

Ten seconds in a pseudo-queer's brain

A story for the still unsure

by Kimberly Lynn Stedman

"...at least, those of us who are REALLY queer and not just doing it to get attention."

I noticed she had been careful to cross out that last clause in her note to me, but still keep it scaldingly legible. It showed restraint, but still gave the full impact of her contempt for me. I looked up at her over the page and she flashed me a razor-white smile. Ouch, I thought.

Wait, what if she's right? Wait, wait...I do tell just about everybody I meet that I'm queer—could I really be doing it just for show? What if I'm really just as straight as a rod? What if I'm just playing around?

How can she be so sure that she's genuinely queer? Is there some birthmark that all Real Queers have that no-one has told me about? How can they all be so sure that they're Real Queers when it's such an intangible thing?

They all look so rock-solid sure that they're Real Queers—I don't feel like that at all! God—what if I've been going to all these Queer Nation meetings and all those queer functions and I'm really just as straight as a ruler? God, I'll bet they can spot me a mile away! I must look like a fool! I'll bet they lean over to one another and say "There is a HETEROSEXUAL in our midst, comrades," and raise their right eyebrows, and then go and secretly tell everyone there about how I don't belong with—I bet they're all outside right now, forming a big mob to ostracize me from the queer community; they'll barge in and tear off my honorary "Fuck Your Gender" sticker, and then—Or maybe they won't even want to degrade themselves by coming face to face with a little wannabe Pseudo-Queer, maybe they'll just write me a note and tack it to

my door with a vibrator filed to a point, and on it will be "Vee know hvat yeew are, yeew deesgusteeng ztraight leetle HET-ER-O-SEX-U-AL" scrawled in red lipstick and—

But, wait, wait, wait, wait just a minute here. What am I accusing myself of here? Experimenting? Am I actually accusing myself of experimenting? What the HELL is wrong with experimenting? I'll be DAMNED if I'm going to be ashamed of EXPERIMENTING. Isn't experimenting what makes life so fantastic? If I get a thrill out of going to bed with a woman because it feels kinky, isn't that a thousand times better than going to bed with men and NOT getting a thrill because it DOESN'T feel kinky? What do I mean, not queer ENOUGH? They're not going to analyze me! I know them, and they're not like that at all! They're NICE! And even if there are a few queers like her who do judge who the Real Queers are, what do I care? As long as I'm enjoying what I'M doing and I'm not hurting anyone else, how can anyone put me down?

Yes, I DO tell everybody I'm queer, God-damn it, and I DO get attention for it. More power to me! There is absolutely nothing wrong with loving whomever you want, and I, a Pseudo-Queer, am doing a lot more to raise people's consciousness to that fact than she is by never telling a soul except people she knows won't mind!

And ATTENTION is FUN.

I looked at her again. I had stolen, and was wearing, her smile. I leaned over and said:

I do what makes me happy

I take a stand on what I believe

and I'm not ashamed of anything I am.

Can you say that?

The following is a list of businesses which advertise or otherwise support the Oregon Alliance, the monthly newsletter for the Oregon Citizens Alliance.

It is important that these businesses feel the effect of their support of hate.

Please call or write to each business, telling them you will not patronize their establishment as long as they support bias and hate.

