

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHAT: Folsom Street East
WHEN: Sunday, June 20, 2010 – 2-8pm
WHERE: 28th Street btw. 10th & 11th Avenues
WHO: Co-Hosts: Peppermint and Mike Dreyden
Performers: Sylvia Tosun, Fredrick Ford, The Johns, Brian Kent, Noa Tylo, Unisex Salon, The I.C.N.Y.

A KINK OF OUR OWN: FOLSOM STREET EAST RETURNS

(New York City) On Sunday, June 20th from 2-8pm, the Folsom Street East (FSE) street fair returns for the 14th consecutive year, celebrating its adolescence with a day of fetish-fueled fun on West 28th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues on Manhattan's West Side.

While most New York City street fairs feature a lot of the same stuff – tube socks sold in bulk, 10-minute massages, a variety of meats-on-a-stick, maybe a couple of pet adoption booths with cute puppies -- FSE is a little different. True, there are tube socks – but mostly just visible above the laces of black leather boots -- and any massages given are more friendly than therapeutic. You're far more likely to encounter bears and wolves than puppies, and "meat-on-a-stick" can quickly take on an entirely new meaning.

Inspired by San Francisco's legendary Folsom Street Fair, FSE was founded in 1997 by former Gay Male S/M Activists (GMSMA) chair John Weis and a cohort of similarly-minded New York City leathermen. "I thought that having a fun day in the sun for the SM/leather community celebrating our diversity would go a long way in helping dispel myths and stereotypes," said Weis. "We saw FSE as important opportunity for visibility, outreach and activism. A key part of that is taking a proud stand -- outside in the sunshine – embracing and celebrating sexual diversity."

Since that first year, FSE has featured live music and performance art, bootblacks, barbers, health and community information, and vendors selling everything from cigars to harnesses to handmade floggers. From a handful of vendor tables and a few hundred attendees that first year, FSE has grown exponentially: the 2009 event drew over 50 vendors and nearly 10,000 leather and fetish-clad revelers over the course of the afternoon.

FSE is also an opportunity for the community to flex some philanthropic muscle as well. The \$10 suggested donation benefits a number of charities and to date, FSE has donated over \$210,000 to a wide array of non-profit organizations, including this year's beneficiaries: the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, the New York City Anti-Violence Project, and the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (NCSF).

Each year, FSE names the winner of the organization's Sexual Freedom Award, which is given to an individual or group whose work promotes equality, respect and openness among people regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression. In addition to public acknowledgment and a commemorative plaque, each year's recipient receives a \$500 grant to the charity of their choice. This year's Sexual Freedom Award recipient is Ms Susan Wright, founder of the NCSF.

FSE is organized and staffed entirely by volunteers who give of their time and talents to make the whole thing happen. Anyone interested volunteering at the event is invited to visit the FSE Volunteer page at www.folsomstreeteast.org/category/volunteers, or email volunteer coordinator Mike Ryan at volunteers@folsomstreeteast.org.

In addition to the street fair, this year FSE will be spanning the weekend, kicking off with BULLY—a Friday night party—at View Bar, moving through Saturday night with Bad Apple at Rush (presented in conjunction with NY promoter Mark Nelson), and on into Sunday's street fair. For more details about these and other weekend events, visit the FSE website.

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