



Leather Archives & Museum
LA & M

**Located in
Chicago and
serving the
world**

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 17 SPRING 2003

Leather History Book Up and Running

by Dan Nash

When I made my first steps into the leather world around 1997, I expected to find adventurous sex, and certainly found it. But I also found belonging, community, friendship and family. To a young mythology fan such as I was, hearing for the first time discussions of the “Old Guard,” and tales of seedy encounters in the dark rooms of the Mineshaft, was a bit like learning tribal lore. It was history no schoolbook would ever teach; a history of a world whose future I could be a part of.

I was immensely surprised and honored when, earlier this year, Leather Archives Executive Director



Dan Nash

Rick Storer pulled me aside at a party and told me that he and Joseph Bean wanted my help with a project. Joseph had the idea for a leather

history book—to have for the first time, collected in one volume, the story of the birth and growth of the leather community as we know it today. A big project, to be sure, big enough that Joseph felt he didn’t have time to do it himself. He said he also felt better about having the story written by a younger leatherman for reasons that I think I understand. So he asked me.

Who am I? Just a leather guy like many others, really. But if I have something that I think makes me somehow a “special” person for this project, it’s that I’m still close enough to my first experiences with the leather world to remember my sense of “where did all this come from?” And if there’s any particular thing that’s motivated me in things I’ve done in the leather community, it’s the thought that out there somewhere — make that everywhere — are other guys like I was: rather shy and scared, but really hungry for knowledge and experience.

For such a person today, there’s a great wealth of information available about how to tie knots or use a flogger, even how to make your own bondage toys from commonly available hardware items. All of this information is wonderful to have and to know, but where does a person
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2003 Membership Mtg.

The 2003 General Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, May 24th at 11am. The meeting will be held on the 7th Floor of the Palmer House Hilton in the Dearborn 1 Room. All members, as well as the general public, are invited to attend this meeting.

We are pleased to announce that Robert Davolt of San Francisco will be the guest speaker for the event. His presentation will be titled “**Uniform Respect: Military Traditions In Leather Culture**”. Robert’s talk will be followed by the regular meeting agenda.

For more information about the meeting, please contact Rick Storer at the LA&M.

Leather History on the World Wide Web

Todd Hawley (Lord Saber) has composed a website which talks about history in general, and provides links to a fantastic collection of essays and historical tidbits available online. The site includes:

- Society of Janus history (a model club history!)
- Excellent advice on writing your OWN club history

Links to history based articles by:

- o Todd Hawley
- o Jay Wiseman
- o Hardy Haberman
- o Guy Baldwin
- o Jack Rinella
- o Joseph Bean
- o Gayle Rubin

<http://www.tdl.com/~thawley/history.htm>

History Book, continued

go who wants to know where all these clubs and traditions came from? Where do you go to ask "what do motorcycles and leather have to do with it?" Were there kinky people before the middle of the twentieth century, and if so how did they meet, what did they do? Just how far back does kinky sex go?

Isn't it about time our kinky story got told... all in one place? I remember the feelings I had when, back in college, I began to discover the famous people in history who were gay or lesbian. A similar thing happened a few years ago when I learned that Benjamin Franklin was a member of a "Hellfire Club." And though I've enjoyed many of the gay and lesbian community histories I've read, almost never is kink or leathersex mentioned—even though some of the names I've read there, I have also heard mentioned as "leather" by people who knew what they were talking about. There are lots of pieces of a larger history out there that need to be collected together, and now is the time to do it.

I won't be writing this book alone. Joseph Bean will be along as co-writer, since in a sense I'm just continuing a book that he's already started. And we've agreed that the

royalties for it will be given to the Leather Archives. But the book needs to be done and it needs to be done while people like Joseph are with us to contribute to it and to critique it.

Now I need to ask for a little help. Leather history at this stage is still a big puzzle. The Leather Archives is a huge step forward in putting the pieces together, but for a project like this the more sources we have, the better. Please take some time and look through your memories and mementos and submit to the Leather Archives—indicating when you do that you want me to see it for my book project—anything you feel might be useful in putting together this book.

If you were at the first Badger Flat run or an early one... if you were there the night the LAPD "freed the slaves" in Los Angeles... if you ever went to the original Gauntlet or Raven in Los Angeles or Keller or Mineshaft in New York... if you rode with a club in the 1950s or even the 1960s anywhere... if you wore leather—black, brown or otherwise—before 1965... you surely have memories and stories and maybe even snapshots that could be important. Whatever you have, for the sake of the men and women yet to discover the world of

leather, SM and fetishes, share it. If you prefer to have me see something, but not to donate it to the Leather Archives, I have Rick Storer's assurance that mail or packages addressed to me and sent to the LA&M will be given to me unopened. I can protect your identity if need be or change the names of your "accomplices" as required, but I can't go on without setting the historic record down for current and future generations. Give me a hand if you can.

