

Jericho Girls Gone Wild!

**First It was culottes!
Then Pants!
Then *Hot* Pants!
Then clogs and Platforms!**

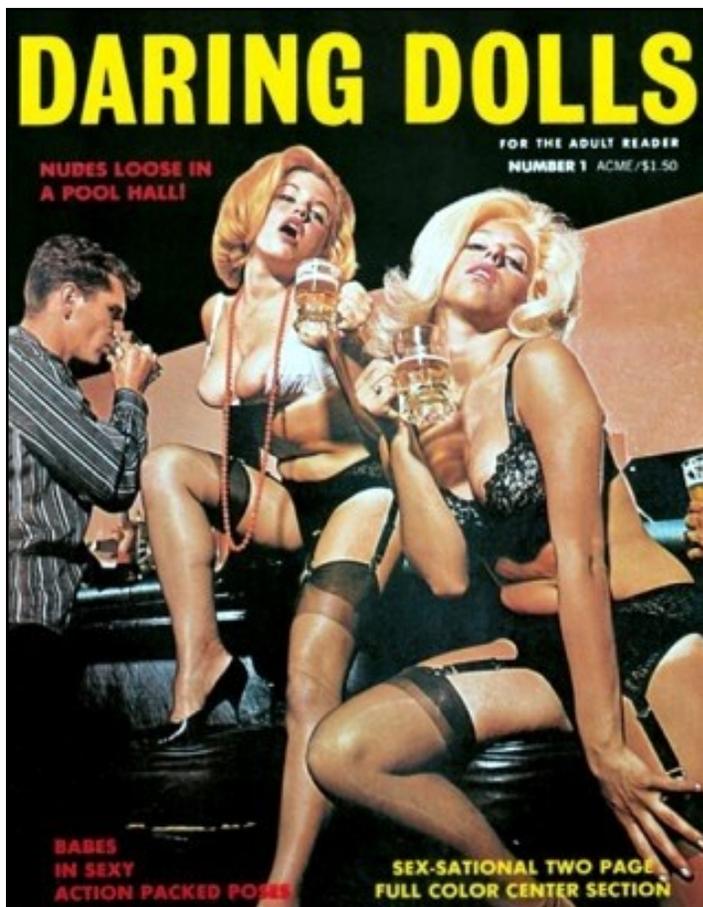
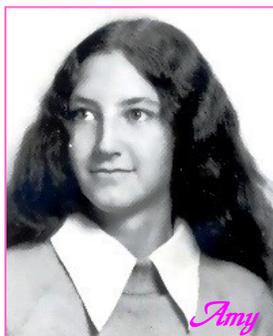
**Who could Have Foreseen It
Would Lead to This?!? →**

**The JHS Administration,
That's who!**

Years before the women's march down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue on August 26, 1970, which more or less kicked off the women's liberation movement, at least symbolically, girls at Jericho High and Junior High were standing up for their fashion rights.

For a time, it seemed like if you were a young women, your sartorial choices were limited pretty much to skirts or a burka, as school administrators prohibited culottes, pants, clogs, and short skirts. Even *long* skirts could earn you a trip to the principal's office, as Amy Lubow Downs ('72) found out at George A. Jackson Elementary School.

"I was told that my skirt was a distraction," she recalls, "and asked to go home and change."



Women faculty were subject to the same rules. Social-studies teacher Ms. Maureen Tracy remembers administrators reprimanding her for wearing a pantsuit, which they deemed "unprofessional."

The female dress code became something of a political flashpoint, not on the scale of the Vietnam War, of course, but a source of outrage nonetheless. During junior high, girls from the class of '72 defiantly wore culottes to school, only to be told to go home and put on something presentable. Namely a skirt.

