

DRUMMER FEATURE ARTICLE

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**“Is That a Powderhorn in Your Pocket,
or, Are You Just Glad to See Me?”**

HOW TO HUNT BUCKSKIN-LEATHER MOUNTAIN MEN AND LIVE AMONG THE BEARS!

by Jack Fritscher

- This entire feature article "[Buckskin-Leather Mountain Men and Live Among The Bears](#)" is also available in Acrobat pdf.
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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION written April 15, 2003

**Feature article written March 14, 1988, and published in *Drummer* 119,
July 1988 (actually August 1988, because the date on the masthead was not
changed from *Drummer* 118,
so two “July 1988” issues exist).**

Being gay is a state of irony.

Writing *Drummer* in the 1970s, I knew, producing the interview with gloriously aging pornstar Richard Locke (who was all of 37!), that we couldn't stay young forever. So I began a campaign to glorify the concept of the older man—into whose face and body we all would pass—in my feature, “In Praise of Older Men,” announced in *Drummer*. This prompted the first “*Drummer* Daddies” interior photo spread which, because it reflected the readers in the manner of my “Tough Customers,” brought in an enthusiastic pile of fan mail. John Embry, who was himself older, so liked my idea that he then created a special issue, itself titled *Drummer Daddies*, which kick-started the new code words of “daddies” and “sons.”

That was always *Drummer*'s distinct role: giving leather culture new concepts and names of new concepts especially in the first post-Stonewall decade of gay liberation. That *Drummer Daddies* issue carried the cover banner line: “In Search of Older Men.”

“Bears,” of course, was another angle on growing up, growing older, growing

hairier, and growing better. Actually, this 1988 “Mountain Man” feature, with 21 of my photographs, was the first article on bears published in the large-format gay press. *Bear* magazine, remember, existed only as a tiny ’zine printed on typing paper and folded in half. I had been supportive of genius *Bear* publisher, Richard Bulger, from the start, and thought his brand-name should be brought to the larger market represented by the deeply established *Drummer*. In *Bear* 7, a *Bear* reader wrote a letter to the editor acknowledging this *Drummer* article and cover: “I think your little magazine is actually influencing the entire industry. *Drummer* recently devoted an entire issue to bears (their cover man was seen in *Bear* first)....”

Fourteen—count ’em—fourteen years after this “Mountain Man” and “Bear” feature in *Drummer*, the sad *Advocate* finally broke down and finally acknowledged the existence of bears in the feature, “Daring to Be Bears,” by Larry Flick, *The Advocate*, August 20, 2002.

This *Advocate* review of the Ron-Suresha edited book, *Bears on Bears*, was also one of the first times the gaystream used the word I coined out of pure utility: *homomascularity*.

Publisher Anthony DeBlase, who was also known as Fledermaus in his capacity as editor of *Drummer*, published my “Mountain Man” feature with bear photographs I’d shot.

Here’s the list:

on the masthead pages 2 and 3, showing 4 photographs of Big Bruno, Jack Husky, and two straight mountain men;

plus seventeen photographs on five interior pages:

full page 18, the historically remarkable David Delay, co-founder, of the original bear bar, the Ambush, Harrison Street, San Francisco;

pages 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; here the photographs are numbered 1 through 20; photos 1, 4, and 5 of Bellybucker Red;

2, 3, 6, and 9 of straight mountain men;

photos 11 and 12 of mountain man/bodybuilder Chuck Sipes who was both Mr. America and Mr. Universe;

photos 7 and 13 of Jack Husky;

photos 15 and 17 of mountain men;

plus photos 18, 19, and 20 of Mike Kloubec, John Muir, who was the model on the first issue of *Bear* magazine and star of two videos I shot for www.PalmDriveVideo.com, *A Man’s Man*, 1987, and *Russian Bear*, released 2001; more Palm Drive Video photos appear on page 68.

At the time of this *Drummer* feature, in 1988, as stated above, the fledgling *Bear* magazine, established in 1987, was still ’zine-sized and photocopied on typing paper folded in half and stapled—which, to me, made it all the more authentic and reflective of the readers, as had my own *Man2Man Quarterly* which was founded in April 1979 with

its “Fictitious Business Name Statement” registered with the County Clerk of San Francisco on July 24, 1979. *Bear* founder, Richard Bulger, in 1988 told *Man2Man* publisher, Mark Hemry, that our *Man2Man* was his model for *Bear*.

Objectively confirming this direct genesis in 1995, Professor Les Wright, PhD, the legendary bear scholar and author of *Bear Book* and *Bear Book 2*, wrote, “*Bear* magazine was the direct successor of Jack Fritscher’s *Man2Man* ’zine of nearly a decade before (a fictionalized account appears in his novel, *Some Dance to Remember*). *Man2Man*’s byword was “What you are looking for is looking for you.” This quotation is from Les Wright’s feature history essay, “The Bear Facts: One Bruin’s Perspective,” *Frontiers Newsmagazine*, San Francisco edition, Volume 14, Issue 16, December 7, 1995, page 19. With his Bear History Project, Les Wright is the leading historian of the Bear Movement and is the founding Executive Director of Nashoba Research Institute for Non-Hegemonic Masculine Identities, Cultures, and Communities at www.nashobainstitute.org.

In the circle of life, Mark Hemry republished one of the short stories, “Mountain Grizzly,” from this *Drummer* 119 when he edited the first ever book anthology of bear fiction, *Tales From the Bear Cult: Best Bear Stories from the Best Magazines, Bearotica for Your Inner Goldilocks*, Palm Drive Publishing, 2001.

Richard Bulger wrote about *Drummer* in *Bear* magazine, Volume 2 #6, 1988, page 23, describing his masculine-identified publishing venture:

“There’s another side to gay media:
the side which *Drummer*,
RFD, and *The Leather Journal* among others capture.
You can feel
the homomascularity
in these publications and I like that.”

There’s the cutting-edge word again, *homomascularity*, repeated early on, by Richard Bulger in his brilliant ’zine on the cutting edge of a movement. The instant recognition of my coinage of this word within the grassroots community of gay publishers is as important as any other groundswell of personal erotic-image expression in gay culture, and certainly better, clearer, and more honest than any word in the flatulent academic jargon that has so be-gassed gay discourse.

Backing Bulger at the beginning of his *Bear*, I felt that as a gay pop-culture author I could help announce this emerging new gay breed of “bears” by crossing the movement over to large-format magazines with color covers like *Drummer*.

I also thought that mainstreaming the small ’zine *Bear* in *Drummer* would help promote *Bear* itself, and help Richard Bulger whom I thought was a pop-culture genius identifying this new breed and nurturing it by marketing directly to its face on page and screen. In the same way that *Drummer* had been an epicentric 70s salon, Richard Bulger in the 80s ran a great salon around *Bear*.

Historically, I had supported *Bear* magazine from its earliest issues; my Palm Drive Video mail order company was *Bear* magazine’s first commercial advertiser.

Richard Bulger wrote to me in a letter sent along with a copy of *Bear* 4 in which Chris Nelson’s photographs of me were spread in the centerfold:

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Dear Jack,

Here you are [in Chris' photographs] as well as [here is] the rest of *Bear 4*.

Crazy times. We've enjoyed our move upstairs (469 Fillmore, 626-1505), David died [David Smith, the photographer whom Richard had introduced Mark Hemry and me to, actually on his death bed, so we could buy some of his dazzling, sun-splashed nude bears we found so beautiful and hot], and orders, as well as magazine production, all seem overwhelming. Need a vacation.

I'll call you soon.

Thanks for all your help.

