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THE Brick House
 136 4th. St. Springfield
Gentlemen's Club

We partied like we were 2 LEGIT 2 QUIT



SHADRA BEESLEY
 ... AND SCENE

People were wearing flannel and JNCO jeans. "C'mon N' Ride It (The Train)" by Quad City DJ's was blasting from the speakers and people were dancing in a line pumping their fists in the air. People wearing overalls with one strap undone, so as to expose their badass No Fear T-shirts, were drinking Bartles & Jaymes wine coolers.

Yes, this is a story from the past. But it wasn't 1996; it was during the spring of 2005. So how did this phenomenon come about?

Theme party. Some of the most fun nights I've had during my college career have been at theme parties. I've had a few memorable experiences among many trips to bars and kegers, but I will never forget a single theme party.

The '90s party mentioned above was a friend's birthday party. She actually bought a giant cell phone from Goodwill to carry in her multicolored fanny pack. People's clothes were hilarious. I saw checkered Keds, Adidas windpants and Starter jackets. We took Jell-O shots and drank Zima. But what really made the theme work was the music. Tunes such as "Live and Learn" by Joe Public, "Bittersweet Symphony" by The Verve and "Groove is in the Heart" by Deee-Lite bathed party guests in a flood of nostalgia — something everyone can understand. People actually had conversations that started with "Did you ever see that 'Saved by the Bell' episode ..."

The first theme party I went to in Eugene was a cocktail party. The host insisted that everyone dress up and said those who didn't comply would not be allowed through the door. I put on my little black dress and a pair of strappy heels and actually did my hair for once. When I arrived at the

party, martini glasses were lined up on the bar-style counter. The host made it clear that guests were only allowed to drink out of martini glasses. He had all kinds of

ingredients for colorful cocktails. When everyone was settled, I looked around the room and saw pink, orange and bright blue drinks against a background of fancy black dresses and slacks with dark button up shirts. Everyone had fun, but they sat up a little straighter and I heard phrases such as, "Thank you ever so much."

Another excellent theme party I attended revolved around something very close to my heart — newspapers. This theme was particularly fun because people's interpretations were creative and varied. Some people wore newspapers. Some dressed as famous journalists. One man looked like he had just walked off the set of the publishing-industry musical "Newsies." Three copy editors wore giant black dots and came together as an ellipsis. There were a lot of people who didn't know each other, but everyone showed up at the party already feeling like they had something in common with everyone else. By the end of the night people who had never met before were talking like old friends.

Theme parties not only provide long-lasting memories, they allow friends to enjoy each other's creativity. I've heard several ideas for theme parties: Al Borland, post-apocalypse, hair bands, high school, you name it. Throwing a theme party requires just a little extra work on the part of the host or hostess and the guests, but that added element of fun and creativity is worth it.

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