OCA Family Business Listing

Steve's Appliance
4905 SE Woodstock
Portland, OR 97206
774-3809

John McCauley Auto.
1237 SE Hawthorne Blvd.
Portland, OR 97214
232-6920

Best Buy In Town
21600 NW Cornell Rd.
Hillsboro, OR
645-6665

Edward M. Jones and Co.
7906 NE Airport Way
Portland, OR 97218
249-1400

Casey's Plumbing
PO Box 20494
Portland, OR 97202
253-6947

Steve's Imports
7273 SE 92nd
Portland, OR
771-6701

Commercial Bindery
Works, Inc.
280 19th St. SE
Salem, OR 97302
378-7278

Thomas G. Edel, P.E.
Portland, OR
232-8100

Life Essentials
A Barber Salon
1429 SE Hawthorne
Portland, OR 97214

Berg Christian Enterprises
PO Box 66066
Portland, OR 97230
777-4101

Trim-Flex Vinyl Co.
4329C NE Killingsworth
Portland, OR 97218
287-9690

Jubilee Cleaning
8602 N Woolsey
Portland, OR 97230
286-2101

Cornerstone Fencing
6021 SW 48th
Portland, OR 97221
244-6345

The Doorworks
1935 NW 27th Ave.
Portland, OR 97210
274-8925

Brothers Plumbing
3757 SE 9th Ave.
Portland, OR 97202

What's in and what's out

Trends and fashions help lesbian and gay youth to answer "Where are the faggots and the dykes?"

by Paula Jean O'Brien

I started answering this question by compiling a list of trends and fashions that are either "in" or "out" according to lesbian and gay youth. More often than not, these trends and fashions offer a wonderful way to identify each other when out on the street. The list reads as follows:

▼ What's in ▼

Being "out"
Tattoos
Levi denim and leather jackets
Political pins
Backpacks
Pink triangles
Crewcuts
Silver hoop earrings
Birkenstocks
Flannel and Wool
The Indigo Girls
Two Nice Girls
Lavender and baseball caps
KBOO
Wire-rimmed glasses
Coffee houses and books
Windfire
Being politically vocal
Tom and Katie Potter
Wool
Hiking, camping and softball
Drag
Being young and gay

▼ What's out ▼

Homophobia
Nose-rings
Handkerchiefs
Baggy levis
Cafe Mocha
927
Slabtown
Michelle Shocked
Gay Bashing
Unsupportive parents, friends and employers
AIDS
Bi-level hairstyles
The Oregon Citizens Alliance
Fear and shame
Butch and femme
Being invisible to older generations (of gays and lesbians)
Men in super-tight jeans
Make-up
Drugs
Being old and straight

Being young is hard enough. Being young and gay or lesbian is a virtual hell. Many lesbian and gay youth depend on trends and fashions to identify each other for the purposes of socializing, dating, and political organization.

Isolation seems to be a common feeling among gay youth. Most would rather sit at home, in their parents' heterosexual household, instead of facing the angry world of heterosexism. Internalized homophobia is the certain cause of much agony for lesbian and gay youth, as well as for the older gay and lesbian population. Fortunately, many more gay and lesbian youth are making themselves visible through the trends and fashions on our list. Hopefully, this will help decrease homophobia.

Now, let's talk about trends. Tattoos are becoming increasingly popular. All sorts of tattoos from sea creatures to the Harley-Davidson logo. Tattooing is a timely art, especially for lesbian and gay youth, because it teaches strength and beauty, trust and bonding. Clearly, parents would find a tattoo disturbing, but when you consider the alternatives (drugs, drinking, theft, etc.) tattooing is, by comparison, an honorable pastime.

Spending time at local coffee houses seems to be another positive trend in the young gay and lesbian community. It is a way to relax, socialize, and learn about each other in an accepting atmosphere.

Fashion is also important in the youthful lesbian and gay community. Pink triangles (first placed on homosexuals by Hitler during World War II, particularly in concentration camps all over Europe) and button-fly jeans are on the rampage here in Portland. Earrings bearing our "secret codes" of pink and lavender seem to be everywhere. Fashion is probably the most important identifying factor for gay and lesbian youth, because clothes and accessories are a



Shannon, 21

"A tattoo is a form of self-expression more permanent than clothes." When asked what's cool for young lesbians and gays, Shannon replied, "To be incredibly outspoken."

"normal" part of everyday life for straights and homosexuals alike. We can get away with being more open and "out" with our clothing, jewelry and buttons.

Trends and fashions are so important to all people, especially in 1991. For lesbian and gay youth, they are a "life-line" and a support network for youth who wish to socialize and/or date. Trends and fashions created by gay and lesbian youth also let older gays and lesbians know that we exist. In a sense, clothes do make the man...and the woman.