

No sex to safe sex, spring break flicks reveal naked truth

By Matthew Pedrolie, Marquette Tribune, Marquette U.

He's tall, he's handsome and he's got the darkest tan in Florida. With that hairy, heaving chest and those swim trunks that leave everything to the imagination, it could only be one man — George Hamilton.

See him dancing the Pony at the beach and see him gather babes wearing swimsuits that expose minimal flesh. It's spring break '60s style as portrayed by the classic film *Where the Boys Are*.

It's not exactly the picture painted by today's flicks with beer slugging everywhere, chanting crowds of insane college students, tan goddesses in teeny weeny bikinis and hulking college men plunging from palm trees into the pool.

But the missions of these films remain the same — to arouse the migratory hormones in high schoolers before they depart for the wonder years of college. And the films have changed much the same way the actual breaks have progressed.

They started with *Where the Boys Are*, the cinematic pioneer of spring break.

The success of the time-honored collegiate rite of passage could be attributed to that first attempt at break entertainment.

"*Where the Boys Are* is really just a camp icon. That movie along with the creation of the astronaut culture, had something to do with [the popularity of spring break]," says Chris Connelly, editor of *Premiere* magazine and host of MTV's *The Big Picture*. "You take a look at it; it had George Hamilton, Connie Francis and several other stars of the time.

So with that it was sort of a typical knockoff of a movie in its day that did well."

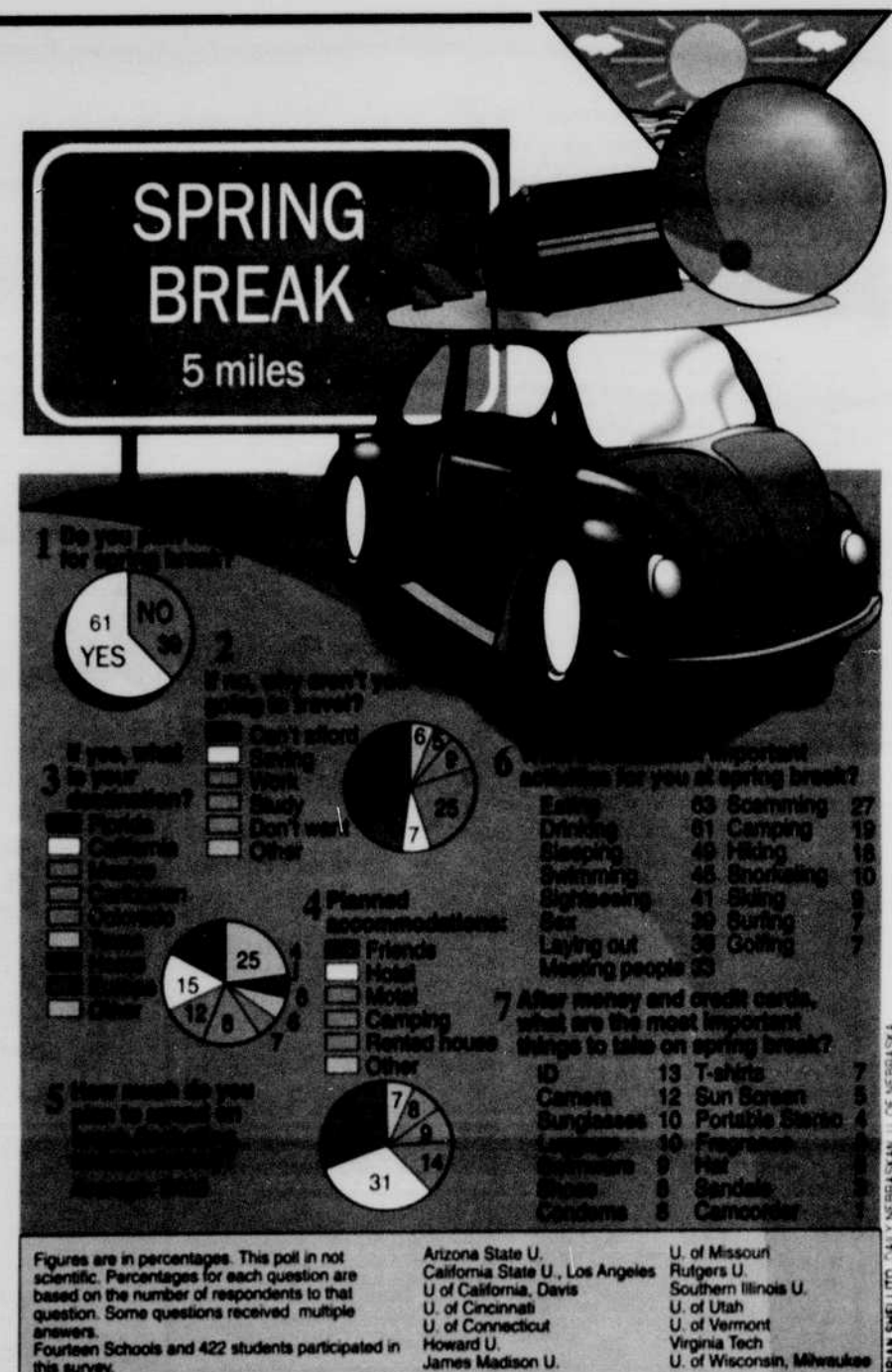
Francis was convincing as the naive college girl who'd never had a beer. Her generous one-piece swimsuit and conservative bun hairdo indicated her commitment to good behavior and moral purity. And her wild desire to play cards on the beach further communicated that vow.

