



Written by [Beverly K. Eakman](#) on May 27, 2011

What's Really in Those Teen Magazines? (Hint: Nothing Remotely Romantic)

Today's grandmothers (those first Boomer females now in their sixties) remember many of these publications as high-fashion magazines, like *Harper's Bazaar*. They gleaned advance insights into glamorous, new color-combinations and tailoring and hemlines fresh off the runway from famous Parisian and Italian designers, the caliber of which doesn't exist anymore. Readers hoped to duplicate their styles by applying a bit of ingenuity to put together an affordable look-alike. These grandmas occasionally still peruse a copy at the hair or nail salon, *if* they go, but since the advent of blue-jeans-for-every-occasion, they generally they don't subscribe, much less keep up with make-up "tips," youth fashion trends (such as they are), advice columns, or the goings-on of Britney Spears and Miley Cyrus — either in print or online. Been there, done that, don't care.



For sure, fathers aren't into the genre.

But young adolescents are nothing if not flush with cash for salons — and curious. Just the covers of these publications provide more than enough titillation to ensnare vulnerable minds. What these youngsters find is legitimized smut — not high fashion — combined with articles by supposed experts who basically tell them that parents are dummies, that sexual experimentation with multiple "partners" is expected, and avoiding terms like *husband* and *spouse*. The focus is mainly on how to be popular, especially in the context of erotically enticing a person of the opposite, or same, sex.

The clothing marketed, whether actually advertised or merely featured in a celebrity article, is not of the variety shown in publications like *Town & Country*; rather, they are "hooker chic" — with nothing subtle or flirtatious about them.

Thirty years ago, dating articles centered on "an object of affection." But affection has been downgraded to mean "a casual second-glance." Looks are everything, and if you are deemed terminally unattractive, unable to produce "the look" considered attractive, then it is implied that a female, in particular, must advertise her navel, breasts, and genitals as aggressively as possible so that peers will "go gaga" and forget about her face, skin, hair, personality, interests, and whatever else makes up that anomaly known as "an individual."

Once one has the prospective "partner's" undivided attention, so-called experts explain in minute detail how to "turn him (or her) on." G-spots, oral sex, orgasms, sex "toys" — nothing is off-limits in the world



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of teen magazines. “Fashion” models are photographed in exhibitionistic poses — either with their legs splayed apart (even when fully dressed), or with their thumbs tantalizingly thrust inside their pants, as if to pull them down. Their expressions are pouty and sometimes even ghoulish, as in “Goth” and “vampire-chic,” but rarely flirty or sweet. Even *Playboy Magazine* once emphasized a “sweet” facial expression, but all that is passé. There is the obligatory section devoted to jeans and underwear, of course, and again the photo-shoot zeros in on buttocks and bosoms in vastly exaggerated ways so that even the clueless geek can’t miss the sexual message. And if that isn’t sufficient, there’s the language, the use of words like “bitchy,” “ass,” “butt,” “pee,” and the ever-present f-word for which more refined terms were once the norm.

Consequently, it is not surprising to find T-shirts at a shopping mall boasting “FUTURE PORN STAR” on the front, in a size appropriate for a six-year-old, or that padded bras are marketed to 10-year-olds, along with thongs, derrière tattoos, fishnet hose, and stiletto heels so high that feet look deformed.

Sexual pleasure was once something a married couple discovered together in private. Females, of course, shouldered the burden for pregnancy, but that hasn’t changed, even with condoms, vasectomies, and emerging forms of birth control available to men. Most boys and young men — the ones girls are supposed to be enticing — don’t bother with them. Newspapers report that even HIV-positive men and those with other [sexually transmitted diseases reject them](#), except with prostitutes — which hardly matters inasmuch as all girls today are called upon to become sexually promiscuous. For that reason, teen magazines promote every sort of device from medications that will vastly shorten the menstrual cycle, to “morning after” pills.

Advice columnists shrug at the idea of monogamy, considering the idea hopelessly naïve. “Cheating,” of course, is serious, but not as in “a breach of trust.” Rather, “cheating” is viewed more like a game of “gotcha”. Partners are supposed to be forever sexy, enough so that neither party will consider looking elsewhere. Under this delusional scenario, neither party gets sick, tired, overweight, or throws up — unless from booze — in which case vomiting is understandable. Sweaty and dirty apparently are okay, too.

Teen pregnancy (mostly without benefit of marriage) [is glamorized](#), as are the details of sordid custody battles, with *OK Magazine*, *Us*, and *Teen People* being among the worst offenders.

