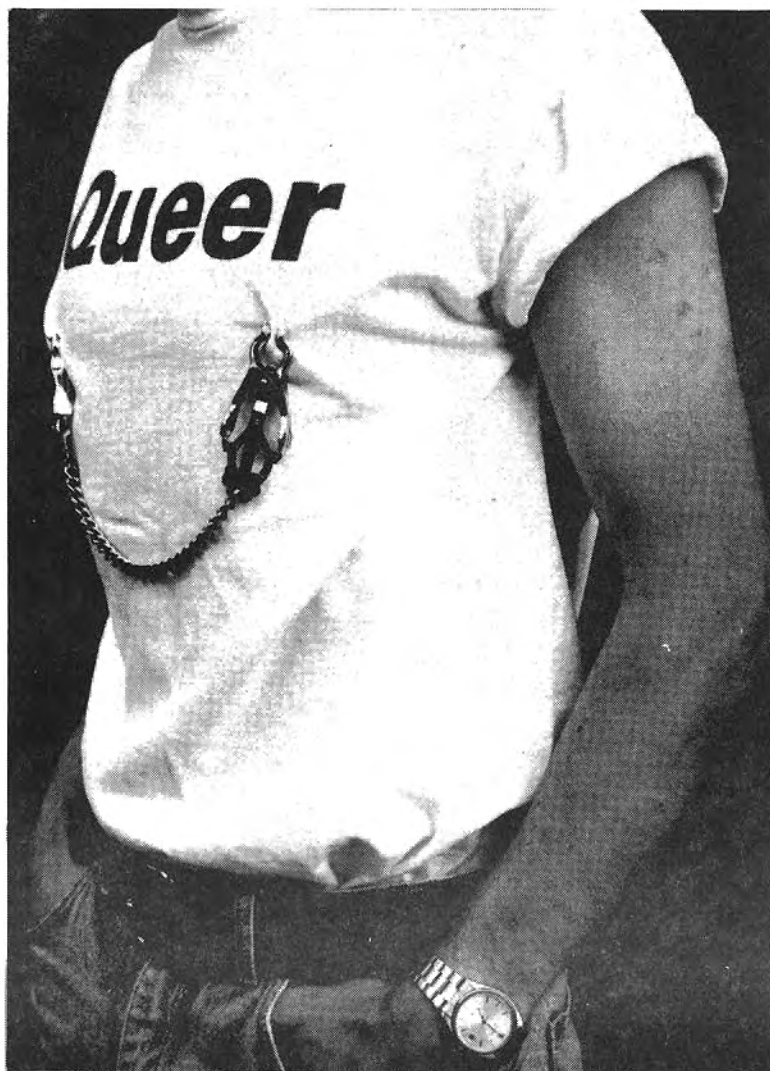

HOMOCORE

toronto

NO. 2

\$1.00



WHY ARE THERE SO MANY QUEER ZINES ?

There are over two hundred queer zines listed in *Holy Titclamps*. And there have got to be more than that out there.

Only a handful come from small towns. Most have addresses in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Minneapolis. About 15 come from Canada, mainly from Toronto and Montreal. A zine would seem a good way for people in more isolated places to communicate. But that's not mainly what happens.

What about those cities? Well, think about all the gay mens' bars where you feel really out of place. The main purpose of the bar is sell beer. And the AIDS memorial they're building in the park doesn't look like a celebration of life. It seems more like gay men burying the one idea they ever had in common. In Toronto Queer Nation organized some pretty good demonstrations but the meetings were a real pain in the ass. What remains of Queer Nation is an angry t-shirt and a zine called IN YOUR FACE.

Some people think of zines like works of art. For them what's important is above all to be unique and creative. The culture of zines comes from the punk and hardcore scenes of the late 1970s and 1980s. But today in Toronto there are only a handful of homo punks to turn up at a Fifth Column show.

