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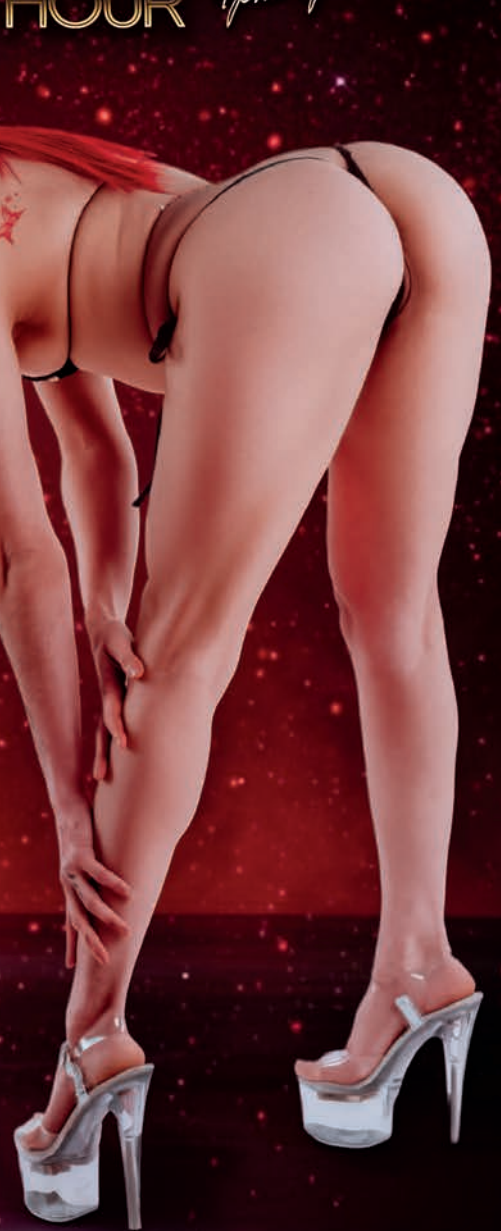
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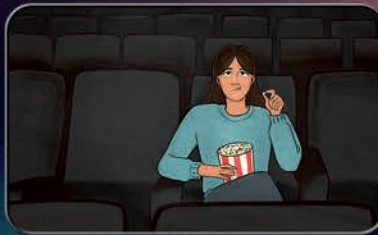
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FEATURING



TALES FROM THE DJ BOOTH

part eight of the 12 rules of stripping series
page 16 | by dj hazmatt



HELP ME, I'M BY MYSELF

removing the social stigma of solitude
page 36 | by hannah one cup



PROS & CONS OF PRESSING VINYL

the absolute holy grail of local band merch
page 38 | by blazer sparrow



JUNK FOOD SAVAGERY

nothing but the greasy and processed truth
page 40 | by wombstretcha the magnificent

INSIDE STUFF

EROTIC CITY & EVENTS SPOTLIGHT	PG. 19
MISS NUDE OREGON '26	PG. 20
EXOTIC PINUP PAGES	PG. 24
EXOTIC MAPS (PDX/OR/WA)	PG. 28
CLASSIFIEDS	PG. 32
MOTORBOOTY RECAP	PG. 34

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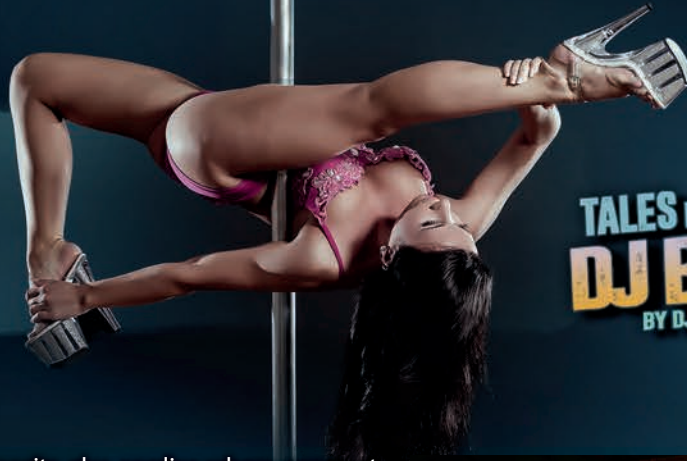
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12 Rules for Stripping



TALES FROM THE
DJ BOOTH
BY DJ HAZMATT

A few months back, I mentioned the concept of keeping one's personal life out of the club, because customers don't usually fantasize about the girl who's late on rent and has a sick dog. The "leave drama at the door" rule doesn't just apply to dancers, but to DJs, security, and bartenders as well—everyone at the strip club is playing a role, and that role is "smiling tone-setter and money-taker." I recall an evening when I drove directly from a funeral to my shift at the club, only to be greeted by a late-to-stage, bad-tipping dancer, demanding that I play her Puddle of Staind or whatever was popular in the trailer parks at the time. So, not only did I play it, but I played that garbage loud and pretended that it was actual music. Why? Because people look at the DJ, and if the DJ (or bartender, security, etc.) is having a bad time, then he's letting others know that the whole experience is a ruse (even if it is, we try to make it look like less of one). If you find yourself naked on a stage, the last thing you want to do is remind your audience that you're a real person with real problems. Your name is "Destiny," and you're here to party (it's not Stephanie, and you're not behind on bills).



This rule applies two ways. If leaving drama at the door is crucial to your income,

the opposite also applies where peace at home is concerned: leave work at work.

Rule 8: Leave the Club at the Club

Sure, some of us degenerates don't (know if we) have kids, so extending our social circle only a few feet outside of the club's front door is an option for some of us. DJs date bartenders, who live with strippers that cheat with bouncers, who secretly sleep with cooks, and we all go to the same sketchy unoccupied office space for after-hours parties where the beer is flat, and the cocaine is weak, before returning to bed for another recharge—no hope of a "normie lifestyle" on the horizon. However, this is the exception, and not the rule.

Believe it or not, many strippers actually are paying for college. I've even met a few who paid for a house, in cash, before they turned 25, by simply avoiding the "club lifestyle" and maintaining a mostly conservative (read: married and clothed, not necessarily political) personal life with a husband named Brad and two kids with extra "eighs" in their names where a "y" should be. Suburbia awaits those who can save their earnings. Especially in Portland, there are many covert dancers whose real life involves a picket fence out front and a "yoga studio pole" in the garage.

