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# HILLTOPICS

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week of september 11, 2006

## Five years after September 11, 2001, a day of hate has been turned into a day for remembrance

by Clare Taylor

Turn on the TV. Open up the newspaper. Surf the internet. Reminders of what happened five years ago today are ubiquitous. No one will let you forget what happened on that fall day in September, as if you would ever want to forget. In many ways, the world is a very different place than it was five years ago.

A couple of weeks ago, I had a journalist for the *Dallas Morning News* come to talk to my political science class about our experiences as high school students on that day. He wanted to know how we felt about it then, how we felt about it months afterward, and then how we put the event into the perspective of our lives growing up. All of these questions seemed okay, until he said something that got me thinking: he called our generation the "9-11 Generation."

The "9-11 Generation" label stuck with me. Our grandparents were a part of the "Greatest Generation," and my parents, at least, were the baby boomers. All of these labels seem fitting, so why is it that I am so troubled by the label "9-11 Generation" for my generation?

I think my trouble with that label lies with the fact that I feel like we haven't yet gotten enough perspective on the event to know how history will perceive it. I still haven't even figured out the true significance of 9-11 in my own life. The events of that day dramatically altered the course of our country: we have fought two wars, both of which were justified as a response to 9-11; we have seen our personal liber-



ties limited in the name of national security; and since then we have seen other terrorist attempts and attacks around the world. September 11th changed the direction of our country, and these changes continue to this day. The events that fill pages of our history books are still being played out.

Being called the "9-11 Generation" also conjures up questions about how one defines identity. With labels like the "Greatest Generation" or the baby boomers (with the implied

progressive social and political movements of the sixties), people played a role in the way that identity was created. The label in some way says something about the generation itself. 9-11 isn't something that our generation created; it's an event that happened to us. This identity was created for us around an occurrence that we had no control over, inventing a label that says nothing about the people of our generation. We will only be able to see how history perceives the events of September 11th by placing it in the context of our country's behavior and response years after.

The anniversary of the tragic events of 9-11 should be a day of thought and contemplation. It is a day where people from all backgrounds and beliefs can come together as Americans to honor the memory of those who lost their lives that day.

*Clare Taylor is a senior international studies and French major.*

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**School:** Greek life isn't all fun and games. At SMU and elsewhere, recruitment rules are making it stressful to try to go greek. Read more on page 4.

**Be Heard:** *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles to [hilltopics@hotmail.com](mailto:hilltopics@hotmail.com).

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## Time to re-examine your iPod: Pop music sucks

by Monica Chavez

It had been a long time since I regularly tuned into the top 100 on KISS FM; I had a vague idea that the current hit-makers were Cassie and Fall Out Boy and... Paris Hilton? Right. But one evening as I caught the radio being piped into the Java City Café, I realized I hadn't been missing much.

Because pop music today sucks. After a few hours of tuning into said radio station, I think I can categorize the majority of mainstream pop songs today into four groups: bad rap, "singer-songwriters," white female pseudo-rappers, and my favorite, "Hollister music." Let's start with the first group. Jibbs' "Chain Hang Low" is the hottest hip-hop song on the airwaves lately. The rapping is set against the same monotonous, droning beats I think I've heard in just about every hip-hop song that's come out since 2003. The lyrics are shallow (not even clever or well-delivered), and the catchiest part of the whole number is the chorus, lifted from a children's song.

Lately singer-songwriters like James Blunt and Daniel Powder have been heralded as the saviors of pop radio, but I swear if one more emo chord-strummer asks me if I've had a bad day, I think I might have to resort to death metal to avoid the meaningless lyrics, unremarkable vocals, and monotony of these songs. Hollister music (and by that I mean the punk-pop they blast through the speakers at a certain popular clothing retailer) has a similar problem: repetitiveness, simplistic instrumental work, and above all, a ridiculously impressive ability to sound just like every other song within the genre.

Finally, Gwen Stefani's post-No Doubt legacy has taken firm hold of the radio with a veritable parade of belly-baring girls "singing"/"rapping" their way to the tops of the charts. Fergie's latest, "London Bridge", is the most horrific example of "music" I have found on the radio today. Supposedly she actually has a voice, but like so many others before her (Gwen and Nelly Furtado, I'm looking at you), she's decided to completely abandon it in favor of a style that vacillates between singing and rapping, and never does well at either. Besides sounding suspiciously similar to J-Kwon's 2004 hit "Topsy," Fergie's new song exemplifies the worst in uncreative lyrics (shouting out your own name in a song as a desperate plea for attention), and the song even lacks an effective hook.

