

GETTING IT ON AT THE HOOKERS' BALL

by Jennifer L. Thompson

Decadence and bare asses ran rampant at the First Annual Hooker's Ball. Leotarded whores, panama'd pimps, and transvestites festooned with feathers, glitter and satin dominated the \$25-a-head "celebrity" Foreplay Party preceding the ball. Several less canny sorts lost their wallets.

Barb founder Max Scherr embarked on his film career that evening shooting a documentary of Margo St. James' First Annual Hooker's Ball and Foreplay Party. "You camera people have got to stop giving all your attention to the queens. This is a hooker's ball," complained a working woman.

"Choo, choo, choo," one queen chugged, gliding past the liver pate to the champagne bar. The dress she wore was hot pink with black sequin sleeves. A slit revealed a shapely thigh and calf as the turbaned woman swished her black satin scarves to the delight of goggle eyed observers. A blond mustache added a piquant touch to an otherwise homely face. "I'm doing security. Honey, they know when there's trouble you get a drag queen," Barb was told.

About two dozen transvestites identifiable by slipping misshapen bosoms volunteered for the show. Two make believe ladies performed exotic dances while balancing two feet of feathered headgear on their pointed little heads.

One blushing bride greeted friends by flashing a chalk white penis which those adept in figuring out social nuances immediately shook with barely a bat of the five-inch eyelash. Once this exchange was completed petticoats dropped modestly to the floor.

Hookers kept a low profile, for good reason. I asked a friend of mine from the Hall of Justice whether or not he thought the vice squad would send a few of its fellows to the event. "Heh, heh, heh," he nervously chuckled glancing furtively over his shoulder. "I've seen a number of familiar faces here tonight."

One pimp dressed in the traditional white suit, four-inch shoes, and broad brimmed leather panama, first tried to tell Barb he was an actor. The man was enjoying himself. He led a kick line of working women and queens. He flashed smiles at every lady that would receive them.

One of the pimp's ladies spotted a shaved head on a woman's body. "Who's that?" she asked. "Betty Dodson," Barb answered. Both she and her take-care-of-businessman exclaimed, "Far-out," and sauntered over to meet the infamous erotic artist.

At least 300 people sardined themselves into two small rooms

for the Foreplay Party. The rooms in the Longshoreman's Hall are reminiscent of a church or school's social lounge. Crepe paper streamers hung from the ceilings. Glitter fell on the vinyl tiles. Metal stack-up chairs were strewn about both rooms for those who could restrain themselves to one area. Posters advertising HUMP (Hookers United Mostly for Profit) disguised institutional cinder block walls.

One young man came dressed as a vampire letter carrier. His companion wore black tights and leotards capped with a silver mink stole. "This is better than I even imagined," the fellow told Barb. He got his official uniform from a supply store in Oakland. The store asked what the uniform was for. The man told them it was for the Hooker's ball at which point the salesperson said, "We're not supposed to sell these outfits for unofficial use, but for the Hooker's Ball we'll do it."

Margo St. James floated throughout the crowd during the evening beaming and looking every inch a madam in a satin burgundy dress that would grace any house along the Barberrry Coast.

Towards the end of the Foreplay Party, St. James said a few words about COYOTE's efforts to decriminalize prostitution, the incredible amount of tax dollars vice squad arrests cost San Franciscans, and mentioned her favorite slogan, "No Hippo-Critters allowed." St. James singled out for praise two black hookers in leotards who had been particularly helpful organizing the ball and doing other work for COYOTE.

It was the queens, however, who stole the show. "Once again it's proven," a harlot reported, "that men end up on top."

As far as Paul Krassner's stance on the issue, Krassner, the editor and Zen bastard of the Realist who joined St. James in the political message segment of the Foreplay Party, reported that now that Ted Kennedy is not running for President he will be able to take certain positions which should make Joan very happy.

