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"It's my impression that interest in the Old Guard is running at an all-time high these days, largely, I suspect, in a sweetly romantic attempt to re-create a tradition-based foundation for contemporary leather life. I know this because I'm traveling frequently to teach classes at events again, and this topic always, always, always comes up with endless questions about "how it really was" back then".

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"I only recently realized that there was a strong likelihood that large numbers of leather guys don't quite know for sure what the phrase, 'Old Guard' really means. I'm sure that I have never seen a description of the style (and it is a style), so I want to offer one now." (Also available on [ambrosio's pages](#))

[Old Guard? If You Say So](#) - [Joeseeph Bean](#) - [iron-rose.com](#)

"Old Guard versus New Guard. It's all become so much more complicated than it used to be, and so very much more complicated than it ever needed to be."

[The Myth of The Old Guard](#) - [Jack Rinella](#) - 1999 - [Leatherviews.com](#)

"If I'm going to make any point in today's rambling, it's going to be that there never was, and never will be, an Old Guard."

[Old Guard, New Guard](#) - [Gayle Rubin](#) - 11.4.97 [black-rose.com](#) [Cuir Underground](#).

"While there are many differences between leather/SM as it was practiced in the 1950s and as it is practiced today, the shorthand terms can exaggerate and oversimplify our past and our present."

[The Old Days, A serious essay](#) - [Jay Wiseman](#) - [ironrose.com](#)

"I see the "Old Guard" being romanticized and idealized in a manner similar to how the cowboys of the Old West were romanticized and idealized. Sadly, the reason for this is largely identical -- all too many of the people who could set the record straight are dead."

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[Master Jim & slave marsha on Old Guard](#) as reported by Brandy Williams from the July 2000 [Living in Leather](#) conference. from [sexuality.org](#)

"Differences between old leather and new leather: the Old Guard treated tops and bottoms as very distinct roles. New Leather

emphasizes the guidelines defining safe, sane and consensual behaviors, and accepts switching more easily."

[The Captain's Corner](#) - Jeff Scheib [bikestop.com/philidelphians](http://bikestop.com/philidelphians)

"We also agreed that an important characteristic of Old Guard was an emphasis on tradition, and that particularly because of the great losses of the past twenty years, it has become difficult to pass traditions--and the meaning behind those traditions--on to the "next generation" of leather."

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From Issue 4.2 - Summer 1998

Old Guard, New Guard

By Gayle Rubin

I have problems with the way in which the distinction between "Old Guard" and "New Guard" is sometimes deployed. While there are many differences between leather/SM as it was practiced in the 1950s and as it is practiced today, the shorthand terms can exaggerate and oversimplify our past and our present.

Most of the alleged differences popularly thought to differentiate "Old Guard" and "New Guard" -- formality versus informality, strict etiquette versus a more casual style of social interaction, deliberate training versus less organized acquisition of skills and knowledge - are more a matter of degree than absolute distinctions.

In fact, if one looks at "Old Guard" leather and SM communities from the late 1940s through the early 1960s, one can see that both tendencies were already present. Louis Weingarden, who opened one of the first leather art galleries at his Stompers boot store in New York City 20 years ago, identified two stylistic poles of traditional gay male leather. One was the military, with its strict formality, hierarchy, order, and discipline. The other was the world of bikers, associated with the celebration of disorder, rebelliousness, and individualism. Both tendencies were important to leather imagery and SM practice.

In the 1950s there were those who eroticized and engaged in very formal interactions based on strict codes of courtesy in the military model, and others who preferred the look of dirty bikers and a more orgiastic kind of buddy sexuality. Of course, there were spit and polish bikers too, and others who looked like greasy bikers but preferred formal SM sex. Similarly, while many people in those days underwent formal training and apprenticeships, others entered leather communities via the bars, social clubs or parties, and absorbed their socialization in a more haphazard fashion.

Today, while the leather/SM community's dominant styles of public interaction have changed, all of the "Old Guard" practices and preferences are still with us. Even now, there are those for whom leather and SM are formal affairs with strict codes and etiquette, and those who seek and find training through apprenticeship types of relationships. At the same time, there are others for whom leather

means freedom from certain conventions and a way to chart an individual path. Across the different eras, many have found freedom in formality, individualism through observance of custom, and a sublime order in things non-leatherfolk might consider completely chaotic.

There have certainly been many changes in leather and SM social life since the late 1940s, but these are more complicated than the simple distinction between "Old Guard" and "New Guard" can express. Many people today regard just about everything before the 1980s as "Old Guard," but by then, leather/SM had already undergone several social revolutions and "Old Guard" had already had several "New Guards."

In the mid-1960s, classic leather styles began to give way to a kind of "hippie leather." People grew their hair, took psychedelic drugs, became less invested in 1950s formality and created new subgroups organized around different sexual styles, for example fistfucking. At one point, dope smoking leather guys and fistfuckers were in effect a kind of "New Guard," although that terminology was not yet commonly used.

By the mid-1970s, there were several distinct leather styles and cultures, although individuals could move among them. After Stonewall, urban gay male populations grew, and by the late 1970s leather had become a kind of uniform for urban gay men -- most of whom would never experience the business end of a whip. This "clone" look included short haircuts, mustaches, tight 501 jeans, boots, leather jackets, and keys dangling from belts. The late 1970s are often seen as a kind of "golden age" of SM in San Francisco, but the large scale adoption of leather styles by non-leathermen diluted the signals and frustrated the hard core leather population. This situation led to the founding of the 15 Association in 1980; the 15 intended to create a more reliable SM environment, in which people did not wear hankies or keys as fashion accessories.

From a larger perspective, it is clear that many of the differences between "Old Guard" and "New Guard" are the differences between life in the US in the 1950s and life in the 1990s. These differences are common to many groups, not just leather/SM. For example, among surfers one hears laments about the loss of "serious" surfing as the activity has become popularized, styles have become commercialized, and communities have become more open.

Much of what is described when people talk about changes in the leather community comes down to more people, more money, and more commercialization. Leather public social spaces are less cozy. Communities are now bigger and it's hard to know everyone. People often make judgements about others -- and about what is important -- based on what they see at a distance on a stage, not what they experience on a daily basis or within the intimacy of a dungeon.

