

drag queen shows



more, 'Oh God, you know, do you want to do this?' But, yeah, I do."

Because Closet Ball will be Michael's first performance, he won't go it alone, he says. He'll have a sponsor who is an established drag queen and former Miss Gay Nebraska who will help him prepare.

Michael refers to his sponsor as a female.

"She's going to help me set up my whole look," he says. "It's a man. I just say 'she' because it's a drag queen."

Michael says he'll continue to perform if he likes it. After Closet Ball, Michael could dance in local drag queen shows and maybe enter the Miss Gay Nebraska and Miss Gay America pageants.

Drag-queen performing is big business, Michael says. In Las Vegas, billboards are lit up with names of drag-queen performers.

Competition between drag queens is sometimes fierce, he says. But Michael thinks he has an edge over local performers.

Michael is thin — one characteristic that sets him apart from most drag queens in the Midwest, he says. He strips off his panty hose, replacing them with tube socks and pulls on a pair of blue jeans that fit naturally around his 150-pound frame.

"There's a lot of drag queens that are larger than me. But they're good. They use the padding and give themselves the curves that they need."

Michael toys with the buckle of a purse as he talks. He picks up a blue bra and fidgets with the clasp.

Michael says he's at ease about wearing women's clothes.

"Did I ever dress up in my mom's clothes? Yes."

— “
I've gone to buy cigarettes and have had guys say, 'Hey, baby,' and stuff like that.
 — ”
Michael drag performer

But if his mother had known, he says, she might not have liked it.

Michael's mother still doesn't know he wants to be a drag queen. She knows Michael wears women's clothes, but, he says, she isn't as comfortable with his lifestyle as he is.

"Every time we go shopping she'll go, 'Did you guys go out and buy some more horrible clothes?' ... She doesn't care for the way I dress."

"My mother is a character. Sometimes she is completely accepting of everything and sometimes she is asking a million questions," he says.

She has asked why he has to be so feminine, he says as he pulls on his black leather Harley Davidson boots.

"I just told her it's a part of me," he says. "It's the way I like to dress. It's the way I like to present myself. Who likes to blend in with everybody else?"

"It's all just like freedom of expression."

But for now, Michael says his freedom to dress up is restricted to the night — a time when he doesn't have to explain himself to co-workers and relatives who don't know about his lifestyle.

"If everybody just accepted people and people got along, we wouldn't have all the bullshit that we do in the world today."

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