

the **free press**

Fall 2023

★ THE

★ Y2K ★

★ ISSUE

the **Best** of
2023

The scoop on the
hottest trends and
fall styles

You can become
Star status with
these looks

Flirt alert!!

Fashion, movies,
secrets and more!

Quiz: Which **Y2K icon** are you?

Y2K Baby!



letter from the editors

Hi Besties!

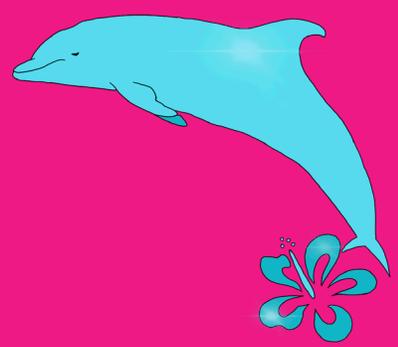
AH! Put me down! JK, luv that ur reading me... and welcome to the Free Press 2023 Y2K issue! In your hands is a collection of student made stories, articles, poems, and art which unapologetically take you back to the fierceness and nostalgia of the early 2000s. From fashion trends and movies, to our childhood memories, this magazine is a testament to the values of a generation, and how they have shaped how we choose to take up space in the world today.

Every generation is defined by the culture which brought it up, and many of us spend the rest of our lives escaping the rigidity and confines of that upbringing, but for just a moment, let's celebrate the past! In so many ways Gen Z thrives in this weird, dystopian technological age that's been created and constantly evolves alongside us. No one has a say in the world they come into, only the ability to move through it with as much dignity and intention as the space allows. This magazine explores just a corner of the early 2000's from the perspective of those who didn't fear the onset of a new millennium, but those who were delivered (dumped?) into it. We hope our words stir a big 'ol pot of childhood emotions for you and maybe inspire something fabulously new.

We'd like to congratulate our contributors for another incredible round of submissions; y'all make those middle pages mean something and without you there would be no magazine. Thank you to our esteemed and wildly beautiful e-board for creating another exciting and thoughtful magazine. I hope we continue to outdo ourselves.

Now kick back in a pair of your favorite flared, lowrise jeans, put your feet all the way up onto the coffee table, and chillax with a good old fashioned blast from the past.

**k l8r,
Lucas & Sam <3**



Art // Emily Gangloff

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MEET THE E-BOARD!



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Y2K INSPIRED MUNCHIES

Light up and Enjoy Your Favorite Childhood Movies for those Chill Nights!
By Sydney Sather

SHARK BOY AND LAVA GIRLS MIDNIGHT COOKIE SANDWICHES



1. Grab your favorite premade chocolate chip cookie mix and pop them in the oven
2. Scoop your ice cream in between two cookies and enjoy your trip to the dream world!

Spy Kids Chicken Finger Wrap

1. Crisp up some chicken fingers in the toaster oven while you prepare the toppings
2. Sliced avocado, tomato, lettuce, cheese, and some hot sauce will do the trick!
3. Warm up a tortilla wrap and put it all together for the perfect late night snack



She's The Man Dirt Cups

1. Combine chocolate pudding with Cool Whip to settle that sweet tooth
2. Add crushed graham crackers or oreos and gummy worms for a fun touch

