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## the Gateway takes you inside rezfest, listerites' annual fight for their right to party

In all my years at university, I never once thought I would find myself hanging out on Lister property, let alone among those associated with the dreaded name. Rumors and stereotypes regarding those young residents—housed within cells of animalistic debauchery and Great Walls of Booze—have forever danced inside my head like chimneysweepers, preventing me from acknowledging their status as *Homo sapiens*.

With a wave of my hand and the lift of my chin, I thought, “Psssh, they’re all hicks with sexually transmitted diseases and an inability to keep body parts or previously consumed alcohol contained.”

Dear friends, some of these preconceived notions are valid, and, well, some of them aren’t. How do I know this, you ask? Well, I experienced first-hand what was probably one of the largest residence parties of the year, Rezfest, and with my clever investigational tactics, I managed to observe and bring to you the facts about Listerites, Hendayites and whatever other mites live in those monolithic high-rises.

I arrived promptly at 6pm, dressed in a mini-skirt and a bright, sequin-adorned tank top—an outfit chosen by my roommates so I’d fit in with the skin-baring crowd. However, to my horror, my expectations were incredibly wrong: there were maybe a handful of people there, all moderately dressed in jeans and t-shirts, chatting away as if they were adults. No sign of juvenile skankiness here. I felt slightly out of place.

Brushing off the anxiety and looking around, I realized that the area they had blocked off for the event—the Lister patio—was fairly small. In addition, there was a free barbeque going on, where students lined up in an orderly fashion and politely stated their preference—burger, veggie burger or hot dog. Something told me Rezfest wasn’t going to be a rambunctious meat market

at all; someone was playing the reverse psychology card here. If they were giving out free meat, then perhaps that would translate into sexual terms, preventing the challenge of the hunt, and therefore eliminating any carnal impulses.

After retrieving some of this meat (and I didn’t do it to prevent temptations towards baby-faced eighteen-year-olds, because that would just be perverted), I moseyed on over to fulfill my daily alcohol intake. To my surprise, drinks were fairly cheap: \$2.50 for a beer and \$3 for a cooler. Wow. Free food and cheap booze—things were starting to look up. Even if there weren’t many takers for the event, the Lister Hall Students’ Association sure knew how to plan a party.

Before the first band hit the stage—a “mystery” group that, unfortunately, was a trio of Engineering students who should have stuck to drawing bridges on expensive grid paper—I stood beside a tree, sipped my beer and observed the few around me. Suddenly, though, the first inebriate of the evening barrelled into me, and proceeded to claim he was really sorry, all while gently placing his unsteady hands on my shoulders and leaning way too close to my face. Most of my focus was spent deciding whether he was going to topple onto me or try to make out with my forehead—but despite my mind’s shrieks of laughter, I managed to remember him saying something about being from rural Alberta and therefore knowing how to drink.

According to this fellow and his team of drunken friends, rural Alberta seems to be the hailing place for Listerites, and as a result, the Edmonton music scene isn’t that familiar to them. The majority of students hadn’t heard of any of the bands—like Drive By Punch, Armchair Cynics or Shout Out Out Out. If anyone I talked to knew something about the evening’s music, they were ecstatic about seeing Shout

Out. Poor things; hopefully, with time, they’ll learn which bands truly deserve their approval.

By this time, things started to look a little less bare. More and more kidlets started filtering in, and, by golly, so did the creatures of the night, wearing short skirts—some that were shiny silver, others that just covered the end of the rump—and spaghetti-strap tank tops. I was no longer alone, and no longer bored. This was my time to strike.

I wandered around, listening to boy-girl conversations and witnessing in their eyes man’s instinctive carnality. A few more drinks, and they were sure to let loose the beast within. But before venturing on my safari, I had to make sure to acquire a decent camouflage—so I bought another beer.

There were pheromones in the air as, once again, I was being chatted-up by a few first-years. One told me to “drink because the brain cells that survive will be smarter.” If there’s one drunken piece of enlightenment that I will forever hold in my heart, it’s that one. Thank you, sir; you are a genius. At another point, I was joined by a different first-year—one from Grant MacEwan, though—who thought I was “lonely,” and continued to keep me “company” for a prolonged period of time. In his opinion, Grant Mac didn’t throw bashes like this one, and he was grateful for the opportunity to celebrate the good times with his U of A friends.

Drive By Punch took the stage, along with the Armchair Cynics, and, slowly but surely, the dancing began. At least half a dozen cops stood in the corner, arms crossed and looking tough, clearly wishing to be somewhere else. I scrounged up the courage to ask one of the enforcers of law whether or not he was having fun, and in response I received a solid “no.” Party poopers.

I have to admit that I was starting to enjoy this Rezfest thing—and apparently I wasn’t the only one. Unable to resist my natural tendency to talk with music-related people, I chatted for a bit to the guys from Drive By Punch, who were incredibly happy to play something that resembled an all-ages show. Similarly, the guys from Armchair Cynics were having a blast, especially the drummer, who developed a following of ogling girls that were presumably all first-years.

Before Shout Out took the stage, Lister President Michael Janz grabbed the mic and began rallying the troops by throwing out hoards of U of A t-shirts, hoodies, caps, \$100 gift certificates to restaurants—even iPods. Say what? Holy, I wish I belonged to an organization that did all this for me.

The night was in its darkest hours, and intoxication was in the air, when Shout Out started pumping out the beats. A cloud of steam began to rise from the sweaty crowd shoved up against the stage barrier, and at this moment, I began a mental compilation of everything I had experienced, and knew that I had finally uncovered the truth about Listerites. Yes, they drank a lot and hit on you; yes, most were from rural Alberta; and yes, some showed up sporting togas. But all of this is fairly normal for any Edmonton student of an older age, if not more sophisticated. There were no unruly public displays of sexualism, no trips to the drunk tank, and most importantly, no holier-than-thou attitudes.

Going undercover at Rezfest not only provided me with some decent music and a few laughs, but it also showed me how to improve upon my party-throwing. Not wanting to miss out on the action, I wandered into the pulsating crowd and became one with the Listerites—that is, after taking the advice of a wise soul and watering my smart brain cells once more.

