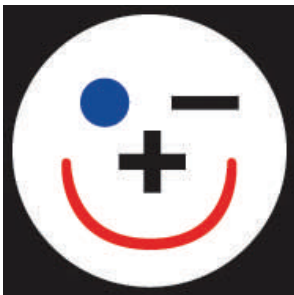




# River Currents



**Mr. Friendly is introduced at Mr. Michigan Leather contest**  
See inside pg. 5

## HUG ME XXIV: Fetish Festival - wet and wild!

**Fennville, MI.** - The Rivermen hosted our annual run on July 11-13, 2008 at Campit Resort. The theme was "Fetish Festival" and the Rivermen were asking "Got Fetish"? The fetish theme provided the wild part and Mother Nature provided the wet part in the form of torrential rain Friday night. The attendees awoke from their campsites to find what was termed "Lake Rivermen". Saturday morning was spent mopping up the water that leaked into many tents.

ing clubs or businesses: The Apartment Lounge, Chicago Leather Club, Illinois Leather Sir, Leather Archives & Museum, Nimbus Michigan, Michigan Titleholders, Rodeo Riders, Southwest Michigan Bears, Touche' - Chicago and the Windy City Boys Troop. The Southwest Michigan Bears were also sponsors of the run. Thanks to all of the party hosts, their participation is greatly appreciated.

The run show was a parody of the TV show "Talk Sex". John Paul Becker played the part of the host. Dave Watt performed "Eat it", complete with a duffel bag full of edible goodies, Tony Wolfram sang an ode to his gerbil Russell Fithen, and there was even a game of oiled-up twister. The show was sick and twisted, and everyone loved it. Thanks to John Paul for producing a hilarious show at the last minute.

Plans are underway for our big 25th anniversary run July 10 - 12, 2009. It is sure to be a big celebration. Hope to see you there!

There was something new, a large circus-like tent. Dave Watt and Jerome expertly transformed the tent into a play space complete with a sling, St. Andrews cross and other fun play equipment. Dave also played the part of dungeon master.

The Windy City Boys Troop were there in abundance earning the award for club participation. The Windy City Boys are relatively new, well organized and a lot of fun to be around. Hope to see them again next year.

Cocktail parties were hosted by the follow-

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**Rivermen 25th Anniversary**

1984

2009

Celebrating a Quarter Century of Brotherhood & Charity.

## Dave Watt wins Mr. Michigan Leather



**Mr. Michigan Leather  
2008-09 winner and  
Rivermen affiliate  
member Dave Watt**

**Douglas, MI.** - September 19-21 was Mr. Michigan Leather weekend at the Dunes Resort. The event has grown to an entire weekend complete with demo's and after-hours parties.

The Rivermen were sponsors of the event again this year. In addition, the Rivermen along with our brother club Nimbus, sponsored the victory party that featured an open bar.

Rivermen affiliate member and current Mr. Fetish Detroit title holder Dave Watt won the contest out a group of six contestants.

Dave is a case manager and volunteer coordinator for CARES. CARES is the agency that provides prevention information and supplies and services for HIV/AIDS in eleven counties in Southwest Michigan.

Dave is also active in fund-

raising for CLAW weekend in Cleveland. Dave and his partner Ken live in Kalamazoo.

The Rivermen welcome Dave as the fourth member who has held the MML title. Dave has always been an asset to the Rivermen and the Rivermen proudly support him in all his endeavors on behalf of the GLBT community. We all wish him lots of luck at IML in Chicago.

**Please join  
The Grand Rapids  
Rivermen  
for  
Turkeys in  
Bondage  
Saturday, November 15  
at  
Touche' - Chicago**



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Visit us on the web: [www.grrivermen.net](http://www.grrivermen.net)

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The Grand Rapids Rivermen are members  
of M.A.C.

### Rivermen members are:

President: Russell Fithen  
Vice President: John P. Becker  
Secretary: Eric Hanson  
Treasurer: Jon Weiss  
D.O.A.: Tony Wolfram  
M.A.L.: Terry Sprenkle

Grandma: Jim Riggle  
Hale Yeakey  
Clif Nash  
Dave Watt  
Clayton Phillips  
Ed Urbany



## Dave Watt debuts Mr. Friendly at MML 2008-09

**Out and about** - The idea for a symbol to encourage discussion of HIV status is long overdue. For years, HIV+ men chatting on gay websites have been treated rudely. HIV positive men have been too scared to approach someone in a bar because they were too afraid to eventually disclose their status. Pozphobia, the fear of HIV, is running rampant in our community and leading to unsafe and possibly criminal behavior. Honest communication is the key to the successful squelching of this pozphobic epidemic.

The symbol "Mr. Friendly" has a positive sign for a nose and a negative sign for a left winking eye. His right eye is blue and he has a big red smile. The color scheme comes from the leather pride flag.