This zine has taken an old name to write about something that doesn't have a name. A few downtown clubs where "alternative" queers hang out. Bands like Ministry, Nine Inch Nails and L-7. Fetish night and Dungeon parties. Shaved heads and skinhead boots. A tatoo of someone taking a piss.

Another fag killed. The pale skin of people in bars. Cops who sometimes save our ass. Zines that can't cross borders. Bookstores charged for selling dyke magazines. A community radio station with a "queer caucus" that never meets. Professional women who are convinced that censorship is the answer.

Latino homos and Mexican *lesbianas*. Grrrl riot. An angry Black writer talking to the Black church. Two-Spirited people in a leather bar. A punk dyke who just moved to the city. A 20-year old gay activist on welfare. The economic crisis. Cuts in AIDS funding. Shitty service jobs. Another sale of personal possessions. Jobless. Sipping a draft all morning. Looking out the bar window.

All the reasons we need more queer zines.

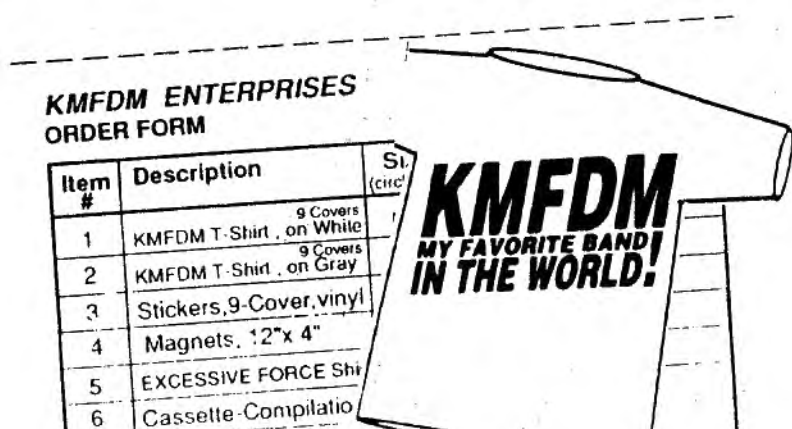
HOMOCORE Toronto
Box 271
Station F
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2L7

KMFDM ENTERPRISES

No majority for the pity. The band has been touring a lot in 1992. Fifteen concerts in June. Thirty-six in the Fall. A performance in a different city each night. It must begin to feel like a job. The October 20th show at RPM in Toronto was on a rainy Tuesday night. There were three queer-skinhead couples and some other queer faces in an otherwise mainly straight crowd.

