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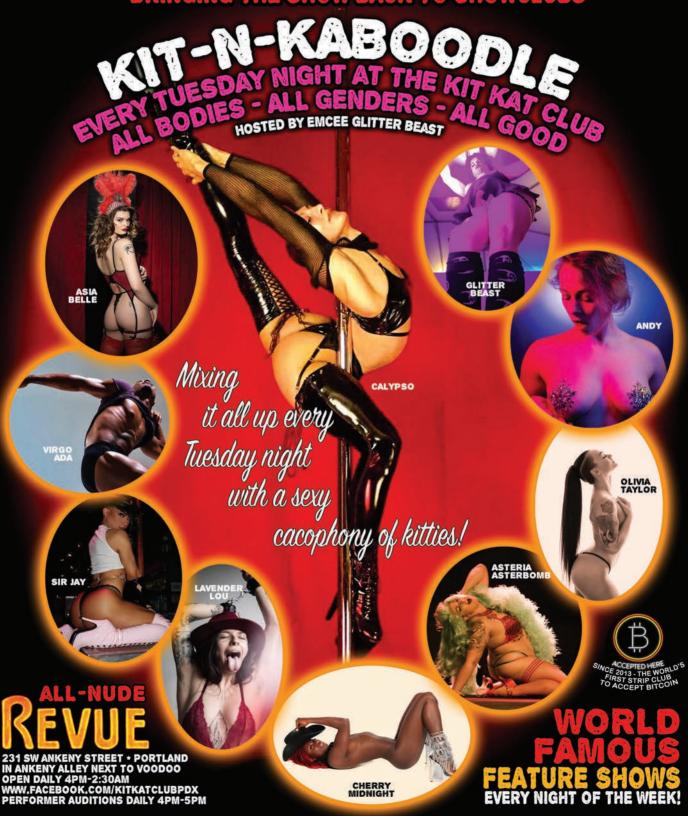






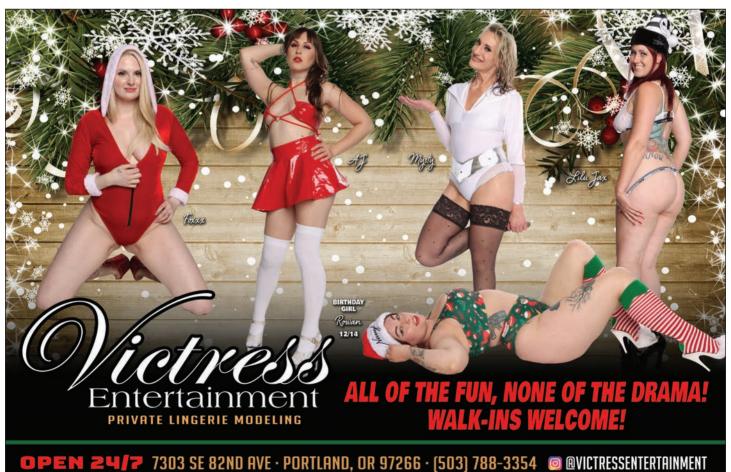
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Issue #346 • Volume 30 • Number 06 December 2022

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818 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 1324 Portland, Oregon 97204 Telephone: 503.241.4317 Fax: 503.914.0439 Email: info@xmag.com Exotic Online: www.xmaq.com

> Publisher XMAG LLC.

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STRIP CLUB ETIQUETTE 2023

Since the new year is on the horizon, I didn't want 2022 to end without doing some *real* investigative journalism and offering up some *actually* useful information for a change. So listen up, all you wannabe strip club aficionados—class is in session!

If you've ever wondered what strippers hate the most but may not tell you in fear of lost tips, I've got you covered. Even if you haven't pondered it, I've still got you covered. It might just save you from looking like a d-bag (I mean... probably not, but it certainly won't hurt)!

Without further ado, I bestow upon you... *Top 10 Things Strippers Loathe:*

- **1. A Cheap Charlie** You had to know this was at the top of the list. Don't come to the club with \$7 in singles and stay all night—or worse yet, sit at the rack without tipping! Instant d-bag status!
- **2. An Uncle Touchy** No one likes Uncle Touchy. Especially strippers who aren't even related to you. Hands off the asses, bruh...
- **3. A Richie Rich** So you say you have a lot of money? Cool story, bro! *Protip*: tip like you're rich versus the verbal boast. It'll go a lot further.
- **4. A Chatty Chuck** Too much talking makes it weird, dude. If you want to talk, call your mommy.
- **5. A Smelly Kelly** It's sad that I even need to list this. Yet, it was one of the more common gripes I heard from numerous entertainers. Take a fucking shower before hittin' the club. Good grief!
- **6. A Bill-Throwing Bob** Please stop

wadding the bills and trying to aim for pussy, ass, or mouth. Money's already dirty as fuck...especially when it's coming from your sweaty-ass mitts.

- **7. A Conservative Cassie** Leave your jealous-ass girlfriend or wife at home. Only Fun, drama-free women are wanted!
- **8.** A Photo-Snapping Freddy Surprise, surprise... There are still asshats that think it's okay to pull out their phone and take photos of stage sets. Do it and get tossed. Hopefully on your head!
- **9. A Sleepy Joe** There's no better way to insult an entertainer than falling asleep during her performance. It ranks right up there with staring and not tipping. It's also a great way to get booted!
- **10. A Stank Breath Seth** More hygiene common sense. Brush your teeth. Chew a mint. But most of all, *stop blowing in your favorite stripper's ear*. She fucking hates that shit, and it's creepy as fuck!



