

PHOTO BY BYRON O'BRIEN

## The ABCs of B/D/S/M

Continued from Page 25

and emotionally or as complex as spending the night together cuddling and talking in depth.

*"Since my early 20s the B/D/S/M lifestyle has been intertwined with my daily life. At this point it is my life. What I get out of it is pleasure and joy."*

—Dyke Daddy

Uregon B/D/S/M organizations abound: Portland Leather Alliance, Blackout Leather Productions, Bad Girls, Portland Leather Men, Rose City Discussion Club. Finding

community elders from whom to learn, reading reputable kink-related materials, attending workshops conducted by experts in their specialties and developing good communication and interpersonal skills will increase your ability

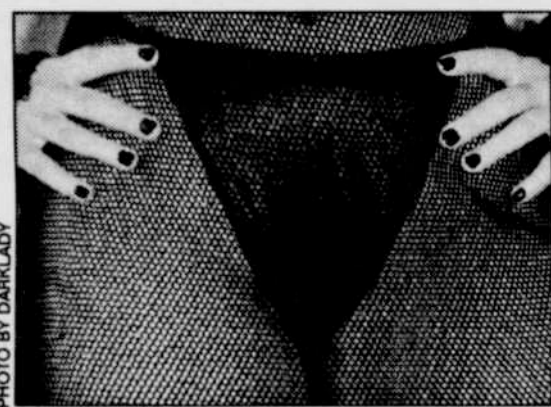


PHOTO BY DARKLADY

to understand what you want and how to negotiate for it.

Ultimately, regardless of why one engages in kinky play, the ultimate goal is the same: to have fun—and play safe. ☐

E-mail Bad Girls at [badgirlspdx@yahoo.com](mailto:badgirlspdx@yahoo.com). Find Portland Leather Alliance, organizers of Kinkfest, at [www.pdxleatheralliance.org](http://www.pdxleatheralliance.org). Contact Blackout Leather Productions at [poohboots@aol.com](mailto:poohboots@aol.com). Write Portland Leather Men at [furry@aracnet.com](mailto:furry@aracnet.com). Rose City Discussion Club holds monthly meetings with informational workshops and can be found at [home.teleport.com/~rcdc/](http://home.teleport.com/~rcdc/). KATS is an age play group you can find at [www.katspdx.com](http://www.katspdx.com).

DARKLADY is a Portland sex educator who writes about and participates in all manner of unspeakable perversions—including a fanatical use of the Internet. More about her depraved shenanigans can be found at [www.darklady.com](http://www.darklady.com).

# Feeling kinky?

**It's time for Portland's Kinkfest 2002—and the police are absolutely welcome**  
by Christopher McQuain

For those who might have been interested in attending the Portland Leather Alliance's annual Kinkfest, better luck next year. By the time you read this, the event will have been sold out for weeks, a testament not just to the increasing visibility of B/D/S/M (bondage, domination, sadism and masochism) as a legitimate alternative sexuality but to the enthusiasm and organizational prowess of the PLA board.

Not that it wants to limit anyone's opportunity to participate. "Kinkfest is an all-encompassing event designed to have

outreach to everybody," says Bruce, a past PLA president who prefers his last name not be used. "Its main focus is actually an educational conference as well as a social event. We will have parties, we will have socializing, but the main focus isn't really to come have a big party. It's educational. When Ruth talks to the police, we do call it an educational conference."

The police? PLA president Ruth Thomas explains that, as a member of the Sexual Minorities Roundtable, she discussed Kinkfest with Portland's finest. "It's for protection and to let them know that there will be an increase of about 300 people or so on this block on this particular weekend."

"It works both ways," Bruce adds. "It's protection for us but also protection for the neighborhood. There haven't ever been noise complaints, but if there were, the police would know there was a conference going on. And we have no issue with the police coming by, checking in and saying hi. In fact, we welcome them. As a private event, this is completely legal."

It is partially for legal reasons that participation is predicated upon preregistration. No tickets are sold at the door, as a sexually oriented event like Kinkfest must be classified as "private."

Bruce explains ticket sales at similar events in other states have caused them to be considered "public" and of dubious legality. (Issues like this are sure to be discussed at "S & M and the Law," one of this year's multifarious workshops.)

But working with authorities to ensure a safe and harassment-free environment for attendees is just a small part of the preparation that's gone into the 2002 fest. PLA has assembled speakers for workshops covering a wide range of topics, including S/M spirituality, costumes and corsets, uniforms, piercing, anal sexuality and erotic humiliation/degradation.

Both Bruce and Thomas stress the group's openness and pan-

sexual stance, which limit any conflict that might arise from having so many varying sexual interests under one umbrella. "We have a few people here and there who are a little nichey sometimes," Bruce notes, "but when push comes to shove, we band together pretty well. Part of the goal of Kinkfest and of the PLA is to allow people to get their foot in the water."

"We welcome new people," asserts Thomas. "People who want to play a little bit more seriously...need to be aware that...there are going to be new people there, and if that's not the element

they want around them, they need to make other arrangements. It will always be open to new people."

PLA has a close relationship to the sexual minorities community, but it stresses unity over categorization. "We are right now approximately 50 percent heterosexual/bi, about 12 to 15 percent gay male, I'd say 30 percent lesbian, and that's not including the transgender crowd," Bruce says. "If all our board were here, they'd probably say, 'We're not really sure we want to draw those kinds of lines,' because a lot of people overlap. I cross-dress; at the same time, I'm heterosexual. We have a board member who is bi, but he really doesn't even like using the word."

Thomas, who is a lesbian, adds, "Some people don't want to define themselves." In a sexual minorities community where even bisexuality causes debate, there's a paucity of tolerance and understanding toward the B/D/S/M community.

Thomas maintains she would not be accepted in other lesbian organizations in Portland. "There are some lesbians in the PLA that do belong to other groups, but they don't talk about [their PLA involvement] there because they know it's not an 'acceptable' behavior. Then again, we're out there at Pride every year; we participate in the parade and have our booth there—that's saying we're not going to go away because they won't acknowledge us. We're here, we're open, and if you want to come talk to us...we're certainly open for that." ☐

KINKFEST 2002 is March 22-24. Participants must have preregistered to attend the event. Contact the Portland Leather Alliance at 503-727-3148 or [pdxleatheralliance.org](http://pdxleatheralliance.org).

CHRISTOPHER MCQUAIN is a Portland free-lance writer.



Ruth Thomas, president of Portland Leather Alliance

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