

NLA NATIONAL NEWS

The ballots are in, and we are proud to announce the new male Co-Chair of the NLA is Chuck Higgins of Little Rock, Arkansas. Chuck is a long-term activist in the leather/SM/fetish community, and has held the titles Arkansas Mr. Leather 1989 and Mr. Southeast Leather 1990. He was a founding member of NLA: Arkansas. Chuck has chaired the Chapter Concerns and Information Committee. The ballot return was the best yet in an NLA National election, with close to 40% of the membership voting. The contest was extremely close; every vote counted!

Elections and Credentials Chair MP Breslin of Atlanta feels that though the election got off to a slow start it went well. A longer time-frame next year will allow the fuller participation of the membership; MP is already working out procedural details.

By the time this **First Link** reaches you, the General Membership, National Council, and Executive Committee meetings scheduled for the Living in Leather VI weekend in Chicago will have come and gone; expect details of these meetings in next month's issue. Among agenda items were the election of Executive Committee members and Officers, and the NLA Budget.

The NLA has been growing again; at last count, the NLA included 875 individual members, 18 Chapters, 3 Chapters in Formation, 34 Non-Profit Organizational Affiliates, and 15 Commercial Affiliates. The NLA solicits the active involvement of all of these members, and of all members of the growing Pansexual National/International Leather/SM/Fetish Community.

The next meeting of the Leather Contingent to the National March on Washington '93 will be November 9th at 6 PM to 7:30 PM as part of the Nov. 8 to 10 NGLTF "Creating Change" conference in Alexandria, VA. A diverse turnout of Leather/SM/Fetish Community members should be at this meeting, in order to elect leadership for the March's Leather Contingent.

NLA Chapter News

The National Leather Association and the Executive Committee as its agents supports the formation and continued existence of active chapters which, in turn, support the National Statement of Purpose. The NLA encourages Chapter participation in the operation and long-range planning of the organizations.

NLA: Houston is proud to announce we have hit 58 members and are continuing to take in new memberships--heading for 75??? October, November and December will be up and running at full blast. LIL VI and Rosebud XI in October, **NLA: Houston's** Leather Jock and Harness Party (cowboys wear boxers, preppies wear BVD's or Calvin's, but real men wear leather jocks or nothing at all) a fun pre-party for the Master/Mistress of Leather Auction to be held the following week. Both are at the Venture-N, **NLA: Houston's** home bar. The latter is our first charitable fundraiser with proceeds going to a yet to be designated charity. Starting in October and culminating at the Auction will be a raffle, another charitable fundraiser. December will be busy running the "Toy Drive for Kids Living with AIDS" and Grab Bag Christmas fundraiser just before Christmas.

NLA: Houston would like to congratulate **Sundance Cattle Co.** for their affiliate membership--we look forward to the possibility of working together at some point in the future. We would also like to thank our **NLA: Dallas** brothers and sisters for their great hospitality during Dallas' Freedom Parade Weekend. Four Houston members had a great weekend at Jerry D. and Lit's home while supporting **NLA: Dallas** activities and the parade. We had a great weekend even at the shoe shine stand at the Trestle!! Oh Well!

NLA: Seattle announces the annual General Membership Meeting, to take place at 2:00 PM on Sunday, October 27th, at 2520 E. Marion in Seattle, Washington. All seats are available at the Board Election. It is very important for all Chapter members to attend; among the agenda items will be a discussion about the possible dissolution of the **NLA: Seattle** Chapter.

(Chapter News continued on Page 3)

N.L.A. CALENDAR

OCTOBER, 1991					
17	METRO NEW YORK Social	NYC,NY Jackson Hole	19	AUSTIN Fetish Ball	Austin,TX
18-20	DENVER "Weekend in the Rockies" MR/MS NLA:Denver	Denver,CO	19-20	HOUSTON Westheimer Art Fest. Info.Booth	Houston,TX
19	CENTRAL ARIZONA General Meeting	Phoenix,AZ Charlie's	20	HOUSTON Bar Night	Houston,TX Venture Inn
			21	BC Workshop	Vancouver,BC Lotus Cabaret
			21	PORTLAND Board Meeting 7:30	Portland,OR Embers
			22	SAN FRANCISCO Open Meeting 7:30	S.F. Eagle's Nest
			24	METRO NEW YORK General Member Meeting	NYC,NY Jackson Hole
			25-27	HOUSTON/DALLAS/AUSTIN Campout at Rosebud XI	Cameron,TX
			27	SEATTLE General Membership Meeting	Seattle,WA
			31	METRO NEW YORK Halloween Social	NYC,NY Jackson Hole

NLA ADDRESSES

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 NLA:AUSTIN - P.O.Box 684013, Austin, TX 78768-4013
 NLA:B.C. - 1170 Bute St., Vancouver, B.C., V6E-1Z6 Canada
 NLA:BUFFALO Chap.-in-Form.) - POB 3, Niagara Sq.Stn., Buffalo, NY 14201-0003
 NLA:CENTRAL ARIZONA - 4620 No. 7th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85013
 NLA:CHICAGO - 2271 N. Lincoln Ave, #470, Chicago, IL 60614
 NLA:DALLAS - P.O.Box 7597, Dallas, TX 75209
 NLA:DENVER - P.O.Box 18568, Denver, CO 80218 (303)-441-9950
 NLA:DETROIT (Chap-in-Form) - P.O. Box 2844, Southfield, MI 48208 313-354-5841
 NLA:HOUSTON - P.O.Box 541921, Houston TX 77254-1921 713-526-2668
 NLA:LOS ANGELES - 7985 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 109-217, West Hollywood, CA 90046 (213)-856-5643
 NLA:METRO NEW YORK - P.O.Box 1084 New York City, NY 10156 212-686-5248 (Noon-8PM only phone; 8PM-Noon FAX)
 NLA:NEW ENGLAND - P.O.Box N-1111 New Bedford, MA 02746
 NLA:PITTSBURGH (Chapter-In-Formation) - P.O.Box 81245 Pittsburgh, PA 15217
 NLA:PORTLAND - P.O.Box 5161, Portland, OR 97208
 NLA:SAINT LOUIS - P.O.Box 69294, St. Louis, MO 63169
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THE FIRST LINK: PRODUCTION CREDITS