Signed: xxoo, Richard

Beginning with "DesiderBEARata" in *Bear*, volume 2, #6, I wrote for *Bear*, and provided photographs for *Bear*, and traveled with its transition from its beginning as "Richard Bulger's *Bear*" in 1988 up through its muddy and final issues as the slain "Brush Creek *Bear*." I also wrote for *Classic Bear*, which was Brush Creek *Bear*'s annual, often providing the issue's only fiction, and many of its photographs, for example:

- o "Wild Blue Yonder," fiction in *Classic Bear* #2, February 1997, which was also featured in M. Christian's *The Burning Pen: Sex Writers on Sex Writing*, as well as in *Uncut Magazine*, Volume 2, #1, September 1987, and in *Rainbow County and Other Stories* which was the winner of the National Small Press Book Award for Best Erotica

- o "Three Bears in a Tub," fiction in *Classic Bear* #4, February 1999, which was republished in *Titanic: Forbidden Stories Hollywood Forgot*, and in *Tales from the Bear Cult: Best Bear Stories from the Best Magazines*, and in Susie Bright's *Best American Erotica 2003*

- o "Mapping the Genome of Bear: The Uncut Legend of Muscle Bear," fiction in *Classic Bear* #5, March 2000, which also published in *Stand by Your Man and Other Stories*, as well as in *Uncut Magazine*, Volume 1, #4, March 1987, as well as in a version butchered by the then dickless and wickless stamp of a "hara-kiri editor" of *Drummer* 186, July 1995. The *Classic Bear* version restored the text-definitive story and included eight of my photographs of the ultimate redheaded muscle bear, the Colt model Tom Howard, star of *Party Animal Raw* for www.PalmDriveVideo.com. After appearing with Palm Drive, Colt Model Tom Howard, billed by *Bear* in a huge marketing mistake only as "Chris" appeared in the Brush Creek video, *Powerhouse Bears*. By taking pains to identify that "Chris" was in fact "Tom Howard," Palm Drive Video was able to sell literally a thousand copies of the double feature, *Party Animal Raw* and *Powerhouse Bears*.

Might I add how close Palm Drive Video was to Brush Creek Media. As an historical note, as a videographer and a small-business entrepreneur, I one day in the mid-90s pulled Brush Creek owner, Bear-Dog Hoffman, aside in the Bear Store on 9th Street, and advised, "Because for so long you have sold so many of my Palm Drive Video titles, precisely because you have never shot a Brush Creek video of all these guys who walk into your store every day, why don't you start shooting your own line of videos."

SYNERGY. The synergy of models back and forth was such that Mike Snofield,

whom *Bear* editor, Scott McGillivray, told me on the phone was *Bear*'s most popular cover model, also appeared in my Palm Drive Video, *Bear on a Hot Tin Roof*, as well as on the cover of the world's first collection of bear fiction, *Tales of the Bear Cult: Best of the Best Bear Magazines, Bearotica for Your Inner Goldilocks*. This popular best-seller, published by Mark Hemry, owner of www.PalmDrivePublishing.com, contains 17 stories by 11 authors with 36 photos of bears, and sold over 14,000 copies.

Tales of the Bear Cult featured three stories by the writer, George Madison, aka Furr, whose first fiction appeared in the early issues of Richard Bulger's *Bear*. The salon around any magazine is interesting in its connections and disconnects. George Madison who may have been privy, for instance, to some relationships in that Bulger salon was not, contrary to what he publically opines, privy to my personal and creative relationship to Richard Bulger. In one definition of history, the now Los-Angeles-based George Madison was spinning in one compartment of the revolving door that is the six degrees of *Rashomon* separation. Because he can't remember me at *Bear*, he suggests I wasn't there wearing my video/photography/writing hats as creative participant and journalistic witness running a business exactly like and pre-dating *Bear*'s COA video. Frankly, I never heard of George Madison back then, nor in 1988 in this bear/mountain man *Drummer* 119, and not even until 2001 after we both were published in *Tales of the Bear Cult*, but I did do my research and found his name in *Bear* 3. These degrees of separation are not terribly unusual—the gentlemanly solution is to do lunch and chew the fat and find out what's in common. In writing my *Mapplethorpe* memoir, I discovered that among all the people who knew Robert, very few knew each other. Sometimes that's the way it is. In writing history, one must let the historical evidence bear witness, because paper trails don't lie the way revisionist historians do.

THE "STONEWALL SYNDROME."

What is immensely amusing in the 21st century is what I call the "Forrest Gump Syndrome," or the "Woody Allen *Zelig* Syndrome," or in the lesbian world, the "Stonewall Syndrome": identity defined by claiming involvement in historical moments, such as, all the hundreds of thousands of people who claim they were at the Stonewall Riots (or at Woodstock, or on the grassy knoll in Dallas).

I write this little sidebar as an intellectual *caveat*.

I should know: one Mapplethorpe friend [name deleted for the internet] was furious that my *Mapplethorpe* book was published and I didn't mention him. So he threatened to kill me with a threat so real the NYPD was involved, and the incident is fully documented. In fact, the entire time I was in Manhattan doing press interviews and readings, the publisher hired a wonderfully handsome and very threatening bodyguard to escort me everywhere. He was a Latin athlete and bodybuilder in a black suit, but that's another story of cologne and gold rings and knuckles!

History is the fusion of all the *Roshomon* angles. So everyone's angle is valuable.

Because memory is *Rashomon*, I never dismiss the recollections anyone is dancing to remember. That's why I titled my gay history novel, *Some Dance to Remember*.

Likewise, my dance to remember should not be dissed when I don't include other's histories which I was not privy to—especially when there is an extensive paper trail documenting my involvement. My sociology professor, emphasizing the relativity of point of view, taught there was one excellent beginning point of witness to history: "Was you there, Charlie?"

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I was there. Man, was I there! From the mid-60s before Stonewall to well into the 21st century, I was there where I was, and all the “there” that was “there” is now where I am here in these notes.

In fact, Mark Henry and I, as Palm Drive Video, shot for Richard Bulger the only video footage of the very first Bear contest which was held at the Pilsner Inn in San Francisco.

That’s the kind of actual-witness-and-participant of being “there” that even Gertrude Stein could find when she was out hunting the wild “there there.”

As a credentialed writer of American literary history, as well as of the history of American popular culture, and of the history of witchcraft, I feel fully credentialed and equipped to write about gay history, wearing the hats of both the pioneer participant and the scholar. Future historians might fuse my remembrances in this *Drummer* journal with the remembrances of others in order to come up with an overview that puts all the pieces of the gay-male puzzle together to give a picture of the last 35 years of gay-male culture in the 20th century.

My connection to *Bear* magazine (and its brother mags) lasted until Brush Creek Media “tortured *Bear* to death” and put it out of business in the first part of the 21st century, because of well-publicized seizure and closing of the *Bear* offices by the IRS for back taxes.

Bear is the only gay men’s magazine that ever came near to the glory that was *Drummer*. If *Drummer* was a “10” overall, then Brush Creek *Bear* was an “8” in popularity and a “3” in production values because of refusing to upgrade the paper and printing. Brush Creek *Bear* was such a shockingly cheapjack and cheapskate production that all the crisp original photographs look like blurs soaked into a blotter. Bears paying a lot of money to support the bear movement deserved better than that, and gay history archives will always suffer because of the totally inferior production values applied to images in the Brush Creek magazines. That penny-pinching was a mortal sin of irresponsible journalism, especially because at the time of Brush Creek’s ride, Brush Creek was publishing the only realistic gay men’s magazines left during the first rise of the internet that killed gay magazines at the turn of the century. Brush Creek Media failed the bear community.

Anyway, long before the Brush Creek (which Richard Bulger had sold when still in its prime) went down the toilet, Richard and I grew our magazines, *Bear* and *Man2Man*, on grass roots and reflected actual readers to themselves in words and images that looked like they themselves.

