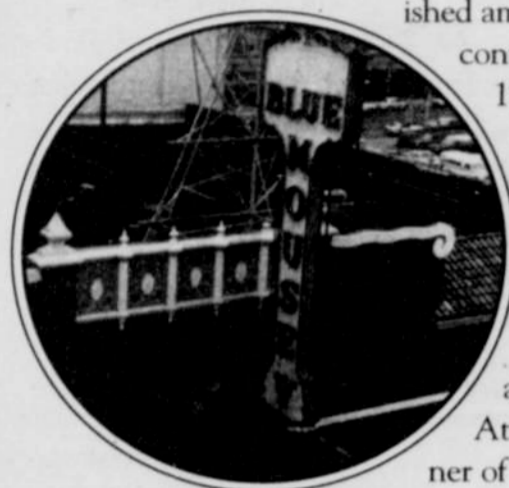


Continued from Page 23

**BLUE MOUSE THEATER
THE GRAND OASIS
THE OTHER INN
GAY COMMUNITY CENTER
DAHL & PENNE'S**

Continuing the pilgrimage on Fourth is another parking structure, sitting atop the site of the **Blue Mouse Theater** at 626. This had been the Capitol Theater when built in the 1920s. The balcony of the Mouse was as busy as many bathhouses until the theater was demolished amid much controversy in 1977. The entire block had been a beehive of gay activity:



At the corner of Morrison (359) had been the original Olympic Baths, and at 339 S.W. Morrison St. was yet another theater, the Round Up, which had been there since 1917, built as the Rex.

Walk right on Third back to Alder, then left toward Second. In this block were four major action spots of the mid-'60s to mid-'70s: **The Grand Oasis** at 242, **The Other Inn** at 243, the **Gay Community Center** at 258 and **Dahl & Penne's**, 604 S.W. Second Ave.

Of the four locales of interest in this block of Alder, only one building still exists: the location of the Grand Oasis, a popular watering hole, now MinuteMan Press. The Grand Oasis (once called the Last Resort) formed part of the "Dirty Triangle" with the Other Inn across the street and Dahl & Penne's down the block.

The Other Inn was Portland's first leather bar, opening in 1964. Mama Bernice tended bar there after her own place on Third shut down, and she bought the place from original owner Jim Frantz. She was loved by all, and even after the Other Inn closed in 1982 when the building was demolished to build the Oregon Dental Service tower, she continued to tend bar at her daughter Gail's Dirty Duck until her passing in 1986. Leather men were her "little bluebirds," and she often tried to help wayward younger men by giving them jobs at the bar.

Above the Other Inn was once a large Italian restaurant. When the Italians moved out, the Second Foundation was able to rent the space in May 1972, forming the city's first Gay Community Center. Coverage of the opening of the center in *The Oregonian* was the first gay-positive article to appear in that publication. The upstairs space was divided into three rooms, space for dances, meetings and offices for the foundation and its newspaper, *The Fountain*. In October of that year, the treasurer and the rent money disappeared. The center was able to reopen briefly in the Pythian Building but closed in 1973.

The pearl at the tip of the "Dirty Triangle" was Dahl & Penne's. The building dated from 1884, and the first Dahl & Penne's soda shop opened in 1916 in what had been the Alder Cafe. Alcoholic drinks were introduced later, and by the mid-'60s, Dahl & Penne's had a gay following, with homosexual patrons appearing between 1 and 2:30 a.m. In 1972, a straight couple from California, Sam and Jean Landauer, purchased the place and refitted it with a back room, popularly known as the "Royal Flush Corral." Van Richards (Vanessa) took charge of interior decorating and organizing drag shows. Dahl & Penne's became the host tavern of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court and was the site of several coronations and shows too numerous to list.



Among the many regular events at Dahl & Penne's, one of the more unusual was Sunday Mass, a morning-after brunch between 8 and 10 a.m. When the Oregon Legislature passed a law allowing gambling by nonprofit groups, Dahl & Penne's became one of three licensed bars in Portland to conduct gambling. All proceeds were aimed at local gay charities. Dahl & Penne's would be with us today had not plans for the Bank of America Building materialized. The end came in 1983, but not without several closing events and much-publicized parties. A greater history of Dahl & Penne's and its era needs to be written. The Landauers still live in retirement in the sunny Southwest.

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**HALF MOON TAVERN
HARBOR CLUB**

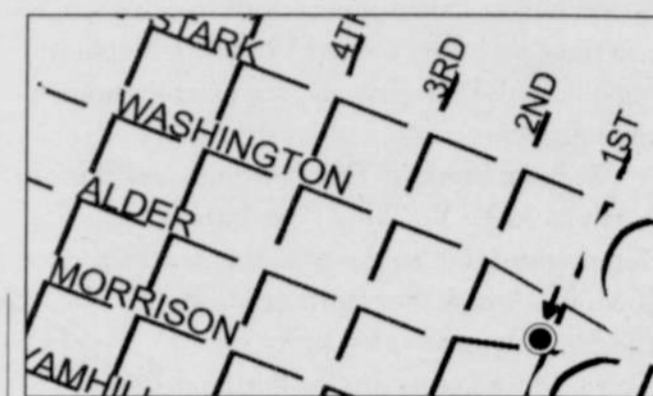
Walk south to Morrison and east to First. Where today's RiverSide Hotel sits once stood a grand waterfront cast iron-fronted commercial building at 72 S.W. Morrison St. This was the **Half Moon Tavern**, a gay-friendly establishment from 1956 through 1961. It was here in 1958 that several patrons concocted a spoof on the venerable 50-year-old Rose Festival with a black rose court of their own. Hence began the long line of official queens and empresses that would become the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court system. When the 1880 building was demolished, the tavern moved a block south to 122 S.W. Yamhill St. in November 1960.



Sauntering south on First from the site of the Half Moon, you will see Paddy's Saloon. Stop for a moment, genuflect and observe a moment of silence for one of the great early gay taverns of Portland, the **Harbor Club**. The Harbor Club dated from World War II and was a popular hangout with sailors until the U.S. Navy became suspicious of reported "activities" there and declared it off-limits. Nonetheless, it was the premier gay bar from the 1950s until it was closed down by the city in 1965. The mezzanine level was a place where boys could sit in the dark and "do things," while the women occupied the main floor. The Harbor



In 1965, the city under Mayor Terry Schrunk tried to shut down eight taverns known to serve gay men and women. Using a twist on OLCC rules, they hoped to close these objectionable places that were giving Portland a reputation as bad as that of San Francisco. Oregon Gov. Mark Hatfield was not swayed and refused to sign the closure orders. Only the Harbor Club eventually closed, caught in a Catch-22 when the city took away its food license, thus invalidating its Class A liquor license. Not to be daunted, owner John Honegger moved his business to a restaurant/lounge called the Riptide at 10th and Stark, becoming the first of the "Gay Triangle" bars.



was popular with several early gay groups, the best known being the Florists, a successful women's national softball championship team. It was raided just once, under City Commissioner Stanley Earl in 1964, the only Rosetown bar to witness any police harassment. As the bar became more popular, men took over the main floor and the women climbed the spiral staircase to the upper level. There is a story that once after a confrontation between the men and women, the women left in a huff. They found a Volkswagen bug parked nearby, and several of them picked it up and set it down directly in front of the Harbor Club's only door, blocking the men inside until a call to police brought out a squad car with recruits to move the car out of the way.



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