In earlier days, people still had to take risks to be involved in leather/SM, and there wasn't much to be gained apart from the experience itself. Today, some people seem to care more about money and glory and their high profile than they do about the quality of their interactions.

I began to notice some of these shifts in the mid-1980s, when the energy at public play parties seemed to change for the worse. Before then, many of the parties had been informal rituals of solidarity, pleasure, celebration, and connection. People cared most about having a good time. Even in casual or recreational play, the focus seemed to be on the quality of the connection between the players themselves and on building and sharing an energy that whole rooms could get high on together. At some time in the mid-1980s, it seems that many people began to care more about what the audience saw than what their partners experienced. Leather had become trendy and popular rather than despised and stigmatized. Others seemed to merely go through the motions -- SM too often became a mechanical exercise rather than an art form or a form of intimate communication. I'm not saying that there is no great public play today, but I often see a community that lacks some of its former style, grace, and values.

Apart from increases in numbers, popularization, and commercialization, the gay leather community has had to deal with one unique factor that cannot be underestimated: the escalated rate of early mortality due to AIDS. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has damaged leather communities and social life in incalculable ways. Communities have experienced the loss, in a short period of time, of many of the men (and a few women) who made major contributions to creating and sustaining public leather life.

Among these were Cynthia Slater, who did so much to build bridges between the genders and orientations; Mark Joplin whose spirit and soundtrack helped shape the great parties of yesteryear; Steve and Fred who made the Catacombs such a fabulous club; Kurt Woodhil whose brilliant dungeon design made the Hothouse and later the 15 Cedar Alley space so memorable; artists like Chuck Arnett, A. Jay, Cirby, Dirk Dykstra, and Robert Pruzan who decorated so many walls and lives; playwrights like Robert Chesley; producers and gallery owners like Peter Hartmann, Robert Opel, and Claude DuVall; doctors like Dick Hamilton who treated perverts and fistfuckers who couldn't take their injuries elsewhere; therapists like David Lourea who tended the same population for a different set of ills; club presidents and owners such as Louis Gaspar, Hal Slate, Jack Green, and Steve Maidhof; writers like Geoff Mains and John Preston; and hundreds of others.

The collective absence of so many leather forebears is, I think, one of the main reasons why the social changes of the last decade seem to have produced so much more of a chasm than did previous ones. These people not only built and refined our institutions, but they also met and talked and played with innumerable others, all the while transmitting community values to newcomers. Their loss has

damaged the social fabric of the leather community and has created huge gaps in the transmission of leather culture. Some of this culture has been irretrievably lost, and leather society has had to reinvent important pieces of itself as a result.

Although much has been lost as leather/SM has evolved, new developments have brought positive changes as well as problems. I'm not proposing that we could or should go back to the 1950s. We should neither romanticize the past nor fail to value it. Today, there are many ways to acquire leather attitudes and leather knowledge, including open classes, books, structured programs such as the Journeyman II Academy, as well as more traditional apprentice relationships.

We have only begun to systematically think about leather history. As more archival and historical material becomes available for study, the schema outlined here will undoubtedly be modified. But I suspect that as we learn more, the simple opposition of "Old Guard" and "New Guard" will be even more radically dislodged by increasingly nuanced and detailed accounts of different leather practices and populations. The early 1990s eruption of concern over "Old Guard" and "New Guard" will itself become a part of that history.

This article is excerpted from a speech given by Gayle Rubin at the graduation ceremony for the Journeyman II Academy on October 4, 1997.

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<http://www.tdl.com/~thawley/oldgd.html>

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THE OLD GUARD  
(The History of Leather Traditions) by Guy Baldwin M.S.

While reading a recent interview with Brian Dawson, I came across some of his comments about that 'Old Guard' in the leather lifestyle. Although I used that label in a piece I wrote almost three years ago, I only recently realized that there was a strong likelihood that large numbers of leather guys don't quite know for sure what the phrase, 'Old Guard' really means. I'm sure that I have never seen a description of the style (and it is a style), so I want to offer one now. I have carried my own 'Old Guard' card in my wallet right next to my Selective Service Registration card (draft card) for long enough that I probably qualify to offer what follows so, here goes...

First, a bit of historical perspective will be more helpful than you might guess. 'Old Guard' is really a misnomer—a misapplied name—for the earliest set of habits that jelled by the mid- to late 1950s in the men's leather community here in the U. S. It is very important to remember that the modern leather scene as we now know it first formalized itself out of the group of men who were soldiers returning home after World War II. (1939-1945).

For many gay men of that era, their World War II. military service was their first homosocial experience (first time being thrown together mostly in the company of other men for significant lengths of time), their first time away from their growing up places, and their first experience of male bonding during periods of high stress. War was (and is) serious business; people died, buddies depended on each other for their lives, and the chips were down. Discipline was the order of the day, and the nation believed that only discipline and dedication would win the war and champion freedom: (Ever notice the especially strong patriotic feelings that happen at leather events?)

Anyway, these gay war veterans learned about the value and pleasure of discipline and hard work in the achievement of a noble purpose. They also learned how to play hard when they got the chance for leave time. Indeed, military life during wartime was (and is) a mix of emotional extremes born out of sure knowledge that one could literally be 'here today, and gone tomorrow.' Lastly (for these purposes), the gay vets had the secret knowledge that they fought and served every bit as well as straight soldiers, and this information strengthened their self-esteem. All of these things came to be associated with the disciplined, military way of life as it existed during the wartime years.

Although not all gay men of that time served in the military, those who didn't were exposed to the military attitudes through their contact with the vast numbers of military men who were everywhere to be seen and cruised both during and immediately after the war years. In any case, all these things greatly influenced the shape of masculine gay sexualities.

Upon their return to the States about 1946, many of the gay vets wanted to retain the most satisfying elements of their military experience and, at the same time, hang out socially and sexually with other masculine gay men. They found that only in the

swashbuckling motorcycle culture did such opportunities exist and so the gay bike clubs were born. It was here that they found the combination of easy camaraderie, the stress and thrill of real risk taking (the riding), and the masculine sexuality that they had known during their military days.

