



## Kid Trends – Summer 2004

### Music

#### Music Notes

- The elder statesmen of **Mall-Punk** will release their next album, *American Idiot* this fall. **Green Day's** follow-up to 2000's *Warning* finds the punk pop trio working with longtime producer Rob Cavallo again.
- **Da Band is Dis-Dabanded.** P. Diddy has dismantled the group he put together on the reality show "Making the Band." Three members were let go while Ness and Babs were kept on and have been signed to his Bad Boy label. The dismissed Dylan and DJ Sickamore have levied their response to the firing with a new mixtape titled, "**Life After Diddy.**"
- **Don't call it a comeback.** One of the originals is enjoying the continuing trend of everything 80s. The melancholy **MORRISSEY**, the former lead singer of The Smiths is enjoying critical and commercial success with his new record, "You Are The Quarry," and will headline the rejuvenated Lollapalooza Tour this summer. Morrissey will also tour to support the record with openers "The Killers" who are poised for a breakthrough of their own with their retrominded sound that brought success to bands like Vancouver's "**Hot Hot Heat**" and Scotland's "**Franz Ferdinand.**"

Here are a few new bands/albums we expect to get some summer air play:

- The Killers (*Hot Fuss*, June 15)
- Simple Plan (July/August)
- Beastie Boys (June)
- Ja Rule (August)
- Busted (August) – cool band from the UK

### Movies

#### Summer Movie Mania

- For the girls, Hilary Duff stars in **A Cinderella Story**, a modern take on the princess tale. Watch for Jennifer Coolidge of *Best In Show* and *Legally Blonde* to make another hilarious turn as the evil step-mother. **(Parent-O-Meter Rating: 3 yawns)**
- Alex Vega stars with some of her tween contemporaries in **Sleepover** where the title pretty much explains the plot. Steve Carell pops up but will he keep the adults in stitches like on *The Daily Show* or his hilarious newsman from *Bruce Almighty*? **(Parent-O-Meter Rating: 4 yawns)**

- Boys are being targeted with a big screen adaptation of **Yu-Gi-Oh!**, but unless you're a fan of the popular card trading game, prepare to only enjoy the A/C (**Parent-O-Meter Rating: 5 yawns**)
- **Thunderbirds** are go! A live action update of the classic "supermarionation" series is going to be all about the action. Hopefully Bill Paxton and Ben Kinglsey will have strings attached to their limbs! It's too bad they didn't target this flick for the Gen Xers (the true Thunderbird fans) instead of trying to kidify it and essentially suck any enjoyment parents may have out of it. (**Parent-O-Meter Rating: 3 yawns**)

### Summertime Sequels

Summer is always synonymous with sequels... For 2004 we've got Shrek 2 (Rating: 1 yawn), Harry Potter 3 (Rating: 1 yawn), The Princess Diaries 2 (Rating: 2 yawns), and the highly anticipated...**Spider-Man 2** (Rating: 0 yawns!). Here are a few sequels lined up for next summer - **Mission Impossible 3**, **Star Wars Episode 3**, **Batman Begins** (which technically isn't a sequel, but a new take on the Batman back-story).

<b>FASHION</b>
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### Scene on the Streets:

- Light layering (tanks and bright bikini tops under shirts). Wearing just a shirt is boring, must show a hint of something underneath and for the first time in ages, it's not skin!
- Dollar store flip flops, ballet slipper-style flats, retro runners (like ROOS, Converse, Gola, and Adidas), jelly shoes, topsiders and moccasins are the "it" shoes hitting the pavement this summer
- Pearls, hoop earrings, seashell necklaces
- Belts - skinny ones, studded ones, ribbons & scarves – whatever! The point is the anti belt days are OVER!
- Mini skirts, crinkle peasant skirts
- Short shorts (think Daisy Duke) and beat up denim cut offs
- Vintage ~ scarves, shirts, jackets, jewellery, jeans with ripped knees
- Dresses/skirts over pants/jeans
- Sporty knee socks with skirts
- Custom made tees (iron ons, etc)
- Flower accessories (hair pins / elastics, pins on purses / lapels, etc)
- Aviator sunglasses and Oversized "Jackie-O" style sunglasses that shape to the face – plastic frames
- Rainbow and vibrant colours – black will be back this fall, but for the summer it's all about brights!

### In the gutter:

- Platform shoes
- Von Dutch trucker hats
- 2 piece track suits
- Writing on the bum

### Fashion Bytes

- For the past few years it was cool to look like a baller (basketball throwback jerseys, warm-up suits, etc.), but this summer preppy tennis or golf pro is the way to go. Polo

style T's, argyle & plaid, pleated skirts, V neck sweaters, etc. Similar to yoga, the interest in the fashion is growing even bigger than the sports themselves.

