

NLA-COLUMBUS

February 2007

This newsletter is published monthly to further the educational outreach mission of NLA-Columbus and to share information about the local, regional, and national BDSM and Leather communities.



“The Journey of Submission” February Events and Updates

Journey of Submission. How do you know you are submissive? What the most misunderstood aspect of submission? What do submissives look for in Dominants? The February meeting will feature a panel of slaves and lifestyle submissives speaking about their lives and experiences.

The panelists will include:

elizabeth: elizabeth is originally from Texas and works in the health care field. Since coming to Ohio, she has been active in both the Sterling Shadow Club activities and local events. elizabeth is currently reading Robert Rubel's book *Protocols, Handbook for the female slave*. she has been a part of J.L. and Jess' house for the last two years.

jorgia: jorgia writes, “i belong to my Masters, Sir Eric and Lady Christie Pride, and my name is slave jorgia, a Protégée of The Pride Household. i didn't set out to be a slave, but have never understood myself as anything else.” (Update: Although jorgia will not be able to attend, we are grateful that she contributed many helpful ideas during the planning and development of discussion topics.)

cindi: cindi has lived in Cincinnati for 42 years, has a son, and runs her own business as a consultant to interior designers. As a member of the board of directors of PEER, she served as secretary and enjoyed working with newcomer educational programs. Her search to know real submission was a major motivation for leaving a 35 year marriage. Currently her journey continues with the guidance and encouragement of her Master, Dave.

david: david writes, “I've been drawn to kinky far before I knew what kinky was. As I matured, I found fetish wear in some of the films I viewed in adult book stores and searched for more, however I had no idea how to find people who were interested in the lifestyle. Finally, I found bondage.com and collarme.com and the rest is pretty much history.”

A question and answer period will follow this panel to open up the discussion and let audience members express their opinions. The panel will be held at the Stonewall Center on Sunday, February 11th at 2pm, after a brief business meeting.

For more NLA-C news, please turn to page 7.

Wow, That Looks Easy! I Could Do That.

By Sir Barak

I have an affinity for Zen Buddhism, so I will introduce this topic with one of my favorite Zen Fables:

* * *

A rich man, fond of felines, asked a famous Zen ink painter to draw him a cat. The Master agreed and asked the man to come back in three months. When the man returned, he was put off, again and again, until a year had passed.

Finally, at the man's request, the master drew out a brush and, with grace and ease, in a single fluid motion, drew a picture of a cat - the most marvelous image the man had ever seen. He was astonished; then he grew angry. "That drawing took you only thirty seconds! Why did you make me wait a year?" he demanded.

Without a word, the master opened up a cabinet, and out fell thousands of drawings - of cats.

* * *

At certain levels of practice, the act becomes so second nature to the person performing, it looks simple. This is something that newer people to the scene take for granted. They watch and see people performing intense, interesting, scary, amazing things with single tails, fire, needles, knives, rope, etc. From a newbie's point of view, it appears very simple and elegant. While imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, it is much harder and more dangerous to do so within the BDSM scene.

Let me help illuminate what is not so apparent. Those fluid motions, elegant ties, breaths of fire, and smooth entries of the needles look so simple because of the time and effort that we have spent practicing over and over and over and over, ad infinitum. It is what some call the "Wu wei" or effortless effort. When a person does a motion over and over, it becomes a part of muscle memory. At that point, thought is taken out of the picture. Let us use the example of riding a bicycle: once you learn, then you don't have to think about the act of riding, you just point and go.

Skills can't always be picked up by just reading books. Before using a single tail whip on a human being, I sought assistance. I went to whip classes through CORDS/SORE and at national leather events. I

watched Tops who were very proficient, asking them for tips, and tricks. Then I stood in my living room, throwing the whip for an hour at a time, weeks on end, for months and months, until I could reliably hit a paper plate or pillow the size of a hand. I know what a single tail feels like, as there were many times that popper came back and cracked me right on the cheek.

I know what a single tail feels like, as there were many times that popper came back and cracked me right on the cheek.

In using needles, it looks easy because I have been pushing needles through human skin for well over a decade. I didn't start by sticking them in human skin, I started with an orange. Orange peel has similar characteristics to flesh, and after learning the basic technique from a book, I went at oranges with gusto. From there, I used myself as a first crash test dolly. After it wasn't so bad for me, I talked my friends into it. Over time, I got more practice and skill.

