

Men Are from Mars

Party planners blast off for "Red Planet"

If you've been to the Red Dress Party before, then your calendar must already be marked for April 1.

This column is for the unconverted needing a nudge to take the plunge. In a nutshell: It's a bargain (\$35 for all you can drink), it supports worthy causes, and it's the best time of year to push the envelope.

What is this year's theme?

After successfully re-creating Amsterdam ("Red Light") and Moscow ("Red Square"), the hard-working party planners settled on their most ambitious setting yet: the "Red Planet" of Mars.

"We're well on our way to creating a Martian space station," says architect Dave Heater, who



Getting ready for last year's Red Dress Party with my friend Kelly Moe.

leads the design and construction subcommittee. "The arrival is gonna be marked by a 12-foot rocket; hopefully that will be illuminated. Then you'll be coming in on a red carpet in basically a hangar bay where...you'll see remnants of a Mars rover."

What if I'm a diva?

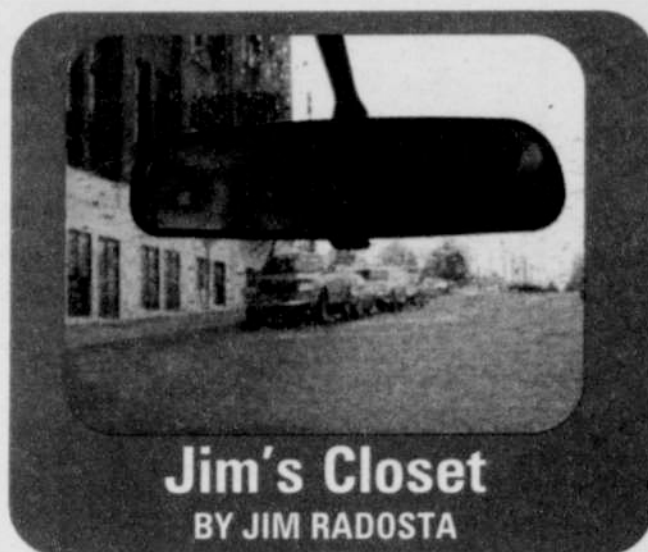
Pay \$40 extra and get the VIP treatment with these exclusive perks: a pre-party aerial acrobatic show and fashion show of dresses designed by students at The Art Institute of Portland; gourmet food; a drink created by Mint owner Lucy Brennan; and a special bar for express service. And if you'd rather not worry about how you're getting home, the Jupiter Hotel is offering a package rate for VIPs just four blocks away, within stumbling distance.

Do I have to wear a red dress?

What part of "Red Dress Party" don't you understand? The only requirement is that everyone wears a red dress. You don't have to wear makeup. You don't have to wear heels. You just have to wear a red dress. No exceptions.

"It's funny—every year I'm always shocked by how many gay men you can come across who just will have nothing to do with putting on a dress," Heater says. "I think a lot of gay men are just worried about it being perceived as an effeminate thing."

But once you go to the party, Heater adds, you realize that "it's kind of far from that. It's really



interesting to see how masculine guys pull off a dress, especially when they combine it with really industrial look, whether that's chains or leather or something like that."

Heater reminds boys to show some skin, too.

"Some of the initial years we had God knows how many people dressed like Barbara Bush. That's not the idea, people!" he laughs. "The sexier the better. You can never go too far at this party."

In case you're hesitant about donning drag in the middle of the mall, check out the gay-friendly boutique Ella's, 2529 N.E. Alberta St., which is offering a 10 percent discount on everything red this month.

Who are the beneficiaries?

Last year's party raised \$20,000 for Our House of Portland, a residential care facility for people with AIDS, and the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center, a drop-in facility for queer kids. This year's charities are Our House; Camp Starlight, an annual adventure for kids whose lives have been affected by HIV/AIDS; and Q Center, Portland's fledgling queer community center. 10

Boxxes throws a RED DRESS PARTY FUND-RAISER co-sponsored by Salon Q from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. March 25 at 1035 S.W. Stark St. \$3 cover, \$2 Jell-O shots.

Crush presents the RED DRESS EXCHANGE, one of your last chances to find a hot number before the big bash, from 6 to 9 p.m. March 26 at 1400 S.E. Morrison St. This is the way dress shopping should always be done: with a cocktail in hand! \$5.