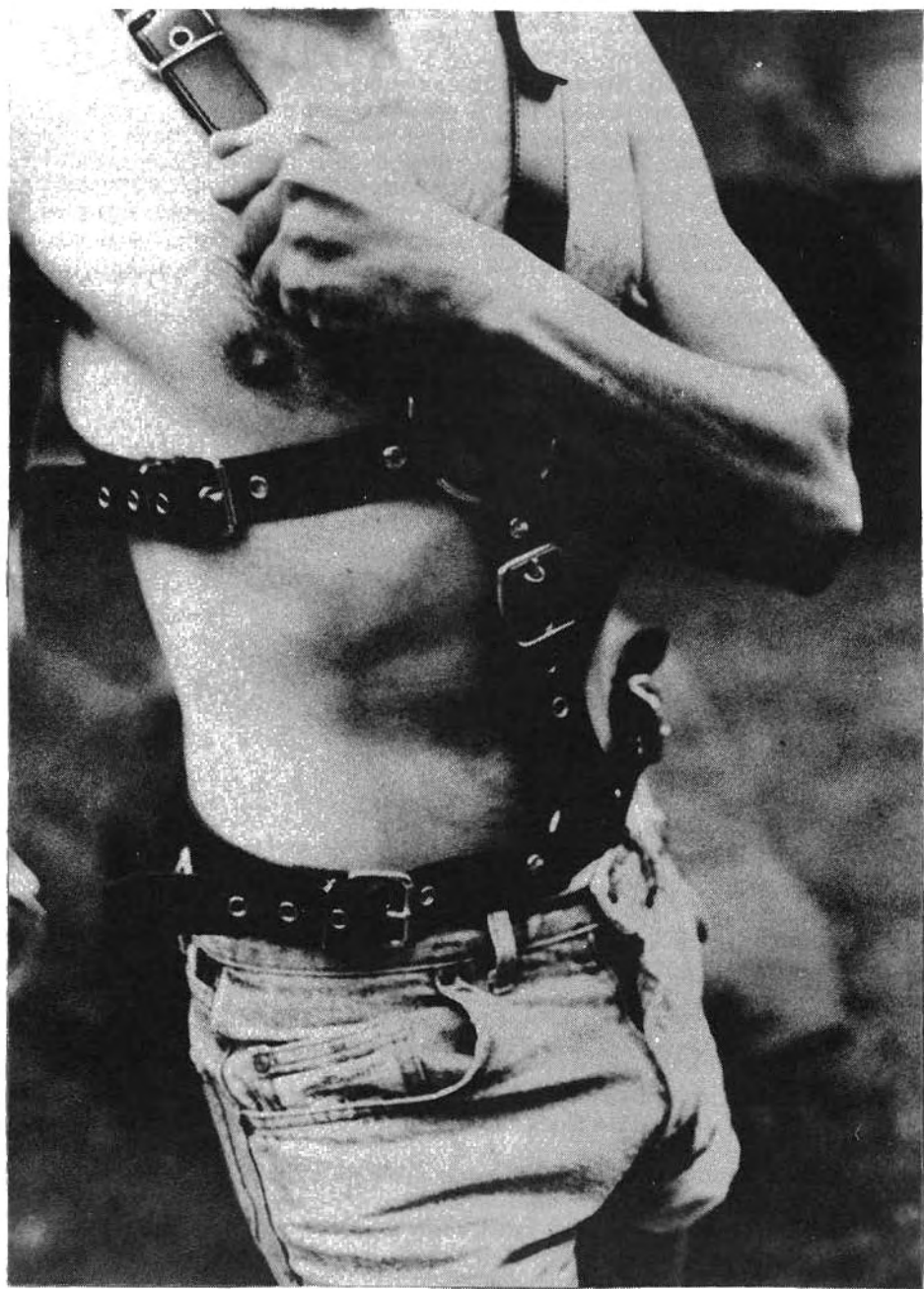
I have to admit that the Toronto concert in June was great. The Concert Hall was hot and sweaty. En-Esch started by telling the boys they could all be faggots for a night and from then on it kept getting better. The pit seemed to be full of queer skinheads who'd taken off their t-shirts. A dyke friend said when the band introduced a U-2 cover (really) they said some homophobic thing about fags, but I didn't hear it. The streetcar home was like a queer KMFDM fan club.

Apart from the music, this band is so commercial it's sickening. The CD liner has no lyrics or anything. Just an ad for KMFDM Enterprises. Okay, I admit I bought a MONEY t-shirt after the June concert--but just because I had a good time.



The October 20th concert wasn't so great. Nobody was into it. The band unfurled their name upsidedown and even wore t-shirts with the American flag the same way. It got absolutely no reaction. This crowd didn't know or care that the U.S. Marines carried the Canadian flag upsidedown before a baseball game on October 18th. It made me think about the difficulties of touring and also to watch for more irony in this band. Somebody has a sense of humour.

They worked through most of their recent material with energy and sweat. Most of the sweat was from En-Esch on electronic percussion and vocals. He was undressed in shaved head, fishnet tights, a tiny green kilt and underneath, a black g-string. Opposite him was Sasha in full military fatigues, army boots, dark glasses and a guitar shaped like a submachine gun. I thought of Front 242's paramilitary image and if I wasn't being so butch myself I'd have giggled. But that didn't do much for the woman vocalist who had to play the usual girl-singer role. The guitarists were nice guys, professionals.