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

This issue of **First Link** offers a departure from our usual summaries of National, Chapter, Affiliate, Club, and Press news. The heart of this issue is made up of *issues*, concentrating on the current stormy debate on consensual-non-consentuality and play "on the edge." This topic was introduced during a Living in Leather V workshop. In the **Link**, the issue was raised with "An Editorial" from Ruth Marks in the August, 1991, issue. This issue, we print four letters continuing the debate. The authors of three of the letters (Bruce Marcus and Laura Antoniou of New York) have excerpted material from their original correspondence for the **First Link**, so that we may fit it within our page constraints. We gratefully acknowledge the extra effort which this entailed.

Editing this issue has been a particular challenge; as we write this, **Living in Leather VI** is 9 short days away. We will carry it to the printer, and not see it until LIL VI has become history. Do not be upset to find our Conference missing from these pages---we promise a fully-detailed report next issue! As we write this, we see tremendous enthusiasm building for LIL VI; bigger and better is the NLA "style."

We thank Chuck Higgins (our new Co-Chair) for the material appearing at the head of page 3. The current mandatory testing issue is a *hot* one, and we are pleased to see members of our leather/SM/fetish community directly participating in the leadership confronting the crisis.

We thank the Human Rights Campaign Fund, which is sending us of important and timely material (featured in the Government and Law section).

We are happy to present material from within the Soviet Union for the first time in these pages. We hope to be learning more about the "Friendship Club" and about Soviet S/M life. Recent events in the U.S.S.R. have been extraordinarily exciting, and this may give us a chance to see some effects of those events from an "inside" perspective.

Contact with Australia and New Zealand continues to be rewarding; the building and growth of their leather communities appears to be both rapid and solid.

All in all, we appear to be witnessing the true beginnings of our Leather Nation, transcending political, gender, and orientation boundaries!

N.L.A. CALENDAR

NOVEMBER, 1991

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | FIRST LINK DEADLINE | |
| 1 | HOUSTON Leather Jock/Harness Party | Houston, TX Venture-N |
| 3 | HOUSTON Bar Night | Houston, TX Venture Inn |
| 5 | DALLAS Meeting: Psych.Domination/ Interrogation | Dallas, TX |
| 6 | ST. LOUIS Meeting | St. Louis, MO Our World Too |
| 7 | PORTLAND Club Night | Portland, OR PDX Eagle |
| 8 | CHICAGO Meeting | Chicago, IL |
| 8 | HOUSTON Master/Mistress/Slave Auction | Houston, TX Venture-N |
| 10 | HOUSTON Executive Committee | Houston, TX Venture Inn |
| 10 | SOUTH FLORIDA Meeting | Miami |
| 11 | DENVER Gem. Member Mtg. 7PM | Denver, CO Dads |
| 13 | DENVER Club Night | Denver, CO Mike's |
| 14 | HOUSTON Meeting | Houston, TX C&N Restaurant |
| 17 | HOUSTON Bar Night | Houston, TX Venture Inn |
| 18 | BC Workshop | Vancouver, BC Lotus Cabaret |
| 18 | PORTLAND Board Meeting 7:30 | Portland, OR Embers |
| 25 | DENVER Officer Election | Denver, CO |
| 26 | SAN FRANCISCO Open Meeting 7:30 | S.F., Eagle's Nest |

DECEMBER, 1991

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|-------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | FIRST LINK DEADLINE | |
| 1 | HOUSTON Bar Night | Houston, TX Venture Inn |
| 3 | DALLAS Meeting: Body Orifices | Dallas, TX |
| 5 | PORTLAND Club Night | Portland, OR PDX Eagle |
| 8 | SOUTH FLORIDA Meeting | Miami |
| 8 | HOUSTON Executive Committee | Houston, TX Venture Inn |
| 9 | DENVER Fundraiser | Denver, CO |
| 11 | DENVER Club Night | Denver, CO Mike's |
| 12 | HOUSTON Meeting/Chrstm's Pty | Houston, TX C&N Restaurant |
| 13 | CHICAGO Meeting | Chicago, IL |
| 15 | HOUSTON Bar Night | Houston, TX Venture Inn |
| 16 | BC Workshop | Vancouver, BC Lotus Cabaret |
| 16 | PORTLAND Board Meeting 7:30 | Portland, OR Embers |
| 20-22 | HOUSTON Grab Bag Fund Raiser | Houston, TX Venture-N |
| 24 | SAN FRANCISCO Open Meeting 7:30 | S.F., Eagle's Nest |

JANUARY, 1992

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|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | HOUSTON Executive Committee | Houston, TX |
| 9 | HOUSTON Bar Night | Venture Inn |
| 9 | HOUSTON General Meeting | Houston, TX |
| 17-18 | HOUSTON Anniversary Run | Houston, TX |
| 19 | HOUSTON Bar Night | Houston, TX Venture Inn |

FEBRUARY, 1992

- | | | |
|-------|--|------------|
| 14-17 | HOUSTON/DALLAS/ AUSTIN Texas Leather Pride Weekend | Austin, TX |
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CDC Guidelines Protested

The AAPHR (American Association of Physicians for Human Rights) met August 22-24, 1991. From Little Rock, Arkansas, Richard Jordan, M.D. & Chuck Higgins S.O. (Significant Other) joined 250 other physicians, healthcare workers and S.O.'s at Provincetown, Mass.

