

Dancing the night away part 2: the Halifax rave scene

BY RYAN STEVENS

Good vibes, good feelings and good dancing. That's how most loyal ravers will describe what goes on at your average rave.

Once you pay your cover charge (averaging ten dollars), you enter a hazy room of karmic lights and trippy, fast electronica. This is where the dancing happens.

On the dance floor is also where the pickup of a significant other begins (if you're into that sort of thing). Later on when you need a break you can head over to the "chill room." This room, which is filled with a variety of sitting needs, is where most people go to smoke their dope, make further advances on their significant other or just chill. There are also TVs showing trippy, crazy computer art and your favourite Japanese animation movies.

The recent success of raves in Halifax can be attributed to P.J. Swim and Murray Trider. A group of people works around the clock to make sure these parties happen. To find out what's going on in the rave scene you can call the "vibe line" (454-2992).

The "dump line" (454-3780) tells the location of the rave, which is released 24 hours prior to the event — a tradition that started almost a decade ago, and helps to avoid complications caused by those who would try to prevent a rave from taking place.

P.J. Swim is the main man making the Saturday night parties happen. His *Last Party* (AKA *Elegant Dump*) series consisted of six parties taking place every Saturday since August 23rd. The 25-year-old Swim has been spending many hours in the last year-and-a-half

planning and working at parties. Peter Axnick, Mike Mader and David Ross are your lighting, visuals and general "chill room" specialists. Big security guys Neukem, Bryan, Andre and Spilly make sure no shit happens.

It took quite a few years for the rave scene to reach our fair city. The parties originated in Europe a while ago and then made their way to Toronto and Vancouver seven years ago. The scene made it to Halifax two years ago and has been growing ever since.

DJ groups SOS and Slim are two of the many great artists who have been featured in the *Elegant Dump* series. These Toronto and Vancouver DJs have to be booked two months in advance, which again shows the time and preparation involved in making the raves happen.

Recently, the television show *20/20* made a documentary on the rave scene, which basically said that it's just a place where teens hang out and do all the hard-core drugs they can find. Canadian ravers responded with a ten-minute cut on CBC to defend their hard work. The media doesn't realize that all ages ranging from 16-42 attend the parties.

Yes there are quite a few drugs at raves. P.J. Swim responds to the question of drugs by saying, "We provide the vibe, not the drugs." He went on to say, "Crystal-meth, cocaine, crack and heroin will not be tolerated." Alcohol is also prohibited as the organizers don't have a liquor license.

One of the favourite drugs of ravers right now is ecstasy or "E" for short. E causes the love juices in your brain to increase to great proportions and increases all your nerve sensations. You

won't hear anything bad from ravers about ecstasy, except that it costs about thirty to forty dollars for a small capsule and runs most people broke.

(ed. note: Dr. Richard Brown, who is a professor of Drugs and Behaviour in the Dalhousie Psychology Department, cites studies done by McCann et al. (1991), Kosten (1992), and Randal (1992) to explain the negative side effects of ecstasy. Ecstasy, which can be addictive, causes the release of serotonin, which is a neurotransmitter in the brain that causes people to feel relaxed and happy. However, ecstasy is a neurotoxin that kills smaller nerve terminals and, in the future, obstructs and de-regulates the release of serotonin. Although the effects of ecstasy are not visible in the immediate days after one has taken the drug, the effects can be seen several years later, as serious brain damage, loss of nerve cells, and depression may occur. Also, if ecstasy is poorly made, it could contain toxins which can cause kidney failure and death, which has occurred in documented cases in Britain.

If you like speed and/or acid then you will have a relatively inexpensive night. Weed and hash go for the same price that they've always gone for. Again, the media gets the idea that there's a counter set up to buy and sell narcotics. Not true; if you want drugs you usually have to look for them.

If you want to go sober, don't worry. The music, the heat and the environment

will fuck you up anyway. Remember things are placed the way they are for your own anesthetic pleasure.

The police have shown up at two of the raves in the *Elegant Dump* series. The first time was at the rave September 6th entitled *Peace*. They spent quite a long time checking for permits and

also a wide variety of munchies to fill the hunger gap.

Bring a few changes of clothes with you and make sure you've put on plenty of deodorant unless the smell of sweat turns you on, in which case you should probably dance by yourself at home anyway.

If you can't dance, you'll learn, as just about anything goes. If you don't want to dance, you'll change your mind before the night is over.

What do you do if you want to go to the rave and none of your friends are going. Go anyway! It's an experience that you have to try. You won't know if you like it unless you try it (your mother has always told you that). You are bound to meet people and make new friends if you go. It also gives you a chance to meet different types of people from a wide variety of places.

So what are the negative things about raving? If the rave is indoors you are going to get extremely dehydrated. Get water. If you have severe asthmatic conditions, use caution if the rave is indoors. And most importantly, if you have serious bowel problems and need to use the washroom a lot, you might not want to go as you are looking at quite a line up for the bathroom. No one I've met has had anyone steal anything from them, but you might want to put your stuff in a safe place just to be sure.

What's new on the rave market? Those crazy rave masterminds are having a party October 18th. If you want to check out the scene definitely go and see what it's all about. Call the "Vibe Line." for more news.

Go to a rave and check it out. See for yourself what everyone's talking about.



photo by Ryan O'Neill

looking for something wrong. They eventually left. The second time was September 27th (*Last of the Last*). Roughly ten police officers rushed in claiming there was a noise complaint. Much to their disappointment they found no alcohol or visible drugs.

Bottled spring water or liquid adrenaline boosters can be purchased at raves if you get thirsty, and there's



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