

lifestyle

tank top:

Made out of five 2-liter soda bottles. The 240 million pounds of plastic bottles that are recycled and turned into fabric each year in the United States save enough oil to power a city the size of Pasadena, Calif., for two years.

jacket: Created from 70 2-liter soda bottles. For every 3,700 bottles that are recycled and made into fabric, a barrel of oil is saved and about half a ton of toxic air pollutants are avoided.

TRASHY CLOTHES

Design students are turning trash into environment-friendly fashion.

Fashion design student

Elizabeth Arenas has always dreamed of seeing her designs on the runway. But she never imagined that her first creations would be made of garbage.

Arenas and 36 other students across the country are working with top designers such as Tommy Hilfiger, Todd Oldham and Nicholas Graham of Joe Boxer through a master-apprentice program to create clothes made entirely out of recycled plastic.

This program is sponsored by

shorts:

Made out of five 2-liter bottles. Americans use 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour of every day.



A model shows off eco-friendly clothing designed by a student in last year's master-apprentice program.

fabric and fiber manufacturer Wellman Inc. Each year the company recycles about 3 billion plastic soda bottles that would otherwise clog landfills and turns them into a polyester fabric called EcoSpun. The bottles are washed, chopped up and melted, then the liquid is sprayed through a showerheadlike device and spun into yarn to make fleece, denim or fine knits.

A t-shirt made of EcoSpun reuses about four 2-liter bottles; a pair of jeans, six bottles; and a sweater, 15 bottles.

"A lot of things we use every day are made out of something that has been recycled," says Arenas, 22, a senior at Kent State University in Ohio. "So why not wear it?"

Under the creative guidance of Nicholas Graham (the man who put bright yellow smiley faces on

Joe Boxer underwear), Arenas designed a tube top, a half-shirt, a pleated skirt and a backpack with bra straps—made of about 25 plastic bottles total.

On Earth Day, April 22, Arenas' outfit will be showcased in New York along with the creations of the other students and designers. Although you can't buy these one-of-a-kind eco-ensembles, some clothing companies like Patagonia, Timberland, Columbia Sportswear and The North Face are already working with the EcoSpun material.

Arenas hopes the recycled material lands in more people's closets. "If clothing made of recycled material is able to get the publicity and widespread acceptance it needs, it could be amazing," she says.

—Leslie Mladinich



Student Elizabeth Arenas and Joe Boxer founder Nicholas Graham sketch designs for clothes made of recycled plastic.

for teens

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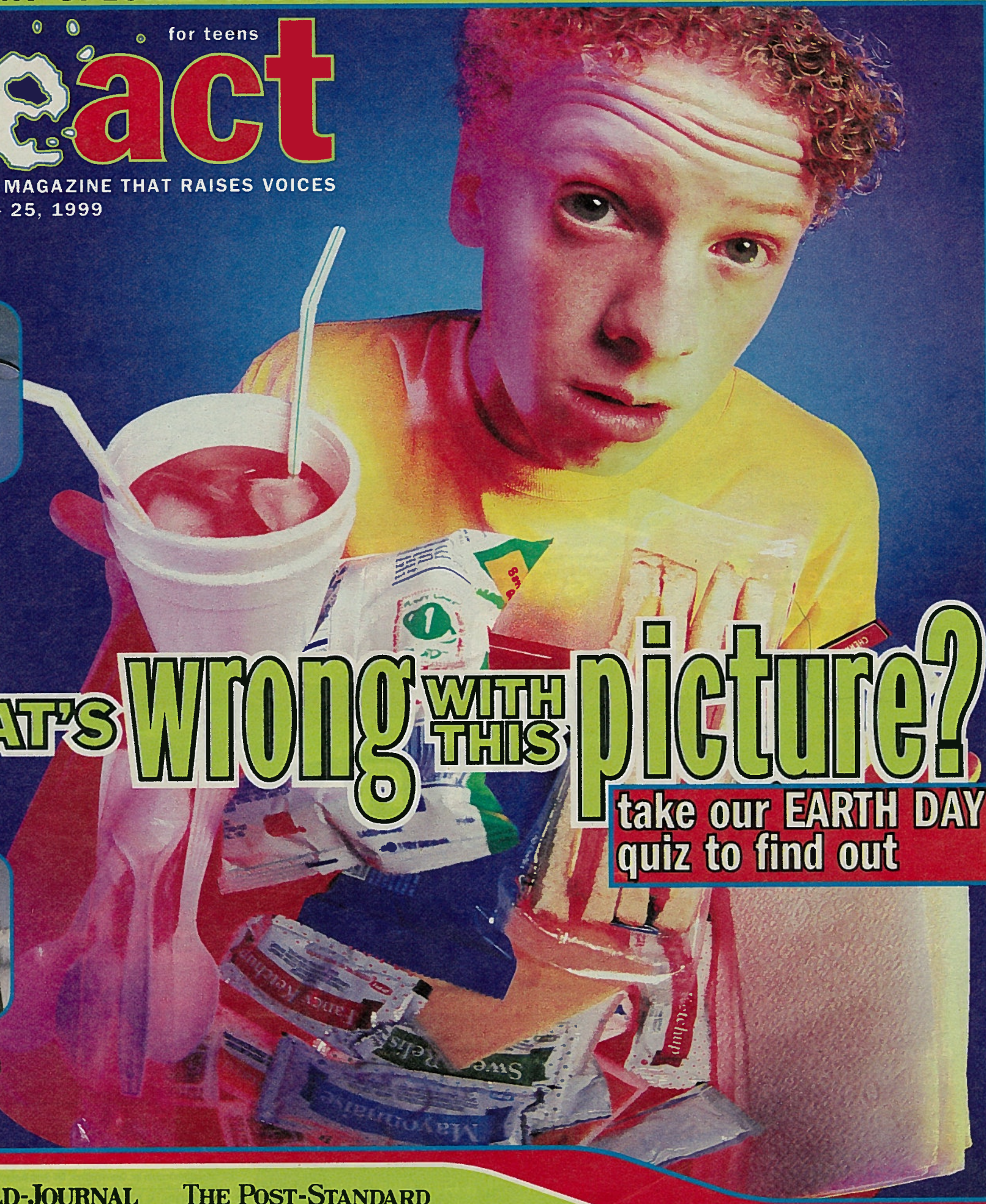
THE NEWS MAGAZINE THAT RAISES VOICES
APRIL 19 - 25, 1999



the hard-knock life of Alex Rodriguez



Leelee Sobieski is one smart starlet



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