

DIVERSIONS

Round dancing: Not just for squares

The queer partner dancing in this town just never ends. You've got your Rose-town Ramblers (square and country western) and you've got your Out Dancing (ballroom dance lessons and socials). And now you've got your **RoundsAbout Portland**.

It's kind of like square dancing, but not really, and kind of like ballroom, but not really. And you, too, can learn round dancing this month from RoundsAbout, and your first two classes are even free because they know you'll be skittish.

Like various kinds of ballroom dance, "it's done in couples around the floor," explains charter club member Bob Lamberson. "However, it is cued. In square dancing we have a caller; in round dancing we have a cuer."

Lamberson's partner, Tim Berg, emphasizes that this takes some of the pressure off those new to dancing. "It doesn't rely on the lead and follow like regular ballroom dancing," he says.

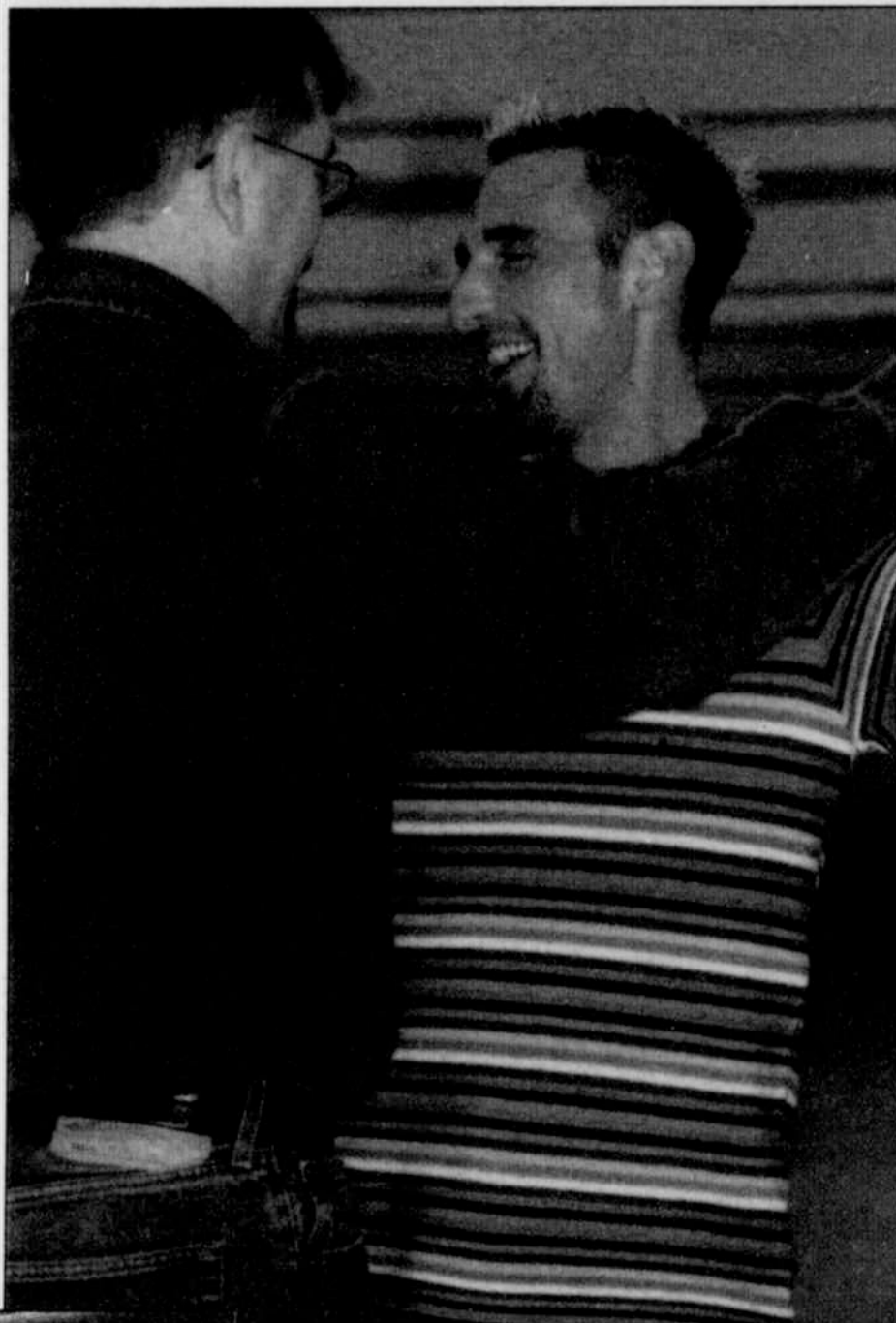
Lamberson continues: "It's a little bit more fancy than regular ballroom dancing because there are different kinds of choreographed steps that one needs to learn. When a person is ballroom dancing, you can just waltz, but when we do the waltz in round dancing, there's fancy choreography that is cued to us. That's why you take lessons to learn what these cues mean."

According to the couple, who have been dancing with the Rosetown Ramblers for quite some time, round dancing is another way to enjoy ballroom and square dancing—none of which you have to know in order to show up for round dance lessons. You start out learning the two-step with cues, then move on to the waltz.