Richard Bulger sent many of his models from his COA videos at *Bear* for me to shoot in my Palm Drive Video: Sonny Butts, Jason Steele, and the original *Bear* model, Mike Kloubec whose real name was John Muir. In fact, Richard gave Palm Drive permission to print Mike Kloubec’s photo on one of our Palm Drive Video brochures to help cross-market his video with ours. In return, Palm Drive included in our mailing yellow subscription forms for *Bear* magazine.

(Here’s an aside. For Bear Expo 1993, the Bear Expo staff sent out an advertisement: “Unity in Action. For one hell of a bearish good time Jack Fritscher and Palm Drive Video encourage you to attend Bear Expo ’93....Jack will be screening Palm Drive Video’s new releases during Bear Expo ’93’s Video Film Festival. Sponsored by the Bear Fax and the Bearhug Group of SF.” What a blood bath erupted that February

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weekend over what groups—*Bear* magazine, *Bear Fax* and *Bearhug*—had the right to use the word *bear*. I tiptoed away from that melee.)

Mostly because I then had an enormous nipple-length mountain man beard, I was photographed by *Bear* photographer, the very skillful Chris Nelson. (Who doesn't enjoy being on both sides of a camera?) Somehow from that shoot, I appeared with a hardon as a slender *Bear* centerfold in *Bear 4* where I was dressed like the mountain men in this *Drummer* article, as well as appearing again as a cigar-smoking head in the Chris Nelson coffee-table photo book, *The Bear Cult*.

On COA letterhead, the official *Bear* magazine stationery, Richard Bulger penned a 1987 hand-written note about those *Bear Cult* photographs, about the Palm Drive Videos I was shooting, and about our connection through common interests in *Bear* which, evidence here proves, he ingeniously invented and created on his kitchen table:

Dear Jack,

Finally got a look at the contact sheet [of all the stills Chris Nelson shot]. Jesus! You're a hot lookin' fella. Also read most of [your new book of fiction from Gay Sunshine Press, 1987] *Stand by Your Man*—well done! And I received your videos (good stuff), but I would give a much more dynamic quote in *Bear* for [your video shot at the Elko, Nevada, Cowboy Poetry Festival] *Cowboy Beards and Moustaches*. I'm not shitting you: I have watched this video more than any other one in my collection. It was my visual companion while folding, stapling, and stuffing *BEAR 3*; I've thrown it in the VCR numerous times while working at my desk; and I have jerked off numerous [word is scratched out] (oops! used that word last time) on many occasions to your men. Well done, Mr. Fritscher.

I want to put an ad/review of PDV in *BEAR 4*. *BEAR 3* filled up before I knew it, and I feel it still needs more "guts" to be what I really envision it to be.

Stay in touch, pal, and thanks for the article on beards. (Can I reprint it...?)

—Richard [Bulger]

In a way, because of the way publishing contracts come in for landings, I shot a companion book to Chris Nelson's *Bear Cult* titled *American Men*. Its subtitle could easily have been what many have called it *More Photos from the Bear Cult*. This tag line is correct because a huge percentage of my photos in *American Men* also appeared inside or on the cover of *Bear* magazine, as well as in its brother magazines, *Bunk House*, *Leatherman*, *Mach*, and *Powerplay* which, edited by Joseph W. Bean, featured in full color on the front cover of *Powerplay* #10, May 1996, the exact photograph from the front cover of *American Men*.

In fact, in the GMP Editions *Aubrey Walter Catalog*, the British publisher, intent on selling the link between the two photo books, wrote: "Hard on the heels of *The Bear Cult* comes another cult book from Bear Country. Jack Fritscher's photographs of US males focus not so much on cuddly teddies but rather on angry bears baring their fangs as well as their butts. These photographs tell a story about the American male fantasising about the freedom to be men on the wild frontier where tough guys strip in the woods, strut their stuff, play rough and tumble in the dirt, hogtie each other, masturbate to the

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morning sun, parade in cowboy drag [sic] and bond the night away as only all boys all together can do.”

In comparison and contrast,
Chris Nelson shot in-studio beautiful “still portraits” of laid-back bears.
I shot on-location “action photos” of very aggressive men.

In the way the publisher thought my men were “angry” and some readers were scared of them, let me put it this way. Chris Nelson shot bears for the cuddly magazine, *Bear*; I shot bears as if headed to the S&M pages of the leathery *Drummer*. That is the difference: cuddling *versus* fucking. Neither is better than the other, although men who fuck don’t usually try to censor photos of men who cuddle. Case in point: my photos scared the cretin “male” reviewing *American Men* for the lambsy *Lambda Book Report*. He called my photographs “misogynistic” which must have been his left-field projection from his own Freudian psyche about his mommie, because—as God is my witness—my book of men has no internal evidence of any thought or suggestion of women at all. Go figure the passive-aggressive politically correct!

At any rate, this “bear cult” connection had its original pedigree in the GMP publisher’s first query to me asking that I send him photos for a book that could follow his publishing of *The Bear Cult*. The book took three years to produce, which is a fucking huge lead time, so I was able to keep adding and subtracting new photos. Actually, it took thirty-six months for the publisher to get over his fidgets that the photos (even though most of them were solo) were too rough, rugged, and, well, manly, compared to some of his lovely books of svelte modelles holding hula hoops in deep shadows. So I got him off the hook of British reserve. I played the wild colonial boy, and told him if he called the book *American Men*, the *American* would excuse everything. He thought the pictures so “artistically specific” to my camera that he refolded the actual title, as if it would get him off all hooks, *Jack Fritscher’s American Men*. Which made me feel like Federico Fucking Fellini and his *Fellini Satyricon*. That said, Edward Lucie-Smith’s introduction to the book was so beautifully written and insightful, it got my satyricon photographs off the hook.

Gay Men’s Press, GMP
PO Box 247
London N17 9QR
England

Jack Fritscher
[address]
February 27, 1992

Dear Jack,

I have been talking to Edward Lucie-Smith [the esteemed British art critic who wrote the introduction to Chris Nelson’s *Bear Cult* and subsequently wrote the introduction to *American Men*] and he suggested I write to you. He was telling me about your photography and how it could possibly fit into my list of gay art and photography. I understand too that he has been in touch with you and you have already come up with three interesting ideas for collections of your work.

The categories are Bears, Bodybuilders, and Cops. I will be interested in seeing what you end Ted. Four-color material is fine....There does seem to be quite a large demand for the Bear type of image and we know bodybuilders are always in demand but as for cops - let's see. Also as Ted has probably told you I don't think I want to publish fuck/suck/wank scenes though I think pics of tenderness between guys are great and erections are perfectly fine – despite it being supposedly illegal to send erections through the post in Germany, Europe is becoming increasingly lenient towards male-male photography including the UK.

I look forward to seeing the collection.

[signed] With best wishes,
Aubrey [Walter, publisher]

Edward Lucie-Smith, prior to writing the introduction to *American Men* as he had to Chris Nelson's *Bear Cult*, voiced an understandable professional concern. He wanted me as the *American* photographer to be responsive to his writing of the essay. In a letter he sent me dated 16th March 1993, Lucie-Smith rather much cautioned: "*The Bear Cult* intro was sent to Chris Nelson in advance of publication, as a matter of routine, and I would expect to do the same with you. Chris went completely off the air some months before the book came out. I never heard from him about the preface, the finished book, or indeed anything else, either before or after publication." [Letter is © 1993 Edward Lucie-Smith]

As much art historian as art critic, the hugely published Edward Lucie-Smith, who is known internationally as a photographer and art writer who excels at working with artists, seemed dismayed as were many others in the *Bear*-Bulger salon that after taking a couple hundred gorgeous bear photographs, Chris Nelson, for whatever personal or professional reasons, basically dropped off the radar. Without Chris Nelson's soldiering on against the odds all art faces, his great talent peaked at the beginning of *Bear* magazine which moved on without him.

