

'A well-choreographed dance'



Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Mac Wells fights Gentleman George Michael on the ropes during the heavyweight title match at the PNPW event in October.

Fans cheer and hold up makeshift signs as Mr. '80s CC Poison faces off against longtime rival Gentleman George Michael in the Pacific Northwest Pro Wrestling heavyweight title match.

The two wrestlers take turns hurling insults, building the excitement of the room as they circle each other in the ring. George appears to be up to something as he hides an object in his mask. The crowd notices but the ref doesn't.

The bell rings and the two wrestlers trade blows, CC appears to get an early jump and it looks like the clash is over. Suddenly, there is a flash of silver and Gentleman George pokes CC in the neck with an object he pulled from his mask. The crowd yells and boos, and George has the upper hand.

The moves look natural. They should — the two have been facing off against each other for years.

"It's a well-choreographed dance we do," said Roger Jaime, the owner of Pacific Northwest Pro Wrestling who also wrestles as '80s aficionado CC Poison.

It's often a painful dance as wrestlers fly off the ropes of the ring and land on slightly



Fans cheer during the Perils on the Pole match last December.

padding wooden panels. According to Jaime, the ring has been used by such wrestling greats as Hulk Hogan and Ric Flair.

"That ring is a piece of history," Jaime said, "and it feels like it."

Gentleman George Michael stuns CC and tries to make his escape. Suddenly, Astoria's Own Mac Wells runs from the stage and pushes George back into the match. The villainous duo Kellen and Annie Raeth follow, teaming up on

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Wells and throwing him in the ring as well.

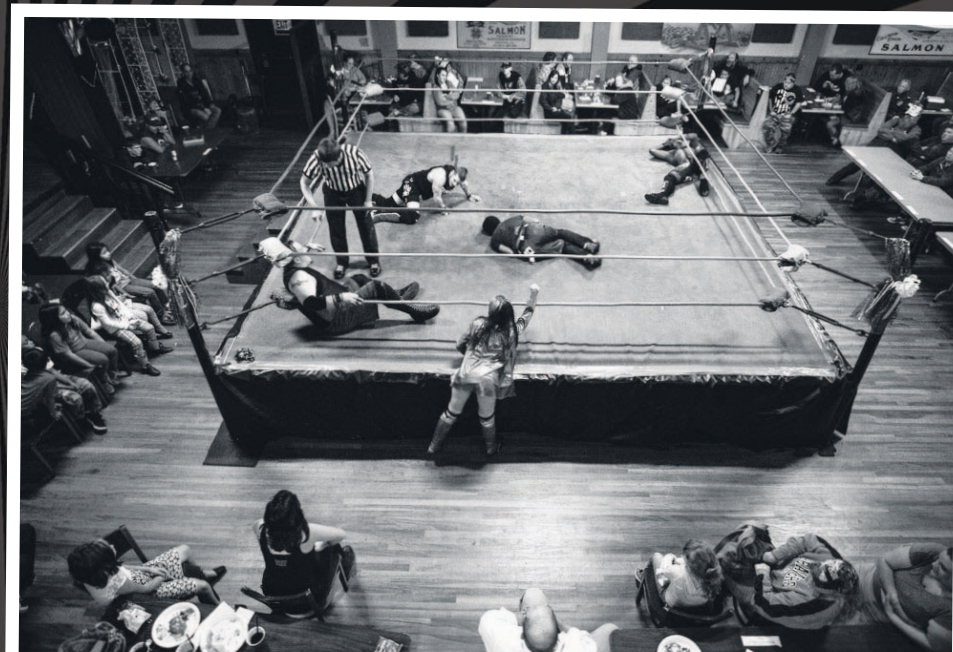
The bell rings, and the match is declared a tag-team battle.

Despite the inherent violence of wrestling, Jaime tries to keep the matches as PG-rated as possible. He doesn't allow swearing, and there is very rarely any blood. While other wrestling circuits use chair matches and racy language to stir up emotion, PNPW relies on a connection with the audience and high-flying moves to keep the customers engaged.

The match ends with another twist. Nearly defeated, Gentleman George Michael attacks the wrestling commissioner in the ring. He is slapped with a one-month suspension and as he leaves, an exhausted CC Poison grabs the microphone and challenges him to another match in January. The crowd cheers and chants "C-C! C-C!" as an exhausted CC Poison makes his way out the ring.



Mary Jane Payne tries to pump up the crowd before the tag-team match at the Astoria Event Center in November.



Wrestlers are left sprawled across the ring during the tag team match at the Astoria Event Center in October.

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