

**W**hy so many queer nights all of a sudden? Sure, the alternative crowd wants an alternative to gay bars, but lay some blame on the economy, too, because slower business is what's really behind the straight-shooters' rash of queer nights.

"A lot of the straight bars are really hurting in this economy, and they are looking for new ideas," says Chad, head bartender at Silverado. "They can go where they want...but we're queer seven days a week."

OK...queer? Yes. Cutting edge? Well, here are a few of the new wave-riders that might get you a little wet.

**Blackbird, 3728 N.E. Sandy Blvd., 9:30 p.m. to 2 a.m. second and fourth Tuesdays.**

Blackbird is the odd angular building on the corner of Sandy and Halsey. It's a gritty, hipster live-music lounge and dance floor, and both are crowded. Drinks are pretty cheap, with a decent selection of microbrews for three bucks. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, and queer night is a fun mix—mostly young lesbians with a lot of cute boi dykes and trannies. There's a good amount of gay guys there, too, who are also pretty young, along with alternative types you don't normally see on Stark Street. DJs spin a variety of music including '80s and some hip-hop.

**East, 322 N.W. Everett St., 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sundays.**

East has been doing queer night for three of the nine months it's been open. This simple, small place has no dance floor, just a bar and lounge. Sleek contours, mirrored walls and mod furniture contribute to an atmosphere that's chic

# It's queer, it's here, go to it



## Queer nights bring homo happenings to hetero hot spots

by Michael Burdick

but comfortable. The night slows down a bit in here; it isn't too crowded, and you don't have to yell to be heard. The crowd is a mixed bag, possibly slightly older than other queer nights in town, with a few Stark Street regulars. Asian food is available all night if you're hungry. Fun fact: East is co-owned by Mike Quinn, who used to co-own La Luna, which played host to Portland's first queer nights in the early '90s.

**Level, 13 N.W. Sixth Ave., 8 p.m. Sundays.** Housed in the old Star Theater, Level offers plenty of room to party, and they definitely know how. It's like going to Neighbors in Seattle or some other big-city club. The

dazzling light show never really gets old. Go-go dancers contribute to the high-energy, festive atmosphere. A floor show, with fire eaters and other curiosities, ensures you won't get bored. Level's relatively new "Not Another Queer Night" has gotten off to an impressive start. The crowd is a good mix, but mostly young and mostly male with many of the same faces you see on Stark Street. DJs play house and trance. Drinks are pricey.

**Skervy—Queer to the Bone! at the Cobalt Lounge, 32 N.W. Third Ave., 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Thursdays.**

The Cobalt Lounge is in a neat, old build-

ing with high ceilings and stained-glass windows. Many of the same people who go to Blackbird's queer night also go to Skervy— young, mostly lesbians with a few fags. The atmosphere is low-key and not too crowded. A lot of people are dressed with unusual creativity—lace, sequins and other frills are well represented. There are always a few people dancing, but most just hang out with friends or play pool. Drinks are moderately priced. [M]

MICHAEL BURDICK fell in love with the sound of his own voice at an early age, beginning a passionate affair that has so far withstood the test of time. He is a free-lance writer living in Portland.

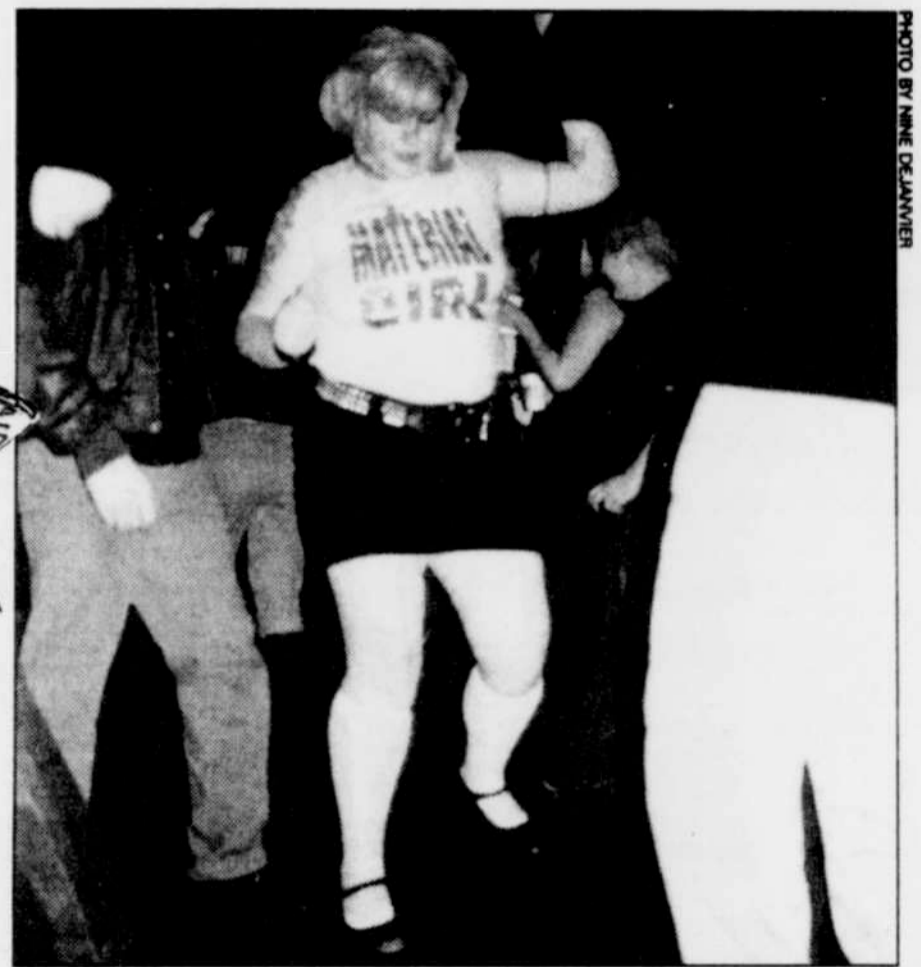


PHOTO BY NINA DEANWIER

Dexter whoops it up for a night at Skervy—Queer to the Bone!



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## It's Time for Change!

Portland Public Schools need a positive change in leadership and direction. There is an opportunity to make this change happen with the May 20th election of four new School Board members.

The members of Portland Association of Teachers strongly recommend the following candidates:

**John Ball**  
**Richard Garrett**  
**Eamon Molloy**  
**David Wynde**

Please vote and return your ballot right away

Thank you from your Portland teachers

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