- Rainwear is all the rage! Trendsetters are seen wearing brightly coloured rubber boots, Ducky shoes, trench coats, rain slickers and ponchos with nary a puddle in sight! Fancy umbrellas are also a must-have item. It won't be long before this look trickles down to the mainstream.
- No need to adjust your glasses. Everything is starting to look a little Lopsided! Hair is being cut short on one side and worn long on the other. One earring is cool! Shirts are off one shoulder. Skirts longer on one side, and socks are being worn with a different color on each foot.

### "David" and "Goliath" fight a new battle: criticism!

You've probably seen their cheeky line of clothing and accessories with such slogans as "Boys are stupid, throw rocks at them" and the ever popular "Boys are Smelly." David & Goliath sell clothes that are a post-modern take on cartoon characters. The characters include "Eve L;" "Goodbye Kitty," (Think Hello Kitty's evil stepsister) and "Jack the Nerd," among others. The characters of "David & Goliath" can be seen on clothing, watches, stationery, socks, gloves, wristbands, hats, pajamas and more. Although this merch is being met with much criticism, we think it will just keep getting more popular before it goes away, especially since they're now opening stores of their own called "**Stupid Factories.**"

### Not So Smelly

Right around the time boys start to take an interest in clothing an interest in personal grooming kicks in as well (gasp!). It's being dubbed the "metrosexual tween boy movement," but it's really nothing new – young boys have been stealing products from their dads and older sisters for generations. The real news is Proctor and Gamble's brilliant idea to create personal grooming products just for them. The line is called **OT** ("overtime") and it includes shampoo, hair gel, deodorant and body wash all themed around sports! The products are perfect for the 9-14 year-old set - with special names like "pit defense" and bright red and yellow packaging with a sport-like grip – that even the grimmest of boys will want to wash up.

## Video Games

### Video Game Industry Abandons Children

While this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo showcased the usual kiddie fare, including licensed sequels to hot properties like SpongeBob SquarePants and Kim Possible, **Teen- and Everyone-rated games were completely dwarfed by head-slicin', gut-rippin' Mature-rated entries at every corner.** It was also made crystal clear that major game companies' marketing budgets were thrown solely behind adult-targeted titles; of the hundreds of games showcased at the convention, the only big ticket support shown for a kids' game was The Incredibles, based on the upcoming flick by Finding Nemo creator Pixar. This is likely due to the entrenched perception that Nintendo's stigmatization as a kids-only company hurt business, relegating the long-time leader to a number three spot in the home console wars.

### Tech-Savvy Kids Demand Better Games

The bane of any young gamers' existence has always been TV and movie-licensed games; at best, they're disappointing. But these days, game developers for long-lasting kids' properties are wising up. What do you do when your first Jimmy Neutron game underperformed, but the license is hotter than ever? Build a better game! Many upcoming licensed kids' games are not simply sequels to crummy originals, but vastly improved updates. Wowed by high-quality titles aimed at older audiences, kids are demanding nothing but the best for their on-screen heroes. They're not quite getting the best yet, but things are definitely improving.

### **Handheld Battle Heats Up – Our Gaming Expert Speaks Up!**

Withstanding no fewer than nine stabs at its handheld market supremacy, Nintendo remains the undisputed ruler of the portable gaming empire with its Game Boy Advance, a device which they say has outsold even the mighty Playstation 2. Sony, for their part, is unwilling to let the Big N hog such a huge portion of the pie. And so the battle begins. At this year's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los Angeles, Sony unveiled its new handheld, the **PSP**, to mixed reaction. Not to be outdone, Nintendo presented its own flawed device, the **Nintendo DS**, to much greater fanfare. On closer inspection, even the DS raised questions of quality and playability. Both companies claim their devices will be ready to duke it out in stores this holiday season...

#### **Our gaming expert was at E3 and here's what he had to say:**

Both systems have a long way to go before launch. Nintendo's machine was still in prototype mode and had no sheath for its stylus. Many of the applications running on the DS were "tech demos" - not full-featured games, but small samples of what the system could do. For example, one demo had Sega's Sonic the Hedgehog mascot running around a racetrack on the top screen. The player had to vigorously scrub the bottom screen with the stylus to make Sonic run faster. This all worked very well because the demonstration systems were solidly bolted to display pedestals; who can guess how the interaction would function (or fail) if the player were holding the DS with one hand and scrubbing the screen with the other?

