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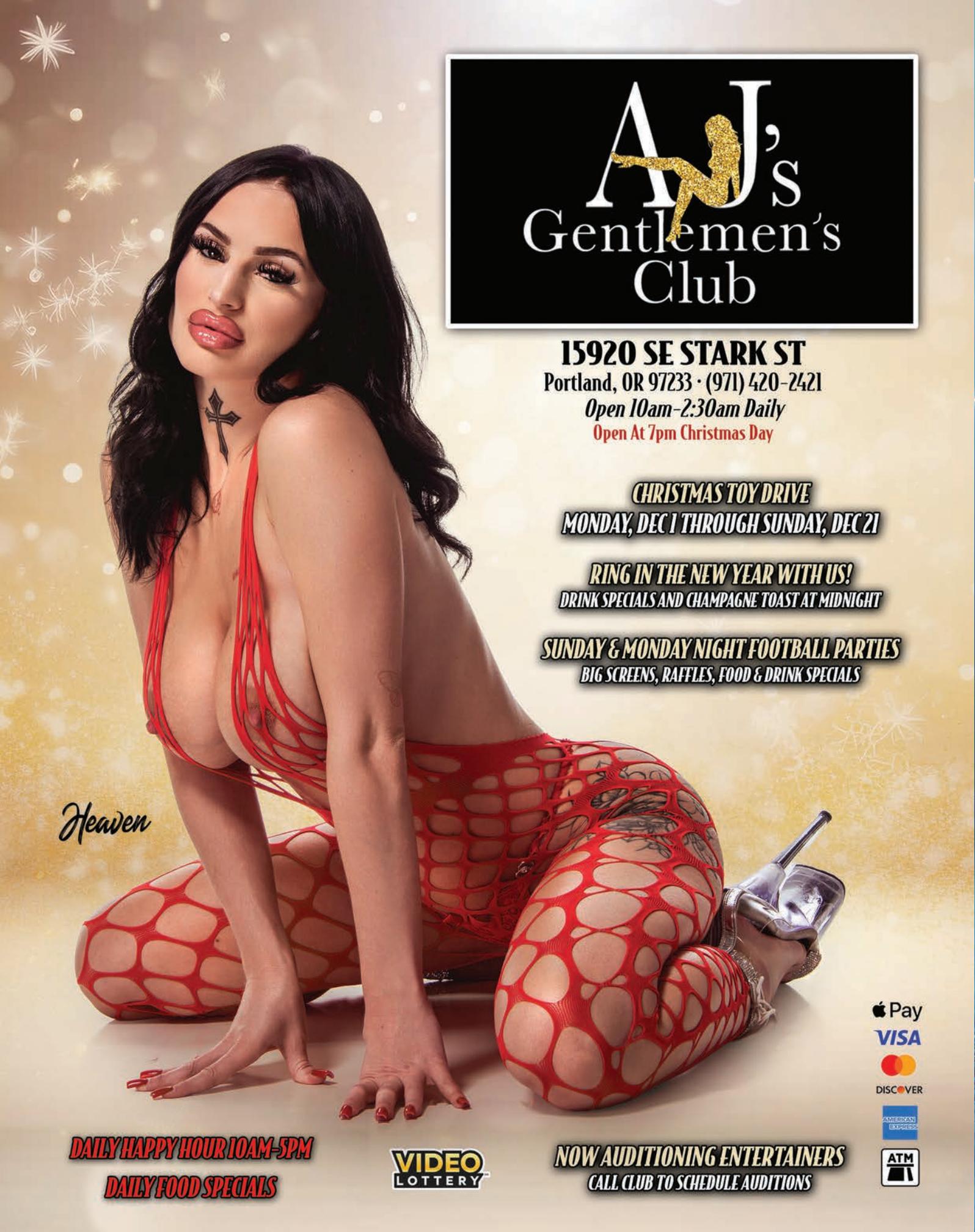
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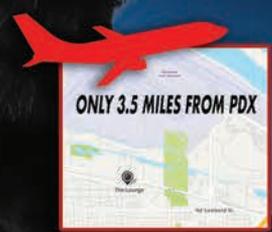


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NEW
YEAR

Hello
2006

Amora
FROM DESIRE

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MAKE PORNHUB SAFE AGAIN

the bipartisan solution to an unjust ban
page 20 | by ray mcmillin



THIS YEAR IN REVIEW

a cellphone camera roll approach to
recounting the year
page 34 | by hannah one cup



OPERATING COSTS

the local music scene at small venues is
slowly eroding
page 38 | by blazer sparrow



GREAT REASONS TO LOATHE XMAS

ensure your hate for christmas is bonafide
page 40 | by wombstretcha the magnificent

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River
THE LOUNGE

MISS EXOTIC OREGON 2026

ROUNDS 4-7 FINALISTS

PHOTOS BY **HYPERION**
PHOTOGRAPHY
& RALPH FOTO

Persia

Sky
THE DOLPHIN

Eric
GUILTY PLEASURES

Energy
THE LOUNGE

Lotus
CABARET

Madeline
DV8

*Brodie
Grody*
DEVILS POINT
& KIT KAT CLUB

Karmen
GUILTY PLEASURES

THE P-TOWN HAPS

Another year's almost down, but let's not overlook this month's industry happenings. There's plenty of bang left in 2025, so let's not sell December short! Without further ado, let's jump right into it...

We've got a few birthdays to close out the year, starting with Annie's Masquerade Ball Birthday Party at Guilty Pleasures on Saturday, December 6. Then, on the following Saturday (December 13), it's the 5th Annual Felix & Margot's Birthday Slumber Party at Lucky Devil Lounge. Happy Birthday, ladies, from all of us at *Exotic!*

Moving on to other industry events...it's Devils Point's 20th Annual Bad Christmas Sweater and Mustache Party on Sunday, December 14. Then, on Friday, December 19, head to Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport) in your yuletide PJs for their Holiday Pajama Party. Keep the holiday spirit alive by heading to Guilty Pleasures' Christmas Party on Saturday, December 20. Next, bust out those pocket protectors and thick glasses for Kit Kat Club's Nerdy Xmas Eve Party on Wednesday, December 24.

Lastly, we have a plethora of New Year's Eve parties for you! Casa Diablo, Cheetahs (in Salem), Devils Point, Guilty Pleasures, and Kit Kat Club all have offerings on Wednesday, December 31. Devils Point will be having a special New Year's Eve edition of Stripparaoke, and it's New Year's Eve Nerd Night at Kit Kat Club.