JUST DISCO

FOR THE 90'S ?

By Alan O'Connor

Is industrial dance music just disco for the '90s? Is Alain Jourgensen the next generation's Donna Summer?

Candice Pedersen writing liner notes for *Kill Rock Stars*, a compilation of mainly new young bands like Bratmobile and Bikini Kill, says they're punk rock for the 90's and fuck alternative.

In Britain, punk rock had its fizzle of glory in 1976-77. It was a strategy of confronting the British public with whatever would outrage it. The Sex Pistols attacked the image of the Queen during her Jubilee year. Punk gleefully appropriated the image and leather of underground gay and S/M sex. It was all style. British punk deliberately confronted the mainstream media. The Sex Pistols did a television interview with Bill Grundy, but pissed off by his drunken attitude and sexism called him a "dirty fucking rotter" on primetime TV. The Pistols had record contracts with EMI and Virgin Records; but then refused to co-operate with their publicity machines.

In the United States, hardcore was very different. Black Flag songs are addressed to bored middle-class kids and not the general American public. Hardcore bands don't do interviews on family television, nor should they sign contracts with major record corporations. The music was speeded up so that it is unmarketable by corporate labels. Hardcore is not a style. The lyrics are political and they matter. The spoken-word albums of Jello Biafra and Henry Rollins are its logical conclusion. The message is against the U.S. government and

big corporations and for individual liberty and freedom of expression. Good American values. Hardcore is about local music scenes and small independent labels.

Unlike Punk in Britain, American hardcore doesn't have much space for homosexuality except as an issue of, well, everybody should be free to do what they want. Not much public fun for fags and dykes. In the mid 1980s, a tiny number of pissed-off hardcore queers invented the word homocore. A lot of camp and a lot of style. Homocore is definitely an un-American activity.

In Toronto, while the boys were mostly working on their image, the girls were busy making music. Fifth Column is still out there. The Nancy Sinatra's subvert everything that nice girls and nice songs stand for. But most homo 'zines are not about music at all. In Toronto today, there are zines and the occasional video, but queer punk seems like something from a past era.

Queers who dislike the disco and HiNRG of gay and lesbian bars tend to hang out in clubs that play industrial dance music (Nine Inch Nails, Revolting Cocks, KMFDM) or Seattle grunge (Nirvana, L-7). Check the labels of these bands. They're a long way from hardcore's resistance to big corporations.

Total volume 1

This is the first issue of a limited edition CD and magazine package which sells for about \$20. The CD includes such "industrial" bands as Front Line Assembly, Fini Tribe and Coil. It's a collection of imaginative sounds mixed with a heavy dance beat.

The magazine includes articles on computer hackers, secret societies, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the "plight of the North American Indians", Muzak, the Society for the Eradication of Television, Wilhelm Reich's theories of sexuality, cults and psychological coercion, the KKK and the power of the Rockefeller family. In other words, it's the usual confused themes of technology, conspiracy, mind control and mysticism associated with Genesis P-Orridge of Industrial Records, Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV. They have a certain fascination but as a way of understanding how to fight back against political and economic power these ideas are worse than useless.

Communication technology is neither so mysterious in its operation nor so powerful that it cannot be put to other uses. Political power is more complicated than a conspiracy master-minded by small numbers of people. And speaking of "primitive" and "Indian" culture forgets the history of conquest by European armies and the resistance by indigenous peoples, of many different cultures, which continues today.

People who know industrial music through dance club hits by Ministry and Front 242, know upbeat music with a heavy beat. It is often experienced as angry and energetic music--an empowering experience for queers who don't intend to take any shit. Nonetheless, a package like *Total* shows that industrial music was founded in a different and quite confused ideology.

PO Box 284, Glasgow G12 9AW,
Scotland UK.

But is it disco for the 90's? Disco was gay music. It was about shaking you ass with all those other fags. It was about this safe enclosed space that everyone was in for a fuck. That little sexual utopia excluded quite a few people and anyway it didn't last too long. Disco culture is totally unconvincing for anyone who came out after AIDS.