LA&M Gift Shop Online Store Now Open!

The Leather Archives & Museum Gift Shop, once located only in Chicago, is now open on the www. Almost all of the items available in the gift shop at 6418 N. Greenview can be purchased on the LA&M website and

shipped to you. In addition to LA&M logo merchandise, IML merchandise, books and posters, shoppers can purchase or renew memberships online and make donations as well.



Need a gift idea for that BDSM-er who has every piece of equipment and fetish clothing under the sun? Why not get them a LA&M t-shirt, pin, or membership?



<http://www.leatherarchives.org>

Donor Thank You's

The following groups / organizations have contributed funds directly to the LA&M:

LA&M Operations

Cleveland Leather Annual Weekend (CLAW)
Pantheon of Leather International Masters Association
Butchmanns LLC
PowerSurge
Royal Imperial Sovereign Barony of the Windy City
Men of Onyx

New Members

Christopher M.
Leon G.
Stefan G.
Donald D.
Jeff W.
Nelson S.

Capital Campaign

Club Z
Pocono Warriors

New LA&M Staff Positions (read: HELP US!!)

The LA&M is looking for talented (not *those talents....*) leatherfolk to help out with important operating functions. If you're interested in these positions, please visit the LA&M website or call Rick Storer for an application and more details about the positions.

IT Manager
2 hours per week

NON PAID - Anywhere
Newsletter Editor
20 hours per quarter
Public Relations Liaison
Various hours

PAID - Part Time - Chicago
Facilities Manager
20 hours per week

NON PAID - Chicago
Office Manager
2 hours per week
Volunteer Coordinator (Midwest)
10 hours per month
Chief Librarian
3 hours per week
Traveling Exhibit Curator
2 hours per week



Upcoming LA&M Events

May

22-26 International Mr. Leather
Chicago, IL

June

21-29 Leather Pride and Gay Pride
New York City, NY

July

4-6 Cleaning the archives
Chicago, IL

5 Fundraiser at the Chicago Eagle
Chicago, IL

18-21 International Ms. Leather
Omaha, NE

August

1-10 Portland Leather Pride
Portland, OR

22-24 Great Lakes Leather Alliance
Indianapolis, IN

Annual Report

At the 2003 Membership Meeting, the LA&M will distribute copies of its 2002 Annual Report to Members. The Annual Report includes:

- Summary of operations and activities of the LA&M during 2002

- Recognition of donors to the LA&M during 2002, and recognition of cumulative donors to the Capital Campaign.

- Audited Financial Statements

Paper copies have been mailed to all members of the LA&M. Electronic copies are available in pdf format on the LA&M webpage. If you would like a paper copy mailed to you, please send a request in writing to the LA&M. Contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

Thank You!
Thank You!
Thank You!
Thank You!

LA&M's New Arrivals (recent acquisitions)

The LA&M collections grow nearly every day. Between the U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service, Fedex, and donors visiting in person, new donations to the collections arrive in a steady stream. Most days, the new donations are fairly small. Mr. Marcus' latest column, a contest program book, the new *Leather Journal* or the latest edition of *On Our Backs* are examples of important but small donations. Over the past several months however, the LA&M has acquired a few significant donations I would like to highlight:

Cycle MC Collection:

Cycle MC existed in New York City. The club members traveled to other MC events in the United States and

Europe often. The collection consists of banners, posters, patches and other ephemera gathered by or presented to Cycle MC. Alan Selby received the collection from a Cycle MC member. The collection was passed to Gayle Rubin, who put much energy into the collection to stabilize banners and fabrics which had collected mold. Gayle assured the collection had a safe journey from San Francisco to the archives in Chicago. The stabilized collection will be carefully monitored until it can be assessed and hopefully cleaned by a professional conservator. The LA&M is thankful for Gayle's efforts in stabilizing and transporting the collection.

Disciples of De Sade Collection:

Disciples of De Sade was a Leather / Levi club in Dallas. Their collection consists of papers related to runs, events and business files. Several artifacts including certificates of appreciation, trophies and banners are also included in the collection.