MISS EXOTIC 2026

By the time you read this, a new goddess will have been crowned *Miss Exotic Oregon 2026*. Sadly, as of this writing, the highly anticipated finale of the industry's largest pageant hadn't occurred yet. Fear not, however! You can check our Instagram (QR code below) for the official announcement and photos of the winners, and we'll have full coverage of The Finals in our January 2026 issue. Until then, let's reflect on some of the action that led us to the final showdown!

But first, let's congratulate all of our qualifying finalists from rounds four through seven:

Round 4: Sky from The Dolphin, River from The Lounge, and Valentine from Club Rouge (downtown)

Round 5: Energy from The Lounge, Summer from Club Rouge (downtown), and Heaven from Dominique Stella

Round 6: Eris from Guilty Pleasures, Persia (independent), and Karmen from Guilty Pleasures

Round 7: Brodie Grody from Devils Point & Kit Kat Club, Lotus from Cabaret, and Madeline from DV8

Check out the left-hand page to see photos of all the abovementioned finalists in action during their qualifying set.

Happy New Year! 🎉

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eroticcity spotlight

SAT 06 – GUILTY PLEASURES
ANNIE'S MASQUERADE BALL BIRTHDAY PARTY

SAT 13 – LUCKY DEVIL – 5TH ANNUAL
FELIX & MARGOT'S BIRTHDAY SLUMBER PARTY!

SUN 14 – DEVILS POINT – 20TH ANNUAL
BAD CHRISTMAS SWEATER & MUSTACHE PARTY!

FRI 19 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
HOLIDAY PAJAMA PARTY

SAT 20 – GUILTY PLEASURES
GUILTY PLEASURES' CHRISTMAS PARTY

WED 24 – KIT KAT CLUB – NERDY XMAS EVE PARTY!

WED 31 – CASA DIABLO – NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

WED 31 – CHEETAHS (SALEM)
NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

WED 31 – DEVILS POINT
STRIPPARAOKE (NYE EDITION)

WED 31 – GUILTY PLEASURES – NYE PARTY

WED 31 – KIT KAT CLUB
NEW YEAR'S EVE NERD NIGHT

HAPPY HOURS

AJ'S – 10AM-5PM

CABARET – 2PM-6PM

CLUB 205 – 10:30AM-6:30PM

DEVILS POINT – 3PM-6PM

DESIRE – 6PM-9PM

DV8 – 12PM-3PM

GUILTY PLEASURES – 12PM-8PM

THE LOUNGE – 11AM-4PM

LUCKY DEVIL – 3PM-6PM

Disappearing for years, then showing up for the holidays, is nothing new for me—just ask my nephews. Thankfully, I come bringing good news and one of those "non-tangible gifts" that doesn't cost me anything besides time, in the form of an article. Although my column(s) disappeared shortly after COVID days, my absence is/was entirely due to getting my shit together and putting out a book. I never fell out with *Exotic*—in fact, I'm still doing the website, and 80% of the current writers are friends (or friends of friends) who I threw into the magazine's lap and said, "You deal with these wackaloons" (and I'm glad I did, they write extra good and stuff). The truth is that Shady Publisher Website Willing to Distribute My Writing is demanding I submit "all original work," so I went ghost to convince them that *Tales From The DJ Booth* was something that never actually existed, like the Taco Bell chilito or *The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. So, yes, I have been writing more than a falsely convicted inmate for nearly five years, and I'm sure I'll spam you all with an ad for the book as it becomes available. That said, here's an article that my publisher didn't want to touch, because apparently, it's okay to write true stories about the time a stripper sold her breast milk to customers at Name Redacted Strip Club, but God forbid a dude bring politics into it (edit: apparently raw milk is now political, so maybe that chapter has to go as well).



MAKE PORNHUB SAFE AGAIN

BY RAY McMILLIN AKA DJ HAZMATT
AKA YOU KNOW THE REST

Now that the Sydney Sweeney blue jean advertisement (which was also my Halloween costume) has faded from the national discourse, it's safe to say that we've healed as a nation. The political divide is no more; the left and the right are dancing with each other in the streets, and everyone is happily sitting around the Thanksgiving dinner table discussing the latest Jimmy Kimmel monologue, and laughing among each other without name-calling or yelling.

However, even as we approach the event horizon of a unified nation, one thing still seems to divide the aisle. I am, of course, talking about Pornhub.

For those on the left, Pornhub exists on every single device within reach. Blue state residents can enjoy watching Pornhub on the boring drive to work, on the sad walk home from their kid's sports game, or on the long, exciting drive home from the bar. But what about those who get up early on Sunday? Unfortunately, some folks are unable to watch Pornhub on the drive to church because, according to *Mashable*, 21 red states have banned the website entirely.

Many would argue that bans on Pornhub exist because of the content, but if the Grindr

maps outside of Republican conventions teach us anything, it's that red hat conservatives love porn as much as their green-haired baristas. Even further, some on the left still see Pornhub as objectifying, sexist, transphobic, racist, misogynist, anti-Palestine, tacky, dudebro-adjacent, and generally "problematic." Pornhub needs to clean up its public image.

Just like a 2 Live Crew cassette tape, the content itself isn't the problem, but the packaging needs some work in order to be sold to the masses. Let us not forget that every grocery store in the country features porn, it just comes in the form of "romance novels." Sitting there above the impulse buys and breath mints, inconspicuous and often dusty, are pages upon pages of housewife smut that would make this publication look like *Highlights*. Porn is out there; it's just disguised as regular media.

So, I suggest a solution to the Pornhub ban that comes directly from the golden days of bipartisan agreement: censorship.

Particularly, Pornhub can clean up in three areas: the splash page of porn categories that hits the viewer in the face like a hot load, the titles of Pornhub videos, and the screen reso-

lution (stick with me on this one).

Not only will this rebranding help Pornhub reboot its red state presence, but the company can also extend a free-range, GMO-free olive branch to those on the left. To show how far up my ass the fence is shoved, I have included suggestions for both sides of the political spectrum, because when it comes to voting, I'm a centrist (felon).