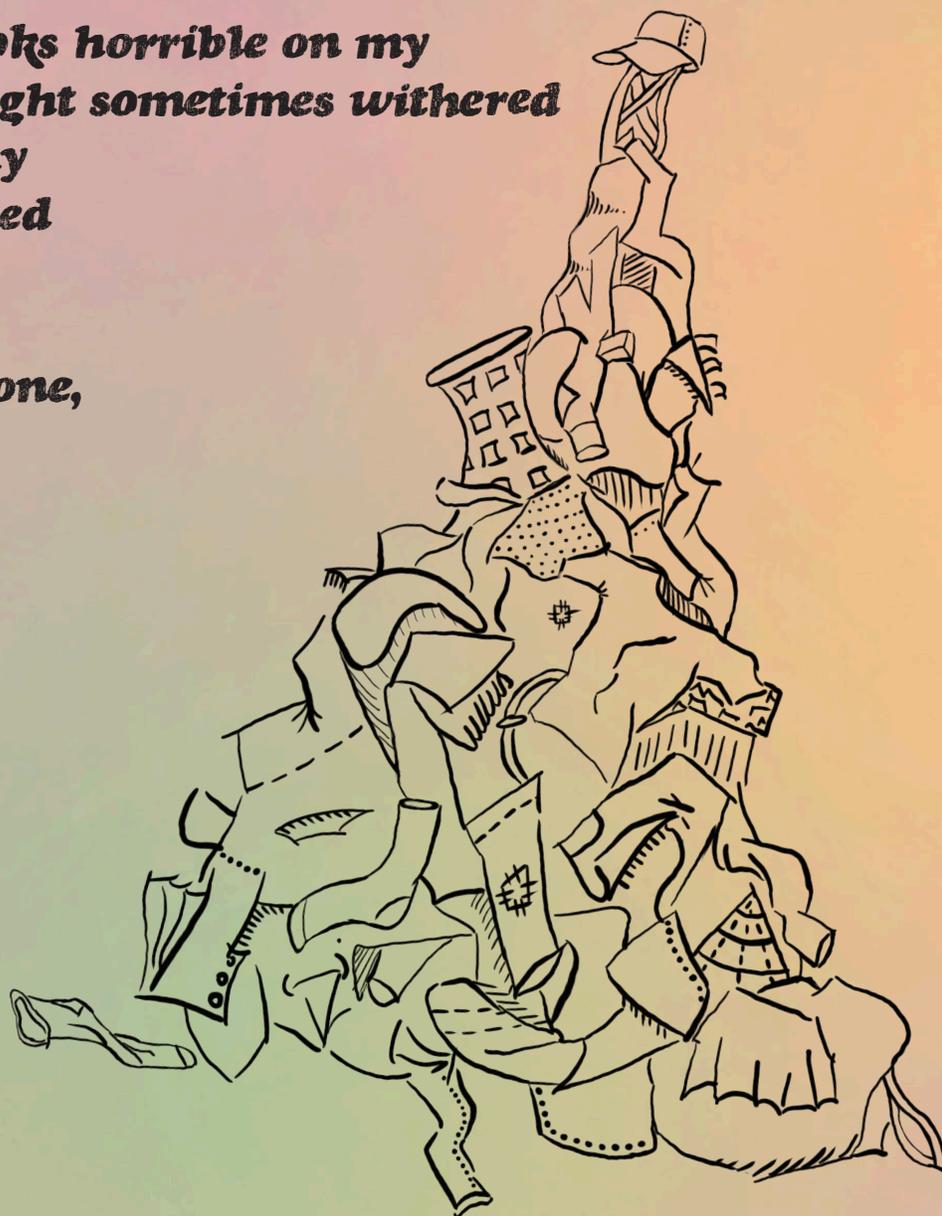
Unclothed

**Sifting through dead piles nothing to
express,
me in the changing room mirror.**

**Everything looks horrible on my
sometimes taugt sometimes withered
sometimes ashy
sometimes hated
skin.**

**I want a new one,
please?**

By Kevin Liu



Art // Lucas Martinez



Art// Kayla Huang

Empty Pantries

By Samantha Bunk

THERE'S NO FOOD IN THIS HOUSE.

THERE'S PLENTY OF FOOD.

NOT THE KIND I'M LOOKING FOR.

NOT THE KIND YOU WANT?

NO. I WANT THE KIND THAT FILLS YOU UP, THE KIND THAT CONSUMES YOUR STOMACH.

YOU WANT TO BE STUFFED?

YES, I WANT TO BE STUFFED. SO STUFFED MY STOMACH HAS CONSUMED ITSELF.

WELL WHAT DO YOU SEE?

I SEE NOTHING.

THERE'S FOOD IN THE FRIDGE.

THERE'S FOOD IN THE PANTRY.

I WANT SOMETHING THAT ISN'T HERE; I WANT SOMETHING YOU DON'T HAVE.

WELL, WHAT DON'T I HAVE?

I'M GOING TO BE FAMOUS.

So?

So, THERE WILL BE FOOD IN THE HOUSE.

BUT WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE FAMOUS?

So I CAN KEEP MY HAIR BLONDE.

MINE USED TO BE.

I KNOW.

IT CHANGED.

MINE WON'T.

I USED TO SAY THAT.

NOT IN THE SAME WAY.

