

# THE <sup>2<sup>nd</sup></sup> LINK



Issue #143

Fall 2021

MAGAZINE



*Living In  
Leather  
Winners  
Announced*

**History of Sex  
Toys**

*The Origin of  
Safe, Sane, and  
Consensual*

**Only Fans  
Sex Workers  
Explore Money  
Making  
Alternatives**

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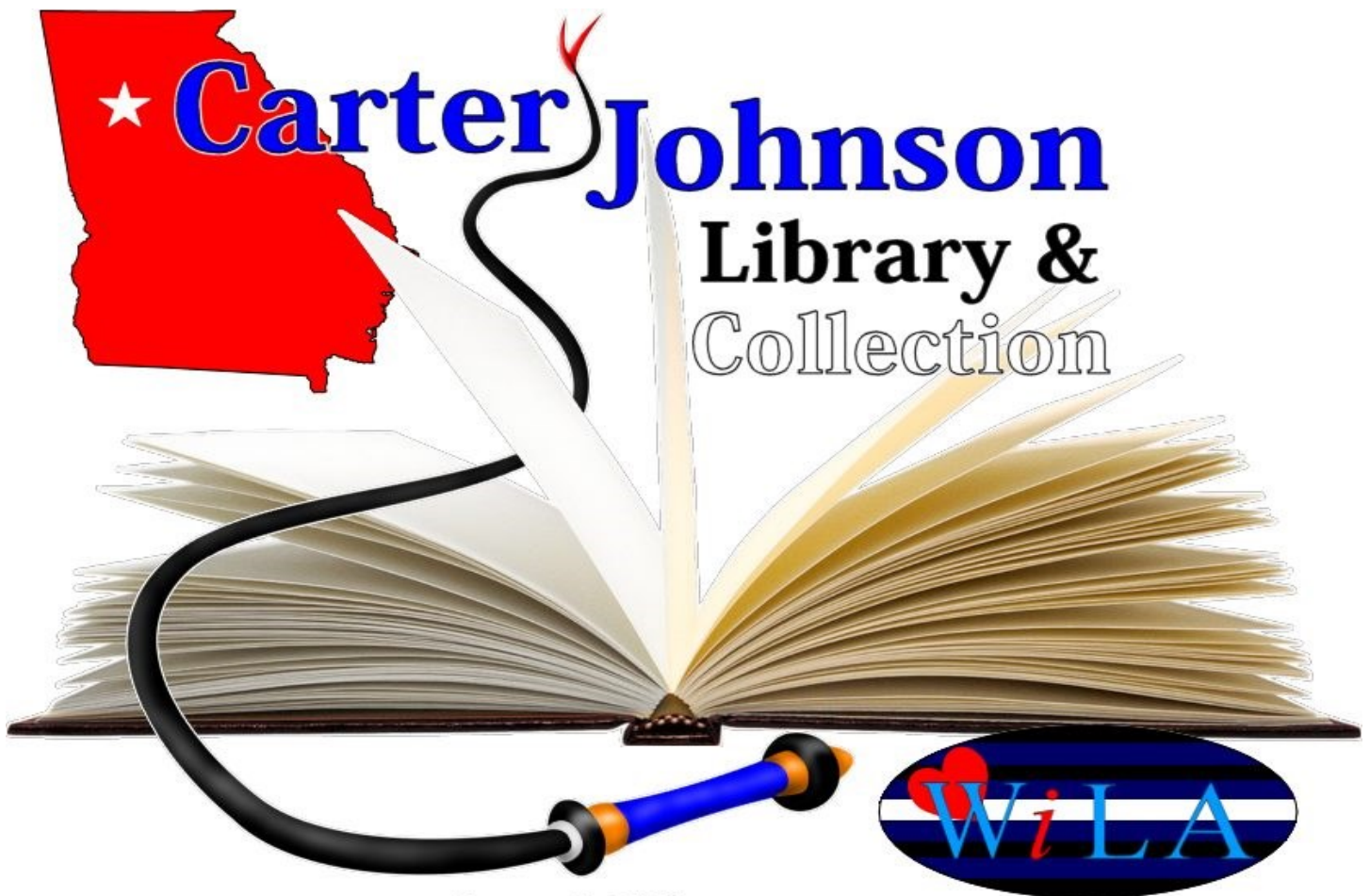


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# THE 2<sup>nd</sup> LINK

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear NLA-Members,

We had an amazing time seeing and interacting with you at Living in Leather 35! Thank you all for participating. This year, Brian, NLA-I Treasurer, and I came to visit NLA-San Antonio for their Leather & Lace event. We made the events back-to-back and so much fun was had by all!

Award plaques have been made and will be sent out to the perspective writers and activists! It was great seeing and interacting with the writers and activists in real time! Congratulations to all the award winners!

NLA-International made plans to have a float in the Atlanta Pride Parade, unfortunately, due to the increasing COVID-19 infections rates, the Atlanta Pride Committee decided to cancel this year's activities. Please be safe and get vaccinated, so that we all can get back together for fun activities.

This year, we shall open up nominations for the Vice President and Treasurer position in November. A separate announcement will be sent out to all members of the Association. Please send nominations to [president@nla-international.com](mailto:president@nla-international.com).

Nominations for writing and artist entries will be opened in November, as well. Correspondence will be sent in this regard.

In Leather,

Sir John

NLA-International President





# Letter from the EDITOR

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR!  
Happy Autumn you kinky fuckers!

I don't know about you, but after a long four months of scorching temps and sweating in places we'd rather not mention, I am ready for cool weather, pumpkin spice, sexy/spooky Halloween costumes and football.

A lot has happened with the Second Link in just the last few months, and I can't muster adequate words to explain how excited I am about it all. From our new website build, to an incentive for our writers and photographers, to additional publications catered to our different lifestyle interests, it's a great time to be kinky.

This will be our last issue hosted on the main National Leather Association-International website. Thanks to our website guru, Vince Andrews, and host with the most, Sir Candi-Anne, The Second Link will be published on its very own website starting in December! Keep an eye out for a link in our social media posts.

We are always accepting writer and artist submissions for the Second Link. If you are a creative and would like to see your work in an international publication, please submit your erotic short fiction, poetry, and art. Please shoot me an email at [publications@nla-international.com](mailto:publications@nla-international.com) and I will send you information and an application.

We are now on Instagram!! Our new NLA account is full of history about the organization as well as news and updates. Our Second Link magazine is for those on the creative side who wish to see and read everything erotic. Look for those accounts to pick up again in November and don't forget to follow!

The Second Link is looking to expand its readership and we are doing that through verticals. For those who don't know, a vertical is a specialized publication used to enhance the main magazine. Beginning in Spring 2022, we will be premiering our TNG and M/s verticals. I am hopeful that both a Polyamory and a BLUF publication will debut in the Winter of next year. Again, you can find updates on our social media accounts.

We are still looking for an editor for our M/s publication, so if you are interested, please send me a letter of interest.

If you are looking for free marketing opportunities, you may want to take note that our December issue is the last issue where we will be offering free advertising for everyone. If you have an event coming up between January and March, you'll want to send us your ad by November 31st. Our new ad rates will be published online when the new website goes live. Of course, our membership will continue to have their ads posted free of charge for as long as they are a member of the NLA-I.

This issue of The Second Link comes just after our 35th annual Living in Leather awards ceremony. That being said, take a look inside as we announce the winners and spotlight some of their work. We also have boy bradley's detailed Folsom experience as he visits post COVID lockdown, and the history of sex toys by Melissa Agaton. Lillith Foxx gives us an inside look into her submission, we go over an exciting update on the legalities of kink, and I speak to several sex workers about their plans after the latest censorship scare.



This magazine is I am infinitely proud of the work that the Link team put into this and every issue. We hope you enjoy it.

*10*  
*alagna Munster*



# NLA-INTERNATIONAL

The NLA International is a fraternal organization of leather women and men with a common goal and a common mission.

The NLA International is a Pansexual group of people dedicated to the progress of BDSM and fetish around the world.

Join our family and become part of our legacy.

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PHOTO BY COOKIE ANDREWS-HUNT

Our Founder Steve Maidhof & first female Co-Chair Vik Stump



A BRIEF

# HISTORY

OF SEX TOYS



by Melinda Agaton

Sex toys are not a 21<sup>st</sup> or a 20<sup>th</sup> century invention. As much as the Puritans, conservative religious doctrines, and the Victorian era tried to scare us about our sexual desires, we have never been without means to satisfy our natural urges. Whether the urges be lived out with another person or alone, we have always been innately sexual. The earliest sex toy can be dated back to 29000 B.C. Archeologist Petra Kieselbach discovered a paleolithic stone phallus in Hohle Fels Cave, which is in southwestern Germany. There was speculation whether it was an idol or a sex toy, but the detailed phallic shape strongly suggests it was used as a sex toy.