POLITICALLY CORRECT PORN CATEGORIES

Let's start with those offensive categories (of which, according to an old *Maxim* article, "Old/Young" sits atop the most-viewed list, while "Redhead" lurks at the bottom, like a soulless goblin who will die alone with her pet rats).

...presented in the following format:

Current Offensive Category = "Politically Correct Category"



Republican-Friendly Revised Porn Categories

- Creampie** = "Starting a Family"
- Incest** = "Southern Pride"
- Gay** = "Republican Convention"
- Gay & Retarded** = "Democrat Convention"
- Poly** = "Mormon"
- Anal** = "Mormon"
- Edging** = "Mormon"
- Femme Lesbian** = "LGBTQ+"
- Latina** = "Brunette"
- Asian** = "Chinese"
- Teen** = "MILF"
- Interracial** = "Babysitter"
- Domination** = "Uniform"
- Uniform** = "Cosplay"
- Amateur** = "Contractor"
- (can also go under "Interracial")
- Babysitter** = "Uniform Cosplay MILF Contractor Starting a Family"
- Solo Male** = "Idaho Redditor"



Democrat-Friendly Revised Porn Categories

- MILF** = "Stunning"
- BBW** = "Brave"
- Blonde** = "Fascist"
- Old/Young B/G** = "What Do You Two Even Have in Common?"
- Old/Young G/B** = "Get It, Girl"
- Furries** = "Business Casual"
- Trans** = "Anime Girl"
- Anime Girl** = "Right-Wing Dog Whistle"
- Femme Lesbian** = "Right-Wing Dog Whistle"
- Butch Lesbian** = "404 Error"
- Group Sex** = "Local Bar Staff"

Group Sex = "Local Art Co-Op"
Group Sex = "Local Music Scene"
B/B/G Threesome = "Progressive Couple"
B/G/G Threesome = "Domination"
Amateur Solo = "Female-Owned Small Business"
Bondage = "Employee"

POLITICALLY CORRECT PORN TITLES

In addition to the categories on Pornhub, some of these titles need to be brushed up, as to avoid offending their respective audiences. The original titles are 100% real (check for yourself) and were taken directly from the Pornhub home screen located in my city's library, using a private browser window to avoid skewing heavily in favor of Lesbian Teen Blonde Threesome videos.



Republican-Friendly Revised Porn Titles

Offensive Title: "18-Year-Old Colombian Girl Needs Money & Gives Us Her Ass For a DP"
Non-Offensive Title: "Immigrant Adult Caught on Tape Stealing Benefits From American Citizens"

Offensive Title: "Busty Blonde Sky Bri Gets Wrecked by Monster Dick"
Non-Offensive Title: "Never Let Your Daughter Listen to Rap Music"

Offensive Title: "Amazon Worker Snuck Out to Give Me Some Pussy in Parking Lot! I Came in Her Pussy Ooops"
Non-Offensive Title: "Millennials Refuse to Work"

Offensive Title: "Veronica Leal Takes Massive Cock in Her Tight Ass & Squirts Like a Fountain"
Non-Offensive Title: "Exploring Salt Lake City"

Offensive Title: "Asian Step Mom Wants to Fuck"
Non-Offensive Title: "Biden's America Destroyed Families"



Democrat-Friendly Revised Porn Titles

Offensive Title: "Lesbian Babes Enjoy Weekend by Licking & Fingering Each Other Full Scene"
Non-Offensive Title: "LGBTQ+IAA Individuals Demonstrate the Need for Living Wage & Time Off"

Offensive Title: "Cumshot/Creampie Compilation #2 - GimGyrl, Blowjob, Doggy"

Non-Offensive Title: "Check Out This Sick Mixtape"

Offensive Title: "I Don't Know Who She Is, but I'll Cum on Her Face"

Non-Offensive Title: "Lead Singer of Local Indie Band Describes Audience"

Offensive Title: "Perfect French Goth Girl Wants Anal"

Non-Offensive Title: "The Coffin Club"

Offensive Title: "My Girlfriend With a Perfect Ass Loves to Fuck on Camera"

Non-Offensive Title: "Beauty Standards Are Socially Constructed and Often Eurocentric, but in My Personal Opinion, My Partner Has a Perfect Ass and Loves to Fuck on Camera"

POLITICALLY CORRECT SCREEN RESOLUTION

Even on network television, it's technically legal to show porn...but it has to be censored, so they do this by reducing the pixel count. A single pixel of underage cartel ransomware revenge porn is indistinguishable from a single pixel of SpongeBob SquarePants. By "censored," most stations will just "pixelate" video, which turns a nice 720 pixels-per-inch nipple into a 12 pixels-per-inch checkerboard. Even on a current screen, supposedly "high resolution" internet porn from dial-up days is too pixelated to enjoy. It's also extremely frugal for internet service providers to dish out low-resolution video, and it can save local governments a ton of money on data costs.

Here's how pixelation throttles would work to make Pornhub video resolution appropriate for their respective audiences.



Republican-Friendly Pixelation

For the right-wing viewer, Pornhub would pixelate upon detecting the closest member of law enforcement, extended family, immediate family (in most states), clergy, other drivers on the road, drive-through employees, pets, neighbors, and politicians (this would cost extra). If a person in one of these



categories is detected nearby, Pornhub can throttle all videos down to 72 dpi resolution and remove video interlacing and audio, effectively turning a pornographic video into something resembling those pop-up ads old people get on Facebook, after trying to play one of those virus-laden mobile games where half-naked barbarian women swing swords at crystals.



Democrat-Friendly Pixelation

For the lefties, a spreadsheet containing oppressive hierarchies would be fed to the Pornhub algorithm, allowing videos to reduce pixel count the closer they get to the bottom of the progressive stack. For example, any video containing three or more gender-nonconforming Indian individuals engaged in anal or oral sex would be in crisp HD, but amateur porn featuring a white virgin couple engaging in missionary creampie activities would be nearly impossible to view on a screen larger than a few inches. However, viewers could opt to diversify their videos for a clearer viewing experience, with options to add body hair, a "BIPOC 'best' friend," or audio of Bernie Sanders, once again, asking for financial support. Liberal men could add a filter to pixelate any actors more conventionally attractive than their current polycule, as not to upset their liberal girlfriends, whose filters would immediately reset to full resolution once they closed the restroom door.