The beauty and sensuality of using specific toys comes from practice. That is the part that not many people see. I am still learning in my path as a Top and Dominant, and there are many things that I do not have a level of mastery with. Those things won't be publicly seen until I feel content that my level of skill will not permanently damage another human being.

If there is a type of play you are interested in, find someone who does it well and watch them play. Honor them by asking them to point you in the right direction, to recommend books that will help, or tricks to hone your techniques. Then practice, practice, practice!

One last thing. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something. It is honest, and will get you so much more respect in the long run.

Sir Barak welcomes your comments at
baraknsheba@aol.com.

The Active and Passive Roles of a slave

How Do We/we Manage Them Together?

By Sir Eric Pride and slave jorgia

Consensual slaves derive a significant amount of security and reward from being supervised by their Masters. Because it is rewarding for both Master and slave to share in intimate and complementary forms of service, this “interdependence” constitutes the basis of many Master/slave relationships. However, on occasions where a slave is intended to make decisions on her own, as a representative of her Master’s wishes, a number of potential problems may come into play. For example, if she is not used to making decisions on her own, she may believe herself inadequate to make substantial choices or take independent action. It follows then that she may experience tremendous fear, frustration and anxiety about making wrong judgments in situations that require her to exhibit “self-control,” that is, any kind of control otherwise typically exercised by her Owner. A great danger at this point is that the slave’s fear of failure may lead to an emotional blockage that makes the learning of self-control quite difficult, and which will hinder her personal development.

For the purpose of this essay, we make the following distinctions: control which is based on immediate authority from the Master, where the slave acts only if her Master makes an assertion of explicit command, we refer to as direct control. In this case, we say that the slave is passive, in that she directly follows the orders of her Master. Similarly, we refer to indirect control to situations where either the slave’s Master is not present, or he chooses to delegate some aspect of control to the slave. In this case the slave is active, on either a situational or permanent basis as she makes decisions about the delegated matters by herself.

A passively obedient slave always waits to be compelled, and although that characteristic is desirable at times, being passive is not always effective in serving her Master’s needs. In contrast, an actively obedient slave, knowing that few Masters enjoy direct management at all times, can better free her Master’s time by anticipating his wishes and striving to fulfill them. In most M/s relationships, both active and passive forms of control exist side-by-side, and whichever is in the forefront at any particular time is determined by the needs of the Owner. Nevertheless, switching from one form of control to another is not always easy, especially for the slave. Instead of immediate answers, questions will abound, and it is easy to become entrapped by intangibles such as: “What exactly is expected of me?”, “How much detail is desirable?”, “Will Master be pleased?”, and “What happens if I get it wrong?”

For a straightforward example, if Master wishes his slave to clean the kitchen while he is away from home, yet does not specifically state that the trash should also be disposed, what should she do? A slave always strives to be obedient, and in an ideal world she might never need to ask what will best serve her Master – she would already know – and unerringly comply. But unfortunately that cannot always be the case, and even in the age of instant communication, Masters are not always available for a direct question. In this simplified situation, we may agree that a passive slave would likely wait for clarification before acting on any question. For an active slave, it may likewise be clear that properly obeying this order would include emptying the trash as well. Not doing so will leave part of the overall task unfinished, regardless if the Master has stated that step explicitly or not.

Well-trained slaves are not robots waiting to be instructed in every move to make.

Let us look at another situation. Suppose that the Master has ordered his slave to look for “better” employment. Most everyone will experience some anxiety and apprehension when contemplating a major change in how they earn their living, and therefore this task might also be a challenge for a slave. However, there are several ways to alleviate the potential distress that active slaves may experience when presented with these types of scenarios.

Well-trained slaves are not robots waiting to be instructed in every move to make. Slaves are fully capable of thinking, making reasonable and responsible decisions, and acting upon them, just like everyone else. When it is incumbent that she is to decide by herself, then that is what she must do. But learning how to effectively do so – as an “agent” of her Master’s interest and wishes – takes time.

How does the slave in this example best serve her Master in seeking new employment? Initially, the slave must arrive at the full realization and acceptance that her Master, though having directed the original command, does not intend to control every aspect of that order. More complex and open-ended tasks like this

Continued on the next page...

