## Lesbians network at Chamber mixer

## Business event cuts out the testosterone

BY CASEY WOODS

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The Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce has been growing quickly, but not fast enough in one area: women members.

Of its approximately 390 members, 345 are men.

So, on Friday night, the

LAST NIGHT c h a m b e r held its first networker for women, partly to foster stronger

ties among current members and also as a way to make prospective members feel more welcome.

"Women don't like to walk into a room and see all men," said Yesi Leon, 31, a producer with Pandora Events and also a Chamber board member.

"The normal networking events are like 150 guys and 20 women. So this small, womenonly event needs to happen first, and then we'll be able to get the women to the larger events," she said.

Seventy guests attended,



BARBARA P. HERNANDEZ/FOR THE HERALD

**SOCIAL:** Members of the Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce mingle at a Friday night networking session.

women from a variety of walks of life: ministers, lawyers and stylists.

They mingled, their voices echoing off the moss-colored walls of host Annette Hogan's office.

In the background, Dido's

Here With Me played softly. Business cards rustled as they left pockets and were passed to new hands.

"I go to the [chamber's] mixers a lot, but it's been a boy thing," said Elizabeth Schwartz, 31, an attorney who does estate

## IF YOU GO

For more information on the Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, visit www.gogaymiami.com or call 305-534-3336.

planning for gay couples. "It's nice to support women in the community."

"I like to send my clients to gay accountants and gay shrinks, and this is the kind of place that I would meet those people," she added.

It was the vibe as much as the business opportunity that attracted some attendees.

"It feels good to come out and connect with someone who has been through the same things," said Miranda Fernández, 22, as she lounged near the spread of food sent over by Soyka Restaurant, one of the sponsors. "I don't do straight events, because I don't think anything in life is straight."

Fernández, who has an independent massage business, also came looking for female clients for other reasons. "I like working on women better than men," she said.

"Less hair."