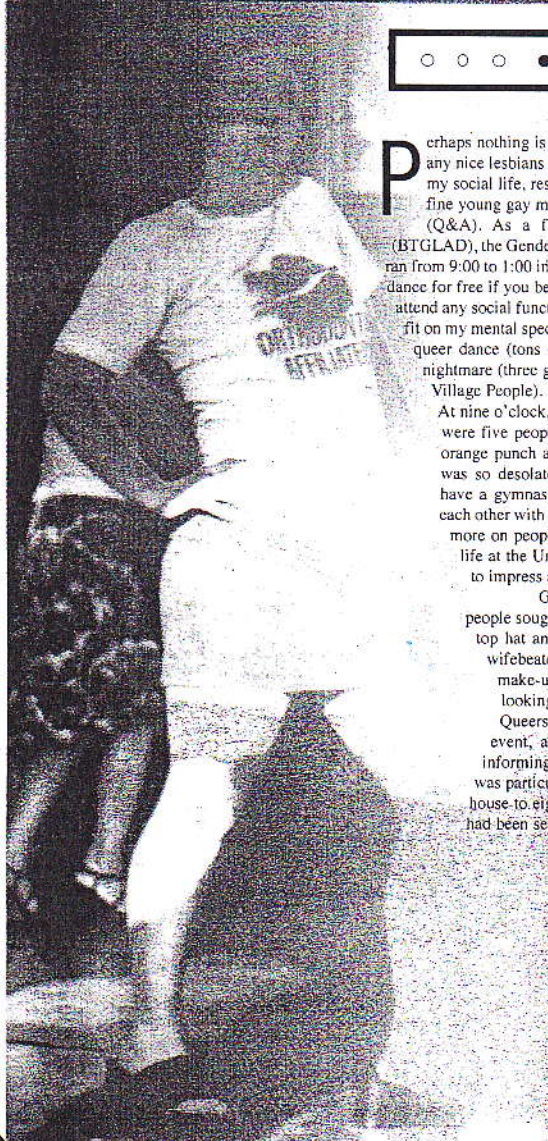


Get Gender Fucked!

A night of revelry, ribaldry and drag royalty

◦ ◦ ◦ ● LIZ BELLIS

PHOTOS BY KYLE GLOVER



Perhaps nothing is quite so awkward as having your mother ask, "So, have you met any nice lesbians on campus?" Yet my mother can stop worrying about the status of my social life, rest assured that I was able to mingle with many a lesbian and some fine young gay men at the GenderFuck dance, sponsored by Queers and Associates (Q&A). As a finale to Bisexual Transgender Gay Lesbian Activity DayS (BTGLAD), the GenderFuck dance was held on Saturday at Hutch Commons. The dance ran from 9:00 to 1:00 in the morning and cost a dollar for admission. Of course, you could dance for free if you bent the rules of gender and came in drag. Despite my reluctance to attend any social functions held in Hutch, I was eager to find out where the dance would fit on my mental spectrum of possibilities: an ideal queer dance (tons of people, great music) or a nightmare (three guys in a room dancing to the Village People).

At nine o'clock, when the dance began, there were five people in Hutch, mainly drinking orange punch and talking. The dance floor was so desolate two students were able to have a gymnastics competition, one upping each other with fancier and fancier tricks. Yet I think the initial low turnout reflects more on people's unwillingness to party before eleven than the status of queer life at the University of Chicago. By eleven more people had arrived dressed to impress and ready to dance.

Given the opportunity to bend the rules for gender dressing, most people sought to break them entirely. A man in heels danced with a woman in top hat and tails. Women sported everything from short leopard skirts to wifebeaters and shorn scalps. Men partied in gowns, heels, T-shirts and make-up. One group of girls boogied in dresses made of duct tape; a man looking Julia Roberts-esque sported a Pretty Woman wig and a halter-top.

Queers and Associates clearly put some substantial planning into the event, as everything from lighting to music was well prepared, signs informing students of the event prominently displayed. The sound system was particularly impressive, the range of music remarkable, everything from house-to-eighties; Madison Avenue to Michael Jackson. A large white screen had been set up to the side of the dance floor, onto which lasers and snippets

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of films were projected. Multicolored lights lined the room creating an atmosphere that was great for dancing, while tables had been pushed against the walls for people who wanted to sit and talk, drink punch and watch the dance floor.

I danced with queer friends I'd met on campus and was introduced to their friends, marking them as allies in my head. I spent fifteen minutes trying to persuade my friend to dance and two hours dancing with a straight friend I'd invited. I watched, delighted, as she danced with first a boy then a group of girls, then a girl, not even batting an eye as the gender of her dancing partners fluctuated. The crowd was energetic, brandishing smiles and holding hands.

Searching the crowd, I noted the absence of a few queer friends who had opted instead for a night of studying, a night of anonymity or familiar hangouts on the North Side. Yet overall there was a definite charge to the party, that surge of electricity I feel whenever two queer people hold hands in public and no one stares.

Towards the end of the dance, GenderFuck held a drag show, calling forth first the men in drag and then the women. Six drag queens strutted across

the dance floor, some flirty, others sassy. The audience sat on the table surrounding the floor, hooting and cheering for the competitors. The drag queen of the evening, complete with flowers and a crown, was Bryson Engeler, sporting a sparkly lavender shirt, black pants and amazing dancing abilities. Even more drag kings than queens competed for the coveted title, dancing to Madonna's *Vogue* in suits and hats, workboots and trousers. Sara Vickers strutted away as the king of the evening, as the spectators cheered and applauded their favorites.

By midnight the dance floor was crowded, everyone was sweaty and laughing. Unfortunately the dance was scheduled to end at one, meaning it was coming to a close as it was picking up the most speed. I followed a few of my queer friends from the dance to a friend's dorm room, where there was a general consensus that the evening had been a success, including the music, people and dancing. Placing the dance on my mental spectrum of parties, it fit itself firmly on the positive end and would have improved only with more people and extended hours. Calling my mom the next day, I allayed her fears that I am the only lesbian on campus, telling her, "Don't worry mom. I met some nice lesbians, and boy do they know how to dance!" **FP**

Kate Rockwood is a GS Hum-Italian-English-Linguistics-Anthropology major who loves girls in ties and boys in dresses. She adores the free press to such a ridiculous degree that she spent her anniversary polishing her section.