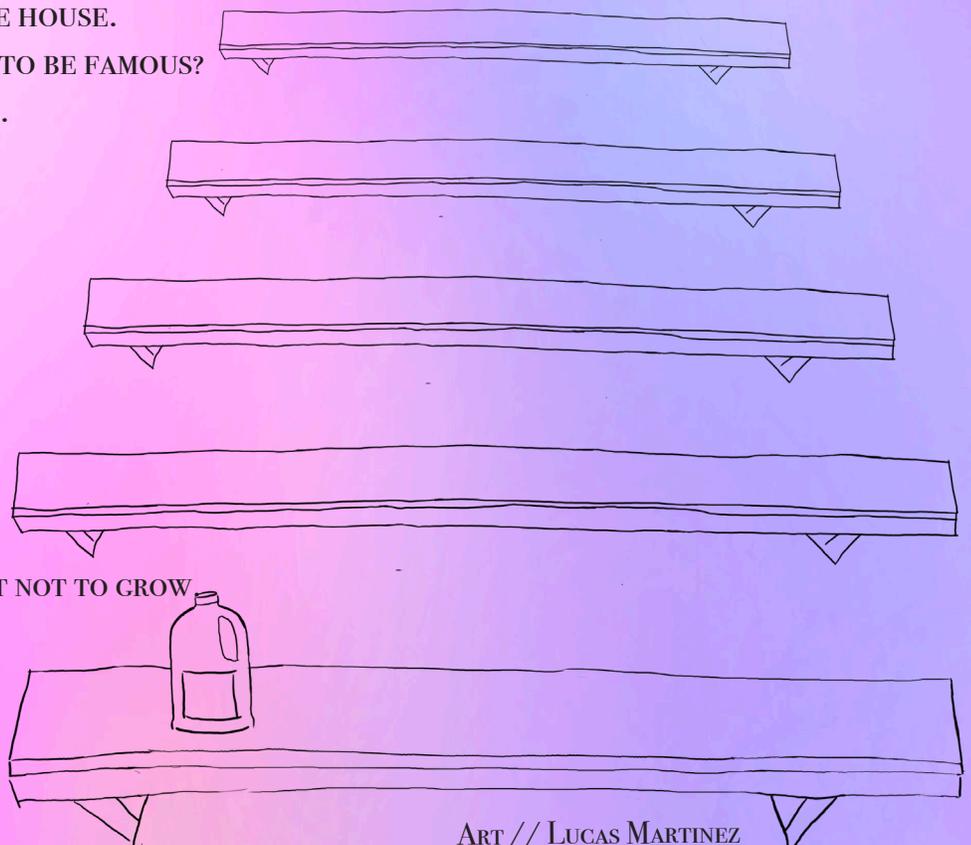
How so?

BECAUSE YOU DID. CHANGE.

HAVEN'T YOU?

I BEGGED EACH BONE EVERY NIGHT NOT TO GROW

BUT DID THEY?



ART // LUCAS MARTINEZ

WIZARD OF.

By Katherine Quinn

Does love embarrass you?

I found my burner email from middle school, with one outgoing message to soccerman@aol.com: "Can I talk to you about something? (No subject)." There was no follow up.

I never learned how to not cry when talking about him to my only friend in the girl's bathroom, underscored by the dripping faucet and the mildew growing between cracked pink tiles. That was the only space I could ever say what my heart only knew.

I was thirteen. I did not know anything about love or sex, nor did I have any desire or curiosity to know—that was for another time, in another world, one with a studio apartment. I'd wear Louboutins every day and play the role of someone respectable and important. What I did know, unlike anything else, was my need to be in his presence—to lay out on the paneled floor of the auditorium during rehearsals for the school play, where the brightness of the floor to ceiling windows burnt the wax finish on the wood so crisp you could smell it. He wasn't much of a talker. So, I'd offer him my opinions on the world in the pretentious way that only a thirteen-year-old can. He would listen, and never look away, and when I'd leave, he'd follow, waving at me through the window until I was out of sight.

I clutched it all so tight to my chest. I desperately wanted to articulate this feeling, but I'd completely choke up and sob at even the thought of all the world knowing. To me, it was all so embarrassing—that I spent my unoccupied hours drawing in my sketchbook, fantasizing about a life far away from all that I knew, to start a new life with someone I loved, where I could be happy, at a time in my life when I was so deeply, deeply sad.

Do you have any wishes so intimate, that to speak them out loud would prickle the air with static, where nothing you could say would make it sound smooth at all?

