

Leatherfest '95: Leatherfolk Gather for Hot Weekend in New Mexico

by Casey Newkirk

October is a time of festivals and celebrations in all parts of the globe. Albuquerque has had the annual International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta the first weekend of October every year for the past twenty-four.

The men and women of Sandia Leather [here] in Albuquerque have taken this annual gathering of over 600 colorful shapes that hover silently over the city to host what has become an annual event. For the past four years, the second weekend of the Fiesta has been a celebration of leather that is known as *Leatherfest*.

This year's production seems to have burst the balloon. Producer and Director Leslie Anderson (who competed in Chicago earlier this year for Int'l Ms. Leather), did a bang up job along with Contest Coordinators Gayla Worrell and Steve Weardon. Kudos, guys, for the great presentation and innovative set. We know you were beat putting on this show and you deserved every lash.

Kelly McMahan and I served as denparents for the contestants, assisting them with whatever needs and preparations arose, and Judge's slaves for the weekend were Wolf and Heather.

Judges for the two-day event were: Craig Mercer, Mr. Leather Colorado 1995 (who also presided as head judge); Sandy Carr, co-owner of Nighthawk Productions; Buddy LaRue, Mr. New Mexico Leather 1995 (who placed ninth at Int'l Mr. Leather 1995 in May); Lady Willow, our first Ms. New Mexico Leather (who placed 2nd runner-up at Int'l Ms. Leather 1995 in July); and Dominick Zurlo, Int'l Bear

1995. Tally Master was Steve Benoit, Mr. New Mexico Drummer 1993.

The contest had merchandise vendors Leather by Boots and Leather ForEver, both of Houston, as well as CJ's Leathers, and TMTC, both of Denver. All displayed and sold their quality wares and got lots of interested parties doing a bit more than just looking. (You know how some of us are when there are toys lying about.)

Also making a first-time showing and getting lots of attention was artist Leon from Phoenix, who displayed his wonderful artwork portraying various aspects of our lifestyles for all to observe.

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Shannon McAlexander & Tristan Tyler, Ms. & Mr. New Mexico Leatherfest, 1995

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Living in Leather X, or How I Spent My Columbus Day

by Diva Marie

I forked over a few hundred dollars and headed to Portland in early October, to attend the National Leather Association's LILX conference. Actually, I went to check out the N.L.A. itself; that is, to find out from the people who know if setting up an N.L.A. affiliate in New Mexico would be a good idea.

My answer: The sooner the better.

Now, as those who follow our community know, the N.L.A. has not had the best reputation for the last year or two (or, to some, three). I did not hesitate when given the opportunity to check things out for myself, and I didn't see anything to confirm or deny any rumors all weekend.

What I saw was men, women, transgenders, gays, lesbians, bi's, hets, singles, couples, dominants, submissives, switches, daddies, mommies, boys, girls, Masters, Mistresses, slaves, tops, bottoms, and other groups of leather people sharing love of their community. There was an air about the conference--call it magic, call it karma, call it good vibes--which left me only wanting more. As many people were heard to say over the weekend, "I found my home."

❖

I spent the majority of the conference working behind the scenes with Jeff Tucker and his boy, Dan, at the registration booth. Jeff is International Mr. Leather 1994, and started the "Better Together" campaign as part of his reign. Many of us here in New Mexico are indebted to him for helping emcee the New Mexico Leather contests back in March, 1995.

Jeff is the best example of the caliber of people who were involved with the conference: He's an IML titleholder and leather icon who has not quit his community. He could have very easily

Continued on page 4

Casey's Corner

by Casey Newkirk

I have been asked to write an editorial for this space. The offer is flattering, and at first I was not sure about what subject to put from ink onto paper. I will attempt to address subjects that people express an interest in, or things that people express a desire to know about. No subject is, or will be, considered to be taboo or off limits in this space, as far as I am concerned.

