

GUYS

SWILLING IN THE MIST

CHRONICLING THE RITUAL OF BOYS' NIGHT OUT. BY GEORGIA PATERA

The bastion of male bonding commonly referred to as guys' night out is gaining attention lately as beer ads and bar rooms rejoice in the pack mentality. According to Urban Dictionary, an online site that lets users define slang and other pop culture terms, boys' night out "involves going to a bar or nightclub and drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, shouting obscenities at members of the public, harassing members of the opposite sex and generally being obnoxious."

Kwesi Graves, 22, is no stranger to this sort of behavior. Built Ford-truck tough, he is seasoned in the art of liquor appreciation. "When we boys go out together and alcohol [is] around, we are looking for trouble," he says.

More than that, guys' night out provides the excuse for men to gather in the name of comparing gaming, drinking and ribbing ability where, according to Andrew Houston, 24, "You can really cut loose and get as stupid as you want." While the consequences may include physical injury, public ridicule or even jail, men continue to uphold the glorious tradition of mayhem.

Houston, a guys'-night-out-veteran, had a recent brush with just such mayhem when he and his friend Ryan, a black belt in karate, decided to, "re-enact Fight Club," while taking a breather outside

Springfield's Prime Time Bar. In a swift move of alcohol-fueled intelligence, Ryan delivered a snap kick straight to Houston's gut.

Alcohol, it seems, forms the backbone of a classic guys' night out. But the night out would be nothing if not for women — both escaping them (girlfriends and wives) and attracting them (strangers in bars), if even for just an evening. "Nobody plans a guys' night out without girls," says Andy Ewoniuk, 20.

The act of picking up women is a complex component of guys' night out. "It's a combination of wanting to make fun of them and wanting to hook up with them. It's a huge competition," says Graves.

For men who are decidedly off the market, guys' night out serves a different purpose. To them, such evenings serve as a jail break from the watchful eye of significant others. "Sometimes especially young guys feel constricted or tied down. So guys night out lets you do things that you used to do when you were single," said Zack Cords, 22.

Whether it's an excuse to imbibe far too much alcohol and participate in ludicrous schemes, or a way to attract women but avoid responsibility, the bottom line of guys' night is about bonding.

"Guys night out is all about memories," Graves says — memories of grown men doing together what makes them happy — even if it spells trouble in the end. **CW**

Queen

for a Day

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BOYS' NIGHT OUT. BY GEORGIA PATERA

In a flourish of fluid sexuality, the university community celebrated guys' night out last month in drag. Men dressed as women, women dressed as men — some defied classification altogether. The LGBTQA-sponsored show held in the EMU ballroom gave many a chance to strut their stuff to win prizes and raise HIV/AIDS awareness.

Unlike the typical boys' nights out, there was no ridicule or unabashed drunkenness. There were, however, several catcalls, understandable given sashaying appearances on the catwalk by Paris Hilton and Nicole Richie (avec chihuahua), Sonny and Cher, and several other celebrity lookalikes.

But even these stars could not overshadow the main act, DRED (Daring Reality Every Day), who defines herself as, "Haitian-American, multi-spirited, performance-artist, poet, educator, activist, singer, and gender-illusioning woman." In her solo performance, DRED set the tone of acceptance for the rest of the show. "We just need to support and love each other," she said. Judging from the crowd's cheers, the feeling was unanimous.

Not everything, though, was so touchy-feely. Jealousy among the drag queens and kings — albeit good-natured — may have been the only pitfall. "I officially hate my legs," lamented one crowd member. "She's wearing the same hair as I am. I'm so embarrassed," noted another.

Despite the petty quips, the show was a huge success. Just goes to show that for boys' night out, drunkenness and wild antics are not prerequisites for letting it all hang out. **CW**



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