

# Make It Sparkle, Tim, Best Make It Pretty

Because I already traipse beyond safe city confines (into Northern Clark County) for work almost daily, I resist venturing beyond our city's periphery—for any occasion. But a few weeks ago, issued a pseudo challenge, I took Highway 26 past our borders, traversing the dense sprawl the Arcade Fire spent an entire album deconstructing. There, past endless big-box stores and strip malls, in Hillsboro, sits a grand stadium, light contraptions to the sky. Its adjoining fields house a particular queer specimen: the softball player. These curious creatures rise with the sun, commit entire Sundays (and summers) playing—forging community I know little about.

I'm not sports deficient, although our relationship has always been complex. (I distrust most endeavors involving men.) I've followed basketball closely since adolescence, even toyed with playing once—mostly in casual pickup games at church retreats or while skipping school with friends. There, for brief, fleeting hours, all the clumsiness and awkwardness that were my usual companions—tripping over nothing while walking, crashing into jocks in hallways—ceased, like I had a secret athlete doppelgänger, Clark Kent style. I'd glide past opponents, dribble effortlessly, sink high-arching jump shots. Even during poorer performances, I indulged in the escape. And in any ensuing man-on-man contact.



## lady about town

BY DANIEL BORGEN

With one part closet athleticism, two parts infatuation with the male form, I adorned bedroom walls with famous athletes, mostly Portland Trail Blazers. After all, Pentecostal parents couldn't explicate the gay from posters of Clyde Drexler or Jerome Kersey like they could from *Tiger Beat* cutouts of Peter Reckell (Bo Brady on *Days of Our Lives*). Their perfect physiques never inspired me to get my own—and still haven't, but they sure helped a sexually frustrated teen get to sleep at night. Much safer than trickier warm body experiments: sleepovers.

Ambling through the field toward the action, I mused. I'd heard about gay softball and its subsequent intensity, but I barely believed it. Big bar talk from drunken gays. I expected scenes from *The Broken Hearts Club*—lazing in outfields, not sweaty, dirty competition. Sunglasses on, too-early morning coffee in hand, I squinted, cursing the probing morning sun. I'm not one for an early Sunday, especially post-whiskey party. Sundays belong to hair of the dog and brunch.

Two friends play on the team (Bella Boys) I promised, all season, to go watch. Tim, my favorite bartender-turned-dear friend, and Jose,

friend/ex/friend, had little faith I'd ever appear. I slipped in quietly, finding a spot toward the back of already hot metal bleachers that wreaked havoc on my exposed thighs. Before me, a whole new world unfolded—no *Broken Hearts* laziness, instead well-oiled machines: following rules, hustling, catcalling and taking very seriously this game I hadn't thought much about.

The early game: Bellas vs. The Swallows (clever). The teams dueled with frightening intensity. They stole bases, dove for balls, unfazed by heat, dirt, hecklers. I took my time before cheering; I was happy deferring to Tim as he single-handedly energized everyone within earshot. He demanded teammates "Make it Sparkle," "Give it a spruce and a fur," and "Take it for a ride." Much more questionable, graphic innuendo ensued—one of the many perks of an all-gay team.

Although I took time trying to decipher what, precisely, was supposed to sparkle—the pitch, the ass in the tight uniform?—I soon realized it didn't matter which nonsensical phrases teammates tossed around; the perpetual verbal barrage was about spirit. Sadly, The Swallows, who showed great mettle, seemed to

be missing several players to suspensions and hangovers. At that moment I realized what a Borgen-constructed team might look like.

I don't remember who won—professional scorekeepers handled that; I was far too distracted by grating lawn chair coaches and abundant skintight uniforms. I remembered when other friends dedicated themselves to things like gay volleyball or tennis and I paid little attention—although I did happily partake in affiliated parties. Perhaps I shouldn't always wait for direct challenges to alter my cherished routines. Because when I adventure, I'm rarely riddled with regret.

For those participating in queer sporting, it's a distinct variation of community. Gay is the adhesive, sure, but the team, spirit and competition—that compound provides contentment. And, for observers, it's rather special to watch friends compete. I doubt I'll ever don tight, sexy baseball stirrups and play, but I understand my sportier brethren a little better. And I'm not opposed to relishing rather impressive scenery, perhaps injecting a little spirit of my own, spirit hastened by a spiked morning latte. ☐

*Apparently, a tournament's converging on Portland (The Portland Cup, Aug. 13-14). Fire up the Grindr, boys, recruit that out-of-town talent. Take it for a ride. Email DANIEL@JUSTOUT.COM.*

**20 AUGUST 2011**  
7PM - 2AM  
\$40 ADVANCE • \$45 W/ SHUTTLE SERVICE

THE SIZZLING SUMMER PARTY

ADMISSION INCLUDES ALL DRINKS, FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT  
MUSIC BY DJ TRONIC • SUNSET LUAU • FIRE DANCERS • HUGE BONFIRE  
CAMPING • OPEN AIR ENTERTAINMENT • SHUTTLE SERVICE FROM Q CENTER AND DOWNTOWN

FOR TICKETS AND INFO VISIT [WWW.FIREONTHECOLUMBIA.COM](http://WWW.FIREONTHECOLUMBIA.COM)  
ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE OREGON CRUSADERS AND THE Q CENTER

**Taboo**  
ADULT VIDEO

magazines  
clothing . lingerie  
multichannel arcade  
huge selection  
gift cards available

**ALL ZEUS electro-sensations products are 25% OFF**  
Take your play in a whole new direction

**ALL \$9.95 DVDs ARE \$7.95**  
Offer Expires 8-31-2011

[WWW.TABOOVIDEO.COM](http://WWW.TABOOVIDEO.COM)

<b>VANCOUVER</b> 4811 NE 94th Ave. Vancouver WA (360) 254-1126	<b>82ND AVE.</b> 2330 SE 82nd Ave. Portland OR (503) 777-6033	<b>MLK BLVD.</b> 237 SE MLK Blvd. Portland OR (503) 239-1678	<b>BROADWAY (PEARL)</b> 311 NW Broadway, Portland 97209 (503) 227-3443
---	--	---	---

HUGE SELECTION OF DVDS • ADULT TOYS • LINGERIE • MAGAZINES  
ALL STORES OPEN 24 HOURS TO SERVE YOU! PRIVATE AND INTIMATE MULTICHANNEL ARCADE