Since this is my first contribution to this effort, I will endeavor to express who I am, so that we may better try to understand each other.

I have been involved in various aspects of the leather/fetish community since the Summer of 1970. That's when I met my first real love, who became my lover for five years. We met at a rodeo and he tied me up, and had my way with him (yes, you read that right). I haven't been "normal" since.

It is fairly common knowledge that I have a predisposition for scenes involving ropes. While most people think that this involves some form of restraint or degree of SM, this is hardly the truth. It can involve those things, if that's what you're into, but only if you *want* to do it.

As a long-time member of [a group] of persons practicing sexual kink, I have done almost everything you could imagine, either by actively participating, or by passively watching others during their sceneplay at parties and such.

I have always had a desire to understand, and failing that, to at least try to tolerate [SM play scenes]. The emphasis [in scenes] has always been on the affection, even if by unorthodox or unconventional means. There is usually no judgement or value assessment placed on these forms of self-expression.

[The idea is:] If that is your thing, and that is what turns you on, then so be it. [What you do] may not do anything for me, personally, but if it helps you to be who you are, and it helps you enhance your experience, I am willing to consider it. After all, who am I to judge you for things that you do that don't enhance my life or experience? I certainly wouldn't want you to [judge me].

It is this fundamental aspect, the respect for a person and [other] forms of expression that I try--but sometimes fail--

to carry out in my dealings with [everyone]. My point is, *I try*. I try to live this ideal of respecting another person's sense of who they are, and how they define themselves. I try to give people the freedom to express themselves, the respect they deserve for being a human being, and the right to show their personality. I expect--no, I demand--only the same fair treatment in return. This is part of being a person, and part of being a member of the human race.

I care not for divisional descriptions based on superficial qualities. You know, those things that we use to divide ourselves into factions like gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, or via group identifications like top, bottom, dominant, submissive, club kids, drag queens, c'boys...you get the idea. Isn't it the quality of a person's character that should determine how they are treated, and not the petty surface details? Yes, surface details have some significance, but when it's all over, what really matters?

I try to show by example that we cannot survive as a species without tolerance of each other and our differ-

ences. It is those differences that make us individuals, which give us our personalities, and gives us our uniqueness, (which either attracts or repels others).

If [something] is not your "thing," be tolerant, gracious, and considerate about it, and move on. Isn't that how you want to be treated? It is how we all hope to be treated and we need to learn to practice this ideal.

I know that sometimes I fail in my striving for this, but I am only human. We all have our faults, and the goal should be [seeking] what we have in common to build upon, not finding differences to push us apart.

You don't have to understand. You don't have to accept anything you don't believe in. You don't have to do anything you are not comfortable with. You only need to breathe, and be tolerant and considerate [of others]. Think about it. How can you make your world a better place to live than whence you found it?

Live that thought.

-- CN

Up & Coming Events

Local/Regional

National

AEL (Alternative Erotic Lifestyles)-- monthly playgroup, (505) 345-6484

pat baillie, International Ms. Leather 1995, and her partner Pat visit Albuquerque November 18. (505) 275-1616

Great Plains Olympus Leather--December 8-10, Denver, CO. (303) 377-6343

South Central Olympus Leather--January 5-7, 1996, Houston, TX. (713) 523-0213

Ms. Gulf Coast Leather--January 12-14, 1996, Houston, TX. (713) 661-9829

Mr. & Ms. New Mexico Leather--March 22-24, 1996, Albuquerque, NM. (505) 275-1616

Spring Iniquity--Anniversary Five, Houston, TX, April 12-14, 1996. (713) 527-9666

Texas Leather Pride--May 3-5, 1996, Austin, TX. N.L.A.:Austin, (512) 370-4713

Pantheon of Leather--February 9-11, 1996, New Orleans, LA. *The Leather Journal*, (213) 656-5073

