

ARTISTS TO KNOW

BORN TO BE ALIVE



MERYL MEISLER

Suburbanites who plied the L.I.R.R. and the L.I.E. between Westhampton and Manhattan in the late 1970s—at least those documented by a nonconformist young woman from Massapequa, who carried her camera to the bars and bar mitzvahs, discos and day camps of Lawn Guyland—spent a lot of time dancing. They danced with abandon at weddings in Rockville Centre. They danced at Hot Dog Beach and at drag parties. They lined up to pogo drunkenly at CBGB. Some of them did the hustle topless in Times Square, some gyrated in G-strings at Cherry Grove. Meryl Meisner's incredibly evocative book *Purgatory & Paradise: Sassy '70s Suburbia & the City* is peopled by indelible New York characters including Ed Koch, Stiv Bators, Patti Smith, and Judy Jupiter (a go-go girl who became Studio 54's in-house photographer). In the North Massapequa domestic scenes, all butterfly wallpaper and plush wall-to-wall, and in the poignant portraits of high school friends dressed for prom in finest disco white and foxfur chubbies, we see a lost world that is both joyfully hedonistic and bruised, purple and black, around the edges.

On Shoulders at Dance Party, August 1977, Westhampton. From *Purgatory & Paradise: Sassy '70s Suburbia & the City*, available at strandbooks.com (\$45).