So we're back to style. The industrial/grunge hybrid has everything that's interesting to smart girls and boys who are busy reinventing sex: fetish g-strings, black leather, skinhead boots, tattoos, bondage, S/M and body piercing. Lyrics of songs like "Head Like a Hole" and "Wargasm" are against big money and war and also about explicit, in-your-face sex. The lyrics would likely piss off mainstreet North America. The heavy electronic beat and the wall of sound is not a little community shaking its ass but the calculated, public fury that Queer Nation demonstrations occasionally managed to express.

State of the Union: A DC Benefit Compilation

The main purpose of the Discord label is to document the DC hardcore scene which includes such well-known bands as Fugazi. The State of the Nation tape costs \$6 and for a dollar Discord will send the large 12-page booklet that comes with the record. It's packed with lyrics and band photos, information on consumer boycotts, on apartheid and military spending. It's also got a statement by the Chief of the Suquamish people in what is now the State of Washington, a radical booklist and the addresses of some 30 radical organizations. There is a statement in a small box about the need to FIGHT AIDS, NOT ITS VICTIMS.

The first song is a rap/industrial number which samples Northern Cheyenne singers, Malcolm X, Jello Biafra and much else. After that, many of the bands do fast but very listenable DC hardcore numbers with lyrics on topics such as sexual harrasment and racism. There are some slower songs and several women singers. Heard along with these bands the lyrics of Fugazi's strong performances seem almost vague: "In defence of humans/ Lay down your gender pride/ We're born into our bodies/ No chance to decide.." After all, whatever bodies we're born into, we can decide to do quite different sexual things with them..



Discord Records, 3819 Beecher St. NW Washington DC 2007.

Coming out of hiding

by Lily Braindrop

This sensible article on coming out was first published in the "Absolutely Queer" issue of Maximum Rock'n'roll (June 1992). Although written for American readers (we made a few small changes for Canada) it's well worth reading.



For young Queers, the question is not whether or not to come out, but rather how much... or just plain *how*?

At least one on ten people is lesbian, gay or bisexual, yet in our home community (be it one of hundreds, thousands or millions of people), we often feel that we are alone in feeling a sexual preference that differs from that which is considered the norm.

It is this sense of isolation, combined with the homophobia so readily apparent in our culture, that all too often intimidates us young queers out of exploring our sexuality and developing satisfying platonic and sexual relationships with the the same ease as our more "socially approved" heterosexual peers.

Despite these obstacles, many (dare I say MOST?) of us do, at some point choose to acknowledge our sexuality, whether it be done via occasional clandestine sexual encounter, full-on militant public declaration, or some degree in between. The level to which anyone chooses to reveal her or his sexuality varies with the individual and her or his circumstance, and, with notable exceptions, the degree of openness is her or his own choice. You get to decide to what degree you want to acknowledge, act upon, accept and reveal your sexual preference. However far out you choose to come, here are resources and tips to help you cope with and hopefully enjoy, your queer life.

survival list. What to do, where to go, who to hook up with...