The symbol is intended for use in person and online. A person can wear a button on their shirt, jacket or vest, letting others in the community know that they are status-friendly. A jpeg file can be downloaded onto a profile to show that he/she is status

friendly. The term "status friendly" is worded in such a way because it doesn't imply someone's HIV status either way. The more common term "poz-friendly" implies that the person is HIV negative. Some negative men have experienced discrimination for not being "poz". The goal for Mr. Friendly is that both positive or negative people can wear the pin to encourage a safe disclosure of HIV status with disclosing their status publicly.

By wearing a Mr. Friendly pin you are letting others know that they can disclose their status safely without fear of social rejection. The pin is a reminder to bring up the topic of HIV status prior to a sexual encounter or by simply helping HIV+ persons feel less alienated. Consider the statistic that most poz men have not disclosed their HIV status prior to having sex. One might think that this is largely due to the fact that poz men are continually turned down for sex or encounter rude reactions once their positive status is revealed. Likewise, a jpeg of Mr. Friendly on a

profile would encourage discussion of HIV Status online. Poz men are often ignored or dismissed as soon as their status is disclosed. This treatment can lead to unsafe behavior and a fear of disclosing HIV status in the future.

The main task for Mr. Friendly is to help ease the topic of HIV status into conversation both online and face-to-face. The knowledge of how to prevent the spread of HIV is out there. We all need to now empower ourselves to bring up the topic of HIV status and to eliminate pozphobia.

Written by Dave Watt

To access Mr. Friendly go to [www.caresswm.org](http://www.caresswm.org).



**WRAP THAT  
RASCAL!**

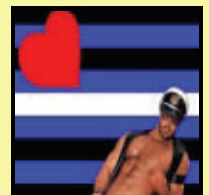
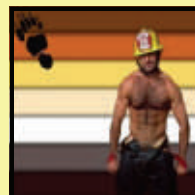
**USE A CONDOM.  
SEX WITHOUT WORRY LATER.  
NOW THAT'S HOT!**

**Nimbus Michigan &  
The Grand Rapids Rivermen**

**Bears in  
Uniform**

**A West Michigan  
Leather & Bear  
Community Event**

**Saturday November 8, 2008  
Rumors Nightclub, Grand Rapids**



## The Rivermen support the Leather Archives

### Grand Rapids, MI to Chicago -

As we enter our 25th year and prepare to commemorate and celebrate this major milestone the Leather Archives & Museum (LA&M) will figure prominently in our plans.

Last November during our weekend in Chicago for Turkeys in Bondage at Touche', the Rivermen greatly appreciated getting a guided tour of the LA&M facility. I and many of my club brothers had never been to the Archives. Not knowing exactly what to expect, I was pleasantly surprised by what I saw and more so by what I learned. The professionalism and dedication of the staff impressed me as did my journey back in Leather history. We were even able to find artifacts from the Rivermen's past.

The LA&M and the Rivermen have worked together in the past. Whether it was our toy donations to the LA&M's Toys for Toys campaign or having the LA&M staff host one of the best cocktail parties during HUG ME complete with a cowboy boot shaped shot glass that guests could keep.

The Rivermen are members of the Archives and we encourage all clubs and individuals to help make sure that the LA&M continues to prosper by becoming members.

With regards to our Silver Anniversary, the Rivermen are planning on contributing items from our history for preservation alongside those who came before us and for those who will come in the future.

With help from the Rivermen and like minded clubs and individuals, our 50th anniversary contribution in the year 2034 will tell the next chapter in

Rivermen history and the history of all our brothers and sisters in the Leather Community.



Leather Archives & Museum ©

**LA&M**

*...located in Chicago, serving the World....*



Since 1991, the Leather Archives & Museum has been saving the historical record of the leather community. The art, artifacts and documents preserved at the LA&M tell the colorful story of the individuals and organizations from WWII (and before) through today. Stop by the museum next time you're in Chicago, or visit us on the Internet.

6418 N. Greenview Ave.

Chicago, IL 60626

773.761.9200

<http://www.leatherarchives.org>



## New Michigan Leatherboy titleholder is Ed Urbany

**Lansing, MI.** - During May 2008 the Michigan Leather Sir and Leather Boy contest was held at the Esquire and Spiral in Michigan's Capital city. The winners went on to compete for the 7th annual regional title in Indianapolis.

The contest consisted of three parts: interview, speech and leather fantasy. The panel of judges were as follows: Michigan Leather Boy 2007 Boy Geno, Master Alex, Sir Shane, Mr. Leather Cowboy 2007 Randall Davis, Former Mr. Michigan Leather Doug VanKirk and Master Sar.