This next one's a little ditty I wrote called, "Stop blown' your stale-ass Pabst breath in my mom's ears when you're sittin' at the rack, Jack!"

There you have it! Don't be these people, and you'll be loved by every industry entertainer. Thank me later, fammo!

THE P-TOWN HAPS

Now that you know how to act right let's practice your newfound strip club decorum at the many events happening throughout this month...

Let's start at Guilty Pleasures on Saturday, December 10, for David and Jocelyn's Bachelor and Bachelorette Party. You don't know David or Jocelyn, you say? That's no excuse! They're getting married, the party is on, and it's as good an excuse as any to get your drink on!

Then, on Thursday, December 15, roll through The Lounge for their Champagne & Diamonds Party. Grab a bite while you're there; they have some great food at some even better pricing!

Fast forward to Sunday, December 18, and it's ugly sweater time... Not one, but two sweater parties this year. One is at Devils Point, and one is at Stars Cabaret in Salem. Bring your best mustache game to the Devils Point party because there's \$1,000 in cash and prizes on the line. Do it big.

Moving along to Friday, December 23, Stars Cabaret is throwing a sexy lingerie party at their Bridgeport location. Women wearing their favorite lingerie and men wearing their favorite pajamas get in for free! I'm guessing women wearing pajamas can also get in free, but for men wearing lingerie, your mileage may vary...

We're almost there! Bring 2022 to an end in style with a special New Year's Eve champagne toast at midnight at Cabaret, Guilty Pleasures, and Cheetahs in Salem (alcohol-free at Cheetahs, of course)! There's no better way to ring in the New Year than with sexy strippers, champagne, and good friends (and yes, in that order...).

MISS EXOTIC 2023

You folks know the drill by now...at the time we sent this issue to press, the finals hadn't happened yet. But fear not; we will have full coverage of the finals in our January 2023 issue! Until then, check out the photo coverage from qualifying rounds three through seven on page 16.

And with that, we'd like to congratulate our qualifying finalists from rounds three to seven:

Round 3: Raven Lynx from Kit Kat Club & X Exotic Lounge, Pink Marie from Casa Diablo, and Passion from Guilty Pleasures.

Round 4: Amara from Stars Cabaret (Salem), Nike from Hawthorne Strip, Sunshine from Reveal Lounge, and Carmen Sinclair from Beanie's Bikini Barista.

Round 5: Maria Knox from Lucid Dreams, Dyme from Dream On Saloon, and Lexi from Dream On Saloon.

Round 6: Lexi from Sassy's, Dylan from Stars Cabaret (Bridgeport), and Nia from Golden Dragon.

Round 7: Chyna from Cabaret, Nina from Cabaret, and Integrity from X Exotic Lounge.

That's all for now, my loyal industry denizens. May the New Year bring you happiness, peace, and prosperity—lots of prosperity... Which you can use to tip strippers and see boobs.

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Zeroliccity spotlight

SUN 04 – SINFERNO CABARET

SAT 10 – GUILTY PLEASURES DAVID & JOCELYN'S BACHELOR & BACHELORETTE PARTY

> SAT 10 — DANTE'S TWERK DU SOLEIL

SUN 11 – DANTE'S NAUGHTY NUT CRACKER + SINFERNO CABARET

THU 15 — THE LOUNGE CHAMPAGNE & DIAMONDS PARTY

SUN 18 – DEVILS POINT BAD CHRISTMAS SWEATER & MUSTACHE PARTY

SUN 18 – STARS CABARET (SALEM)
UGLY SWEATER PARTY

SUN 18 – DANTE'S EL GORDO + SINFERNO CABARET

FRI 23 – STARS CABARET (BRIDGEPORT)
SEXY LINGERIE PARTY

SAT 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTIES:

CABARET
CHEETAHS (SALEM)
GUILTY PLEASURES

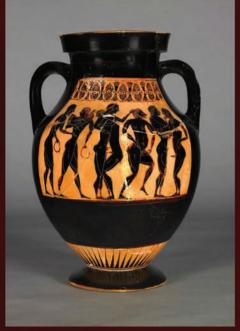
HAPPY HOURS

CABARET – 2PM-6PM
COLUMBIA STRIP – 4PM-7PM
DEVILS POINT – 3PM-6PM
DV8 – NOON-3PM
LUCKY DEVIL – 3PM-6PM

Yo Saturnalia! Let's Bring Back The Reason For The Season

By Blazer Sparrow

The War On Christmas is almost won, comrades. Although most evil Christians would have you believe some poorly-written propaganda that their side is losing 'cause Gen Z doesn't pray in school or jerk off to the American flag or some horseshit, that's simply not the case. It's about economics. More and more of our youth



are turning their backs on this consumerist pageantry because there just isn't much to celebrate. Anyone who works service industry knows that holidays are just workdays that are busier with worse clientele. Most office jobs don't even give Christmas Eve off. It's hard to get excited about a holiday that equals as much time off as Veterans Day. Also, the cult of family is quickly dissipating since the American Empire has literally run out of money, and the last pathetic dynasties holding onto some sort of illusion of the American Dream realize theirs is the last generation that will ever own houses. Christmas means a stressful time with family and literally going broke out of guilt. Boo.