"Eventually you get into level six or seven, then you start doing tango, cha-cha-cha, things like that," explains Lamberson, "but to begin with, the basic two-step."

Lamberson and Berg helped form the group, which is the only gay round dance association on the West Coast and only the second in the country. "I've been involved with dancing since I was a freshman in high school, and that's been a few years ago," Lamberson jokes. He did round dancing in the past and finally convinced a fellow Rose-town Rambler to teach a class.

Now the couple dance with the Ramblers and with the



Round dancing is the new big couples dance thing: Learn it from RoundsAbout Portland this month; Tim Berg (far left) and Bob Lamberson make the rounds



PHOTOS BY MARTY DAVIS

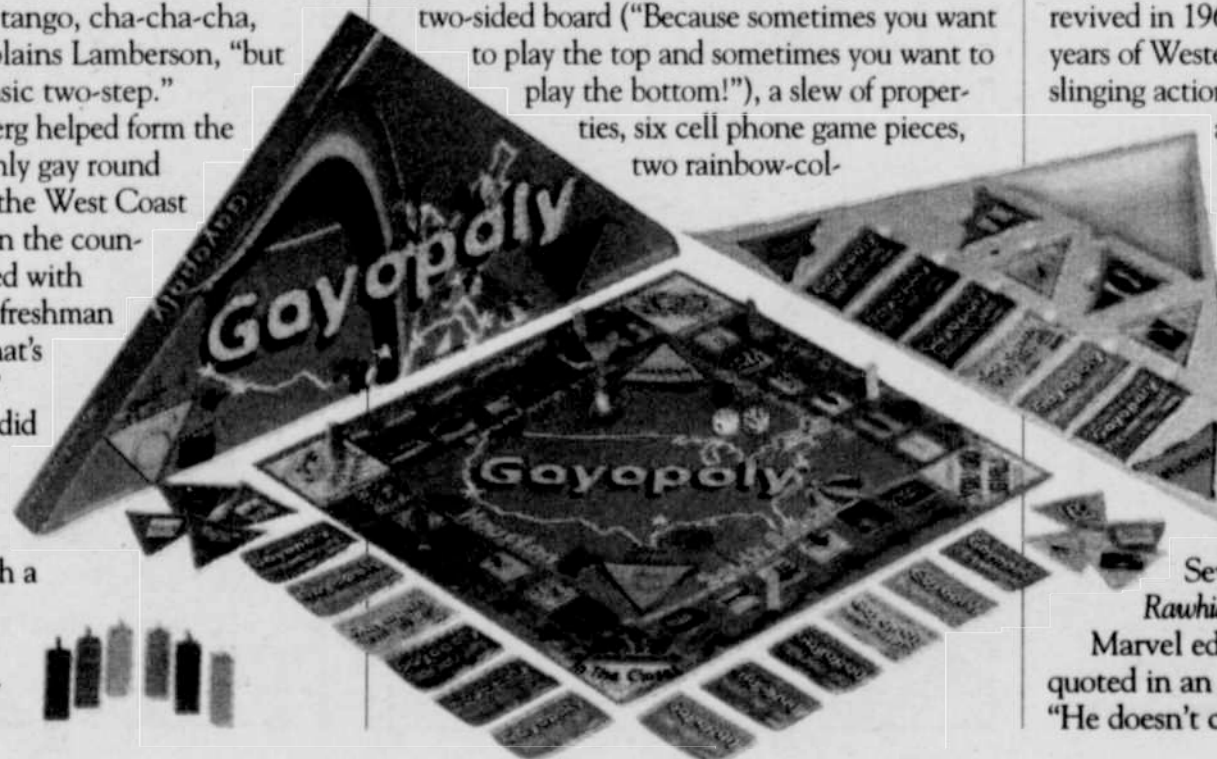
Rounders. Music and dance pretty much dominate their lives: Berg also sings with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus, and Lamberson teaches piano and voice lessons when he's not directing or performing music for the theater.

"It's great fun," exclaims Lamberson, who also notes round dancing will be incorporated into the Rosetown Ramblers' monthly dance socials.

RoundsAbout Portland's beginning two-step class starts Jan. 14 and continues for 20 weeks every Tuesday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Oak Grove Community Club, 14496 S.E. Cedar Ave. Call Carolyn at 503-892-3307 or Michael at 503-643-9163 for more information and to register.

Oh, the games we play...

Been waiting for a new party game to reveal itself? Well, kids, here it is. **Gayopoly: The Versatile Boardgame** comes complete with a two-sided board ("Because sometimes you want to play the top and sometimes you want to play the bottom!"), a slew of properties, six cell phone game pieces, two rainbow-col-



ored dice, one sand timer, 600 Queer Cards, 76 Diva Detour Cards, 72 Whatever Cards and 200 other cards ranging from your assigned employee and supervisor role to your title in your own queer community.

The board includes hot spots San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Atlanta, South Beach, Key West, Houston and West Hollywood, where you can own gay monopolies while visiting all the local gay-owned businesses, possibly becoming the "Queen of the Universe."

