tenure, Bear Dog Hoffman, a heavy bottom player, became chairman. Under his leadership, the club not only restored the monthly play parties, but also made them extremely popular with well over



*Les Farnak and Tony DeBlase. Folsom Fair, 1990. From Peter Fiske's personal collection.*

100 men frequently attending. When, in 1997, Bear Dog and his partner began suffering from health problems, Peter once again agreed to run the club in order to complete Bear Dog's term. But he also warned that he would not continue beyond that.

As The 15 entered its third decade, leadership passed from the first generation of our members to the next. Arturo Salazar took the helm as Chairman in 1999, followed by Don Folkers in 2001. It was during this period that The 15 confronted the trans question — whether or not, for our purposes, transmen were men and as such welcomed as guests and members of the club. Prior to that, the question was never raised and, for that reason, the club never had to address it.



*Steve Gaynes*

Membership Chair (and future Chairman) Steve Gaynes met with a transman interested in joining our parties. Steve had lunch with the man, and then came back to ask the club to endorse his inclusion. There was a vote of the whole club, in 2002, and, to Steve's delight, the result was unequivocal: 68 to 1 — and the only opposition to the change proposed came, not from someone who was opposed to trans inclusion, but on the contrary someone who thought the club was not going far enough in that direction, particularly with regard to its requirement of name-matching

IDs. It is, therefore, not hyperbole to say that there was universal support for trans inclusion. It was then that The 15 Association became one of the first major male SM clubs to explicitly include transmen as our brothers. Elsewhere, these discussions were not always as easy but members of The 15 fought from within various other organizations to make our community trans-inclusive.

Later, we would continue to become more welcoming of transmen and gender non-conforming guests as cultural understanding evolved. In 2019, under the chairmanship of Eric See, Christopher Wood, a cowriter of this biography, reopened the debate on name-matching IDs and led a discussion to remove that requirement. Then, in 2021, Fraternal Lyle Swallow suggested we make further changes to our stated policies to be more welcoming considering new understandings of gender presentation. This ongoing attention to create an inviting atmosphere for ALL men is a hallmark of our club.

As the club's membership steadily grew in the 21st century, a solid group of leaders such as JW Rutkowski, Steve Gaynes, Bob Brown, Steve Ward, and Jeff Garner held a steady course navigating changes to playspace locations and a strong annual Boot Camp in Northern California.

By 2014, Steve Gaynes, chairman again after his first term in 2006-2007, had moved the par-

ties to a new playspace, then known as Alchemy. It has been our home dungeon since, initially as Alchemy and then as Transform1060, its new name. Transform1060 is a community non-profit that has been managed for the past seven years by Christopher, who is also (in a separate role) the current chairman of The 15.

Around 2015, the Fraternal committee made a conscious choice to begin passing leadership to a third generation of members. In 2016, Eric See took the lead. With his masterful, consensus-building style, Eric strengthened the foundation of the Club, ensuring it would thrive for many more years.

It was around that time that Christopher joined the club, brought by longtime Fraternal Jon Bumgarner. Christopher had long been turned off by The 15 who projected an image of being unwelcoming of younger players. His view changed when, after serving Jon privately for a summer, he agreed to go to a 15 event where he discovered the brotherhood. "I remember going to my second party during Folsom with my 19-year-old boy. Unsure of how we would be received, I was nervous. But as soon as we entered the social area, a short, kind stranger by the name of Peter Fiske stood up off a couch, hugged us, and said, 'Welcome brothers.' That is the moment I knew I had found home," he says.

Christopher became a member and, within a few months, he also became a board member. A firm believer that bringing in the youth and merging their ideas of BDSM with older generations' traditions is essential to the survival of clubs and, more broadly, of our subcultures, his focus has been on bringing in younger and more diverse players.

Thus, in 2017, an amendment to the Bylaws was introduced to allow men as young as 18 to join (instead of 21, which had been the minimum age until then). The Fraternal committee had been able to observe a young individual in that age range who had proven themselves a competent player and hard-working volunteer (and happened to be Christopher's boy): that made it an easy decision. Whisper became the youngest member of the 15 shortly after. Since then, The 15 have welcomed many young members who will be the leaders of the club tomorrow.

In February 2020, barely three weeks before San Francisco went into lock down during the COVID pandemic, The 15 Association celebrated its 40th Anniversary. More than 150 guests and members converged on San Francisco for a weekend of debauchery. In addition to two spectacular play parties, our men came together in brotherhood at events at the SF Eagle, Lone Star Salon, and the newly launched Eagle Plaza.



