STREET

Coping with fame, Britney Spears style

STEPHANIE A. CASOLA

The bedroom walls of teenage girls and boys are a testament to the teen idols of today. Just one peek into the sacred space of a teenager today would likely reveal the sweet smiles of Britney Spears, Christina Aguilura, The Backstreet Boys and N'Sync. It's all part of the teen idol cycle.

For Spears, whose sold-out show at The Palace spurred a second-coming in July, living up to that teen status hasn't really affected her personal life. In a telephone interview, the young star said she's trying to keep her success in check. "I can't go home as often as I would like to," she said. "But other than that, you know, my friends they come out on the road with me and when I go home...it hasn't really affected it that much."

With the success of hits like "(Baby) One More Time" and "Drive Me Crazy" Spears catapulted into the spotlight quickly and became a household name. While she admits her music is mostly digested by high schoolers, she hopes to reach an older audience with the next album. "Well, I think that my material off the second album is a little bit more mature and by doing that I think I'll capture a little bit of the older audience as well as keep the younger audience, too."

Another difference? She wrote a song — an autobiographical song — on the album titled "Dear Diary." "It's just a personal song and talks about a girl who she's interested in this guy and she comes in every night and she writes about him."

But fame comes at a price for this teenage picture of perfection. "At times it's a bit overwhelming, but I think I surround myself with really cool people that keep me humble and that I've been with for a really long time. I think that keeps me sane."

Spears admitted celebrity life isn't what she expected. "There's a lot of hard work involved that I didn't see and I didn't realize. But I mean, there's ups and downs too, you know. But to sum it all up, I love what I do, you know, performing is like I guess when I'm happiest. It's a lot of fun. But no, it isn't what I thought it would be."

Aside from the constant touring, being bombarded by young fans, and having her face plastered in magazines and on MTV, Spears is just your average 18-year-old. She idolizes Madonna and Janet Jackson, doesn't have a candidate preference for the upcoming elections, and her New Year's Resolution was to eat healthier. Of course, not every teenager has a doll made in her image. Not every teenager has to try to follow up the success of selling 17 million copies of a song worldwide. Spears had some advice for Britney wannabe's everywhere: "God's given them a talent. I think they should use it and express it and show the world."

Lucky fans will see the sold-out Britney Spears shows, 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, The Palace of Auburn Hills, or 7:30 p.m. Sunday, July 9, Pine Knob Music Theatre, Independence Township. Try for tickets one more time, 7:30 p.m. Monday, July 10, Pine Knob Music Theater, Independence Township. $25 lawn/$40 pavilion. Eight ticket limit per person. Call (248) 645-6666.

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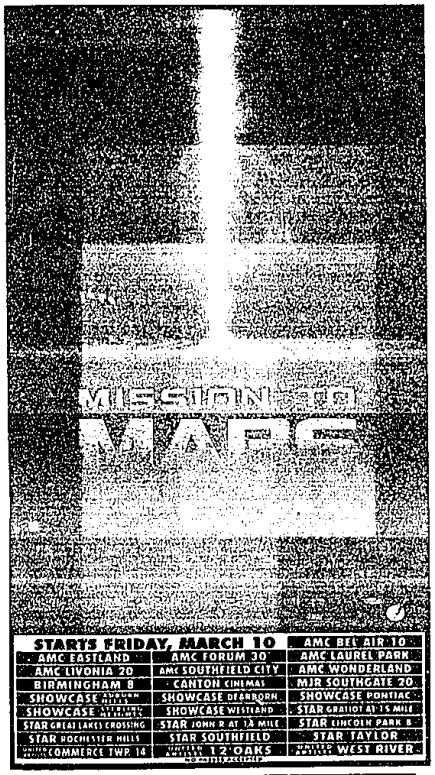
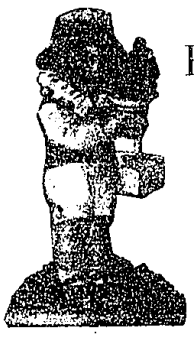
Britney Spears





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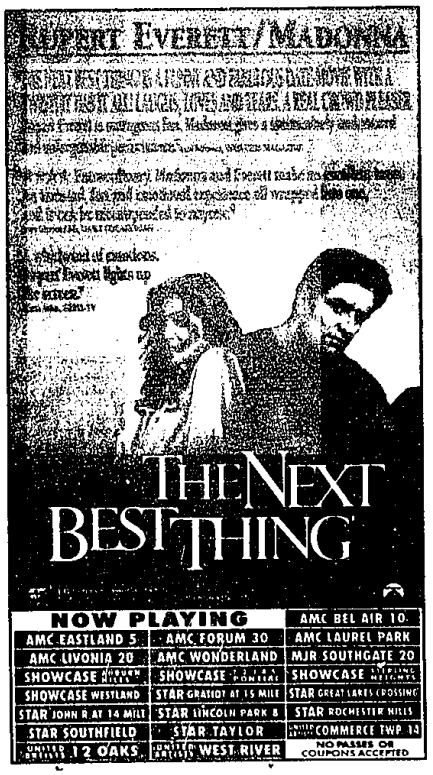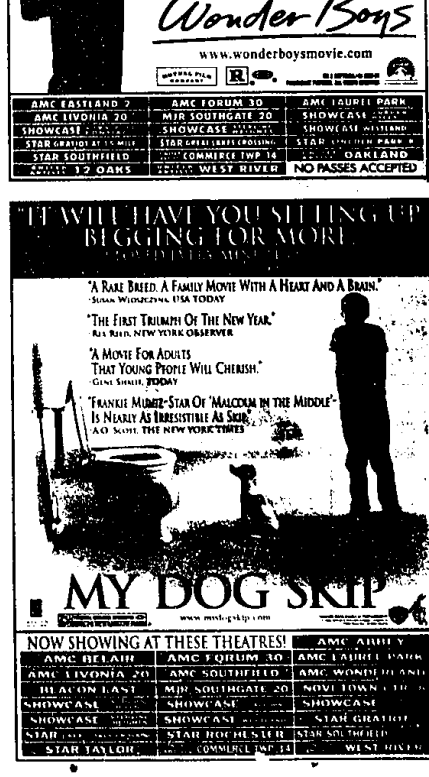
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