Meanwhile, back in 1982...Rewind.

Years earlier, in *The California Action Guide*, November 1982, almost six years before there was a *Bear* magazine, I had been the first writer and editor to print the word "Bear" on the cover of any magazine or paper.

This involvement grew into my historical introduction to the bear movement in *The Bear Book II: Further Readings in the History and Evolution of a Gay Male Subculture*, edited by Les Wright, 2001; as well as my piece, "Bearness's Big Blank: Tracing the Genome of Ursomascularity," in *Bears on Bears: Interviews and Discussion*, edited by Ron Suresha, 2002. In 2004, Ron Suresha included my story, "Muscle Bear," in his book titled *Kink*.

My commitment to sending bear literature into the mainstream continued with the publication of my short story, "Three Bears in a Tub: A One-Sentence Romance," in *Best American Erotica*, 2003, edited by Susie Bright. "Three Bears in a Tub" was first published in *Classic Bear* #4, February 1999.

BEAR HISTORY ALERT!

Actually, I'm coming out of the closet here with the following piece of historical

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information that I have only obliquely referred to when writing as a guest-author in other people's books, because I was saving it for my website.

From here it can go to Les Wright's Nashoba, the Bear History Project, of which I became a sponsor in October, 2003.

This piece is a "Virtual *Drummer*" piece in that it was written for *Drummer*, but never published in *Drummer*, and then came full circle in concept with the bear-themed *Drummer* 119.

Now, that is synergy!

In that November, 1982, *California Action Guide*,
I wrote the first ever feature on the hair fetish of bears. On the cover, under the banner headline,

"BEYOND GAY: HOMOMASCULINITY FOR THE 80s,"

the lead line read in all caps:

"BEARS: HAIR FETISH RANCH."

Inside, on page 14, the lead line giving homage in this direct quotation to "the first bear bar, the Ambush in San Francisco," read: "AMBUSHED IN THE MANBUSH!"

The title of my feature was

"HAIR-BALLING" HAIR FETISH CONFIDENTIAL."

In the manifesto-like article I analyzed "hairy bears" and profiled an acquaintance named Veet Manu, founder of the first bear club, the "Hirsute Stud Ranch" and its "Hair Fetish Club."

Veet Manu began publishing his *Hirsute Newsletter* in 1980, eight years before *Bear* magazine, which makes his actually the first bear magazine.

My article contains swipes at both the sad *Advocate* and *Drummer*'s lust for cash at the expense of authentic reflection of the readers, because in the 1980s *Drummer* took the route of least resistance and began featuring porn models from the new medium—video—rather than actual guys who are harder to find.

Drummer also suffered terminal hemorrhage from the self-inflicted wound that was the Mr. *Drummer* Contest.

From the very first moment, when I was editor in chief, I was not dead-set against the contest, but I wanted nothing to do with it, because I told publisher Embry I could not both edit a magazine and run a beauty pageant. The Mr. *Drummer* Contest was invented for one main purpose: to capture photos of hot looking guys (none of them bears) who posed for free (that is, without model fee) standing in front of commercial signs purposely advertising *Drummer*. That "*Drummer* Does Vegas" culture seemed to me as far from the outlaw roots of leather and S&M as a man could go.

But then, I'm an old-fuck purist who gets hard remembering how hot leather was in the 60s and 70s before leather was organized, publicized, sensitized, theorized, commercialized, sanitized, and generally fucked by the time the politically correct

demanded “safe words” and “safe sex.” There’s nothing hotter in one’s old age than the forty-year-old memory of screaming, “No! No! No!” while some hot top expanded your limits which would never have been tested like a Navy Seal if he had stopped. I’ve always liked the S&M theme song, “(Your Lips Tell Me ‘No No’) But There’s ‘Yes Yes’ in Your Eyes.”

Drummer became like a narcissist standing between two mirrors to jerk off to his images curving off to infinity. *Drummer* devoted way too many covers and pages to winners—many of whom looked as emotionally desperate as any reality-show survivors, or, more likely, survivors of school playground bullies. So obvious was this fevered psychology to cynical audiences and readers, that the pop term “sash rash” was coined to cover that little-ol’-deer-in-the-headlights look of men with bare chests covered with a leather sash, while visions of a triumphant “G. I. Joe” doll danced in their shaved heads held high wearing the emperor’s new tiara.

With the greatest kindness, however, one must realize that the desperate look of smiling-through-terror on so many of those faces was actually valiant, particularly in the dead-fall 80s, when so many of the contestants were HIV positive as I found out both as a judge of the Mr. *Drummer* Contest as well as when I photographed several of them for Palm Drive Video. I may kid some of them, but bless them all.

The reason I mention being a participant and witness “coming out of the closet” on this topic (or any other) is that, when recounting history that I was a part of, either personally or as a journalist, it sometimes disturbs other “historians” whose own personal experience travels back not so far and not so deep, and whose research systems have been broken by AIDS, censorship, and politics.

I’ve never claimed to have invented any gay movement; but I was a participant in and witness to an awful lot since 1965, because of my personal sexual tastes exercised in global cities, because of my personal and professional writing about culture and sex, and because of my editing *Drummer* which put me into the centerflow of the leatherstream of homomascularity.

That is why I have assembled this website ebook on *Drummer*: precisely to show what a culture-sieve *Drummer* was. (Without *Drummer*, Mapplethorpe and I would never have torn each other’s clothes off. Repeatedly.)

As an aside: In this bear feature article, I did introduce the existing straight word, *mountain man*, into the bear lexicon, thus widening gay pop culture vocabulary. Writers do this kind of thing—often. It’s a writer’s job.

For instance, having studied classical Greek for four years (two in high school and two in college), I consciously did invent the word *homomascularity* the way that *Drummer* columnist Fred Halsted, the filmmaker, mentioned he invented the word *twinkie* to refer to his blond lover, the *Disney on Parade* actor, Joey Yale, in the magazine, *Skin*, Volume 3, Number 1, January 1981, page 52.

Once a word is coined or someone connects the dots of history, which is this website/book’s purpose, then everyone begins using the word or the facts. But it is intellectually worthwhile, with anything, to consider the sourcing: what journalist coined the word, what critical analyst clarified events.

As an example, endorsed by Mark Thompson in his historic anthology, *Leatherfolk*, I was the first to call gay culture’s attention, actually in *Drummer* 134, to the June 26, 1964 *Life* magazine article announcing the existence of masculine-identified

homosexual men. Since then, that *Life* issue is mentioned everywhere as a benchmark that helped Stonewall happen five years later, June 27/28, 1969. This is good.

As an analytical journalist, I did my job of bringing a bit of history of the homomasculine kind into gay consciousness and queer theory which are often dominated by academic political correctness, pinked with effeminate camp, and driven by aggressive drag.

[From Jack Fritscher's "Secret Files of *Drummer*": Until a certain person self-dressed to be "review-proof" by parading in the "emperor's new clothes" is dead, six paragraphs are here deleted from this internet presentation, but remain included in the original historical document.]

Because this "Hair-Balling" feature—with its reader-reflexive actual personal ads—preceded both *Bear* magazine and the "bear" issue of *Drummer*, it here comes out of the historical closet and is included in this thumbnail preceding the actual *Drummer* feature which followed it seven years later.

Historically, Richard Bulger, who wrote in *Bear* 7 that he "never had dealings with the Hirsute Club" published a letter in that issue that mentioned "several years ago there was a group called the Hirsute Club. They did some damn good work and were a good forerunner of *Bear*."

