



# Alameda County Leather Corps Newsletter

## December 2017: Vol 26, Issue 1

### In This Issue:

|  |    |
|--|----|
| From The Editrix.....                      | 1  |
| From Mr. Alameda County Leather 2017 ..... | 2  |
| From Ms. Alameda County Leather 2017 ..... | 3  |
| The President's Moment.....                | 4  |
| Meet the Beneficiaries.....                | 8  |
| Recent ACLC Events.....                    | 8  |
| Anniversary Party .....                    | 8  |
| Upcoming Events .....                      | 9  |
| Big Daddy Santa's Minion Auction.....      | 9  |
| Members' Gift Exchange.....                | 9  |
| Club Committees.....                       | 10 |

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### From the Editrix

Hello all, and welcome to the first issue of the 2017-2018 newsletter! I'm introducing a few new topics this year, and am hoping to include regular columns from our President and both of our title holders. (You might be surprised at all the places they show up to represent our club!) It's my hope this will help the membership gain a more in-depth view of what it is that we do. Hope you enjoy them!

## From Mr. Alameda County Leather 2017

Steve "Ox" Geist

So, I have been honored to be named Mr. Alameda County Leather 2017. Even though I was unopposed on stage, I was running against myself, and as anyone who's done this knows, you can be your own worst competition, second-guessing and doubting everything you did in front of the judges. The trick is to silence those voices in your head, be comfortable in your skin, and go for it.

It's already been a busy first month with the nearly immediate trial by fire of all of San Francisco's Leather Week events. Being visible at benefit dinners, participating in Leatherwalk, nearly getting vibrated to death by loud music at beverage booths, and of course, the insanity of Folsom Street Fair itself, plus, as my late husband would say, as a titleholder, I will attend the opening of an envelope. He just left out the part where my calendar explodes. Fortunately, the mania will soon go back to normal, and I'll be able to devote time to trying to bring new life into the ACLC both by finding the ever-elusive millennials and by re-engaging current members who have wandered away.

This is where you come in. We're a social club, not a government agency, so let's socialize! Yes, we have plenty of meetings, but we also should have plenty of fun. What would you like to do as a club? Movie nights? Progressive dinners? Bowling? A group trip to Great America? Think about it for a while and let me know at [mracl@acleather.org](mailto:mracl@acleather.org). I can't promise that we can do everything you may come up with, but if it sounds like a fun way to get people together, I'm willing to try it.

Yours in leather,  
Steve "Ox" Geist  
Mr. Alameda County Leather 2017  
[mracl@acleather.org](mailto:mracl@acleather.org)



## From Ms. Alameda County Leather 2017

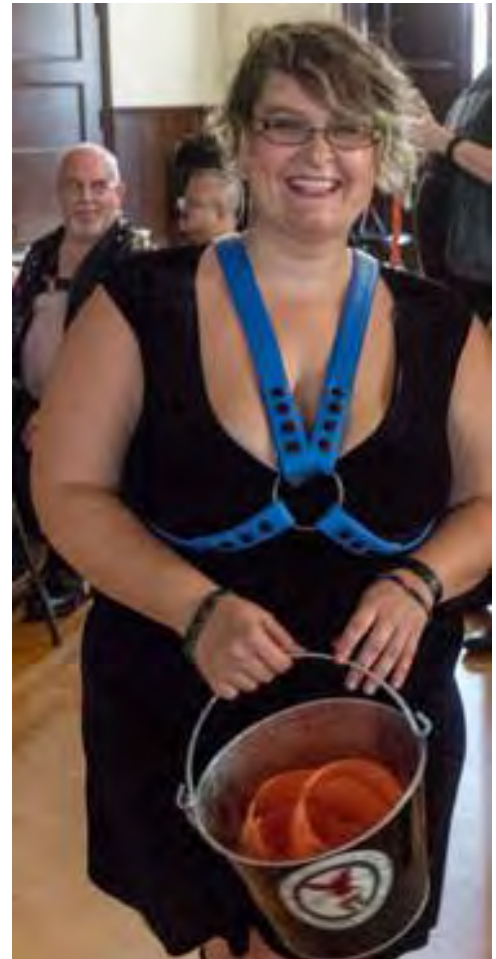
*Minxy Jeni Finch*

Hello all!

I'm so excited to be joining the ACLC leather family and looking forward to an amazing title year with this club. One of the reasons I decided to run for this title is the rich history this club has. I love that we have an incredible foundation to build from as we move into the future.

