

CULTURE

It's finally here—an entire evening for fat girls and those who love them.

On May 3 at Hollywood Theatre, *FatGirl Speaks: A Celebration of Size, Self and Sexuality* takes the stage. Honoring the feminist principles of size positivity and the promotion of natural body diversity, the event promises to energize, empower, uplift and celebrate women of size and their allies through political and educational workshops, a fashion show, spoken word, dance, performance art, live music and fun extras (like scale-smashing and a kissing booth).

Behind all this is a bunch of volunteers headed up by TechnoDyke.com editorial maven Stacy Bias. A well-known e-commerce entrepreneur, a published author and owner of two other hugely successful queer-lovin' companies—Pussy Pucker Pots (a vegan lip balm) and DykeTees.com—she has been active in the lesbian community locally and nationally for more than five years and never hesitates to create an environment that welcomes social and personal change.

"From my vantage point, FatGirl Speaks is about breaking the silence," shares Bias. "It's as personal a venture as it is political. All my life I have felt shut out, put down, clammed up, closed off and either way too visible or entirely unseen."

In addition to the immediate benefits of attending the event, the conference program is being published in a 'zine format guide with both local and national resources for living large, loud and proud.

Performers include Big Burlesque: Ms. DeMeanor's Fat-Bottom Revue, a Michigan-based cabaret group; Seattle's femme drag/burlesque troupe The Queen Bees; the radical cheerleading of the Portland Heavy Action Team All Star Squad (or P.H.A.T.A.S.S.); the

Fat girls, fat girls, rah rah rah!

Smash some scales and kiss a fat girl at FatGirl Speaks

BY MARIE FLEISCHMANN

Austin-gone-Portland acoustic dyke duo Pirate Jane; and Vancouver, British Columbia, singer/songwriter Ashley Schram.

Organizers will offer workshops on both big-girl burlesque and how to identify and cultivate fat allies. Locals performing spoken word to soothe the FatGirl soul include "multi-issue social justice slut" Emi Koyama, 'zine-ster diva Krissy Durden and Chelsea Lincoln, founding member of the Portland-based Queen Sized Revolution.

Bias will also perform spoken word and music. "Our culture equates worth, or lack thereof, with girth, or lack thereof, and those two things are not related. I wanted a venue where I could scream out my success at having finally found a place of...truly enjoying and loving and feeling at peace with myself. No venue like that existed, so I decided it was time to make one."

Vendors at the event will offer FatGirl T-shirts (up to size 6X) and a slew of products ranging from skin cream and outerwear to thigh highs and harnesses.

The sliding-scale ticket cost reflects the inclusive nature of the event and its organizers. Any profit will go toward next year's affair (yes, it's annual!) and a not-yet-decided organization (vote online at www.fatgirlspeaks.com) that helps promote the ideals embodied in the celebration.

"I hope this event will start a ball rolling for

others and break that silence that we keep, even with one another, as women of size," states Bias. "I hope this starts people talking, exploring, accepting and loving themselves for who they are, as they are—now." □

FATGIRL SPEAKS: A CELEBRATION OF SIZE, SELF AND SEXUALITY is 4 to 10 p.m. May 3 at Hollywood Theatre, 4122 N.E. Sandy Blvd. Workshops start at 4 p.m., fashion show at 7, performances at 8. Tickets are \$3-\$6 sliding scale at the door or in advance from *In Other Words*.

Want to sponsor, volunteer or perform at FatGirl Speaks? Visit www.fatgirlspeaks.com or send donations to TechnoDyke LLC, P.O. Box 13782, Portland, OR 97213-0782.

Editorial Assistant MARIE FLEISCHMANN is a full-time FatGirl.



Well, hello! Big Burlesque Fat-Bottom Revue awaits you at FatGirl Speaks.



From left: Canadian Ashley Schram joins Portlanders Stacy Bias and Emi Koyama in celebrating size, self and sexuality

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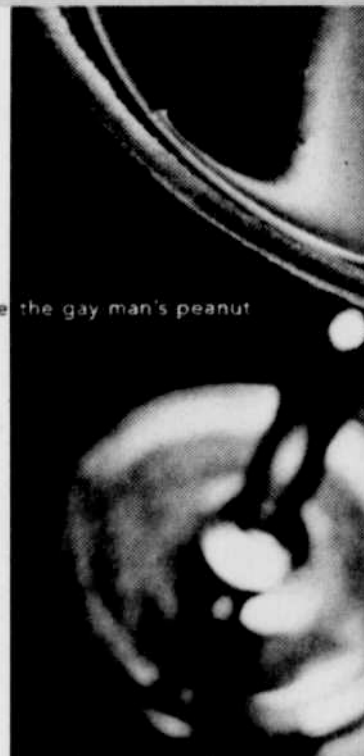
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life bites

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