Leatherfest VIII--March 8-10, 1996, San Diego, CA. *Club X*, (800) 598-1859

Leatherfest L.A.--April, 1996, Los Angeles, CA. Details TBA

International Mr. Leather--May 24-27, 1996, Chicago, IL. Details TBA

International Ms. Leather 1996--July 18-21, 1996, Philadelphia, PA. *Bare Images Productions*, (402) 451-7987

Living in Leather XI--October 3-7, 1996, Portland, OR. Details TBA

Do you have an event you would like to have listed? Mail the details, including event name, date(s), where, and who to contact to the address on the back of this newsletter. Upcoming deadlines are December 15, 1995 and February 15, 1996; we reserve the right to edit for space.

Passages

Leatherfest

.....continued from page 1

Albert Kraus

Four days after completing his term as Male Co-Chair of N.L.A.: International, Albert Kraus passed on.

Albert was very much involved with the Chicago Hellfire Club. He resided and worked out of Chicago, and joined the National Leather Association as Member-at-Large and parliamentarian.

Albert replaced Chuck Higgins as N.L.A. Co-Chair while at Living in Leather VIII in Houston, TX. It turned out to be the final year, as he and Female Co-Chair K.T. Chase, as well as the Executive Council, moved to close the San Francisco N.L.A. offices, in the hopes of rebuilding the organization.

In his final year, he travelled extensively, participating in various leather and S/M events, including Texas Leather Pride IV. He was also a judge for Int'l Mr. Leather '95 and Int'l Ms. Leather '95.

Albert left the reins to Mark Frazier, who will no doubt carry on his legacy.

Thanks to the N.L.A.:Houston "Chain-Link" for details on the above. We'll miss him. -- DM

We hope to see all our vendors, and maybe many others, back for our contests in March.

Attendance was good. Many out-of-town members of various leather groups were represented, including The Satyricons of Las Vegas, Nevada; The Battalion Motorcycle Corps, and The Cowtown Leathermen. Of course the local organizations were here as well, including the New Mexico Association for People Living with AIDS (NMAPLA), the Bears of Manana, The Motorcyclemen of New Mexico (MNM's), and the host clubs of Sandia Leathermen and Sandia Leatherwomen. I know there were many others, too, both for the event and for the hot air balloons who got the extra treat of a leather weekend. I apologize for those unmentioned.

During the opening ceremonies on Friday's night, a touching and memorable tribute was made by Leslie Anderson, as Mistress of Ceremonies, to former leaders and friends of Albuquerque's leather community. Numerous small candles were placed on tables and counters throughout the establishment, and with audience participation, they were lit in

remembrance of those we have lost recently and over the past several years to AIDS, and also as a sign of support to those who are living with it. Great idea, Leslie: Start a fire, and let it burn brightly in remembrance of someone you have loved and lost.

For the first time at this October's Leatherfest, there were both men and women competing for the annual preliminary title that leads to the Mr. and Ms. New Mexico Leather competitions held in March. The contestants appeared with both men and women in numerical order from a drawing. This worked nicely, as it titillated the crowd's interest by interspersing men and women, and prolonging the desire to see personal favorites.

There were two women who competed, both for their first time. Although novices to the scene, they made a great showing in the first ever Ms. Leatherfest title contest. These remarkable women were first runner-up Bonnie, and Ms. Leatherfest 1995, Shannon McAlexander. These are the first of a new line of women visible in leather, we hope. Great show, ladies!

For the men's portion of the competition, there were five vying for this year's title. A definite growth pattern is seen here [as Mr. New Mexico Leatherfest 1994 only had three contestants]. The new Mr. Leatherfest is Tristan Tyler, an active member of the local PEP (People Exchanging Power) chapter, and he made quite an exhibit with the stunning full leather wardrobe he made himself. First runner-up was Phil Montoya, while second runner-up was Carl Clack. David Martin made his first appearance as a contestant, and for James Peters this was his second leather contest. All the contestants made a good showing on stage, especially during the Skin Show/Jock Strap portion of the presentation!