I'm passionate about leather service, education, and advocacy. This year is going to be full of opportunities for all of us to get involved in those things and I welcome you to join me :) Come say hi and tell me about your journey - I'm a newbie and can't wait to get to know all of you and your stories. We are going to have so much fun!

Cheers,  
Minxy Jeni  
Ms Alameda County Leather 2017  
[msacl@acleather.org](mailto:msacl@acleather.org)



## The President's Moment

Lance Brittain

Alameda County Leather Corps gave me my start in community involvement when I became Mr. Alameda County Leather 1994. (See photo at right.)

Twenty-three years later, I find myself back in the thick of things as ACLC's President for the next two years.

Since May, I have been watching and listening to the happenings and goings-on of ACLC so that I could have a grasp on what seems to be working or not and to better understand the pulse of the organization. Changes have been made through executive decisions and actions taken by the Board of Directors so that we feel can be the catalysts to bringing back the "FUN" while making a difference which will darn well help in our new outreach efforts.



## Where I'm Coming From

In 1995, just two weeks before my title step-down, I experienced a collapsed lung and was hospitalized for a few days. For a while, we thought might have to hold the contest in my hospital room, since I was the producer. During that period, I was diagnosed with AIDS, which was a far more serious situation than it is now.

As a result, I pledged to help those who were less fortunate than myself or could not help themselves. My community work is my way of giving back for what the community has given to me in my times of need which have been and still are of great need.

In addition to my Mr. Alameda County Leather title year, I went on to gain experience from many other endeavors, including:

- Fundraising and volunteering to open an HIV testing clinic and first LGBT Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma (April-December 1996).
- Serving as Mr. Leatherman Toronto Committee Secretary (January-June 1997).
- Achieved the title of San Francisco Leather Daddy's boy XVII (1999). That year, I also created and presented a panel discussion workshop entitled, "The Mind of a boy, What Really Goes on In There?"
- Created social/support group, "BayAreasubmissives" or BAs (2000).
- Served as Mr. Gay San Francisco 2003.

I'm confident these experiences will help me lead ACLC for the next two years as the organization and its membership re-energizes and retools to be able to continue making a positive difference in the lives of residents of Alameda County, while doing so beside those with similar interests in leather, Levi's, and uniforms.

## Who We Are

ACLC is a *working title club* which means it is an all-volunteer organization whose success or failure depends on the membership.

Like many established Bay Area clubs and organizations, ACLC finds itself with stagnant growth, an older membership, without a fully integrated social media presence, and decreased participation of active members, all of which lead to burnout.

These factors have led to a decrease in outreach efforts, and feelings of all work and no play. Now you have an all-volunteer group wondering where the fun has gone.

Are we at crossroads with only dead-ends in all directions? Maybe, maybe not.

In due time, the membership will have the chance to decide on the direction of the organization as it moves into the future.

In the meantime, the Board and I will continue to give the membership the tools and resources to be able to make a difference in Alameda County and to have fun while doing it.

As members, *you* have the choice to make it fun or you can decide it is not. We can't continue to be successful unless more Active and Affiliate members become more active, we add newer, members on a regular basis and especially younger ones, or if too many members cannot find the fun doing volunteer work to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate and those that cannot help themselves.

## Where We're Going

By now, I bet you are asking what actions have taken place to help bring the fun back into the fold. They are

1. Business meetings/General Assembles (GA's) will be shortened to 30-60 minutes and will depend on what is planned for the next month and if it is part of our duties as a 501(c)3. Afterwards, we'll revive the social hour at The Turf Club for the libation (alcoholic or non-) of your choice, going to a cafe for dessert, or socializing at the General Assembly (GA). This took effect at the November 9, 2017 General Assembly.
2. The educational classes will take the place of the social hour after the GA in March, June, September, and December. This will take effect at the December 14, 2017 GA/Education Class.
3. More group outings to local events with our titleholders which increases our visibility and outreach efforts. In addition, we hope to do the same within the region to places such as Reno, Sacramento, San Jose, Stockton/Modesto, and Fresno in hopes our support and goodwill will encourage their community members to attend one or more of our events.
4. More non-event, social, fun outings like dinner, game nights, bowling, Golden Gate Fields (June), movie nights, potluck dinners or picnics, and more.
5. Our success doesn't always have to be rooted in fundraising. Our Member Gift Exchange Party takes place (after a *very* short GA) at the Turf Club on January 11, 2018, from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm. This is one of our most popular social events each year!
6. Events are already being scheduled, so check out the calendar and opening pages on website at <http://www.acleather.org>!
7. December 2, 2017 is **Big Daddy Santa's Minion Auction** at the Turf Club, 6pm-10pm. What's your specialty or service you are going to auction off or buy? See either of our title holders or me if you'd like to be auctioned off...or make or bring something (someone?) to be auctioned off.

