

The day the music died

Woodstock '99 fails to project spirit of original, falls to greed



DAVID LEE

Without a doubt, Woodstock '99 is quickly becoming the most anticipated concert event of the decade. An impressive "who's who" of contemporary music is scheduled to appear during the festival; the Woodstock '99 band list as of this week includes Aerosmith, Sheryl Crow, Ice Cube, The Roots, The Black Crowes, The Matthews Band, Jewel, Alanis Morissette, Red Hot Chili Peppers, and Willie Nelson, among many others.

As early as this Sunday morning, music fans around the world began snapping up the \$150 individual tickets for the three-day festival scheduled for July in upstate New York. With concert organizers predicting at least 300,000 in ticket sales, this event is well on its way to living up to the hype.

There is a small problem with all of this fuss, though. Yes, it is going to be an unbelievable concert; arguably one of the hottest lineups in rock history. Few people would pass up the chance to attend. However, it is obvious that the Woodstock name is being exploited in order to promote this concert, a concert that does not share the same spirit of the original festival held in 1969.

The only aim here is to make money, an aim that betrays the memory of the original Woodstock. Unlike this concert and its 1994 predecessor, the original Woodstock was more than just about the music or profit. It was the catalyst for a cultural movement. It gave the youth of that era an identity, an identity that had a huge impact on the social fabric of American society.

Professor Terry Anderson documents this impact in his book, *The Sixties*. With the nation in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement and of dealing with the horrors of Vietnam, a counterculture evolved from the younger generation, tired of the establishment America had in place. Anderson cites "fighting the organization" and rejecting mainstream culture as the credos of this generation. Naturally, this movement caused the youth to be labeled as outcasts, confined to their own circle of friends.

With Woodstock, they found that they were not

alone, that they had a voice, a collective power. "We used to think of ourselves as little clumps of wierdos. But now we are a whole new minority group," said Janis Joplin, one of the performers at the original festival.

The concert became the focal point of a mass pilgrimage of sorts. Days before the first band even took the stage, wave after wave of young people streamed into the quiet towns of upstate New York. From Miami to San Francisco, hippies of all backgrounds and origins poured in.

In such a mass of humanity, one would expect chaos, but the hippies took it in stride, playing their guitars, singing songs and making love as the traffic-clogged roads inched along.