If you, the aspiring functional member of clothed society, want to moonlight as a stripper, it's just as important to draw boundaries in your personal life as it is to keep your anonymity at the club. Your husband/wife/boo/girlfriend/boyfriend/partner doesn't need to know the nitty-gritty of what goes down at work, especially if you're not breaking any laws or couples agreements (read: you're not selling drugs or turning tricks).



Jealousy aside, there's a degree of "eww" that most people feel when we (this includes all industry staff) describe what happens at work, but this applies to *most* jobs where working with the public is a thing. Baristas get hit on. Nurses put their fingers in people. Politicians get bent over and fucked raw by corporate interests. There is no such thing as honest work, as even the Amish aren't safe—they know what an erect horse cock looks like, for better or worse. I've seen a lot at the clubs, but I've never seen an erect horse cock (only flaccid ones are allowed on stage per Oregon law). So, no, you being topless while a dude looks at you is no different than going to Sauvie Island for

the day, except you're getting paid, and there's a bouncer who will smash face if anyone tries to touch you.

This column isn't just for strippers—no one should bring work home with them. The idea of keeping work at work isn't about hiding anything or keeping secrets; it's about not bringing problems into your house. It's literally the same respect my girlfriend gives me, when she gets off shift at her hipster bar job and doesn't go on about how the weird cook with the half man-bun and greasy smile keeps trying to win her over with tickets to Bright Eyes, and weird jabs about how being a DJ-slash-writer isn't a real job...okay, maybe she did once, but I just pretended to not know who Bright Eyes is (R.I.P. Bonnie Tyler).

Of course, *do vent*. Couples are stronger when they can shit talk together. If a guy at your stage said some out-of-pocket shit, share that with your hubby. Or, if there's something on the news about an incident at your club, by all means bring that up. But don't talk about how the guitarist from Dandy Warhols smells good up close (and don't ask me how I know, but he does). Don't go into detail about what "friction dances" are. Don't tell your babe about how the bouncer found your clit ring next to the stairs. Pretend you're an OBGYN for the elderly, a pet mortician, or something most people don't want to hear the details about. Don't feel any shame related to the fact you work in "the sex industry"—feel shame that you know every word to a Buckcherry song. Keep work talk funny, light, and yes, slightly negative. Work is supposed to suck. Don't



make your significant other feel like they have competition at the Rusty Clam II. Even if your regulars are all super attractive dudes who make you feel like Queen of 82nd Ave, they're just customers.

Sometimes, work can be fun, and yes, certain financially lucrative situations fall into that gray area of "not quite cheating, but also sketchy if brought up," similar to our country's relationship with Israel. If you, the family-having, normal-life-aspiring stripper, experience an awkward lap dance or get aroused when an off-duty member of Popular Band sits at your stage, that's fine. Your office worker husband has a secretary coworker, and yes, he thinks about her naked, often, especially when the copier needs paper changed, and she's wearing those cut-off jeans. Do you know your husband has eyes and a Y chromosome? Sure. But do you want to hear about how that affects his relationship with intern Jessica? No. So, just keep your work life separate from your home life, and understand that it's an issue of basic respect and tact, not dishonesty (unless he's actually banging Jessica, in which case, all bets are off and you're free to hang out with the Blazers at their hotel).

Be Catwoman (Tim Burton version). Go about your daily routine, sneak into something sexy at night, rob motherfuckers blind, and then return home without waking up your baby. Don't make "stripper" your entire personality, unless you plan on a completely fused personal-and-work lifestyle, which is totally fine (I'll see you at after hours), but not ideal for the credit-score-aspiring woman. If you run into a regular customer when you're at Winco with Brad, Breighleigh and Ti-meightheigh, just smile and keep it moving. Customers are (usually) equally embarrassed to be a regular at your work, so they will probably ignore you as well. Treat your shifts like *Fight Club*. Don't talk about them, don't go into details, and don't explain the bruises. Some of us have thigh bumps from the pole; others have corporate burnout—every job destroys you, but pole marks can heal (whereas the mental trauma of slaving to a cubicle for your entire life cannot). Most people envy independent contractors whose dress code is "nothing" and whose taxes are op-

tional. You have the second best job on the planet, and until Weird Al retires, you should be grateful that you're not working for Amazon, let alone the fact that you're being paid to look pretty.



So, if you want to do the whole "husband and brunch" circuit, just leave your personal life at the club door, and leave the club life on the other side of that same door. Your customers don't need to know where your kids live, and your kids don't need to know that you pretend to be aroused for strangers, while Bon Jovi plays from a dusty speaker that hasn't been updated since the 1980s.



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BY BRYAN A. BYBEE

THE P-TOWN HAPS

August is here, and summer is in full swing throughout the Pacific Northwest. *Fun fact:* August's former name in the old Roman calendar was Sextilis...and anything that starts with those three letters is simply fabulous. August also used to have 30 days, until Emperor Augustus added another day due to being jealous that Julius Caesar's month (July) had 31 days. So those born on August 31 can thank Augustus that they're not September babies—a month tagged as the worst of the year, both psychologically and financially. But don't kill the messenger...I'm just disseminating known data.

Anyway, speaking of birthdays...we've got three this month! The first is Mz Jordan's Birthday Blockbuster on Saturday, August 8, at The Lounge. Later in the month, it's Belladonna's Birthday Bash on Saturday, August 22, at Desire. Wrapping up this month's birthdays is Bartender Amber's Birthday Party on Saturday, August 29, at Columbia Strip. Wishing you all very happy birthdays, from all of us at *Exotic!*

Now on to industry events! Dick Hennessy's 15th Annual *Vagina Beauty Pageant* Finals is on Saturday, August 1, at Las Gatas (PDX). Then, it's Lucky Devil Lounge's 20th Annual Bikini Car & Dog Wash on Sunday, August 9, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., outside of Lucky Devil Lounge at 633 SE Powell Blvd—a benefit for Array Animal Rescue. Make sure to stop by the Kit Kat Club on Friday, August 14, for their Cowboys vs. Aliens Party! Then, on Saturday, August 15, it's The Sunset Strip VIP's Hot August Car Show, featuring a wet T-shirt contest and a dunk tank—sounds like a great combo to me! Moving on to Thursday, August 20, Flesh and Bones Lounge will hold their Lights, Camera, Action! Performance Competition, with a \$500 cash prize and open to all entertainers in the industry!