Around 500 B.C., Ben Wa Balls came into the picture and were meant to help both men and women. For men, it was meant to enhance penetration. For women, it was a means to strengthen pelvic muscles. In 300 B.C., the Greeks sold items called olisbos, which of course, were dildos. The word Oslisbos is

derived from a Greek word meaning “to slip or glide.” They were constructed from stone and leather. They were purchased, mostly, by single women, but it’s safe to assume men bought them as well. Ironically, here in the State of Texas, there is still a law on the books against anyone owning six or more dildos at any given time...just a side note.

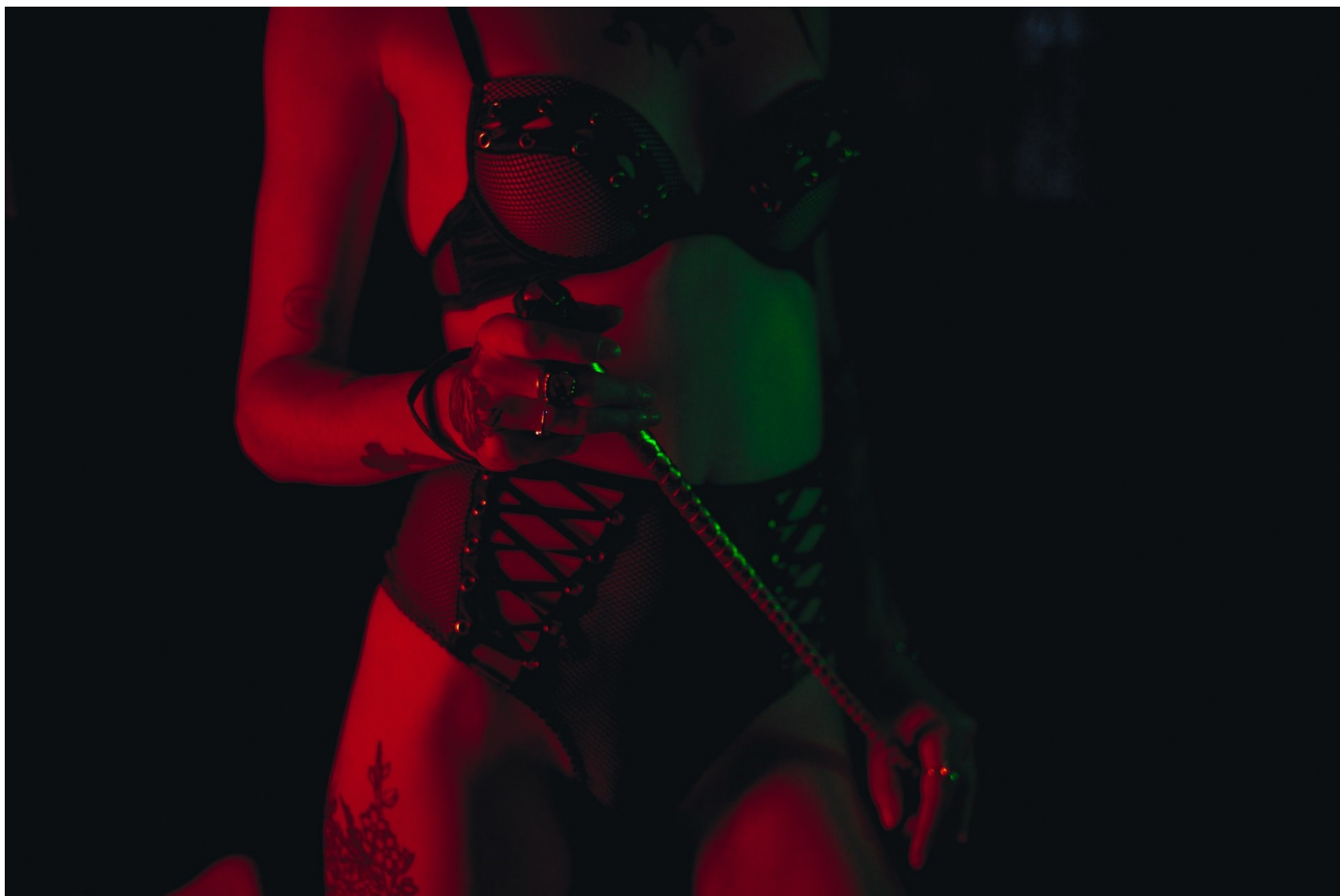
By the year 1200, the earliest double-headed dildos can be traced to China. Of course, double headed dildos have many uses, but it started out being for use between two women. By the 1400s, the Renaissance in Italy was in full swing. The word oslibos evolved into the word diletto. The word diletto appropriately means “delight.” Lubricants were also developing during this period. Diletto were used with olive oil. Fortunately, as we know in the current day, olive oil has amazing benefits whether it is ingested or absorbed. It created a most pleasing penetration with the diletto.

By the mid 18-century, the French developed the vibrator. Ironically, they were available from medical instrument supplies in the American colonies, which is peculiar since we have been taught how conservative and judgmental the early colonies were. Despite being expensive, they were available to any person who had the cash. By 1844, Inventor Charles Goodyear discovered how to vulcanize rubber. This would not only go on to benefit cars, but the sex toy industry. It made sex toys more durable. By 1869, Dr. George Taylor, an American, created a steam and foot/hand crank device. He named the machine the "Manipulator," and it was a wheel that pushed a rod. A person could either stand against the padded rod or sit against the surface to receive the vibrations.

Would you believe as early as the 1890s, porno flicks were being produced? The invention of the motion picture was cutting edge at the time, and it didn't take long before people began filming women using dildos, massagers, and strap ons. By the turn of

the century and we trudged forward into the 1900, there were more than 20 different types of vibrators. They either ran on electricity, batteries, or foot or waterpower. It's difficult to imagine being in the middle of masturbating and having to peddle to keep the momentum going. However, vibrators were electrified before the vacuum cleaner or iron. It's difficult to believe, but during that era, vibrators were advertised in such magazines as Good Housekeeping and McClure's. Moving on to the year 1917...it was a good year for everyone as it was the year KY Jelly was invented. They were used in medical procedures until 1980 when they were made available over the counter. Of course, lubricants were evolving right along with sex toys during this entire period of time.

The 1930s brought the Great Depression to our country, however, vibrators and sex toys continued their evolution. There were more pornographic movies that showed vibrators being used. The editors and publishers of made magazines became aware



these vibrators were more than massagers. Therefore, they began to remove the advertisements from mainstream magazines. Despite this being a difficult time for our country, rubber latex was discovered. Rubber latex is by tapping the Hevea tree. The rubber was found to be softer and easier to work with than vulcanized rubber. It would go on to be used for both diaphragms and condoms. It wasn't until 1971 that formal workshops on masturbation for women were developed. Fortunately, masturbation, particularly clitoral stimulation with a vibrator was shown to cure hysteria in women, which they realized was not a disorder at all. 1971 was the year Betty Dodson came to fame with her teachings on masturbation. Her Magic Wand is still legendary.

One year later, on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1972, the classic movie *Deep Throat* was released. This was the movie that helped adult films become mainstream. The 1970s saw the rise and infamy of adult theaters. Sex toys continued to evolve and grow in popularity as the movies did. In 1974, *Hustler* magazine came into circulation. Larry Flynt never hesitated to keep the free flow of advertising for sex toys, lubrication, dolls, and all devices we have come to appreciate. The old mail order system allowed us to receive toys without fear of judgement. I recall ordering toys back in the 1980s and whether it was Adam & Eve or Doc Johnson, they had impeccable discretion with delivery. Along with toys, VHS videotapes could easily be ordered to accompany the toys and make for a fabulous weekend. With the invention of the internet, sex toys and videos are available as readily as Amazon. Today, sex toys are a 33.6-billion-dollar industry. According to [Grandviewresearch.com](http://Grandviewresearch.com), the sex toy industry is expected to expand and grow at a rate of 8.04% by 2028. We have come a long way since stone phalluses, so enjoy yourself!



## Chaos Muse

By: Lilith Foxx

My chaos muse

My wildflower

My beauty of the  
damned

I say "my", but she is  
untamed fire

Licking my skin but not burning.

# COMING SOON

SECOND LINK VERTICALS

POWER  
EXCHANGE  
RELATIONSHIPS

SPRING 2022

TNG

SECOND LINK  
VERTICALS

TNG

## NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT

### Elvira, Mistress of the Dark, Reveals Long Time Girlfriend After 20 Year Relationship

Cassandra Peterson — best known to the world as Elvira, Mistress of the Dark — released her new memoir *Yours Cruelly, Elvira* today and, in the process, came out by revealing her 19-year relationship with another woman, Teresa “T” Wierson.