Active and Passive...continued from page 3

example often require a great deal of inquiry. The Master himself may not necessarily know how he wants to proceed until more facts are available, and may therefore not have assigned detailed expectations as to what the end result should be. Instead, he may simply expect, or explicitly instruct, the slave to first do some research on her own. Getting started is often the most difficult part.

Next, regardless of how broad the starting point, the slave does need to understand what their Master wants accomplished. It is the Master's responsibility to offer this necessary guidance. In situations where her Master does not have "all the right answers," she still should ask her Master as many questions as are reasonable to give structure to the process. Some questions for the job search may be: "Will she enjoy the job?", "Is it exciting and rewarding?", "Is she afraid of the challenge?", "Will it make her feel valued?", and "How close is it to her Master?" Questions such as these, however relevant they indeed are, may still invite turmoil. A reason for this is that the emphasis has been placed upon the slave's own concerns and anxieties – instead of focusing on serving the Master's needs.

From the Master's perspective, "better" employment for his slave may be a job that serves the household's requirements and purposes more suitably than the current job. He will probably want the job to compensate his slave equitably in pay, for it to be challenging and extend opportunities for growth, and to allow adequate time for the slave to serve her Master's other needs. Another part of what serves him may include the overall well-being of his property, which besides basic health and safety needs, would also permit enough recreational time for her to be happy. Every Master will express his desires differently, and how well his slave responds to his wishes is a good measure of how well the communication within the relationship works.

There are some obvious items that should not be overlooked. It is important to keep organized. Dividing the task into smaller sub-goals will keep things on track and help make it seem less overwhelming. The slave, in accordance with her Master, should set and maintain timelines for specific goals. When a task gains some momentum it often becomes easier; every small accomplishment sets the stage for further progress. It is important that the slave continuously updates her Master and seeks further guidance from him. she should report on any actions or decisions she has made along the way, suggest the reasonable next steps, and continue to work on her Master's assignment.

There are other things Masters can do in order to make it easier for their slaves to follow their orders. Purpose

and direction is one of the major means, and there is rarely any reason to make a task harder than necessary. Orders must be clear and unambiguous, stating what needs to be done, what means are available, and when they should be completed. Masters should be sensitive that their slaves can at times be overburdened. When this occurs, it is important to set priorities for the slave, and possibly also to postpone other tasks or projects. There are times when it may be beneficial to allow for a more relaxed protocol, or invite the slave to be playful, because any intimate relationship based purely on work is bound to suffer unintentional consequences. A slave needs to feel that she can depend upon their Master's willingness and ability to provide structure and meaning to her life. The motivations may change over time, but the fact that a slave's Master is consistent in setting the course is extremely important.

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Given the opportunity to exercise more self-control, another concern often expressed by slaves, is that they are no longer "real slaves," or that their relationship with their Master has changed. On the contrary, having to decide which direction will best accomplish an order given by their Master does not result in any change in the relationship between them. Their identities and relationship dynamics are still the same: Master presents his slave with the opportunity to serve, and the slave provides her Master with service – and hence, they are still Master and slave. The Master's integrity in life sets the presence and tone for how his slaves conduct themselves, whether acting actively or passively. He provides the blueprint for how he wishes his slave to live, both directly and indirectly. If a slave has proven themselves worthy of their Owner's trust and validation in taking on more responsibility, she should be proud of her hard won sense of devotion. Control has not been released – it has been personified and internalized. The slave has not been ignored – she has been empowered with greater accountability. Once a slave is secure in knowing that she is still able to obey and effectively accomplish her Master's orders, even in his absence, it leads to an ever deeper understanding and belief in her place. And most critically of all, a well-socialized slave understands that being pleased, or not pleased, is the realm and responsibility of her Master – a slave's foremost duty is to obey, even if she does not always know the best way to do so.

Sir Eric Pride & slave jorgia welcome your comments at Eric_Pride@yahoo.com & slavejorgia@gmail.com.