Rivermen member Ed Urbany entered the Leather Boy contest. Since this was his first time competing he was understandably nervous and during the interview portion the judges did manage to stump him for a while. But with some quick re-

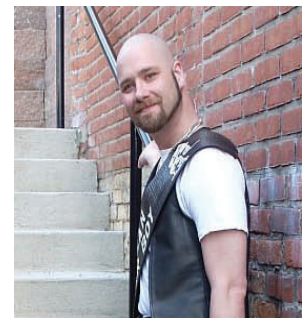
search on a cell phone, Ed was able to provide the answer.

Next up was the speech where Ed talked about his journey into the leather lifestyle. He began with his first piece of leather, which was a vest from an ex-partner. He also described his experience in the Cleveland leather scene and the people he has encountered since then. The most recent part of his continuing leather journey was joining the Grand Rapids Rivermen during 2008.

The last part of the contest was the fantasy portion. Leather Sir contestant Sir Merrill appeared with Ed during his presentation. The fantasy told the story of Ed arriving home knowing he had been where he shouldn't have been. His Sir needs to dish out some discipline to his Boy and a flogging ensues. After learning

his lesson Boy Ed is lead off by means of the belt now used as a collar.

After a lot of nerves and a spilled drink and ashtray, Ed's hard work paid off when he was awarded the Leather Boy Title. Sir Merrill was awarded the Leather Sir title. Congratulations go out to both winners.



**Rivermen Rookie Member  
Ed Urbany.**



Don't miss the Rivermen's  
**SNOW  
BUNNIES  
FROM HELL!**  
January 24th 2009  
Esquire - Lansing, MI.

## Brotherhood within the Leather/Bear Community and beyond Twenty-five years with Nimbus, Trident, Icon, Tribe, Hellfire, MAC, CLC, WCBT...

**Out and about** - Brotherhood (*bruht*-er-hood) *noun*: the condition or quality of being a brother or brothers; sharing a common interest or quality; the belief that all people should act with warmth and equality toward one another, regardless of differences in race, creed, nationality, etc; an association for any purpose. This is the definition of brotherhood in the dictionary. Within the leather and bear community it is more than just words on a page, it is our mantra, our reality, our commitment.

The concept of brotherhood is obvious at any run such as HUG ME where the Rivermen worked with the Southwest Michigan Bears as both groups mutually sponsored each other's events. The concept is evident at Campit during their August

Leather weekend where both the Rivermen and Trident Toledo hosted cocktail parties. Further evidence of a thriving brotherhood is the joint bar night featuring Nimbus and the Rivermen or when the Rivermen work with Hellfire to coordinate and help provide security for Inferno.

Even though many of our groups are geographically spread out, it is amazing to know that when I see an Icon or Tribe patch on a vest I know there is a common bond even though I might not have met that person before. After attending another club's run one can take comfort in knowing there is someone who shares your beliefs whom you will likely see again in the future.

Another great example is M.A.C. (Midwest Assoc. of Clubs) of which

the Rivermen are members along with many others. Even though I have not been to many runs yet, I know when I see run applications come into the Rivermen P.O. box that if I were to attend I would meet some great new people, see old friends and be among like minded persons.

As the Rivermen ramp up for our Twenty-fifth anniversary, and in hopes of hosting the MAC conference, we are looking forward to seeing many members of the leather/bear brotherhood. Some members will have blessed us with their presence or support in past years. Some will be new friends as we write the story of the next twenty-five years of brotherhood. July 10 - 12, 2009 will be a special celebration and we hope to see many new and old friends.

# MEET the MEAT

### Private Progressive Dinner

6-9 p.m., \$25 in advance

Order dinner tickets @

<http://clawinfo.org/kzoo.html>

Location of dinner given after ticket purchase. (Max 40 tickets to be sold)

**A CLAW NATION  
Fund Raiser Dinner &  
Bar Night in Kalamazoo  
November 22, 2008  
Proceeds to benefit  
Leather Archives & CARES**

**Tradewinds Lounge  
562 Portage St. - Kalamazoo**

**9 - 10 pm - Dessert**

**10 - Midnight - Kinky Cocktails**

**Midnight - Jock Auction &  
Charity Auction**

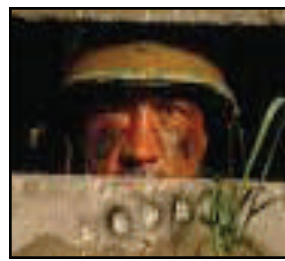
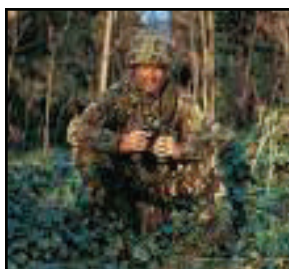




Photos courtesy of Greg Serrano. Thanks much Greg! You're awesome!



# HUG ME XXV: BACK TO BASICS RIVERMEN BOOTCAMP



**JULY 10 - 12, 2009  
CAMPIT RESORT  
FENNVILLE, MICHIGAN**



Rivermen **25th** Anniversary

HUG ME IS A MAC



SANCTIONED EVENT