In the end, we're not so different. Everyone loves watching people engaging in sex for clicks, but the government wants us divided. Whether you want to Make Pornhub Great Again or Build Pornhub Back Better, we can all benefit by learning from our elders, by simply changing the packaging of things and pretending they're good for us. Under every MAGA hat is a person who loves watching young, degenerate college sluts do things for money that would make most Home Depot Mexicans blush. Behind every "In This House Blah Blah Blah" sign is a male-identifying cis-male male man person who fantasizes about being one-on-one with a naked woman at some point in his life. Pornhub is here to heal us all. That's why we need to censor it in really weird ways, and then pretend we still have our freedoms. It's the American way.

*TalesFromTheDJBooth.com
 @RainmanMcMillin on IG
 I don't check Facebook.*

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A woman with long blonde hair and bangs is sitting on a vintage, ornate leather sofa. She is wearing a dark bikini top and high-heeled sandals. She is looking down and to the right. The background is a dimly lit club with a sign that says "NEW YEAR".

Amora
FROM DESIRE

EXOTIC
PINUP DECEMBER
2025



Amora
FROM DESIRE



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8325 SE McLoughlin Blvd | (503) 231-9611
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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
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CASA DIABLO 7 **FOOD LOTTERY**
2839 NW St Helens Rd | (503) 222-6600
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CLUB 205 7 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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Daily 10:30am-2:30am

CLUB DETOUR 8 **FOOD**
215 W Burnside St | (971) 385-1896
Wed-Sun 9pm-2:30am

CLUB ROUGE 9 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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Beaverton: 8687 SW Hall Blvd | (971) 266-8340
Daily 11am-2am

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605 N Columbia Blvd | (503) 289-1351
Sun-Thu 12pm-1:30am, Fri-Sat 12pm-2:30am

DESIRE 11 **FOOD LOTTERY**
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DEVILS POINT 12 **FOOD LOTTERY**
5305 SE Foster Rd | (503) 774-4513
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1735 SE Tualatin Valley Hwy | (971) 990-4015
Daily 4pm-2:30am

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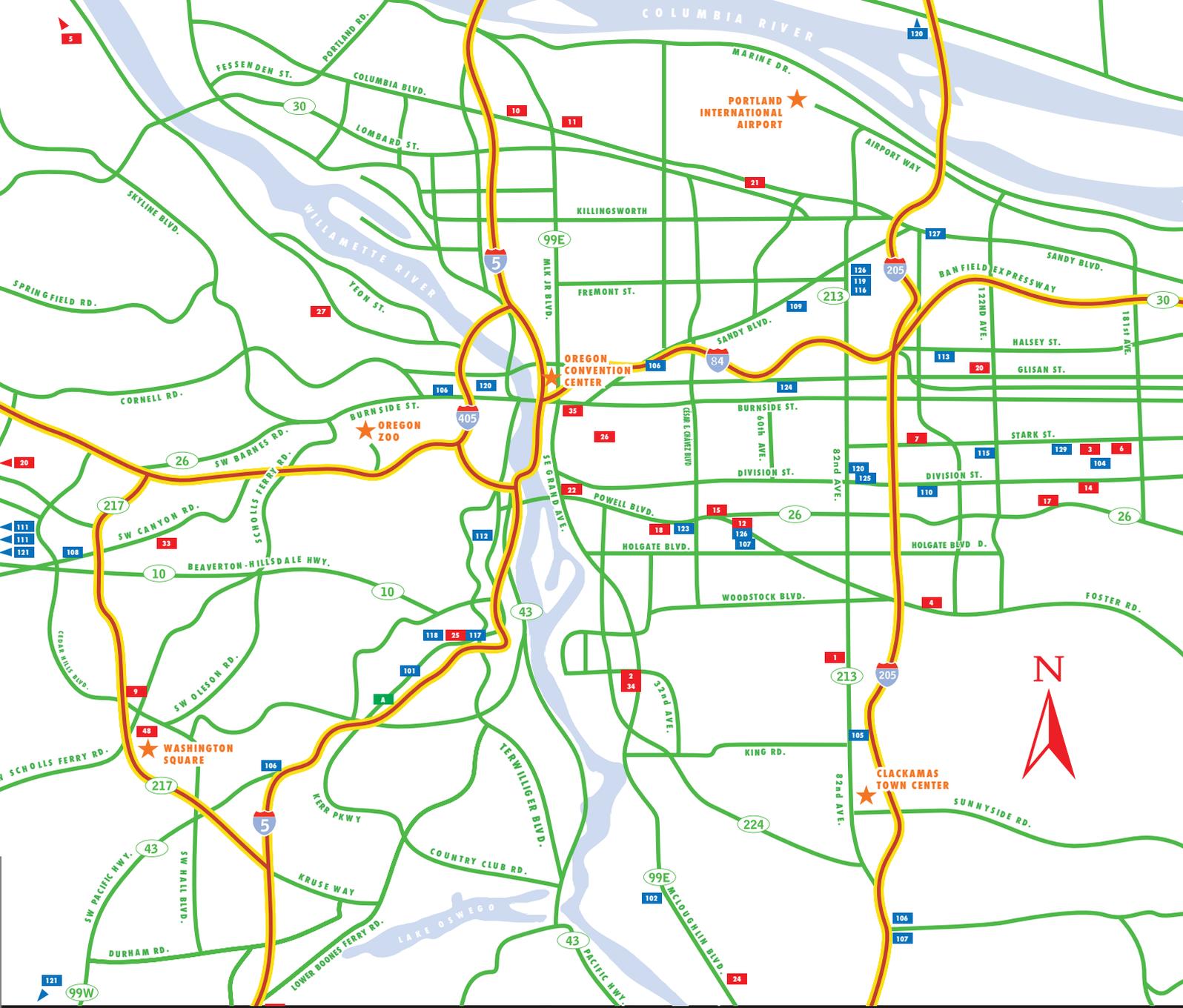
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By Ian Sellwood

BUGONIA



I don't give a shit about music. The only music I listen to is the soundtracks to my favorite video games and anime. When I'm scrolling through /pol/ or Mr. Skin or pretending to do stuff at my cushy work-from-home job, I don't listen to music. I listen to Joe Rogan or Theo Von if I'm feeling saucy.

What I especially don't understand is people who get like...into artists, and follow them. Like, people will hear a song on the radio or see it in a movie, and then they...like, find out who made that song and follow them? Like some TikTok influencer? They listen to whole albums with that one song and a bunch of others, and then they anticipate the next batch of songs from that artist. It all just seems like a huge waste of time for...for background noise?