If this is the "small" leather event in New Mexico, I know lots of people are anxiously awaiting the March contests. We hope to see you here March 22-24, 1996!

Casey is a new contributor to the NewsLeather, and we didn't even have to bribe him (though I'm sure he wouldn't mind).

Serious about leather?

The Sandia Leathermen

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Public Awareness

Leather Friendship

The Sandia Leatherwomen

Sponsors of the Mr. & Ms. New Mexico Leather Contests

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c/o The Ranch
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Albuquerque, NM 87108

Living in Leather Xcontinued from page 1

gone into a quiet retirement, but Jeff lives to support leather in any way he can.

So, he volunteered to be Registrar for this year's conference. Pat baillie (International Ms. Leather 1995), and her lovely partner (Reverend and Mistress) Pat, Dan, and I helped him.

What does that mean? It means we all gave up time from workshops, dungeon parties, and vendors because we were busy signing people in, making badges, and explaining rules regarding the very events we were missing.

You won't hear a single complaint from any of us. We got to see everyone who came and went, we took our breaks to see workshops. Some of us even went to the dungeon parties anyway, and worked the booth the next day on only a couple hours of sleep. I, for one, had a great time, and I've already got my volunteer registration for LIL XI in 1996.

If you'd like one, write to me. Volunteers only have to work 12 hours for the weekend, and we get a break on registration fees. Such a deal!



The two workshops I *did* attend both had to do with helping to support my leather community. The first was "Let's Put On A Show:" *Organizing a Leather Event*, and was presented by Dean Walradt. Dean is part of the wondrous N.L.A.:Houston chapter, which is very much involved with Texas Leather Pride weekend (held each May in Austin). Dean was also the director of LIL X, so his credentials were hard to beat.

The atmosphere during this workshop was such that I'm still not sure who was actually presenting the information and who was there to receive it, but in attendance were people who could answer just about any question I've ever had about running leather events and fundraisers. We traded knowledge of scholarship organizations, corporate sponsorships, "for profit" events, AIDS fundraising, and local and national publicity. The information shared during this 90 minute seminar is going to be a big help for us here in New Mexico.

The second workshop was *Leather Relationships: Raising Children in an S/M Environment*. This was less like a



**Don Bastian and Mary Dante
Mr. & Ms. N.L.A.
International '94-'95 and...**



**David Hoffenbacher & Stacey
Mr. & Ms. N.L.A.
International '95-'96**

workshop and more like a support group. I don't have kids, but I babysit for people in my S/M family, and I wanted to find out how other parents handle it. We all went around the room and told what our situations were (Jeff Tucker took time away from registration to mediate this one). It was nice to see that the communication we share in our adult S/M relationships is not lost in our relationships with our kids. We learned so much, I can't possibly cover it here.



The vendor area for LIL X was the happening spot of the weekend. Artwork, clothing, dungeon furniture, magazines, books, and toys, Toys, TOYS! My special thanks go to Paul C Leather, for letting me wander in all weekend, *knowing* I couldn't afford those beautiful corsets; to Elizabeth Gonzalez, for showing me what a well-crafted paddle looks like; to Silver

Smoke, for being the best salespeople--not pushy, but not pushovers--I've ever encountered; and to Dave Rhodes, for the posters for Pantheon of Leather VI (see upcoming events on page 2).



I didn't get a chance to attend any of the dungeon parties, but I did get to see most of the dungeon equipment--racks, sawhorses, etc.--during the opening gala on Friday. The gala itself was held as a way of getting to know the people who were running LIL X and the Executive Committee for N.L.A.: International.

Woody Bebout was the keynote speaker for the gala, and gave a rousing speech about GLAAD (Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), and how they have gone out of their way to have the Leather community included in their activities. As Woody pointed out, we need to support them all we can, because this is the first time a national gay and lesbian organization has approached *us* about how *we* want to be presented publicly.