The "Deteriorata" satire titled "DesiderBEARata" which was published in *Bear*, Volume 2, #6, 1988, p. 46, follows at the end of the *Drummer* feature, "Buckskin Mountain Men." —Jack Fritscher, April 15, 2002 © 2003 Jack Fritscher

**Feature article as published in
the "Virtual *Drummer*" of
The California Action Guide, November 1982**

The San Francisco gay tabloid, *California Action Guide*, was edited for 24 months in 1981-1982 by Jack Fritscher for publisher Michael Redman

**This is the first feature article ever published on bears.
The word "BEAR!" appeared in large headline point on the
cover.**

**Hair-Balling
by Jack Fritscher**

Researchers: If quoting from the *Hirsute Newsletter* contained only in this article, please footnote all quotations in this way:

"From the *Hirsute Club Newsletter* as found in the feature article by Jack Fritscher, 'Hair-Balling,' *California Action Guide*, November 1982, posted at www.JackFritscher.com"

**"DAVE: Hairy trucker with sleeper cab,
24, 6-2, 147, 9 uncut inches, ex-USN,
tattooed, raunchy and kinky. Lotsa pit**

**and crotch hair, pierced cock, hot sphincter.
Am VERY HAIRY. Dig both furry or
smooth hair-ballers!”**

If ads like that put a twitchy finger on your hair trigger, you’re gonna have to comb your teeth after you get into the HIRSUTE STUD RANCH. This HAIR FETISHIST CLUB is a national organization of Furballers into wild and wooly mansex. Now two years old, the Hair Club, headquartered in Daly City, is for Manimals who are hairy, and for men who worship well-upholstered male faces, chests, bellies, pits, backs, legs, feet, and crotch bushes.

If you’re hairy, or if you get off on thick, matted animal hair, then you’re within a hair’s-breadth of wishing the Hirsute Stud Ranch had a midnight toll-free 800 number!

HAIRY BEARS AND BEAR-CHASERS: HUNTING IN THE TRUE HOMOMASCULINE PRESS

Actually, this mail-and-phone directory of fair-haired boys and dark, furry men is a fetish idea whose time has come. The bi-monthly *Hirsute Newsletter* is one of those underground publications that tells you more really what homomasculine men are truly doing than does the *Sadvocate* [*The Advocate*] with all its middle-class censorship of heavy-duty sextrips, selling its gay little soul, denying dicks exist, in order to woo the lucrative straight, commercial advertising base of cigaret-and-liquor accounts.

If E. T., for instance, read the *Sadvocate*, to access a profile of homosexuals, he’d be led to believe we’re all pretty much nice, soft, homogenized, bourgeois consumers who are careful not to scare the horses which the John-Waynes-Who-Judge-Us put between their legs.

How you gonna get Sex-Truth-For-Men from a commercially co-opted, politically correct rag like the *Sadvocate* whose last sharp editorial bite was to chomp off its own homomasculine balls?

The hottest male shit being published in the 80s is more often than not created on some dedicated dude’s kitchen table. (*Cigar Studs Newsletter*, Box 20604, Seattle, WA 98102, is another Xeroxed sex-n-fetish shitsheet that comes to mind. Send a buck for information and application.)

NATIONWIDE HAIR-SPLITTING ROSTER

Daly City “Bob” [Veet Manu] is founder and publisher of the *Hirsute Stud Ranch Newsletter*, or the *Hair Club Newsletter*. He lists a couple hundred Fur Sports fans whose *Hair Roster* ads he groups together as specifically as:

- o Hairy/Furry, Prefer Hairy Partner
- o Hairy/Furry, No Preference
- o Not Hairy, Prefer Hairy/ Furry Partner

Bob’s hair-splitting classifications plait every possible combination of Bears and Bear-Chasers. His listings feature Bay Area and nationwide Hairballers, and offers a total variety of mansex trips mixed in with the whole nine yards of the hair of the mandog who bit you.

REALLY BIG HAIRY DEAL!

The *Hair Club Newsletter*, like most small publications created out of a passion for men, and not drummed out with a lust for cash, is a nonprofit operation kept alive by its ardent members. To whet your prurient interest, some Hair Club members' sample ads are reprinted here, necessarily deleting, because of deference both to discretion and to Bob's exclusive listing, real names, real addresses, and real phone numbers. *The contents of the ads, however, are very authentic!*

**BACHELORS #1:
HAIRY/FURRY, PREFER HAIRY PARTNERS**

ALAN: 5-6, 160, weightlifter with medium-hairy HARD CHEST, THICK ARMS, dig super-hairy legs and SMELLY, JUNGLE HAIRY PITS TO LICK OUT!

BOB: 32, 6, 210, thick 7 inches cut with big head. Hairy chest and belly, beard, horny, visual-verbal, turcker-type, french a/p, greek a/p, mutual JO, FACESITTING, phone JO, groups, photos.

JOHN: 30, 5-6, 130, very hairy chest, belly, balls, and asshole. Uncut with long, loose foreskin. Into men covered with lots of fur.

KENT: 34, 5-9, 148, masculine, muscular, aggressive, hairy chest, furry legs and butt, trim beard, uncut 9 inches. Muscular, furry, receptive rear. Versatile man seeks same. Kiss-and-cuddle a plus. Flip-flop a must!

MIKE: 26, 5-9, 140, long, dark hair, beard, hairy front and ass. Love long, RUSTIC MOUSTACHES AND BEARDS AND FORESTED CHESTS.

MAC: 39, 6-1, 170, muscular, hairy from head to foot, beard. HOT NIPPLES. 69, deep throat, mutual fucking. PISS.

JIM: 29, 6-1, 170, uncut inches. FORMER COP. Hairy all over. Moustache. Greek active. Seeks hot sessions with hairy hunks.

RANDALL: 6, 225, 7 inches cut, BALDING, beard, HAIRY FROM NECK TO ANKLES WITH VERY THICK, BLACK, SILKY HAIR.

Tom: 38, 6-1, 180, thick moustache, VERY HAIRY, MUSCULAR CHEST. Like to PUMP MUSCLES UP AND RUB HAIRS.

**BACHELORS #2:
HAIRY/FURRY, LIKE BOTH HAIRY AND SMOOTH PARTNERS**

RAY: 30, hot, hairy, sensuous, FACE-SITTER TOP. Loves long, wild sessions. Blonds a plus!

SID: 42, 508, 7.5 cut. Very hairy, especially chest, back, legs with very MUSCULAR THIGHS. Handsome. Collegiate looking.

VINCE: Covered with long, thick, black hair, top-to-bottom and front-to-back.

BRUCE: 38, 5-10, 15-0, good looking, well built, very hairy chest, belly, legs, and pits. 8 inches cut. Hot, versatile TOP into most scenes. Heavy body contact in hot sessions.

MIKE: 41, 6-2, 215, bearded. I'm extremely hairy and love a guy's tongue rubbing and wetting down every hair that I have. I like to take his face in my hands and pull him to me so that his wet tongue is lapping at the thick growth on my chest, stomach, and bush. I love to see my cock disappear into a sucking mouth while the dud is looking up at my fuzz, rubbing his hands across my chest while sucking all my juices out.

PHIL: 34, 6-1, uncut 8.5, dark complexion. THICK, MATTED, BLACK HAIR ALL OVER. TATTOOED. Love to fuck and have my fur worshiped and licked.

GINO: Very hairy. WRESTLING. BOXING. JO. Toys. Sex fantasies.

**BACHELORS #3:
NOT HAIRY, PREFER HAIRY/FURRY PARTNERS**

BILL: 38, 5-8, 180, biker/leatherman, full black beard, 8 inches with good bush. Prefer big (230+) hairy, bearded men. Your photo gets mine.

MARC: 41, 5-8, 160, beard, dark hair, hot TOP MAN into getting RIMMED and into naked fun with furry guys. Mutual JO.

WD: Blond, hairless guy loves to worship hairy males with special emphasis on armpits, crotches, assholes. Special treatment for UNIFORMED studs.