The major thrust of the meeting was the discussion of the impact of the new CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines re. the testing of healthcare workers. Efforts are being pushed by Jesse Helms for mandatory testing of all healthcare workers. Even though the CDC guidelines were the response to demands from the country resulting from the Kimberly Bergalis incident, the CDC guidelines were printed on paper watermarked "Homophobia." The right-wing radicals are fanning the situation so that the homophobia converts into fear and panic.

Although there has never been a documented case of HIV being passed from a physician or nurse to a patient, all potentially HIV-infected healthworkers are being

made the scapegoats. The livelihoods and professions of as many as 30,000 healthcare workers are being placed in jeopardy. As misfortune would have it, those in jeopardy are the very ones most likely to be providing care for patients with HIV-related diseases. The potential damage is catastrophic.

Speakers with national reputations such as Congressman Gerry Studds, Urvasi Vaid (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) and Virginia Appuzzo (longtime activist) emphasized the absolute necessity for all of us to become more involved, more politically active and to begin standing up for our rights before they are taken away from us.

In a larger sense, said Eric Rofes from the San Francisco Shanti Project, it has become increasingly evident that we, as a community, must increase our cooperation and combine our strengths to keep the right-wing conservatives from taking away those rights we have fought to achieve and maintain.

The wide variety of topics discussed at the Conference included such subjects as the ethics of outing, the role of ACT UP in liberalizing policy regarding new anti-HIV drugs and the future of our culture. AIDS specialists from both coasts gave an update on new treatments.

One message of the Conference rang out loud and clear: "In-fighting gains nothing. In-fighting drains us of our resources. In-fighting plays into the hands of those who would oppress us. We must stop our own self-destructive behavior and look for ways to recognize our diversity as a source of strength."

In a related note, Chuck Higgin's personal efforts in coalition-building resulted in his being invited to become a National Board member of AAPHR, specifically representing the leather community.

--Courtesy Chuck Higgins

NLA Chapter News

(Continued from Page 1)

NLA: St. Louis conducted its first educational seminar, "Beyond Vanilla: An Introduction to the SM/Leather/Fetish Community" on October 5th. Its November meeting will be on the 6th at 7:30 PM at Our World Too Bookstore. The Chapter reports steady growth, and tremendous enthusiasm.

NLA: Denver is sorry to report the resignation of President Don Dustin. Acting President is Greg Lowe. Don sends the Chapter wishes for much success for the future.

NLA: San Francisco Bay Area is still recovering from the hectic Mr. Drummer/Fetish and Fantasy Night/Folsom Street Fair weekend; plans have begun for Scream Break II in 1992.

NLA: Austin's big event for October is the Fetish Ball on the 19th. It has recently held Officer elections, and is planning a great year ahead.

NLA: Metro New York hosted the Pirates of Penance Play Party on September 22nd. Their Chapter membership recently voted to continue Chapter status within the NLA.

NLA: Portland recently staged its MR/MS Portland NLA Contest, featuring fine entertainment (including an Appalachian fiddler in a G-string), great bodies, and heated competition. Winners are KT Chase and Kevin Koesel.

Any group of 12 or more persons who support the statement of purpose of the NLA may petition the Association for a Charter as an official Chapter of the Association. The Petition shall be submitted to

the Membership Committee and be referred with recommendations to the Executive Committee for issuance of Chapter Charter. The petition shall contain the name of the proposed Chapter (e.g.: National Leather Association: Bismark), the official Chapter mailing address, the names and addresses of the Officers and the organizing members (at least 12 in number) with appropriate dues for each, a statement of adoption and support of the Association's Statement of Purpose, and a copy of Bylaws under which the Chapter would operate. Any group working towards establishing a Chapter may request the National Office to list it as a Chapter in Formation. A prerequisite for this listing is the availability of a publishable address. For further information, write the NLA at P.O.Box 17463, Seattle, WA, 98107.

From the U.S.S.R.

From the Soviet Union comes a letter from the Friendship Club, welcoming pen pals worldwide. "If you are serious, open-minded, and want to know more about Soviet culture, history, and life, and want to exchange visits with beautiful Russian Gay and S/M people, please write to Friendship

Club at P.O.Box 6595, Kishinev 50, 277050, Soviet Union. Please include photos, and either two International Reply Coupons or \$2.00 cash for postage." They would appreciate receiving appropriate publications from our community (though Customs inspections may still be very problematical).

Our Moldavian correspondent, Mr. Igor Zlobin, would much appreciate receiving any correspondence, and is anxious to share his experiences in the rapidly-changing nation.

On the Edge Debate.....

ON THE "EDGE" OR OVER THE LINE?

(The following was abridged by the author at the request of the First Link editor. The complete version was published in the summer 1991 issue of NewsLink, published by and available from GMSMA. The Editor extends special thanks to Mr. Marcus for editing his original material.)

We owe Ruth Marks a vote of thanks for her editorial in *First Link*. She's the first person with the courage to go into print on the notorious "Consensual/Nonconsensual" workshop at the NLA's last conference.

On first reading, the sentiments in Ruth's editorial seem reasonable. Surely, we all stand firmly against censorship, strive ardently for genuine unity, and reject the imposition of "rules" imposed by others. The problem is, these noble abstractions obscure what was really discussed and promoted at the workshop.

The subjects there weren't "censorship" or "rules" but rather scenes with loaded firearms; attempts to antagonize cops and provoke beatings; having bottoms sign suicide notes before scenes in case something went wrong; choosing not to seek medical assistance during an emergency for the "thrill" of life-or-death control; the promise of putting someone to death as the culmination of an ultimate surrender scene; and more.

