

# NEW YORK CITY

## NEW YEAR'S ROCKIN' PEE



BY RICH KANE

Dick Clark is a *big pussy*. Every New Year's Eve, he sits safely perched above Times Square while hosting his eternally abysmal, teen-pop-laden, countdown TV show, oblivious to the hellish, steamy cesspool of human body fluids coagulating on the Broadway pavement many stories below.

This grotesque, stomach-and-bladder-contents cocktail is what a *real* Times Square New Year's Eve is all about.

But you wouldn't know it if you grew up in the '70s, weaned on annual viewings of *Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve*, which makes this annual New York City tradition out to be *THE MOST HAPPENING, GOT-TO-DO-IT-ONCE-BEFORE-YOU-DIE EVENT EVER!* So this past December, flush with those creaky old childhood memories, I finally got to experience the monster in person. All of my friends tell me the lingering stench of puke and pee is finally starting to wear off.

Watching a Times Square New Year's on the tube ain't nothin' like the real thing. Everyone doesn't just show up an hour before the ball drops—you've got to get there really early to make sure you'll even *be* in Times Square. Anything not in the six-block area between 42nd and 48th streets, and you might as well stay home. I arrive about six hours before midnight to see the NYPD busy forming large square holding areas out of wooden barricades to contain the hordes of revelers. Sort of like livestock pens, each one has a capacity of about 400 people, leaving just barely enough room for everyone to move. Once a pen is maxed out, it's closed off, and another one opens. These pens are spread out all across the square, and they fill up quickly.

At 6 p.m., the big, gaudy crystal ball gets raised to the top of the pole it'll drop from at midnight. I stake out a choice spot beneath a giant neon Kodak sign, smack in the heart of the Square. It's the perfect locale, one where I can just sit on the asphalt, read my *Village Voice* and wait. No problem; it'll go fast.

At 7 p.m., lots of loud music and flashy graphics on the Jumbotron screens above announce that it's the New Year in Dublin—this will continue each hour with a new time zone right up until midnight. About this time, I notice a slight logistical problem, a natural disaster waiting to happen: while anyone can leave the pens if they want to, the police will not let them back in, and there are no portable toilets anywhere inside the pens. *Hmmm* . . .

At 8 p.m.—Happy New Year, Azores, Portugal!—I see a youngish girl of about

20 with her torso arched over a wooden barricade. Her face is turning lovely shades of pink, red, green, purple, yellow and blue, and it's not a reflection of all that neon, either. Suddenly, a fabulous, chunky stream of pale-pink puke projects violently from her agape mouth, lumps hurtling over one another and plummeting to the inky black pave-

ment below. The spray hits the Broadway asphalt and splashes every which way, just missing the feet of some passersby. A puddle builds, and this freshly made river of bile begins to ooze in my direction. Sitting, I figure, is no longer an option.

By 9 p.m.—Happy New Year, São Paulo, Brazil!—puke reservoirs have sprouted all around like rabid fungi. People are smoking pot just a baton

swing away from uniformed NYPD, who are obviously aware but also afraid of causing a riot or something if they try making arrests. People have been pounding down gallons of Demon Alcohol, too, which leads to an inevitable dilemma—where to whiz? No one's about to leave the pen (because they can't get back in, remember), so it's time to get creative. Someone notices the large cardboard trash boxes nearby that had filled past overflowing some time ago, and no one's coming around to empty them. So a few rebels take the initiative by turning them over and scattering the rubbish all over the street. But there's a higher, more immediate purpose afoot—a rambunctious teenage boy slits a trash box from top to bottom, forming a privacy shield, and gets two of his buddies to hold up each end just above the ground whilst he evacuates his bladder (it's a bit difficult to pull this stunt off by yourself, y'see). A pause, a grimace on the kid's face, and then I witness a steady stream of steamy liquid flowing underneath the cardboard shield, heading swiftly toward the gutter. When he's done shaking off, someone asks him if they can borrow his handy device, and he obliges. If he had been smarter, he could have sold it, the idjit.

By 10 p.m.—Happy New Year, Santiago, Chile!—the cardboard pee shields have become the hit of New Year's and are passed around with the sort of peaceful, communal spirit that usually only free reefer inspires. For women, though, pee shield usage takes a little extra work, not to mention courage—squatting down and coming face-to-face with a slew of soggy male wet spots *can't* be pleasant. But this also requires some extra security—twice I've been asked to volunteer my services as a human shield so women can squat and squirt without worrying if their naughty parts are showing.

By 11 p.m.—Happy New Year, San Juan, Puerto Rico!—Broadway is a thick, Technicolor soup of pee, puke, spilled beer, and probably some blood and semen. Confetti has camouflaged the puddles by now, though, making things very dangerous if you just bought some new shoes and aren't watching where you step.

At midnight, the ball drops—Happy New Year, New York!—fireworks shoot off, people do a lot of yelling and face-sucking, and they can't seem to vacate the area fast enough, even without the cops' pissy insistence. Everyone is trampling over a minefield of broken chairs, soiled blankets, and maybe a body or two. There's also the unmistakable *squish-squish-squishing* of feet trudging through the random minilakes of stomach/bowel/bladder discharge. The stench? Don't ask. Looking up as I'm leaving, I notice Marilyn Manson performing live in the MTV studios. Nobody cares. **OC**

