

NORTHWEST NEWS

Gay Bar Passages:

Dirty Duck Ducks Out, the Eagle and Casey's "Imagine" Something New

Mid-August has proven a tough time for gay bars in Portland, especially if they've served the leather, bears, fetish or less mainstream parts of the community. After a steady decline, the Eagle Underground shuttered on Sunday, August 14, and in a shock to many, the Dirty Duck Tavern, which had experienced a recent upswing in business and clientele, announced it would be closing as of Sunday, August 23.

Those active in the leather and bear communities were not surprised with the news from the Eagle Underground; even prior to the closure of the original Eagle PDX space on 13th and West Burnside in early 2008, business had been steadily waning. On websites and in private conversations, many community leaders and former customers blamed Eagle owner Karl Wilgus, and what they viewed as his negative attitude as cause for cancelling events there and migrating to other establishments.

In an August 5 email sent to patrons on his mailing list, Karl Wilgus wrote, "times change and it is now time to face reality and admit that The Eagle's time has passed, for whatever reason, there is not support and we have decided to close the bar and sell off its assets." According to his website, whose ac-

count has now been suspended, Wilgus will not donate any items to local historical organizations, but plans to sell them on eBay; as of press time, none of the seven eBay items for sale by seller "karlwilgus" had bids. Online blogs and an official website confirm that the Eagle and upstairs bar Casey's will reopen later this month as "Imagine," a nightclub for queer folk 25 and under.

In stark contrast, the Dirty Duck Tavern—which celebrated its 25th anniversary in mid-March, making it the oldest single-location gay bar in Portland—had been winning community support in recent months, as more groups and organizations booked events there. The schedule ranged from leather and bear events to regular live music and Broadway-themed nights, with lesbian group Bad Girls, men's wellness group Manifest, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, and others benefiting from the bar's open-door policy.

The Portland Development Commission, which owns the land on which the Duck is located, informed owner Gail Kennedy of its plans to force the bar to close earlier this month, but she attempted negotiation. Instead the PDC exercised its option to end the lease, and will be exchanging the space with Blanchet House (according to Blanchet's website) for an



Dirty Duck owner Gail Kennedy is seen with husband Don during the bar's 25th anniversary celebration in March. The Portland Development Commission, which owns the land on which the Duck is located, informed Kennedy of its plans to force the bar to close earlier this month.

Gail Kennedy, a third-generation gay bar owner whose grandmother and mother both owned gay bars in town from the 1950s forward, says, "It breaks my heart to close the Duck but I have no choice. It's been 26 years since my mother found it and wanted me to buy it. She wanted a little place on a corner for her boys. All these years later her spirit lives on at the Duck and it has always been what makes the Duck special. The hardest part will be keeping track of all my friends without our meeting place. I hope to find us a new home soon, I am looking."

Those wishing to have one last round at the Dirty Duck have an opportunity the weekend of August 21. Friday evening features a "Bikers & Boots Party." Saturday night sees the final charity fundraiser at the bar, "Jockstrap Twister"—a game night of flesh and fantasy. And Sunday, August 23, the bar will sell off some of its items, while reserving other historic memorabilia for the Oregon Leather History Project. Live music begins around 6 p.m., including the Green Machine Jazz Ensemble and Sneakin' Out.

And with that, the doors will close on a historical part of Portland's past and present.

—Andy Mangels

expansion project; Blanchet will eventually redevelop the east side of the block into a new homeless facility. The Portland Historic Landmarks Commission was scheduled to review the plans and advise on Monday, August 24.

GAY OWNED AND OPERATED

JK Financial Corporation

office: (360) 694-7091
601 Main St. Suite 201
Vancouver, WA 98660
www.jkfin.com

Give Us A Call!

BECAUSE OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS HELP, TOO

CALL TODAY FOR
A FREE CONSULTATION & LOAN ANALYSIS

With you when two accounts become one

Sharing expenses is a big step and Wells Fargo will help you take it. Together we'll navigate the maze of your personal finances and find solutions tailored to both of your needs. Wells Fargo has a wide range of accounts and services that help you achieve your financial goals. From flexible checking and savings accounts, loan offerings to premier investment management services, we'll work with you to help you save, plan and prepare for the future. Talk to a Wells Fargo banker today and take your big step with confidence.

wellsfargo.com

Together we'll go far

© 2009 Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. All rights reserved. Member FDIC. (123964_13666)