I completely disagree with the thrust of Ruth's remarks. I believe the views expressed at this "death workshop" stand in contradiction to much of what GMSMA and the rest of the organized S/M-leather community have always stood for.

It has been suggested that the workshop discussion was a form of mental masturbation -- a sort of "my fantasy is bigger, harder, wetter ... than yours" juvenilism. However, attendees at the session were led to believe that real, current practices were being discussed. And nothing was said by panel's organizers at the time or by NLA leaders since to distance themselves from the views expressed.

It seems that the NLA has now come to a position on these controversial questions.

Ruth is the current Ms. NLA, and the NLA has long advanced the notion that titleholders are legitimate spokespeople for their organization. And Ruth's article appeared in the NLA newsletter under a banner reading "Editorial."

I urge the NLA to reconsider its stand and to reject the views expressed at the panel and in Ruth's article.

For most of our ten years, GMSMA has emblazoned the slogan "safe/sane/consensual" on everything it does. Those exact words may have taken a few years to develop, but the concepts behind them have always been central to our organization. More than a slogan, they describe a policy. They proclaim an ethic that we strive to promote by persuasion, example, and education.

Does this ethic give us the right to proscribe certain behaviors? I believe it does. Even more, it imparts upon us the responsibility to do so. As a community, we have the right and responsibility to say that we find some activities acceptable and some unacceptable. There is a "line," and some activities fall outside that line.

Advancing this "safe/sane/consensual" ethic has nothing to do with censorship, policing, or promulgating rules for private behavior. There's clearly a difference between private behavior and public activity. But that difference manifests itself more in questions of enforcement than in ethics. At events our organizations sponsor, we make rules and we enforce them. Some of these rules -- on safety, consensuality, general behavior -- are very strict; violate them and you get chucked out.

In reality, we already employ a potent tool to advance our ethic: the prestige and influence of our organizations and the regular educational work we carry on. That's how we educate new people (and, evidently some who are not-so-new) about what "safe/sane/consensual" means.

It may be that Ruth and others feel there should be no "line" and that two or more supposedly consenting adults should be encouraged to do whatever they want.

Our broader community has learned some very hard lessons on this subject. I doubt you'd have much success in this age of AIDS in convincing anyone that unprotected anal or vaginal sex is a safe activity.

We don't leave this up to individuals to decide for themselves. We forthrightly say people should not engage in this risky activity. We don't equivocate; we don't say people should consider the facts and then decide. We advance a clear, uncompromising position.

Nobody has a problem recognizing there's a line here. And nobody seems to have any difficulty recognizing the difference between advancing an ethical position by education and entering people's bedrooms to make sure there's a condom securely affixed!

Not everyone agrees with our view. Some say that using a rubber limits their sexual expression. Some prefer the "outlaw" status they feel they achieve through unprotected anal intercourse and want to live (or die) on the edge. Others resent any interference in their sexual lives. But I've never heard anyone in our organizations argue that we should stop championing safe sex because it may drive someone away.

In this real "life-or-death" area, most of us have found that there is indeed a line -- some activities are simply unacceptable. We have found at least one part of an ethic we will defend. Ruth says she will "behave in [her] bedroom in a manner that seems good to" her. I sincerely hope that includes the use of rubbers and other safer-sex items. And I hope she's willing to recognize my right and responsibility to tell her so! By reputation, Ruth is indeed known as a person who behaves "in a responsible manner" and acts "with integrity." What we need now is some "responsible" leadership. I hope Ruth will help.

I believe that many of the activities discussed at the NLA's "death panel" are unsafe (loaded revolvers), insane (refusing to call for medical assistance), and non-consensual (provoking a police beating). Exactly what the limits are can be the subject of a useful discussion inside the organizations of S/M-Leather people. But first we need a clear and unambiguous statement about our right and responsibility to draw the lines. Ruth Marks' editorial points in exactly the wrong direction.

-- Bruce Marcus

(Continued on Page 5)

On the Edge Debate.....

REPLY TO BRUCE MARCUS' LETTER FROM NLA CO-CHAIRS

We are sorry that Bruce did not include in the opening remarks of his article the same statement that he made in his cover letter, "I am confident you will recognize this article as a sincere attempt to continue a discussion on a question that I believe is vital to the interest of all of us. I assure you that this was not intended as an attack on either Ruth personally or on the NLA." This statement included as part of the article may have changed some perceptions.

While feeling that we are plugged into the "national grapevine," we had not heard the workshop in question referred to as the "death workshop" until now. The workshop that Bruce refers to was titled Consensual/Non Consensuality. Presenters in Living in Leather workshops are specifically selected to include diversity, differences of ideas, and to include both NLA members and non NLA members. The NLA does not instruct our workshop presenters what they may or may not say. While realizing that this may lead to some controver-

sial statements, it is a frightened community who cannot discuss controversial subject matters. The NLA has never made statements, censored or retracted any statements or comments made by either the presenters or audience members, and does not intend to do so now.

Concerning the letter published in the *First Link* by Ruth Marks, the NLA considers our title holders to be ambassadors to the Leather/SM/Fetish community. The official spokespersons for the NLA are the Executive Committee, specifically the Co-Chairs. Ruth expressly asked that her letter be put in the editorial section and did not include her title to ensure that people were aware that this was her personal view and not necessarily the views of the National Leather Association. Our title holders are very aware of the distinction between expressing NLA policy and statements and their personal views, while at the same time the NLA is supportive of freedom of speech of our title holders when this distinction is made.