One thing I notice in the comments section from these weird music fans is when they complain about how a newer batch of songs from one of their favorite artists is worse than an older batch of songs. There's a common complaint about how certain artists "sold out," "went commercial," or "went soft," and other such grievances. It's one of the most frequent gripes I have observed from these weird music fans.

And although I still don't give a shit about music, I finally...*finally* understand this sentiment. I get it now, but with filmmakers.

Yorgos Lanthimos is...well *was* one of my favorite modern filmmakers in terms of true and unfettered wankability. I am so bummed I didn't get this *Exotic* job until after *Poor Things* was released. If *ever* there was a five-eggplant movie, it was that one. I nutted three times during that film. A masterpiece.

Now, to be fair, Yorgos has been hit or miss. *The Lobster* had some fuckscenes but were pretty tame. *The Killing Of A Sacred Deer* didn't have a lot of nudity but *tons* of horny scenes, plus the situations were top-notch—anaesthetized play, teenage bedroom play, etc. *Dogtooth* has actual penetration shots. *Kinds of Kindness* has a brief but very graphic

orgy scene, plus you get to finally see Hunter Schafer's titties! God, you can't beat nubile natural titties! *The Favourite* also had a bunch of tits and fuckscenes.

Like these weird music fans, I was indeed a fan of Yorgos's earlier work. And, like weird music fans, I was very excited for his next movie. His *third* with Emma Stone, knowing she got properly nude in the previous two movies of his she was in. Plus, the marketing was all too promising. She's chained up in a basement and covered in cream? Plus, a lot of honey imagery? Was this movie going to outdo *Poor Things*, where you got to see *inside* Emma Stone?

SPILERS AHEAD

It didn't. You don't get to see *any* of Emma Stone. You don't get to see any nudity whatsoever. There's *one* scene near the end where two dead teenagers are on top of each other, implying they died during sex, but the tits are covered. You can only see dude ass.

Again, Yorgos is great at horny situations. The scene wasn't long enough, but I appreciate he once again mined teenage bedroom boning with this bit. I did get a little hard.



Poor Things ranked most wankable movie of 2023

And the setup is horny. Not gonna lie, Emma's creamed-up, shaved look is...hot. As is her apparent nudity under the big coat, especially the fact that she's chained up. She also does a lot of crawling around, which was definitely tapping into that classic Yorgos pervy aesthetic.

But alas. Not one tit. Not one bare ass. Not one bush. Not one (alive) fuck scene.

I get it now. I get what these weird music fans go on and on about when they complain about the new albums not being as good as the old ones.

What happened, Yorgos? Why?

It seemed like these flesh-filled films were *critically* acclaimed! And did well at the box office. There was no need to prude it up to sell more tickets and get more awards. He's been at the Oscars for years now. Emma Stone *won* for the role where she was basically naked the whole time.

I don't get it. I don't see the point in covering up now, after you've kicked open the doors and allowed movies to show some skin again.

Apparently, this movie was a remake of some weird, low-budget Korean movie. Maybe since the original didn't have any nudity or fuck scenes in it, Yorgos wanted to make some kind of faithful adaptation? But this is no excuse. This would be an opportunity. Take a movie where you like things like... story or theme or those other non-wankable parts of a movie, and then load it up with boobs and boning! That seems like something Yorgos I know would do. "Huh, I like this old Korean movie. What a concept. You know what it could use? Emma Stone's tits, ass, and bush. Plus a bunch of scenes of her fucking."

What happened to you, Yorgos? You used to be cool.

I prefer your earlier work.



1/5 eggplants

Ian Sellwood is a voice actor, comedian, and certified Sigma Male from Lake Oswego. He frequently contributes content to Mr. Skin and is highly active on 4chan. He can be reached at iancel@xmag.com

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This Year in Review

(WHAT I CAN RECALL BASED ON MY PHONE'S MEMORY)

BY HANNAH ONE CUP

How does someone sell a year to another person? How can we explain the events that occurred for roughly the last 330 days and still make it sellable? Was your previous year of life worth rehashing and remembering? Do you enjoy going through the photos you took or the saved events in your calendar? Do you remember the majority of them? Even after this, do you think you could sell your year to someone, and make them want to do a Freaky Friday with you, swapping bodies for that year? Have them saying, "Man, I wish I had been you this year!"

If your answer is yes, congrats. I'm happy that at least one of my readers out there did something fulfilling with their time. You deserve the champagne and kiss at midnight on New Year's. If your answer is "No...WTF?" then welcome, fam. May my year in review be something you can either live vicariously through or be happy you weren't there to be a part of. Do make note that these memories should absolutely feel slapped together like Elmer's Glue on a kindergartener's piece of "art," because they are all coming from my phone's photos, screenshots, and calendar events. I've also provided one highlight of that month, so we can compare to see whose month's highlight may have gone better. I'll let you decide.

January

World: Trump was inaugurated (again), and the Tesla guy did "the Hitler" on stage.

Me: Started dance class at Arthur Murray (say it with a pinky out and a "faaunncy" accent). My partner bought me lessons because he figured I needed to get out and learn how to talk to people outside of work and my small group of friends. I'm still dancing and pretty fine at tango, but I don't go out of my way to talk to people or be friendly, so I'm not sure if it did what he thought it would or not.

February & March

These are, traditionally, pretty boring for me. But not for the...

World: United Airlines had to turn a flight from San Francisco to Chicago around because a passenger demanded to know "Where are

the Mormons?!" and started a physical altercation. Snakes on a plane? No...just zealots.

Me: Created a foot site which I'm not really active on (yet). I'm afraid I might break the internet with my gorgeous feet and what they can do...I also ended up moving a friend and her 30-foot-long U-Haul into one person's garage and a small shed...so many couches and oak furniture. I didn't know anyone who wasn't at least 70 could own so many pieces of furniture and real wood. But in the end, it's another friend who meandered down from Seattle to live closer to me...so I feel like I'm on some sort of winning streak here against the North. Seattle friends, I love you...come live by me. You're all welcome in my home.

April

World: Pope Francis died, and we got another pope who's the same as all the others.