Since one can tell who is and is not in the military only when uniforms are worn, these gay men unconsciously (in most cases) transferred their loyalties to their own uniform-the leather gear of bike riders with a few paramilitary touches thrown in. Club insignia often recalled those insignia of special military units: Thunderbolts, Warriors, Blue Max, and Iron Cross to name only a few. Club members would exchange their insignia with members of other clubs in friendship; christening rituals were transferred from tanks, ships and airplanes to motorcycles and piss was substituted for champagne; the military dress uniform hats became the leather bike caps-all these elements were just as had been during military service.

Incidentally, during the war, the soldiers would often put on skits for their own amusement. Since women were not allowed at the front, some of the men would play the parts of women by doing a kind of mock dress-up (as in one scene from 'South Pacific'). Later, this tradition would be expressed in 'drag' shows during bike runs. So, masculine men pretended to be pretending to be women-not truly 'drag' at all. (It still happens in a few places.)

In any case, being in the military also meant following lots of rules. And just as in the military, there were (unspoken) rules about what you did and did not wear, how you handled your personal affairs, who you could and could not socialize with and more. All this was overlaid with a kind of ritual formalism just as in the military. Those men who were really into dominance and submission, SM, or leather sex tended to take these rules rather more seriously than those guys who simply thought of themselves as butch. The butch ones wore just enough leather to be practical when riding, and those into the exotic sexualities tended to wear more gear than necessary to signal this fact about themselves, but they all hung out together in the same settings. As you might guess, in some cases, any particular person might be into both riding and the exotic sexualities.

Just as an aside here, before and during the war, kinky folks seeking to identify each other would sometimes defensively ask, 'Do you play the mandolin or the saxophone?' to discover which of them was the masochist or the sadist by the first letter of these instruments. All this while wearing street clothes! The creation of a butch subculture by the gay vets began to allow people to specialize their sexual interests in a way that had been impossible earlier. Prior to this development, it was not apparent that there were very many ways to be gay.

The bike clubs and the bars where they hung out became the magnets of their day which attracted those gay men who were interested in the masculine end of the gay spectrum, but it was the leather men who defined the masculine extreme at that time. (Nowadays, we know there are many ways to be masculine) This meant that those who had an inclination to kinky action pretty much felt compelled to explore kink in the context of the leather SM scene since it was the only game in town. If motorcycle riding or black leather itself was not 'your thing,' that meant one felt obligated to visit the hang outs and look and act the part as much as possible to find one's way into the inner circle of those who looked like they knew something about the exotic sexualities. This meant finding out what the rules of inclusion were (how can I be included?) in order to gain access. To some extent, all this is still true because the attitude still prevails that the 'uniform' indicates experience and social access to the Knowledgeable People.

And so, the Scene became EX-clusive rather than IN-clusive, meaning that the people in the Scene understood the rules and tried to keep outsiders out-to exclude them. An outsider became defined as anyone (butch or not) who did not have a primary interest in and experience with the exotic sexualities or at least an interest in motorcycles. (This excluding attitude was probably also reinforced by guilt about being kinky.)

I know that this combination of kinky men mixed in with motorcycle riders may sound a bit odd now, but that's how the Scene worked and, to some slight extent, still does. All through the 80's, with the emergence of kinky organizations and specifically leather/SM events, the motorcycle riding community and the kinky leather community have grown apart such that now those in one group are pretty much ignorant of or indifferent to the events happening in the other.

This growing separation is more true in larger cities which have the numbers of people that are necessary to support each of these two communities, each with separate needs and agendas. Consequently, many old and venerable bike clubs have experienced a drop in membership and some have disbanded altogether.

But for the most part, kinky people have segregated themselves out from the riders as the process of erotic specialization has continued. Generally, the riding community seems not to have minded this development perhaps because many of the members of riding clubs are either turned off or embarrassed by the erotic visibility of the kinky crowd "Birds of a feather". But for this discussion, it is noteworthy that many of those kinky people retained the paramilitary trappings, manners and attitudes of that early, core group of returning World War II gay vets.

Most importantly, these features of the military mind-set joined with kinky interests and became erotic in and of themselves became fetishes. These men then were the original 'Old Guard,' and so it will come as no surprise that their quasi-military rules of inclusion and exclusion still influence kinky society today.

So what exactly were the (unspoken) "Old Guard" rules? Here are a few of the more important ones that had prevailed by 1970:  
About Attire

Always wear boots, butch ones, and preferably black.

Always wear a wide black leather belt plain, not fancy.

Never mix brown leather with black leather.

Never mix chrome or silver trim with gold or brass trim.

Long pants only, Levi's or leather, and no shorts.

Chaps indicate more commitment than Levi's, and leather pants more commitment than chaps, especially when worn consistently.

Leather Jackets must have epaulets (bike riders excepted).

Head gear is reserved for Tops or experienced or heavy bottoms only.

Bottoms may not own collars unless a particular Top has allowed that bottom to be the custodian of the Top's collar. A bottom wearing a collar is a slave, and belongs to the owner of the collar who, presumably, has the keys. Other Tops are not to engage a collared bottom in conversation, but other bottoms may do so. Should such a relationship end, the collar must be returned to the Top.

Never touch the bill of a bike cap, including your own.

Never touch another man's cap (or head gear) unless you are very intimate friends or lovers.

Keep studs and other decorations to a tasteful minimum unless they happen to be club insignia.

Never wear another man's leather unless he puts it on you.

Leather, other than boots and belt, must be 'earned' through the achievement of successively challenging 'scenes.'

Wearing gloves is reserved for heavy players, glove fetishists or bike riders.

Always indicate SM preference, only with keys left or right.

If you are cruising seriously, wear the keys out; if not seriously, tuck them in a back pocket.

Always indicate strictly leather sex or 'rough sex' interest by wearing no keys at all.

Those who 'switch' are second class players and not to be taken as seriously because they haven't made their minds up. If you must switch, do so in another town.

'Full' leather is reserved for after 10:00 P.M. only and only with 'our own kind'.

Respect the public by wearing less of it during the day--don't frighten old ladies (I did once by accident), or anyone else for that matter.

About Socializing and Cruising:

Experience in the Scene determines social seniority (Top or bottom), not age, not size, not amount of leather worn, and not offices held in organizations, awards received or titles won.

Tops and experienced bottoms should be accorded higher respect and deference unless and until they behave rudely--all are expected to observe rules of social courtesy--bad manners are inexcusable and can lower one's status in the Scene (thereby reducing access to the Knowledgeable People for information or play),

Real Leathermen keep their word: they do not borrow or lend money; they conduct their affairs with honor and integrity--they don't lie.