Hey, We Already Knew Jack Rinella is God

A Book Review of *Philosophy in the Dungeon*

By Biker Mike and Rita Seagrave

How can a kinky person find spiritual nourishment when there aren't any religious traditions that endorse BDSM and kinky sex? According to Jack Rinella, it's time to start developing our own spiritual paradigms. One of the main premises of *Philosophy in the Dungeon* is that BDSM is an enlightening, deeply revelatory experience that helps us gain higher awareness about our existence in the world. And you thought it was all about partying and playing.

To show how sex and spirituality can be integrated, Jack looks at what it is we do from a variety of angles, drawing his understanding of spirituality from a huge range of traditions, from ancient Greece to Buddhism to new age philosophy. From the historical and mythological perspective, he explores cultural links between sex and divinity, such as the fertility and phallic rites of ancient civilizations like the Sumerians, whose temples housed sacred prostitutes. From the energy work perspective, Jack recounts the rituals he's developed to create magical space in his dungeon, and he looks at the transfer that occurs when working with the chakras and tantric breathing, as well as the power exchange that occurs during physical impact. He also fills several chapters and appendices with enough science to satisfy the skeptics, focussing especially on how endorphins and theta brain waves create altered states similar to religious ecstasy.

The ideas that we found interesting were wide-ranging. Mike was drawn to Jack's analysis of Apollo and Dionysos as two opposites that can either be locked in struggle or brought into harmony—one side logical, orderly, and law-abiding, and the other side uninhibitedly devoted to the pleasures of the flesh. Rita was especially interested in Jack's conceptual articulation of topspace as a recognition of the divinity of both top and bottom, wherein "the greater the polarity between the partners, the greater the energy flow" during dominant and submissive play.

Some of the material is recognizable from his weekly columns and event lectures. And there are moments when you can clearly hear Jack's wry sense of humor. (On the importance of self-knowledge, Jack writes, "I learned that neither of those things really turned me on. Other scenes, such as fisting and spanking, did. Voila. I now knew more about myself without hardly trying.") In addition, Jack continues to develop themes of his earlier books, including mastery and slavery, and he includes practical advice about how to meet people in the lifestyle. Each chapter is sprinkled

with inspiration to seek the satisfaction of "a leather-life well-lived." Jack talks about his own education with different masters and what he learned of himself in the process. He points out that today he considers them his mentors, but at the time they were just fuck-buddies. To distill it down a bit, what we call play will over time evolve into substantial relationships if both parties desire that. And from those relationships, people are initiated into and trained in the lifestyle. Not just trained in how to flog or paddle, but in the notions of top and bottom, Dom and sub, and how those roles can reflect the wide variety of human desire.

BDSM is an enlightening, deeply revelatory experience that helps us gain higher awareness about our existence in the world.

While reading *Philosophy in the Dungeon*, we both realized that new fantasies were taking shape in our minds. Rita daydreamed about primal piss play, thinking of piss like sweat, and tasting piss the way you might want to lick sweat off someone, almost like tasting your partner's blood, but safer and sterile. Piss as deep intimacy. Meanwhile, Mike lingered on the thought of throwing down a warm blanket into a deep snow drift, taking time to call the corners of the compass, contemplating the moon and stars, realizing the vastness of creation and how small we are in our physical selves, sharing meditation calling the gods into ourselves, emotionally expanding ourselves to fill the cosmos, and then sharing that most intimate act and exchange of power.

Philosophy in the Dungeon will encourage you to ask yourself what you seek from your involvement in leather and BDSM. Jack wants us to live an examined life. Through that examination, we find and express our authentic selves. Having found our authentic selves, we are able to visualize our dreams and make them reality. BDSM is one tool we can use to examine and express who we really are and what we really want. "The trick here," Jack writes, "is to take the lessons learned on the cross, bondage table, the bed, or in the dungeon to improve one's life in general."

Mike and Rita welcome your comments at ablecharmer@yahoo.com and ritaseagrave@mac.com.

Crush, Chop, and Tear?

Theories about the Physics of Impact Play

By Samantha Roberts

Last time, I talked about getting sting and thud out of paddles, and promised to introduce crush, chop and tear. I don't really care for those words, but they seemed like the best descriptors at the time... perhaps I will come up with something better as I go along.

The first thing that happens when an object strikes the skin is what I called "crush," though "squish" is probably a more apt description of the effect. This is what happens when a wide, flat, rigid object such as a paddle strikes a rounded surface such as an ass cheek. The flat surface of the paddle compresses the tissue, squishing it in towards the center of the body and outwards towards the edges of the impact zone (fig. 1).