I miss the days when Mariah Carey "over-sang" and blew out our stereo speakers with her magnificent voice, before she resorted to the whispery vocals favored by the much less talented Rihannas of today. There was a time when rock/pop/rap stars managed to turn out songs that were not only catchy, but actually indicative of a musical or lyrical talent.

Is the end of quality pop music at hand? A few things reassure me, like the fact that the gifted Christina Aguilera outsold Paris in their albums' opening weekend by about three to one. But I don't think bad music is going away soon, because even if we do realize the music we're listening to is crap, at least some of those songs will be catchy enough to stick in our heads and even land a coveted spot in our iPod. Why do we tolerate sub-par music? Maybe because I can see myself pulling off a Fergie on-stage on American Idol, but a Christina would be out of the question. Could it be that we like music that makes us think we could be stars too?

Monica Chavez is a junior political science and foreign language major.

## SterMo's guide to the Fall TV line-up

by Sterling Morriss

It's September and the fall television season is just around the corner. I'm one of those TV freaks, you could say; I own a TiVo and multiple seasons of *Cheers*, and I stay up to date on what shows are new and what shows are returning. So sit back and let me give you an (extremely) short-listed preview of what there is to get excited about this fall on the small screen.

New Shows:

**30 Rock** - This is my bet for most promising new comedy. It goes behind-the-scenes at a comedy-sketch show, centered around a veritable battle royale of personalities. Cast includes *SNL* veterans Tracy Morgan and Tina Fey, as well as the always-funny Alec Baldwin. Look for the premiere on Wednesday, October 11, 7:30pm on NBC.

**Six Degrees** - This is another show from the TV mastermind J.J. Abrams, who brought us *Lost* and *Alias*. This time, at least we know where the show is set: Manhattan. It's about six very different New Yorkers and how their lives intersect. It will premiere Thursday, September 21, at 9pm on ABC.

**Ugly Betty** - A Spanish television import brought to us by Vanessa Williams, *Ugly Betty* has a lot of potential to be a runaway hit. With a *Devil Wears Prada*-esque story-line, ABC is giving it enough clout to place it right in front of *Grey's Anatomy*'s new time slot. *Ugly Betty* premieres Thursday, September 28, at 8pm on ABC.

Old Favorites:

**Grey's Anatomy** - *Grey's* returns for its third season, with plenty of questions to answer for us all. Who will Meredith choose, McVet or McDreamy? Will Izzie still be a doctor this season? Will Burke fully recover and will Christina learn how to help him through his tough time? Check out the premiere on Thursday, September 21, at 9pm on ABC.

**Lost** - Season 2's finale cliffhanger episode answered many questions, but raised even more. The third season looks to please more people than the second, as producers have said it will be more action- and romance-based. *Lost* premieres on Wednesday, October 4, at 9pm on ABC. It will air six shows in 2006, then go on hiatus until early 2007 to avoid reruns.

**The Office** - Last year's Emmy Winner for "Best Comedy" returns with Steve Carrell and cast, and plenty of promise following its second season. Rumors online are circulating that Jim has a new love-interest in the form of a co-worker at the Stamford office. But then again, with corporate downsizing always looming in the background (thanks to an incompetent

General Manager like Michael Scott), perhaps the lovebirds will be together again soon. To find out, watch the premiere on Wednesday, September 21, at 8:30pm on NBC.

Sterling Morriss is a senior art history major.





## A response to the *Post*: Dissent is more than patriotic; it's a prerequisite for democracy

by Amanda Wall

Last week, *Mustang Post* writer Brad Julsonnet asked, "Is dissent really patriotic?" He made a strong argument in the negative and really got me thinking about what it means to dissent, what it means to be patriotic, and the relation between the two.

I agree with Brad that using the phrase, "Dissent is patriotic," to "stifle debate" is a definite misuse and misunderstanding of that idea. Dissent is important precisely because it promotes discussion about issues that might otherwise be ignored, opening the possibility for change. If by dissent you mean a spiteful rant used as a tool of anger or misdirection, it is inexcusable. But if you take the textbook definition, which as Brad explains, is "merely disagreeing with a taken view," it is no longer menacing.