8. ACLC will need your help with our annual IMsL Hospitality Suite in April in San Jose, and with a Hospitality Party at Northwest Leather Conference in May in Sacramento

To volunteer for or donate to any of our events, please email us at [info@acleather.org](mailto:info@acleather.org). All donations are tax deductible.

I hope you're as excited as us regarding the changes and goals that the Board and I have set for the coming year. I hope you'll enjoy reading the three new columns we are debuting in this edition which are by me, the President, Ms. ACL 2017, Jeni Finch, and Mr. ACL 2017, Steve Geist.

In closing, I feel I am here to help the membership to decide on the future look of the organization. I will not hold back, will be frank and up front. I will always do what is in the best interest of the organization even if it is not the way I think it ought to be.

As I sign off, please remember that this is not about you or me. It is not even about our titleholders. It is about the Alameda County organizations that receive little to no government funding and the Alameda County residents they serve. It is about making a difference.

Let's make a difference together and have fun while doing it!

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## New Generation, New Board

*Mr. Allan*

My present multi-year run on the Board has come to a temporary end. It's not my first multi-year Board run.

I started the most current run in 2014 as Sergeant at Arms, and within a couple of months quickly found myself appointed Secretary. I have remained in that position now for three boards.



The biggest issue in that 2014 board was one I'd previously encountered when I was Sergeant at Arms for the 2006 and 2007 boards: each board spent the first 3 months of its term reinventing the wheel.

By that, I mean that each board typically spent the first month figuring out what the new GA and BOD meeting schedule would be, the second month putting together a Board Retreat and panicking once they realized their first event was being held early the following month.

The second month was also spent hastily assembling and organizing committees, and that started a game of "catch-up" that wouldn't fully resolve until at least the fourth month of the board term...meaning that each board was spending up to ONE THIRD of its term just getting organized.

All this rediscovery and organization frequently involved a fair amount of negotiating and even occasional arguments about how things should be done vs. how they've been done vs. how they will be done.

Making the situation worse in 2014 was finding that the set of board binders I remembered helping Joan Norry put together in 2007 had degraded to the point of non-usability. Nobody

had the same set of policies in their board binders. Whole sections were missing from some books. We lost two entire pages describing our awards and traditions, *and nobody had noticed for several years*. Nobody had a complete binder.

The organizational delay resulting from incomplete and inconsistent board binders paired with the constant reinvention of the wheel consistently and dramatically interfered with each new board's ability to hit the ground running.

With two different presidents (Wyatt Gale and Jay Williams, both of whom I am grateful to for their support during this long journey!), I assisted in working out a set of solutions:

1. All binders were gathered, and as complete a set of pages assembled as possible. This was scanned into a temporary "e-binder" to keep the board running while all the pages were researched and reconstructed.
2. The entire binder--all 350 pages of it!--was electronically recreated, with page numbering and "this page left blank" messages made consistent across all policies, to ensure that we would never "lose" one or more out of a written policy again. This new binder was given to each successive board as both a searchable PDF and a printed paper copy.
3. Our bylaws were changed to make each Board position a two-year term, alternating half of the board elections into even years and half into odd years. This ensured that each new board would have continuity from the outgoing board. This change was based on several GLBTQ square dance organizations who use a similar alternating year election system to provide operational continuity to their boards.
4. An informal time line policy was formalized and fleshed out in detail, so that each incoming board knows precisely what must go onto its BOD and GA agendas each month. This allows the new board to focus less on basic organization and more on mission.
5. A comprehensive board turnover policy was created to make the transition between boards as easy and efficient as possible.

And that brings us to the current day. We now have an incoming board which is composed half of new folks and half of continuing board members to help the new folks by providing operational and informational continuity and orientation.