Next, we'd like to congratulate DV8 on a sublime 25! Join them on Friday, August 21, from 9 p.m. to close, for their 25th Anniversary Party. Friday, August 21 is also Country Night at The Sunset Strip VIP, so grab those boots and cowboy hat for the ultimate hoedown (absolutely *no* pun intended—promise)! Saturday, August 22 is wholly owned by Stars Cabaret—with events happening at both locations. Visit the Bridgeport location for their Beach Party and Limbo Competition, featuring drink specials and delicious pulled pork sliders, and Stars Salem boasts a Hawaiian Luau Party, with food and drink specials.

Wrapping up August events, it's the Micro Maidens Burlesque After-Party on Friday, August 28, at the Kit Kat Club, and this show is going to be *huge* (pun intended this time—I'm sorry)! Next, it's the Miss Bi-ti-es Competition at Las Cariñosas Cabaret on Saturday, August 29, featuring a \$1,500 grand prize, and open to all industry entertainers. Finally, on Sunday, August 30, visit The Lounge for their End of Summer, Back to School Bikini Car Wash, with old-school cars and new-school vibes.

Until next month, my industry grandes.

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eroticcity spotlight

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SUN 02 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

SAT 08 – THE LOUNGE – MZ. JORDAN'S BIRTHDAY BLOCKBUSTER

SUN 09 – LUCKY DEVIL – 20TH ANNUAL BIKINI CAR & DOG WASH

SUN 09 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

FRI 14 – KIT KAT CLUB – COWBOYS VS. ALIENS PARTY

SAT 15 – SUNSET STRIP VIP

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SUN 16 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

THU 20 – FLESH AND BONES – LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION! CONTEST

FRI 21 – DV8 – 25-YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

FRI 21 – SUNSET STRIP VIP – COUNTRY NIGHT

SAT 22 – DESIRE – BELLADONNA'S BIRTHDAY BASH

**SAT 22 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
BEACH PARTY & LIMBO COMPETITION**

SAT 22 – STARS CABARET (SALEM) – HAWAIIAN LUAU PARTY

SUN 23 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

FRI 28 – KIT KAT CLUB

MICRO MAIDENS BURLESQUE AFTER-PARTY

**SAT 29 – LAS CARIÑOSAS CABARET
MISS BI-TII-ES COMPETITION**

**SAT 29 – COLUMBIA STRIP
BARTENDER AMBER'S BIRTHDAY PARTY**

SUN 30 – THE LOUNGE – BACK TO SCHOOL BIKINI CAR WASH

SUN 30 – DANTE'S – SINFERNO CABARET

HAPPY HOURS

AJ'S – 10AM-5PM • CABARET – 2PM-6PM

CASA DIABLO – 2:30PM-7PM (WED-SUN)

CLUB 205 – 10:30AM-8PM • DEVILS POINT – 3PM-6PM

DESIRE – 6PM-9PM • DV8 – 12PM-3PM

FLESH AND BONES – 4PM-8PM (TUE-FRI)

LAS CARIÑOSAS CABARET – 4PM-7PM (MON-THU)

THE LOUNGE – 11AM-4PM • LUCKY DEVIL – 3PM-6PM

STILETTOS – 11AM-8PM

SUNSET STRIP VIP – 12AM-2:30AM (MON-SAT) | 5PM-2:30AM (SUN)

Exotic would like to congratulate

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Takya

from **Club Rouge**
PORTLAND

Appearing Friday & Saturday Nights





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FELIX
BEST STRIPPER
FINALIST

PHOENIX
BEST STRIPPER
SECOND PLACE

BROOKE
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NOMINATED TOP FIVE

STRIPPARAOKE
BEST KARAOKE - NOMINATED TOP FIVE

DEVILS POINT | 5305 SE FOSTER RD | (503) 774-4513 | OPEN 2PM TO 2:30AM DAILY

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VIXEN

HAZEL

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CARMEN

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HIBANA

SERENA

AMERIE

MOANA

GEMMA

SUNNY

JESTER

VERITY

DREAM

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DIAMOND

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LUX

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ICY

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SOPHIA

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SAT 15TH

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CAR SHOW

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PINUP ²⁰²⁶
August

Shimmer
FROM
CASA DIABLO





Glimmer
FROM
CASA DIABLO

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82ND STRIP **1** **FOOD LOTTERY**
7737 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 771-0096
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ACROPOLIS **2** **FOOD LOTTERY**
8325 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 231-9611
Mon-Thu 2pm-2:30am, Fri-Sun 11am-2:30am

AJ'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB **3** **FOOD LOTTERY**
15920 SE Stark St | (971) 420-2421
Daily 10am-2:30am

ANGELS **4** **FOOD LOTTERY**
10335 SE Foster Rd | (503) 889-0916
Daily 1pm-2:30am

BOTTOMS UP! **5** **FOOD LOTTERY**
16900 NW St Helens Rd | (503) 621-9844
Tue-Sun 12pm-12am

CABARET **6** **FOOD**
17544 SE Stark St | (503) 252-3529
Daily 2pm-2:30am

CASA DIABLO **27** **FOOD LOTTERY**
2839 NW St Helens Rd | (503) 222-6600
Tue 8pm-2:30am, Wed-Sun 2:30pm-2:30am

CLUB 205 **7** **FOOD LOTTERY**
9939 SE Stark St | (503) 256-0527
Daily 10:30am-2:30am

CLUB ROUGE **9** **FOOD LOTTERY**
Portland: 403 SW Harvey Milk St | (503) 227-3936
Daily 5pm-2am
Beaverton: 8687 SW Hall Blvd | (971) 266-8340
Daily 5pm-2:30am

COLUMBIA STRIP **10** **FOOD LOTTERY**
605 N Columbia Blvd | (503) 289-1351
Sun-Thu 12pm-1:30am, Fri-Sat 12pm-2:30am