What follows is a potpourri of sample titles taken from articles in various “women’s” (teen) magazines since 2000. These reflect only the tiniest fraction among thousands of possible entries. Every issue of every magazine named, including additional teen publications collectively branded “Miscellaneous,” catch the eye with covers announcing something “Hot” and/or “Sexy.” Consequently, those terms become etched upon young minds and provide yet another excuse for schools to provide graphic sex education to little kids — on the questionable grounds that institutionalized curricula are more factual than what youngsters see on their own.

Readers can go online to explore further, but beware that all sorts of “cookies” you really don’t want will land on your computer — just from accessing the publications’ covers, never mind the articles.

Best to physically check out the magazine sections of stores, or go into an average hair or nail salon (but not the super-upscale ones charging \$400 for a haircut, color and conditioning, in which case you might find *Town & Country* or *House Beautiful* on the reading tables instead of the more typical fare your kids see). That said, here’s the sampling (note that the online versions of these magazines carry hyperlinks advertising and providing automatic access to the other publications):



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COSMOPOLITAN (or **CosmoGirl**, the 1990s teenage spinoff) is the most pervasive publication on the list. It bills itself as “the lifestylist for millions of fun fearless females who want to be the best they can.”

May 2011:

- “The Sexy Perk of Being Single”
- “77 Sex Positions in 77 Days”
- “Sex Tips from Guys”
- “Bedroom Blog”
- “Crazy Sex Positions”
- “Naked Body”

Aug. 2008: “The Secret to Being a Great Kisser”

TEENVOGUE

April 2011:

- “Pushy Parents: How to Get Yours to Back Off”
- “The Vampire Diaries”

SEVENTEEN

May 2011:

- “Look Hot in a Bikini”
- “Make Him Worship You”

March 2011: “Hookup Shocker”

GLAMOUR

Jan. 2009: “The #1 Thing That Makes Sex Very, Very Good”

Sept. 2009:

- “25 Naked Truths About Guys’ Bodies — Your Personal GPS Map to All His Hot Spots”
- “331 Sexy Looks You Can Afford”

June 2009:

- “WHOA! New Sex Secrets Guys Keep”
- “Your Most Personal Body Questions Ever — We Answer Them All, Even the Grody Ones”

ALLURE

May 2011: “Look Better Naked”

Jan. 2011: “Leighton Meester Strips Down Past Her Headband”

MARIE CLAIRE

June 2009: “BEYONCÉ’S WORLD TOUR (She’d Rather Be in Bed with Jay-Z)”

April 2009: “TRY GREEN SEX: We’ll Tell You How”

May 2004: “MEN & SEX: What Makes You Memorable in Bed”

ELLE

Feb 2011: “COULD YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN?”

Some online links provided by the magazine are as follows:



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"Anatomy of the Female Orgasm"
"Are You Second to Masturbation?"
"Are You Second to Porn?"
"Emotionless Sex? ... No need to freak out ... our experts say"
"G-spot Amplification"
"All About the Clitoris"

HARPER'S BAZAAR Website

One cover shot shows a man's hand over woman's naked breasts. Article titles include:

"Hottest Student Bodies" (all photos are tasteless, suggestive poses)
"Kylie Minogue See-Through Dress Ass Shot" (another exaggerated, tasteless pose)

OK MAGAZINE (Misc. dates)

"I Had an Abortion at 16"
"Teen Moms"
"Teen Mom 2's Jo Rivera Arrested for Pot Possession"
"Teen Mom 2' Reunion"

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER TEEN MAGAZINES (linked to online print publications above):

"Do You Know When Women Really Get Pleasure?"
"Some Naughty Things Women Love to Do in Secret"
"Lesbian couples photographs"
"Jessica Szohr Half Naked? So Be It." (The cover ad explains that nude means "patches over the boobs and pubes and then painted with fake scales".)

Here are some accompanying online magazine hyperlinks that you probably didn't know existed. All these, and more, are located at the bottom of most online teen magazines:

Celebitchy

The Frisky

Dlisted

Zimbio

Cracked

Fark

The Superficial

Maxim

Celebuzz

PopEater

Exposay

SI HotClicks

Hollyscoop

Celebrity Cafe

Too Fab

College Candy

Bitten and Bound

Moreover, if a goal of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s - '80s was to keep women from



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being seen as sex objects, that objective failed miserably.

Beverly K. Eakman began her career as a teacher in 1968. She left to become a science writer for a NASA contractor and went on to serve as a former speechwriter and research-writer for the Voice of America and two other federal agencies, including the U.S. Dept. of Justice. She has authored six books, scores of feature articles and op-eds covering education policy, mental-health, data-trafficking, privacy and political strategy. Her most recent works include Walking Targets: How Our Psychologized Classrooms have Produced a Nation of Sitting Ducks and the 2011 Edition of her blockbuster manual, How To Counter Group Manipulation Tactics (Midnight Whistler Publishers). Mrs. Eakman can be reached via her website at www.BeverlyE.com .



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