So the question is really whether dissent can be positive, not just neutral, and I think history has already decided that. A few of history's louder and more contentious dissenters

are Socrates, Jesus Christ, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Martin Luther, Galileo Galilei, Susan B. Anthony, and Martin Luther King. And, of course,

there's that treasonously contrary document, the Declaration of Independence, which glorifies dissent as the divine right of the citizen and

proceeds to list problem after problem with the British government. All of these examples are now the stuff of legends, but they had humble beginnings. If we look back, we will often find that our most important reforms and revolutions began with angry people on the sidewalk, with everyday acts of dissent.

The American government assumes the existence of disagree-

ment and thus requires it in order to function; without it, our political parties, houses of congress, and judicial courts are useless. There will always be conflicting ideas about the best course of action, and so we will discuss, we will debate, we will outright argue among ourselves and with our government. So long as opposition is allowed and encouraged, so long as the discussion continues, we remain a democracy.

But what is patriotic? There are two ways to understand this question. 1. What does it mean? I agree with Brad that it essentially means love for one's country. 2. What kinds of ideas or actions are patriotic? Here's where the disagreement begins. Although all of us might want the best for our country, we definitely don't agree on what that is.

Many of us born and raised in the US of A were taught to revere our country. We have an American religion. For some, this means a fierce loyalty; for others, loyalty crosses the line into a tribalism prejudiced against all that is foreign. American ideas and American culture are revered above all. But what are "American ideas?" And who gets to decide?

Blind love is a pretty theory but a bad practice. Unconditional approval of our country makes us more vulnerable to abuses from it. We are our country's guardians, and like all good guardians, we must combine encouragement with correction, and love with discipline.

Amanda Wall is a junior English, Spanish, and women's studies major.

### Oops!

Last week's story on Facebook was written by Carter Twitty, not Todd Baty. Todd wrote the story on Meadows events. Sorry for the misprint! We'll do better from here on out!

-DH, editor-in-chief

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...politics, music, class, television, football, shopping, intramurals, fraternities, movies, the Mavs, sex, restaurants, religion, sororities, driving, study abroad, fashion, the war, parking, magazines, bars, the weather, professors, the Mustang Band, dating, books, nightclubs, Texas, club sports, or anything else?

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## More than just parties and meetings: Greek life goes hand in hand with stress and rules

While Greek life for freshmen consists mostly of finding a group of people similar to you, for upperclassmen a major part of Greek life is recruitment. Every year I hear new stories about sorority rush being stressful and fraternities having no trouble. It might be a bigger deal to the girls, but from my experience some make it a bigger deal than it should be. Strict sorority rush rules and fancy recruiting methods just add to the pressure for both freshman and upperclassmen.

The rules followed by fraternities might be tough, but sororities have it even worse. One would think that since we are talking about all Greek organizations that the rules would be the same, but that is not the case. The only major rule enforced on fraternities by the IFC is to have no alcohol present during formal rush rounds. Freshman guys pretty much only have to worry about not getting two alcohol violations before the spring. Sororities on the other hand have rule problems ranging from promoting their chapters to taking potential new members out to eat.

These girls are cut-throat. As quoted in a recent violations summary given to all the sororities, at least 28 girls were told by recruitment chairs that they were guaranteed a bid and many did not ever receive that bid. Other violations included sorority members giving out t-shirts and buttons to freshman. In general, the most talked about standard is simply not to directly tell potential members that they should join a specific sorority. Of all the main issues that are con-

sidered a violation, the only real problem I see is when some girls give out fake bids before formal bid day. Everything else just adds to the pressure for current members and freshman. Why is it okay for fraternities to tell freshman to join their house but not sororities? Why does IFC not care when fraternities host weekly parties for all freshman while sororities can't invite freshman over to houses, apartments, or even to lunch and talk about their sorority life?

Perhaps social interaction between freshman girls and current members should be made a little easier. You can tell that something is wrong when girls utilize dropping buttons into purses at bars as a way to promote their houses. The wild rush techniques used by girls are on a different level than the guys. Often unfair social pressure is put on girls to get into certain houses. For example, a freshman last year felt that she was forced to join a certain house because some sorority sisters had told her that they couldn't hang out with her if she was not in their chapter.

I guess college life teaches us how to deal with stress in the real world. Just try to not get bent out of shape over something as trivial as rush.

*Mark McDowell is a junior accounting and economics major.*



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