ROBERT: 35, 5-8, 150, very smooth Latin. Black beard, 8 uncut inches. Horny. French a/p. Greek active. Always ready.

GARY: 31, 5-11, 155, hairy lets and ass, good-looking, beard, will tongue your entire hairy body into sensual ecstasy. ULTIMATE TURN-ON IS EATING YOUR HAIRY ASS!

DENNIS: 32, moderately hairy, endowed; stocky, athletic build. Imaginative, sensitive, versatile. Loves furry men, dirty talk, play, cuddling.

DAN: 38, 5-10, 160, MUSCULAR, 6 inches, french a/p. Likes to please BRAUNY, HAIRY MEN with TREE-TRUNK THIGHS and SLIM, HAIRY ASSES.

R. C.: 31, 6, 190, BIG AND MUSCULAR, 7 inches cut, fairly smooth, loves to fuck with and hear from/trade pics with hairy men, especially stocky builds in their 40's and 50's.

WALTER: Super-hairy men given special attention by this blond, 42, guy who loves pubic, crotch, asshole, and pit hair more than anything in the world. I'm shaved. Sit on my face.

GREAT HAIRY PIX AND HAIRY CAVEMAN PARTIES

The *Hirsute Newsletter* keeps readers up-to-date with all the latest magazines, straight and otherwise, which feature pix of hairy men in their issues. In addition, the artwork of Hair Club member Ken, as featured here, appears regularly in the roster. So also do offers of hot photo sets of especially hairy men.

A very fraternal note: the Hair Club is more than correspondence. Members often host CAVEMAN PARTIES that are known as wild, hot times among all the Daddy Bears, Baby Bears, and Bear Chasers who've had the good luck and good sense to get it together and get it on!

Interested in joining The Hirsute Stud Ranch Hair Club? For more information, send your self-addressed, stamped, business-length envelope, with your ads, messages, ideas, and suggestions to BOB, PO Box 3271, Daly City, CA 94105. Be fair, guys, in these rough times for small publishers. Include a few bucks donation for this nonprofit pleasure organization. The Hair Club gives you manstuff you can't get anywhere else.

NEW, HAIRY SFPD RECRUIT

There's one very hairy, muscular, Italian, new SFPD cop we know of who likes to gear himself up in fur leggings and furry horned headmask, and be worshiped like the hairy, dionysian, goat-footed god, Pan.

So who knows, ambushed in the forests of manbush, what hair-raising adventures await you! © 1982, 2003 Jack Fritscher

Feature article written March 14, 1988, and published in *Drummer* 119, July 1988 (actually August 1988, because the date on the masthead was not changed from *Drummer* 118, so two "July 1988" issues exist).

**"Is That a Powderhorn in Your Pocket,
or, Are You Just Glad to See Me?"**

HOW TO HUNT BUCKSKIN-LEATHER MOUNTAIN MEN AND LIVE AMONG THE BEARS! by Jack Fritscher

DUDE! YOU WANNA MARCH TO A DIFFERENT *DRUMMER*?

Run, as in "Bike Run," is Anglo-Saxon short-speak for *Rendezvous*. Get the picture? Current manhunting rendezvous don't take place in cozy French cafes. "*RendeVOO!*" That campfire shout, in the American West these days, means a shit-kicking 3-day weekend in the woods with bearded guys in full leather buckskins, wearing fur animals on their heads, and shooting black-powder rifles. So, if you dig tenting something besides your pants, whether in authentic teepees or "tin teepees" (aluminum campers on the bed of a 4WD pickup truck), listen up!

This info is real as bear shit in the woods.

WHERE THE MOUNTAIN MEN ARE

More than 250,000 mountain men roam the US wilds from Colorado west to the coast. Every weekend, from early spring, when the mountain streams are icy cold enough to shrink the balls of the hardest buckskinner, to late autumn, when campfire smoke hangs soft in the air, mountain men gather in rendezvous to live out a lost past in the lost present.

Robert Redford's *Jeremiah Johnson* is brother to the gay mountain men in the classic novel and film, *Song of the Loon*, and, sub-textually, in the new gay video, *Northwest Passage*, shot entirely on location in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State. (Write: Adam and Company, 8210 Lankershim Blvd, #11, N. Hollywood 91605, \$59 + \$3 postage; say you're 21.)

Mountain men, traditionally, were classic loners, except maybe for a "special pardner," spending their intense winters out trapping skins and furs. Come the spring thaw, "YEE-HAW!" these American bear-trappers came down from the high country to "rendevouz" with French traders, cash in their pelts, kick some shit, pass the jug, and play some mountain-skills games with black-powder rifle contests, hatchet throws, and "fastest time" nicking a spark from flint-to-tinder without setting their beards on fire.

In the True West, these mountain men flourished between 1780 and 1820, before the advancing choo-choo of civilization made their hard kind an endangered species. The good news is: contemporary mountain men, basically blue-collar guys, are the revivalists of hyper-male rugged individualism.

LEATHER FETISH ORIGINS

You can join 'em, if you can find 'em, and this info is how you can blaze your trail to initiation into their tight circle where you can bust your britches at the sight of guys who, if modern bikers had ancestors, are the prototypical leather men of American male culture.

Since I was a kid, I always figured that in the wide circle of masculinity, there were ever tighter inner circles of men. My aim was always to penetrate further into the mysterious rites and rituals of the most secret of fraternities.

Cracking into the posse of mountain men took some investigation and some doing. I always heard about rendevouz too late to find them. It took nearly four years of this enquiring-mind-wanting-to-know to stake out my first Mountain Man Rendevouz.

The hunt was worth the hardy company that embraces "Pilgrims," as newcomers are called. This Pilgrim made it to full mountain man in one summer: buckskin boots, buckskin trousers and shirt over red longjohns, capote (heavy wool overcoat cut from traditional Hudson Bay blankets), coyote head-dress, and black-powder rifle.

This may be drag, fella, but it's male drag!

Stick your Nautilus-or-not bod in tight, soft buckskin leathers and pull your pud in your teepee, its white canvas walls dancing with the shadows of rough, tough, big-bearded dudes carousing around a campfire, playing harmonica, fiddle, and guitar, passing the jugs of "Pie," and you'll become more of an initiate than *A Man Called Horse*!

"Pie," you should be warned, is whatever wild-ass alcohol lightning mix each buckskinner pours into his secret-recipe jug. Sitting around a campfire, hot—from the flames—on your chest and crotch, cold on your back from the bracing night air, you handle Pie jug after Pie jug as the clay bottles pass around the circle. It's a throw-back feeling when you put your index finger through the small hole of the handle with the jug itself lifted on the outside of your forearm with your elbow hoisted to the stars.

Pilgrim, beware!

HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL

www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

Before you can shout “Rende~~V~~OO!”, you’ll be up doing the *doe-see-doe* with some bearded, long-haired buckskinner who works cement construction during the 40-hour week! This ain’t disco bunny stuff! Especially, when on the last *doe* of your *doe-see*, the sight the revelers around the campfire get is your mountain man coaching you how to drop your buckskin pants, pull open the crack of your longjohns, and, in duet, double-moon the blazing campfire to a roar of cheers and uplifted fists!

NEITHER CHARADE NOR PARADE

Buckskinning is real buddy-buddy “stough” for homomascuine men who like horseplay with heteromascuine men. If you’ve never been a gay separatist, and, if, in your sexual politics, you’ve always believed in a deserved mainstream place for us queers who define ourselves by more than our queerness, you don’t have to deny anything. You can take your lover or your fuckbuddy. But you don’t have to take an ad out in the paper either. Without charade or parade, you’re just yourself, *sans* candelabra on your camp table, and the buffalo chips of sexual preference fall where they may. Buckskinners, each an individualist, couldn’t really give a shit anyway when your overall true self is like them in almost every way but what gender you take to your bedroll. Best of all, every rendezvous has its full supply of single men and male couples buddying around together with no explanation, and no apology for bonding.

