

Call It Improvised Confession

I've always loved New Year's Eve. My continued adoration isn't a sign of my (well-documented) love for binge drinking, as this devotion existed long before I emerged an ever imbibing, sentient adult. In the Pentecostal cult I grew up in, I anxiously awaited an annual church service called Watch Night: a frenzied, late-night spectacle that rang in each new year with raised hands, tongue-talking and sprinting up and down the aisles. As a young child and, eventually, a teenager, I'd sit attentively, transfixed, participating, awaiting either Jesus' imminent return or the apocalypse's inception—I was never certain.

The dawn of the new year represented something I couldn't fathom then: hope. Hope for improvement, change, for bidding the past good riddance. The older I got, I realized there was plenty I needed to banish: impure thoughts (the gay), questionable morals (the gay), indecision (again, the gay). I capitalized on this opportunity to bury recent history. I called it improvised confession—inspired by distant, abandoned Catholic roots but utterly evangelical in nature. I'd pray, weep, break down in the arms of church elders. Then, hope was more about biding time, maintaining delusion, plotting escape.

Now, I still yearn for purging. And since 2010 was debacle-filled, a brief look back—and subsequent lessons. (*Not resolutions.*)

First: Beach trips rarely end in happily-ever-after, wedded bliss. If you find yourself caught



LADY
ABOUT
TOWN

by Daniel Borgen

Chained to electronic constraints. I've felt—at times—flighty, unnerved and, at worst, utterly unhinged. Battling this irreversible trend is a futile effort. I know. Society marches on, determined, with or without me. Going forward: Be present.

up in a moment, acting somewhat embarrassingly during said trips (say you write messages in recently emptied wine bottles and toss them into the ocean), keep those sorts of shameful secrets secret, lest close friends spend the rest of the year making jokes, crafting variations. "Maybe you can pass that handsome stranger sitting at the bar a message in a bottle." "Need some of my empty wine bottles for your date?"

Lesson: It's okay to hide your sexy secrets until someone puts a ring on it. (Most don't.)

Next: Time isn't sacred. There are no longer moments, respites to escape our electronic obligations—the ones, whether life, death or not, we feel compelled to fulfill instantaneously. Immediate text responses. Social networking posts. Barrages of cell phone calls, voice mails. Friends declaring, "I *know* you're there, you just posted on Facebook!" The last time I sat through an entire movie, show or dinner without checking my phone? No idea—as if waiting an hour on that usually urgent, witty retort will spell the ruin of close friendships. Chained to electronic constraints, I've felt—at times—flighty, unnerved and, at worst, utterly unhinged. Battling this irreversible trend is a futile effort, I know. Society marches on, determined, with or without me. Going forward: Be present.

Third: Even if you're especially eager to get your trick home, do not drink and drive. A close friend did last summer, wrecking his vehicle, crashing into a gigantic construction dumpster. He somehow managed to pull away and get his (completely totaled) car home (he had a trick in the car, after all). When the police came, knocking on his apartment door—mere moments after—he answered Matthew McConaughey-style (nude, inebriated: "Can I help you, sexy officers?"), they tossed the (also disrobed) trick out the door and arrested Matthew-lite. When I

saw photos of the wrecked car, grief and what-ifs overwhelmed me—a sad, way-too-late wake-up call everyone needed. Each of my closest friends has cabbed or walked since.

Another: Although Facebook seems to be dying a slow death, it still serves vital purposes: stalking, awkward public proclamations, incessant griping, droll mayhem. This beloved resource holds some oft startling revelations—our go-to for relationship gossip. This I learned vicariously through close friends: Be quite sure you're ready to alter that "relationship status." When your burgeoning love crashes and burns weeks after it begins, you might regret all the condolences that pour in—unless, of course, you're into that sort of thing. Lesson: Facebook isn't *life*. Disconnect sometimes.

Finally, changes of scenery can be good, cathartic even. Even when said change is a move to an old neighborhood (NW) or rejoining an old gym (24 Hour), where daily I've faced more ghosts of old flames past than a year's worth of Blow Ponys. Unlike that confused Pentecostal kid, I now understand why I embrace out-with-the-old, in-with-the-new. I blithely embark upon 2011, hopeful that, year by year, I'm less an idiot than before—older, wiser, pleasantly purged, like the Pentecostal. ☪

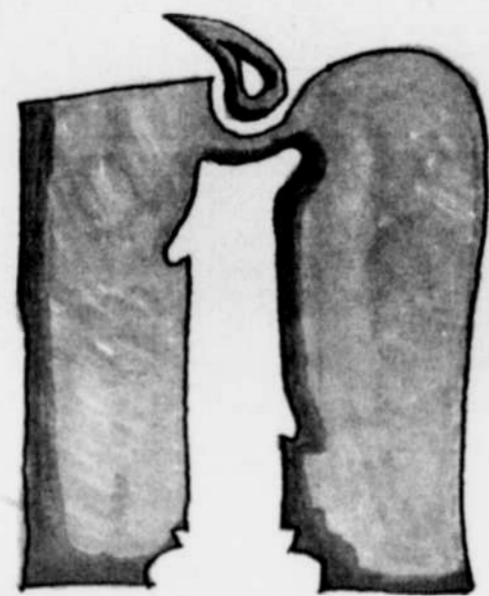
Are resolutions worth the energy? Can't simple reflection suffice? DANIEL@JUSTOUT.COM.

Bring Your Bottoms In For Bottomless Mimosas



Quality Food, Quality Service
& Lots of Champagne

Every Saturday & Sunday
from 10am - 2pm



night+light
LOUNGE

21st & Clinton
South East Portland
www.nightlightlounge.net
503.731.6500

CLYDE COMMON

Domestic & Foreign Cooking

503.228.3333
1014 SW STARK STREET

Just Out
is taking two weeks off
for early spring cleaning.

We'll see you back in print on
Feb. 4.

Still bringing you
the news daily at
JustOut.com

Starky's

Restaurant and Bar

Good food, Great Fun, and Friendly Staff...

Portland's Eastside Dining & Spirits

Music and Videos on flat screen plasma monitors

Late Night Menu: FRI. + SAT. TIL MIDNIGHT

Bar Menu: EVERY NIGHT TIL 2 AM

(p) 503.230.7980 (a) 2913 SE Stark St.