Preliminary social contact should be on the formal side.

'Senior Persons' (Top or bottom) are not to be interrupted when in conversation.

Experience being equal, Tops lead the conversation.

Junior Tops defer to Senior Tops and Senior bottoms in social situations.

Junior bottoms defer to all others in the Scene but not to outsiders.

When walking together, bottoms walk half-a-step behind and to the left of Tops with whom they are involved or playing.

It is up to the Top or the experienced bottom to extend a hand to invite a handshake. (All touching is highly restricted during initial contact between strangers.) NEVER over-indulge in drugs or alcohol in public, or otherwise attract scornful attention to one's self--to do so brings dishonor on the men in the Scene,

Tops should always have the first two opportunities to make verbal or physical contact.

The more submissive one is, the less direct eye contact one makes--glance frequently at or stare at His boots only when cruising; less so in non-sexual conversation. The more dominant one is, the more direct the eye contact is unless there is no erotic interest (cruising only).

Men in the Scene do not discuss (or write about the Scene with outsiders. All men in the Scene must be able to spot outsiders with the 'right stuff' and be ready to facilitate them into the Scene after they indicate sincere interest.

None of these rules are taught or explained to anyone except by innuendo, inference, or example.

Erotic technical information is only shared among peers.

Maintain formal and non-committal relationships with those outside the scene; avoid contact with feminine men. Women are not allowed although Senior People may occasionally have intellectual or brief social relationships with the occasional qualified kinky woman, but only in private.

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Very few men maintained full compliance with all these rules all the time, and some, flatly refused to follow rules they personally objected to. But, to be included one was expected to follow at least most of these rules most of the time. Also, confusingly, there was some variation in some of the rules depending on what city you happened to be in at the time. The list above is not complete although it conveys the sense of the style.

Understandably, a certain stiffness surrounded the men who followed these rules, just as a certain stiffness surrounded the military men of the era. Those who sought inclusion had the challenge of finding a relaxed and easygoing way to follow rules. However, this required considerable social skill and many kinky people lacking those skills (or patience) simply gave up and accepted a frustrated role on the fringe.

As time passed, there were more and more guys in their twenties whose early sexual development had not been influenced strongly by contact with the military. Therefore, they lacked the early raw material with which to fetish-ize the military features of the 'Old Guard' leather/SM scene. Still, they needed information and experiences to help shape the urges of insistent kinky longings.

These people were essentially without resources until the establishment of kinky organizations brought about new educational opportunities that were not bound by 'Old Guard' rules. Consequently, there is a lot more support now for new people coming into the leather/ SM scene who have other ideas (non-military) about what is hot. Long hair, rockers with wild designs on their jackets, road racing bikers with brightly colored leathers, leather faeries, skinheads, women and others now are found on turf once dominated by the 'Old Guard' system'.

So, 'Old Early Guard' or perhaps thought of as 'Early Guard' or perhaps 'First Guard' because that style makes sense given the erotic influences that shaped the inner lives of the men who were coming of age sexually at that time. The Old Guard made some real contributions and made some real mistakes, and still does both.

It is more useful to understand than to criticize. And, perhaps most importantly, what the Old Guard did for the development and expansion of kinky life and butch gay male sexuality can best be appreciated against the backdrop of what had existed earlier--not much of anything!

But remember this, as long as we have a military, and a paramilitary police system, and as long as that military has traditions of initiation, ritual, inclusion/exclusion, honor and service, there will always be an 'Old Guard.' Its size and influence in the leather/SM scene will probably always be proportional to the role played by the military and other paramilitary organizations in society--larger following wartime and smaller during peace. I thought maybe you'd like to know.

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<http://www.vanilla-not.com/reallife/oldguard.html>

Old Guard, New Guard High Leather Protocol: what does it all mean? It sometimes sounds as if SadoMasochism was invented in Post War America. Noted author Jack Rinella (The Master's Manual) speaks of there being a confluence of three "rivers" of Lifestyle. Historically, Jack notes, the Pro Dom is the oldest branch, Gay Leather, is the second "river", and Heterosexual BDSM or D/s, is the third leg of this convergence. Old Guard generally refers to the gay leather Post W.W.II model, of the last century as you will read. The structure of "Discipline, Duty Honor Obedience Integrity and other values carried form a military indoctrination, became common threads for many a secret society in the 1950s.

Today, the rise in hetero sexual kink, has many self appointed "Masters" cooking up their own brand of service, protocol and behavior. Submissives who have been inspired by The Beauty Series or The Story of "O" come looking for Master GoodBar. Role players who have read the John Norman Gor books, come in with that as a model for finding a Master/ slave world of their own. Some people who have stumbled onto a dark corner of chat, begin their "education" on the Internet, sorting and sifting through chat rooms and channels and the characters that haunt those less than hallowed halls. Others find web sites such as this one, or may have read a non-fiction book or two.

So this Old Guard stuff doesn't seem to quite match the fantasy role. It is easy to dismiss Protocol and Discipline as an old "gay" thing that has no place in the new millennium... until you look carefully at it. Submissives want structure. In fact they crave it. The truth is most relationships that fail do so, not just because people change as they grow in this, but because core values of Honor, Integrity,

Obedience, Duty, and Respect, that were binding requirements of 20th century Leather Life, seem now to be optional elements in the Het community.

There is no one answer. Each couple or clan must find their own way and define themselves and even redefine themselves as they grow. But it would be a good idea to understand the past and the current underground, and take those elements you feel will work and apply them to your needs and desires. I am from the heterosexual side of the track. Yet those who train with me..are far better trained than I in the ways of the Leather folk that came before me. It is my "Duty" to insure they do. They expect me to help them learn. Because of that I am as comfortable walking into a Gay Leather bar with my submissives as I am a pansexual munch.

Enjoy this collection of essays on Old Guard and High Protocol. Chances are if you have asked me to teach you, I have sent you to this page to learn. You don't need to adopt all you see here, But you do need to understand it and respect it as one facet of our overall community. There is a lot of value here if you keep an open your mind.

