

LESBIAN SEX AND THE CITY

ON SWINGING SINGLE AND HOW TO KEEP SEX HOT AFTER THE U-HAUL

As promised, here's the second installment in our monthlong series on queer sex and dating in Portland. This time we've turned the mike over to the dykes. Helen Silvis talks with a number of single queer women to find out where to go on a date and what they're looking for, and also why being single can be fabulous. Gina Daggett addresses a prickly issue that comes up after the headiness of dating has faded: Lesbian Bed Death. Is it a myth? And what do you do if it's happening to you?

Whether taking things slowly or steering clear of total enmeshment, queer women today are leaving the U-Haul at the curb and forging new paths of fun and intimacy—like our cover models, Maro Sevastopolous and Jake Lawsyn, who favor entwining limbs over being joined at the hip! (Their hot date spot? Queer-owned Crush on Southeast Morrison Street.)

Beyond the Potluck

Single queer women weigh in on Portland's dating scene

by Helen Silvis

For decades, Portland has had a reputation as a lesbian Shangri-La. So you'd figure our dyke dating scene would be as well-established and hot as in San Fran or New York...right?

"When I first moved here, I had the impression that lesbians did potlucks all the time and I had to get in on this or I would be single forever," says Puppet, a 28-year-old who moved to Portland from San Francisco in 2001.

Instead of waiting for that mythical potluck to chase her down, the former U.S. National Guardswoman started throwing her own dance parties. Morphing into DJ Puppet—the name is an endearment she has inherited from her Korean family—she teamed up with boy pal DJ Stormy and other friends to produce queer dance parties in otherwise straight venues. She lays down her mix of hip-hop and house Thursday nights during Booty, which is held at Porky's in North Portland.

Katharine Sprecher is another recent transplant from San Francisco who feared her dating prospects were doomed.

"I don't like hiking or

mountain climbing or dragon boat racing, so I thought, 'How am I going to meet anyone?' There are a lot of subcultures here—Portland has a strong young punk anarchist dyke culture. It's strong and it's beautiful and it's great...but I'm 35."

Sprecher found Portland's animal-friendly culture less than friendly to romance. "People were walking their dogs a lot, but were they having sex? I don't know."