Twenty years ago, the hyper-femme queen of late-night horror spotted who she thought at the time was the hottest bad boy in Tinseltown. “Often, when I was doing my pre workout warm-up on the treadmill, I couldn’t help noticing one particular trainer — tan, tattooed, and muscular — stalking across the gym floor, knit cap pulled so low over his long brown hair that it nearly covered his eyes,” she writes in the book. “Dark and brooding, he gave off such intense energy that when he crossed the enormous gym floor, the waters parted, and people stopped in their tracks to stare.”

It wasn’t until they had a chance encounter in the ladies’ room that she realized her “bad boy” was really a “bad girl” and the two soon became close, albeit platonically.

Peterson describes the rainy night Wierson showed up at her door, in need of support and a place to stay following a breakup and a stint in rehab. Peterson herself was recently separated from musician Mark Pierson at the time. The two women moved in together, offering each other mutual support.

The attraction that developed took Peterson by sur-



prise, she writes. “I was stunned that I’d been friends with her for so many years and never noticed our chemistry,” Peterson recalls. “I soon discovered that we connected sexually in a way I’d never experienced.”

Peterson admits she hesitated to reveal the relationship for many years for fear of alienating or disappointing fans of Elvira.

“At this point in my life, I’ve got to be truthful about who I am,” Peterson writes in *Yours Cruelly, Elvira: Memories of the Mistress of the Dark*, as *The Advocate* reported.

Although the couple was out to family and friends, the book marks Peterson’s first public acknowledgment of her relationship. “I’m happy and relieved to finally allow our secret to see the light of day,” Peter-

son writes in the book.

## Atlanta Walk For AIDS Returns Post COVID Shut Downs

The 30th annual AIDS Walk Atlanta & Music Fest returned to Piedmont Park on Sept. 25th after having been canceled last year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The event, which usually attracts thousands of participants, is the Southeast’s largest AIDS related fundraising event. Bringing attention to this important issue, it raises money to assist in educating and inspiring the community to work together and end the epidemic once and for all for the nearly 40,000 people living with HIV in Atlanta.

The 2021 AIDS Walk Atlanta and Music Festival



raised nearly \$318,000 to support and care for Georgians living with HIV/AIDS. The following organizations will or have benefitted from the walk:

- AID Atlanta
- A Vision for Hope
- Center for Black Women’s Wellness
- Center for Pan Asian Community Services
- Jerusalem House

- National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities
- Open Hand
- Positive Impact Health Centers
- Someone Cares
- Thrive SS

Aside from minor snafus, the walk was extremely successful with perfect weather and picturesque views. The walk began later than expected, but fun was had by all. Congresswoman Nikema Williams gave an inspiring speech, and Front Row Yogi led the warm-up into the event.

The walk ended with a free concert by Atlanta hip hop artist Ludacris and Florida native Sevyn Streeter. The news came amid waves of musicians showing support for the LGBTQ+ community and for people living with HIV/AIDS in the aftermath of rapper Da Baby’s homophobic rant during Miami’s Rolling Loud music festival.

Ludacris’ involvement in AIDS Walk Atlanta sent a major message of support for LGBTQ+ fans at a serious confluence in the music industry.

## Queer Icons Take the VMA Red Carpet



Last night, MTV celebrated the 40th Anniversary of their Video Music Awards, and it turned out to be perhaps the most ostentatious award show since the pandemic started. (Host Doja Cat at one point joyously dressed up like a “worm.”)

But what’s the point of an award show if not to be over the



top? To announce winners? THAT could have been sent in an email.

Thankfully, the VMAs seem to know the power of living out loud, particularly for queer people. From Lil Nas X's lavender red carpet moment to Normani grinding on Teyana Taylor, this year's show featured no end of queer glee -- and here are our favorite queer moments from the night.

There's something to be said about Billy Porter introducing Lil Nas X's performance in true Pray Tell fashion—both openly gay, black artists. As Porter reminisces a time where “black boy joy” was not embraced by the masses, we can't help but realise how far we've come, and how far more we still have to go.

2. “First I wanna say thank you to the gay agenda, let's go gay agenda!” Lil Nas X cheerily shouted out the shadowy gay forces that catapulted him to international fame during his acceptance speech for VMA Video of the Year. Later, during his performance onstage, took time to spotlight the HIV epidemic in the southern United States. He invited Mardresq Harris, director of community investments for the Southern AIDS Coalition, to join him during his performance, where he wore a black top with the number 433,816 emblazoned in red on the back. According to GLAAD, this number represents the number of people living with HIV in the region — one of the hardest hit in the country, where 52% of all new HIV diagnoses occur. An overwhelming majority of which are among Black men who have sex with men, according to the CDC.



3. The IT moment of the night... When Teyana Taylor was first wheeled onto the stage, the pieces started falling into place. The metallic silver outfits. The St. Andrews cross. Paying homage to Aaliyah and Janet Jackson Normani's instantly iconic performance of her new single, “Wild Side” feature Cardi B who didn't show up to the awards show. Instead, Normani performed solo, incorporating a seductive aerial lap dance on Taylor. We're not mad.

## OP-ED



### Pretty Little Thing

#### The Objectification of Drag Performers

by Lillith Foxx

The clacking of heels and the glint of gems turned every head in the bar. I saw her and I was entranced – I knew I had to speak to her. As I walked up to the captivating and vibrantly bejeweled Sister Zsa Zsa Galor, Mistress of Novices of the Space City Sisters chapter of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, I fixated on the intricately crafted elements of her costume and performance. She was beautiful. Her makeup was flawless, her jewelry and costume were perfect. I had to compliment her, ask her advice on contour, admire her colorful headdress, and scream “YAS QUEEN!” from the heavens. I saw her for what I needed her to be, not for what and who she actually was – a concept drag performers are unfortunately not unfamiliar with. “Treat her like a person, and just be cool.” My inner rational mind kicked me in the gut at the eleventh hour, so I said “Hi.”, shook her hand, and introduced myself.

Over the course of several weeks, Zsa Zsa and I would speak at length about drag performance and the vessel of a persona that she found and carefully crafted. Drag was a liberating expression of art and the human experience – both to her and her audience. She could embody a facet of herself that her “vanilla” side, all

too longingly, sought to express. It was in this expression that she could create a space where others could safely embody theirs. It was how she told her story, and enticed others to do the same. She set the stage for her performance and for their journey of discovery.

Why then, in this beautifully symbiotic liberation of the self, did it at times, feel *exhausting*? She spoke of times where if it wasn't for her Sisters or a prior commitment that she made, she would have rather stayed at home for the night. “You're objectified.” I said, and immediately her eyes widened in epiphany. She exclaimed loudly “Yes!” and she spoke of times where her consent was not factored, where people would speak to her of personal matters with no boundaries or regard for hers, where her emotional labor was expended – or expected to be – with no consideration for whether she could take the burden. “Why do it?” I asked, and her eyes softened as she



told me she wouldn't change it for the world. Her story poured out; emotions heavy, and with a deep sigh she smiled, contented....

It is important to consider that drag performers bear a substantial burden. Their ostentatious identities and characterizations are meant to set the bar high so that anyone can feel safe to express themselves to their comfort level or just outside of it. They are pioneers in creating a more beautiful and accepting world around us, yet we forget that they too fight invisible battles.

Drag is not consent. Just say "Hi."

*The Space City Sisters' mission is to engage with the LGBTQ+ community in promoting diversity, bringing awareness to social causes and promoting safer sex practices while spreading universal joy and helping to expiate shame, guilt, and self-hatred. To learn more about them, visit: <https://www.spacecitysisters.org/>*

Please consider donating via PayPal to treasurer@spacecitysisters.org

## **REVISED MODEL PENAL CODE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN LAW INSTITUTE**

It may be old news, but the excitement of it remains. This past June, The American Law Institute (ALI) approved the revised Model Penal Code on Sexual Assault, which decriminalizes BDSM activities in connection with sexual penetration, oral sex, or sexual contact.

Dick Cunningham, the National Coalition for Sexual Freedoms's Legal Counsel and member of the ALI, says, "The Model Penal Code on Sexual Assault (including unwanted or injurious contact), approved by the prestigious American Law Institute at its June meeting, is a milestone in the law's understanding of BDSM and a major advance in the treatment of consent as the cen-

tral element by which sexual contact is to be judged. The National Coalition for Sexual Freedom has been deeply involved in the ALI process for over 6 years and is recognized in the ALI's report for its many contributions."