I'd like to think that I am among many women, whose innermost wish is that there will come a day when she stands at the top of a staircase, in a dress so tailored to who she is, that she is spiritually naked. This is her moment; one she prays she could dip in formaldehyde like a deer carcass and preserve forever and ever. Maybe that sparkling

and unfortunate moment comes when she is so small, that all love and beauty for the rest of her life are informed by that girl she was, at the apex of the room, in a dress that was chosen for her, in colors that someone else assigned and assessed with swatches and measuring tape, and said, "yes, this is the face of your crowning moment." For me, it was a blue gingham dress, and my hair was the longest it would ever be. That is the state of being I will forever associate with love, the image I will forever synonymize with beauty.

And in this secret wish, someone perfect will be at the bottom of the stairs, starry eyed, all for her. And in his mind, he will say, "I would love this woman even if she were clothed in a trash bag dress tied with a shoestring belt. None of this fuss matters to me." But it does, and he will never fully grasp how it was all so delicately planned. He's just a man.

I was thirteen then. I remember dropping him off at the house with linens on a clothesline in the backyard, where I signed my name with a black heart on his pink cast. For years, I'd make a wrong turn or two, just to pass that corner house on my bike ride home from work, close my eyes, and let the wind sweep me back to that moment in the same way it passed through the white sheets. Does it still embarrass me? Some days. Love is so infinitely embarrassing. But most days, I wished I'd said something more, when I was emboldened by spotlights and held stiff by hairspray.



WHICH Y2K ICON



favorite fashion trend?

- a. boot-cut jeans
- b. emo neckties
- c. juicy tracksuit
- d. chunky heels

which hair accessory?

- a. banana clip
- b. star clips
- c. butterfly clip
- d. bump it

which hairstyle?

- a. pin straight hair
- b. colorful highlights
- c. zig zag part
- d. voluminous beehive

which movie?

- a. mean girls
- b. charlie's angels
- c. american beauty
- d. 10 things i hate about you

which show?

- a. degrassi
- b. skins
- c. the simple life
- d. punk'd

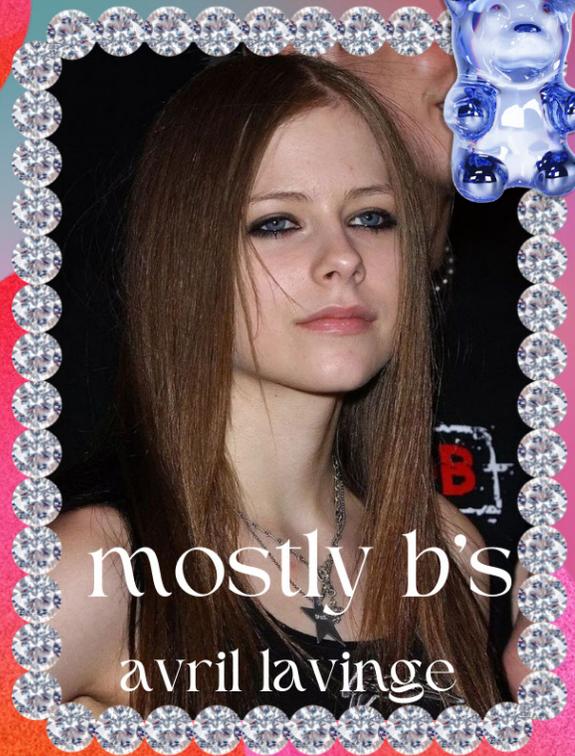
favorite discontinued food?

