

# Happy Fun Times Distribution

## By Robert Norton

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#### I've never seen a sluttier snack treat

"Who wants a corndog?" Sid, a thirty-seven year old from here in Portland, Oregon announces over the stage microphone.

I'm at the Nite Stik, a strip joint that just moved in next to the Rolling Hills Adult Care Facility on SE 82<sup>nd</sup> Street. Sid is the reigning Northwest Annual Stripper Trials (NASTis) champion and he is taking the stage tonight to defend his title against a field of thirty beefy contestants from all over the Pacific Northwest and Canada. I'm an intern at the local weekly newspaper and I'm here because I mistakenly admitted to a senior reporter that I've never seen a male stripper perform.

When they hear Sid's voice, the drunk and titillated crowd of rowdy gay men and squealing bachelorette parties rush to the edge of the stage, pressing their excited bodies into a pulsing mass of flesh as they compete for the best view of the action. Loud techno music begins to thump and throb out of the ceiling mounted speakers and Sid struts onto the stage dressed as a ballpark snack vendor with a tray of steaming corndogs slung around his neck. A few people in the audience laugh, but most have already seen his act.

"I don't mind if the audience thinks I look ridiculous. This is entertainment. It's supposed to be fun," Sid explains later with a wink.

He is wearing a bow tie and white button up shirt with Happy Fun
Times Distribution embroidered on the back and a patch that reads Sid
stitched on the front. The health code requires that all food handlers must

cover their hair, so his long black mane is pulled back into a ponytail and wrapped inside a hairnet that looks like a spider web stuck to his head.

Sid scans the crowd with his sparkling, mischievous eyes and then begins trading plump corndogs for articles of clothing from the audience. A giggling middle-aged woman slingshots a pair of pink lace panties towards his feet and Sid hands her a corndog with a suggestive mustard smile painted on its greasy little face. I swear I've never seen a sluttier snack treat. A stout Latin man in the front row asks for two and then flings his jeans and t-shirt onto the stage, leaving himself only a pair of tight red briefs. The crowd cheers as the Latin man puts both corndogs into his mouth at the same time. He probably won't be going home alone tonight.

"Years ago, I worked as a snack vendor doing basketball games and concerts. One night I showed up for a shift at a strip club and forgot my fireman outfit, so I took the stage in my work uniform. I made some good tips that shift, so I just stuck with it. The tough part is making sure that the corndogs are warm when it's time to dance. Nobody wants cold meat in their mouth," Sid giggles. "I tried to incorporate a cart into the routine a couple times, but it didn't work. They're big and heavy, and one time I forgot to set the brake and it almost rolled into the crowd."

When the snack tray is empty, Sid whips his hairnet into the frenzied crowd, removes his condiment stained shirt with a practiced flick of the wrist, and then he begins to dance. Patrons toss dollar bills onto the stage and Sid clicks the buttons on his heavy change-belt, showering them with nickels and

dimes.

"I'm the only stripper that'll give you change for a dollar. I'm getting old for this business. I'm not so sure if this is worth a dollar anymore," Sid titters like a little girl as he pinches a roll of fat on the side of his hairless belly. "I'm not as hard or attractive as these young studs, so I need a gimmick to get the crowd into it."

Sid wiggles and shakes his hips so the change-belt jangles, coaxing whistles from the crowd. Then he slides his pants off, revealing a tiny pink thong. To my relief, the full-monty is not allowed here at the Nite Stik. He invites the Latin man on stage and they dance together. Then the music stops just as the audience is begging for more and Sid courteously returns the pile of clothes to the patrons, but I notice that he keeps the pink lace panties.

#### Better than a cat show

Sid has won the NASTis three years in a row, matching a record set by 70's gay porn legend Rod Holder, whose real name is Stub Harrison and is serving as a judge this year.

"I was a sexy man. I was what you would call a real cowboy. I didn't need all these gimmicks to get some cash. Hell, I didn't even dance. I just walked on stage with some grease on my chest, a pair of boots on my feet, and a cigarette in my mouth. But now there are guys dancing prettier than girls and wearing costumes for Christ's sake," Stub complains between performances. "This is stripping. The sexiest man will win."

"How will you feel if Sid breaks your record and wins a record fourth NASTi in a row?" I ask, deciding this is better than the cat show I had to cover last week.

"He's got some tough competition. This is the first time we let the Canadians compete. I thought they would be a bunch of roughneck loggers with long beards, but they sent over some handsome men," Stub says and points at Thugz, a black French-Canadian with enormous muscles from the Le Sud-Ouest borough in Montreal. "But if by some miracle Sid does win, it won't mean much to me. I've got other records. I've still done more feature length porn films than anyone else. He hasn't even done one."

After his performance, Sid and I wait backstage for the results. He is visibly anxious but more comfortable than I am because we're surrounded by half-

naked men rubbing oil and sparkles on each other.

"I noticed that you kept a pair of panties," I ask. He blushes and holds them up so I can see the phone number written in the crotch in black eyeliner.

"I made a grand at a private party last week and I only worked an hour. I've got bills to pay," he says and pulls handfuls of sweaty dollars out of his thong and arranges them into neat piles. Then he counts them up, slides them into a merchant money pouch, and slathers anti-bacterial sanitizer onto his hands. "I just bought a cute little convertible, my retirement account is in the crapper thanks to this economy, and it's a lot of work looking this good at my age: gym membership, tanning parlor, waxes, blah, blah, blah."

"And the winner of the 2010 NASTis goes to," Rod Holder begins and the contestants gather into a group hug. Sid stays seated with me, but I notice that he has his hands pressed together in his lap under the table like he's praying. "The nastiest guy around, Thugz."

Thugz swaggers onto the stage and grabs the golden dollar bill shaped trophy as gangster rap music pounds through the speakers.

"It's alright. I didn't think I'd win this year, especially with Rod on the panel and his record on the line. But maybe it's time to hang up the snack tray. I've got a brother-in-law in real estate. Would you buy a house from an honest face like this?" he asks with a forced smile. "This is a tough business. I'm not making the tips anymore and maybe this is the beginning of the end, but I have to admit, I still enjoy the attention."

"Will you compete next year?" I ask.

He twirls the lace panties around his index finger, his long hair hanging down into his eyes as he stares at the small roll of fat hanging over the elastic waistband of his thong. Then he pulls out his phone and dials the number written on the panties.

"I don't know, but I need some cheering up. I feel like a party."

#### THE END