Consent as it is practiced in the BDSM communities is accurately reflected in Section 213.10 of the MPC, with "Explicit Prior Permission" preventing criminal prosecution of activities that are truly consensual and do not result in serious injury. Permission is "explicit" when it is personally given, orally or by written agreement, along with:(a) specifying that the actor may ignore the other party's expressions of unwillingness or other absence of consent;(b) identifying the specific forms and extent of force, restraint, or threats that are permitted; and(c) stipulating the specific words or gestures that will withdraw the permission.

Cunningham has been assisting in the revision of the Model Penal Code on Sexual Assault as part of NCSF's Consent Counts project, helping to establish this legal framework that acknowledges the use of safewords, protecting those who use them properly, and equipping prosecution for when they are violated or when serious harm is done. Survivors who are sexually assaulted during kink activities also may now be covered by "rape shield" laws, meaning that their prior sexual behavior with others generally can't be used as evidence, reducing exposure to possible stigma attached to kink activities. "Without this change, BDSM practices, even when consensual, might still be violating the law," says Susan Wright, Spokesperson for NCSF. "In fact, there is not a single appellate court decision in the U.S. that has accepted consent as a defense in an assault or abuse prosecution arising from BDSM conduct. This case law has established that using nipple clamps or dripping hot wax on someone constitutes 'serious bodily injury,' when in reality, these are relatively mild activities."

The new MPC on Sexual Assault includes a general



definition of consent for sexual activity, in which consent may be inferred from behavior—both action and inaction—in the context of all the circumstances. Neither verbal nor physical resistance is required to establish that consent is lacking, however consent is ineffective when given by a person who is incompetent to consent or under circumstances precluding the free exercise of consent.

—KINKYCAST



NLA-International, a leading organization for activists in the pansexual leather community, announced the winners for excellence in literary awards in SM/Leather/fetish writing published in 2020.

The judges received a great number of nominations this year and judging in most categories was quite difficult with such exemplary pieces of writing.

These are the winners of this year's Living in Leather Literary Award:

1. Rachel Kramer Bussel: John Preston Short Fiction Award for Necessary Roughness.
2. Juby Arriola-Headley: Samoia Poetry Award for Original Kink.

3. Jane Boon: Pauline Reage Fiction Novel Award for Edge Play.

Congratulations to our winning authors. Our judges thoroughly enjoyed reading your works.

The winners of this year's Living in Leather Activism Awards are:

1. NLA-OKC for Chapter of the Year.
2. Leather Heart Foundation for the Jan Lyon Local Dedication Award
3. slave phil: Master/slave Lifestyle Podcast for the Steve Maidoff International/National Dedication Award.
4. Barking Leather for the Vice President Award for Brotherhood and Appreciation.
5. Tom of Finland Foundation for the President Award for Brotherhood and Appreciation
6. Brian Dawson for the Living in Leather Lifetime Achievement Award.

There were no nominations for artists awards this year.

Next quarter, The Second Link will be publishing interviews with each of our winners. Please look out for the issue in December.



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<b>Domestic Violence Project</b>	<a href="mailto:dvp@livinginleather.net">dvp@livinginleather.net</a>

# SAFE, SANE, CONSENSUAL

BY SLAVE DAVID STEIN

under the Guardianship of Master Steve Sampson

Taken from the Leather History Group

History is what happens while you're doing something else-- and it may not be until years later that you discover what you did was "historic." When i agreed in mid-1983 to be part of a committee of GMSMA (Gay Male S/M Activists) charged with drafting a new "statement of identity and purpose" for the two-year-old organization, i had no idea that the lasting significance of our work would be reduced to a single phrase: "safe, sane, and consensual S/M." Today GMSMA is the world's largest S/M organization for men and one of the oldest and most respected S/M organizations of any sort. Yet there are thousands -- perhaps tens of thousands? -- of kink-lovers all over North America and around the world who have no idea what the letters "GMSMA" stand for.

But they do know "safe sane consensual." Those words appear on T-shirts, on Web sites, in personal ads, in the bylaws and foundation statements of hundreds of organizations, on porn videos, in virtually every kink magazine, in every book or pamphlet or instructional video produced for kink-curious audiences. It's become a cliché, and some people are heartily sick of it -- but no one has yet proposed an alternative that rolls off the tongue as easily, covers so many bases, or boasts nearly the same degree of acceptance. Blame me for it, if you like. The August 1983 report of that GMSMA committee represents the earliest use of the phrase anyone has found, and it seems very likely that i was its author.

The statement of purpose we drafted began, "GMSMA is a not-for-profit organization of gay males in the New York City area who are seriously interested in safe, sane, and consensual S/M." This wording was adopted without change by the Board of Directors on August 17, 1983, and since that fall the sentence has appeared in every GMSMA brochure and membership application as well as in most program schedules, newsletters, and other literature. The only changes made over the years have been

to drop the reference to New York City and to replace "males" with "men."

Both of the other members of the committee, Martin Berkenwald and Bob Gillespie, are now dead, but a few months before his death last year, Bob said he thought it was me who came up with the formulation. It does seem likely: i produced most of GMSMA's key early documents, and i'm sure i was the only one of the three of us to come to our meeting with a complete draft ready for comment. Martin and Bob critiqued what i'd written, and we made revisions on the spot until we came up with something we all liked. Frankly, i don't remember who contributed what, but "safe, sane, and consensual S/M" certainly sounds like my style. Other pieces i wrote in the years just before refer to "consensual vs. involuntary S/M," and i was always keenly interested in drawing a line between the kind of sadomasochistic sexuality that ethical people can support (at least if they are also broad-minded and unprejudiced) and the kind of abusive, exploitative, coercive activity they rightly condemn.

## THE PAST RECAPTURED

It seems obvious to me now that "safe" and "sane" derived from the good old American practice of urging people to have a "safe and sane" 4th of July celebration. i heard that exhortation every year while growing up, and it stuck. It stuck with Tony DeBlase, too, and appears in an unsigned essay he wrote for the Chicago Hellfire Club's Inferno 10 (1981) run book: "In 1980 the following was adopted as the club's statement of purpose: '. . . to provide education and opportunities for participation in S&M sex among consenting adult men and to foster communication among such individuals.' 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."

Since Inferno 10 was the first Inferno i attended, and it made a big impression on me, Tony's words may have reminded me of "safe and sane," and even suggested the association with "consensual." But the GMSMA statement was the first place the three terms were actually conjoined. As a kid, what i took "Have a safe and sane 4th" to mean was something like, "Have a good time, but don't be stupid and burn down the house or blow your hand off." A couple of decades later, that seemed to fit S/M just fine. What we meant by "safe and sane S/M" in 1983, and what i believe GMSMA and most other organizations still mean by it today, is something like, "Have a good time, but keep your head and understand what you're doing so you don't end up dead or in the hospital -- or send someone else there." Possibly the echo of a familiar phrase explains why so many other kinky Americans have also felt immediately comfortable with "safe, sane, and consensual S/M," which still isn't nearly as popular in Europe or elsewhere as it is in the U.S. even aside from the issue of language.

#### SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE

Clearly, GMSMA's use and dissemination of the phrase through the mid-1980s laid the groundwork for its later explosive spread. And the fuse was lit when the Community Involvement Committee (GMSMA's political arm), chaired by Barry Douglas, decided in late 1986 to use a streamlined form of it as the slogan for the S/M-Leather Contingent in the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights (it didn't become the S/M-Leather-Fetish Contingent until the 1993 March on Washington). Barry is also no longer with us, but i was a member of that committee, too, and when we commissioned a 20-foot-wide banner for the march bearing the words "Safe Sane Consensual," the bomb was set. It didn't hurt, either, that they also appeared on the T-shirts produced for the event or that for the entire day before the march the same banner hung across the stately portico of the government building on Constitution Avenue that hosted the contingent's huge S/M-Leather Conference.