Sony's PSP demonstration also raised some nagging doubts. The system looked good up-close, but it was hardly a portable unit. The thought of sliding the PSP into one's pocket to marry the large 16:9 screen with metal keys and loose change brought tears to the eyes! When asked, Sony said that there were no plans to release a case or screen protector with the system (one would be available at an extra cost, of course), but that the unit's screen was treated with a scratch-resistant coating. That kind of assurance won't cut the mustard with fans who will pay what the critics predict will be a hefty early adoption price - early estimates place the system between \$300-400 CDN, although Sony has remained tight-lipped about pricing. The most nagging difficulty with the PSP is the battery life, which drains at different rates depending on system use. Watching video on the system puts the biggest strain on the battery, tapping it dry in 2 hours. Do the math - for a feature-length movie, that's one viewing per charge.

#### **Now that We've Got Your Attention:**

All signs are pointing towards a year packed full of sequels. It's well known that follow-ups and offshoots of already popular licenses are big hits and easy sells. As a result, game developers are churning out the sequels faster than ever. It used to be that you had a long wait to play the next installment of your favourite series, but **these days you can expect to see a follow-up within a year of the original**. The idea is to keep the brand on the shelf and in the minds of consumers. Among others, this year we can expect: Viewtiful Joe 2, Prince of Persia 2, another Final Fantasy and a follow up to the popular

The Legend of Zelda: The Windwaker. This begs the question; Are there any new ideas out there?

## Books

### Comics Cross Another Medium

Comic book heroes have been making the leap from the page to the big screen for some time now so it was only a matter of time before they branched onto another medium – DVDs known as Digital Comic Books, which are essentially digital versions of popular comic book series where the original comic book art that pops up on screen, and camera moves, word balloons and animated effects (like rain and explosions) are used to create movement around these images. There's also a full audio track of voiceovers, sound effects and music.

**By the way** – July 3<sup>rd</sup> is **Free Comic Book Day**, where free comics will be given out by most respectable Comic Book shops nationwide. Titles will depend on whether or not the publisher is a Gold, Silver or Bronze sponsor, but just to whet your pallet – Archie: I Was A Teenage Comic Book Creator; and Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventures will be available in every participating store.

## Toys

### Toying With Religion

Interest in religion is rising and with movies such as *The Passion of the Christ* and the upcoming "Saved!" (starring Mandy Moore) causing such a stir and celebrities like Madonna and Britney flaunting their religious practices all over the media, it's no wonder that kids are curious as well. Items once available only in niche religious markets are turning up in more traditional places, such as toy stores and magazine racks. Many of these items merge modern pop culture with religious themes such as card games "Bible Rummy" and "Jonah Go Fish;" children's books like "Learn-To-Read Bible;" action figures featuring key biblical characters, play costumes and role-playing games. We've even seen churches taking a cue from Harry Pottermania by teaching wizardry-themed Sunday school lessons. Other kid-targeted religious lines include comic books, magazines and electronic toys – of course there are less serious takes on the trend as well, with popular brands like "Teenage Millionaire" selling T-shirts with "Jesus is my homeboy" on the front. We have a feeling that this impact may be seen mainly in America, but definitely something we should look out for as the topic of Christianity becomes more mainstream.

### Souped Up

Mattel continues to introduce new innovative formats to its beloved Hot Wheels line. Some hot ideas off the assembly line are **Formula Fuelers** – cool vehicles that run on common household liquids like soda, soy sauce or water. And **Blings** – which are tricked-out rides complete with oversized wheels, muscled bodies and loud colours like "Hummer Yellow" and "Pimpin' Purple."

### Summer Licensed Favourites

- Remember Operation? The game where a steady hand and concentration were necessary to remove a patient's "broken heart?" Well, it's been 39 years and Hasbro has finally decided to revive this classic by introducing the **Operation: Shrek Edition**.

This game should be even more fun than the original as kids try to remove the ogre's ear wax, toe jam, onion breath and so on. There are tonnes of Shrek products out there, but this one is our favourite.

- The hit toy from the first movie was the Spider-Man Web Blaster, which had kids strapping on a glove and shooting liquid, so it's no wonder that the latest licensees are following a similar model with the **Motorized Webble Shooter**, an apparatus that shoots bubbles. We predict that most kids will find it fun for a while until their bubble bursts and they realize that *ain't* no one running from a few wimpy bubbles!

### Get Outside

We are all over toys that encourage outdoor play so it was great to discover Wild Planet's new **Off the Map** gear for the young explorer. There's the Extreme Canteen Kit that includes a snack container, fork and spoon, a flashlight and a plate/Frisbee. And The Explorer Positioning System that's a light and motion sensor tool that comes with a hand-held monitor to track the motion of animals and people. Other items include the hat-mounted Trail Lights, the camera/binocular Zoom Cam, a multipurpose Pathfinder tool, a utility belt-style Trek Pak, an Explorer's Watch and, of course, the Expedition Backpack. These toys should inspire kids to get out of the house and into one of the oldest forms of recreation - outdoor exploration.

