

DRUMMER REVIEW

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When the best men get together, things go glimmering...

DRUMMER GOES TO ITS OWN PARTY Full Moon Christmas 1978 by Jack Fritscher

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AUTHOR'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT INTRODUCTION



DRAFT VERSION



Written September 30, 1978, and published in *Drummer* 25, December 1978. I wrote this article, after I had been *Drummer* editor in chief for a year, to let our *Drummer* readers spy in on a little *Drummer* reception we threw to celebrate our third anniversary as well as the publication—finally—of the much censored extra issue, my special project, *Son of Drummer*. The night of this *Drummer* party David Sparrow wielded the camera with me directing him to shoot the “who’s who” list of our little group of friends. *Drummer* was still a low-key affair—hardly a Playboy Mansion party, but the photos exhibit what our *Drummer* office looked like at the time: it was simply a second-floor Victorian apartment turned to commercial use at 1730 Divisadero Street; and the pictures also identify some of the habitués of *Drummer*.

In the photographs, Robert Dunn, who was in charge of advertising and helped make the Quarters into a photo-stage dungeon for John Embry, is pictured on page 88. Art Director, A. Jay, Al Shapiro, appears in the center of page 90 with a panel from his murals behind him. The same page, in the lower left-hand corner, reveals *Drummer*’s typesetter, Marj, sitting on a bath tub full of iced drinks. Marj Anderson, one of the few women ever to work with *Drummer*, toiled away in a back room—a former bedroom—at our *Drummer* office typesetting galley sheets for me to proofread and for Al Shapiro to paste up in the dining room. I think Marj Anderson had come to San Francisco from Los Angeles when John Embry arrived. Actually, Marj Anderson and Al Shapiro are two human examples of the labor involved in putting *Drummer* together in this decade before computers and word processing did away with all the handiwork of typing and cutting and pasting.

From the top of page 91, artist Chuck Rozema—who rented his upstairs flat to the then infamous Dusty Hellsbeck—talks with writer Frank O'Rourke, the former San Quentin ex-con who worked up to his dying day, years later, with John Embry. In the upper right corner, my friend, George Benedict, with whom I had bought a house, leans into the camera in front of a wall of Drummer covers. George Benedict was the longtime friend of Peter Fisk of the Thirteen, and together we were, with S&M priest Jim Kane and his lover Ike Barnes, part of the circle surrounding Tony Tavarosi and Hank Diethelm, founder of the Brig Bar, up until Hank's murder in his basement at the hands of an S&M hustler who killed him and set his house on fire.

Below the photo of George Benedict, Al Shapiro pasted me up against a drawing by the artist Olaf; I was very self-conscious at the time as my face had not been seen in Drummer but twice before. The first time, before I was editor, was in Drummer 17, July 1977, on page 11, for the feature, "Famous Dungeons of San Francisco," with photographs taken by Gene Weber, including on page 9 three photographs of Jim Kane topping Ike Barnes in their playroom on Pink Alley, San Francisco. Jim Kane and I had been intimate since 1969 when we took a Harley Ride from Denver to Taos and Santa Fe; I had also written a media column for the Reverend Jim Kane, editor of the Catholic newspaper in Colorado Springs. The second time was a little "Hitchcock" appearance in Drummer 20, January 1978, page 76, pissing jockstrap to jockstrap on a redheaded gay man playing with my nipples.

In 1975, Gene Weber and I traveled together to Japan, and later to the Caribbean where he shot the underwater fisting photographs for my gay sports feature in Drummer 20, January 1978. Gene Weber, famous for his multi-projector slide shows, also shot me with Russell Van Leer in the sequence "Blood Crucifixion" which upon Gene Weber's death went to the Gay and Lesbian Historical Society at the San Francisco Public Library. Odd to think of it, but considering the dynamics of the wild '70s, I was at the time I was a tad reluctant to show my face because when I was at the baths guys could identify me and often wanted me to do to them what I had written about in Drummer. Bummer! Just because I wrote about it didn't mean I actually did it, at least more than once, and certainly not with everyone. Publisher John Embry had the same reluctance, because he is in the photograph to the left of mine, and his face is turned away from the camera.

In the bottom right corner, the photographer John Adams who was David Warner Studios is pictured. A full-page ad for "David Warner Studios, 1746 California Street, San Francisco" appeared in this issue, Drummer 25, page 75, selling the medium of the time, Super-8 movies, as shot by John Adams/David Warner featuring his take on musclemen, sex, and leather. Also known as "Ivan" and "Olaf" because of his shaved head, John Adams brought me the huge African-American model, Dick Black, whom I shot for Palm Drive Video. I last saw Ivan at the Police Olympics Bodybuilding contest that I shot in Bakersfield in 1988. He had arrived in a chauffeur-driven antique Dusenbergs, but he was very ill, looked so, and I learned later could not ride back to San Francisco in the open-air convertible car, and had to be flown back to the City in an ambulance plane. He died—disappeared among the huge numbers of the other dead—in 1989. —JF, November 14, 2000

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DRUMMER GOES TO ITS OWN PARTY Full Moon Christmas 1978 by Jack Fritscher

When *Drummer* throws a party, everybody comes: in leather, denim, uniforms, chains, and flesh-flash. A Kid from Cincinnati thought he'd died and fallen into a reel of *Heaven Can Wait* so much was the macho, so many were the men, standing, chatting, paying occasional attention to the Living Sculpture chained spreadeagle to the wall over the mantle.

Models and men rubbed elbows and codpieces with bodybuilders and filmmakers.

The Cincinnati Kid suddenly realized that *Drummer* is not all fiction. "You guys live the reality you write about," he said. "The Catacombs, the Quarters—all these places really exist!"

"Betcher ass," said the DI in charge of the Quarters' slaves who served the reception. He handed the Kid an application card for putting in some "hard time" at the Quarters.

The Cincinnati Kid blushed.

A mustached six-two Dutch Marine, who wears almost the identical uniform as the USMC, smiled knowingly at the Kid. The Flying Dutchman was cruising the crowd for recruits for training at his own regimental stockade where discipline is administered in full uniform up until total wet stripdown.

Jockstrap lovers cupped pouches no Speed Queen ever washed. Watersportsmen searched the pools of one another's eyes. Handballers asked bodybuilders how big was their glove size.\

Size fans sniffed out the tasteful difference between the Cut and the Uncut.

Fantasy lovers met the artists, photographers, and writers who create the erotica that fuels the J/O nights in Philly, Fargo, Fresno, Frankfurt, and Fukuoka.

The moon was full.

Some men left alone, grinning, with *Drummer's* Third Anniversary issue or the all-new extra-issue edition of *Son of Drummer*.

Some men left in pairs: red handkerchief on the left working it out with a yellow hanky on the right.

Some left in groups trundled off in pickup trucks to the Full Moon Party at the Black and Blue.

Some say, after most of the guests left, that the very large party scaled itself down to a small soiree of Tops and Bottoms who left to "dance" all night.

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“And boy!” as the Cincinnati Kid stuttered in white-line fever amazement “can those *Drummer* boys fu-fu fu-foxtrot!”

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