That weekend thousands of men and women from all over the U.S. and many foreign countries read those words, identified with them, and took the memory of them back to their local communities. The rest is history -- and commentary. Let me give a little of both. GMSMA's Community Involvement Committee chose "safe sane consensual" as the slogan for the contingent and the conference because we felt these words were the best sound bite to distinguish the kind of sexual expression we were marching in support of from the typical association of S/M with harmful, antisocial, predatory behavior. While no one at our meetings felt that "safe sane consensual" was the last word on

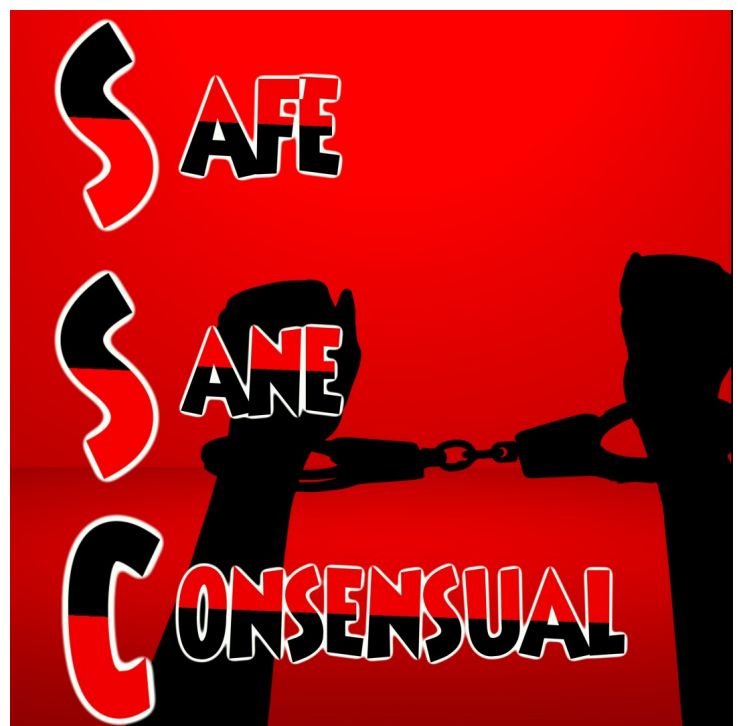
the subject, or that it "defined" S/M, we felt it did the job that needed done: to say to anyone coming to us with a stereotypically negative view based on lurid headlines and exploitative movies (we all remembered Cruising), "That's not what we're about."

We had no idea the slogan would have the success it did, or that so many people would take it as more than a starting point. But if it hadn't been spontaneously embraced by so many people, because they felt it fit what they were doing, or wanted to do, it wouldn't have had such "legs." There was no way that GMSMA, or anyone else, could have imposed the slogan on the community if most people hadn't liked it.

#### MISUSE OF A SLOGAN

The understandable popularity of the slogan has a downside, however. Those with few or no roots in the struggle to bring S/M out of the shadows -- who take for granted today's world of BDSM clubs in every large town and kinky images all over the mass media -- tend to apply the slogan in a simplistic way, even using it as a stick to beat anyone whose style of play offends them for whatever reason. The implication is that whatever is safe, sane, and consensual is good, and whatever isn't is bad, which goes far beyond what we intended back in 1987. In 1987, we were trying to draw a line between what is clearly defensible, in terms of both social structures and personal well-being, and what is either indefensible or at least very questionable.

It was a conscious, deliberate attempt to shift the debate onto



grounds where we thought we could win, instead of having to keep proving we weren't serial killers, spouse beaters, and child abusers. Of course, the morality of such a strategy depends on who is left out. The organized gay-rights movement has been accused many a time of marginalizing those who don't fit a "respectable" or "straight-acting" image, and in some cases that's a fair objection. But when it came to choosing a slogan for the S/M-Leather Contingent in the 1987 march, that wasn't our intention. People who rejected "safe sane consensual" principles weren't exactly clamoring to join our organizations or march in our parades. Such people, we thought, tended to be loners and to exclude themselves by crossing any line that anyone else draws; they thrive in the shadows, not the light. Of course, once an idea is reduced to a slogan that fits on buttons, T-shirts, and bumper stickers, no one can control its meaning.

Each person who sees it interprets it with whatever prejudices and preconceptions he or she brings to it. While it's evident that thousands of people have taken "safe sane consensual" as a welcome validation for a type of sexuality still considered "sick" or "crazy" by much of our society, others read it as devaluing their own "edgeplay" in favor of cautious, conventional, and completely scripted sex games. Sometime after the 1987 march, at least one prominent member of the S/M community was seen wearing a T-shirt emblazoned "Unsafe Insane Nonconsensual," and i have seen that phrase used elsewhere. i have also heard and read more thoughtful criticisms of the slogan.

The more popular and widespread it has become, the more common it is to see it angrily rejected as either trivially empty, too far removed from what makes BDSM exciting and meaningful, or else menacingly intrusive -- representing yet another attempt to force individual styles of living and loving into a boring conformity. Which is it? Both? Neither?

#### CONTEXT IS THE KEY

Let's return to the origin and look at the full statement of purpose GMSMA adopted in 1983:

"GMSMA is a not-for-profit organization of gay males 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 males, whether they desire a total lifestyle or an occasional adventure, whether they are just coming out into S/M or are long

"Our regular meetings and other activities attempt to build a sense of community by exploring common feelings and con-

cerns. 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."

Note that this first use of "safe, sane, and consensual" occurred in a context that also included concepts like community, responsibility, tradition, education, and gay liberation. Moreover, the rubric "safe, sane, and consensual" itself was explicitly presented as embracing all degrees of commitment, from "a total lifestyle" to "an occasional adventure," as well as S/M practitioners ranging from novices to veterans. In other words, the strategy was not to try to redefine "S/M" itself as inherently "safe, sane, and consensual," something that seems all too common today. Neither those of us who drafted the statement nor GMSMA's board were that naive. We knew that the full range of real-life S/M -- briefly defined as sexual arousal or gratification through the infliction or suffering of pain, bondage, or humiliation -- can embrace much that is unsafe, insane, and nonconsensual by anyone's standards. S/M involves powerful emotions and intense vulnerability, and it can be scary stuff.

This must not be forgotten or swept under the rug in the quest for social acceptance. The "dark side" of S/M -- the injuries, the abuse, the exploitation, the violence -- was well known to us back in the early 1980s because we were still close to it. We hadn't already had two decades of S/M education and activism, which sometimes have the effect of making it seem like a flogging, tit piercing, or mummification are routine activities for a first date. We all knew about bottoms who'd been traumatized, or tops who'd gone berserk and sent someone to the hospital. The emerging iconography of S/M in Drummer magazine and elsewhere was very edgy, very "noncon."

In the early 1980s, as again today in certain circles, being known as "dangerous" was more of a badge of honor than a liability. Knowledge of S/M's potential for harm was one of the chief things that led us to form GMSMA in the first place. The organization was intended to shine a light into some very dark corners. Therefore, rather than saying, "This is what S/M is, and it's okay, nothing to be worried about," the GMSMA statement of purpose said, in effect, "This is the kind of S/M we stand for and support. S/M can be damaging, crazy, or coercive, but it doesn't have to be, and together we're going to learn how to tell the difference." If someone was deliberately careless or irresponsible, or broke agreements about limits, we didn't say, "He's not

doing S/M" but rather, "He's not doing the kind of S/M we can support."

#### DEFINING ISSUES

As an organization, GMSMA never tried to officially define "safe," "sane," or "consensual." From the beginning, we knew that beyond the obvious applications of these terms, there are vast gray areas. Moreover, we knew that "safety," especially, differed from one individual to another. A maneuver that's perfectly safe for one gymnast or ice skater to perform could easily lead to a broken neck for another. A flogging that one bottom finds pleasurable exciting might leave another with serious damage. A session of rigid bondage and sensory deprivation that leads to fulfillment and ecstasy for one person might send another into a psychotic breakdown. A year as a 24/7 slave might be the peak experience of a lifetime for me, yet cause you to have an emotional collapse.



#### Woo Girl in the Gay Bar

By: Lilithfoxx

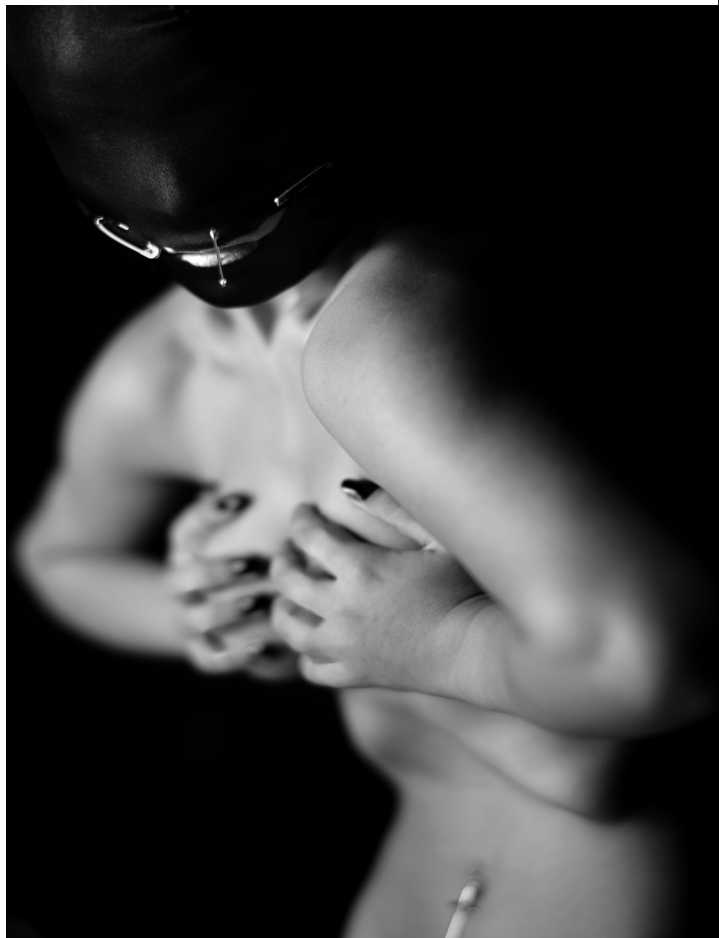
Woo girl in the gay bar, you walk upon sacred ground. Where your White Claw-

induced fury stands once stood an artist, activist, bard, and soul stolen from this earth by a cruel disease.

