

Talkin’ ’bout my nerd generation

Cool people are stealing nerd culture, and it’s time we politely asked for it back



MICHAEL SMITH

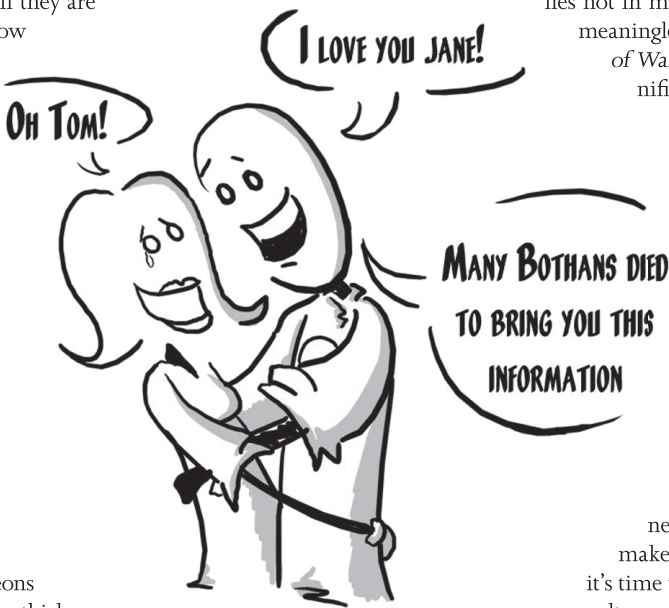
My fellow nerds, certain members of society are debasing those of our kind. You see them everywhere you go: they wear shirts that depict the heroes of our culture and act as if they are like one of us. They know nothing about the discrimination our forefathers endured, or the hardships they overcame. These fakers have appropriated our culture because it’s cool, never knowing what it truly means to be a nerd.

You see, for the last half-decade, video gaming and nerd-dom in general has become cooler and cooler. Bands of pretty boys sing about Dungeons and Dragons. Guys with thick-rimmed glasses are suddenly hot. Hell, being a skinny weakling whose likes include *Mario Kart* and twenty-sided dice is even considered cool. Although the fact that nerds like myself are suddenly hot commodities on the man-meat market doesn’t terribly upset me, the way others have appropriated and abused my nerd-culture is outrageous.

One example is the popularity of the “Talk Nerdy To Me” T-shirts that I see girls wearing all too often. What would

happen if I actually approached such a girl and began commenting on the poor continuity between the original *Star Trek* series and *Enterprise*? More than likely her eyes would glaze over, rendering her into a stupefied state that could only be cured by me mentioning how much I love Fall Out Boy.

This rise in nerd culture has resulted in better chances for nerds like myself in some ways, but others have exploited it, creating a faux-nerd



group that appears to only have one goal in mind: to destroy the chances of real nerds like myself from getting the girls we truly want in the one time period in history when we’re considered hot commodities.

I’m talking about the boys wearing “1-Up” mushroom shirts, or the guys that have never played D&D wearing a shirt proclaiming their love of the game. Although these faux-nerd

types fit perfectly well with faux-nerd girls, with so few real nerd girls they destroy our chances. This is because real nerds are shy around the opposite sex, and are terrible at actually seeking a romantic relationship.

This ends up going both ways, as faux-nerd guys pick up the real nerd girls and faux-nerd girls pick up the real nerd guys, screwing both sexes out of a more meaningful partner. Most of us are too busy thinking we’re happy to realize that true happiness lies not in meaningless sex—it lies in meaningless sex following a *World of Warcraft* raid with your significant other.

This new trend is slowly but surely destroying my culture. The erosion and absorption of nerd-dom is even encouraged by some among us, eagerly hoping they will be cool and finally fit in. As the traditional bastions of nerdiness become more a part of the everyday world, nerds are losing what makes us who we are. So I say it’s time to fight back and reclaim our culture.

You there, nerd boy! Tell your girlfriend who thinks it’s quaint that you like *Star Trek* that she can beam herself out of your life. Nerd girl, you need to start hitting on the boys at the comic shop, because for god’s sake, that guy you are dating may like *Halo*, but you need more than just energy-sword love! Fight on my friends. Enough D&D, poor hygiene, and Kirk vs Picard debates can make us uncool once more!

ILLUSTRATION: CONAL PIERSE

I said, ‘turn down your headphones!’



