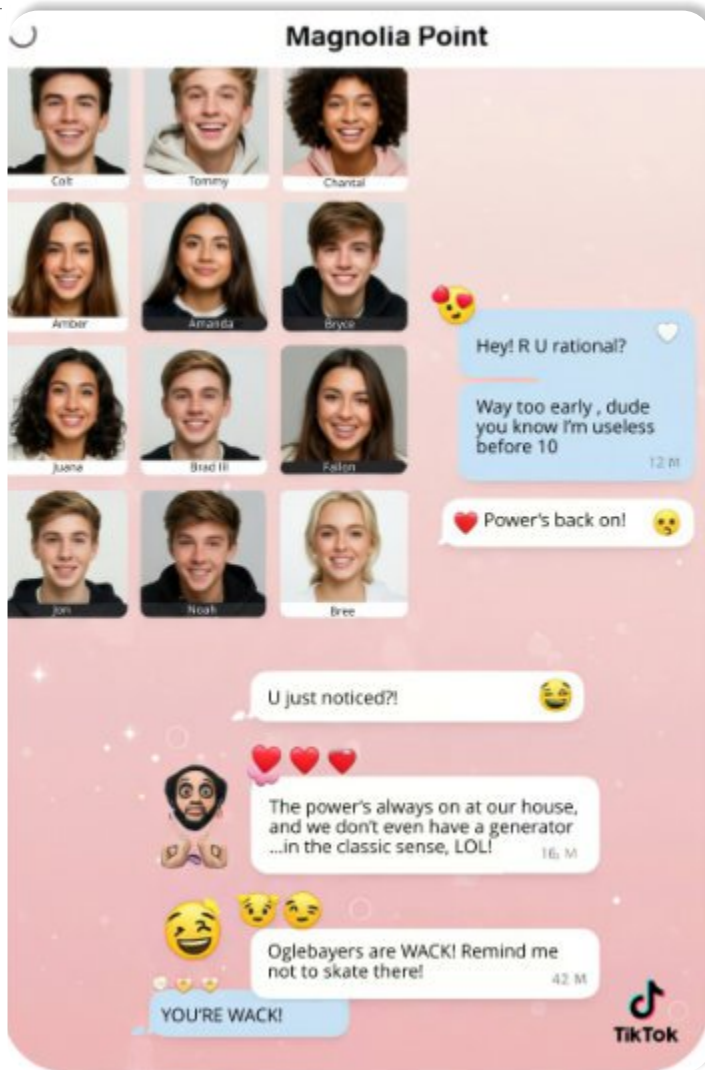


# Generational Survival Guide - Chapter 1: Who's Humming What?

*Music, it can be said, is the most instantly recognizable, accessible, and portable mean with which generations identify themselves, true the modern world over. Hence, our introductory chapter hopefully hums a tune you'll know...*



**Boomers:** Think classic rock anthems that must be sung at full volume. *"Sweet Caroline"*, *"Hotel California"* and *"Margaritaville"* are their national anthems. Expect a heavy rotation of Motown, folk rock, Beatles, Stones, and anything that reminds them of "simpler times", before the internet and sensible footwear. They might accidentally leave their car radio blasting a talk radio show at max ("11") while retrieving their mail. Be prepared for unintentional performances. It's not uncommon to see a Boomer neighbor absentmindedly air-drumming to *"In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida"* on their morning walks, or overhear them humming *"Brown Eyed Girl"* during evening golf cart rounds. Or, God forbid, they decide to host a "sing-along" at the clubhouse that inevitably turns into a competition of who can remember more lyrics to a forgotten B-side.

**The Rest of Y'all:** Consider your edgy mix of grunge, alternative rock, early hip-hop, and the occasional ironic pop song from the 80s or 90s. Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Beastie Boys, R.E.M., anything that screams "I'm too cool for school, but also, I have crippling student loan debt!" The older among you secretly love one-hit wonders from the 80s that only you remember. You might conspicuously belt out *"Smells Like Teen Spirit"* while retrieving *your* trash bins from the street. The younger among you are more eclectic, heavily influenced by early 2000s pop-punk, to indie folk, to mainstream hip-hop, anything resembling *"Mr. Brightside"*, to whatever obscure genre blew up on TikTok last week. You youngest of **Y'all's** go for global, genre-bending, and driven by short-form video trends. K-Pop, hyperpop, bedroom pop, obscure indie artists, anything by Billie Eilish and anything that can be remixed or sped up for a dance challenge. You listen to "songs" that are often just

15-second clips, rarely played in the traditional sense; it's more likely emanating from someone's phone speaker while you film a TikTok dance by the club pool. The concept of an album is *quaint* to you.

**Life in the Wild:** MPCA Board Meeting. Before it starts, a **Boomer** enters the room humming *"Dust in the Wind"*, while a **Y'aller** scrolls Spotify, blasting *"When You Were Young"* (no, really!) at low volume through AirPods. Both accidentally lock eyes. The **Boomer** nods approvingly and mutters, "Now that's a catchy tune," unaware it's been on every wedding playlist since 2004. Treat with care: they think 'Gin Blossoms' is a mixed drink they've had once, 'somewhere around here' (though it actually is this month's **MIXmagic** on **page 28**.)

Or, at the community yard sale, a Gen Xer blasts *"Sabotage"* from their Bluetooth speaker, attracting a **Y'alls** neighbor who compliments their taste before both of them are interrupted by a **Boomer** proclaiming, "Now *that's* a song you can dance to! But not like you kids do it now, back then we *danced*." They then begin demonstrating a move best described as disco-meets-chiropractic emergency. At the pool, someone is filming a TikTok dance challenge to hyperpop on the pool deck, as a **Boomer** glides by in their wide-brimmed sun hat muttering, "Why are they flailing? Should we call someone?"

**Your Survival Play:** When trapped in a musical monologue, compliment the **Boomer's** excellent taste in vintage music. Ask if they remember when *"Stairway to Heaven"* was released. This creates an immediate bond of shared nostalgia. If you hear them playing something recognizable, offer a knowing nod. A shared *"Remember when music actually rocked?"* can forge an unspoken alliance against the saccharine bleating from their car speakers. Ask them about their favorite new artists. This will simultaneously baffle and delight them, as they're always eager to share their carefully curated sonic discoveries. If trolled, resist and train yourself to endure quietly such grumblings, smile, and mentally thank them for their service.

- STORY, ART: EDITOR