Woo girl in the gay bar, your shrieks pierce the air where once spoke plans to protest the dehumanization and cruelty to love.

Woo girl in the gay bar, your presence disrupts the very fabric of a sub-culture fueled by the flicker of candles in the wind – the fervent beckoning of the Damned.

Woo girl in the gay bar, though you sully this sacred ground and vex the Damned in repose, you are safe in this house. We ask that you just bear witness to the reverence around you.



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# HOW WAS FOLSOM?

by boy bradley

OP-ED

For two weeks, that is all everyone has asked me. They want to know about the sex, food, people, weather, and anything else they may want to pry out of me. I would love to tell them about it. But the only thing I can think of is: “without.”

Folsom this year was paired down due to the long-overstayed COVID-19 (get vaccinated!). But it was still my first time.

I met with a Daddy and his Daddy and their shared pup who now has part of my heart. I’ve known this Daddy for over a year—he’s become essential in my leather journey and my life as a whole. We have a strong love for each other. We talk daily and he flew me out to Folsom as a gift for my completing my MFA. Our relationship was founded in the wake of my break up last year, and our relationship has gone through many transformations. But what’s stayed consistent is that he is Daddy, paternal and honest, reliable and sincere. You don’t have to be collared to a Daddy to have a man as Daddy. I may not wear his collar, but he’ll always be Daddy. And thus, my first without: Daddy.

We had dinner at beautiful and delicious restaurants. Laughed full bellied and bonded as a leather family (though I knew I was leaving in three days with an unknown return.) His pup was with me every day during my visit and with me every night. The pup would look at me, and I knew I was safe. I knew I was loved. I knew I was wanted. He said to me, “I’ll protect you.” He would wrap me in his built arms as we slept and I would do the same when we rolled over. Now that I am home, I am with my second without: that pup who I love.

Out in San Francisco, I wore black leather head to toe. Formal shirt, bow tie, Sam Browne, cuffs, gloves, waist belt, pants, and boots. That Daddy of mine lent me his Langlitz coat that fit me perfectly. I felt powerful. I also had excellent back posture. And I wasn’t the only one in full uniform. At the Eagle that Saturday night, there were so many men with cigars smoking and Leather on their bodies. It was like an Eagle should be. How the Atlanta Eagle was once said to be.

It all felt familiar but was still foreign. I was the visitor and the weekend voyeur.

Even in the safety of my friends, it was sensory overload: The mass of people, booming circuit music, not knowing how to navigate through the crowd, red and purple lights zooming about, and the smell of tobacco and hide.

Where does that exist here in Atlanta? It might exist at our local dive bar or the popular sports when we have Eagle night. Yes, we have a night every so often to com-



memorate our fallen home. So, there is my third without: I am without a home Eagle.

Fourth: I am without an active leather community. At Folsom, hundreds of people outwardly expressed their fetish and kink, their Leather and lifestyle, laughing and reconnecting with old friends. On the street, boys and slaves were servicing their Sirs and Masters. Porn stars walking the streets, leaving little to the imagination. A woman on a stage was being flogged by her Dom. In her cries, you could hear and feel her love of the beatings and being on display. I wanted to be her.

When I say I am without an active leather community, I mean there is none of the likes of this alive in Atlanta anymore. Once, at the earliest a couple years back, there were demonstrations by Jack Handcock, and I would be his rope dummy. There would be floggings on the lower patio, and everyone could feel the love between the Dom and sub. And people actually gave a damn about being in Leather. If you look at our scene today, you won't find any of that anymore.

A small band of us still do, but most of us are boys without Sirs. And the "Sirs" in the city don't want boys: they want dependent and/or one-time subs. No commitment. Us boys are hurting. I know we would thrive if anything of a percentage I saw at Folsom could be here at home. I want to say we're trying to rebirth it. At least we're learning who gives a damn.



And fifth: I am without a committed Sir. Folsom Sunday afternoon, I serviced a Sir for possibly just over an hour. I fetched him drinks, stood by his side with my hands behind me, eyes and mind focused on him, and asked for permission to sip my beer (after being reprimanded). This black knight I only tasted gripped my jaw in his

gloved hand and studied my face—he saw the devotion I was willing to give him; he knew I was a boy hungry to please. But, as many of the others have been, this moment was a one-time thing. I live on one coast; he lives in a desert state. I was left high and had no way to chase that high to keep it going.



The intoxication of being a boy in service...I missed it then, and I miss it now. Each day, I work hard at my job and writing. Each day, I work hard at owning my sexuality. Each day, I know I am a leatherboy. But, each day, I am without my Sir's collar, without his ownership over me and my devotion to him.

As brief as I can answer "How was Folsom," I can only say I am without.

*Paul Bradley, aka boy bradley, lives in Atlanta, GA where he has received his MFA in Creative Writing from Reinhardt University. bradley has come into knowing leather over the last several years. The power dynamics, romance, and cultural impacts of leather has influenced his writing. bradley aspires to be a professor of English and Creative Writing. Creatively, bradley aims to blend leather and poetry together, much as the poet Thom Gunn once did. bradley thanks NLA-International for accepting his poems and spreading love, leather, and poetry to everyone.*

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# PAIN & PLEASURE

People who practice BDSM have a higher threshold for pain, new studies show.

People who practice BDSM have higher thresholds for pain, according to a study published in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine*. The study also found evidence that engaging in a BDSM experience can further boost pain threshold among submissives.

BDSM is a term that describes sexual roleplaying involving bondage, discipline, domination, submission, sadism, and masochism. All practices are consensual and usually involve two partners who adopt the roles of dominant and submissive. Play often involves the infliction of pain from the dominant partner toward the submissive.

A team of researchers led by Elise Wuyts was interested in studying the role of pain within BDSM interactions. Specifically, the researchers launched a study to investigate how pain threshold and attitudes and assumptions about pain might differ among practitioners of BDSM compared to non-practitioners. A final sample of 34 dominant-submissive BDSM couples and 24 control participants was recruited.

The BDSM couples were tested during an evening of pain play at an event at a BDSM club in Belgium. An experimenter conducted two different types of pain threshold tests that required participants to indicate when the sensations became painful. The tests were conducted on three separate occasions throughout the night — before pain play, directly after play, and 15-20 minutes after play. The control participants experienced the same pain threshold tests during a night out at a bar, also on three occasions separated by similar time intervals.

All participants additionally completed questionnaires that included demographic measures, health measures (e.g., Body Mass Index, heart rate, blood pressure), and assessments for fear of pain and the tendency to catastrophize pain (minor, severe, and medical).

The researchers found that the BDSM participants had higher pain thresholds compared to the control participants. This was true for both dominants and submissives, and regardless of par-

ticipants' age, gender, BMI, or scores on Beck's Depression Inventory.

Interestingly, submissives tended to show an increase in pain threshold following the BDSM pain play, although the effect did not reach significance. They were also less likely to catastrophize pain, as indicated by significantly lower scores on the pain catastrophizing scale.

Wuyts and colleagues discuss several reasons why BDSM practitioners might have a higher pain threshold. From a biological standpoint, experiencing repetitive pain can lead to habituation, a reduced physiological response to pain. It is also of note that the submissives showed heightened endocannabinoid levels after the pain play, which has been connected to elevated pain thresholds. Further, sexual arousal has been found to have a pain-relieving effect and to increase pain threshold.