- a. ice breakers liquid ice
- b. trix yogurt
- c. yogos
- d. dunkaroos

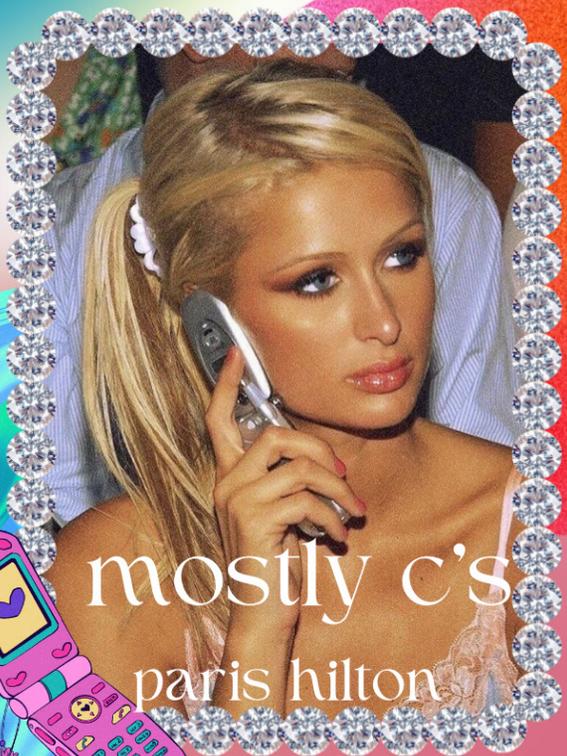
results



mostly a's
lindsay lohan



mostly b's
avril lavinge



mostly c's
paris hilton



mostly d's
amy winehouse

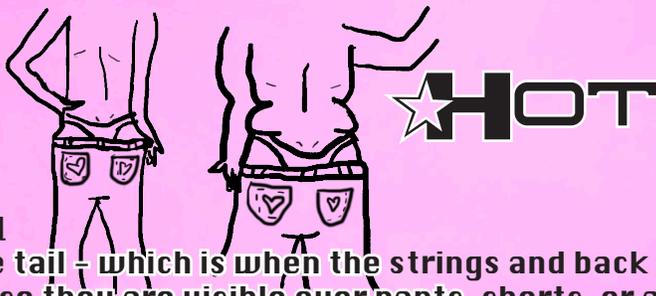


★HOT VS ★NOT

BY GABBY LIPKIN

Y2K is back, baby! From music to aesthetic, everything nowadays has that influence from the early 2000s and our childhoods. But the quintessential—and most mainstream—aspect of Y2K culture is its unique style and flashy fashion choices.

I'm sure many of you read Tiger Beat or J-14 or Seventeen as preteens or tweens, or at least had their massive posters of celebrities plastered across your walls (I had one of Ariana Grande that I had to take down because it was so lifelike and huge that it would scare me at night). So, in classic teenage magazine fashion, it's time for a "hot or not" – ranking what fashions we should keep in 2023 and what we really should leave back in the early '00s.



Whale Tail

The whale tail - which is when the strings and back portion of a thong or G-string are pulled up so they are visible over pants, shorts, or a skirt - is one of the most defining fashions of the early 2000s. Seen on Y2K it girls such as Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, and Mariah Carey, the whale tail is a perfect way to add a little hint of sensuality to your outfit without having your whole a\$\$ out (especially in the cold Binghamton weather). Cute, confident, and a great accessory, whale tails are something we definitely need to continue wearing – plus they look great on everybody!

Combined best with: low-rise jeans, a tramp stamp tattoo (either real or fake!)

Not so great with: high waisted bottoms - you won't be able to see it!

Skirt over pants

Y2K is all about maximalism and layering, and what can be more maximalist than a skirt or dress over pants? A controversial fashion choice, even in its peak, the skirt/dress over pants combo needs so much more love. It can be dressed up in a sleek and tailored business-y way, or dressed down in a casual, Ashley Tisdale red-carpet circa 2004. Even for our readers into more experimental or alternative fashion, the skirt or dress over pants has been popular in mall goth, punk, emo, and scene fashion, with brands such as Tripp NYC creating pants that have attached skirts to give off that layered look. Though many have negative opinions about this combination, I think that everyone should try it out at least once. You might be surprised at how cute you look!

Paired best with: Any pair of pants will do, but jeans – especially bootcut or flared will really help accentuate the Y2K influence in the outfit.

Not so great with: Bodycon dresses or tight skirts. It'll be hard to get the skirt over the pants, and might be a bit bulky or uncomfy.



Baby Tees

The baby tee was the shirt of the early 2000s. Cropped and tight fitting, this short sleeve shirt dominated schools, shopping malls, and parties. As an owner of many baby tees myself, I genuinely don't know how I lived without them. Whether just simple, basic colors, or funky designs (such as the one I have with glow in the dark sharks on it), the baby tees can be worn literally EVERYWHERE. I've seen baby tees worn in class, in the halls of my apartment building, at the bars and frats, and even at the gym! Baby tees are known for their versatility and can be worn with anything, from yoga pants to long skirts to jeans to booty shorts. This is a classic trend that I hope never goes out of style (and even if they do, I'll still keep all my baby tees anyways).

Paired best with: literally ANYTHING.

Not so great with: Maybe don't wear one to a funeral or a wedding.

★NOT



And now we move onto the “not”s. While most “hot or not” columns in teen magazines showed unflattering pictures of celebrities to make them look bad on purpose, or clashing color combinations, that's not what I'm about. I have one big “not” that I think, with the rise of Y2K culture, needs to be discussed.