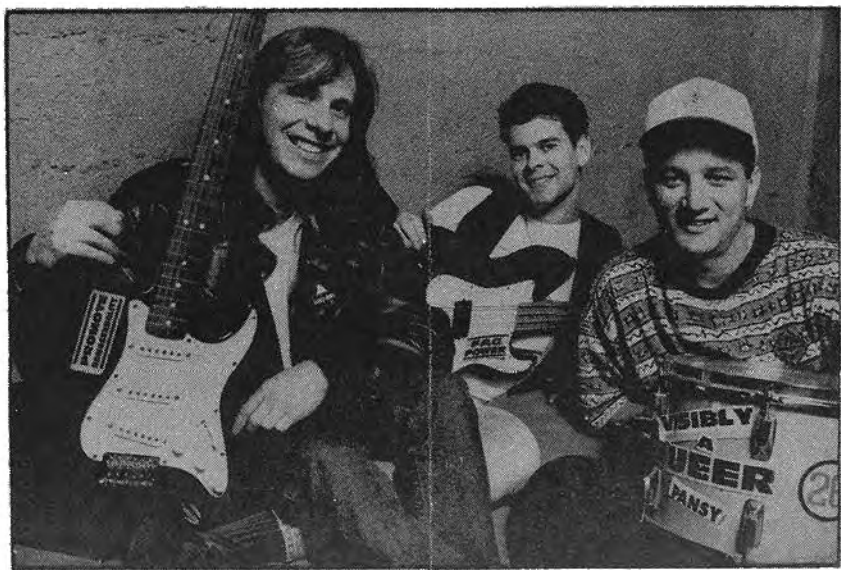
#1) ACCEPT WHO YOU ARE. You are not a monster, you are a queer. They are not the same thing. You are not even considered mentally ill because you are queer (they took homosexuality off the "sicko" list in 1973, probably before you were even born!). You are A-OK. There are millions of others with the same feelings as you. If you don't believe me, reach out and you will find them. Which brings us to....

#2) ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH OTHER QUEERS. This can be as simple as approaching someone locally whom you know is queer

it may be a bit more challenging, requiring networking and/or travel.

Placing a classified ad in a 'zine is a good way to hook up with like minds. This may require you to get your own post office box if you (a) are leery of giving out your address, (which, by the way, you should be) or (b) you have nosy parents who read your mail. Post office boxes are \$35 a year in the USA and \$75 in Canada, and they are darned handy. You can not only receive your pen-pal letters there, you can also receive queer zines and other neat stuff.

If an openly-queer band comes to your area (like Fifth Column,



Pansy Division is a 1970s-style garage rock'n'roll band with just one difference. The lyrics are all explicitly about boys having sex with boys. Among the funniest is a song about being turned on by dicks that are curved rather than straight: "Curvature: Something that can peek out at me around the furniture." On some songs the joke gets a bit worn, though others include interesting observations, for example, about hippy boys. Pansy Division, *Undressed* (Cassette, US\$7). From P.O. Box 460885, San Francisco, CA 94146-0885.

Coming out... (cont.)

or the American bands Pansy Division and Tribe 8), go check them out. There are sure to be other queers in the audience, which can be quite a welcome change to those sweaty hetero boys hogging up the pit. It's a great place to meet friends, and the cruising is fabulous. Go, kid, go!

If you are the proud owner of a computer with modem, you can sign on to a queer computer bulletin board. Scan gay mags for the info, they exist in a healthy quantity, and they are great networking channels.

If you live near a city, there's probably at least one queer hang-out there. The problem is, most of the queer hang-outs are bars, that obviously, don't allow minors. Some places, in the name of queer diplomatic immunity, will allow minors in under the condition that they don't drink alcohol because they know damn well they have no where else to go. If you are carded or stopped at the door, a little friendly chat may get you in. Try it and see.

A few words about big-city queer life: the larger the community, the less friendly it can seem. Just like the punk scene, the queer scene is a small, ostracized, and therefore, occasionally defensive and stand-offish minority. Be patient and irresistibly affable and chances someone will crack a smile and start talking to you eventually. Please disregard the previous tip if you are

exceptionally cute. Then you will have people crawling all over you. Which seques nicely into...

#3) MAINTAIN AT LEAST ONE NON-SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP. Of course you're horny, that the beauty of youth. However give yourself the safe space of a purely platonic friendship. As you know you're bound to fall out with a lover far quicker than with a friend, so keep a few buddies on the safer side of your bed--the outside--so you have a dependable confident with which to share all of that glorious queer drama.