The authors also discuss psychological factors that may be at play. For one, social bonding and trust can raise pain threshold, and both of these processes are involved in BDSM interactions. The fact that the pain experienced during a BDSM experience is voluntary and submissives are in control of the pain experience likely also supports a higher pain threshold. On another note, personality could be partly driving the pain threshold effect, as high extraversion and low neuroticism have been linked to both higher pain thresholds as well as BDSM participation.

Wuyts and her team emphasize that pain threshold is a subjective measurement, which means that it was up to participants to judge their experiences of pain. Submissives may have been biased toward reporting a higher pain tolerance since this may be perceived as admirable in the BDSM community.

Despite this limitation, the researchers maintain the importance of these types of studies. "Research in this specific topic strives to shed some light on something that is widely practiced yet poorly understood," the study authors write. "This study endeavors to explain how pain may be processed in a

different way in the context of a BDSM interaction through biological and psychological processes. By further enhancing our understanding of the mechanisms behind a BDSM interaction in this way, we aspire to relieve the stigma these practitioners still endure.”

The study, “Beyond Pain: A Study on the Variance of Pain Thresholds Within BDSM Interactions in Dominants and Submissives”, was authored by Elise Wuyts, Nele De Neef, Violette Coppens, Alana Schuerwegen, Ilona de Zeeuw-Jans, Maarten Van Der Pol, and Manuel Morrens.

—PsyPost



## SEX WORKERS EXPLORE MONEY MAKING ALTERNATIVES AFTER LATEST CENSORSHIP SCARE

Story by girl alayna

When OnlyFans announced it would ban adult content starting October 1, little were surprised. After years of fighting the government, financial institutions, and other websites, sex workers and pornography performers had already been aware of rumors of policy changes. This coming after Adult Streaming service XTube was forced to shut down due to scrutiny of its parenting company, MindGeek.

After news hit, many adult content creators took to Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok to announce that they were now doing it alone and launching their own platforms, attempting to create a solid base for their

livelihoods in an online position that is increasingly hostile to sex work.

The London based platform, founded in 2016, has since announced that it has “suspended the planned 1 October policy change”. It is unclear if the delay is permanent.

Many online sex workers who use the site were once again forced to reckon with the unstable nature of their industry. Centralized online platforms that have been used by sex workers have and can be taken offline at a moment’s notice, leaving them without a source of income. They are then forced into more dangerous work on the streets. Given the insecurity of large and small platforms for adult content, the conversation about how to move forward is gaining a huge push amongst sex workers- including making platforms of their own.

“Many sex workers I know personally are building their own websites, making sure their content is available on multiple platforms, and focusing on securing their income in case one platform disappears,” Lena, an adult content maker, told Motherboard. “It would be a freeing and fantastic feeling to have a spot on the internet that was my own—where I could curate an audience, create my own content, and not have to worry about it being removed due to puritanical belief.”

“The challenge is finding a site that will host adult content,” said Lena. “Many mainstream sites that don’t require intricate coding knowledge to use shy away from pornography.”

The other challenge is payment. Because some banks are not sex work friendly, the creators would have to find ways to get the money from the client. PayPal and Visa are among the many financial institutions/platforms that will block payment or close an account if they suspect the exchange of sexual services.

Platforms are also policing adult content because of

the Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act (FOSTA) and the Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (SESTA), a law passed in 2018 that made platforms liable for hosting sex trafficking—and created an effect on all sexual speech online. As with anything that creates risk, this made banks and payment platforms more hesitant to do business with sites that host adult content. So if a sex worker creates their own website, it could be taken down under FOSTA because of its content.

Despite the hurdles, many sex workers are accelerating plans to move away from centralized platforms—and regain some degree of independence in the process.

Elsewhere, sex workers are turning to cryptocurrency to overcome digital payment woes. Purpose-built adult industry tokens, such as CumRocket and Nafty, may help circumvent stringent banking policies. The latter launched a crypto alternative to OnlyFans – NaftyFans – just weeks before OnlyFans’ temporary porn ban.

Despite creative workarounds, the longevity of adult content online is uncertain. OnlyFans’ threat to sex workers was only the latest in a long line of tech platforms purging adult content, from Tumblr to Patreon and eBay, highlighting ongoing ostracization and instability for adult workers in the digital world.

Even though there is a general distrust of large platforms now, most sex workers still choose to use them, carefully. Some workers have opted to join OnlyFans competitors like Fansly and ePlay as alternatives, citing better payout options and subscription features. But no matter the platform, they are all a means to the same end.

*girl alayna Munster (she/her/zombie cupcake) joined the BDSM community in late 2010 and began her Leather journey shortly after in 2012. A polyamorous, asexual-panromantic, the Leather little/middle is a founder of the Old Dominion girls of Leather in Hampton Roads and is presently a full patched member of the Mid-Atlantic Onyx Pearls where she proudly serves as their Public Relations chair.*

*Her advocacy began as a young adult when she created fundraisers and benefits for homeless women and children and AIDS patients in Fayetteville, NC. More recently, she has organized events and panels including Blood is Blood Virginia Beach and What Now: End the Silence on Sexual Assault.*

*Obsessed with learning about Leather history and its culture, girl alayna joined the National Leather Association– International in 2016 and quickly began work in the organization with Living in Leather and the Domestic Violence Project. In 2018, she was appointed the position of Publications Chair and is now Editor of both The First Link newsletter and Second Link magazine for which she received the Steve Maidhof Award for Local/ International dedication in 2020.*

*girl alayna lives in Virginia Beach, VA with her fiancé Lucius X, their children, and her collection of Marvel Pop! vinyls and owl stuffies.*



## JOURNAL OF MY SUBMISSION

OP-ED

By Lillith Foxx

As it so often happens, it occurred to me well after the fact how I wanted to express my need and desire to serve. I blanked. I didn't quite know how to convey why I *needed* to have someone strip me of all that I am, all of *who* I am, and rebuild me in the way they saw fit. I worked so hard for so many years to do that myself. Why should anyone else deserve that?

I grew up in a very abusive home, and am not in contact with any member of my Family of Origin. It's difficult, it feels wrong sometimes, holidays and birthdays certainly aren't easy, and I wonder if I made the right

decision. I understand that it's a weight that I will likely carry for the rest of my life, but the person I am without them is the person I was always meant to be, and I'm not willing to let that person go.

Years of going through one abusive relationship and friendship after the other, along with therapy, self-work, and endless soul-searching got me to a point where I stripped *myself* of what and who I had been built to be. I rebuilt myself the way I saw fit and the work is never-ending.

So, why then, do I trust giving quite literally, my life's work to someone else? It seemed to be the exact opposite of what I had worked so hard to achieve. The whole concept seemed to go against the grain of what I believed in, or what I *wanted* in life. It seemed foolish, and yet, here I am.

Submission of self exists and is expressed in many forms. It's not always kneeling, it's not always following a protocol, it's not always vulnerability. For me, it was my sexuality.

Years of sexual abuse and sexual assault from the time I was a small child and well through my adulthood took from me my sense of self, my control over any aspect of my life, and who I was at my very core. I didn't even know if any of that even existed; I had that time stolen from me.

The only thing I could control was my sexuality. In the most woefully ironic, perplexing way I healed with orgasms. I changed the script when it came to sex. A guy didn't just fuck me and ghost me, I used him as a means to orgasm as well. If I was on a date and I realized that it wasn't going in a direction for anything of substance, I figured I might as well fuck them. The evening would be a waste of time and makeup otherwise. To put it simply (and a bit sexist, sorry!) I started treating sex like I was a man.

I never misled partners to feel that I was after something serious, and then would just fuck them and

leave. I was brutally honest to the point where they thought I must be lying. On numerous occasions I would just flat out say that I didn't see it going anywhere, but I wouldn't mind fucking so the night wouldn't be a complete bust. It's interesting how people are so uncomfortable with the thought of a woman being so empowered with her sexuality. It wasn't just sex with partners either, I showed myself plenty of love.

This sexual empowerment was the cornerstone of my healing. It was the only thing that I control in my life. I held it dear, and there wasn't anyone on earth that could take that away from me. I wasn't going to give it to them.

Until Him.

I so willingly and freely wanted Him to have everything. I didn't have the words or thoughts to quite understand this, let alone understand that I was doing this. This wasn't a fairy tale romance (though it feels that way sometimes) where the skies and the stars lit a path to Him and I just knelt and said "Here, Daddy! Have all of who I am!" It started off with sex.

Sex on the first date, and sex being really the only aspect of our relationship that was defined in any context, but it didn't feel quite so transactional.

Pretty early on, I told Him that I wanted Him to own my orgasms. Orgasm control was sexy. I had done it before in scenes, and with partners. It just satisfied a need. I thought nothing of it, because it never left a scene or the bedroom. But I wanted Him to have it, and I didn't know why.