I've completed my last duties to the 2016-2017 board with the Anniversary Party...and *now* the *real* test of all that work begins, as our incoming board now has the tools needed to allow it to focus on moving forward in its mission: *Putting the FUN back into ACLC!*

Will the new board succeed? That depends almost completely upon YOU, the members.

Sign up for committees. Attend General Assemblies. Attend Education Nights. Attend our events. Socialize with each other. *Have some fun.*

I'll remain active in ACLC, just not as a board member. Hopefully, you'll remain active, too.

## Meet the Beneficiaries

### Bay Area Youth Center

BAYC provides support and a safe space for at-risk youth who identify as LGBT and may be at risk for homelessness, drug or alcohol abuse, physical or emotional abuse. It provides service to youth in the East Bay/ Hayward area.

### Charlotte Maxwell Clinic

The Charlotte Maxwell Clinic (“CMC”) provides free integrative care for individuals fighting serious cancers. The focus is to provide quality care for low income and destitute women in the greater Bay Area. From CMC’s website:

CMC provides integrated medical services to over 800 clients, primarily in Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano, San Francisco, Marin and San Mateo counties, through a volunteer base of over 400 healthcare practitioners. CMC is a California licensed free public health clinic and 501(c)(3) non- profit organization.

A long-time donor, ACLC is prominently featured on CMC’s Supporters webpage.

Alameda County Leather Corps is proud to be a partner in helping this work move forward. For detailed information on this beneficiary visit their web site at: <http://www.charlottemaxwell.org>

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## Recent ACLC Events

### Anniversary Party

We celebrated ACLC’s 26th Anniversary at the World-Famous Turf Club on October 28th. Beneficiaries this year are Charlotte Maxwell Clinic and Bay Area Youth Center. Good company, good entertainment and great drinks! Awards were presented to both members and community supporters.



## Upcoming Events

### Big Daddy Santa's Minion Auction

*Who're you callin' a Ho Ho Ho?*

Come out to the World-Famous Turf Club on Saturday, December 2, 2017, from 6 PM to 10 PM and bid on minions (evil and good) to wash your car, wrap your gifts, or cook a tasty dinner! We have minions providing a wide range of (non-sexual) services, along with gift baskets, cookies, cakes, and other delectables!

Proceeds of this event will benefit the Alameda County Community Food Bank!

MCs: Kim Croteau and Tek

Please remember Mama's Toy Drive, and bring an unwrapped toy or gift card to help Mama help children this holiday season!



### Members' Gift Exchange

Our Member Gift Exchange Party will take place after a very short GA at The World-Famous Turf Club on January 11, 2018, from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM. Bring a wrapped gift for the gift exchange. We are no longer doing this as a White Elephant exchange, we want everyone to have a chance to get something they like. There will also be a silent auction.



## Club Committees

As the saying goes, “Many hands make light work.” We’re still searching for members to join our committees! Please consider joining a committee today; just contact the chair (first per-son listed under each committee below) and we’ll get you started!

- **Newsletter and Public Relations:** Lady Cynthia, Mr. Allan
- **Events:** Denise McLeod, Ray Middling
- **Contest:** Kim Croteau, Steve Geist, Jeni Finch, Ray Middling, Jay Williams, Uncle Drew, Mr. Allan
- **Education:** Lance Brittain
- **Bylaws and Policies:** Lady Cynthia, Jay Williams, Randy Hensley
- **Membership & Logo:** Uncle Drew

Thank you for reading this issue!

The newsletter can be found on the website.

Remember, all members are welcome to submit articles and photos!

Your Editrix,

*Lady Cynthia*

newsletter@acleather.org

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## Alameda County Leather Corps – 2017-2018 Board of Directors

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|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Mr. ACL 2016 .....     | Steve Geist.....               | <b>mracl@acleather.org</b>          |
| Ms. ACL 2016.....      | Jeni Finch .....               | <b>msacl@acleather.org</b>          |
| President .....        | Lance Brittain .....           | <b>president@acleather.org</b>      |
| Secretary .....        | Beth Elliott .....             | <b>secretary@acleather.org</b>      |
| Treasurer.....         | Randy Hensley .....            | <b>treasurer@acleather.org</b>      |
| Sergeant-at-Arms ..... | Lady Cynthia .....             | <b>sergeantatarms@acleather.org</b> |
| Member at Large .....  | Uncle Drew, Ray Middling ..... | <b>membersatlarge@acleather.org</b> |

To email entire board ..... **info@acleather.org**