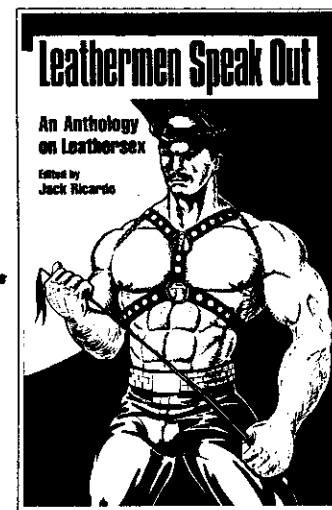
The NLA complete supports the policy of Safe Sane and Consensual. We also realize that an activity that is perfectly safe for one person to engage in may not be safe

for someone else. Within a scene one must rely on individual competence, judgment and responsibility. While we, within the SM lifestyle, consider our acts to be sane, many would disagree with us, so what is defined as sane is constantly being redefined by our community. Different aspects of consensual play are expressed by our community, as evident by kidnapping scenes, rape scenes, and forced submission scenes, in which at least in fantasy there is an element of non-consensuality.

The NLA feels that this controversial subject needs to be openly discussed in a setting where people feel free to express their individual feelings without fear of condemnation. To this end workshops dealing with these issues will be presented at Living in Leather VI. Workshops will include: **Safe, Sand and Consensual** and **Fantasy vs. Reality**. We invite your attendance and welcome your participation.

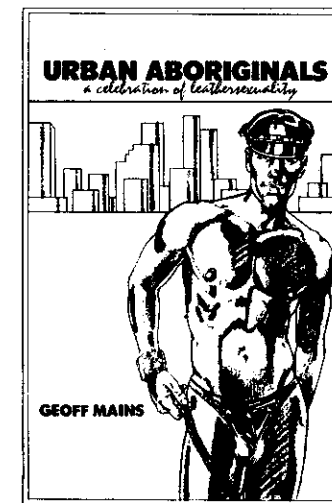
--Jim Richards and Jan Lyon
Co-Chairs of NLA

(continued on page 8)



LEATHERMEN SPEAK OUT:
An Anthology on Leathersex, edited by Jack Ricardo. Fifty leather dads and sons, masters and slaves, tops and bottoms, write with no holds barred on what it means to be a leatherman in America today. 192pp. \$14.95.

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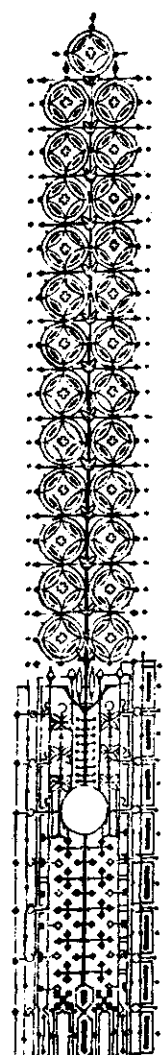
Leathermen Speak Out and *Urban Aborigines* are also available at gay bookstores nationwide.

THE Leather/SM/Fetish Calendar

Table listing events for October and November 1991, including dates, event names, and locations. Includes events like *OUTCASTS, MSC LONDON, C-SPACE, *THRESHOLD Video Workshop, etc.

NOVEMBER, 1991

Table listing events for November 1991, including dates, event names, and locations. Includes events like *NLA:HOUSTON Leather Jock/Harness Pt, MSC ROTE ERDE, etc.



Title page: Textile (Design No. 102) printed linen, designed for F. Schumacher & Co., New York, 1955

THE Leather/SM/Fetish Calendar

Table listing events for December 1991, including dates, event names, and locations. Includes events like FIREDANCERS LLC, COMMAND, *TRIDENT INT D.C., etc.

DECEMBER, 1991

Table listing events for December 1991, including dates, event names, and locations. Includes events like SOMANDROS, *NLA:HOUSTON Bar Night, etc.

On the Edge Debate.....

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF GMSMA'S NEWSLINK

(The following condensation of the original letter was prepared for us by Laurie Antoniou, the original writer. Our thanks to her for this service. The full text of the letter is available for anyone who wants it; write to Laurie care of the Metro New York Chapter).

To the Editor:

Mr. [Bruce] Marcus has proven himself adept at mixing images and manipulating the English language to "prove" several unrelated points about 1) a workshop he did not attend, and 2) an organization which he is not directly addressing.

The greatest issue in my eyes is the freedom and opportunity to discuss any topic or issue without immediately being branded as advocating or supporting any sort of action.

Discussing, sponsoring a workshop on, or printing an article about any topic does not indicate approval or "taking a stand". Description of actions taken or proposed does not equal stating a "view", or "promoting" those forms of action. The NLA does not have to "distance" itself from that or any other seminar or workshop that

occurred during LIL V any more than a university has to "distance itself" from instructors or courses which discuss politically or socially unpopular practices, philosophies, or realities. Anyone wishing to know what the NLA stands for as an organization can read it in the Statement of Purpose.

It's very easy to issue statements which boil down to "We're for good and against evil!". "We support safe, sane and consensual, and we reject dangerous, insane and non-consensual!" But that does nothing. What Ruth Marks is addressing is not the right to commit rape, murder and mayhem, but the right to discuss different levels of safety, sanity and consensuality.

What she, (and many others) are in fact asking, is: who determines what is safe? Whose definition of "sane" applies to individual situations? Do we consult *DSM III*? Then we are all, by definition, quite "insane". Do we use the standard of prudent behavior, as it is used in the legal system? If we do that, then we are ignoring the variable factors of individual expertise and informed consent. Who will set these "lines" that Mr. Marcus refers to?

Mr. Marcus tried very hard to make it seem that the NLA, Ruth Marks, and anyone who defends them are "championing" dangerous and potentially deadly behavior. Nothing could be further than the truth. What I and Ms. Marks are championing, and what the NLA has provided, is the right

to have forums within our community where we can freely discuss, debate, question and consider topics which may be unpopular or yes, disturbing, to many of our neighbors. But they are there nonetheless. To ignore them, or simply denounce them and hope that they will go away, is irresponsible.