#4) LEARN HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF. Sound paranoid? Nope. Queer-bashing is a very real threat. Regardless of whether you wear a t-shirt that says "I'm a dyke", or walk hand in hand with your same-sex partner or hang out near the gay bars or just look "like a fag", there's somebody out there who would like to thump your noggin with a baseball bat. Be prepared! Take a self-defence course and carry a whistle to attract attention to the scene if you're attacked. Do not take this lightly. Reported incidents of queer-bashing have sky-rocketed in recent years. Don't become another bleeding pulp of a statistic. You are worth defending. Learn how to do it.

#5) SAVE YOUR MONEY. Get a job, pocket your allowance, sell your Docs, whatever. It's a good idea to save some cash so you can travel to the queer-haven of your choice, buy some queer 'zines, or, if need be, relocate yourself.

#6) KEEP YOUR WITS ABOUT YOU. If you get kicked out of your house or you need to run away, (see #5). Try to find a sympathetic friend or relative to stay with while you figure out what to do next.

If you head for another town for escape, you will obviously need food, lodging and all the basic necessities of life. If you have saved your money, you will be covered for a while, but eventually that money may indeed run out. Think about what to do if this happens.

If you are unable to find regular employment due to being underage or lack of opportunity, you may find sex work or drug dealing to be one of your few employment opportunities. (This is not an encouragement to do this kind of work, rather, it's acknowledgement of plain truth.) If you do this kind of work, TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF. Always, always insist on safer sex with tricks and try to keep your nose clean with your co-workers and superiors.

Again, try to save your money. Sex and drug work often equal fast money, and fast money usually spends fast. Be prudent. Do not open a checking account if you are trying to avoid being tracked down by your parents. Be wary of anyone offering to open an account for you in their name. The best thing is to buy travellers checks. They are harder to trace than regular checks, and unlike cash they can be replaced if stolen. You do need legal ID to cash them so try to get a

government issued ID at some point (such as a driving licence), preferably before you leave home.

#7) GET TO KNOW QUEER CULTURE. Look up the listings of magazines such as *The Advocate* in the USA or local lesbian/gay magazines like *XTRA!* in Toronto. They are often mainstream and fairly conservative in viewpoint but will contain listings of community resource groups that can offer you support and education about your sexual preference. Such information can be invaluable in helping you figure out how to be as comfortable with yourself as possible. Yes, there is life outside of heteroville. As a final note, we come to point...

#8) BE KIND TO YOURSELF DURING YOUR COMING-OUT PROCESS. The frustration that comes from being queer in a homophobic world can be immense. Do not take it out on yourself. You are not responsible for the bigotry and ignorance surrounding queerness, and your sexual preference is just as valid as anyone else's. Don't turn your frustration inward and try to blot it out with excessive drug or alcohol use. Understand it takes time to find a cozy queer niche for yourself. Be patient and work to feel good about yourself and make good connections with people, whether they be face-to-face, or via mail or modem. Doing so will give you someplace to land, be yourself and hang out... however far out you choose to hang.

VIDEO OF SERGIO

wearing jeans with two jagged holes at the knees, a T-shirt with suspenders, and a red bandana headband: he's both punk and vato. His face is expressive and mercurial: a hard look gives way to a quirky smile, blends into a distant gaze.

Sergio's family and friends are gathered in the backyard of a modest barrio home on a sunny afternoon. The children shout and dash about. Someone puts on some music-----a cumbia rhythm. Sergio beams. He gets up to dance.

Only a few people follow Sergio's lead. The rest are still seated, content to watch. As he bends his knees, his skin shows through the holes in his Levis. He smiles, tosses his head back like an outrageously proud macho, and then swings his hips exaggeratedly, sensually.

Closeups on the faces of the family members seated around the impromptu dance floor. There is some laughter, perhaps from mild embarrassment, but not a single face betrays ill feelings. Sergio closes his eyes, stretches his arms wide, opens his palms and twirls about... --(Los Angeles, March 1988)

From, Rúben Martínez, *The Other Side: Fault Lines, Guerilla Saints and the True Heart of Rock 'n' Roll*, published by Verso in 1992.