But don't take me for some Jehovah's Witness who thinks celebrating holidays, in general, is bad. Hell no. Holidays are all about having a day off and having fun. I'm all about holidays. And don't think this is some screed against tradition either. For some, the War On Christmas may indeed be a rebellion against outdated tradition and ceremony that has no meaning to this generation anymore. Not for yours truly. Rather, I think it's time we get back to the roots of this solstice celebration. Anyone who comes at me with some "true meaning" hogwash, I dismiss as obnoxious, new age cultists appropriating a wonderful, multi-day solstice celebration with some desert hippie who ate fish or some such nonsense

I'm talking about Saturnalia! The actual beginnings of the Western civilization's end-of-year bash. The Yule tradition might be older, but we'll never know since the drunken, moustached forest barbarians didn't write anything down.

Saturnalia is a safe bet as the very first iteration of the "holiday season," we can't quite agree on what to appropriately call. As a staunch traditionalist, I think the only way to put this argument to bed is to go to the beginning.

Although it's silly to assume strip club patrons aren't familiar with the pagan drunken orgy-slash-harvest festival that was the highlight of every ancient Roman citizen's year, I'll reiterate some bullet points. More than anything, it was a goddamn party. Dancing and singing in the streets. Excessive drinking. Parades and shit. Feasts! Gambling! As with most pre-Christian holidays, lots of going doorto-door and singing at your neighbors in exchange for gifts. That really seemed to be everyone's favorite activity in antiq-

uity. The most important aspect of this holiday is that it was a whole week long. That was seven whole days off work for the entirety of the empire. Depending on sources, sometimes it was as long as nine days off work. No wonder everyone was stoked on this OG Christmas. Everyone got to take a goddamn break. In fact, one of Caligula's (everyone's favorite emperor) most infamous decrees during his reign was to shorten the length of the festival to only five days. Dick. He deserved to be murdered for that alone.

Now granted, I can't change a centuriesold tradition with a one-thousand-word comedy piece in a magazine with boobies. However, I can suggest batshit ideas that can improve the dwindling music scene in Portland. Multiple times between these flesh-filled pages, I've thought of some genius ideas for music festivals. The Naked Music Festival at Sauvie Island was my most shared piece. I'm really hoping someone gets on that next year.



Once again, the death of Music Fest Northwest and then Project Pabst is really leaving quite the gaping hole in Portlanders' music-loving souls. Most music festivals dot the summer calendar. Why not cap the year off with a week-long extrava-

ganza?! Something to look forward to. Something to put Mardi Gras to shame. Tear down the Christmas Trees and erect statues of Saturn. Either the Roman God or the planet. Who cares? Let's make it fun. Replace crosses with sickles.

The easiest way to do this would be Tom McCall park, but I think to revive the true spirit of Saturnalia, it should work like Music Fest Northwest, where venues around town just host continuous music that revelers drunkenly bounce between. Instead of the King of Saturnalia, we could declare



the King of Portlandia and parade him around on a throne of trash or something. In keeping the spirit of upending the social norms and reversing roles, bands could swap places with random audience members and let chaos ensue. The whole point of this multi-day celebration was to take a break from the status quo, which is something Portland and our society as a whole could seriously use.

Now, I realize the biggest logistical nightmare of trying to pull off an authentic Neo Saturnalia is giving everyone (at least in Portland) a whole week or more off. This seems impossible since, for some reason, capitalism will die if we take too many bathroom breaks. Asking people to use their hard-earned PTO or charging for such an event seems counter-intuitive since that defeats the purpose of a break from the grind. Also, it would just feed the corporate machine even more.

The solution: just don't show up to work, everyone! I know this sounds a lot like Burning Man (probably the closest modern equivalent to Saturnalia,) but think of it as one that's less dusty, closer to home, more inclusive, and less expensive. Everyone just don't go to work! There have been online talks of a general strike for some time, but since the internet is literally the worst organizing tool, it never quite materialized. However, if we all had an incentive to ditch work (a week-long festival) and we all did it together, I don't think there's much they can do to stop us—power in numbers. Bosses would stew for the first day but then join in the festivities by the second when they realize the reason they worked so hard to climb the corporate ladder in the first place was to have more days off. Let's do it together! Down with Christmas! Yo Saturnalia!







Spring-Heeled Jack

BY ESMERALDA RUPP-SPANGLE

So many of us are both fascinated and entranced by things that are aesthetically Victorian—brass architectural details, clockwork jewelry, aggressive syphilis, unregulated industrial toxins, etc. Unfortunately, we don't all have the luxury of being dead, so in hind-sight, here is one of the coolest and weirdest whodunits since ever.

The reports of this bizarre leaping demonic figure were first reported around 1837 and ended around 1934—oddly, almost the exact same tenure as Queen Victoria herself. However, he was far more rakish than she, reportedly. Hard to say, though, as the appetites of monarchs have been known to be grotesque at times.

What comes off as most interesting about the reports of this bouncing demon is that there didn't appear to be a goal for his antics. He never really demanded anything or lifted purses. He didn't steal the *virtue* (such as it was) from young women. He didn't appear to be overcome with a ferocious bloodlust, and he didn't pillage, commit major arson, or start a pitchfork mob. (That was easy back then, right?). By all accounts, he just leaped menacingly about, occasionally causing minor injury and a definite need for an opium pipe or a snifter of brandy, perhaps both.