DESIRE **11** **FOOD LOTTERY**
535 NE Columbia Blvd | (971) 339-2198
Daily 3pm-2:30am

DEVILS POINT **12** **FOOD LOTTERY**
5305 SE Foster Rd | (503) 774-4513
Daily 11am-2:30am

DOMINIQUE STELLA **14** **FOOD**
15826 SE Division St | (503) 319-0318
Daily 2pm-2:30am

DVB **15** **FOOD LOTTERY**
5021 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 788-7178
Daily 2pm-2:30am

FLESH AND BONES LOUNGE **25** **FOOD LOTTERY**
8345 SW Barbur Blvd | (971) 346-2071
Tue-Fri 4pm-2:30am, Sat-Sun 8pm-2:30am

HAWTHORNE STRIP **18** **FOOD LOTTERY**
3532 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 232-9516
Daily 2pm-2:30am

KIT KAT CLUB **19** **FOOD LOTTERY**
231 SW Ankeny St | (503) 208-3229
Daily 4pm-2:30am

LAS CARINOSAS CABARET **33** **FOOD LOTTERY**
10140 SW Canyon Rd | (503) 430-5364
Daily 4pm-2:30am

LAS GATAS GENTLEMEN'S CLUB **20** **FOOD LOTTERY**
Portland: 12035 NE Glisan St | (971) 420-8097
Daily 3pm-2:30am
Hillsboro: 1735 SE TV Hwy | (971) 990-4015
Daily 4pm-2:30am

LAVENDER LOTUS **8** **FOOD**
215 W Burnside St | (971) 431-8710
Wed-Sat 9pm-2:30am

THE LOUNGE **21** **FOOD LOTTERY**
6210 NE Columbia Blvd | (503) 281-3212
Daily 11am-2am

LUCKY DEVIL LOUNGE **22** **FOOD LOTTERY**
633 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 206-7350
Daily 11am-2:30am

MARY'S CLUB **23** **FOOD LOTTERY**
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Daily 11:30am-2:30am

THE OLD DOLPHIN **24** **FOOD LOTTERY**
17180 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 908-1177
Daily 12pm-Late

THE PUSSY WILLOW CLUB **34** **FOOD LOTTERY**
8445 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 222-6610
TBD

SASSY'S **26** **FOOD LOTTERY**
927 SE Morrison St | (503) 231-1606
Daily 10:30am-2:30am

STAG PDX **29** **FOOD**
317 NW Broadway | (503) 894-9679
Mon-Thu 7pm-2am, Fri-Sat 4pm-2:30am, Sun 11am-2am

STARS CABARET BRIDGEPORT **30** **FOOD LOTTERY**
17939 SW McEwan Rd | (503) 726-2403
Mon-Sat 11am-2:30am, Sun 4pm-2:30am

STILETTOS GENTLEMEN'S CLUB **17** **FOOD LOTTERY**
13639 SE Powell Blvd | (503) 760-8128
Daily 11am-2:30am

THE SUNSET STRIP VIP **35** **FOOD LOTTERY**
10860 SW Beaverton Hillsdale Hwy | (503) 627-0666
Mon-Sat 2pm-2:30am, Sun 5pm-2:30am

UNION JACKS **31** **FOOD**
938 E Burnside St | (503) 236-1125
Tue-Fri 6pm-2:30am, Sat-Sun 4:30pm-2:30am

X EXOTIC LOUNGE **32** **FOOD LOTTERY**
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Tue-Sun 8pm-2:30am

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14555 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 652-2004
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Daily 7am-9pm

DANTE'S **103**
350 W Burnside St | (866) 777-8932
Daily 11am-2:30am

EYE CANDY FASHIONS **105**
10412 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 771-0080
Mon-Fri 10am-7pm, Thu-Sat 10am-8pm

FANTASY FOR ADULTS ONLY (4) **106**
3137 NE Sandy Blvd | (503) 239-6969
Daily 10am-12am

15536 SE 82nd Dr | (503) 203-6969
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6440 SW Coronado St | (503) 244-6969
Daily 10am-12am

1703 W Burnside St | (503) 295-6969
Daily 12pm-8pm

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5228 SE Foster Rd | (503) 775-0094
Daily 24 hours

16016 SE 82nd Dr | (503) 655-4667
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HOT BOX **108**
3785 SW Hall Blvd | (503) 574-4057
Daily 10am-9pm

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Daily 24 hours

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20625 SW TV Hwy, Aloha OR | (503) 356-5624
Daily 24 hours

OBSESSION X **116**
3414 NE 82nd Ave | (503) 206-5552
Daily 24 hours

PARADISE **129**
14712 SE Stark St | (503) 914-3904
Daily 24 hours

PDX BARBIES **113**
11142 NE Halsey St | (503) 206-4535
Daily 24 hours

PEEP HOLE **115**
709 SE 122nd Ave | (503) 257-8617
Daily 24 hours

SNEENA'S GSPOT **117**
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8521 SW Barbur Blvd | (503) 245-0489
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Daily 24 hours

TABOO VIDEO (4) **120**
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Portland: 2330 SE 82nd Ave | (503) 206-4708
Daily 24 hours
Portland: 237 SE MLK JR Blvd | (503) 239-1678
Sun-Thu 10am-12am, Fri-Sat 10am-2am
Vancouver: 4811 NE 94th Ave | (360) 254-1126
Daily 24 hours

TORCHED ILLUSIONS **121**
17935 SW Tualatin Valley Hwy | (503) 259-2310
Daily 6am-12am
Newberg: 2515 Portland Rd | (971) 412-7113
Daily 11am-9pm

THE VELVET ROPE **123**
3533 SE César E Chávez Ave | (971) 271-7064
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VICTRESS ENTERTAINMENT **124**
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8431 SE Division St | (503) 257-0622
Daily 24 hours

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5226 SE Foster Rd | (503) 477-4614
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XKXTASY **127**
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2839 NW ST HELENS RD
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9939 SE STARK ST
(503) 256-0527



