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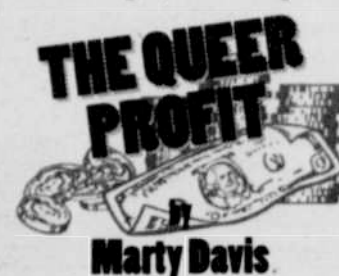
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NORTHWEST news

EAGLE EYE

Portland's favorite leather bar under new ownership

There are two signs hanging over the Eagle in downtown Portland. One advertises that space is available, and the second says, "Under New Ownership." The first sign refers to separate quarters above the Eagle; the other sign, the important one, is all about



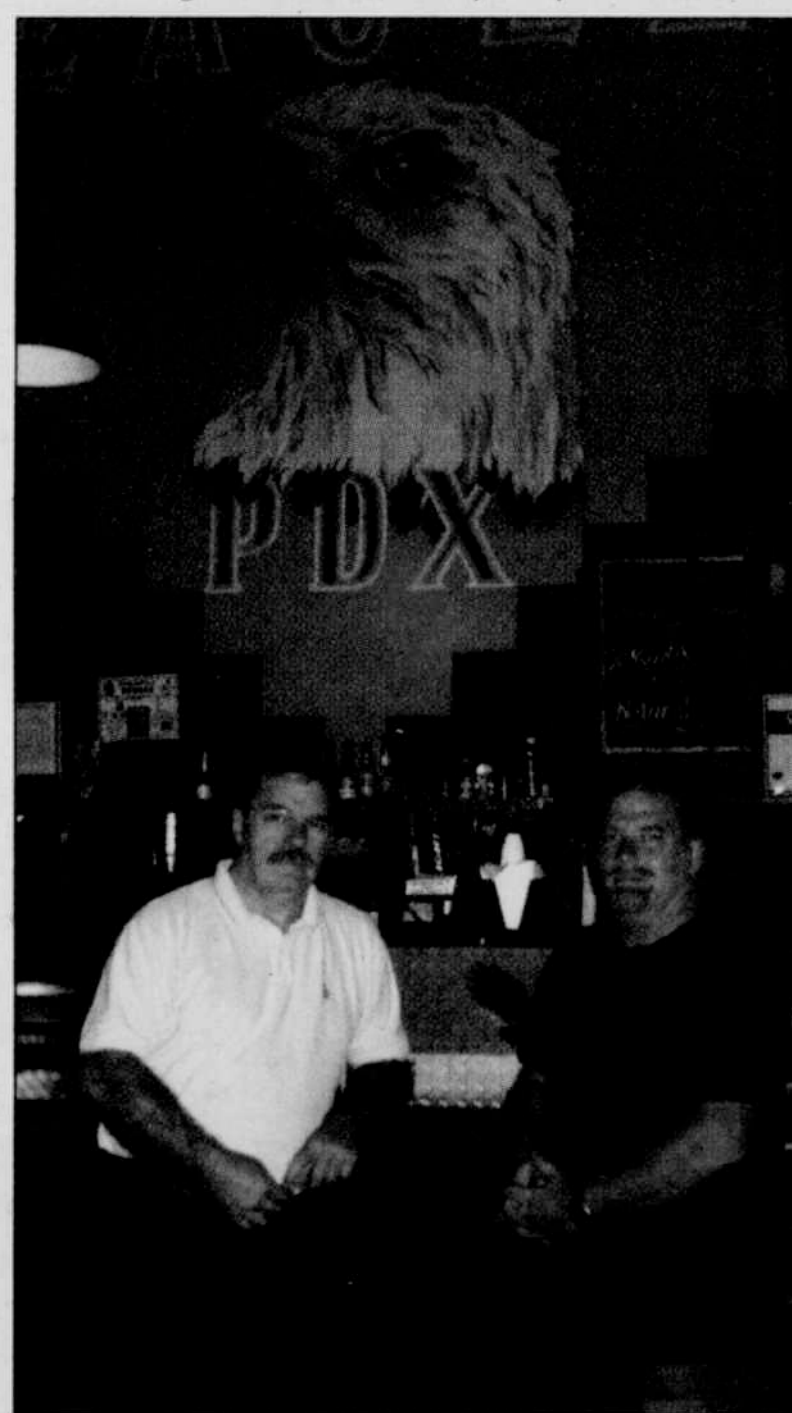
business partners Karl Wilgus and Fred Morris, the new gay owners of the perennially favorite leather bar.

Yes, the Eagle has returned to its heritage of gay ownership, and the bar is here to stay—albeit with a few changes and some serious cleaning projects in the works. The Eagle is loosely identified with other Eagles across the country. They're not a franchise, they don't pay dues, the owners don't go to meetings, and there's no common decorating theme or shared tips. What there is in common are years of history of serving the traditional gay male leather crowd with affectionate attention paid to the culture of this group. And while this effect will remain a mainstay of the Eagle PDX, there is now a new message of inclusivity and a welcome to all resonating from the walls of the oft-perceived mysterious and daunting tavern.

Is the Eagle the "Babylon" of Portland, as in *Queer as Folk*? Is there a dark backroom set aside for groping, coupling and sex of all sorts? In the past, maybe, maybe not. While there was never a backroom, there was an open loft area, and what may or may not have happened will remain part of the Eagle's lore. But that was then, this is now. Sex is not an accepted form of meet-and-greet at the Eagle. If you see some cute little ole bear who you'd like to get to know, you'll need to walk over and sweetly invite him out to dinner. While

naked pool nights might still occur, even these events come with helpful "rules and regulations." Open and public sex acts will not be part of the culture of the Eagle. You might still keep a watchful eye on those pool cues, however.

What Wilgus and Morris are bringing to their new venture are ideas, energy and a desire to create a welcoming environment for all, be they bears, dykes on bikes, accountants, schoolteachers or construction workers. Lawyers, hmm? Well, they weren't mentioned. But Wilgus and Morris did say everyone. And indeed,



Fred Morris (left) and Karl Wilgus want to make the Eagle a welcoming environment for all

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