

WEEKEND

THROWBACK

COLUMN

Pappy’s Picks:

How to party like it’s 2016

// BY ANNA PAPAKIRK

Want a movie rec? Need a new hobby or activity? Craving a sweet treat? With so many decisions and too many options in this world, allow me to help you make your pick.

Hi! My name is Anna “Pappy” Papakirk, although only a select few from back home actually call me “Pappy.” I’m a junior in Branford studying economics and history. When I’m not in class — or doing my favorite activity: writing for the WKND desk — you can find me exploring. I love trying new things, whether that be discovering new places on campus, feasting at the restaurants of New Haven or watching a binge-worthy show. And when I come across anything that I truly enjoy or find something that achieves can’t-live-without status, I want to share it with all of you. Trust me, I’m not gate-keeping any of my favorites.

That’s why “Pappy’s Picks” will give you suggestions to help you maximize your days and find the little things that can bring you joy. Without further ado, take your pick.

“Cause they say two thousand twenty-six
Party over, oops out of time
So tonight I’m gonna party like it’s 2016”

In his famous song “1999,” Prince made a bold statement, refusing to enter the new year at the turn of the millennium and instead to “party like it’s 1999.”

And for those of you who haven’t heard, this new year, we are taking a lesson from the books of this legendary popstar and turning back the clocks — but this time to 2016. Snapchat’s dog filter is making a comeback, and so are Kylie Lip Kits. The internet is ringing in the new year by reviving decade-old trends rather than embracing a bleaker future.

I didn’t mind 2016, but I wouldn’t want to go back to being 12 again. The teenage cultural references that Kylie Jenner keeps posting about online were far from my sixth grade experience. I had a full set of braces and was learning algebra for the first time. Sounds like a party, right?

However, if you, like me, want to reclaim those notoriously awkward

middle school years then 2026 might be the year for you. Perhaps relive the sweeter side of life — when you may have not even been a teenager but rather a tween-ager — then 2026 is the year for you. The whole year is a party that your tween-age self was dying to go to. And

taking center stage. I still remember early morning car rides to school, these tunes blasting from the speaker, with my favorite songs being the ballads of King George.

What’s more fitting is that as the United States celebrates its semiquincentennial

theme here, this is the fit I’m rocking into the new year.

My statement piece is going to be a bomber jacket. Full disclosure, I didn’t own one then, and I don’t own one now. Remember — 2016 was the beginning of my awkward middle school years, so I had no sense of style. However, since I’m reclaiming the year, I’m going to do it right by following the fashion trends of the time.

What I did own plenty of was chokers, so that’s how we’ll accessorize. At my middle school, the black choker with a singular white pearl was the accessory to own. I probably made my mom go to seven different stores trying to find one because I just had to have it. It truly works well with any outfit.

Activities and accoutrements

If there was one type of party that defined 2016, it was the house party.

This January, you’ll be the one ... the one, the one impressing every party guest by crushing the bottle flip challenge while the speaker blasts Ultimate by Denzel Curry.

After that, we’ll get the whole group involved with the mannequin challenge. Everyone will literally be frozen in time, reminiscing on the good ol’ days of 2016.

As an homage to my sixth-grade self, we are whipping out the Elmer’s glue and laundry detergent for this party’s slime-making station. Back in 2016, my friends and I were so infatuated with this craft, our Instagram feeds were filled with slime ASMR and various tutorials. We even made bank selling slime to other sixth graders. And about a week after sky-rocketing revenues, slime was completely banned from my middle school. Nevertheless, it makes for a super fun — and somewhat therapeutic — arts and crafts project.

Let’s not forget the best part of any party — the party favors! No one is leaving my party empty-handed, so I’m opting to give everyone a fidget spinner.

You don’t always get the chance to relive your youth, so be sure to swipe up and RSVP. #YOLO

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STYLE

In 2026, trends are trending down

// BY FABEHA JAHRA

Every December, fashion tries to tell us what’s coming next. Editors publish forecasts, brands release trend reports and social media asserts certainty about what we’ll all be wearing next year. The language is always confident — this silhouette, this shoe, this aesthetic. But living through 2025 made me skeptical of how much the calendar actually controls style these days.

At the start of 2025, the predictions felt neat. Elevated basics. Statement outerwear. A return to polish after years of loungewear. And in some ways, they were right. Wool coats stayed long. Tailoring felt sharper. People cared again about how outfits came together, not just about how comfortable they were.

But that isn’t the full story.

What actually defined 2025 wasn’t one look; it was how fast looks came and went. Microtrends moved at internet speed. One month it was ballet flats, then Sambas, then suddenly polka dots were everywhere — on sheer tops, skirts, tights, even

accessories — before quietly fading back into the background. I’ll admit I was rooting for them. I’ve always been a fan of polka dots, the kind of print that feels playful without trying too hard, familiar but never boring. Watching them resurface felt less like a trend moment than a small personal win.

By the time December rolled around, it was clear that consistency mattered less than adaptability. People weren’t committing to trends; they were sampling them. Wool coats stayed, how they were worn changed. Sneakers rotated. Prints appeared briefly, disappeared, then resurfaced and styled differently. Outfits became modular, built to be reinterpreted instead of replaced.

To me, that’s why the 2026 style predictions feel different. Less about reinvention, more about refinement. The early signals point toward structure without stiffness, nostalgia without costume. Tailoring is back, but softer. Pants matter

again. Shoes are playful but grounded. Prints like polka dots don’t need to dominate to matter, they slip into outfits naturally and are part of a longer conversation with personal taste. If 2025 has taught us anything, it’s that style doesn’t move linearly. Trends don’t just rise and fall, they loop, remix and overlap. A silhouette from 10 years ago comes back but is styled with different proportions. A familiar print reappears not as a headline, but as background texture. The calendar says it’s a new year, but styles don’t reset, they accumulate.

So maybe 2026 won’t be defined by a single look at all. Maybe it’ll be about editing rather than chasing. Wearing things longer. Letting personal taste catch up to trend cycles that move too fast to follow anyway. Looking back, the most accurate predictions for 2025 weren’t specific items. They were about a mood: a shift toward intention



in clothes that feels chosen rather than accidental. If that continues into 2026, then trends won’t disappear, they’ll just matter less than how we wear them.

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