535 NE COLUMBIA BLVD
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5305 SE FOSTER RD
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633 SE POWELL BLVD
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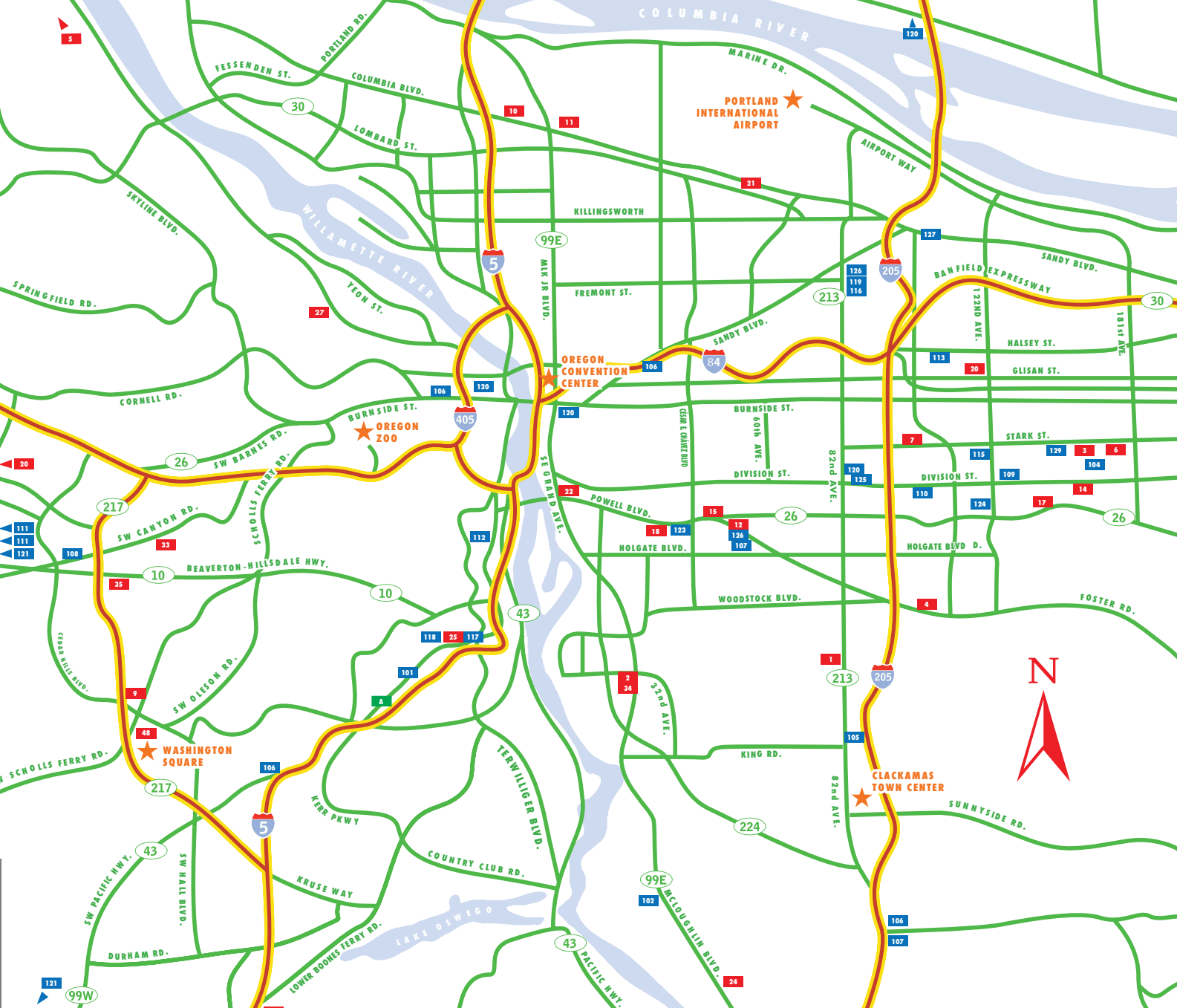
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Huge Selection Of Lingerie, Shoes,
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Rigs, Cigs, Cigars, Pipes, Wraps, Vapes, Hookah,
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1510 1st Ave / (206) 624-1784
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Sun 10am-8pm

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12706 Lake City Way NE / (206) 363-0056
DVDs, Toys, Novelties, Lingerie, Theater
24 Hours / 7 Days

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10am-2:30am / 7 Days

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10326 Lake City Way NE / (206) 523-5973
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Theater
10am-1am / 7 Days

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CASTLE MEGASTORE

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YAKIMA

X SPOT

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9am-11pm / 7 Days

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Vibes* ♥



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HOT ENTERTAINMENT
UNFORGETTABLE NIGHTS