*Christopher Wood*

The pandemic quickly put an end to all that and our monthly in-person parties dropped for a while. But that didn't stop the brotherhood: under Eric See's leadership, we started meeting online. While many leather clubs, bars, and businesses unfortunately did not survive the restrictions imposed by the lockdown, this allowed us to keep tight during the pandemic and still be there, ready to meet again, at the end, and be here for our 190 members today. In 2021, when celebrating the anniversary of the club the same way we had in the past was impossible, Christopher came up with an alternative: he produced "Anniversary 41: An Oral Celebration," a video of oral histories by club members. In time, the video will join the 15 Archives hosted at the GLBT Historical Society of San Francisco, and it will be accessible to the public.

Telling our story, honoring our traditions, preserving our history, transmitting it to others, particularly younger generations, who will use them as they see fit: those are the things we do at our parties, or when we write a biography like this one. Or, apparently, when a pandemic forces us to stay home and find ways to occupy our time.

For Peter also took advantage of the pandemic to write (with Thomas Peterson) the second volume of his autobiography, *My Leather Life*. This seems a fitting place to conclude this biography because, while there are articles in the local media at various moments of the club's life, and of course for more in-depth researchers the club's archives hosted at the GLBT-HS, until "Anniversary 41" is made accessible, Peter's book is about the only place we can indicate for those of you who feel curious and want to know more about The 15.

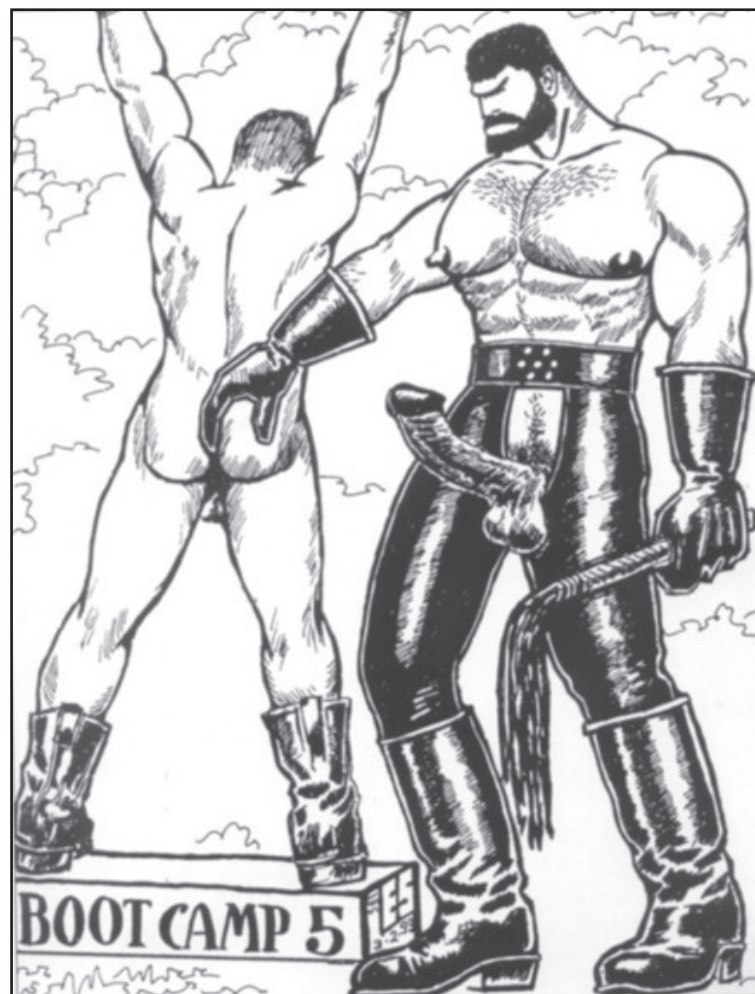
And when knowing about The 15 is no longer enough, and you realize you want to know *the thing itself*, come meet us. For example at our infamous "Street Dungeon," the event we have hosted for years now during the Up Your Alley/Dorey Alley Street Fair, in July.

For inquiring minds:

Peter Fiske, *My Leather Life. The Later Years*, Fair Page Media, 2022.

Race Bannon, "The 15 Association," *B.A.R.*, Feb. 18, 2015

<https://www.ebar.com/story.php?225048> (accessed on Nov. 4, 2022).



*Les Farnak was also an artist*

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