And right on cue Vaughn Meader, the impersonator who became rich and famous in the early '60s imitating John F. Kennedy, blasted from the past, New England accent untarnished. Meader who is now doing skin flicks with Linda Lovelace, came attired in a lion tamer's outfit. Completing the gent's costume were two young ladies bodies painted yellow and black in leopard fashion. G strings girded their loins, pasties their breasts and pipe cleaners protruded from their noses and

heads.

Quite a spectacle! But, on to the ball where the hoi polloi quadrupled to fill the long shoreman's geodesic hall to the rafters. At least one thousand friends of hookers came to ball with the hookers irregardless of the \$10 admission fee. Those who couldn't afford the price of admission were admitted free.

True to promise the Ball was the "social event of the year for heterosexuals, bisexuals, trisexuals, transsexuals, asexuals "and I guess that about covers it."

The balconies were filled with TV and film cameras shooting the writhing mass below. Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show opened the show with a song Shel Silverstein wrote about Hookers.

There was a BIG bar and a small bar. There was a table about twenty feet long where COYOTE T-shirts, buttons and other memorabilia were sold. The dance floor seemed to go on for miles. The stage formed a wall above the heads of dancers.

Coyote yells pervaded the hall as the parade of costumes moved about the exposition sized hall. Even Mardi Gras was never like this. The belly dancers and bands were good entertainment while the greatest entertainment of all was provided by the people who came to ball with the hookers. A good ball was had by all.



A FEW ROUGH EDGES

Sam the Silver

The First Annual Hooker's Ball was delivered from the gates of heaven to the depths of the other abyss at the hands of a single Hells Angel. A bit after Midnight this diminutive Hells Angel decided that although it was okay for him to wear his costume it was not okay for a drag queen to wear his. The leather fetishist then in very unpartylike fashion started to beat and kick and otherwise mishandle the lace fancier.

This example of what some would call "rough trade" was the first instance of nastiness that marred an otherwise incredible evening. In the words of Paul Krassner, "This is what happens when Margo opens her closet. She has the biggest closet in town."

It is a credit to the rest of the Angels that they attempted to restrain their misguided fellow. However after his display of Angel politeness the entire crowd turned sour towards the Angels and soon thereafter some of the City of San Francisco's own leather fetishists came over to complete the destruction of the vibes.

The police were summoned when the drag queen who, despite his fine clothing gave the

Angel a bit of a fight, attempted to make the security guard who was feeling very secure by this time, was not going to endanger his body or dirty his pretty grey suit under any circumstances and summoned the police. This all propagates a confusion that was at least as elaborate as the winning costume from the promenade.

The drag queen dragged the guard over to the Angel who by this time was calmed and controlled by his fellows. The queen, yelling and screaming and a bit bloody, rushed the guard towards the barely quiet Angel. The guard and the Angel managed to avoid each other but soon thereafter this same leather fancier lit out after the queen much to the disgust of the crowd.

The vibes were getting heavy on all the Angels by this time and a blond one came over to me and with a very vicious smile on his face said, "How's it going, Berkeley?"

I looked him kind of half in the eye and said, "Better than you could imagine." Where upon he

left much to the relief of the folks who happened to be standing about.

That was the end of the violence. The police came but no one was taken from the Longshoreman's Hall. Directly preceding this bit of Americana there came the highlight of the evening, the Promenade.

The Promenade is where anyone who wants to can parade themselves in front of the rest of everyone. The folks who were with us made for a most interesting parade. There was a judging and a winner but by this time most everyone was too drunk to worry about details.

The cause of the complete drunkenness of the affair was the bar that was controlled by folks who poured the liquor heavy and although they knew about ice cubes knew nothing about water. This hard liquor probably contributed to the Hells Angels impoliteness.

It carried on for a while after that but the style was a bit worn. All in all it was a party that only the Dame Margo St. James could throw. As Krassner said, "Margo's got the strangest closet in town."



photos: Janet Fries