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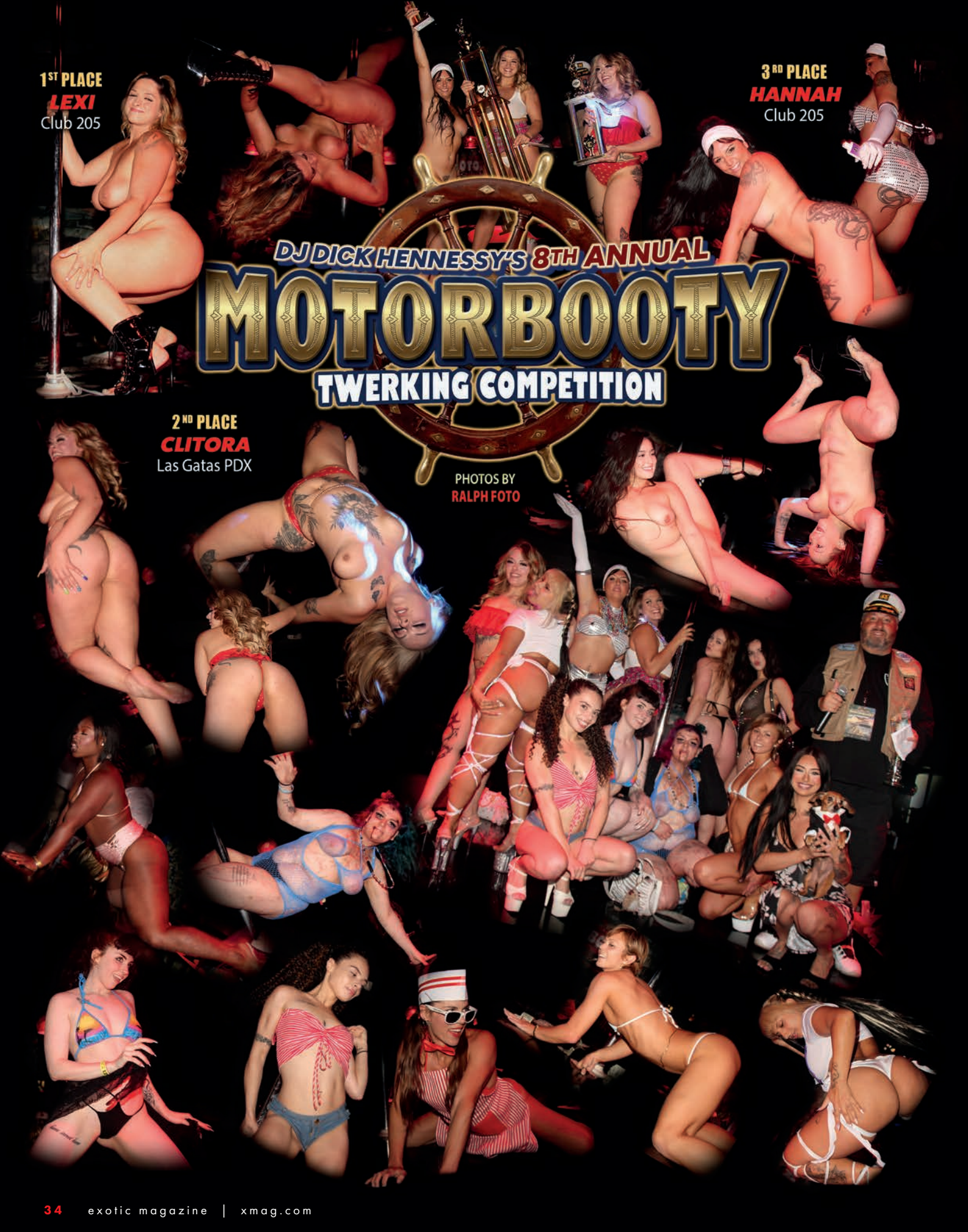
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Help Me, I'm by Myself!

By Hannah One Cup

Whoever said that “doing things alone isn’t as entertaining as when you’re with another person” had to have hated their own company, and was mostly incorrect. Doing things alone can be deeply satisfying in a way that otherwise would have been hard to feel when you’re with another person. Do you want someone judging your awful guitar and singing skills? Reading your elf fiction novel you’re trying to finish, so you can one day publish it under a secret pen name? How about telling you something’s not salty enough, when you feel like you put an entire salt shaker’s worth of sodium in the berry pie? My guess is you’ll say “no” to all of these, and that it’s pretty obvious you *don’t* want someone “enjoying” your secret hobbies you never really get better at.

But somewhere along the way, people seem to think that it’s nearly impossible to enjoy doing things alone, versus with friends or a significant other, and it’s more than likely due to being surrounded by them more often than you aren’t. Being alone turns into this switch that makes you afraid of non-existent problems that *never existed in your brain before people*, but now they do, even though they *aren’t real*. You start thinking, “This would’ve been more fun with someone.” Or “I can’t possibly finish this salty berry pie on my own.” Or “I want to go eat sushi, but I don’t want to go alone.”

Be not afraid, my woeful, lonesome crawdads! You can do all of those things alone *and more!* You just need the power of *overconfidence!*

Overconfidence is a wonderful invention you give yourself when you feel absolutely certain you can’t possibly accomplish something. If you want to get yourself out of the hole you continue digging for yourself, quickly go to a restroom, look in a mir-

ror, and lie to yourself about how awesome you are and how amazing your eyebrows look today. Even though all of those things are true, they probably aren’t to you—so lie to yourself anyway and make it so! Once you’re done taking a normal amount of time to “freshen up” in the bathroom with your own positive affirmations, step out of that hole, and put your shoulders back. Go out in the world and conquer it. Eat that salty berry pie that you confused sugar for salt with. No one else will do it with you.



Going Out to Eat – Once you realize that people don’t need to constantly be surrounding you to enjoy a burger, your world will open up. Suddenly, you’ll end up at a bar that you never would have gone to with your friends, because none of them enjoy tabletop games. Walk into the establishment like you were meant to be there, and not like you have no idea where you just warped from. When you notice a seat in the middle of two strangers, sit in it as if it were your own. If a menu confuses you, just ask the server for the dealer’s choice. Then ask them for a board game for one. There are. So. Many. Out there. Who knows, maybe you’ll end up making new friends that do enjoy tabletop games. Or you’ll just dive deeper into your own self-discovery of the joy of being alone.

Vacationing/Travel – For those lucky

enough to do either, these activities can absolutely be accomplished solo. In fact, I find a lot of the most satisfying trips I’ve had were when I was with only myself and my dog. I was able to go to places I thought were fun, but that others might not feel the same way about...*and* I didn’t have to spend my time trying to come up with plans that everyone would enjoy, not just me. If you’re on the cheap and want to get away, Econo Lodges are still fairly affordable and allow pets. I used to venture to Newport, stay at an Econo Lodge, and pretend I was a traveling salesman with my dog, while eating Chinese food in the room. It was great.



Concerts/Shows – Okay, get your ticket. Your single ticket. Now you don’t have to worry about seating another person or two with you, and making sure there are enough spots next to each other. You get to just go and enjoy what you purchased. They could be the worst band in the world, like Nickelback, or that blonde, country singer, who’s worth billions of dollars (gross)—but see? You won’t have me there saying “gross.” You’ll be in the crowd crying and whooping with joy that you were able to be there. It’s a very visceral feeling when you finally realize that you can freely enjoy something without fear of being judged.