Old Guard: A Collection of Essays

Leather Restoration: Reflections on Old Guard - Guy Baldwin - 4.17.02 • leatherpage.com • Guy Baldwin archive

"It's my impression that interest in the Old Guard is running at an all-time high these days, largely, I suspect, in a sweetly romantic attempt to re-create a tradition-based foundation for contemporary leather life. I know this because I'm traveling frequently to teach classes at events again, and this topic always, always, always comes up with endless questions about "how it really was" back then".

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Protocol Links:

Aspects of Protocol- Lord Suttle | Discipline -Jake Staley: Drummer | Protocol -slave mike boytraining.com | Protocol for the boy - slave mike

Leather Daddy Leather boy relationships - officer Wes | Protocol - Officer Wes | Protocol - Sir Eric Albany Power exchange | Protocols: Codes and symbols | Collars: one view - by wolfcubbie |

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[http://shogun\\_lord.tripod.com/Guard1.html](http://shogun_lord.tripod.com/Guard1.html)

## Changing Of The Guard

By

Hardy Haberman

<[http://shogun\\_lord.tripod.com/jadebar.jpg](http://shogun_lord.tripod.com/jadebar.jpg)>

I am honored to be able to bring you a series written by Hardy on changes he's observed since his involvement in the scene.

Hardy is NLA International's Man Of The Year in 2000. For those of you don't know Hardy, he has been a leader in the BDSM community in the southwest for a number of years.

Hardy first awakened to his leather fetish by the smell of the leather upholstery in his dad's new 1956 Buick. Hardy has been active in the leather community since the late 1970's. Not content to classify himself as simply a gay male sadist, he prefers the term, "pain technologist."

Hardy works with various community organizations. He is past Co-chair of NLA-Dallas, as well as one of the founding members of Inquisition Dallas. His articles have been published in various leather publications in the United States and Europe. In his professional life, Hardy designs internet sites and makes films. His award winning short "Leather" has been seen in film festivals around the world.

<[http://shogun\\_lord.tripod.com/jadebar.jpg](http://shogun_lord.tripod.com/jadebar.jpg)>

You are just turning 20, and though you have a good job working in the same factory your father did, you can't stay. Oh the work was OK, and the pay was darn good, but there are some things that just have to be done. You know that there's a war and you are going to be part of it. That's just the way things are.

Boot camp. Some of your friends call this place hell, and in some ways they're right, but there is an order here that is different than anything you've ever known. It's damned hard work, and at the end of every day you just don't think you're gonna live 'til sunrise, but

you do. And you learn to like it. A life with other men. A life of structure and rules. No guessing. As long as you follow the rules, and trust your commanding officers, you not only survive, you thrive.

The war. Real hell. Blood. Killing. Cold nights and mud encrusted days. It seems you are never dry. You're either covered in sweat, rain, mud or grease, and those nights in boot camp on that rickety cot seem like heaven. You don't sleep at all. You lose so many friends you stop counting, and you just get numb. There are breaks though. A few days in some foreign town where you are treated like a hero. People here love your uniform, and you do too.

Home again. After all the emotional welcomes and the congratulations, you find yourself with part of you missing. Did you leave it somewhere "over-there" or is it just so deep inside you can't reach it. You go back to the job you left, but only stay a few months. You just don't like the restrictions, and you miss your friends and you miss something else, the company of other men.

Searching. You try to find the others like yourself. Those guys who came back changed. Not from the war. Everyone was changed by that. You miss the whole structure, the order of it all. You buy a military surplus motorcycle, and take off on the road. You are looking for those others you know are there.

Found. It only takes a few days before you meet up with another guy on a surplus bike just like you. He could be your twin brother if you didn't know better. Something about him strikes a resonant tone in your soul, and that missing part of you begins to shake its way loose from the depths of your being. He's got an old leather jacket, and a hat that looks almost military like. He tells you about a group of other guys like him that ride together. They're not a gang, but they have a few laughs with each other. Once you meet them, you know this is where you belong. They are mostly vets, like you. They still retain some of the military protocol, even though they don't have formal ranks. Some of them dress more like officers, broad brimmed caps and chain for braid. Others act more like grunts, walking behind, eyes down, speaking when spoken to by an officer. This is where you belong.

So what does this story have to do with the Leather community. It's part of our heritage. Hundreds of returning GI's found themselves missing something they found in the service. The order, the discipline and the constant testing of their endurance and strength. Back home, some of them ended up in the new phenomenon of the motorcycle gang. A pseudo-military environment where order was preserved through rank and experience.

Soon, Hollywood picked up on this powerful imagery and with the help of stars like Marlon Brando and James Dean the male icons became firmly entrenched in the collective psyche of America. Men, wanting the company of other ultra-masculine men sought the

biker image as well as the men themselves. Many of these guys played rough. Having learned the intricacies of discipline in their boot camp days, they now incorporated these kinks into their sexual activities. Many were having sex with other men, something that would have been unthinkable in the 50's. Doing it rough made this "pansy" activity seem more masculine and acceptable.

By the 1960's the gay leather community had emerged as a way of life and love, and after Stonewall it began emerging from the shadows.

Now before anyone gets the wrong idea, I am not old enough to have served in W.W.II. Many people consider me to be Old Guard leather, but in relative terms I'm somewhere in between. I was lucky enough to experience some of the legendary leather bars like the Gold Coast in Chicago, the Anvil in NYC, and in Dallas, the Sundance Kids.

I was not steeped in the traditions of "old leather" but I was mentored by a few people who were. What they created was a community of like-minded people who were intent on living and loving outside the societal boundaries. Did this mean they were anarchists? Far from it. They developed a true subculture with rules, traditions, rituals, and hierarchy of it's own. It is that early subculture that we are building on today.

When Larry Townsend wrote the Leatherman's Handbook in the early 1970's he was attempting to not only create a how-to guide for people interested in leathersex, but to document and preserve some of the traditions and knowledge that had been passed on to him. The success of his book, now in it's second or third incarnation is testament to what his readers wanted. A book describing how to swing a flogger or handle a whip would be of only passing interest. He wrote more about the "who" and "why" than the "how-to", because readers wanted to know more than technique. It is that information beyond the technique that is the real legacy of the Old Guard. Even the idea of "safe sane and consensual" sprung from the minds of Leatherfolk many would consider old-timers.