### Board?

Skateboarding is a favourite pastime of many, so it's not surprising that new innovations are coming out like gangbusters. Here are a few that made our radar:

- Forget the fancy footwork - meet **e-sk8**, the 4 foot long aluminum electric "streetcarving" skateboard! Simply press a foot button on the front of the deck and the e-sk8 zooms away - no foot power required. This may seem to promote laziness, but who cares? The skateboard, which can only go 7 mph, is currently only distributed in the UK - although it is a sign of things to come...
- **SuperJump** and **MBS Mountainboards** are two new styles of boarding that allow kids to ride on rougher terrain and perform jumps higher than ever thought possible - these boards look cool with bigger wheels, beefier decks and in some cases, brakes. There are even some that come with a sail!
- There are also innovations for the Snowboarder - allowing aficionados to practice in the summer. The **Freeboard** has inner two wheels that simulate the snowboard's base - spring-biased casters that can swivel 360 degrees and the outer four wheels simulate the snowboard's edges.

### Back and uglier than ever!

You didn't think we could release a report without a retro toy revival story, did you? **Trollz** are the latest toy to make a comeback - you may remember em'...small, squat bodies with tall neon hair that gets messed up when you shake them. Created almost 50 years ago the good luck Trolls became popular in the 1960s and 70s with a brief resurgence in the mid 90s with the Trash Can Trolls. These days, Hasbro is developing a toy line that includes games, fashion dolls and electronics. Scholastic will publish a series of books. There are plans for a website to launch this year, and a TV, home entertainment program for 2005.

## Suzy Homemaker

Home decorating isn't something that comes to mind when you think of kids favourite pastimes, but interest was bound to build with the bevy of makeover and DIY shows on TV these days. Here are a couple toymakers that are wise to this trend and creating toys that tap into it...

- This fall, Wild Planet is launching G.L.S. (**Girls Living in Style**) that allows young girls to personalize their rooms with a line of decorating accessories. The *Mini Room Mates* are mini bedroom accessories (fan, radio and lamp) that plug in and come with assorted patterns to switch, swap and design. There's also the *Dazzlin Doorway*, a voice-customized curtain greeting system and *My Voice!*, a customizable alarm clock. The line also features a *Photo Gal\*lery* vinyl poster, used to hang photos and memories on the wall.
- Then there's B-Bel Inc.'s line of scale model design houses based on the TLC program "Trading Spaces." The **Trading Spaces Design and Redesign House** is like a doll house; allowing girls to paint, wallpaper, decorate and accessorize it over and over again. Kids may not be allowed to pull huge reno jobs in their parents house, so this ought to suffice until they save up for that first mortgage.

## Television

### Tween Sitcoms Are Back!

Tween sitcoms have been around for generations; starting with *Growing Pains*, *Facts Of Life*, *Different Strokes*, *Full House* (ABC used to have a night involving programs for tweens called TGIF) and more recently with *Lizzie McGuire* and *That's So Raven* leading the pack.

And now Nickelodeon, traditionally the domain of gender-neutral animation like *SpongeBob SquarePants*, *Rugrats* and *The FairlyOdd Parents* – are getting in the game. Two of their breakout hits include **Romeo** (starring Master P and his son, Lil' Romeo) and **Drake & Josh**, both coming to YTV.

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**YTV DECODER** (every issue we give you the skinny on some kid vernacular)

What with summer here and all, we thought we'd give you some terms to throw around the basketball court...

**Monster Jam:** ramming a dunk shot with down with two hands

**Crunch Time:** The last minute of a close-scoring game

**House:** One's home court - The star of the team will say during an interview of a visiting opponent, "We can't let them win -- not in my house"

**Glass Eater:** Someone who gets a lot of rebounds (no one cool uses this one)

**Pine time/ridin' the pine/bench jockey/scrubs:** All referring to the bench players who don't see a lot of action on the "hardwood" –generally not nice to call anyone that must head home when the street lights come on

**Throwing bricks, jacking up bricks:** When the shot has no arc and just clangs on the rim

**J jumper:** A jump shot

**Playing above the rim:** Means the player is dunking and getting all his points in the air by jumping over guys

**Eating some rim:** Means someone has just thrown down a monster dunk!

**From downtown:** Means the player has hit a three-point shot, from behind the three-point line

**Cleaning the glass:** Player is getting all the rebounds

**Picking up the garbage:** A player is collecting all the missed shots and putting them back

**Getting burn:** Means you're getting playing time

**And 1:** Means you were fouled but the shot went in, so you got two points AND 1 free throw (that explains the name of those popular shoes!)

**Good handles:** The player can dribble well and has great ball control

**DISCLAIMER:** The trends that the YTV Trend Huntaz comment on come from the buzz on the street, the mall, the Internet, and numerous publications. YTV does not guarantee that all of the above information will come to fruition, but you can pretty much believe us as we are obsessed with this stuff.