“Heroin Chic”

Heroin chic is an “aesthetic” based on gaunt, pale, unhealthy bodies that focuses mainly on hyper-thinness. Starting with supermodels in the late '90s, “heroin chic” became the beauty standard, and the early '00s furthered that standard. As Y2K culture is now being integrated into modern day, the advent of social media such as Tiktok is popularizing this self-destructive body negativity even more than how it was in the early 2000s, which is not okay at all. This mindset leads to low self esteem, body dysmorphia, and disordered eating, all of which are wildly harmful.

In the 2020s and moving forward, we need to leave behind this negativity and embrace bodies of all shapes and sizes. Social media tends to perpetuate a certain “ideal” body that is often a result of Photoshop or unattainable wealth while furthering that it can be achievable to anyone, when in actuality this is not the case. All bodies are beautiful, and Y2K fashion can be worn by everyone, which is why we should leave that harmful mindset back in the early 2000s where it came from. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to pull off Y2K style, nor is it designed for one specific type of body. If you feel cute and confident in Y2K fashion, then it's meant for you!

Y2K MOVIES

By Taylor Walczak

Looking to stay in and revisit a simpler time? Here is a list of nostalgic movies from the 2000's that consumed my childhood and, maybe bizarrely, shaped me as a person...



Spy Kids (2001)

Two kids, Carmen and Juni, discover that their parents are secretly spies, and embark on a journey to save them from the evil TV host, Floop and his Thumb minions. The special effects are now very dated, but the creativity, uniqueness, nerve and talent is what will keep you on your toes.

Ella Enchanted (2004)

Anne Hathaway (must I say more?) stars as Ella in this Cinderella-like fairytale. Gifted the strange power at birth of having to obey everything she is told to do, Ella goes on a journey to rid herself of this curse. In one scene, Ella goes to a bar in Giantville and sings with Giants, which is where I learned the lyrics to "Somebody to Love" by Queen at about age seven.



A Series of Unfortunate Events (2004)

Based on the books narrated by Lemony Snicket, three children orphaned in a fire find themselves under the care of an unknown relative, Count Olaf. Mother Streep cameos as a nervous nelly and unreliable guardian, forcing the children to fend for themselves yet again. Plus, Jennifer Coolidge (Baddie) surprises the girls everywhere in a darker role...



Zathura (2005)

Two young boys discover a mysterious board game that transports them into space. Serving an Elena Gilbert Y2K fantasy, Kristen Stewart gags as an irritated older sister in this intergalactic adventure.

Nanny McPhee (2005)

A father hires a nanny to get his seven misbehaved children in order. With one tap of her magic cane, Nanny McPhee is able to turn this unruly household into a loving space, all while serving funeral chic.

Barbie Mermaidia (2006)

I cannot understate the impact this movie had on my sister and I as children. Elina, who becomes a mermaid, travels with best friend Bibble to Mermaidia to rescue their lost friend. My favorite quote from this movie is by Bibble, who says "Oh, boobababybolaloodo." Super fierce.



Aquamarine (2006)

Next on the list... another mermaid movie! Two teenage girls find a mermaid washed up on shore and vow to help her find true love. It also includes Aquamarine's amazing DIY on how to transform a long sleeve shirt into a fabulous cocktail dress.

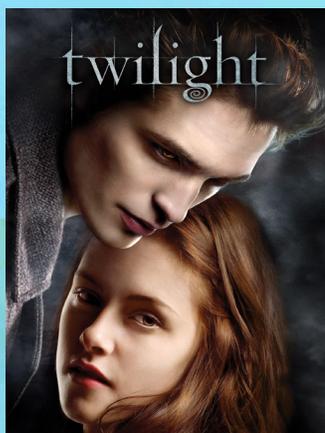
How To Eat Fried Worms (2006)

This gnarly movie is probably the most strange on this list. The book was even banned in many schools for supporting "inappropriate behavior" (eating worms). After the school bully bets that Billy can't eat 10 worms in a day, he commits to eating all of them in the most outrageous and disgusting ways.



Bridge to Terabithia (2007)

Jesse and Leslie discover a treehouse in the woods and using their imagination, name it Terabithia. This movie is very special, and Leslie's bob inspires me to this day. But warning! It will leave you incredibly devastated and empty inside.



Twilight (2008)

Last but certainly not least, Bella Swan finds herself immersed in a new world and in love with emo vampire, Edward Cullen. Having watched this countless times throughout my childhood, I am becoming aware that Kristen Stewart is probably the reason I turned out gay.