So what good does all this do someone who is new to the leather/fetish/BDSM scene? It gives them roots. Having a cultural history can serve as a firm foundation for growth, experimentation and new ideas. One thing is constant in the leather community, change. Leatherfolk are rarely content to trod over well worn paths. Exploring is a big part of what the scene is all about. So with that in mind, I will try to answer a few questions I receive on a regular basis from newer people in the leather scene. These are not the definitive historical answers, merely what I have learned. For a more precise history of the Leather community, I suggest checking out the reading list at the end of this article.

## Badges, Symbols and Rank.

That guy I saw in the leather bar with the club vest and all those patches and pins. Where did he buy all those neat pins, and why are some of them upside down?

Club colors (logos) originated with the motorcycle clubs, the origin of many present day leather clubs. These colorful embroidered patches are signs of club affiliation. Tribal symbols for anyone familiar with the club or it's orientation. My first colors were sewn to a denim vest.

This was worn over my leather motorcycle jacket, almost like armor. If you see early photos of infamous motorcycle clubs like the Hells Angels, you can see the same style vests over bike jackets in cold weather, and worn alone when it was too hot.

Within the leather community, the motorcycle clubs, usually indicated by the initials MC after the club name, were gradually replaced with LC and LLC. Leather Clubs and Leather/Levi Clubs offered much of the same camaraderie as the Motorcycle clubs without the necessity for a bike.

When members joined a motorcycle club, they used to have to do a certain amount of time as a "pledge", much like a fraternity pledge. During that time, they were give special pledge colors, indicating their position.

As in fraternities, the pledges are often asked to perform a certain amount of service work and or servitude to the full members. My pledge time was spent tending bar at club functions, and cooking several hundred plates of scrambled eggs at club "runs". This pledge service was one way a member earned their rank as a full member of the club. This was true in BDSM play as well. Pledges often bottomed to full members of the club to learn the ropes, and have fun!

The pins, known as friendship pins, started as tokens of affection and affiliation between clubs. A member of one club would become friends with a member of another and "pin" them. In Texas, as well as a few other states, this pinning was done in a semi-public place, usually a bar. The member giving the pin, would unbutton the receivers fly and after a suitable grope or in some cases more, would attach the pin to the flap of the jeans fly. The pin would be in an upside down position and would remain that way even when transferred to the members vest. It could be turned over by the giver only after a play session or sexual encounter with the receiver. Today, with the importance of safe sex, most friendship pins are given without the sexual caveat, however many people do adhere to the inverted pin until the two friends have a BDSM play session together.

Pins are also used as souvenirs of special community events. These "run pins" started with old style "campaign button" pins. Today, most are enameled or cloisonne. They, too, are badges of rank. Run pins show the history of the wearer, and when they are pins from prestigious invitation only events they hint at his or her standing in the community.

Most people know the left and right symbolism of left for Top and right for bottom, but I am still asked about armbands and shoulder chains. Armbands might be a fashion statement for some, but in most cases they are a pretty good indication the person wearing them is into leather. A band on the left is a Top, Dom, Master or Daddy and the right is a bottom, sub, slave or boy. Armbands on both arms indicate either a switch, (a new leather concept) or someone who is clueless.

Chains hanging from the shoulder epaulets of a motorcycle jacket could either be because they are pretty and jingle, or they could mean that the person wearing them is into heavy bondage and SM or even an official in a motorcycle club.

Today, many people call themselves Masters. They use the title as an indication of their preference and not as a rank. In the past, a Master became a Master only when someone else called them Master. Masters were experienced and skilled in their "work" (what the Old Guard used to call SM play). Most of the Old Guard Masters I have known learned their skills as both bottom and later Top. They were trained and mentored by other Masters or sometimes by very experienced bottoms. The most prevalent sign of a Master in the Old Guard was the motorcycle cap. The broad brimmed leather caps resembled officers caps in the Armed Service, and had much the same meaning. Boys and bottoms wore baseball caps or none at all. Slaves were shaved and went without any head covering at all.

In the next article I hope to write a little about another subject about which I often get questioned, protocol. Until then, I would again repeat, that this information is drawn from my experience and that of my friends and teachers. For those interested in more reading on the leather culture and history, I suggest the following books:

The Leatherman's Handbook by Larry Townsend  
Published by Carlyle Communications, Ltd. - NY,NY

Leatherfolk edited by Mark Thompson  
Published by Alyson Publications - Boston, MA

Urban Aborigines by Geoff Mains

Published by Gay Sunshine Press - San Francisco,CA

Ties That Bind by Guy Baldwin, MS

Published by Deadalus Publishing - Los Angeles, CA

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<http://scotlandjudysplace.mybravenet.com/leathertradition.html>

<<http://scotlandjudysplace.mybravenet.com/graphics/sj-blueline.gif>>

~ The Leather Tradition ~

<<http://scotlandjudysplace.mybravenet.com/graphics/sj-blueline.gif>>

<<http://scotlandjudysplace.mybravenet.com/graphics/sj-heart.gif>>

The LEATHER Tradition...what does that mean?

Old Guard, New Guard...what's the difference?

Did you know the flag we use on our site is the "Leather Pride" flag?

Did you know that there is a National Leather Anthem?

Pan-sexuality? What does that mean?

Why don't we also post the Gay/Lesbian flag?

In my recent searches the last few months...I centered in on the "Leather" tradition and of San Francisco...I didn't know there was so much out there. In fact..we just recently had a local "Eagle" Levi-leather bar/club grand opening and many OLD Guard leather people from SF attended.

Major events are Mr. Leather contests, Ms. Leather contests. The leather clubs one can join indicate a lot about you. Motorcycle clubs. I found the Aids Memorial quilt, and once again saw my nephew's quilt panel.

The seriousness of the Leather Community...the charities and organizations that are out there making a big difference in the acceptability of Leather and BDSM. I am about to become an activist...well, not really...but certainly willing to support many of the causes we need support from all over the world.

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(... Judy originally posted this in our community on 6-25-00, followed by a few questions, then Scot wrote, on 12-20-00, the following to express his view of the leather tradition ...)

I can't do as good a job as Guy Baldwin, but for those that have not yet followed the links to leather, I will write a short history of Old Guard and a description of other Leather traditions.

Old Guard Leather started during and after WWII within the military.

Many young men were for the first time in their lives thrown tightly together and under a great deal of stress. For those that were gay, it was the first time many of them actually had access to other gays.

