

A RAVE NEW WORLD

Educating yourself makes the difference

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to finally go to my first rave. I have always been interested in the rave scene, but never motivated myself to go to one. Now with all this media attention, I felt it was time to get my own opinion on what really goes on at raves.

Late Thursday night, I started my search for a local Portland rave. This was not a difficult task because the Internet is swarming with websites filled with rave information, chat rooms and upcoming event calendars just for the local scene. With little effort, I came across a rave called Swirl that was happening the very next night. The same company, Big Bam Bass Productions, who only a week prior held a rave where Melissa Flaherty died, was putting on the rave. This would be the best opportunity to really see it for myself. Most likely, the same people would be there and the environment would be similar to that of the prior rave. I called the information number given, got a location and went to bed early to prepare for the all-nighter ahead.

I wanted to go with an open mind. I'm not stupid. I knew that people were going to be selling and using drugs, but I did not want to condemn everyone for a few people's actions. I enjoy techno music and was looking forward to going dancing, something I hadn't done for a long time.

Late Friday night after work, I picked up Maggie, our Feature Editor, and her friend Jenny and headed downtown. Even with the vague directions, we were able to find the empty warehouse and the

huge line of ravers that extended around the corner of the building. I treated it like any other concert I've been to and left all my valuables in the car, except for the \$30 to get in and enough to buy some water. We took our place in line and began the long wait to get inside. It was obvious by all the spotlights and news vans that we were

I think what people need to understand is that dealers don't care about you and your well being. They just want a quick buck or something in return. This brings me to the three girls in line in front of us. Now, like I mentioned earlier, I don't want to condemn the whole rave scene for a couple of people's actions, but the story I'm about to tell you really bothered me.

I don't particularly have a warm spot in my heart for ecstasy dealers.



Mike Pollock
Photo Editor

not the only reporters looking for a story. Every major television station was present across the street as if they were waiting for something terrible to happen so they could flash it on the eleven o'clock news.

We had probably been in line for about thirty minutes around a diversely dressed group of kids between the ages of 14 and 25, when someone finally said the words, "you guys want to buy some ecstasy?" I wanted to ask him if the drug was so great why he didn't seem to be high on it. I decided not to because I didn't want to draw attention to myself. I figured if I still had to spend another five or so hours with these people, I should probably stay on their good side. We proceeded to ignore him and soon he got the message and left us alone. I don't particularly have a warm spot in my heart for ecstasy dealers, in fact, I think they're scum. Not that any drug is really safe, but with ecstasy, you don't know what you might be getting. That is a chance I'm just not willing to take.

Rave presents few surprises but ecstasy in full supply

Last week I attended a rave party in a Southeast Portland warehouse for the first time. The dance show called "Swirl" was thrown by Kelly Monroe of Big Bam Bass Productions, the same promoter who had been in charge of a rave party two weeks ago when Melissa Flaherty died, possibly from an ecstasy overdose.

A long line awaited us when we arrived at the warehouse. At the front door, security guards

were searching backpacks and purses and conducting pat-downs. After waiting in line for about ten minutes, a guy tapped me on my shoulder.

"You have some ecstasy?" he asked.

"No, do you?" I answered, not sure whether he was joking or not.

He told me that he had a whole bunch of it and that it was \$20 for a pill. I asked him where he hides the drug and how he gets it in there, but he wouldn't tell. Our conversation ended with him telling me that if I changed my mind and wanted some ecstasy, to find him and ask for it.

The next person I talked to was a young girl who was attending a rave party for the first time. She warned me not to do anything stupid and to be careful.

"Don't do any drugs in there, you can have fun without it,"

she said. About an hour later, after finally getting inside the warehouse, I met the very same girl telling me how much fun she was having and what wonderful drugs she had been taking, including ecstasy. She complained about three guys who gave her ecstasy for free, and then they wouldn't stop kissing her, but it didn't seem to bother her. It seemed like it was a popular thing for guys to do in there; give away ecstasy for free to girls so that later on they could take advantage of them.

Once in a while, I saw the guy who had offered me ecstasy outside the building. He would just appear out of nowhere and say exactly the same thing over

and over again, "ecstasy, ecstasy, ecstasy." I figured that ignoring him would probably be the best way to get rid of him. At midnight, a message about the dangers of the drug ecstasy was displayed on a

little screen. It was hard to really understand what they were saying since music was playing in the background. The message I got out of it was: Be good, behave yourself, don't do anything stupid, now go and have fun. In my opinion, it was not very convincing. Most of the teenagers



INTERNET PHOTO
Many people argue that the raves have more to do with the music the DJ's produce from 'spinning' than the drugs that are consumed there.

the middle of the dance floor. I looked at them and got a good laugh, then realized that it was Lisa, the girl we met in line. We met up with her later and she said, "I was bad. I took drugs, but they were given to me for free." She went on to say that three guys had come up to her and made out with her. She seemed so excited about everything. I tried to explain to her that was probably why she was given the drugs for free in the first place. This bothered me so much, but what could I do. She didn't seem interested in what I was telling her and

walked away. All and all, I enjoyed the rave. I don't think that raves are the problem, but instead it's the people who go to them uneducated. The whole time I was there, everything stayed under control. It was not unlike other concerts I've attended. As for the girl we met in line, I can only hope she can learn from her experience and make better decisions next time. Remember that there were people using drugs, but there were also people there that were sober and having a good time.

"I was bad, I took drugs, but they were given to me for free."

Lisa Raver

Ecstasy was available at every corner.



Maggie Jirasek
Feature Editor

she explained. It was pretty much what I expected a rave to be. Nobody got violent and the whole time I felt pretty safe. I would have never imagined though, that it would be that easy to get ecstasy. You didn't even have to go and look for it; the drug came to you, even for free.

