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Beyond the Comfort Zone

Adventures of the formerly unadventurous

Now that I'm 47, I don't want to fall into a rut. Instead, I want to be like Disco Sally, the elderly grandmother who danced the night away at Studio 54. Every weekend, in sneakers and dark sunglasses, she would get down with the cutest, sexiest gay men in New York.

Because New Year's Day is a time of resolutions, my promise to myself this year is to be adventurous. I want to meet new people, go new places and have new experiences, which is kind of hard when you're naturally a homebody. Lucky for me, this column forces me to be Out Going.

So, I've thrown myself into the night (and day) life of Portland, determined to travel far and wide for new adventures. For my first, I traveled all the way to Northeast Alberta Street for the Hip Holiday Soiree—billed as “the lesbian event of the season”—at Zaytoon.

Luscious ladies dressed to the nines with sequins flashing and chiffon flowing. To the strains of the Pussycat Dolls singing, “Don't cha wish your girlfriend was hot like me,” Lebanese lesbian (say that three times fast) Janan Bejaige staffed the bar, mixing L-tinis, a potent tequila-based potable created especially for the evening. Meredith Cole was present looking festive and gay inside the kissing booth festively dressed as a gaily wrapped present.

This was my first women-only event, and surprisingly, I didn't feel out of place at all. In fact, I was the hottest guy there. Barb Beck organized with Girls on Gay party planners Rochelle Sprunk and Karen Hooper. The tasty trio hopes the Hip Holiday Soiree becomes the female equivalent of the swanky Salon Q and a regular fixture on the Sapphic social scene.

Next, I traveled to Wonder Ballroom, where, straight from Elton John's wedding, adventurous performance artists Kiki & Herb (Justin Bond and Kenny Mellman) undertook their unique union of cabaret and standup comedy. Bond and Mellman (the latter appeared during September's Time-Based Art Festival) mix fantasy and reality into a hysterical evening that Poison Waters (Kevin Cook) described to me as “like Steve and Eydie on crack.”

Laughing along to Kiki's alcoholic rants and maudlin reminiscences (“I've forgotten more good times than most people have had,” the diva declared) were former ballet dancer Abel Carrejo and his humpy boyfriend, Will Becker. (The couple moved to Portland from San Diego in July.) Balloons on Broadway owner Ron Pitt was there with former Triangle Productions director Don Horn, as was filmmaker David Weissman (*The Cockettes*), whom I also noticed at the Pink Martini concert on New Year's Eve.

Speaking of which, while watching my favorite band's early show wasn't exactly adventurous (in fact, the audience looked like there had been an emergency evacuation of the West Hills), hearing Pink Martini backed by a nine-piece string orchestra was a new (and thrilling) experience. Thanks to press agent extraordinaire Aaron Scott (who also writes for *Just Out*), we had great seats in the front of the balcony, where I peered down and saw dynamic doctors Jim Sampson and Geoff Beasley,



Out Going
BY FLOYD SKLAVER

whose glorious garden inspired one of PM's most seductive songs.

Then, fired up by Pink Martini's infectious rhythms and ready to dance, Marc and I boogied up to Studio 69 for the third annual New Year's Eve party thrown by prolific writer Darklady (Theresa Reed). Her first feature for *Hustler* appears in the March issue. The spread includes three pictures of



Meredith Cole kisses her girlfriend, Mindy Nicholson, during the Hip Holiday Soiree.



Floyd Sklaver joins, from left, Karen Hooper, Rochelle Sprunk, Barb Beck and Zaytoon owner Aysha Ghazoul for “the lesbian event of the season.”

the voluptuous brunette, whom the magazine's editors call “a firebrand from Portland.”

Upon arriving, a harness-clad host placed a black lei around my neck, signifying that I had a recent birthday and inviting others to ask about my birthday fantasy. My fantasy wasn't fulfilled (too many straight people), but my voyeuristic tendencies certainly were, especially in the “Rubitorium,” complete with massage table, mattresses and mirrors, where the most adventurous ventured.

My last adventure was, appropriately, with the Adventure Group. Damon Micheau brought 15 outdoorsmen to Portland Art Museum, where, as a docent, I led them through the treasures of Hesse: *A Princely German Collection*. I highly recommend this once-in-a-lifetime treat, especially the tiara with a thousand diamonds that's made for a princess but fit for a queen. The exhibit continues through March 19, so catch it before it's Out Going. 10

FLOYD SKLAVER wants to know about your event. E-mail him at floydsklaver@comcast.net.