Jack's first sightings were just rumors of a vague and menacing something occurring in the south of London and the villages around the area in the late months leading up to 1837. Some said a bear, some a spirit or ghostly force, some a devil, and some thought a nobleman was basically trolling the lower class for shits and giggles—leaping out and frightening folks just because they could. Basically, frat bros, 200 years removed.

A young woman, Jane Alsop, reported that on the evening of February 19, 1838, a policeman came to her door demanding she fetch a light because "for God's sake," they'd just caught his reportedly nefarious "SpringHeeled Jack down the lane." She hurried back into her home and brought a candle out. She noted this "policeman" was garbed in a long black coat and appeared official until she handed him the candle. Upon doing so, he shed his cloak and "vomited forth" a spew of blue and white flames, and his eyes turned to red balls of fire. Cool trick, bruh, but I bet David Blaine could do that underwater in chains after three months without food, so, like, chill.



Chill he did not, because after disposing of his cloak, he grabbed her and tore her dress with what she described as "metallic" claws. He seemed to be wearing some sort of helmet, and a suit likened to "white oilskins." I could Google it, or I could sort of imagine it as a Clockwork Orange thing. Codpieces and eyeliner. We're going with the latter.

She ripped herself away from the miscreant, but he caught up with her again, tearing and slashing at her, barely in time for her sister to rush outside and save her. Though her wounds weren't life-threatening, he had slashed at her shoulders, neck, and arm with no apparent goal. Indiscriminate, oddly cruel, and yet only vaguely malicious. Additionally, he had seemed to hold a candle "to his chest" at a point—perhaps to fuel the strange blue flames that he expelled? Maybe a time-traveling emo? It's hard to say. When I personally vomit blue flames, it's generally because of

either vodka or Taco Bell, FWIW.

In another "attack," eight days later, on February 28, an 18-year-old girl named Lucy (who was returning home from a trip with her sister) passed an alley where she and her brother were accosted by a man lurking in an alley. He reportedly spewed a blue flame in her face that made her erupt in fits. Sure. I know why I don't remember Friday, but whatever. Her description appears to be generally similar to the previous assailant. The nefarious attacker seemed to have no further desire for evil than to spring upon someone and give them a fright, as the brother who rushed up noted. Nothing was swiped, no one was killed, etc.

As time went on, several additional attacks were similarly reported: A mysterious and menacing man with claws, spewing blue fire, with flaming or red eyes, wearing a cape and leaping on roofs, bounding around improbably, with metal claws, red eyes, and occasionally bearing even more unrealistic features that seemed to prefer to spring upon people and tear them with metallic claws, rather than do any lasting damage or harm. Sometimes reported as having chemical fumes or haunting sounds, some attacks were reported as having aspects that sound almost futuristic. Was he a rakish visitor out of time? A Victorian supervillain? A proto-troll looking to raise hell? It remains unclear. No one was murdered or even seriously injured, but somehow, this Jack (as opposed to the arguably cooler ripper) was still in the forefront of the news of the time, as his odd visage was so unique and bizarre.

I maintain we need more criminals like this. Not breaking laws for personal gain, and not for malice, but just because it's fun.

Esmeralda Rupp-Spangle was actually born in 1814—fact check it and try to argue. She can be found on Facebook as Esmeralda Marina or on Instagram as @esmeraldasilentcitadel.