Me: I went to Emo Night and felt like a weird, misplaced parent who was making sure that she and her children (friends) didn't lose each other in the mosh pit when Hawthorne Heights started playing. Friends called me the next morning, telling me of the pain their back and neck were in, after giving themselves whiplash the night prior.

May

World: A robot marathon happened in Beijing, where humanoid robots ran alongside humans. Some humorous events ensued with this.

Me: Went far away and camped in a cabin in the woods with friends. We all enjoyed burgers, dogs being stupid, and putting bananas where they don't belong when friends are sleeping. That sounds dirtier than it was. But they really hate bananas. Taught one of the dogs how to play poker. No demons or evil books were involved, unfortunately.

June

World: A mailman was stalked and accosted by three wild turkeys on his route. As was the reporter who came after him.

Me: Went to the beach with dogs and have had a car full of sand ever since. I was also



dragged to a Styx concert by my friend, who acts like they're 21 and a 55-year-old dad at the same time. This concert was on Father's Day, so it was filled with dads all over the place at this stupid venue in Ridgefield, Washington, where alcohol costs more than the ticket. I spent 63 dollars on two "mixed" drinks for my friend and me, as my mouth went agape, almost ready for a surprise gold bar to be shoved in by the dude handing me the drinks. No gold bar happened. Since prices weren't listed, it's my fault for forgetting how overpriced alcohol is at music venues and some states' insane alcohol taxes. But I pretty much paid 63 dollars for MD 20/20 in a reusable cup.



July

World: A bee tornado happened in Manhattan, and scientists recorded one of the shortest days in Earth's history due to the planet

spinning slightly faster than usual. Time flies, just like bees.

Me: Did the “Haunted Shanghai Tunnel” tour, which is fun. I’d lived here my whole life and never done it...because I grew up just going in the tunnels for free, if a particular bartender wanted to scare you as a child. Also had great, interactive fun at this art immersion experience called Hopscotch.



August & September

World: The first of (I’m sure) many future crashes occurred between two flying cars on their way to an air show in China. I’m sure that’s gonna set us back several more *decades* before we get to see our own flying cars, and have our own accidents (sigh).

Me: Went to a good friend’s wedding in Seattle and loaded them with some really decent fungi, which I’m sure will be enjoyed. Probably not the most romantic or practical of gifts, but I know it’s gonna be the most fun. Also, went to a Labubu “event” in a back alley I didn’t know existed on Hawthorne.

October & November

World: There was a global shortage of pumpkins, causing house parties to start busting out melons to carve. Finally, a use for cantaloupe. The worst of the melons.

Me: Bought a house and started living in it. It’s pretty great. I can yell at the computer as loud as I want without my bitch of a downstairs neighbor shoving a broomstick at her ceiling. Also entered a couple of costume contests, where no one knew who we were, except for a dear friend... whose Oogie Boogie was known, because she announced who she was every few minutes.

And that’s that, folks. So far, anyway. I’d say my year was decent and full of things I’ll remember, which is a definite improvement from the year previous. However, globally speaking, I feel that each year that passes provides me with a very visceral fear and some light curiosity about how much more like Idiocracy we will get. They didn’t have flying cars in that movie, either, if you’ll recall. Anyways, Happy New Year, and let’s continue hoping for alien intelligence to intervene in some way!

Hannah One Cup can be found feeding the crows in her new backyard in hopes of convincing them to take her by the arms and fly her far, far away, and without crashing. She’s also on Facebook (barely), Instagram, and TikTok: @thursdaynight_depression.



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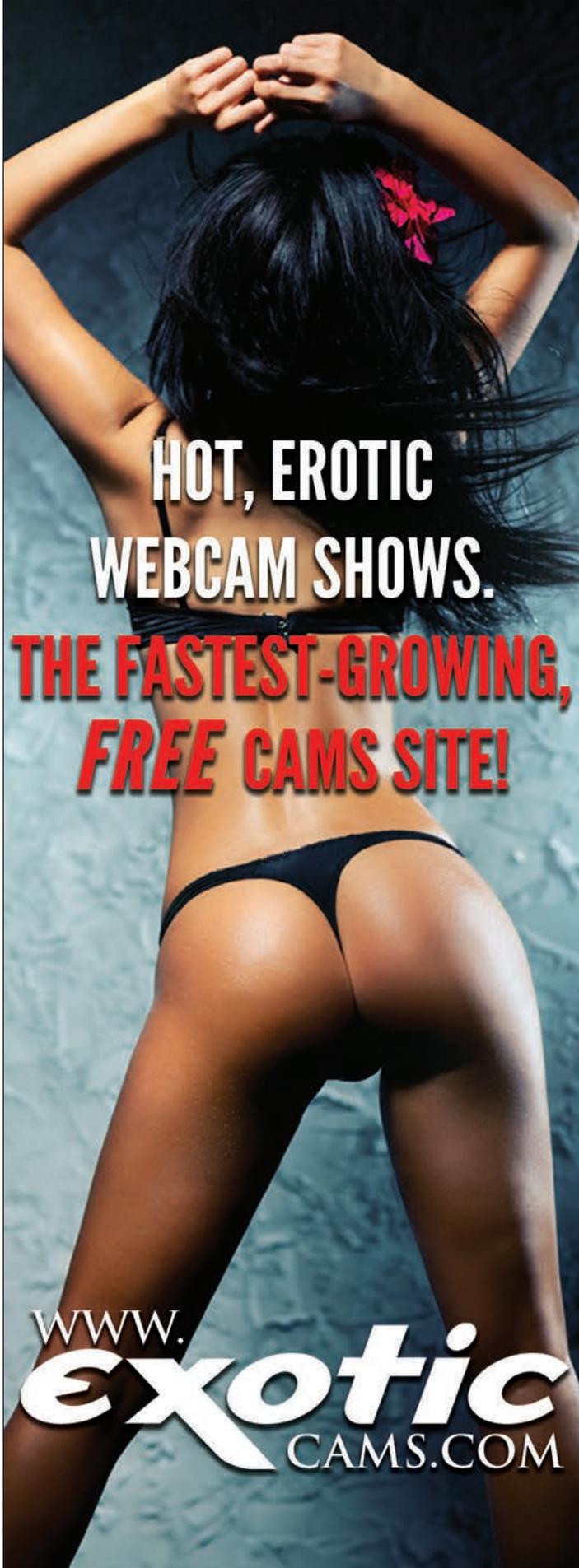
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OPERATING COSTS

By Blazer Sparrow

Sorry folks, no comedy this month. No listicle. More of an obituary, really. While Monqui and AEG break ground on this “mid-sized” venue in Lloyd Center, smaller...I guess “micro-sized” venues? How ‘bout “nano” venues are shuttering left and right. Apparently, Crystal Ballroom and Revolution Hall are “small-sized” venues, so what I’m referring to are essentially bars with stages. However, these...“mini” venues are the entry points for basically anyone trying to begin their live music career. To say they’re essential is an understatement—and they can’t seem to hack it.



