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Sexually Active

By Erin Keikoan

I have never seen so many penises in my life.

Once a year on Folsom street, between 7th and 12th streets, in San Francisco, there is a colorful fair that takes place. Every year, on the last Sunday of September, people dress up, or rather, dress down for this fun-filled occasion. People walk around, shopping at vendor stands, drinking and eating, wearing little or no clothing at all. See, the Folsom Street Fair is also known as the S & M Fair. For those of you who don't know what S & M means, allow me to enlighten you. The "S" stands for Sadist. A sadist is a person who derives sexual pleasure from giving physical or emotional pain to another. The "M" stands for Masochist. A masochist is a person who derives sexual pleasure from receiving physical or emotional pain from another.



Throughout this fair, many men and women dress in bondage wear (leather straps, paddles, whips, collars, butt-less chaps and such) or nothing at all. The least amount of clothing I saw someone wear were a pair of socks and some shoes, nothing else. Vendors stand by selling their best ware; leather paddles that run up from \$40 to \$70, whips that go as high as \$100, and sexy corsets that go from \$150 to \$400.

Many might take one look at these people and go running the other direction because it's something different. From my personal opinion, it was a new experience that I wouldn't mind going again. Many of the men and women there were gay/lesbian. There were only a handful of straight couples. However, 99% of the people who attended were incredibly sexually active. Some were even engaging in sexual activities right on the street, under tents, or on the sidewalk. Even as "different" as that may seem, usually illegal, they promote safe sex. There were many stands promoting getting tested for HIV and AIDS. Some were even handing out free condoms.

In my experience, I have never seen anything like this fair before. But it was so energetic; it was hard not to leave. The people there were friendly and nice, allowing any one to take pictures of them in their get-ups.

When my friends and I first arrived at the Folsom Street Fair, we were expecting the nudity and the crazy get ups from hearing what other people saw the last year and looking at pictures on the Folsom Street Fair Website. I had already braced myself knowing what I was going to see. However, what I didn't expect was all the sexual tendencies that people let out openly in the streets. It was a little different seeing the male appendages hanging out in the open, so maybe I didn't brace myself as well as I thought I had. My mind was saying, "Oh my god! He's naked! Wait...I've seen it before. Why am I shocked?" I was a little embarrassed at first because society believes that people should be covered up at all times when out in public. But why mold to what society thinks? The people at the Folsom Street Fair definitely didn't care.

After a while, I got use to seeing everything hanging out in the open. My boyfriend on the other hand seemed to be going into homophobic shock. I had to remind him several times to relax and that it wasn't a big deal. He wasn't as open minded as the rest of us. However, we were a little skeptical about several men masturbating in the middle of the street. One of my friends was clinging to the group because she didn't want to be touched by a strange man's penis. My boyfriend didn't want to take any pictures with any of the transvestites. I'm thinking that he may of thought that taking a picture with a transvestite would turn him into one. Such paranoia I will never understand.

We spent about two-three hours wandering around the streets taking in the scenery and opening up our minds to new ideas. In the beginning, we were pointing at other people saying, "Oh my god! Look at that person! They're completely naked!" But after a while we were point to other people and say, "Wow. Look at what that person's wearing. It's sooo cool!" I think that everyone should go to the Folsom Street Fair once in their life. It would show them a completely different world. I definitely think that everyone needs to get freaky once in their life, whether it's for private or public viewing.