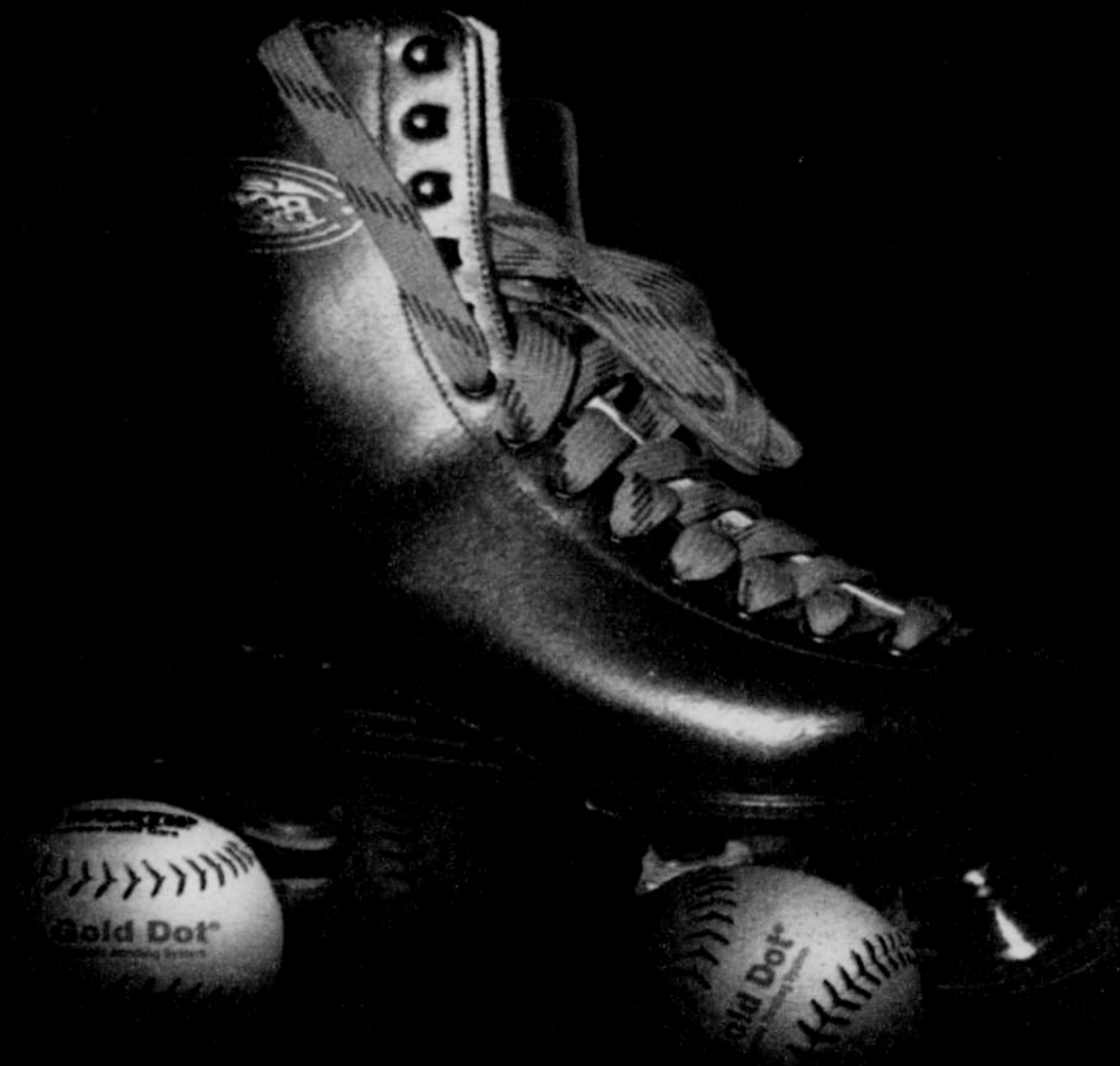
T-minus 48 hours! Come to Mint and 820 for happy hour, dinner or late-night drinks as the final RED DRESS COUNTDOWN begins 4 p.m. March 30 at 816 and 820 N. Russell St.

The sixth annual RED DRESS PARTY starts 9 p.m. April 1 at its new digs: the site of last summer's Pride Warehouse Block Party at Northeast Ninth Avenue and Flanders Street. Admission includes hosted bar, food and intergalactic entertainment from DJs Mr. Mumu, Barrett Paul, Scotty D, Saltfeend and Harmonix. \$35 from Balloons on Broadway or www.reddresspdx.com. To volunteer e-mail reid@reddresspdx.com.

Arts and Culture Editor JIM RADOSTA needs your feedback. Write to jim@justout.com.

CROSS-TRAIN!

MONDAY, MARCH 20TH, 2006



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