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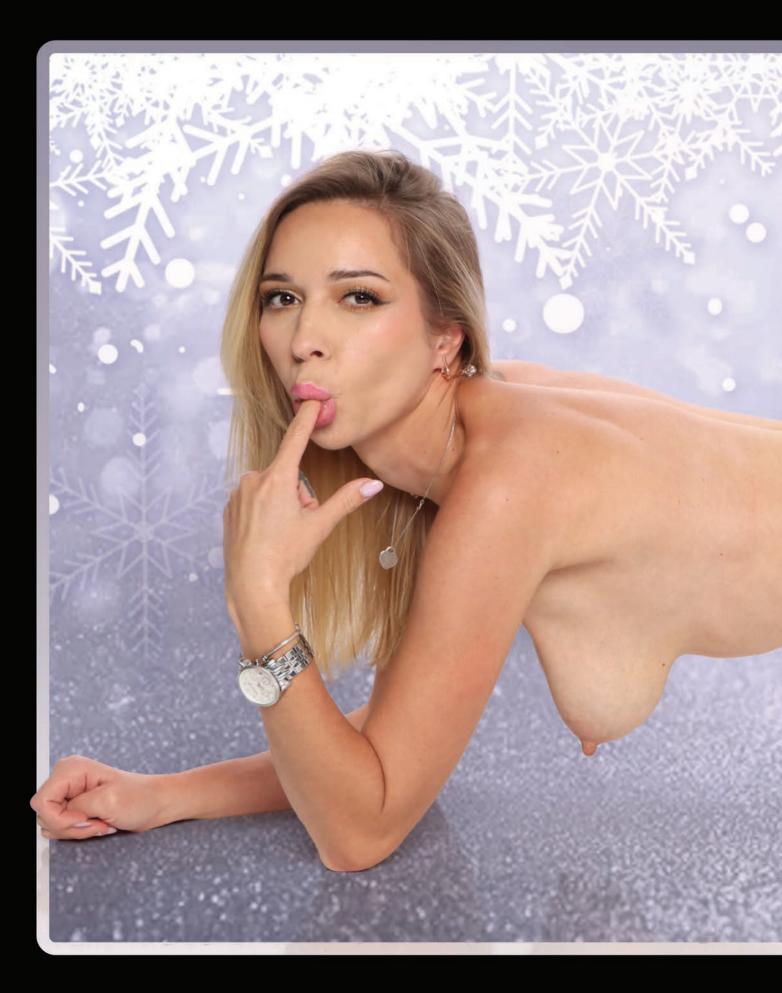
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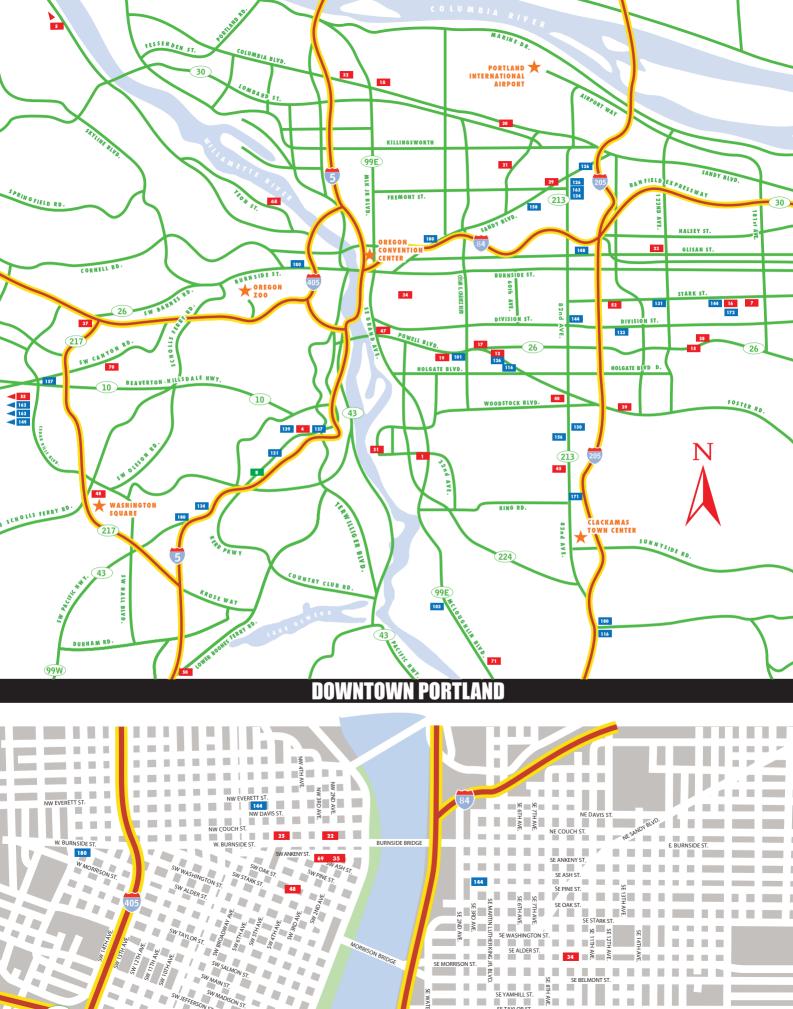




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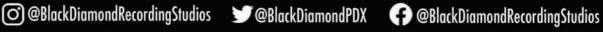
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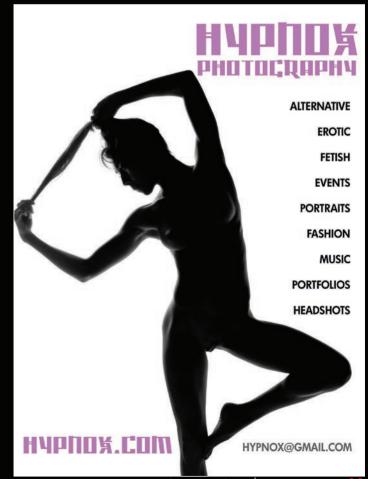