Cooking at Home – This, I feel, is harder to do alone than the rest. People love

pleasing others, more so than they enjoy pleasing themselves sometimes. And that comes into play big time with cooking—at least for me and most of the people I surround myself with when I'm not alone. When alone, I'll generally try to find some very easy ingredients, whip something up in 4 minutes, and then scarf it down, because I didn't plan on taking time to enjoy the meal. But when you have someone to cook for, you want to make sure they savor and enjoy the love you put into each thing. The easiest way to try getting over this backward thinking is to pretend you're royalty and also the chef, and you are cooking your dish exactly as you would have it. It also makes it easier if you start with things that can easily be cooked quickly. Like pasta and chicken. Just buy more spices for your meals and try them out. You can literally make Greek chicken or Japanese-style popcorn chicken with 3 different spices and some flour. Eventually, you may want to start adventuring into cookbooks or websites, and trying to gain some new skills. Good, use them on yourself. Pretty soon, when you have someone else over, you'll be reaching in the cabinet for your Hamburger Helper because you ate your delicious Karaage chicken, rice, and broccoli yesterday evening, alone. "Sorry, I'm not much of an entertainer," you'll say.



And with that, I just want to say that doing things alone should be enjoyed more by everyone. It shouldn't be stigmatized, and you shouldn't feel out of place for doing so. Enjoying your own company is what eventually leads you to knowing what you want out of life, and what you want others to bring to your table—literally, since you ate all the good food by yourself. So get out there, you. Nah, I won't be joining you—I'll be doing my own thing, alone. Let's all be alone together. One big, happy group of folks in the PNW, just out there doing our own things, probably lookin' at birds and stuff. Just enjoying what it's like to be with ourselves.

Hannah One Cup can be found lookin' at birds and stuff, and wondering things like why sugar or salt can't be given a color to distinguish the two more easily. You can find her on Facebook, TikTok @thurs-daynight_depression, or email hannahbird6@gmail.com



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37

Pros and Cons of Pressing Vinyl

by Blazer Sparrow

Since the World Cup is over and likely won by fucking France or Argentina, (I don't actually know, we're still in the quarter finals as I'm writing this, but the way it's fucking going, we're looking at another Warriors/Cavaliers NBA championship tradeoff, only it's every four fucking years, so we get to watch the *same two teams* face off with each other in the World Cup Final *twelve-fucking-years in a row*...this is not what I'm day-drinking a month straight for—or it's England which would be rad!) I've had to reorient and try to plug back into the local music scene for my column. (Editor's note: Well, well... The "unmentioned" Spain gets the cup. Exotic suggests you never use Blazer's column for sports betting purposes...)

Unfortunately, if you haven't figured it out from my last piece and the little intro to this one, I've pretty much used up *all* my "going out tank," going to World Cup matches—mostly at Away Days Brewing.

As such, I don't have much to go on for jabs at the local scene, since I simply haven't been to any shows.

Instead, I'll have to draw from my own failures, and dish out some advice from another aging millennial chasing the impossible dream. I'm talking vinyl. The final upgrade to your merch table. Like with everything else in the DIY music world, you can do this yourself. But is it worth it? Should you spend the ungodly amount for what is essentially a vanity plate? I can't tell you what to do, but I can lay out the pros and cons of this final stage of your delusion.



Mediums come and go, but honestly, the 12-inch long playing record is still the tem-

plate for album art, regardless of what it's on. The cassette tape and the 8-track may have bucked the trend with their dumb rectangular shit, but that was short-lived. When you go on Spotify (or Apple Music, if you're an asshole) and look at album artwork, that artwork is always going to be in a square. CDs are even designed to be either the same square shape inside a jewel case or a digipack that looks like a vinyl LP. Album artwork is supposed to look and feel like this, and I'll fight anyone that says otherwise.

Cons: It's Expensive...

The first hurdle you're going to experience when shopping for presses is that it is goddamn expensive. The first time I saw shitty local bands hawking their shitty self-produced LPs for \$30, I was in disbelief. Then I started doing the math on my own project's order. That's basically what you gotta charge to cover costs, unless you order like a thousand copies, but we both know you're never going to sell a thousand copies of your shitty, sad, white-boy album. Short orders mean high prices, so unless you get a grant, them's the brakes.

Pros: It Sounds Cool!

We can argue to the end of time as to whether vinyl actually sounds better, and I still won't concede. Even kicking aside the tired old adage that it's "warmer," there's just the simple fact that your music is being heard through a needle touching grooves in vinyl. Your music has become an actual physical thing. Plus, it forces you to truncate your long list of songs that mostly sound the same to about 40 minutes' worth. A lesson in efficiency and minimalism. Choose the best, and make them shine. Or the least bad, in your average Portland artist's case.

Cons: It Takes Forever to Make...

It takes nothing to get an album up on Bandcamp or the streaming giants. You can make cassette tapes or CDs at home! With a stack of blanks and some elbow grease, you can crank out as many copies of your crappy album as you and your sucker friends can fit in a weekend. With vinyl, you need to actually order it from a press. And here's the rub. Due to the CD takeover in the '90s and the digital

takeover in the '00s, many of those presses closed down as demand plummeted. With those presses closing, you also lost a lot of the knowledge base to run them. People retire or die without training the next generation. Thanks to the hipster revival of the late '00s, *demand* has skyrocketed, but the infrastructure simply hasn't been rebuilt to meet it. On top of that, every time Taylor Swift releases an album, literally every press on the planet is backed up with a bazillion orders for her new collection of songs that sound the same, about some ex. Your tiny little boutique order of 100 copies has to wait. My biggest piece of advice here is to order about a year before you plan to hold the release party. You think I'm joking, but I'm not.

Pros: Your Fans Will Buy It!

Your poor, poor fans can only buy so many T-shirts. I had a previous piece about some other, cheaper merch items you can decorate your table with that *aren't* T-shirts. Truth is, the bestest and coolest thing you can have on that table is an actual vinyl fucking record. The five people at your show will buy it. Even though they don't have a record player. I'm serious. One of the nice things about the hipster vinyl revival of the late '00s is that it had nothing to do with the *sound* of vinyl. It had to do with saying you *have* something on vinyl. It's a status symbol. Again, I am not joking. I know people who have entire vinyl collections and nothing to play them on. You're basically selling fan tokens.

Cons: It's Heavy...