The point is, don’t be afraid to pass into a straight group of men. That’s the ADVENTURE! You only have to be able to rough it in the heat of a noonday shoot or the cold night of a mountain camp without screaming when you jump into a freezing stream or waltzing when you walk. Queens often call butch, homomascuine men who can pass without making an issue of sexuality, good little Uncle Toms. Piss on them. I came out to hang out with masculine men, gay and straight, not queens, who—I respect in their pivot—can do whatever they want where they want, except in my bearded face.

CAMP TRAMPS: WALT WHITMAN SLEPT HERE

In all the mountain-man camaraderie, which Walt Whitman loved, a rendezvous is a very sensual experience of male ritual. Sure, there’s sex. Married stuff; families; kids. But there’s night cruising too, nearly all male-female, with the lady “camp tramps” making most of the moves, because mountain men tend to sublimate sex, being more into their buckskins, camp gear, and guns than they are into a good “poke.”

After all, in the 80s age of universal erotic malaise, the mating dance is often no more than an audition for a show that gets rotten reviews and closes on opening night.

These mountain dudes seem genuinely sexually shy for all the fantasies we have about Blue-Collar Sex. Besides, they’re surprisingly AIDS-aware. Just like us, they’re wary of the toxic hickey. So the whole trip, like an affirmative exercise in burning abstinence, stays very heated and under-ventilated. You can talk sex. You can touch and hug. “Normal” stuff guys do. Then go back to your teepee or nylon tent and snort the wild musk smell of them on your hands. In three years of buckskinning, having heard about 12 million jokes about whores, I’ve only heard two gay jokes, and neither was a real putdown. The closest any comment came to “attitude” was about a handsome group of white male “Indians” who, the riff ran, liked to wear loincloths because it made fudge-packing easier.

Lots of mountain men, both muscular and bear-bellied, wear only loincloths and chest beads during the heat of the day, so they were joking about the potential fudge-packer side of themselves as well. Something there is about a deerskin loincloth, flapped front and back, that, like us wearing only a jockstrap and boots in public, makes a hail

mountain man well met turn into a joking flasher.

The “Indians,” by the way, whether or not they’re gay, have my total respect. Their costumes, even though designed up so thoroughly they’d be a hit at any disco, are so authentic, they usually win the Saturday night “Best Costume” prize for Native American gear. The skill they put in creating their Look deserves the notice.

SATURDAY NIGHT MOUNTAIN FEVER

Those Saturday night costume contests include, besides the “Best Primitive Campsite” award, the “Ugliest Mountain Man” (and the best-outfitted winner is never the “ugliest”), “Best Young Buck” (hubba-hubba!), and distaff heats for “Best Indian Maiden,” “Best Frontier Gal,” plus a prize for the “Best Papoose.” Rendezvous weekends are fantasy trips for laboring men, for their women who work the adding machines in building supply offices, and for their kids who carry anachronistic skate boards under their arms. At the Saturday-night dance, when one of the inevitably costumed “Western Saloon Floozies” comes up to you and asks you to cut a rug, something latent on the straight side of your heart goes *boom* and you figure that maybe, thank God, you don’t look like a Castronaut after all.

LET’S DO THE TIMEWARP AGAIN!

If you’ve got a nostalgic ache in your groin to do something different some weekend than stand in a bar, then, go ahead, Pilgrim, dare to mix with another American male subculture besides ours. If you’re tired of city life, head for a country rendezvous. If you’re sick of the 20th century, time-warp back to the 18th and 19th. If you’re bored with urban cowboys, try the Mountain Man Alternative.

I guarantee you’ll trip your circuitry sitting around a campfire under a full moon watching a blond Harley biker (they’re big in the scene) lift a golden trumpet to his big-moustached lips tootling in some wailing horn above the guitars and banjos. Sometimes, some nights, my whole body, kicked up on Pie and a tokeless Toklas brownie, explodes in a mind-body orgasm of male camaraderie and glory that transcends the mere ejaculation of my dick.

What can I say? HIV times being what they are, we seek our kicks in hot alternatives. When retro-viruses cause us to cross our legs or cross our fingers, the clever man finds new, safe releases. The sight, the sound, the smell, the touch of these men, the way they move and use their voices, the style of their gear, the way they piss against trees, clean their guns, throw their axes, bathe in the creek, groom their beards in the early dawn, and treat their kin and friends, of which you can be instantly one, because of their innocent trust, is a gift from the gods.

MOUNTAIN-MAN MUSCLE WORKOUT

One dazzling Sunday morning, tripping around with my video camera, I caught a pair of mountain men, straight as sticks, working out together in a male bonding older than dirt. The senior buckskinner I recognized almost instantly as the famous Chuck Sipes, Mr. America 1961/Mr. Universe 1962. He was a perfectly muscled bearded buckskin daddy. His workout partner was a tall, lean-muscled young trapper with long blond hair. Both were stripped to the waist, sweating in their buckskin trousers.

Gunshots echoed through the spring air from the firing range where some local deputy sheriffs (some in their workday uniforms, some in blue nylon SHERIFF jackets) were shooting their pistols alongside the black-powder mountain riflemen.

Mr. Universe and the blond traded back and forth a two-foot piece of black rubber with a steel stirrup at either end. Alternately, each hooked one stirrup under his buckskin boot and held the other in alternating hands, building more muscle pump, doing bicep curls. They switched exercises. Each in turn took the stirrups in both hands, raised their arms high, and stretched the tense rubber down and straight out at arms' length in perfect crucifixion, pumping up their chests. Sweat from the hot mountain sun ran down their armpits, wet their buckskins, dripped in the dust. Finally, they sat on the ground outside a teepee, the soles of their boots flat together, holding opposite ends of an old towel, pulling ever so slowly, dynamic tension, rocking back and forth, working their rippling shoulder and back muscles. Two cross-generational buddies, mountain men, muscle men, working out together in the woods, man-to-man, loving the idea that my videocam was respectfully, at polite distance, recording their every move—as so they told me later in Chuck Sipes' teepee where he showed his artwork whose proceeds went to house orphans.

I've never yet met a mountain man who didn't love to have his picture taken. What man into intricate costume isn't a free-spirited exhibitionist? Bring your camera. Bag your game. Take it home. Having shot the picture, shoot again.

WHAT ELSE DO THE MOUNTAIN FOLK DO?

Ah, the women! They might ask you to dance, but rendezvous are not feminist strangleholds. Men rule the roost. You never see women dressed up in buckskins like Doris Day in *Calamity Jane*. Cross-dressing isn't done. A gal, home on the shooting range, may fire black powder good as Annie Oakley, but she's done up in bonnet and gingham like Mrs. Conestoga. East is east, but this is west: men are men and women are women—different yet equal together in the old ways of the time they are re-enacting modulated with modern sensibility to gender.

Never—I repeat—*never* underestimate a strong-willed mountain gal. The one thing you may have to look out for on a rendezvous is the Red Garter Brigade!

Pay attention. This may be the only fantasy you haven't tried.

BEWARE THE RED GARTER BRIGADE!

The Red Garter Brigade is a playful platoon of about a dozen ladies who pick out, each rendezvous, some single, unmarried man, whom they cut--poor little doggie--from the herd of mountain men, and carry off to the woods, where they tie him to a tree, slip a red garter like a snapping cockring around his privates, and paint his pecker blue.

You still want to be a mountain man? Go for it! Them Red Garter Ladies won't kill you. I survived and got treated like a Camp Stud for the rest of the rendezvous! Go figure!