THE DEATH OF THE CHICK FLICK

BY CAILEE SALVATO

Mean Girls is, unequivocally, one of the best things to come out in the year 2004 (other than me). The top-tier cast, timeless humor, and incredible uniqueness of this movie really allowed it to thrive. Even in modern times, it still gets referenced heavily (the *Mean Girls* musical is still on tour today, five years after its first performance on Broadway). *Mean Girls* is a standout example of a chick flick, a comedy film starring women, mainly marketed towards women (but enjoyable to everyone). Yet I am left wondering, why has there not been a good chick flick in the last ten years?

If you google “chick flick” you will see many suggestions of brightly colored films to watch. While I scrolled through these suggestions, I couldn’t help but notice that the last truly notable chick flick was in 2012 with *Pitch Perfect*. Of course, there are other attempts, but they don’t come close to other early 2000’s movies like *Clueless*, *Legally Blonde*, or *10 Things I Hate About You*. The most undeserving of this title to me was *To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before*. Sure, it’s a cute movie where a girl is in an odd and entertaining situation, but it is completely missing the wit and comedy of these other movies. While I don’t think you need to be funny in these movies to be a chick flick like in *The Notebook* or *Thelma and Louise*, you need to at least have character. A reason for the missing character could be that these films were produced by Netflix.

It has been pointed out that the rise of streaming services has led to a different breed of actors and writers. The writing is so obsessed with being relatable to younger audiences that it takes away from the rest of the film. The thing that makes these other movies so well loved is the fact that their jokes are timeless. A joke from *Clueless*, which is almost 30 years old at this point, can still land with modern audiences.

I will scroll through Netflix for hours looking for a good movie to watch, but often find myself struggling to find a satisfying, lighthearted chick flick that has come out in the last five years. I tend to see film commentators making fun of these movies—not because of their intended audiences, but because of how devoid of character they are compared to the movies of the early 2000s. On a short scroll of one of my favorite commentators, Aaron and Jo, you can spot many low budget, low effort movies being the subject of their videos. Some examples of these include the *To All the Boys* series, *365 Days*, *Tall Girl*, and *He’s All That*. The titles paint these movies as “actually awful,” “this broke us,” and “not good but funny.” Obviously, other people agree with my stance that these movies are cringey by the large amount of views on these videos. In fact, Aaron and Jo are just one of the many youtube channels that make videos like this.

Some newer films have jokes in them that you can just tell will age horribly based on how overly focused writers are on relating to Gen Z. The other issue with this is the very quickly moving trend cycle. What some members of Gen Z would have found funny a month ago can already seem stale. With the current trend cycles getting quicker and quicker with the rise of fast paced comedy apps like TikTok, what is funny one day will become unfunny a week later. Even when writers can recognize these trendy jokes and concepts and use them correctly in an appropriate time frame, they still become stale after just a few years. Movies that come to mind that fall into this category are *The Kissing Booth* and *The Perfect Date*, both of which are produced by Netflix and were released around the same time. *The Kissing Booth's* premise is about a girl who becomes romantically involved with her best friend's brother, which is against their friendship code of conduct. The movie is over-saturated with stale concepts, like a group of girls being referred to as "The OMG girls" and awkward misused phrases like two characters asking to "grind coochies." This is clearly a shitty representation of how Gen Z speaks, and the phrase aged badly before the movie even came out.

In my opinion, this over-pandering attitude toward Gen Z is leading to lower-quality movies that just will not reach the same audiences that their predecessors have. But, hope for the genre of chick flicks to return with the same quality they had before is still out there. Movies like *Booksmart* (2019) and *Bottoms* (2023) have been praised for their sharp wit while still being able to relate to younger audiences. Thus, there is a glimmer of hope for the beloved chick flick having a resurgence.



SECONDHAND GUESS

BY ROSE BELL-MCKINLEY

“No second guesses, only secondhand Guess,” is the best piece of advice I’ve ever received. My friend said this to me from across a rack of vintage T-shirts while I anxiously explained to her (but really to myself) why I’d made what felt like the first real adult decision of my life. I’d definitely already had this conversation with her a few times over, but something about the stickiness of the late May air mixing with the mustiness thrift and the fluorescent lights made me indulge the dread tugging at my sleeve once again. I’d recently made a significant decision about my future based on both facts and feelings. There was heaps of evidence to support that I made a “good” decision, a happy decision, a smart decision, everyone told me this, I tried to tell myself this, yet doubt still gnawed at me. I’d decided differently than I’d expected to and I couldn’t shake the overwhelming fear that somehow I’d “chosen wrong”.