Good luck on tour. You will need to go on one if you plan on selling the entirety of that short run. Since you only have five fans in Portland, and they already each bought their own copy to make you shut up, you now have to sell the other 95, and your ego can't handle another poorly attended show at No Fun. You gotta hit the road, and take these boxes of heavy vinyl discs with you. As your out-of-shape ass lugs another heavy box in the blistering sun to the back of your van, you reach an epiphany that this was all just a giant, expensive, ego-stroking mistake. A tear rolls down your sunburned cheek as you realize too late you were better off releasing your album digitally, for free, on Bandcamp.

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Junk food. We know it, we love it. In the dead of night or for lunch at work, we all have our favorites. I polled the electorate on various social media sites to ask people what their favorites were. Wild answers unfolded, so I am going to list them; perhaps some are your favorites, too.

Ranked in no particular order, as this is the list of other people's opinions, and not just my own.

Cup Noodles

One of the respondents said, "Ramen, but only if they're in the foam cup." Well, I've been eating that shit since I was a young latchkey kid in the '80s. Can vouch for it. Since I've been going to Asian grocery stores as an adult, I found the best kind. Black pepper crab, in the foam cup. A superb junk food. Fills your belly and takes a piss on your health. I recommend it. Pick it up wherever Asian groceries are found.



Velveeta Shells & Cheese

I have to say, I'm not a big fan, but one of the pollsters said this was the GOAT of junk food. I've had it before, and I will say that I need hot sauce to make it taste like anything. It's like hospital food.



Jack in the Box Tacos

When your writer was but a lad, his mom said that he "had to try them; they are so bad, they're good." "Like an old Godzilla movie?" "Yeah, but you can eat it. It is an edible Godzilla movie." "Sure enough, it was. Many claim this as their favorite junk food.

Costco Hot Dog and Pizza Slice Combo

I can't complain about the Costco hot dog. They said they would never raise the price, and for a big company, they actually did not. When you're going to buy 50 gallons of mayonnaise, for...personal reasons, you are gonna get the dollar-fifty hot dog and add that pizza for a tiny amount more money, and life in junk food land is gorgeous.



McDonald's Fries With the Sweet and Sour Sauce

I cannot hate on this, either. I mean, Mickey D's probably has the best fries of the fast-food chains, and the sweet and sour is the best choice for fries and McNuggets. Their BBQ sauce can suck farts out of my ass.



Totino's Pizza Rolls

Very much a staple of junk food as anyone who grew up in the 1990s knows. First made in 1993, after Pillsbury (yeah, of doughboy fame..."Hoo-Hoo!"—shut up you dough-making motherfucker), acquired Jeni's. Eight years later, General Mills (of Cinnamon Toast Crunch and 16 kinds of Cheerios nobody likes fame) bought Pillsbury. They were originally invented in the 1960s by Beatrice Ojakangas and marketed as Jeni's Pizza Rolls by Jeni Pautucci. Still a staple food for when everyone at the party is too drunk.



Hot Pockets

Oh, lord, here we go. There is nothing wrong

with them, but they are nothing but tiny calzones, are they not? I have not had one in some time, but I did make my own mini calzones once (yeah, your author cooks) with regular pizza dough and deep-fried them. I felt like I should have been sitting next to my brother playing Double Dragon 2 while eating them. Good junk food.



Reser's Microwave Burritos

These dick-sized little fuckers microwave in like a minute and come in packs of twelve!

Who am I to resist? Gimme those bean and cheese bitches. I still eat these to this day, even though I no longer have homework to do. When you crave junk food, you eat junk food. Many said this was their favorite. Hard to hate on them, even though they're essentially crap (and roughly the same size).



SpaghettiOs

One of my pollers said SpaghettiOs was their go-to junk food and would eat it raw out of the can, with a focus on drinking the juice. That weirded me. Another, a professional chef, said SpaghettiOs were "a war crime." To which he was rebutted, "Maybe that's why we like it!"

Fruity Pebbles Breakfast Cereal

This came up a lot when I asked people about their guilty pleasures. I've had Fruity Pebbles before, but it didn't carry a note of craving for me. However, your author *does* have a bottle of the Fruity Pebbles syrup in his kitchen. Yes, this exists. It is disgusting. It's like if your uncle put an icepick through



your tongue. Do not buy it.

Lipton Noodle Soup (specifically, the kind that comes in the box)



I can support this. My parents gave it to me when I was sick as a child. Bland, but comforting. I can see how this would be someone's junk food of choice. Comfort food: I imagine people probably also got it when they were ill as kids and then grew up with it. I personally haven't had it in ages, but that taste sits on the back of my tongue.



Ninja Turtle Vanilla Pudding Pies

The person who said this was wistfully recalling the early '90s. "Do... do they even still make those?" "No, and it's even hard to find vanilla cream pies." But these were a relic. A Hostess hand pie, colored green, because of the Ninja Turtles fame at the time. I vaguely recall having one, but that was 35 years ago. Still thought they were pretty good. Hostess still makes hand pies, of course, but my pro tip to snackers is "nuke for 30 seconds, and spray them fucks with Reddi-wip." Then play video games. Careful, that shit's hot, especially the apple ones. Take care with that one, kids who are reading a strip-club-oriented magazine.

Hamburger Helper

I had a conversation with a friend about the best junk food. I advocate for the Jack tacos. "No," she said. "Hamburger Helper!" Oh shit, I had to agree. She ran out and got it, and I was hit right in the meat sack. "Stroganoff! Yeah!" "Best flavor." Damn right, but I am also about the chili mac as well.



Kraft Macaroni & Cheese



The classic junk food we've been growing up with since forever. Even your grandparents were eating the ol' Mac. Kids coming home from school, adults who had long days? Just boil that water, and add that cheese powder! Stir it and have a whole pile of carbs. If you're daring, cut up some hot dogs and toss them in there, or a can of Nalley's Really Shitty Chili™, if you wanna get down and dirty. Oddly, they just call it "Kraft Dinner" in Canada. Have they no concept of the nature of macaroni? I cannot speak to it.

There is so much junk food out there, and everyone has a favorite. Be it for comfort, depression, feeding the kids, well, carry on. Sometimes junk food is the easy answer to an otherwise complex situation.

Be well, and don't eat too much crap.

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a semi-professional food critic, ape taunter, mustard enthusiast, junk-food enjoyer, writer, and semi-retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on X as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe (yay!) and Facebook (boo!), as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."

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