He was actually unsure about the whole thing, and wasn't quite on board initially. He didn't understand why I wanted, and needed, Him to have this. I just thought that I was going through the motions of having it just be fun in the bedroom as I had before. However, it was more than that. He saw it before I did, and I didn't realize the gravity of what I was giving Him, because while I was so empowered with my sexuality, that empowerment was taken away from

me the night I was [sexually](#) assaulted. My rapist gaslighted me. I went through the trauma thinking that there was no ill-intent, that he just didn't understand consent, and that it was an honest mistake. He was my friend, he still acted like it. I baked a birthday cake for his little girl and would go to dinner with him and his wife. It was an honest mistake and he didn't mean to. Why then, was this weight on my heart that something didn't feel right? Why then, did I feel it was ok for my body to be a practice ground for learning consent? Why then, did I keep feeling compelled to tell people about this, in hushed tones and begging them to keep the secret? I wanted to alert them, I knew he was a predator, but why was I not coming forward?

When an individual experiences sexual assault, they go through two traumas: the trauma of the attack, and the trauma of the fallout from those around them that continues well after. They become branded with their attack. They are no longer "Lilith, a bratty switch who enjoys cooking, writing, and traveling." They become "the girl that accused \_\_\_\_\_." They are put on trial, forced to relive every moment of their trauma, over and over again. To the satisfaction of an arbitrary system of "due-process", by a proverbial torchlit mob. They are doubted and they are silenced. It's hard to quantify which is worse: the assault or the social fallout.

The reactions are not always ill-intended. A lot of the time, it's quite the opposite. Friends and community who want nothing more than to seek justice for the survivor. They want to go after the attacker and right this wrong and keep the community safe. I was told that it would do me no good to come forward. It would be more stress on me than just letting it go, and they were right. I was told that it would disrupt social circles and friendships, and they were right.

The intent is noble, but what they don't understand is that in silencing me, while intended to help me, stole my voice and took from me my empowerment. Jus-

tice for the survivor and the community and supporting and empowering a survivor are two separate things. While connected and dependent upon one another, they must to some degree remain separate if there is to be healing.

When a survivor is compelled to continue to relive every moment of their trauma to the scrutiny of an often ignorant audience, the survivor is never able to heal. The effects of trauma manifest in people remaining in relationships with their attackers. It manifests in them recanting their story or even changing it. Their entire sense of self, safety and belonging was attacked. Their empowerment was taken away. It should come of no surprise that they won't be in the right state of mind to sort through the minutiae of the necessary details for seeking justice. What they need is empowerment. What they need is to be validated in their pain. What they need is community support and love.

Justice is important, and preventing a predator from attacking another is very important, but we cannot use the trauma of a survivor to seek a means to an end. If a survivor is not willing to come forward publicly, their decision is valid. Countless reasons for this exist, separate from working through the effects of the trauma.

My attacker could very easily out me. He knows my full name, he knows what I do for work, he knew where I worked previously. He knew my friends, he knew some of the restaurants and bars I'd frequent. He very easily, to this day, could jeopardize the job security of my household, familial relationships with my in-laws, you name it, he could do it. So, I didn't come forward for a long time. I had every right not to do it. I needed to protect myself, I needed to empower myself, I needed some semblance of normalcy, and being branded with my attack and put on trial for it, all the while jeopardizing my personal life and well-being was the exact opposite of what I needed and wanted to do.

I came forward because I was empowered and while I credit myself for the bulk of that, I cannot deny that it was Daddy who helped set that stage.

The day He asked me if a power exchange relationship was something that I wanted to pursue with Him was the day I came forward publicly about my attack. For the first time, almost ever, if ever even, I felt that I didn't have to be on guard. I felt that I didn't have to have my walls up and constantly fear that someone was trying to hurt me and take away what strengthened and healed me.

I could just *be*, and I knew that I would be ok. It was a surreal feeling that I had never felt before.

I confronted my rapist publicly. I called him out for what he did to me. I called him a rapist. I called him out for the situation that he premeditated and engineered to be able to sexually assault me. It was truly one of the most frightening moments of my life and yet, I felt safe. I was with Daddy when I did this and right afterwards, I was surprisingly calm. The community support that I got was unlike anything I expected. The pain that I felt was pain that they felt. I did not understand how to process this.

I wanted intimacy; it was quite an emotionally taxing day. So, W/we started to have sex, and right as I was about to orgasm, I, of course, asked Him for permission--as was protocol. W/we had negotiated giving the idea a try. He allowed me an orgasm, and as that feeling of release hit me, I realized that I was feeling something that I hadn't felt in a very long time. My orgasms, my empowerment, was mine again. All. Mine.

I never thought I would have them back. I burst into tears, overcome with emotions buried deep in me from the years of pain, abuse, struggling to heal. My heart broke wide open and all of that pain came pouring out. He held me, and I wept.

I realized then the gravity of what I was giving Him. It was that moment that I found my slave heart. My em-

powerment, my healing, something so very important to me that was taken away, and was finally mine again.

It was His.

I gave that to Him. I wanted, and needed Him to have it. And in that surrender of self and identity, I realized that I was completely and irrevocably myself again.

*Lilithfoxx (she/her) has been in the BDSM lifestyle for the better part of a decade, and an active member of the Houston kink community for the past few years. She currently serves on Council for SAADE (School for Austin Advanced D/s Education), and serves Team Dungeon and Houston QueerSpace group. Lilith is a polyamorous, sadomasochistic switch who goes from bratty babygirl, to a sadistic pro-Domme with a penchant for degradation, mind-fucks, and (just about) all things bloody, painful, and fucked up. She identifies as "Leather-ish", identifying with and serving both the Leather and BDSM communities.*

*Valuing education and service to community, Lilith has taught several classes and served as a panelist for a number of groups, including organizing and moderating Team Dungeon's "BIPOC Experiences pt. 2" panel, teaching "How-to Walk in High-Heels" class, "Social Media Marketing for Kinky Businesses and Brands", and serving on Team Dungeon's "M/s Experiences" panel. She has also served as a panelist for Dark Necessities' Prominent Blood Players of Houston panel, and was recognized nationally at Anomaly's Frost Gala Fundraiser for her service to the kink community. She volunteers her time and experience as a writer, marketing specialist, and business consultant to local kink businesses, and runs Kinky Marketer, where she gives free marketing advice for kinky and adult-oriented brands on Fet-Life, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.*

## HELP WANTED

THE SECOND LINK  
NLA's official Leather Lifestyle  
magazine

Is looking for talented  
writers, artists, and  
photographers.



The National Leather Association-International (NLA-International) calls on the Leather/SM/Fetish community to take the lead in reducing domestic violence through education.

No group is free of domestic violence, assault or abuse; but fear, denial and lack of knowledge have slowed public response to this serious social problem. The NLA-International is committed to reducing all forms of domestic violence by:

1. Showing community action can reduce violence.
2. Holding offenders/abusers accountable for choosing to be violent. Using drugs or alcohol as an excuse for domestic violence, assault or abuse is unacceptable.
3. Encouraging victims to take legal action against the offender/abuser.
4. Encouraging the offender/abuser to seek treatment and the victim to seek support.
5. Listening and supporting those who have the courage to tell us and help them end their shame and isolation.
6. Educating the legal and social service system about the differences between consensual SM and domestic violence, assault and abuse, and to encourage their appropriate intervention.
7. Taking the responsibility of educating the SM com-

munity about the forms of domestic violence, assault and abuse as well as its extent and severity. Domestic violence takes many forms: physical violence, assault, isolation, outright or subtle psychological and emotional abuse, economic control, sexual assault and abuse as well as the destruction of personal property. Non-consensual manipulation and assault are not part of SM. The NLA-International advocates relationships based on personal responsibility, honesty and integrity in which power and pleasure is derived from mutual respect.

8. Promoting information about where to go for help.

*If you are interested in volunteering with the NLA-International DVP please email our President at [president@nla-international.com](mailto:president@nla-international.com).*



**NLA-International DVP Advisory Committee Members**

NLA-International DVP Advisory Committee Members represent various diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and professional occupations. Advisory committee members make available advice and guidance to NLA-International DVP. In addition, NLA-International DVP Advisory Committee Members' participation within the NLA-International Domestic Violence Project benefits the services NLA-International Domestic Violence Project provided to the Leather/SM/Fetish communities and mainstream society.

**NLA-International DVP Regional Coordinator Contacts**

NLA-International DVP Regional Coordinators are responsible for compiling and gathering information for the NLA-International DVP. In addition, NLA-International DVP Regional Coordinators are responsible for working with individuals and groups for the region/states assigned to them to coordinate on behalf of the NLA-International DVP.