To find out more about GLAAD, call their national field office: (503) 224-5285.

The Mr. and Ms. N.L.A.: International contests were held Saturday night. Mistress Mir was emcee extraordinaire, and the contest judges were Mark Colter, Int'l Drummer Boy 1994; Jan Lyon, founding member of the N.L.A.; Jan Hall, activist and member of many leather organizations; Don Bastian, Mr. N.L.A.: Int'l 1995; and Mary Dante, Ms. N.L.A.: Int'l 1995. Don and Mary both gave emotional, spirit raising "stepping down" speeches, and then the announcement was made: The new Ms. N.L.A.: Int'l is Stacey of New York City; and the new Mr. N.L.A.: Int'l is David Hoffenbacher, recently of Portland, OR. They are both GREAT titleholders, and will only make our community proud!



Sunday morning, the Leather Brunch and awards were held. Besides the great food and conversation, we were treated to the annual N.L.A. awards. Chapter of the Year went to N.L.A.: Austin, a major force in the leather community, as well as host to Texas Leather Pride. The recipients of

the 1995 N.L.A. Lifetime Achievement Awards were Viola Johnson (whose lover/partner/Mistress/soulmate Jill "roasted" her for all of us), and Larry Townsend (author of *The Leatherman's Handbook*, which is our leather bible).

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Sunday evening, we were treated to an Afterglow party at *Darcelle's XV*, a Portland club dedicated to drag and all its splendor. Hosted by the new titleholders, Stacey and David, a variety show was presented for the new titleholder's travel fund. Mark Frazier, Mr. N.L.A.: Int'l '93, even did a drag number for us. (Now, someone out there has the photos, and I want one!) Even I was coaxed onstage to sing a number or two for the fundraising efforts. But I'll do almost anything to get in front of a crowd...

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Needless to say, it was a busy, tiring, amazingly wonderful weekend. I volunteer to be in charge of planning for the 1996 New Mexico group trip to Portland for LIL XI! --DM



Three lovely ladies of leather: pat baillie, International Ms. Leather 1995; Jan Lyon, founding member of the N.L.A.; and Stacey, Ms. N.L.A.: International '95-'96

Diva Marie is probably back home in Albuquerque, scaring the novices again.

Photo credits on this piece go to Lee Lambert and Bob Fifield--thanks for getting them to us! If there's anything we can do for you...at all...<grin here>

For info. on LIL XI, write:

**N.L.A.: Portland
P.O. Box 5161
Portland, OR 97208**

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New Mexico NewsLeather

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Team Sandia Leather Walks for AIDS Funding by Leslie J. Anderson

On October 22nd, Team Sandia Leather made it's first organized appearance at Albuquerque's AIDS walk. Comprised of members and friends of Sandia Leathermen and Sandia Leatherwomen, the walkers raised approximately \$700 in pledges.

Some participants were partially clad in leather, and *all* walked the full 10K, or 6.2 miles.

Leather club colors were carried all the way. The banners were for The Sandia Leathermen and *The Ranch* bar, while the Sandia Leatherwomen were represented on the vests of walkers.

Interest in the leather clubs was apparent, as more than one question was fielded by team members.

This year's AIDS walk exceeded last year's net (\$127,000) with a whopping \$141,000. That made the walk New Mexico's largest and most successful

fundraising event for 1995. Proceeds from the walk go to multiple state-wide organizations with dedicated services to people with AIDS, AIDS prevention and education, and the shaping of AIDS public policy.

-- LJA

❖

Leslie J. Anderson is an HIV+ leatherwoman who was the organizer for Team Sandia's AIDS walk participation, just one week after she produced Leatherfest weekend. Understandably, she is now on a brief vacation.

HIV+ Women's Affinity Group

1st & 3rd Saturdays - 10 to 11:30am
NMAPLA

111 Montclair S.E.

For info., call Andrea @ 266-0342

So Talk To Me

by Jeff Tucker

Show & Tell

I could not have been more pleased that so many people embraced "Better Together" during my year as International Mr. Leather. It was an honor to engage in conversation about what inclusion and acceptance meant to people around the planet.