It is a continual disappointment to me that GMSMA devotes so much of its time, energy, and editorial space to "NLA baiting". At a time when the NLA is planning the first Living in Leather east of the Rockies, when the important position of male co-chair is available in the coming elections, and when the NLA is working on a "clear and unambiguous" statement separating SM from domestic violence, the Newslink only has space to discuss an event almost a year old, and the personal opinion of one of the NLA title-holders. Sadly, it seems that the only time GMSMA has something to say about NLA, it is accompanied by attempts at humor and snide comments, or it is an outright challenge or condemnation.

I keep hoping that this will change.

Sincerely

Laura Antoniou

NLA: Metro NY Counselor

Editor, The Inquisitor

NLA/NAC Member

ships, and emotions, rather than on the issues involved.

As you raise no disagreement with my summary of what was discussed at the workshop, I can conclude only that it is my disagreement itself you consider to be "baiting." Is any disagreement with statement by NLA leaders "baiting" as you perceive it? Is it "baiting" to urge the NLA officially to clarify its views on this vital subject?

From your letter it seems to me that you wish this entire discussion would simply go away. You label the subject as "that which we do not discuss" and suggest that some agreement has been struck to keep this discussion hidden. From the initial response I've already received, I can virtually guarantee that will not happen. This subject deeply concerns all men and women involved in the organized s/m movement. I

can assure you, many more voices will be heard.

This may well be a difficult discussion -- feelings run high on all sides. I urge you (and everyone else) to debate the issues and to avoid the kinds of accusations and charges that can only obscure the questions and prevent a resolution in our best interests.

Finally, you are in error as to the direction of my article. It was simultaneously sent to the chairpeople of the NLA, to Ruth Marks, to *Firstlink*, and to *Newslink*. GMSMA's publication date came first; it is my understanding the *Firstlink* will publish an abbreviated version in an upcoming issue.

Sincerely, Bruce Marcus

RESPONSE TO L. ANTONIOU'S LETTER

Dear Laura,

I've received a copy of your letter to *Newslink* responding to my article on the NLA's Consensual/Nonconsensual workshop.

You raise a number of questions I plan to address as the discussion on "the edge" unfolds. At this juncture I only want to make one point absolutely clear -- I categorically reject your accusation that the article in any way constitutes "baiting" of the NLA, Ruth Marks, or anyone else.

Regardless of your intentions, the inevitable result of such charge can only be to poison the debate and to pressure people to adopt a stand based on loyalties, friend-

Affiliate News

RENEWING AFFILIATES:

We are pleased to accept the renewals of Affiliate membership of many fine groups and businesses this month. Among renewals recently received are those of **Knights of Malta Stockman Chapter** (address P.O.Box 9836, Denver, CO 80209; primary purpose Levi-Leather fund raising for AIDS related issues), **Society of Janus** (address P.O.Box 426794, San Francisco, CA 94142-6794; veteran pan-sexual organization serving the metropolitan area of greater San Francisco), **On Wings of Leather** (P.O.Box 2253, Vancouver, BC V6B-3W2, Canada; providing networking for leather wiccans, pagans and faeries everywhere), the **Association Sportive et Motocycliste de France** (address B P 2, 75965 Paris CEDEX 20 France, whose goal is the friendship and solidarity of SM Leather guys), **Knights d'Orleans** (address: P.O.Box 50812, New Orleans, LA 70150; 18 years old, the group is active in community service and charity work), **Gauntlet, Inc.** (address 2377 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114, and 8720 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90069; specialties including retail jewelry and piercing), **Dyn American Distributing/Black on Black Leathers** (address Box 1485, El Cajon, CA 92022; specialists in the manufacturing and distribution of leather goods), and **United Leatherfolk of Connecticut** (address P.O.Box 787, Danbury, CT 06813-0787; a pansexual support, educational, and social group). The NLA is indeed proud and pleased to number these fine groups and businesses among its Affiliates!

CAUSTIC COMMENTS

TITLE: *The Bunny Book*

AUTHOR: John D'Hondt

COST: \$11.95

PUBLISHER: GLB Publishers, S.F., CA.

PRINT QUALITY: Good

OVERALL: *** (see note)

I was surprised and pleased when this book came for review; the bunny is my totem animal, and my involvement with them dates back twenty years. My office is decked with rabbit effigies of cloth, glass, aluminum, wood, brass, etc.

According to the publisher, the author began writing a surreal tale about rabbits

TRIDENT INTERNATIONAL D.C.:

Trident's new home bar is the Wild Oats; they will be hanging their colors there in the near future. They are working hard for the 19th annual Trident International Run on May 15 to 17, 1992. Future events include their Nov. 2 10th Anniversary Party, including a luncheon buffet and a cocktail party. Contact them at 5909 Cloverleaf Ave., Clinton, MD 20735.

SUDANCE CATTLE COMPANY:

The Sundance Cattle Co. will be working with Mary's, its home bar, on the Cajun Festival (compete to be the best Cajun cook in Texas!) on October 27th. All members will attend the Texas Riders Fall Round-Up November 29 to Dec. 1, 1991. Future meetings are Nov. 10 and Dec. 8; they invite all to attend.

KNIGHTS D'ORLEANS:

Knights D'Orleans announces its new Executive Council: President Steve Smith, Vice President Mike Hamilton, Road Captain Ken West, Secretary Rocky Herbert, Treasurer Gary Nolan, and Mid-America Representative Dave Goodman. They send their best wishes for the coming year and the continued good work of the NLA.

A.S.M.F.:

ASMF welcomes members of our Leather/SM/Fetish Community traveling abroad; they are willing to arrange accommodations for those visiting Paris (please write well in advance). NLA members are also invited to participate in ASMF member-only parties such as the Leather Afternoon one Saturday each month (where you can learn to build your own accessories,

whether cockrings or slings!), and the Member List with special messages. ASMF's address is BP 2, 75965 Paris CEDEX 20, France.

