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# Being a granny is in style

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## Suddenly it's all about grandparents—from '40s fashions to Silverman's latest video

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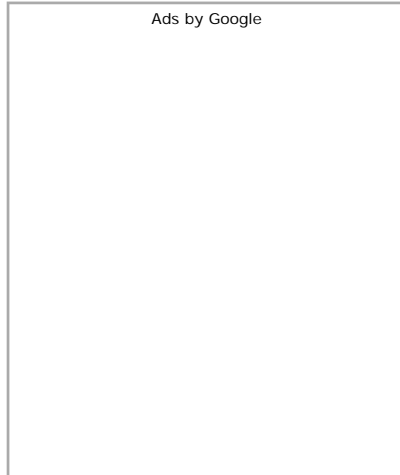
By Nara Schoenberg | Chicago Tribune reporter  
October 15, 2008

Move over, Paris.

Granny is ready for her close-up.

On tonight's season finale of "[Project Runway](#)," one of three remaining designers, Kenley Collins, will be showcasing 1940s styles reminiscent of those worn by her calendar-girl grandma.

[Sarah Silverman](#), the comedian best known for her "I'm [intimate with] [Matt Damon](#)" video, has turned her attention to the senior set, netting more than 750,000 views for her YouTube video urging Jewish hipsters to push Obama on their dotting bubbes and zeides.



"[Ugly Betty](#)," a show that helped pioneer the modern era of female geek chic, recently championed the g-rents, with a subplot in which mean-girl Kimmie Keegan ([Lindsay Lohan](#)) ignited the wrath of Betty ([America Ferrera](#)) by dissing the Suarez family patriarch, Ignacio—"I mean, how old is he, like, 100?"

And then there are the bloggers who are singing the praises of their thrifty Depression-era grandparents in light of the current economic meltdown.

"It's kind of cool to be a grandparent, even cooler than it is to be a parent," says Rob Weiner, a humanities librarian at Texas Tech University who writes about pop culture.

Among the explanations: More grandparents are hip, fun-lovin' Baby Boomers, or near Boomers. Think [Mick Jagger](#), Aerosmith's

Steven Tyler and grandma-to-be [Sarah Palin](#).

But some of the grandparents getting name-checked by pop culture's in-crowd aren't Boomers. Elayne Rapping, a professor of American studies at the [State University of New York](#) at Buffalo, says that the economy—not just the current crisis, but the broader economic pressure preceding it—is also part of the story.

At a time when college students may be working 20 hours a week or questioning the financial value of a degree, pre-Boomer, Depression-era thrift and caution are starting to look pretty good too, Rapping says: "Penny-pinching—that's back in style."

But with the aging of the nation's 78 million Baby Boomers, seniors' role in pop culture is only going to increase, according to Gary Hoppenstand, a professor of American studies at [Michigan State University](#).

"It's not going to be something that's immediately noticeable, but I think the day of the teen or tween dominance of content in popular culture is really starting to change, and is almost starting to shift significantly to seniors."

So keep an eye out for that remake of "[The Golden Girls](#)." Or maybe "[Dancing With the Stars](#)—The Senior Edition."

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