You know, so many think that unconditional acceptance of our fellow humans means that we have to do what everyone else is doing. I believe that we can only do our best work when we are free to be ourselves and perform those activities which send our spirits soaring. Being forced to participate in activities that make us feel less than complete is an old idea for days past. And thinking that the only way is the way it used to be will only pull us down, much like the tar brought down the mighty dinosaurs.

There is enough to do fighting the forces from outside our community to keep us busy. I can't imagine anything to gain from fighting ourselves. I hear conflicts between "old guard" and "current guard," between SM players and those whose fetishes are fulfilled by the wearing of the leather alone. Jockeying for position between the Drag community and the Leather community, both of which are proclaimed "black sheep" of the Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual communities.

Well, I have a new idea! To continue my crusade, I want to help individuals and communities see the power of diversity and the joys that grow from acceptance. I am working on ideas to publish in words and photographs, examples of the positive impacts experienced by members of our community from working together.

Please write to me, and share your stories of how working together made your life better. Or when working together made an event better. Perhaps you have a dream that you would like to share. If you have pictures to illustrate your point, I would love to see them.

Meanwhile, play with whom you want. Have sex with whomever you choose. Live with that person who makes you soar, on your own terms. Live wherever your heart calls home. Hang

Psst....hey!

Ever wanted to see your name in print?

This is the space where we showcase *your* talent. So send us that poem you wrote about how you want to spank the girl next door, or a drawing of your favorite boy all bound up and smiling. Cartoons, favorite quotes. We don't ask for copyright, we'll print your name (or not, if you request it) and nothing is taboo here.

What are you waiting for?

"Respect cannot be learned, purchased, or acquired. It can only be earned."

Unknown

"Any child can tell you that the sole purpose of a middle name is so he can tell when he's *really* in trouble."

Dennis Fakes

out where you feel most empowered. Please, do all of the things that feed your spirits. Be the *you* that only *you* know how to be. Allow the same in others.

If we are happy and fulfilled, we can only become stronger. Help others see who we are and understand us, one at a time; you don't have to talk to the masses to get the job done. The day will come when we will be looked up to for living our truth and walking our talk.

Respect yourself, respect others and you will be respected.

Go ahead, make my day, please share your thoughts, your stories, and your images with me:

▼
Jeff Tucker
1284 Prevost Street
San Jose, CA 95125
▼

Thanks to Jeff for the okay to reprint. And if you don't remember that, Jeff, it's too late to recant now, so you'll just have to come out here and....visit.

"Why don't lesbians wear makeup or diet? It's too hard to eat Jenny Craig with Mary Kaye on your face."

*Darcelle, of Darcelle's XV
LIL X Afterglow Party*

"The only 'normal' people are the ones you don't know very well."

Joe Ancis

"Whoever called it 'necking' was a poor judge of anatomy."

Groucho Marx

"Is it supposed to hurt?"

Overheard at an S/M Party

"Don't hassle me...I have a Daddy for that!"

Dan's boy button (by Jeff Tucker)

"Not all gay bashers use a fist or a weapon. Some use a pen or a camera."

GLAAD flyer (seen at LIL X)



C. Brooks, 1995

"Edgeplay with Complete Abandon"

Albuquerque's 24 Carat Diamond.....C.J., That Is!

Albuquerque's very own **C.J. Diamond** is celebrating 20 years as a female illusionist and performer.

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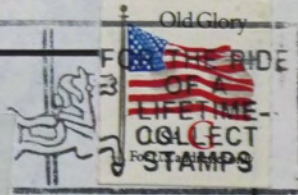
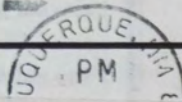
Call for an appointment (505) 841-1850 Ext. 3900#



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