Earlier this year, St. John’s premier local live music spot—The Fixin’ To—didn’t close, but it did shut down its stage and replaced it with an arcade. The official reason was operating costs. I attended one of the final performances with Rayon and The Fur Coats. Fantastic show, but obviously the mood was somber. I could never get the straight story, since I’m not in the inner circle, but like always, the culprit was money—not enough of it. Betty kept hammering the point home that you gotta go to the venues if you want them to survive. Don’t eat before the show; venues have food in Oregon. Eat there. Get more drinks, damnit. Pay the cover. Etc.

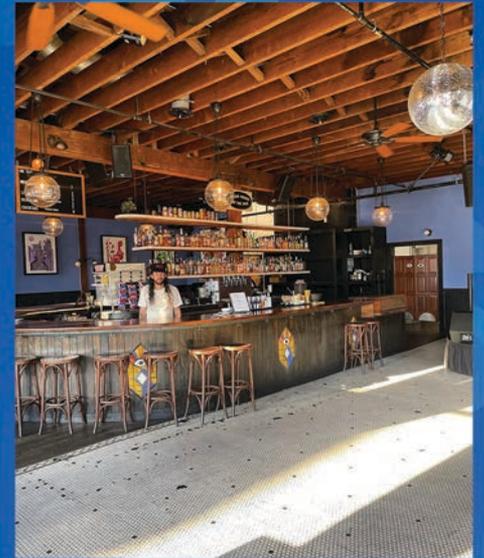
Sounds like greedy capitalists begging for your hard-earned income, but sadly, it’s true. Go to any of these “nano” venues in Portland, and I guarantee you’ll never feel too crowded...unless the band has a TikTok hit or it’s a larger, signed band that one of these venues snagged with a good advance. I promise I’m not some boomer parent telling you it’s your fault and that’s how the free market works, but it’s hard not to see the trend. A scene is made of people, and if there are no people, there’s no scene.

Often, when I get really grumpy about money, I do some inflation calculation to see if our numbers are off. Apparently, the average show at CBGB in the mid-’70s was five bucks, according to Debbie Harry and Lou Reed in interviews. They are notorious liars and all, but let’s say that’s accurate. Adjusted for inflation, that’s about \$30 in today’s dollars. Seems high, right? But I looked up public records, and New York’s minimum wage in the mid-’70s was indeed \$2.10. Probably less in some places, with unethical employers. So, that kinda tracks. Portland’s minimum wage is \$16.30. I guess if we want to create a CBGB in Portland, we’ll need to start charging 30 dollars at the door.



Seems ridiculous, right? But no matter how many ways I math it (average rent in the city, average wage, etc.), that’s

what the poor bastards in New York were paying at the door, seeing history be made, adjusted for inflation.



Lollipop Shoppe, one of the *premier* “nano” venues in the new downtown of Inner Southeast, will be closed by the time this comes out. If I have any readers in Eugene, they’ll notice that the Jewel of the Whitaker, Sam Bond’s Garage, is also no more.

One of my favorite venues I’ve ever played out of town (Art Boutiki in San Jose) is also apparently dunzo by the end of this month. I spoke to one of the bookers, and it sounds like the team that puts on shows there is looking to do “pop-ups” in other smaller venues, whatever that means. But the dark, sad revelation of that talk was that the owner apparently hasn’t been paid in five years. Once again, the issue is money. Not enough of it.

Kelly’s Olympian isn’t closed, but they lost their live band booker and are apparently focusing on karaoke and DJ nights, so they’re effectively closed.

Can nothing be done? Don't ask me. The musicians can't exactly take a pay cut; we're already playing for free. I guess you can ask the show staff to do the same, but that probably won't go over well.

I seriously doubt that anyone in this city is going to pay \$30 to see three shitty local bands. I have "friends" who complain about paying \$15 to see their friends' band at Dante's (is that a mini-venue? Small? Where's the size chart?).

All five venues I've mentioned here cite "operating costs" as the reason they can't do live music anymore, and I get that there's just not that much money coming in the door for the bands, but how much is it costing? Do they have to put another bartender on shift? The sound guy and door guy get hourly pay, sure, but setup-to-teardown can only be a few hours max. Is that really breaking the bank?

I've never operated a venue, so I don't know. Write in and tell me if you do.

If you were expecting some jokes or snarks, or even sincere solutions, sorry to disappoint you. I'm just here to drag you down with me, in my depression of losing these rad venues with no one to blame and throw batteries at. Ultimately, it seems to be a case of there not being enough to go around. Not enough money, not enough people...maybe there are too many venues. There are *definitely* too many bands, so perhaps the herd needs to be thinned a bit for some sort of scene to flourish. I also just saw *Bugonia*, so that bleak-but-convincing argument to burn, destroy, and rebuild is ringing somewhat true for me.

Furthermore, I'm sick of artists moving to Nashville or Lost Angeles as soon as they get a modicum of success here. Like, great, on top of venues closing, we also have brain drain. That'll definitely help cultivate a scene.

Some people like to say house shows are the way to go, and that's fine and dandy for the kids, but ultimately, that leads to insular scenes. What I like about pubs is that they're public—everyone's invited. A scene made up of pretentious hipsters who you have to text for an address doesn't sound very inclusive.

Maybe the answer is places like our beloved Firkin Tavern. Every show is free, and they do a bar cut. It is a janky setup. There's no sound guy, and you're shown the PA to figure out on your own, so basically, it's a house show in a bar. But I've never seen an ill-attended show there. It's a nice location and the staff is awesome. Maybe that's the way to jumpstart and maintain the Portland scene.

Or we just start charging \$30 at the door.