In hindsight I see that what was eating at me was less about the choice itself but rather what deep-seated truths it would somehow reveal about me. Despite the tremendous amount of deliberating that led up to my decision, I still felt like there was a kind of mystery factor that went into making it, something I couldn’t fully rationalize, maybe simple intuition. That was what scared me. If I couldn’t analyze and sort every single thought that went into it and tie it all up with a neat little bow, how would I possibly begin to understand the present that this decision eventually led me to? Was there something in this unknown that I had missed, something that would ultimately hurtle me into a doomed spiral of failure and unhappiness? Would I one day look back at this point in my life, in five, or ten, or twenty years, and be able to identify this as the specific moment where I got everything wrong?

At the root of this was the long-held fear that I can’t fully understand my life, or myself. When someone asks me about myself, my hobbies, my passions, my taste in music, although I know the answers to these questions, I hesitate like I might get it wrong. What if I list something and one day I don’t identify with it at all? I blocked a song on Spotify the other day that a year ago that I would’ve called one of my favorites.

The reply “thrifting”, though, is always on the tip of my tongue. I’ve spent entire days methodically prowling the aisles of Goodwills and second hand stores, afternoons rifling through yard sales in the beating summer sun, and my screen time on Depop is what some have called concerningly high. I love the “hunt.” Usually I know exactly what I’m looking for, and after a successful search I bask in the satisfaction of finally finding the perfect piece. But the best moments are stumbling upon unexpected gems, a silk bubblegum pink hand-beaded top, a pristine inky blue cashmere turtleneck, or the perfect Y2K Guess cargo mini skirt.

I can still love my second hand Guess skirt without second guessing its past, or feeling the insatiable urge to understand every little thing about it. I don’t need to know the origins of it, its khaki fabric, a tiny white tag on the back pocket, a red backwards question mark embroidered underneath a sparkling silver snap. I don’t need to know who owned it, and when and where and why they wore it, whether it sat untouched in their closet for years or it was their favorite skirt before they decided they hated it or it no longer fit them and they gave it away. I can wonder, theorize, stalk Ebay and figure out how much they originally paid in the year 2000 for the skirt I bought for \$5 at L Train Vintage 22 years later, but I don’t need to know. The transitive beauty of thrifting is that an item once existed in one life as one thing to one owner, and now exists in another life as something else to someone else. Its identity is ever-changing. Its past exists, the very title of “second hand” acknowledges and honors this, but its past does not define it.





A Modern Era Fashion Tycoon

By Kevin Liu

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A surprising individual rises in the face of a new millennium. Donned with his iconic smug smile and thinning eyebrows, he looks onwards to a future of greatness, a callback to America's prime. This business tycoon has popularized his own merch line, featuring a standout red hat with white letter print in the font Century Schoolbook with tight kerning. Printed across it are the words, "Make America Great Again," an ironic statement and a brave one in today's political climate. Like every great influencer with a racist past and ignorant/potentially white-supremacist present, Donald J. Trump has made his stamp in the media Hall-of-Fame. From his initiation process of being canceled on Twitter to becoming one of the exclusive celebrities to be bashed on national television, Trump has risen to the same ranks as eyebrowless alien, Jeffree Star, multiracial queen, Trisha Paytas, and the guy who likes children, James Charles.

What most people fail to realize about Trump amidst their rage and valid criticisms against his anti-immigration policies, support of Nazi/Terrorist groups, sexual assault allegations, elimination of several environmental regulations, denial of climate change, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, stealing classified military documents, and more (he's going to surpass all those in history and make it to the 10th layer of Hell) is that his fashion sense makes his figure really stand out. His peachy tanned skin (?) paired with a simple, but classic, blue suit really brings out the features of his face. The complementary colors are subtle but are enough to plaster his face, pillowy folds and all, into your memory. The iconic white shirt and red tie are callbacks to his capitalist beginnings and his billionaire status (self-referencing, what a guy). His clothes are also tailor-made to fit his figure and to highlight his biggest asset, bringing fierce competition against the reigning champion of "America's Ass," Chris Evans. Below are some examples (viewer discretion advised):



Sorry.

To wrap up, Trump brought back capitalist couture and is probably the only fashion designer and icon to be impeached, twice. If those feats aren't enough to consider him a modern era fashion tycoon, I don't know what will. Who else can replace him?

Maybe Kanye?

