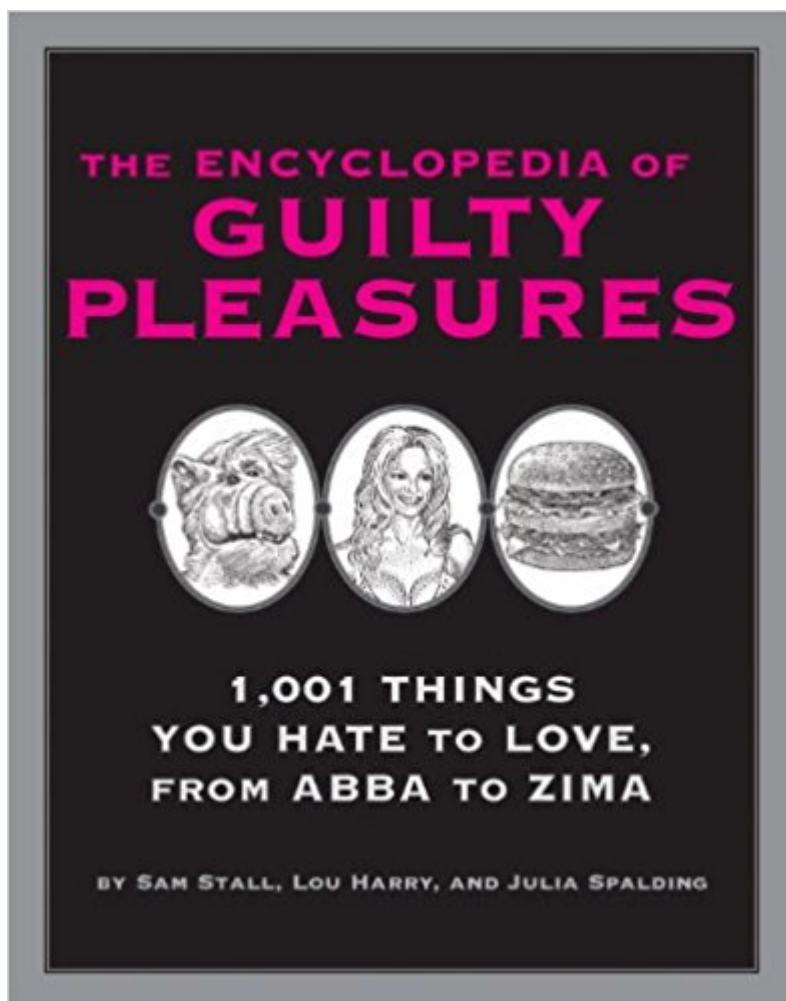


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The Encyclopedia Of Guilty Pleasures



Synopsis

What do Neil Diamond, Touched by an Angel, Pamela Anderson, The Boy in the Plastic Bubble, White castle hamburgers, Benny Hill, Thomas Kinkade, and the song "You Light Up My Life" have in common? They're all guilty pleasures and they're all celebrated in this massive A-to-Z encyclopedia. Authors Sam Stall, Lou Harry, and Julia Spalding have unearthed fascinating trivia about literature (Valley of the Dolls, The Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue), television (The Real World, Land of the Lost), fashion (Members Only jackets, the WonderBra), and more. Every page features a sophisticated two-column design and handy guide words for quick at-a-glance reference. Best of all, we've illustrated 100 of the guiltiest pleasures with the same portrait style used by the Wall Street Journal. Complete with 1,001 entries, it's the ultimate guide to everything you hate to love!

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Customer Reviews

A trio of creative minds, obsessed with those secret indulgences we enjoy when no one else is watching, have produced a 50-year chronicle of guilty pleasures from A to Z. With over 1,000 capsulized, satirical descriptions, the book offers plenty to savor. Contemporary self-indulgences such as boy bands and the Olsen twins earn mentions, as do groan-worthy old timers like Old Spice cologne and water beds. Jackie and Joan Collins and Anna Nicole Smith score high on the schlock scale, along with devilish foods like the timeless green bean casserole and Cinnabon sticky buns. Television takes a lot of cheesy credit, with entries including The Love Boat, Baywatch, The

Osbournes and that pioneer of reality shows, Candid Camera. Time-tested favorites Cool Whip, the Carpenters and the National Enquirer provide as many hoots as the snippet-length bios of Fabio, Adrienne Barbeau ("apparently this woman was an actress of some sort"), Amy Fisher and Monica Lewinsky. The encyclopedic arrangement is funny in and of itself (the Little House on the Prairie entry says, "See Landon, Michael"). As tempting as Jiffy Pop Popcorn, this flippant (albeit subjective) reference is compulsively seductive, with tongue-in-cheek remarks the authors' flair. Illus. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Sam Stall pleads guilty to enjoying Fantasy Island, Bloomin' Onions, and the artwork of Boris Vallejo. Lou Harry has mastered the Electric Slide and collects Hummel figurines. Julia Spalding is a fan of Sweet Valley High novels, Clinique Pore Minimizer Makeup, and "Designer Imposters."

Bought for a gift..