The stress this causes in the tissue is pretty uniform... perhaps a little greater in the center because the flesh has been compressed further there, and a bit higher at the edges because of the "outward squish effect," but pretty uniform. For that reason, it tends to redden the entire area without leaving lines and welts. When thinking about the design of an impact toy, I call this the "face effect," because it is generated by the face of the toy rather than by its edges.

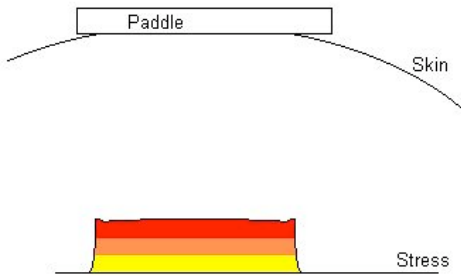


Figure 1. Paddle crushes or squishes flesh uniformly.

If the paddle strikes with enough energy, it will squish the tissue until one or both of its edges reach the skin's surface (fig. 2). As it continues to press into the body, the flesh tries to wrap around the edge but cannot because of the undisturbed skin next to it. This is "chop," a shearing action which creates very high stress in the flesh along the edge. The visible result is red lines or welts parallel to where the edge landed. In the extreme, with "sharp" (i.e., un-rounded) edges and/or high impact speeds, this can split skin and the underlying tissue. As you might easily guess, I think of this as the "edge effect."

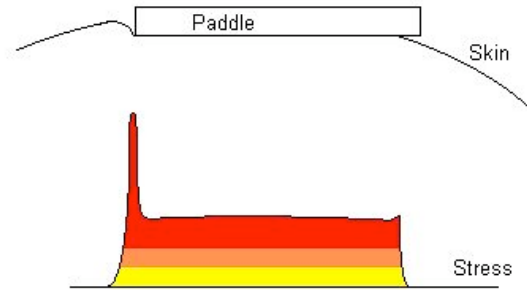


Figure 2. Paddle "chops" flesh and causes welts.

How do these effects work together to create the "feel" a particular toy gives to the bottom? Our nervous systems detect the level of stress in our skin, so the greater the stress level, the greater the sensation registered in our brains (i.e., pain). For a given amount of impact energy, the edge effect creates higher stress than does face effect, so edges give more pain. Further, the edge effect tends to be more a skin surface effect than a deep tissue one, so it is primarily a "sting" sensation where face effect can be either sting or thud (or, because of the toy's edges, a combination of both during deep impact).

The wider the toy, the more face effect and the less edge effect... the narrower the toy, the less face and the more edge effect it has. Starting with a wide paddle that is pretty much all face, as we cut it narrower and narrower it feels more and more "sharp" and intense because of the edge effect. When it becomes so narrow that there is no flat face and only the rounded edges remain, it has effectively become a cane... all edge... and it will leave the cane's characteristic parallel stripes on the skin.

So, a cane is just a very skinny paddle, but what about floggers? Here we must introduce two more concepts: flexibility and the impact effect I called "tear." A better word for "tear" would be "drag," because it is what happens when a toy is pulled across the surface of the skin. When a flexible item is dragged on the skin, it can give rise to a wide variety of sensations depending on the surface qualities of the toy and how intensely it is used. Next time we will consider very flexible paddles (i.e., belts and straps) and floggers.

Samantha welcomes your comments at MsSam53@yahoo.com.

NLA-C Board Notes Event & Updates

By the NLA-C Board

Party Ticket Policy. If you buy tickets for an NLA-C party but are unable to attend, you may be able to transfer your tickets to the next party, on the condition that you inform a board member beforehand to cancel your tickets for the current party.

Grandmother Rule. Please remember to follow the grandmother rule at Surly Girl munches. The grandmother rule means that you should not do or wear anything that you wouldn't want your grandmother to see. The grandmother rule helps us maintain a good relationship with Surly Girl management so that we can continue holding munches there.

Fifteenth Anniversary. The board has begun planning our 15th Anniversary celebration for a weekend in August. In conjunction with our event, which will include demos, food, and parties, we've also submitted a tentative proposal to host a concurrent AGM (Annual General Meeting) for NLA-I.