WORDS ON PAPER

Reebee Garofalo (editor),
*Rockin' the Boat: Mass Music
and Mass Movements*
(Boston: South End Press,
1992).

Does music make any difference? This book argues that it does. Not in small hardcore scenes that shun the music business like unsafe sex. But in large fundraising and awareness events like the Red, Hot and Blue tribute to Cole Porter. The argument is that properly organized mega-events can communicate a radical message to a very large audience and properly channel money where it is needed. Sure, there are also concerts that are badly organized. And the writers in *Rockin' the Boat* wouldn't claim that Red, Hot and Blue is the most political of music events. But it did get across information to a lot of people and some of video is subversive. They have an argument. The two booklets that come with the CD are excellent.

On the other hand, the more recent Freddy Mercury memorial concert was really depressing because we didn't control the meanings (those poor fags all dying). . David Bowie on his knees offering

an "Our Father" should have been booed off the stage. And many performers seemed unclear about whether they were supporting some vague AIDS research (to stop straights catching it) or services for persons living with HIV/AIDS and political action against homophobic governments.

There is still a lot to be said for a hardcore ethic. Against big corporations and for local control. But not everybody is part of a local scene and not all issues can be tackled at that level. *Rockin' the Boat* makes a good argument for taking a more careful look at the political effects of mainstream rock musicians.

Queer Sites

Studies in Lesbian
and Gay Culture

May 13-15, 1993

For information write:

Queer Sites Conference
c/o New College
University of Toronto
Toronto, ON
M5S 1A1

SISTER DOUBLE HAPPINESS

Gary Floyd is "a queer singer in a band" called Sister Double Happiness. The rest of the band, he explains, are straight. They do an amazing cover of a Dead Kennedy's song on the Alternative Tentacles 100th release, *Virus 100*. Gary Floyd sings in a powerful blues voice: "It's a holiday in Cambodia: Don't forget to bring a knife."

Back in 1980, Gary Floyd was the singer in an Austin, Texas hardcore band called The Dicks.

Almost a decade later, Sister Double Happiness (SST Records, 1988) still has some of that punk energy underneath its melodic blues style. But this song is about San Francisco in the late eighties.

I swear to God I hardly messed around
That modern plague put me into the ground

I call my mama, she said "Don't come home."
My friends shun me, I'm all alone
Before they touch me they put on gloves
C'mon, people, I need some love.

Hardcore clearly has its limits. That last plea could only be said by moving out and into the tradition of the blues. Listen for yourself.



ESCORTS AND MODELS

Borghesia is one of the most interesting industrial bands in Europe. And *Escorts and Models* (Play it Again Sam, 1988) is their most queer album.

The band started as a theatre group formed by sociology and philosophy students in Yugoslavia. The music is grandiose with a heavy beat. Only part of *Escorts and Models* is in English. The words are stripped down, clever and unmistakably about queer sex.

"Naked, Uniformed, Dead," is a string of words like city, cruising, leather, black. "Beat and Scream" is about master-slave sex games. Another song asks "Am I a man machine, a sex machine, a fuck machine... Am I a life machine." Nine Inch Nails themes for queer art-school students? Maybe.

TORONTO

Sucktion Thursdays at the Boom Boom Room (650 Queen St W) got a new DJ a few months back and the music improved. There is still not much hard techno or industrial. The night is sometimes advertised as straight and other times as wildly queer (see below). Most nights it seems kinda confused.

SHOK Sundays moved in November to 9 Dundonald and soon after expanded to Friday and Saturday. SHOK Sunday is still the best night out. The crowd is mostly straight but people have worn fag t-shirts. When will those queer skinheads smile a bit and stop being so fucking shy?

Dyke Night is at the Boom Boom Room on Fridays. The policy used to be that 20 percent fags is okay, but the doorman has recently insisted that "men must be escorted by a lady." What night?

The third get-together of homo-punk and queer zines

SPEW 3 Toronto

May 15 and 16, 1993

Box 271
Station F
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4Y 2L7



SUCKTION THURSDAYS

