



## SUNDAYS:

House Drinks \$3.25

Karaoke

## MONDAYS:

All you can drink

Bud & Bud Light Bottles \$7

## TUESDAYS:

All Beers \$2.75

All Top Shelf Liquor \$3.75

Karaoke

## WEDNESDAYS:

All Beers \$2.75

All Top Shelf Liquor \$3.75

Pool Tournament

## THURSDAYS:

Underwear Night  
with Drink Specials

## FRIDAYS:

Bear as you dare!

## SATURDAYS:

Tradesmen's Night Out

3935 Queen City Drive  
Charlotte, NC

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www.woodshedlounge.com

# Leather, BDSM 'lifestyle' provides security, stability

When most folks think leather or BDSM — that is, bondage, domination, sadism, masochism — chills might run up their spine. Or, perhaps, feelings of disgust flash through their mind.

It's that initial, gut reaction that most upsets Pam Payne. She lives in and around Hickory and operates a mentoring program and four-bedroom "halfway house," so to speak, for people in the leather and BDSM "lifestyles" who find themselves in flux or in need of some extra help. She is a part of the BDSM lifestyle herself and she says her way of living is about much more than images of sexual power, pain and perversion most people ascribe to it.

"It's not purely a sexual identity," Payne says in rebuttal to arguments about her life and family. "I'd say it's a balance of 50-50 — people who just want to belong on a level that doesn't exist in the vanilla world."

"Vanilla" is how Payne describes mainstream society, whether gay or straight.

She says most people in the BDSM lifestyle simply long for acceptance and relationships that matter. "I want to be able to do this for you, give this to you, serve you in this way and, in return, I want you to take care of me in this particular way," she says, describing a typical relationship which she says is built over periods of months — sometimes years — and depends on negotiation and contract.

Payne says most relationships "in the lifestyle" require people to "lay out all their cards on the table." Someone might have a good job or good credit, for example, while their partner doesn't like to pay bills and doesn't want to handle the money at all. She says some relationships are even 100 percent sex-free and instead center around mutual caring or service.

"Mostly, it's people who don't want any gray area," she says. "How many people get married today and don't even know who will do the dishes? How many people check the credit score of their partner? How many people get married and have never had an STD test until afterward?"

Payne also says she often feels the sting of prejudice and bias, particularly from the LGBT community.

"We're completely ostracized by the gay community," she says. "If I go out with my leather family and they are wearing the simplest of collars or moving around the club as a family, we are very rarely interacted with. It's very much a quick 'Hi, how ya doing?' interaction and people just keep walking on. They don't want to be associated with 'weird people.'"

But, one of the biggest misconceptions Payne and other leather or BDSM folks face is the perception that some people are being "owned," "subjugated" or "subordinated" by other people. It's a perception that, to many, seems to fly in the face of values on individual liberty. Payne says the reality is quite the opposite.

"We do live in a country that is supposed to be about freedom of choice," she says. "When you go into service, people don't own you in the sense of 'You're mine and do what I say.' People have to negotiate, have a contract. Service is sought after. Domination even more so."

Payne adds, "Submissives have rules, hard limits they set for themselves. Total power exchange relationships are few and far between. Very few people can say, 'I trust you completely to take care of me and I'll ask no questions.' People in collars have worked very hard to get into those and they've made their negotiations for their particular situation the way they want it."

Payne insists that service, submission, domination or any other part of her lifestyle are merely facets of a much larger issue. At the end of the day, she expects others to respect both her sexual and personal freedom — legal rights already attained by gay people after the Supreme Court's 2003 ruling in *Lawrence v. Texas*.

She says cooperation among leather, BDSM, bear and other stigmatized communities could usher in much-needed legal changes.

"I'd like to see some unity," she pleads. "There are so many laws working against us having our sexual freedom. I'd like to see these communities come together so our numbers grow and we can have more say."

In December, Payne is helping to organize a special event in Charlotte for leather, levi, bear, BDSM and other communities. Her hope to create a push toward that unity she craves. The event would be the first time diverse Carolina fetish communities combined to host an event at the same place and time.

"My goal is to bring all these people together to share ideas, honor each group for their community service and provide a place where they can all come together once a year as one group," she says.

Learn more about Payne's event, LeatherFet2010, at [leatherfet.com](http://leatherfet.com).

— Matt Comer



## Leather, Levi and Bear resources

### Organizations

Carolina Bear Lodge / Bear / Carolinas-wide / [carolinabears.com](http://carolinabears.com)

The Tradesmen / Leather/Levi / Charlotte / [thetradesmen.org](http://thetradesmen.org)

Charlotte Bear Dinner Group / Bear / Charlotte / [charlottebears.com](http://charlottebears.com)

Southern Country Charlotte / Country/Western Dancing / [southerncountrycharlotte.com](http://southerncountrycharlotte.com)

Tarheel Leather Club / Leather/Levi / Greensboro / [tarheelleatherclub.org](http://tarheelleatherclub.org)

Capital Leathermen / Leather/Levi / Raleigh / [capitalleathermen.org](http://capitalleathermen.org)

### Nightlife

Club Cabaret  
Hickory / [clubcabarethickory.com](http://clubcabarethickory.com)

Flex  
Raleigh / [flex-club.com](http://flex-club.com)

Sidelines Sports Bar  
Charlotte / [thesidelinesbar.com](http://thesidelinesbar.com)

The Woodshed Lounge  
Charlotte / [woodshedlounge.com](http://woodshedlounge.com)