

NORTHWEST BRIEFS by Ryan J. Prado

Blow Pony Changes Venues. Cites Bad Management At Casey's

Blow Pony, the monthly queer dance party that has been hosted at Casey's Bar (NW Sixth and Couch) for the past year and a half, has changed venues amid a swirl of controversy, violence and management issues.

After Pride weekend's incidences of violence at Casey's during Blow Pony, both a Queer Town Hall Meeting—hosted at Q Center—and a special focus meeting during the July 14 Sexual Minorities Round Table at the Justice Center were held to discuss the issues surrounding the attacks on Blow Pony DJ Jose Cruz, and go-go-dancer Heatherette. A purported negligence on the part of the Portland Police Bureau, and specifically from Sergeant Timothy Robinson, was also addressed.

However, according to Blow Pony founder and event DJ Airick Heater, the reasons for the venue change stem mainly from a different kind of negligence—that of allegations of a lack of community support, and unfulfilled financial obligations from the owner of Casey's Bar, Karl Wilgus.

"It was saddening to see the owners of Embers and Silverado show at the SMRT meeting and Karl didn't, or anyone representing Casey's," said Heater.

Heater claimed that Wilgus has failed to pay staff members, including a bartender who quit at the same time Blow Pony decided to

vacate the space for not being paid in seven months. Wilgus told *Just Out* that the bartender in question, Heater's partner and a former Casey's employee, was only allowed to tend bar during Blow Pony, and that there was no payment arrangement.

"Karl has been horrible with paying several hard-working employees," said Heater. "The fact he did not support his community after [the violence during Pride weekend] just made me feel like, why am I doing an event to help his bar and him out?"

"I think it is obvious that we are a part of the gay community and that we care about that community," Wilgus said in response to his absence at the Queer Town Hall Meeting and the SMRT meeting.

He also stated that Heater's allegations amount to little more than publicity for Blow Pony.

"In the end, Blow Pony was no longer fun or an event that we wanted to continue," Wilgus said. "It was no longer about giving the community a fun party. Rather, it was a method of feeding Airick's ego, and him trying to get the attention he wanted."

Heater also claims that when he was assaulted by an upstairs tenant from Casey's in April, he approached Wilgus to contact the building's landlord to address the tenants, and that Wilgus refused to get involved. These same upstairs tenants were alleged to be the instigators of the crux of violence during the attacks at Casey's over Pride weekend.

Blow Pony organizers announced that be-

ginning August 29, and every fourth Saturday thereafter, Blow Pony will take place at the two-level compound of Branx (320 SE Second Ave., downstairs from Rotture), shifting the popular dance night from downtown to Southeast Portland.

The updated ambiance will include six queer DJs, both inside and outside in the Branx parking lot. There will be a free veggie and vegan barbecue, dancing, and Heater hopes for future shows and performances from national and international acts.

Visit www.blowpony.com or www.facebook.com/blowpony for more information.

Hermiston's Multi-Cultural Celebration Set for August 8

Umatilla Morrow Alternatives will produce a multi-cultural event this Saturday, August 8, from noon-5 p.m., and will include gay pride in the festivities.

UMA, a group that advocates for equality, leadership, education and human dignity among all under-served minority populations, hosts the celebration at McKenzie Park (320 S First St.) in Hermiston, Oregon.

Equity Foundation is one of the event's sponsors and will have a booth onsite with a drawing to enter for a \$500 grant toward a nonprofit organization of the winner's choosing.

Via press release, Equity Foundation Executive Director Kevin Easton stated, "It's

rare that rural Oregon celebrates gay pride. We are elated that Hermiston is stepping out."

For more information, visit www.umalt.com or call Umatilla Morrow Alternatives at 541-626-9635.

Find Veronica Movement Continues. Gains National Attention

The search for Veronica, a miniature Yorkshire Terrier missing since June 11, has experienced a national media surge.

Since the beloved mascot of The Funny Bone (617 SW Washington) disappeared, several local media outlets have run stories in an effort to raise awareness and hopefully have Veronica safely returned to the downtown gift shop. However, during a recent Portland visit from pet writer Julia Szabo for the *New York Post*, the story took on a higher profile.

An article was published July 26 in the *Post*, which mentioned Veronica's disappearance. Additionally, Portland's KOIN 6 News aired a featurette on the missing mascot, and the "Find Veronica" Facebook profile has amassed 375 friends.

Still, said Funny Bone owner Gary Hopping, nothing has yet led to her return.

"We would still love everyone to keep

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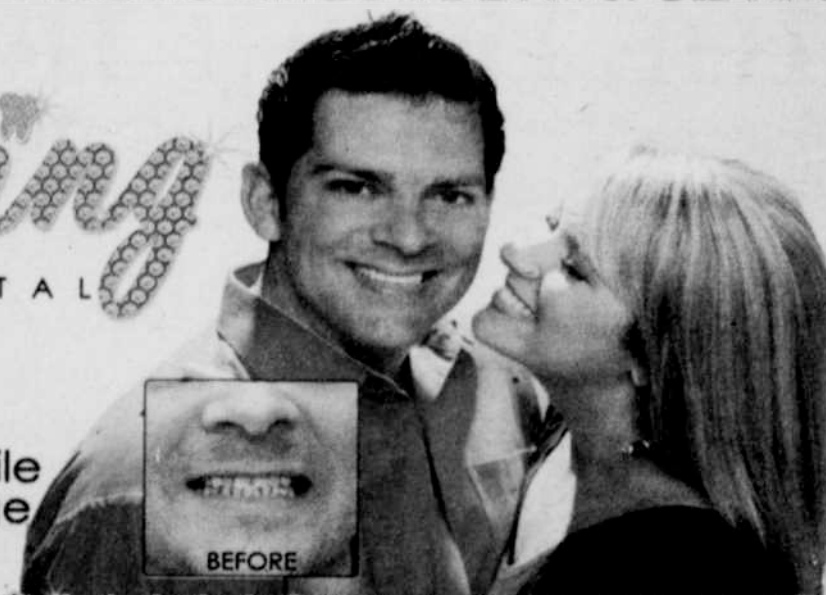
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