

Mark
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Freakin' spooky

What's the matter with kids these days?

If any reasons exist to chop the support ropes of the swaying generation gap bridge, I saw them zombied around Edgfest two months ago. Garbed in head-to-toe



nihilism, they seemed hardly the types to bop to Semisonic or The Refreshments — I couldn't blame them for that. But they tended to cluster together, their

mascara-framed gazes comforting each other amidst the gawks of people whose closets actually contain colors other than black. And on the backs of some, in a rare flash of nonblack, was their raison d'être "I am the God of —"

I'd better not finish that sentence, but it ends with a word that begins with "F" and has a "K", a "C", and a "U" somewhere in it.

Marilyn Manson is the inspiration for these people. Marilyn Manson scares the living hell out of me, and that's why I'm ready to disassociate myself with the upcoming generation. But there's a problem with disfranchising the generation directly behind mine on the basis that Marilyn Manson is freakin' spooky — and that is that Marilyn Manson is in my generation.

As we know by the rules of generation-bashing, the attributes of one member of a generation are the

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attributes of all members of a generation. So to avoid insulting myself and other members of Generation X, I will concentrate my barbs on Marilyn Manson's fans (or minions as they like to be called) who are mostly members of the Millennium Generation (or the Freakin' Spooky Generation, as they also like to be called).

Because I'm new at marginalizing people, I will use the "Baby Boomer" method of reducing entire generations to overused stereotypes.

First, is the Millennium Generation lazy? Do they lack a healthy work ethic? Of course they do. Most are under the age of 16, so they don't even have jobs. Their lives are consumed with loafing around their parents' homes all day. How lazy can you get?

Second, do they have no sense of civic duty? Do they lack a unifying cause for which they will lie down and be trampled by police horses? Their sense of civic duty is finding out what bands are coming to Omaha Civic Auditorium and informing their

friends. Scathing, isn't it?

Third, does the Millennium Generation whine? I don't know, I've never talked to one.

Fourth, does the Millennium Generation have no wars to fight nor any to dodge? For this I will offer them some leeway. Most are not military age yet, so they couldn't possibly have proven or disproved themselves on this ground. Also, they need to rely on their elders to create a conflict to thrust them into.

Speaking as a card-carrying member of the X Generation, I pledge that we will indeed make a situation in which they can prove their mettle. Probably something with a Middle-Eastern theme.

All this curmudgeoning over younger people has given me a great sense of satisfaction. I beam with pride at having been born at the moment in time I was — the glorious 1970s. Criticism of youth has, for the first time, put into perspective that that 10-year span is truly the greatest in the history of the universe. How divine!

Maybe I shouldn't limit myself to bashing only younger generations. Certainly there is plenty wrong with people older than me and my age, and pointing out their flaws will only further unveil the importance of Gen-X.

I'll have to come up with a means other than the "Baby Boom Method" with which to criticize the Baby Boomers, as they are the wily creators of that particular tactic and, undoubtedly, will be unaffected by it. One possibility would be to associate every word that rhymes with "boomers" to that generation. For example, all Boomers wear bloomers underwear. Or all Boomers spread rumors about other generations. So far it's pretty accurate.

Generations older than the Boomers will be much easier to accost, as they are mostly dead — which affords them little opportunity for rebuttal.

The Beat Generation is the easiest generation to be stereotyped, as they are all exactly like my parents. They may attempt to deny it. They may cling to their imaginary differences, but their gig will be up when it is revealed that they believe a beatnik orbits the planet somewhere between the moon and Sputnik and that a "goatee" is an adjective describing an object of goat-like quality.

Those crazy, misinformed 50somethings.

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GUEST VIEW

Nathan
DUDLEY

A stutterer's story

Silence isn't really all that golden after all

Editor's note: This guest column was written and submitted by Nathan Dudley, a freshman sound production major.

I have stuttered my whole life. I'll admit it, speech impediments do sound funny on occasion. Even I make jokes about the way I talk sometimes. If I'm having trouble on a word, I might say, "If I don't get this word out, we'll be here all night." But I wasn't always this confident.

When I was young, I was very shy. I wanted to hide the fact that I stuttered from everyone — even my teachers. I would always sit in the back of the class, hoping no one would see me back there. If a teacher asked me a question, I would act like I didn't know the answer.

I was angry with everyone: my mom and dad for letting me stutter, my peers for all the jokes. I was even mad at God for making me stutter. I mean, why did He have to give me this? Why couldn't He have given this stutter to someone who sits behind a computer all day and never speaks to a soul?

I didn't want to stutter — I have too much to say. I wanted to talk all

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the time, but my speech got in the way.

My social attitude toward my speech made my personal life pretty miserable. Since I did not know how to cope with my speech, I was very angry with myself. I wanted to be alone, just for the fact that I stuttered. I also got the impression that no one wanted to hang around with me. When we were in grade school and junior high, image to us was everything. One flaw could ruin our whole reputation.

Then, when I was a freshman in high school, I came to the realization that the reason I didn't have oodles of friends was not because I stuttered but because of my attitude toward my stutter. It was because of my attitude toward other people who poked fun at my speech. There will always be

those people who will make the jokes or the smart remarks. I realized that I had to get beyond my temper, beyond the jokes, beyond the people who don't know how to handle something different — and beyond my attitude problem.

After that, I started making more friends. I had more dates. I was invited to more parties. My grades and my self-esteem skyrocketed. Probably most importantly, my speech started to improve. I finally was where I wanted to be in my life. I was happy, and I had some control of my speech, instead of my speech having control of me.

Now I am at peace with my speech. I love to ask and answer questions. I'm probably too confident for my own good. I speak my mind whether it takes me three

seconds or three hours. I don't blame anyone — not even myself. I do not think of my stuttering as being a nightmare but as a symbol of what makes me unique. Some days my speech is good; some days my speech is bad. I just have to deal with it.

Someone asked me once, if I could stop stuttering, would I do it? At this point and time in my life, I really don't know. I have been stuttering my whole life. It's the only way I know how to speak. Oh well, it happens.

Throughout the years, I have learned to take my stuttering with a grain of salt. I still have my moments when my speech gets so bad, I can hardly understand what I am trying to say myself. But I guess I just have to deal with it. I just can't let my stutter get me down.

I have grown and have learned from my stuttering. It always reminds me that I'm not perfect. In a way, stuttering makes me want to talk more. So if you want to talk with me, that's great. Just don't make any plans. The conversation might take awhile.