HOW TO RENDEVOUZ WITH A RENDEVOUZ

If you want more Buckskin Rendezvous info, start your own search. Rendezvous are, like, totally special. I'm not going to divulge carelessly what it took so long to find, and I'm not about to spoil a genuinely precious, even *naif* trip just so urban looky-loos can day-trip through the primitive teepee camp snapping their Instamatics like anthropologists who always ruin the primitive tribe they go to investigate.

This isn't attitude. This isn't snobbishness. This is protection to keep the pure,

straight Mountain Man species from endangerment. Do you like it when Gray Line Tour busses creep through the Castro and the tourists want you to pose with their kids in your cute little leather cap?

If a man doesn't understand my caution in the best light possible, then he's exactly the one who should never go to a rendezvous. If that considerate politesse is controversial to someone's politics, well, slap my cheek with your shoulder-length glove, and we'll duke it out at dawn, bud!

PRIMITIVE PURITY AND STRAIGHT RESPECT

For men truly interested in the Mountain Man Lifestyle, for homomasculine men who respect the straightforward integrity of a trip more real and even more accessible than the fantasy cliches of USMC brig weekends and leather dungeons, fine as they are, connections, Holmes, can be made.

BOOKS AND MAGS

If you want to test the water before leaping into a new male-male situation, take the next best educational step to attending a genuine rendezvous. Read, for instance, William Scurlock's *Book of Buckskinning*, \$8.95, from Rebel Publishing, which also prints *Muzzleloader Magazine* out of Box 347-M, Route 5, Texarkana TX 75503. Check out "Mountain Men" listings in your library and "Black Powder Rifles" in your Yellow Pages. You wanna be a tracker? Pilgrim, start trackin'.

VIDEO

Men, both leather-fetishists branching out to buckskin, and serious collectors interested in the alternative ways of contemporary straight males, might indulge their VCRs in a colorful, up-close-and-personal, full-sound, 80-minute documentary video, *Mountain Men*, \$29.95 (plus \$3 USPS/\$8 UPS; mail-order only), Palm Drive Video, PO Box 193653, San Francisco CA 94119.

"ONE O' THESE DAYS, THESE BOOTS

ARE GONNA WALK ALL OVER YOU!"

In these, our *Les Miserables* hard times, nothing could be finer than to have more homomasculine brothers discover the buckskinning mountain-man lifestyle as an authentic alternative complement to the incredible lightness of being male!

You want to march to a different drummer?

You either get it. Or you don't.

You get it.

Some night around a campfire soon, I want to see you Pie-eyed, dropping your 'skins, spreading the crack of your red longjohns, flashing your butt, and howling under the full moon.

Got it?

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Also included as a note to the editor:
“FOR *DRUMMER* 119 PHOTO SPREAD:
Twenty photos shot by Jack Fritscher are attached
with one-time publication rights to Desmondus, Inc, June 12, 1988
Photos © 1988 Jack Fritscher

AD FOR *DRUMMER* 119

SUPER BEARS!

from
PALM DRIVE VIDEO

Own your own BEAR! Specializing in “Masculine Videos for Men Who Like Men Masculine,” Palm Drive Video shoots men, not modelles! PDV’s “SUPER BEARS,” pictured here, include the very hairy and hung “Big Bruno,” “Rugged Carpenter Jack Husky,” “Bellybucker Tattooed Biker Bear, Big Red,” “Cowboy Mike Kloubec,” and “Sam Bush: Daddy’s Beerbelly in Bondage.” If you’re bullish on bears who talk directly to you and stare you straight in the eye while they beat their meat, smoke cigars, piss, and act as nasty as they talk, Palm Drive might just drive your palm to XXXXtasy! Each 80-minute feature video, \$49.95 (\$3 USPS, \$8 UPS; mail order only), Palm Drive Video, Dept. D, Box 193653, San Francisco CA 94119. Say you’re old enough to vote!

**Spun analogously from the satire of leathermen
and Castro men in March 1978
Drummer 21, p. 31, “Gay Deteriorata,”
this is a new-age satire of bears
as published in Richard Bulger’s *Bear Magazine***

This “Desiderata” take-off is part “Virtual *Drummer*”
which is made up of the writing that I did for *Drummer*
that circumstances caused me to disperse to other magazines.

**“DesiderBEARata”
1988 Bear-Style**

**published in Richard Bulger’s *Bear Magazine*,
Volume 2, # 6, 1988, page 46,
written by Jack Fritscher**

Go grizzly amid the bears and lairs,
and remember what furry comfort there may be
in grabbing a pelt thereof.
Avoid hairless men unless they are bear-spirited
and don’t mind combing their teeth
after currying your coat.
The “bear necessity” of life is bear lust in your own heart,
and in the heart of bear bounty hunters.

HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL
www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

Speak glowingly of those hairier than yourself,
and heed well their color-coded hankies.
Avoid bear traps like electrolysis.
Remember that a rendezvous with two lovers on a bearskin
does not necessarily a three-bears idyll make.
Whenever possible, write your 800-BEAR hotline number on toilet walls.
Be comforted that in the jaded face of beardless fucking
and despite the plucked fortunes of time,
somewhere in Iowa a chicken is turning into a cub.
Do not a cub-scout master become.
You cannot do two packs a day.
Bend over on all fours, but walk erect.
Exercise caution in your affairlettes,
especially with those closest to you:
that hairless dildo you live with, for instance.
Be assured that a walk through a backroom bar
will wet your paws.
Fall not into the urinal therefore:
you will soak your hair balls.
Thankfully surrender the things of twinks:
tweezers, size 28 Levi's, and deodorized armpits.
Let not poppers substitute for the heavy hit of mansweat.
Write personal ads for bears:
tattooed, uncut, built like brick shithouses, whatever.
Seek hairy buttholes
and ye shall find.
Worship annually
at the Mr. Golden Bear Bodybuilding Contest
at the California State Fair.
Meanwhile, for a good time,
mirror-fuck yourself,
hardon in hand:
groom your coat,
curry your hairy thighs and butt,
stroke your furry chest,
and pray for the miracle
of a hairy back and shoulders.
Take bruin heart
amid the deepening gloom
that big, low-hanging bear balls
and thick, ursine foreskin
are somewhere dripping bear grease
for you to lick..
Cruise the wilds where bears shit in the woods.
Reflect that whatever is the shortage of bears in your location,
bears are not an endangered species.
Bears are simply the rarest of the rare.
You are a manimal of the universe,
whether you are cub, bear, or hairless bear-groomer.
Living "bear" is a state of mind.
Relax.
Remember, protected under
the Orion Constellation of the Great Bear,
that behind the cosmos,

there is no great mystery–
only a couple of big-hairy-deal joke books.
Therefore, make peace with your Master,
whatever you consider Him to be:
 hirsute caveman
who likes Eugene O’Neill’s American classic, *The Hairy Ape*,
 as much as the musical, *Hair*;
 or bear-bellied, grizzly Harley-Daddy
 with upholstered punch-fucker knuckles;
 or hairy linebacker college stud
with coarse hair pouring over the neck of his football jersey.
 Visualize your ideal bear.
Be mindful that what you are looking for...
 ...is looking for you!
 With all its bruncherie talk of
 gyms,
 real estate,
 rising consciousness,
 and bear markets,
the shaved world continues to fuck up.
 Hug your Teddy.
 Be happy.
 Do what you must and
 call it by the best name possible:
 bearable.
 Drink unflavored gelatin daily
 to increase the growth of your fur.
Dream of black bears, and blond, and red, and silver.
 Know when to growl and when to purr.
 Try not to drool.
Above all, remember that manimals grow hairier as they mature.
 Bear up!
Be thankful you appreciate husky, balding, polar bears
 as much as furry cubs.
No matter how hairy or hairless you are,
 “the incredible lightness of being bear”
 is in your head.
 Keep your bearings.
 Be thankful
 you were ever cuddled
 in the first place.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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