UNITED LEATHERFOLK OF CONNECTICUT:

United Leatherfolk joined Connecticut gay activists in lobbying for the recent passage of a gay rights bill, making Connecticut the fourth state to have such a bill. The law, effective October 1, 1991, makes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal.

SEATTLE MEN IN LEATHER:

SML presents the 1991/92 Seattle Daddy/Daddy's Boy Contest at the Offramp Cafe and Lounge on October 27, 1991. Also coming up are the annual SML Slumber Party December 7, and SML's third anniversary, Equinox III, March 6 to 8, 1992, at Pilgrim Firs.

TARHEEL LEATHER CLUB:

The Tarheels report a dynamite anniversary weekend, full of fine fellowship, parties, workshops, and a great banquet and show. NLA congratulates Tarheels for a great year! Contact them at P.O.Box 16457, Greensboro, NC 27416-0457.

SOCIETY OF JANUS:

Program for October 24th is seasonal in nature: Vampirism. The program will be more than an examination of blood sports and intense hickies; it will involve audience participation, and discussions of the role of the vampire spirit in S/M. For further information, call the Janus Hotline at 415-985-7117.

tance of higher eternal truth & an awe at the magic which is everywhere.

The book is an interesting read. While naturally "cute," the bunnies are not cloyingly so. The lessons they show can, in fact, offer consolation in this era of the AIDS catastrophe, while the potent magic of the bunnies may be of interest to many in our leather community. Certainly, the many citations of rabbits & hares in wildly divergent mythologies is thought provoking.

--reviewer W.G.

(NOTES ON RATINGS:

0 - Won't get your curiosity up.

X - Borrow it, don't buy.

* - Average.

** - Worth the price.

*** - Run and get it.)



Our New Zealand Correspondent

"Thanks for sending the Link. It makes me feel not so cut off to continue getting news from the world of leather. After what George had to say in his latest editorial you can tell him I read it cover to cover every issue. While I don't agree with everything (even sometimes the editorial), I find a lot of what is being said so relevant to my experience & lifestyle as a leatherman in New Zealand. When I don't agree with something, when I analyze what it is is often a direct result of the differences between our two countries. Gay men (and women) here live a far more relaxed lifestyle, more read-

ily integrated into the wider community. HIV & AIDS are only very minor problems here because of safe sex programmes being introduced by the govt. & homosexuality being made legal over the age of 16--all this before the epidemic had a chance to get a hold here (there are 600 HIV+ & of these only about 100 have AIDS or ARC--there have been about 50 deaths). So the gay community doesn't feel so threatened or traumatized & doesn't need to protect itself with ghetto existence as in the states. As a sub-group there must only be about 100-200 men in the country into leather (and as a

scene it hasn't spread to women here) so we tend to be a small group who know one another, although we're spread over several cities. Which is good because we tend to be self-supportive & fairly homogeneous. Whenever a run can be organized for a holiday weekend taking over a resort it tends to be a fairly laid-back event without any of the in-fighting too often associated with the gay community at large."

--K.M.

Government & Law

The **Human Rights Campaign Fund** reports mixed results from recent Senate votes, including passage of a Helms amendment prohibiting National Endowment for the Arts' funding for "patently offensive" depictions of "sexual or excretory organs or activities." The amendment does not say who has to be offended by such potential depictions. The vote passed this year 68 to 28; a similar amendment was defeated last year by a similar margin. The Senate rejected, 27 to 67, an amendment to cut the NEA budget by 10%.

The national gay/lesbian civil rights bill is gaining adherents in Congress, but the recent veto of the California gay & lesbian civil rights bill by Governor Wilson represents a critical defeat of progressive legislation.

National bills requiring mandatory testing of health care workers have not yet been enacted, though various states have

imposed rigorous requirements. Continued vigilance is certainly going to be necessary of this critical issue.

The **Committee to Preserve Our Sexual & Civil Liberties** reports that Amnesty International will expand its activities to include individuals imprisoned because of their sexual orientation.

The **American Civil Liberties Union** of Washington will be honoring Perry Watkins (keynote speaker at Living in Leather VI) this November with their 1991 Civil Libertarian Award. Watkins & his ACLU-W attorney, Jim Lobsenz, fought nearly a decade for Watkins' right to serve in the U.S. Army as an openly gay soldier. This struggle concluded in a negotiated settlement in January, 1991, after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Ninth Circuit held the Army couldn't discharge Watkins since it had permitted

him to serve for 14 years in spite of its knowledge of his open homosexuality. The decision is a major step in the fight of discrimination based on sexual orientation.

In Oregon, opponents of the Oregon Citizens Initiative (which brutally lumps together Gays, Lesbians, S/Mers, Necrophiles, Pederasts, & Bestiophiles as victims of the right wing) are working together, & among attendees at a recent news conference were representatives of a variety of Portland area organizations, including NLA: Portland & ORGASM, the MCC, *Just Out*, the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission, & the Portland State University Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Alliance. Hopes are running high that the needed 89,000 voter signatures will not be secured in order to place the measure on the ballot.

Other News

SYDNEY BONDAGE CLUB:

SBC meets regularly. For info., write their new address: Secretary, P.O.Box 293, Broadway, Sydney NSW 2007, Australia.

MINNESOTA LEATHER ENCOUNTER:

October 18 to 20 brings the 3rd Minnesota Leather Encounter weekend, featuring the Ms. & Mr. Minnesota Leather Contest. Information available from P.O. Box 582601, Minneapolis, MN 55458.

TEXAS CONFERENCE OF CLUBS:

TCC announces Lone Star 9 at Buzzards Peak, May 22 to 25, 1992. Further information available from TCC, Inc., at P.O.Box 66973, #1010, Houston, TX 77006.