Gayopoly covers everything from your game name (Ivana Munch, Jim Freak, Ian D. Middel, Freeda Knight, Amanda Bee, Lou Cinda Booty) to how to get out of any of the board's particularly tight squeezes (for instance, pulling a Diva card that gives you a chance to sing yourself out of the closet).

The company is kick-starting sales with a tour (only a gay board game would have its own tour) to clubs located in the game's featured cities. (Portland, for some reason, is not one of these.)

Slypuss is looking for local retailers to stock Gayopoly, but for now you can order one for \$32.95 at www.gayopoly.com. All online orders include a free cordless toy microphone.

OK, then, read the rules before you start, play nice and don't forget—do not pass "You Go, Girl!"

Slap leather with comic cowboy

Next month will see the debut of Marvel's **The Rawhide Kid: Slap Leather**, a miniseries that marks the first-ever gay lead character by a mainstream comic book company.

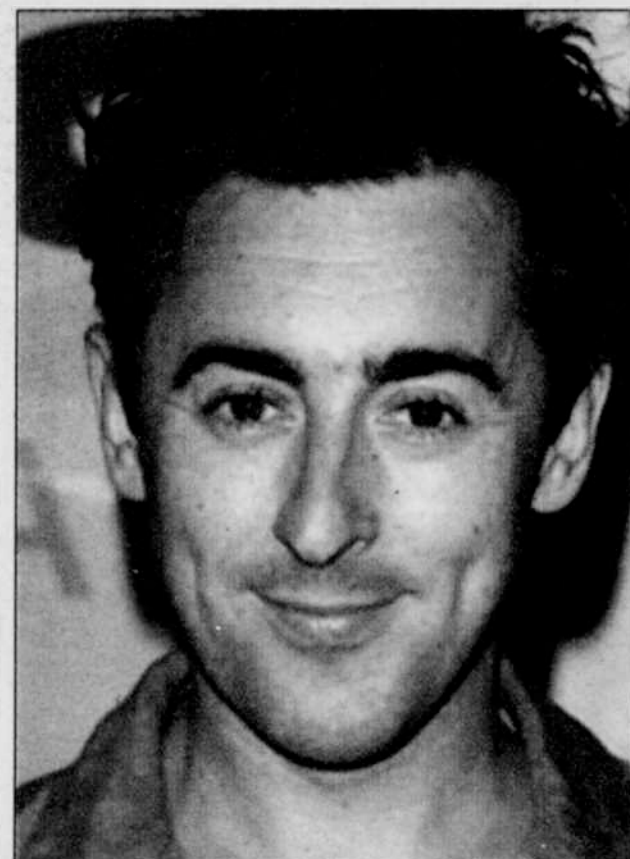
The Rawhide Kid himself isn't new—he debuted with Marvel in 1955, was put to rest after only 16 issues, then revived in 1960 for 19 years of Western gun-slinging action. He was a guest star here and there and even had a short series in the mid-'80s, but

nothing that will match the fanfare of coming out in this new millennium of comic themes. Ron Zimmerman, who oft pens for the *Howard Stern Show*, is writing the stories, and John Severin, who worked on the original *Rawhide* comics, is illustrating. Marvel editor in chief Joe Quesada was quoted in an Associated Press article as saying, "He doesn't come out and say he's gay, but it's

obvious through his actions and the things he says that his preference is men, not women."

It remains to be seen what "actions" this refers to, but there's a warning bell in Quesada's other quote: "It's not a book solely for a gay readership. Who watches *Will & Grace*? Everybody I know. This is the same. If you like a good story and a good laugh, this is for you."

Read: a *Will & Grace* nonsexual, non-physical gay character in the hands of a Howard Stern writer. It remains to be seen if this is progress; proceed with caution.



Cumming to prime time: *Mr. and Mr. Nash*, starring Alan Cumming, is ABC's entry in gay programming

Relearning our ABCs

ABC hopes to catch up with NBC, HBO and Showtime (note: not CBS, which canceled *The Ellen Show*) in regard to gay programming with *Mr. and Mr. Nash*, which will star bi actor Alan Cumming as half of a male couple who own an interior design business (of course!) but weekly find time to solve murder mysteries.

The *Hart to Hart*-style show will incorporate relationship dynamics with crime-solving tactics and lighthearted humor. Produced by Steve Martin and the award-winning production team of Carsey-Werner-Mandabach—the TV brains behind *The Cosby Show*, *Roseanne* and *That '70s Show*—*Mr. and Mr. Nash* is slated to premiere in the fall.

"This is a murder mystery. These guys are going to be smart and hopefully doing some serious stereotype-busting," GLAAD entertainment media director Scott Seemin said to Gay.com. "There are a lot of firsts in gay and lesbian programming, and this is one of them. The show is going to be pinned to chemistry between the leads. The relationship will be shown, and it is necessary. If they're not going to be a couple, then make them friends." []



Sure he can blow, but will he? *The Rawhide Kid* debuts in February.

Compiled by LISA BRADSHAW and MARIE FLEISCHMANN