What's not to like? Three hundred pages of your favorite trash, elevated to nostalgia, handily packaged, and punchily, pithily, wittily written. Makes a great gift! (see "Infomercials")

According to the Introduction, these 1001 iconic and wildly popular examples of American pop cult are all things that cause shame "things people relish in private, but in most cases wouldn't be caught dead eating, visiting, viewing, listening to, touching, or rubbing all over their bodies in public." But just as the many "Official Guides" that have procreated ever since the appearance of the Preppy Handbook, despite their tongue-in-cheek tone, contain more than a grain of truth, so this blanket condemnation shouldn't be taken as 100% gospel. Certainly some of the entries are guiltfests "Valley of the Dolls, The National Enquirer, Teletubbies, Playboy (and various similar titles), Jean-Claude Van Damme, Jerry Springer, wet t-shirt competitions, Victoria's Secret catalogues, Frederick's of Hollywood. But others, like Walt Disney World or baseball-stadium hot dogs (which even their entry admits are "a game-day rite"), are "pleasures" most of us wouldn't really be that embarrassed to confess to indulging in; some, like Star Trek, Abbott & Costello, superheroes, and The Twilight Zone, have reached the point of being seriously studied in academia; some, like cozy mysteries,

may be something of an addiction but aren't necessarily as bad as the authors suggest (it's not that their towns all have "a disturbingly lame police force," it's simply that those police forces aren't accustomed to murder and aren't well equipped (psychologically or technologically) to solve it, whereas the amateur detective, who operates on intuition or esoteric knowledge, may be better suited to seeing the connections they don't); and quite a few, like Elvis, the Super Bowl (and its commercials), The Partridge Family, Hallmark Hall of Fame, The Waltons, Shirley Temple movies, The Wonderful World of Disney (in its various incarnations), bowling, and the Hollywood Walk of Fame, are either authentic American institutions or family-friendly (if not both). And then there's Jerry Lewis, who may be a guilty pleasure in the U.S. but has attained a near-divine status in France (much as Edgar Allan Poe, today recognized as a major author, did 150-odd years ago, so there's hope for Jerry yet!). Perhaps the book should be considered, not a catalogue of shame, but simply an examination of some of the more popular examples of pop-culture. Some of these people, places, and things, including Twinkies, Rocky Balboa, Schoolhouse Rock, Kraft macaroni and cheese, the Kennedys, and RV's (and that's just the ones from the most recent version; 11 more appeared on the Third, in 2013, two and a half on the Second, and three on the First) have even been added to Fortune's annual list of "100 Great Things About America," so obviously not everyone thinks they're "shameful" at all. I can't speak for anyone else, but I, for example, have never felt embarrassed when I've succumbed to the charms of a kitten poster, bought a movie-soundtrack CD by one of the "symphonic" composers or a Time-Life book or record,, put a box of Pop-Tarts in my grocery cart, or stopped at Dunkin' Donuts for a coffee-cake muffin!

The Encyclopedia of Guilty Pleasures, 1,001 Things You Hate To Love is just plain fun! The amount of cross-referenced trivia is astounding. I find I am curious about many things other people stick their nose up at. How many of you have the same guilty pleasures? The authors believe many of the items have two things in common: 1) Discussing them in public with either friends or strangers will automatically bring either 'condescending smiles or derisive giggles.' 2) All the things they talk about are or were extremely popular. Arranged alphabetically, the book covers a rich and vast haul - everything from celebrities like Liberace and Bill Clinton; the scoop on Chef Boyardee (yes he was a real person), Hamburger Helper; and Rice-A-Roni; and an interesting fact about Old Spice Cologne and the sailor in the commercials. There are also tidbits about television programs like Sanford and Son, The Osbournes, Hee Haw and Gilligan's Island, to name a few. We also get interesting facts

about The George Forman Grill, Kathie Lee Gifford, embarrassing Oscar acceptance speeches and television bloopers. This is a fun, light read full of 'stuff' that people are interested in, even if they don't want to admit it.

Please! _Doctor Who_, a "guilty pleasure"?! Or anime, which is a genuine art form? And I'm very good at "Trivial Pursuit" -- most reference librarians are. It's also obviously a generational thing; my mother was a Liberace fan in the '50s, and I loved Jiffy Pop in the pre-microwave days myself. (I was already too old when MTV debuted in 1981, or for paintball, which appeared that same year.) And is there anyone who *doesn't* have a few souvenir T-shirts in the closet? On the other hand, who's gonna admit to deliberately watching Hanna-Barbera cartoons? Or _Leave It to Beaver_ reruns, or _The Gong Show_? Or to drinking Big Red? This is the perfect book for a long road trip, for reading aloud to each other and starting arguments. There are some odd omissions, though: How can you talk about "End-of-the-World Movies" without mentioning _On the Beach_? Or "Elvis Impersonators" without noting Andy Kaufman's eerily accurate version early in his career? Or, for the ultimate in self-reference, why isn't there a listing under "Trivia Books"?

Well-written, well-selected, and often very funny. The entries do a good job pinpointing the appeal of their respective cultural oddities, and the array is pretty dazzling. Heavily weighted toward the generation that came of age in the eighties, but hey, where else can you go for so much guilt in one place? Our colleges should consider giving it to foreign graduate students on their way through customs--it's a guide to all that's 'essentially useless', the hidden flotsam and jetsam of our culture. I got this as an 'extra' gift from a friend, and expected to find it moderately amusing, something to thumb through. Surprise: My partner and I were so impressed with the book that we both wound-up reading through the entire thing.

The Encyclopedia of Guilty Pleasures: 1,001 Things You Hate to Love (Stall, Harry, & Spalding), is my official new favorite for that old game of adding "in bed" to anything to make it hilarious. From the first entry, ABBA, to the last, Zima, this book chronicles a thousand (and one!) things that you'll want to try in bed with your spouse, significant other, or a random person you picked up on the street (and a couple of good-quality condoms, please!).[...]

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