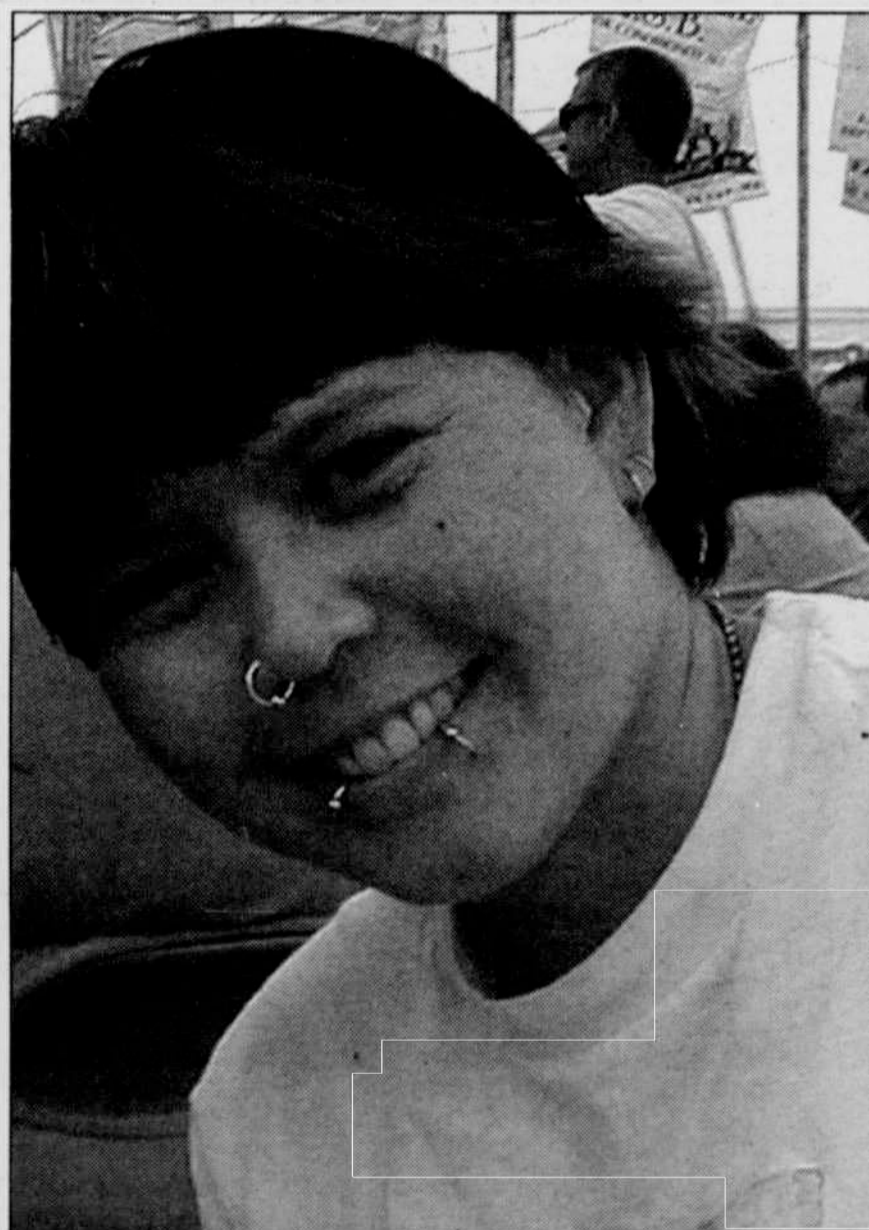
Like Puppet, Sprecher took the initiative and started her own dance club. Diva, which takes over the venue Holocene one Sunday a month, opened in February. With its go-go dancers, cigarette girls and mix of world music and electronica, Diva celebrates dressing up, flirting, drag and other shameless displays of queer sexuality.

"What I want is for women to get to know each other at Diva and to celebrate their sexuality," Sprecher says.

Sprecher describes herself as "insanely shy," which might be what inspired her to create Diva's trademark flirt cards. See an attractive stranger you would like to get to know better? Just grab a flirt card, write a witty note



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and ask your friendly cigarette girl to deliver it. More than a few hot dates have started exactly this way, says Sprecher. And some of those couples are still an item—including Sprecher, who met her girlfriend at her own club!

The direct approach

Maro Sevastopolous moved to Portland from her hometown of Cleveland about a year ago. Compared to Cleveland, she says, Portland rocks. Through

the Web site TechnoDyke.com she volunteered to take part in an erotica performance where she met a group of drag kings.

"It opened up a whole world to me, at least the queer world," she says. "So far I've been a guest performer with DK PDX as a bio-queen, and in the last two shows I've performed as a king. I'm having so much fun with it. I love the kings."

Wearing a black vinyl bondage dress, pirate head scarf and sword, Sevastopolous recently partied at Booty with a blond sailor in tow—literally. On the other end of the leash she held was the sailor, sporting a white and blue uniform and a mischievous grin. The entire scene was the result of a bet, and not a date. But it's clear both women were in their element.

"I really enjoy power plays," Sevastopolous says, laughing. "It was the first time I'd had anyone out in public as a dominatrix, but now I can cross it off my list."

Kestryl Lowrey, a student at Lewis & Clark College, points to Portland's thriving dyke band scene as another way to meet potential dates.

"Most of the people who show up to see certain bands are young lesbians," she says. "Take

bands like The Butchies, T-Rexa, Drastic Plastic, Pomom Meltdown. They're all girl bands with a rock 'n' roll and a punk sound that tends to attract that crowd."

Because Lowrey is still 19, her night life is restricted to the few all-ages venues in town. "The young lesbian community in Portland sometimes seems rather small," she says, "because you go to these shows and after a couple of times you recognize everyone."

Surprisingly, Lowrey hasn't met many dates on campus, despite her high profile as coordi-

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