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BY WOMBSTRETCHA THE MAGNIFICENT

GREAT REASONS TO LOATHE XMAS

Bah. Humbug. I know it's popular to hate Christmas, but for most, it's not hated for the right reasons. Formerly a celebration of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, ya know, that guy who got nailed to a big "t" and became a symbol of divinity, as a result of Roman carpentry mishaps. However, it has turned into an absolute steam engine of crass consumption. I can get behind hating it for that, but we're going to explore exactly why it should be disliked in greater depth than obligatory gifts and greeting cards. There's a lot of history here, and no matter your religion, let's unpack it. If you love Christmas, that is fine. I'm not taking a steamy dump on the premise of the holiday; it's just the equivalent of that guy at work who rubs you the wrong way, despite never personally doing anything to deliberately mess with you.



Death

No, Xmas will not literally kill you, depending on which aunt made the ham.

However, there is a sharp increase in suicide rates following the holiday. Xmas Day is shockingly low for self-termination, but just after, people off themselves in droves. The stress of it all is a mitigating factor, be it financial, emotional depletion after a "holiday" with no breaks, or just having to listen to your uncle tell the same story over and over again; it takes its toll, and sometimes that toll is quite severe. Don't be a sucker and do anything drastic. The world needs you. Who knows? You might develop a revolutionary urinal cake that smells like cinnamon, and then you become the "piss millionaire."



Xmas Music

Dear fuck, we have the same 10 songs played over and over again, in every single way one can hear things, from elevators to shopping center PA systems, until you become so fed up that you want to jump in front of a train. Most Xmas songs are over 60 years old, meaning that we are destined to a lifetime of living out boomers' childhoods. The weird thing is that it's become such a fundamental part of the so-called "holiday season" that younger generations born

in the last few decades just assign it to "Oh, this is Christmas," which means that they might be forging memories over the whole thing, and these songs are cemented as part of it. If we were hoping to be spared hearing "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," once the boomers all shuffle off, we just might be out of luck.



Timetable Creep

Your favorite author personally witnessed, on Halloween Day, the local grocery store being completely decked out with fake trees, inflatable snowmen in red hats, and Xmas displays. Halloween-fucking-DAY! Halloween used to be our last line of defense against it, but it seems like it has lost the war. Pumpkin-headed defense force consumed by Santa Claus' army of sinister elves. Shall we expect Xmas to start after Independence Day now? The song is "The Twelve Days of Christmas," not the "Quarter of a Year of Christmas," yet we quite actually spend a fourth of our lives in the trappings of the holiday; can a brother get a break?



Santa Claus

Santa is the iconic representative of the entire season. His image is splashed on everything possible, as he is not a copyrighted character, so that anyone can use his likeness. I am sure Coca-Cola is fuming over that to this day, as they were the first to depict him in a fur-trimmed red suit. Jolly Old Saint Nicholas. How jolly was he, though, and how did Nick get his moniker of Santa Claus? Well, for his name, we have the Dutch to blame for this one. In Holland, he is called "Sinterklaas." Easy to see how that can translate into "Santa Claus" when Dutch immigrants moved to the USA. However, old Saint Nick was not even from Holland; that's merely their name for him. As for the whole "Kris Kringle" thing, we can blame the Germans for that, as when they showed up in the USA, they used the term "Christkindlein," which they used to refer to the oil baby-in-the-manger thing. Much like Santa Claus, it's easy to see how English speakers bungled that into Kris Kringle. As for his history, he was a Greek bishop from the 4th century, preaching in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey), and he was tossed into prison during the reign of Diocletian (of ancient Roman fame), who persecuted Christians. When Constantine took over, he legalized being a Christian, and so Nicholas was set loose. His feats as a saint are allegedly resurrecting three children who were pickled in brine by a wicked butcher, who killed them and was going to pass them off as pork to unwitting customers. He is also said to have chopped down a tree, which was possessed by a demon, and smacked a heretic in the face for preaching in his church about the old gods, and generally being an asshole.

That doesn't sound too jolly to me. He is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, toymakers, unmarried people, and students. So yeah, Saint Nick would totally take your TV and give you five bucks, some Go-Bots, and a beer for it.



The Pagan Connection

Not a crime thriller; Christmas has a significant overlap with the Roman holiday of Saturnalia. What is Saturnalia? It was a time when they celebrated the god of agriculture, being Saturn, of course, and basically got drunk and partied for a month after the winter solstice. Even slaves were temporarily freed and treated as equals, because the Romans decided "we gotta get everyone in on this shit," and so they got to mingle with everyone of any social strata in Rome. Businesses and schools were closed because everyone needed to get down and get funky during the season. Richer Romans also celebrated the birth of Mithra, who was the god of the unconquerable sun and patron of soldiers, whom they worshipped as well. Not sure why only the upper class did this, and legionnaires, but that's what research says. Poor people either didn't know or weren't allowed. His birthday? December 25th. Hmm, makes you think. Jesus' actual birthday is hidden to history, but the Catholic Church said "Fuck it, it's December 25th," at some time in the 5th century. He is noted as having been born in the spring in some references, but hell, middle of winter it is. Not really a reason to hate Xmas, but the curious overlap does raise an eyebrow.

Family Gatherings

Whether you like them or not, your family is yours; you have to deal with Aunt



Gladys going off about the myriad problems in her life, and you try to be civil, but someone always brings up politics, and you get into a knife fight with your cousin. That cannot just be me, can it? I think awkward family gatherings are the norm, but we stick around for the food, which is usually good, or if not, at least filling. I've backed up the toilet with my uncle's potatoes a dozen times at the very least. Some people cite this as the most miserable part of the season, and there are hundreds of whole articles out there with titles like, "How to Deal With Your Family on Christmas." This is not one of those.



I might hate Xmas, but I enjoy life. I hope you enjoy life as well.

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a Santa Claus denier, Miracle on 34th Street disbeliever, maker of fine scalloped potatoes, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, OR. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter/X/whatever as @wombstretcha503, and on MeWe and (begrudgingly) Facebook, as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."

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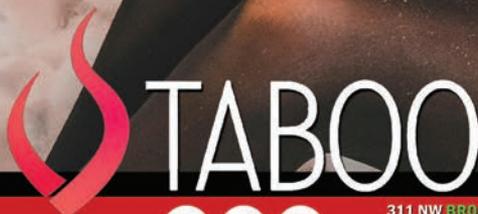


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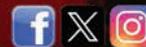
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