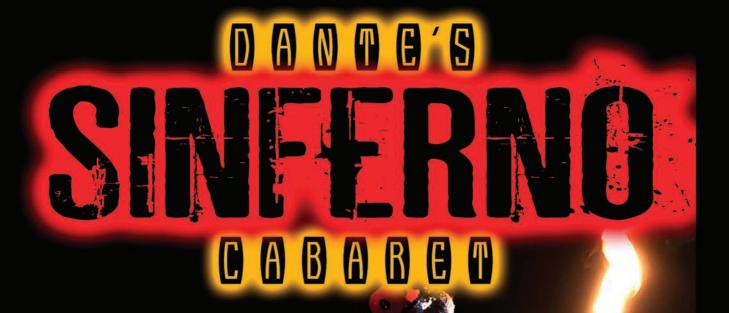












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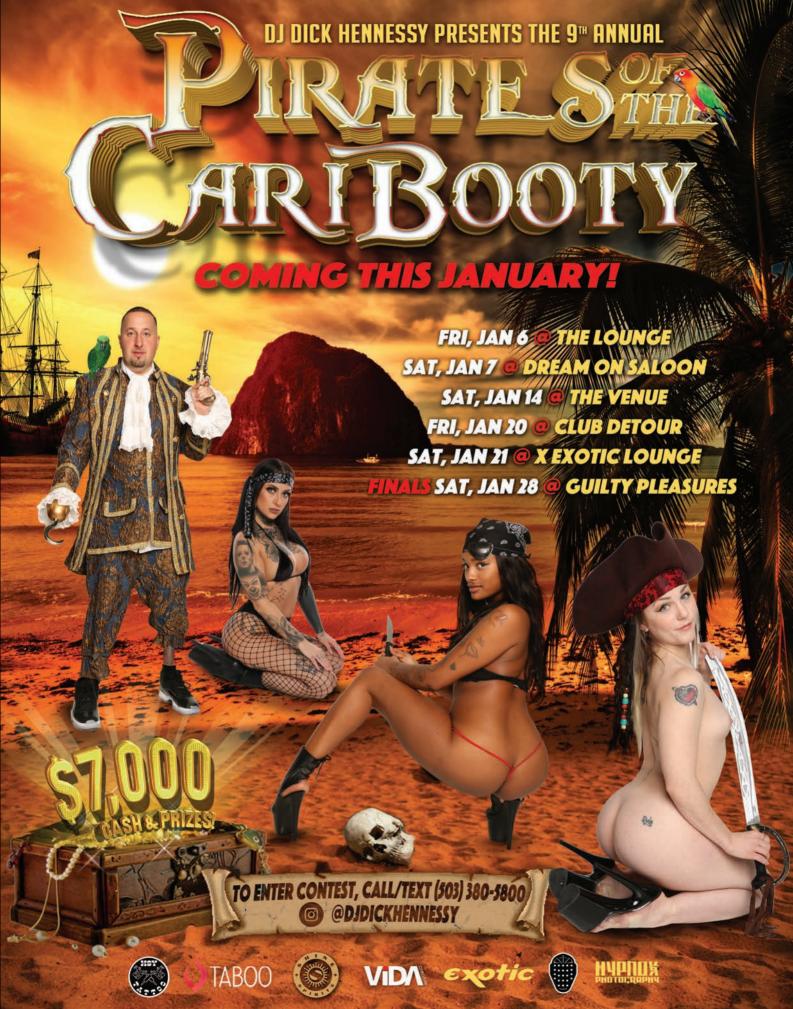
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HOLIDAY RECIPES THAT SOUND AS GOOD AS THEY LOOK

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CHEFS THAT POST TO ALLRECIPES

So, it's the holiday season, and for some reason, you were put in charge of hosting this year. Hosting, you realize late in the game, doesn't just mean "buy alcohol and Coca-Cola for the guests," but also means you must supply something for them to eat as well. No, those chocolates filled with alcohol do not count. They may have sugar and calories, but they lack the ability for Aunt Clara to stop gulping down her red wine and nitpick everything she hates about your apartment. You need food for that.

Since the dawn of time, people have hosted parties for holidays, and no one knows why we keep doing it because none of us are religious anymore, and no one really likes peppermint-flavored drinks. If you drink peppermint schnapps, you're from Florida, and I wasn't talking to you.

So, what do you do when you are supposed to cook for more than yourself, and you've no idea what family likes to eat, other than you assume everyone likes cheese? Forget that Aunt Carla is lactose intolerant (remember, food is used to shut her up, anyway); you go to Allrecipes.com! Home of...recipes that exist online, with photo proof that no one on that site gives a damn about the quality of the picture of the final product or the recipe quality itself.

But that doesn't matter when you're desperate for some recipes that call for literally anything in your cupboards to just be thrown into a pot and left alone in the oven for 8 hours. Let's start with some fabulous finger food...

Appetizer: Easy Tuna Patties

Didn't think tuna patties were worthy of being a holiday-time appetizer? Well, me neither. And after reading this recipe and reviewing the photos, my mind has not been changed. Use this to really set the mood for what is to come at your "event." Brought to you by a couple of cans of tuna (in water), ten heaping tablespoons of Italian bread-crumbs, a few more tablespoons of whatever hard cheese you have (even the cardboard

stuff would probably be fine), and last but not least, hope that the tears you used to dry these patties out are tasted by your family. Pair with some sort of mustard sauce.



Main Course: Chicken Alfredo



Who doesn't think about chicken alfredo when they think of Christmas? Probably the family that eats this, that's who. Everyone, who is anyone, loves chicken alfredo. And if Aunt Cassy is allergic to cheese, it's already too late since she probably ate some of your hard, cheese-encrusted tuna balls...er....patties.

Brought to you by four cans of alfredo sauce, two pounds of chicken cut into chunks that come from a can, spaghetti noodles, and some Italian seasoning to taste. Doesn't this sound delightful? Just like mama back in the old country used to make. Maybe. Happy holidays and bon appétit (that's French, I think).

Dessert: Marshmallow Popcorn Balls

Okay, so it's fair to say that I chose one of the worst-looking photos on this recipe site to represent this delightful holiday dessert, but I really couldn't help it. It looks like they were going for the color green, but halfway between weren't so sure, so instead, they put some red food dye in the marshmallow mix, and voilà...zombie holiday marshmallow popcorn balls! Brought to you by half a bag of cooked popcorn, a few tablespoons of vegetable oil, several tablespoons of store-brand salted butter, and some marshmallows, or marshmallow paste in the can, if you don't have marshmallows getting stale in your cupboards like a normal person. Oh, and some green-blue, zombie-colored dye. For the kids...and drunk Aunt Cassy, who tried sobering up after you attempted feeding her all the prior cheese goods but got back on the sauce after she heard about dessert.

After serving your probably more-thangrateful family these courses, they may still be a bit munchy. Fear not; there is now a subcategory for snack foods that I just discovered was a thing. We'll give the family something to *nosh* on.