DUSTIN LOOMES

Music lovers worldwide herald iPods as one of the greatest forces in the evolution of musical culture. However, they also have the potential to do a lot of damage as well.

I’m not picking on iPods in particular. Any device you shove into your ear canals and proceed to blast away is equally bad. However, the pervasiveness and popularity of the iPod makes it the most guilty. In the mecca of litigation that is the US, Apple is facing a lawsuit on the damaging potential of the iPod. A suit submitted to a San Jose federal court on behalf of a Louisiana man seeks class-action status and unspecified damages, and also demands that the volume on iPods be limited to 100 decibels.

In Europe, where they seem to be routinely more proactive about health, some countries already have decibel limits in place for portable music devices. In accordance with French law, for example, iPods must have the volume capped at 100 decibels. Apple has also voluntarily applied the limit to all iPods sold in Europe. However, there are few such limits in Canada that protect our ears.

Hearing damage can result after listening to just an hour of music using

earbud headphones in the 110-120 decibel range—roughly equivalent to the volume of a concert. The Hearing Foundation of Canada lists overexposure to noise as the number-one cause of hearing loss—even above aging. So do the tunes from our beloved MP3 possessions betray the silence to come? Audiologists predict just that: a generation of iPod lovers with profound hearing damage in later years.

Our society in North America currently has very little regard for the risks of hearing damage. This is partly due to the subtleness of the symptoms, but there’s also a lack of awareness of the issue. As a result, hearing damage often goes unnoticed until the deficit is severe. This is reflected in the general population, as each year hearing loss creeps farther down the age spectrum.

I went to the recent Stabla concert at the Powerplant, and when I woke up, my ears were still ringing. Did the music need to be that loud? No. Suddenly, concert earplugs were looking like a good idea. Clubs are also big culprits on the repeat offenders list—and I don’t mean the kind you beat seals with, but the kind where you go to get your dance on. Some speculate that nightclubs have the music turned up loud to complement the surreal atmosphere of the dim lights, booze and slutty beer-tub girls. But I personally think that the people who are holding the volume knob on your night out are the same people who hold the volume knob every night, and are probably clinically deaf or close to it. Barring protective legislation or a boycott of the bars—both of which

are unlikely—it seems there’s very little that can be done, however.

Along with regard for their hearing, courtesy is another thing that goes out the window when some people plug in to their iPod. How many times have you had to listen to what the person on the bus beside you was listening to? If the incessant roar out of their ears makes you wince, it’s a wonder what it must sound like to them. In-ear headphones are a great solution for those who use public transit, study in the library or pretty much listen to their iPod anywhere outside of a silent room.

They don’t sit in your ear like traditional “bud” headphones—a rubber piece actually occludes the ear canal to act like ear plugs. They cut out ambient noise so that you don’t have to turn your iPod up in noisy environments. And for those of you who plug into your iPod to drown out reality, you can do so without a flood of brain-numbing beats.

Many people fantasize that one day health care will fix whatever sort of damage they do to their body now. Moreover, many people do not take the daily steps that are necessary to keep themselves healthy. Over the last ten years we have seen health care dramatically improve the course of many “lifestyle illnesses,” from treatment of heart disease to diabetes, and we might see a “fat pill” on the market in the near future. Currently, however, there’s no cure in sight for acoustic trauma injuries caused by high-volume listening over many years. But in the meantime, just turn down your fricking iPod.

OUR WEEKLY LINEUP

Mini Burger Mondays:
Cure that case of the “Mondays” with 99¢ mini burgers and \$10 jugs. House Rules Apply. 7pm to close

Karaoke Tuesdays:
Downstairs in the LIBRARY. Like Canadian Idol, only our \$8.99 nachos are cheesier than Ben Mulroney. 7pm to close

Wing Wednesdays:
Get in V-formation and migrate to the land o’ 25¢ wings. House Rules Apply 7pm to close

Loonie Thursdays:
\$1 Draught downstairs in the LIBRARY. Celebrate the invention of the loonie. 7pm to close

Finally Fridays: Extended Happy Hour.
“True North strong and nearly free” 3pm to 9pm

S.O.S. Saturdays:
\$2 Highballs downstairs in the LIBRARY. Your wallet is sending out an S.O.S. – Save On Spirits. 9pm to midnight

Music Trivia Sundays:
Test your music IQ. No studying required. \$15 Buckets of Domestic beer! 7pm to close

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