Leather Leadership Conference. "The Leather Leadership Conference is an organization dedicated to strengthening the SM/Leather/Fetish community through the development of the leadership skills of community members and fostering a greater sense of connection between and within community groups. The LLC hosts annual conferences where attendees may share their knowledge and experience with one another, fostering a greater sense of unity and understanding within the community as a whole." This year, the annual conference will be held in Minneapolis, April 20-22. If you're interested in attending LLC with other Ohioans, please contact Rita or Shane.

**National Leather Association,
Columbus Ohio Chapter**

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Shane	Co-Chair
Dawn	Co-Chair
Owen	Treasurer
Rita	Corresponding Secretary
Diane	Recording Secretary
Mark	Member At Large

January 07 Financial Report

<u>Income</u>	
Dues	20.00
Party Ticket Sales	105.00
Fund Raiser	166.00
<u>Total Revenue</u>	291.00

<u>Cost of Sales</u>	
Club Pins	-
Patches	-
Domestic Violence Pins	-
Total Cost of Sales	-

Gross Profit: 291.00

<u>Operational Expenses</u>	
Meeting Space Rnetal	150.00
Printing	13.01
Miscellaneous	10.00
Advertising	30.00
<u>Total Expenses:</u>	203.01

Jan Net Profit: 87.99

<u>Assets</u>	
Cash On Hand 01/31/07	4,082.20
Legal Fund Restricted	200.00
Bldg Fund Restricted	100.00
Cash Available 01/31/07	3,782.20

<u>Inventory</u>	
Club Pins (37)	54.02
Patches (9)	36.00
<u>Total</u>	90.02

<u>Year to Date Summary</u>	
Income	291.00
Expenses	203.01
Net Income [YTD]	87.99

Calendar of NLA-Columbus Events

Wednesday, February 7	Munch Munches are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm.	The Surly Girl 1126 N. High Street (at the corner of High and 4th)	Free and open to the public
Sunday, February 11	Board Meeting (12 noon) & General Meeting (2 pm) Meetings are held on the second Sunday of every month. Topic: <i>The Journey of Submission</i> A Panel Discussion with: <i>jorgia, cindi, elizabeth, & david</i> (see p. 1 for more info)	The Stonewall Center 1160 N. High Street (at the corner of High and 4th) Note: Please notify a board member in advance if you plan to attend a board meeting.	Board meetings are open to all NLA-C members. General meetings are free and open to the public.
Wednesday, February 14	Valentine's Munch Munches are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm.	The Surly Girl 1126 N. High Street (at the corner of High and 4th)	Free and open to the public
Saturday, February 17	Bar Night Bar Night is the third Saturday of every month at 11pm.	Exile 893 N. 4th Street	Admission: \$2
Wednesday, February 21	Munch Munches are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm.	The Surly Girl 1126 N. High Street (at the corner of High and 4th)	Free and open to the public
Wednesday, February 28	Munch Munches are held every Wednesday at 6:30 pm.	The Surly Girl 1126 N. High Street (at the corner of High and 4th)	Free and open to the public
Sunday, March 11	Board Meeting & General Meeting	Stonewall Center (see Feb 11)	Free and open to the public

Calendar of other local group events

Sterling Shadow Club hosts monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of every month, and a party on the first Saturday of every month. For more information about these events, visit sterlingshadow.com.

SORE (Southern Ohio Resource and Education) and CORDS (Central Ohio Real Domination and submission) host workshops, roundtable discussions, munches, parties, and fellowship dinners every month. For more information, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SORE> and cordsinfo.org.

CARE (Cincinnati Area Rope Enthusiasts) will host Rope Rendezvous Workshops on March 3, and April 6. For more info, visit <http://www.ds-arts.com/shevah/CARE>

M_O_R_A_L hosts a munch every Thursday evening. More info: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/M_O_R_A_L/

Fightclub Ohio will host a munch on February 17, and a party on February 10. For more info, visit fightclubtng.org.

MAsT (Masters And slaves Together) will host an open meeting February 18 at the Surly Girl. For more information, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MAsT_General

AIS (Adventures in Sexuality) will host a party on Feb 17th. For more information, visit www.panpolybds.com.

Please send calendar listings and announcements to Rita@nlacolumbus.com.