The real-life breaks of that time were equally as crazy.

Patty Barrett, a 1959 graduate of Webster College, cherishes the memory of her spring break escapade in 1958.

It was a trip with her friends down to Ft. Lauderdale for a week of fun in the sun.

"My mother made us some fried



The 1961 *Where the Boys Are* (top) kept genitals under wraps, but the 1984 *Spring Break* (center), left little to the imagination. And even the geeks got women in *Revenge of the Nerds II* (bottom).

chicken to eat along the way and off we went — driving all day and all night to get there."

After *Where the Boys Are*, the spring break trips became serious fun in the sun with a purpose — to seek out boys for rollicking canasta games on the sand. Other spring break movies of lesser quality were released. In the late '60s there was *Love in a Fish Bowl*, starring Fabian among others. It seems the flicks somehow created a cult following desperate to mirror the dancing and romancing done by the likes of the hairy Hamilton.

"If you mythicize something like that it definitely spurs an interest in checking it out," Connelly says. "The distance created by time has kind of made it something more than it is."

In the 1960s things remained innocent — Annette Funicello was a model teen, Frankie Valli was a hair mentor and genitals stayed under wraps (where they belonged) — but as free-thinking hippies descended on the eastern Florida coast, there grew to be more to fear than just sting rays. Drugs started to pop up along with more liberal attitudes toward sex.

Luckily the spring break movies stayed abreast of the changes and set new agendas. The absolute hedonism of the '80s was offered up in jiggle-and-giggle flicks like *Lauderdale*, *Spring Break* and *Revenge of the Nerds II*. Wet T-shirt contests came to national prominence, belly flopping became a favorite pastime and

through a scientific breakthrough, all bugs were worked out of a new device — the beer bong. But all of this progress didn't just happen, it was a gradual transformation.

"Spring break has evolved out of a combination of technology and affluence," says Linda Richter, a social scientist at Kansas U.

With all those advances, spring break has become a college icon.

And many students say their breaks have been like the movies. Danna Callero, a senior at the U. of Dayton, says her trip to South Padre Island two years ago is one she won't forget.

"It had the movie atmosphere. We went down with a whole group of friends from college," she says. "It was wild and fun in the sense of the movies, but there were corporate sponsors all over the place."

Starting to think about your trip this year? If the movies help shape your plans, it seems there's one thing to strive for — insanity.

And that probably won't be a problem.

"We went to Disneyworld last year, about 15 of us from school," says Chris Jones, a senior at Providence College.

"At night we would go to this thing there called Pleasure Island. It's an island filled with different bars. I saw sweat shirts from across the country. Every night it was like a thousand college kids drinking and going nuts."