SM GAYS:

A disco club for practitioners of S/M opened Friday, October 11. The Sadie Maisie Club is a gay & lesbian venue in the basement of the London Lesbian & Gay Center, & runs from 9:30 PM to 3 AM the second & fourth Friday of each month. Organizers encourage extreme fetish attire. Further information available from SM Gays at BM Sm Gays, London WC1N-3XX, England.

FFA, WASHINGTON D.C.:

FFA/CAC plans Octoberfest Weekend October 18-20, 1991, including a bus trip to the Baltimore Eagle, a FFA special socials, & a commemorative T-shirt. Info. from 2501 Q St. NW, Washington, DC 20007.

MS. NORTH EAST LEATHER:

New York City will proudly host the Ms. North East Leather 1992 Contest on April 4, 1992; The contest is open to leatherwomen of all orientations from New York, New Jersey, New England, & Pennsylvania. More information from Rose Paradox Productions, 496A Hudson St., #D42, New York, NY 10014, Attn: MNEL '92.

CENTAUR M.C.:

The Centaur's host Leather Weekend 1992 & the eighth Mr. Mid-Atlantic Leatherman Contest January 17 to 19, 1992, in Washington, DC. More information from P.O.Box 34193, Washington, DC 20043-4193.

Scribbles

A couple of months ago I scribbled a public thank you to a half dozen community workers who generally haven't been publicly recognized. The list could, and should, have been much, much longer.

Now, with the completion of our Sixth International Conference, and its variety of workshops, parties, and--for some--a series of organization meetings, I have one more person to add to my public list.

Since the fall of 1988, NLA and our entire national Leather/SM/Fetish Community has benefitted from the thoughtful, personal, and quiet dedication of Jim Richards. Coming from Dallas to his first Living in Leather Conference, Jim was then serving as Co-Chair of SSCA, the loose grouping which was established with the Spring 1988 Dallas meeting and has since been absorbed into NLA.

Since that time Jim has devoted innumerable hours to our organization and

community. His slow but continuously increasing workload has resulted in his near complete loss of privacy, a travel and phone debt of national proportions, and a half dozen threats of divorce. He has represented NLA in dozens of local and national community events. Although he claims he is not a public speaker, I've heard several erudite and convincing presentations! He has demonstrated a skill for remaining neutral and listening objectively to opposing arguments. At the same time he has been more and more willing to take a firm stand for principals he believes important to the strength, growth, and integrity of our community. Jim was even willing to step in as Co-Director of LIL VI when earlier leadership dropped out. And in my opinion, he has done a successful and commendable job.

As a by-line here, I also give great credit to the support and patience of Jim's

George Nelson

lover Michael Spehar. Mike has found himself swept along in both local and national involvement. Even so, he has been a reliable, constant strength for Jim.

With the completion of LIL VI, Jim can mark the successful finish of his second elected term as National Co-Chair. He has served us conscientiously and with intense personal dedication for 3 years. He has maintained a calm, steady influence in the most difficult of problems and discussions. As a co-worker he has been amiable, effective, and dependable.

I've worked with Jim, and watched his growth over those three year, and in that time he has become a respected and valued friend.

My recognition, and thanks, to Jim Richards.

NLA STATEMENT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

We are pleased to report that **Partners**, the newsletter for gay and lesbian couples, has reprinted the NLA position statement on domestic violence in its September/October issue, as part of a larger discussion of domestic violence. Other articles in this issue note that "S/M and domestic violence are totally separate.... Domestic violence is abuse, control and violence that is *unwanted* by the victim. Domestic violence is not sexual behavior." Domestic violence is being increasingly recognized as a common phenomenon among gay and lesbian couples. For information on **Partners**, write P.O.Box 9685, Seattle, WA 98109.

CLASSIFIED ADS:

Classified ads cost \$5.00 for the first 25 words, \$.25 for each additional word. Make checks payable to National Leather Association, POB 17463, Seattle, WA 98107. We do not provide forwarding service. Sexual solicitations and roommate requests are not accepted.

NLA MEMBERSHIP

Open to adults who support our statement of purpose. **National Dues \$25. (\$30. outside North America--U.S. funds).** Fill out form to right and mail with check or money order to NLA at P.O.Box 17463, Seattle, WA 98107.

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP: _____ PHONE: _____
(above info. is confidential)

I agree with the Goals and efforts of the NLA, & wish to become a member. I am at least 21 years old.

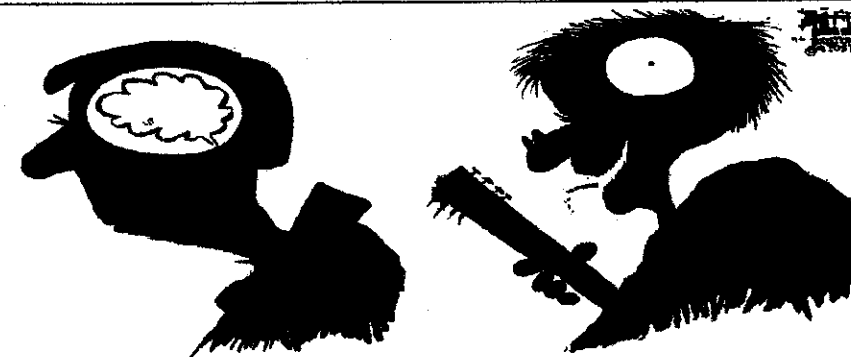
SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

Release my name to the Chapter (if any) in my region. _____

I may be contacted for NLA business by other NLA members? _____

V-10



A smaller than normal cluster of neurons in the brain may explain homosexual tendencies.

A smaller than normal brain explains homophobic tendencies. (Courtesy **Houston Post**).

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