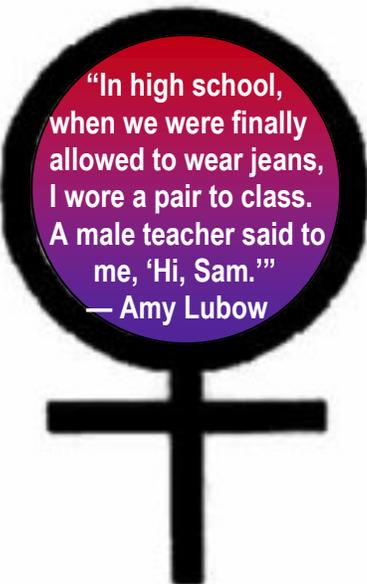
As Debra Schwartz from the class of 1971

Continued on page 2

Jericho Girls Gone Wild!

Continued from page 1

remembers it, "I thought we were always allowed to wear culottes. It was pants that were the big deal. There was a girl in the class ahead of me—I think her name was Shelly—who led the pants thing. I remember some kind of meeting in the Little Theater about this. I guess I must have attended, but I don't remember doing much."



"In high school, when we were finally allowed to wear jeans, I wore a pair to class. A male teacher said to me, 'Hi, Sam.'"
 — Amy Lubow



"You know how teenage boys, with their raging hormones, can get at the sight of a well-turned ankle! It's [splutter] a disgrace! An outrage!"

Avert your eyes, avert your eyes! Don't look! Dear God, help me be strong ...



The ban on women's pants seems bizarre in retrospect. Since a major object was apparently to not wave a red flag in front of the adolescent male population, wouldn't pants be preferable to skirts? Debra finds it equally odd that the school administration fixated on the outfits girls wore, yet both sexes were allowed to smoke in the newly established senior lounge.

"I look back at that totally mystified," she says. "How could the administration have caved on that one? And why weren't the parents up in arms?"

By the 1969-70 school year or so (it's not like somebody kept records about this stuff), jeans became commonplace, and the fuss about student dress subsided, on both ends. Here are the recollection of some of the participants.



Carol Rosenblum Levin ('73): "I totally remember assemblies in 1967-68 about the girls' dress code. If at any time during the day the length of our skirts or dresses were questioned and considered to be too short, we had to drop to our knees. If the hem of our dress didn't touch the floor, we were sent home.

"The reason we weren't allowed to wear jeans to school, they said, was because 'It's impossible to learn wearing blue jeans' (?), but I'm guess-

ing that was for boys and girls alike.

"I remember that well into the spring of 1968, the junior high school banned culottes [how revolutionary: a cross between a skirt and shorts!], and there was an assembly about that. A ninth-grade girl (I was in eighth) stood up and said to Mr. Rathje, the principal, that it was unfair to ban culottes after we'd bought our spring wardrobes. I can't remember her name, but she had blonde hair and was self-assured enough to speak before the entire school.

"The ban on culottes was lifted after that assembly—a credit to those in charge, because they really did listen to reason. It's hard to imagine that culottes were ever an issue when you look at the way people dress today!

Continued on page 3

Jericho Girls Gone Wild!

Continued from page 2

“I was also thrown out of driver’s-ed class for wearing clogs to class—unsafe for driving!”

Benita Zahn Stulmaker ('72): “It was 1971, the last day of my junior year. I’d been to the beach the day before with a group of friends and gotten a very bad sunburn. It was all I could do to put on any clothing.



Benita

“So, with sunburned feet, I slipped on a pair of thong sandals. Well, you know, sandals were verboten, and sure enough, I was hauled into the principal’s office for that offense—never got to the last-day assembly. It was both ridiculous and very funny.