At the end of the war, many of these men wanted to keep the feeling and traditions of the military and formed clubs here in the US. Mostly these were motorcycle clubs and the leathers they wore kept many of the trappings of army uniforms.

They adopted a "chain of command", set up rules and punishments for those that failed to follow the rules. These clubs also formed a very tight relationship and tended to keep out those that were not part of the shared experiences.

Old Guard Leather no longer revolves totally around motorcycles but the feeling of being a "closed club" remains. To join an Old Guard Tribe you must be invited by a member. You must show your willingness to abide by the rules of behavior and will be tested as to your fitness to be a member.

Until very recently, all of Old Guard was gay, and one of the original rules was that it was improper to even speak to a woman. I know of only one tribe that accepts women (the one we belong to) but that may be changing.

The original Old Guard is dying out, those that returned from the war are now in their 70's for the most part, AIDS took a large toll on the group. Some changes had to be made or Old Guard will quite simply die out.

New blood has been added to many of the tribes, but only time will tell how or even if Old Guard will continue to live on. New Guard Leather was a reaction to the growing interest in leather on the part of many gays that couldn't get into an Old Guard Tribe. New Guard has fewer rules, is open to almost anyone that wants to join, and is more loosely organized. Where the Old Guard Tribes tended to remain apart even from each other, New Guard mixes more with all that are interested in leather: gay, lesbian and even heterosexual. There is more to leather than Old and New Guard.

There are gay leather groups, lesbian leather groups and more and more are heterosexual groups forming and moving into the leather club scene. Each of these groups forms its own rules and operates based on the desires and activities of the members. Some clubs are simply those that like to wear leather, they attach no meanings to different pieces of leather they wear. Many of these "leather" people are not involved in BDSM at all, they just like the look, feel and smell of leather.

Times have changed greatly in the leather scene, what was once a very tightly controlled small group of gay men, has now become a large number of people, gay, lesbian and straight, involved in every aspect of the BDSM lifestyle. The lifestyle is also getting more and more public. While the rule in many parts of the country is still "keep anything BDSM secret", in larger cities around the world more and more are becoming open about their lifestyle choice.

Well this is a short version of the leather scene.

For more information, check out the leather links listed from our "Resource Directory".

Scot and Judy

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June 25 and December 20, 2000

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[http://www.iron-rose.com/IR/docs/old\\_guard.htm](http://www.iron-rose.com/IR/docs/old_guard.htm)

Old Guard? If You say so.

by Joseph W. Bean

Old Guard versus New Guard. It's all become so much more complicated than it used to be, and so very much more complicated than it ever needed to be. I can't for a moment claim to "know it all" on this question. I can hope—by sharing what I know to be true and laying out what I believe to be true—to shed some light on the subjects involved.

First, let me point out that there is nothing at all new about this question. The famous Brando movie, *The Wild One*, is a (presumably all-hetero) version of the conflict. Ten years after the movie swept through the lives of leathermen and bikers, I saw the same us-versus-them model working itself out in the gay leather communities of Southern California. I am not trying to be mysterious.

For those unfamiliar with *The Wild One*, the plot is something else altogether, but the point that matters to us here is that Johnny, the Brando character, has dropped out of the rough, street club with the loose-morals and unkempt, rebel appearance to join (or form)

another group in which, under his leadership, the guys are a touch less rebellious in action, a touch less disrespectful and a great deal neater and more concerned with their appearance. The older way of being a biker is the way of Lee Marvin's club, the one Johnny left. The new way looks weak by comparison, in the perspective of the bikers. Marvin's gang could hardly have day jobs, Brando's may have. Marvin's men are hard, sex-crazed and fully comfortable with their outsider status. Brando's men—himself first and foremost, again—are more concerned with the people and institutions around them; still rebels, but not at ease with being disconnected outsiders. The 1954 movie was intended to recreate a real event that took place in 1947 in Holister, California.

I suspect the writers of the movie script found their cues for the internal action that formed and distinguished the two primary characters and their followers in what was happening in the gay community at the time they were writing rather than in what had happened on the open road in 1947. That's a guess. I didn't see anything like this until 1965 among people I knew, and I didn't begin to understand it until some years later.

Here's my view of the 60s version in gay leather:

The circle I was in worked (meaning we did SM scenes) in planned parties with rules and with a host who was playing what eventually became the role of the dungeon master. We dressed carefully, groomed ourselves neatly, and tried with all our might to follow Social Rule One: Don't frighten the villagers. This meant not behaving in ways that would attract attention from outsiders, more than anything else. I had to walk across Santa Monica Boulevard to the gate that led to our party space with my hands cuffed behind my back, but my Master was required to see that this was done without being noticed by anyone. He was always successful.

We were aware—me last of all it seems—of others who worked differently. Their lives are pretty much described in the famous Carney book, *The Real Thing*. There don't seem to be rules and there definitely are no dungeon masters. Same world, same time, different approach. In the real world as I knew it, the Real-Thing men could be seen as descendants of the Lee Marvin gang, many of them too rebellious to bear the rules of the world in such a way that they could hold and succeed in jobs or have careers. If we were neat to a pre-Beatles fault, they were studies in slovenliness. I have to admit that they were very sexy to me, but their sexual appeal was mostly in the fact that I was scared to death whenever I saw them. The important thing is that I knew they were not us.

The word choices reflect my leather breeding, I know. An example: Smoking was common if not quite universal in both groups. In my circle, smoking was done in areas provided with ashtrays, and the ashtrays were always used. In the other kind of group, smoking and tricks involving cigarettes were done everywhere, and the ashes went on the floor, on any bottom at hand or, most commonly, were rubbed into the thighs of the smoker's jeans.

The possibilities of the two groups were obviously very different. The men around me (I do not include myself in this) were generally successful in terms of their jobs and finances, and they were the ones who were beginning to create stable institutions. Among their accomplishments were the in-town bike clubs which had significant social functions and usually allowed buddies as well as bikers, leather tailoring businesses, retail shops with a definite edge, and—fanfare here—leather bars. All of these institutions and the system of manners and etiquette, training and deference we now call Old Guard were, at that point, the New Guard, although no one said it that way. Outsiders called it "sissy shit" or "gay stuff." We called it our life. We called their ways greasy and raunchy, and we meant nothing good by it.