Holiday Bonus: Reindeer Food

I guess I needed to include at least one somewhat "holiday-themed" snack—and this took the proverbial cake. Reindeer food consists of everything you thought a reindeer would eat and things they probably don't. Like this picture shows...Cheerios. Who is craving Cheerios in any mixed hand snack? I guess if you're out of everything else, just throw whatever stale cereal you have in your cupboards, along with some pretzels (the sticks are the best, obviously), some green M&Ms (only green), and some white chocolate. When you take a picture of all of this, make sure the flash is on. Magnifique and ho ho ho!

Okay, so you've finally run out of food you had lying around your cupboards, fridge, and freezer. It's time to break out the big guns. Liquor. If your family brought kids, those adults definitely need it. For the kids, there's always water. You can tell them it's fancy stuff that

reindeer like (I mean, it isn't a lie).



For the adults, however, let's get a little saucy.

arah's Frozen Pumpkin Spice Cocktail

This drink was given a whopping 4/5, with seven people having rated it and only one person having shared a picture (Sarah, of course...and Sarah claims this is delicious). All you need to do is trust in Sarah, take some whipping cream, pumpkin spice, pumpkin puree, some pumpkin spice flavored liquor, and ice cubes, put them in some glasses, and freeze them. Pull them out, and drink, er...eat? Drink. Probably drink with a spoon. I don't know, ask Sarah. Either way, this will have to do because you worked so hard at getting drunk that you forgot about pulling the pie out of the oven—which is why we didn't bring up pie.



And that is how you have a successful holiday dinner party, alcohol. Alcohol, cheese, and Allrecipes.com. The holy trinity of all home chefs. Remember, it isn't always about quality. These recipes and photos are proof that you can have a party everyone is sure to remember and possibly never wish to experience—ever again.

Hannah One Cup can be found searching for recipes to cook based on how ugly the photo is on Allrecipes.com, wrangling dogs, adopting dogs from shelters outside of Salt Lake City (another story for another time), and getting drunk at her family conventions, because 'tis the season for love, harmony, and figuring out how to fake these things. "Ho ho ho all my hoes, may your December be filled with better food than what was shared here, and may many very dirty martinis find their way to your mouth to wash down Sarah's Frozen Pumpkin Spice Cocktail."

DANCERS & LINGERIE MODELS!





WEIRDMAS: THE ODDBALL STUFF OF THE HOLIDAYS

It's holiday time once again. Most cultures tend to celebrate something around this time of year. We in the USA tend to think of this as Christmastime, or possibly Hannukah (Chanukkah? Never been sure on that one) time, depending on what shape the building was when your parents took you there once a year as a kid. Either way, it's a grand celebration of snowmen, jingling bells, compulsory gift-giving, soulless consumption, excess, and being dicks to retail workers. Oh, and sometimes something religion-oriented happens, depending. Suffice it to say, if we're going to spend a quarter of every year swaddled in the trappings of "the holidays," we ought to look at some of the more unusual things which transpire around this time in various places around the world. Let's go!

Not ranked in any particular order.



Krampus - Austria and other Alpine nations

You've probably heard of this one, but if you haven't, Krampus is one of Santa's helpers, though not in the cheerful way one might think when hearing of one of Santa's helpers. In Alpine nations, the story goes that when Santa/Saint Nick/whatever goes out to dispense gifts to good little girls and boys, he brings Krampus along with him. Krampus is described as looking like a demon of sorts, covered in coarse hair, with horns on his head and the cloven hooves of a goat for feet. He carries chains (which whimsically have sleigh bells attached to them) and serves to punish the bad children. You see, Santa/Nick is a jovial fellow and can do no harm. Thus, he subcontracts that job to Krampus, so he's kind of like the Blackwater of Christmas. Plausible deniability. "Santa would never hurt you! Ho ho ho! That's why Santa brought Krampus with him, ho ho ho!" Upon entering a house, Santa checks his famous list, and if the kids are bad, he gives the nod to Krampus, who beats them with birch rods to let the little brats know that Christmas ain't no joke. Coal? Nah. Beatings by a goat creature are what gets it done. If you're in Austria during the holidays, you can expect to see people running around in Krampus masks, playing pranks on others.



It's a Very Colonel Christmas - Japan

In Japan, due to some clever marketing back in the 1970s, there is a tradition of getting KFC for Christmas. Yup, KF-fucking-C. For you (KF) see, the marketing pushes the exclusive-to-Japan "Christmas Bucket," which features the famous chicken, of course, as well as salads, cakes, pies, and other items, for a complete Xmas meal. And this isn't a weird one-off thing. KFC franchises in Japan do 10x of their typical business between the 20th through the 25th, with the 24th being the busiest day. On the 24th alone last year, KFC Japan made 6.9 billion yen (or 65 million US dollars) in just that day's sales. Also, if you pay a special fee,

you can get a man dressed up like Colonel Sanders in a Santa suit to deliver your meal. Christmas isn't a formal holiday in Japan, as they're mostly Shinto or Buddhist, with only a small portion being Christians, so they're not even pretending it's about anything but excuses to eat. In a recent poll, it was found that some 3.6 million Japanese eat KFC for Xmas, and many reserve their "Kentucky Christmas" well in advance, as lines stretch around the block starting the 23rd. From the simple slogan "Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii!" (It's Kentucky for Christmas!) spawned a unique tradition that only the Japanese could really pull off.