“There was another act of civil disobedience. The girls wanted to wear

Continued on page 4

Tali-banned Fashions! (At Least for a While)



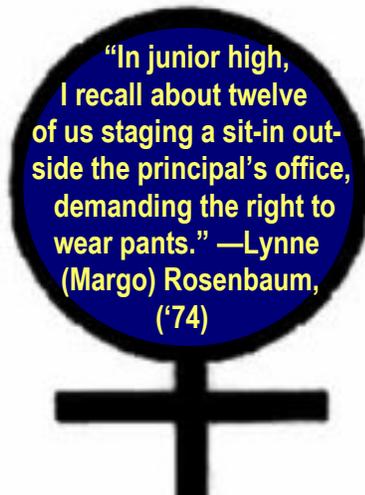
Hot Pants!



(Left) “I just crushed to death a wolverine without even realizing it in my fashionable new pair of platform heels!”



Miniskirt!



“In junior high, I recall about twelve of us staging a sit-in outside the principal’s office, demanding the right to wear pants.” —Lynne (Margo) Rosenbaum, ('74)

THE BRALESS LOOK!



From the cover to Carly Simon’s *No Secrets*, the best LP jacket ever (at least, from an adolescent-male perspective). Honorable mention: Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass’s *Whipped Cream & Other Delights*.

Jericho Girls Gone Wild!

Continued from page 3

culottes. Science teacher Mr. Herb Kramer was sympathetic and suggested that we all don culottes and lie down in front of the school buses in protest. Knowing Mr. Kramer, he was probably only *half-kidding*.

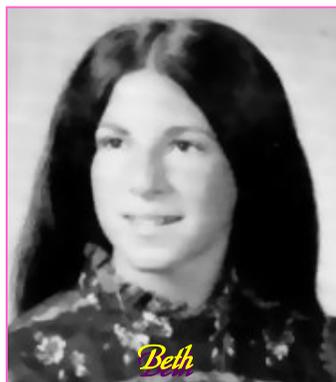
“Needless to say, the protest in that form never happened. Nowadays I think the administrators would welcome culottes compared to what is worn!”

Janet Penn Finklestein ('72): “About those culottes—I remember a pair that were blue and white plaid. I don’t recall ever being sent home for wearing them, but I do remember one day in seventh grade having to get on my knees and pulling my skirt down so that it touched the floor, so I wouldn’t have to go home and change. Hard to believe ...”



Janet

(Right) In a thoughtful letter to *Newsday*, fourteen-year-old Beth Fischer (class of '73) tries to make sense of it all. The year: 1969.



Beth

Wendy Foxmyn ('72): “In seventh or eighth grade, I was brought before the authorities (the vice principal?) for wearing a skirt considered ‘too short.’

“I remember the skirt well. It was baby blue and, well, *short*. But nothing compared to the hot-pants that many others (not me!) wore just a few years later. I was embarrassed by the experience and thought that the male administrators were ‘dirty old men’ for being obsessed with these matters.



Wendy

Short-Lived Fad?

During the past few months the question of whether girls should be permitted to wear pants to school has become a major issue. Many of the schools on Long Island have given in to the protests, including the one I attend.

As a girl who has just been given the privilege, I am confused. I would like to be comfortable and relaxed in school, and it is quite cold waiting for the bus in the morning—but are slacks proper? Do slacks enhance a girl’s appearance? I have not yet found the answer to these questions.

I do know that our new right will soon diminish in popularity, because on the first day we were allowed to wear slacks everyone took advantage of it. Now as the days go by, fewer students wear slacks. So this new fad might soon end.
—Beth Fischer, 14

“Ironically, I’m occasionally appalled by the revealing clothing worn by girls today and the general sloppiness and casual dress of students today. I’m in favor of school dress codes, as long as they’re fair and developed with input from the students and the community-at-large, nonsexist, etc.

“I’m even open to the idea of uniforms—this, from the person voted 1972 Class Individualist, along with Billy Hartley!—so that students don’t have to be so focused on buying expensive clothes, shoes, accessories, and so on. I like the distinction between school clothes and ‘play clothes.’”



Above, the offending garment. Look only if you dare!

Lessons from Bra Burning 101: “Always remember to remove garment before setting on fire.” Solid advice then; solid advice now!