By the late 70s, the founders of both traditions were too old to be its best leaders, but the attitudes and mores had been ingrained in a new generation, which is where I come in. Meantime, the bars and pay-to-play sex clubs needed enough customers to stay open, so they were willing to admit most of the greasy, raunchy outsiders to the carefully constructed institutions of the stay-at-home leather club-men.

An uneasy alliance was struck which was sometimes more volatile than the word uneasy conveys. Soon, of course, the outsiders wanted in, all the way in. They wanted membership in organized clubs and recognition for their ways. By then, their rebellion had taken new forms. They were wearing rubber and spiky hair—sometimes in strange cellophaned colors—whereas before they wore heavy, dirty leathers and combed their hair in Vaselined wings with duck's-ass backs. It may be that the overwhelming popularity of black leather over brown and the uniformity of the biker model over all others was born, finally, in the tacit dance toward agreement that made the co-existence of the two groups possible. That's guessing again, but I could argue the point very effectively, I think. Piercing and tattooing, especially if not covered by normal, daytime clothing, are products more of the greasers' history than the club-men's. Order and acts of respectful mutual recognition are contributions of the club-men from which we have derived what is conceived today as The Old Guard.

That is, the current Old Guard was the new form of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The (now so-conceived) conflict between the values of the two groups came to a head any number of times, with the businessmen usually deciding the compromise. In the late 70s, the (now so-called) New Guard went too far for the (now so-called) Old Guard to tolerate without resistance in terms of "frightening the villagers." They were on the street in their gear—biker leathers without bikes, for instance—and such behaviors as wearing handcuffs out to be seen or leading boys down the street in bondage or on a leash.

An important part of what was seen as "going too far" was the parodying of by-then traditional values by behaving "within" the forms without having learned the meaning of the gestures and modes involved. Example: When I hear someone in the new form try to use the word "Sir," my skin sometimes crawls. The word is not a name or a noun and, in my world, cannot be used as if it were. It is a title, a deference, a display of respect, and can only replace a name in direct conversation with the respected party. The new form likes the word, feels the charge in it and, apparently, mistakes the charge for the substance. "You'll call me 'sir,'" results today in the boy speaking of "my Sir" and doing things because "Sir said to." It's bad English and a broken descendant of the original use of the word. I could give a dozen similar examples, but they will only insult and irritate people. Why would I want to do that?

I don't really know if I have made anything clear at all yet. My point, at least in part, is that all varieties of leathermen existing today have existed all along if we are talking about how the men are being. What they are doing changes with time, but it is always informed from being, and that seems to come in as many flavors as there are people, but in only two broad forms. You can have the flavor of your choice, but all flavors are either sweet or savory—if you know what I mean. On the one, side you have your institution-builders, community leaders, men who balance their interactions with the larger world against their relationships in the leather world. On the other side, you have your rebels, your pioneers, your "bad boys" who take a fuck-em attitude toward the world when it is troubled by them. The institution-building types were the New Guard of 1960, and their habits are the traditions called Old Guard today. The bad boys of 1960, with shifts due to nothing more than the changes in the social world, are still with us, and we call them New Guard in the 90s.

So where do we go with this in 1999 and beyond? First, we can accept that almost all young people will always think that what they are discovering is new and that, therefore, their version of anything must be called New. Witness Bossa Nova, la Nouvelle Vague, and New Age, as well as New Guard. Second, we can accept that youth matures, and we can let it do that at its own pace and in its own way. Third, once we are over the brashness of youth and the newness of every (re)invention, we can recognize that the history of leather, like the history of the world, is made of great forces diverging and recombining. In the case of the world of leathersex, the great forces are order (which supports Master/slave realities best) and rebellion (which supports the most extreme forms of physical sexuality best). I wouldn't and couldn't give up either for the other, but I know many people in each camp who—two to five decades after they started doing SM—still can not accept the tenets of the "opposing" camp.

I want to be able to work a bottom out to the very edge of his capacity and mine without negotiating the plan to death, but I also want to be shown deference and respect once I've earned it. So, at 51, it might be said that I want to be both New Guard (big tattoo that I show off on the streets in good weather, piercings that straight resort dwellers have to put up with, leather gear including whips carried through malls if it suits me) and Old Guard (careful manners and order, etiquette and respect, reflected in some level of care that my

New leanings don't disturb others overmuch). If I were 25 years younger, I'd probably have had blue-green hair by now and piercings in my face as well, but I'm not. If I were 25 years older (and I know these men very well), I'd probably be unable to tolerate the in-your-face "freshness" of the young men and novices who are called New Guard today.

Personally, I can be very nostalgic for the rigid simplicity of the small, tightly networked circles of SM men I first knew. I liked the freedom that came from everyone knowing all he needed to know about everyone by observing their manners and the forms of respect by and around them. I liked the signs and displays of submission and the easy acceptance of superior place. But these are all part of the now nearly lost side of the traditional club-men, the "Old Guard."

In the privacy of my own life (at home and in leather-public as well as full-public at times) I have been able to strike a nice balance: everything, all the time, 100% my way. And, my way is usually exactly the way I was raised: Respect required in all directions, deference in one, training in the other. That's what is called Old Guard today, but it was new to the leather world, in a sense, when it was new to me.

The truth is that the Old Guard as is it conceived and spoken of today is mostly myth. Some of the forms are genuine and have history, but they never had the kind of universal acceptance and weight they are given in "memory." That is not a problem! If inventing a way of life that is loosely (and sometimes comically so) based on the behaviors of the "Old Guard" results in a myth that can breathe and have value in the lives of leathermen today, so be it. If Sy Lechter and Jim Kane and Bill Swenning and Val Martin are to be made (usually nameless) gods in a pantheon they would not recognize, so be it. Better to become giants and myths than to be ignored and forgotten. And much of what is being invented in the name of the Old Guard is genuinely useful, regardless of how it is rooted in the past.

Is there really a New Guard/Old Guard conflict? Yes, absolutely! What's more, there will always be a conflict between the two forces driving us down the leathersex and leather-social road. Paint-by-number safety and Picasso-like risk/madness can never enjoy each other (except in private and secret moments of wild passion), but each is undefinable without the other, maybe even pointless.

This article was previously published in the VASM Scene newsletter and is reprinted here with the permission of Joseph W. Bean.

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