Γhe Xmas Witch – Italy

In Italy, Santa doesn't do all the heavy lifting. Indeed, long after he's come and gone, a witch shows up on the 5th of January to pick up the spirits of the kids, who leave their stockings up for this purpose. The old witch, named Befana, also glides down the chimney and leaves candies, fruits, liquors, and wine for the good kids—and rotten potatoes or onions for the bad kids. Damn. Italian kids really have an incentive to be good. She's described as the almost stereotypical witch, down to the big nose and riding on a broomstick, which she'll whack you with if you see her, as she ostensibly does not like being viewed. The history of this character is a lady who met the Three Wise Men (or Magi) of

Christian myth when those fools were lookin' for Jesus. They asked her if she knew "where the son of God was," and she was like, "uh... the what, now?" but being good-natured, she put them up for the evening. Upon their departure, they asked Befana if she wanted to come along, which she declined, citing housework to be done. The story says she changed her mind later and went looking for the guys but couldn't find them, and decided to take up freelance gift-giving. Families leave wine and pasta for Befana, much like Santa gets milk and cookies, but ya know, this is Italy we're talking about.



The Yule Cat - Iceland

In Iceland, where everything is at least a little fucked-up, they've got the Yule Cat, whose name in Icelandic is this Nordic mess: Jólakötturinn, so we'll just call him the Yule Cat. The Yule Cat is a very large cat, basically a housecat, but scaled up to be as large as an elephant, and his purpose is not to give gifts or any such thing, but instead, to viciously maul and devour anyone who hasn't gotten new clothes to wear before Christmas Eve. Yup. He's the fashion police. It's thought that this creature was supposed to motivate farmers to process the autumn wool harvest before Christmas, as those who helped would have new clothes, and those who didn't, well...you don't make the hat, you get mauled by the



German Tree Pickle – Germany and Austria, possibly Switzerland

It all starts with the Christmas tree. Where exactly that particular tradition came from is a matter of some debate among...Christmas

bullshit scholars or something. They've mostly concluded that the whole drag-a-tree-intothe-living-room-and-cover-it-with-crap deal started in Germany way back in the 16th century. Naturally, as happens when people start emigrating to the USA (once that became a thing), they bring their traditions with them. When the Germans came, they brought all manner of interesting things, including Xmas trees. However, we seem to have been spared the tree pickle. What's the tree pickle? Well, Germans, loving anything brine-cured or fermented, decided that it'd be fun to hide a pickle in the ol' Christmas tree and make kids try to find it. The kid who finds it, well, gets to eat the pickle but also gets a small gift for finding said pickle. This has led to a number of various pickle-camouflaging techniques, lest the kids find them too easily. Modern incarnations involve pickle-shaped ornaments rather than brined cucumbers, so I guess they don't eat them anymore. Well, perhaps they do, but I wouldn't want to take that dump.



Disgusting Holiday Drinks – USA

No, not eggnog. I kind of like eggnog. It's my second-favorite nog, and it's a perfect metaphor for the holidays: a little goes a long way, but it's around for months, and once you've had your fill, it lingers until it has overstayed its welcome.

The things I'm actually referring to are the "fun" holiday beverages that various drink companies foist upon an unwitting public. Kroger and its gaggle of subsidiaries have candy cane soda and cinnamon roll soda from its store brand offering, value-priced at \$1.49 (plus deposit) for two liters, which is still probably too much, both in cost and in quantity. This year, the anarchists at Mountain Dew have decided to bestow upon the

public a fruitcake-flavored version of its sugary caffeine fluid. It is called "Fruitquake," and the slogan for this substance is "not your traditional fruitcake." Ya, don't say. I don't think traditional fruitcake comes in 24-ounce EZchug bottles.



There are many, many others in this genre, such as Jones Soda's "holiday box," which has sodas flavored like turkey, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, etcetera. Though, at least the Jones people know it's more-or-less a gag (possibly literally) gift and not to be taken seriously. The last one I'll touch upon for this year is Red Bull's entry: Fig Apple energy sauce. I don't know if that's a bad flavor combo or what, but come on, guys, why would you pick something that can be truncated to "fapple?" Go brave the horrors of your local grocer's drink aisle, and you'll find some interesting stuff this time of year.

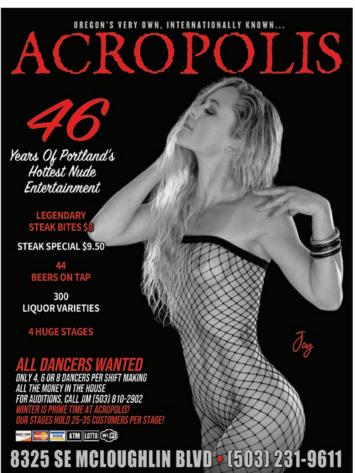
Those are some holiday oddities for you. There are many, many more out there, but I only get so much room. Look forward to part two next year, Weirdmas II: Electric Weirdaloo.

Merry Xmas, chappy Chanukah, kwazy Kwanzaa, bitchin' Bodhi day, and a...reasonably pleasant Tohji-Taisai, for my Shinto peeps. May you survive the holidays intact and more-or-less sane.

-Wombstretcha

Wombstretcha the Magnificent is a gross soda enthusiast, Yule Catnip farmer, Kentucky Colonel, writer, and retired rapper from Portland, Oregon. He can be found at his website, wombstretcha.com, on Twitter as @wombstretcha503, on MeWe.com (yay!), and on Facebook.com (boo!) as "Wombstretcha the Magnificent."















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