Safe, Sane and Consensual Adults (SSCA) Collection:

SSCA was a group formed after the Leather Contingent at the 1987 March on Washington. A follow up meeting was held in Dallas in 1988. NLA (National Leather Association) was eventually born out of the process. This collection includes papers from the 1987 March, the Dallas convention, and the formation of NLA.

Archiving / Cataloging the Art Collection

by Michael Donovan

The erotic art collection at the Leather Archives and Museum is currently being cataloged. This undertaking was begun in September of 2002 after Rick Storer placed an ad in the School of the Art Institute student newspaper looking for volunteers to work on the collection. As an art historian currently cataloging art for the slide library at the Art Institute, the ad caught my eye and imagination. I met with Rick and decided pretty quickly that I was interested in working with this very unique collection within the LA&M.

The collection I'm working with encompasses works in all media - drawings, prints, pastels and paintings as well as posters, commercial illustrations and even cartoons. There are simple sketches copied from magazines and incredibly detailed pencil drawings from life and the range of creators goes from amateur enthusiast to professional artist. The size, variety and scope of this collection is quite amazing.

Cataloging these works of art is pretty straightforward. Each work is given appropriate identifiers (number, title, artist, etc...) and a description. The description includes the type of



Art by David Grieger

work (drawing, print, poster, etc) , the dimensions, the media (pencil, lithograph, oil on canvas, etc.) and the artist, if known. Then I describe what the artwork actually depicts. This is often the most difficult task for me because I want to be concise, but it is from these descriptors that searches will be done, so I want to make sure I include words future researchers may be looking for (eg. bondage, leather boots, military).

Once the description is done, the work is put into either a glassine envelope or an archival plastic sleeve and placed in one of the flat files for storage.

As with other types of materials in the Leather Archive and Museum, collecting and preserving these works of art is very important. Like written material, artifacts or oral histories, works of art represent a record of a specific time, place, group of people and lifestyle. They are a visual record of a lifestyle that often relies on looking for both education and pleasure. Moreover, like written erotica, these works of art provide a space in which artists and viewers can explore fantasies and describe impulses that sometimes exceed physical possibilities and social norms. As such, they are often destroyed or censored by those who find this type of material offensive or dangerous. When an organization like the LA & M undertakes the task of preserving the history of the leather lifestyle, the importance of preserving the erotic art associated with it cannot be underestimated.

Contact Information:**Mail:**

Leather Archives & Museum
6418 North Greenview Avenue
Chicago, IL 60626

Phone:

773.761.9200

Fax:

773.381.4657

E-mail:

archives@leatherarchives.org

Donations and Tax Deductions:

The Leather Archives & Museum is recognized as tax exempt under the US Internal Revenue Service section 501c(3). Donations are deductible from your Federal Income tax subject to IRS deduction regulations.



Visiting the LA&M

The LA&M will have open visiting hours as follows:

Thursday 5 PM - 8 PM

Saturday 12 PM - 3 PM

Requests to see the museum outside of these times and requests to conduct research in the LA&M archives can be arranged by contacting the LA&M.

The LA&M Newsletter

If you have ideas or suggestions for future newsletter articles, please mail them to us, to the attention of:

Mark Collier, editor

or e-mail them to:

newsletter@leatherarchives.org

LA&M in your city

While the physical gallery and archives of the museum are located in Chicago, we seek to serve leather communities all over the world. Our board members travel to leather conferences and event weekends around the US. We currently have two travelling exhibits which also make appearances around the country. If you are an event organizer, and would like a travelling exhibit at your event, please contact Rick Storer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Notice of Meeting of the Board of Directors

Saturday Nov. 8th, 2003 at 11am

Leather Archives & Museum

6418 N. Greenview Ave.

Chicago, IL 60626

Voting members shall be notified of all Board of Directors meetings as noted above and shall have the right to attend and may participate in the directors meetings at the discretion of the Chair, however, Voting Members of the Corporation may not vote at Board of Director's meetings

I wish to become a member of the Leather Archives & Museum. Enclosed is my donation.

Name: _____

Club or Org.: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone (day or eve): _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

I will contribute:

\$30 and become a Member of the LA&M for one year

\$100 and become a Voting Member of the LA&M for one year

\$500 and become a "Full-Brick" donor to the LA&M building fund

\$600 and become a Voting Member & donor to the LA&M building fund

\$ _____ as a donation to the operation of the LA&M

I Represent

An Individual

An Organization

A Business

Please also send

Information about

a codicil to my will

Send information on

Donating Materials

Club Colors Project

Vacation Volunteers

Local Volunteering

Regional Volunteers

Major Cash Gifts