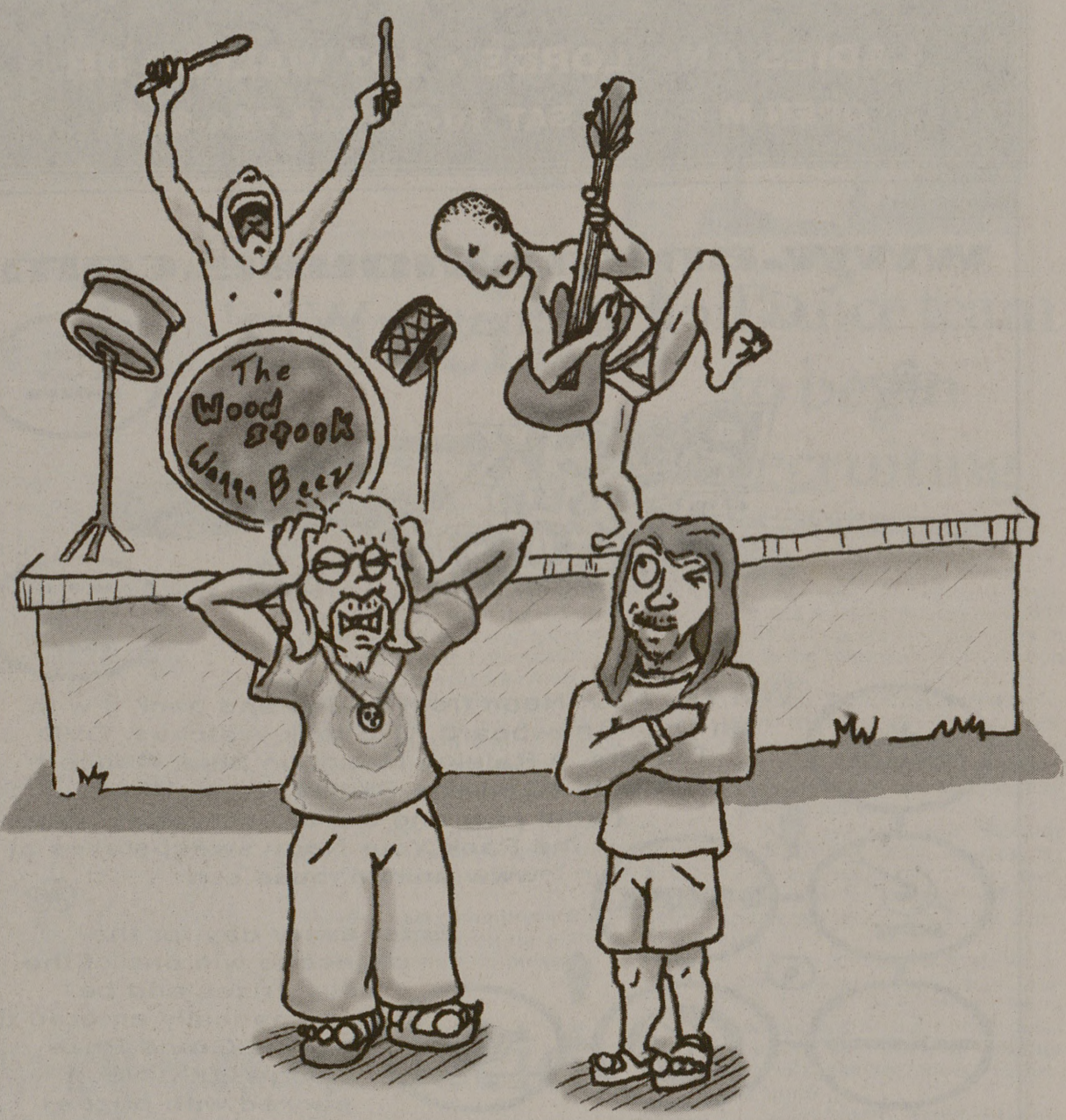
The sense of community and brotherhood that emerged from this gathering turned this simple rock concert into the pinnacle of the counterculture movement. That is why even today, Woodstock is regarded by many with warmth and pride.

Needless to say, somewhere along the road the Woodstock spirit has been lost. In today's complacent society, it is doubtful Woodstock '99 will instigate any social change. It is unlikely that this one concert will give our generation any sort of rallying cry.

The festival in 1994 was the first attempt at reviving this spirit; not surprisingly, it failed miserably. With merchandising and profit being more important than the atmosphere and quality of performers, Woodstock '94 was doomed from the beginning as a product.

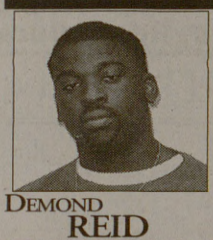
In all honesty, that in itself is nothing to be ashamed of. Woodstock '94 was for all intents and purposes a great rock concert that many people enjoyed. The live album that followed went multiplatinum and the live pay-per-view broadcast broke all previous records. The bottom line, however, is that it did not come close to living up to the memory of the original festival. No one recalls Woodstock '94 with the same warmth and pride as our elders do for the original festival. No matter how many tickets and albums they will sell, no festival will ever live up to the legacy of the original festival.

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MICHAEL WAGENER/THE BATTALION

Lines at the box office do not mean quality time inside



DEMOND REID

Coming soon to a theater near you." The home video rental industry still one of the most profitable industries in the country. The main reason that the entire movie-going experience is about as enjoyable as a flaming hot enemy.

The cinema journey starts out bad. First of all, you spend 20 to 30 minutes outside of the multiplex trying to figure out which movie is not going to bore you to tears. After deciding on a movie that will not be a complete waste of the

next two hours of your life, you have to pay the equivalent of a king's ransom for the movie ticket.

Once inside the movie theater you are greeted by an arctic air-conditioning blast that would make Frosty the Snowman shiver. Theaters are kept colder than the shoulder Hillary is giving to Bill.

Since it is almost a federal offense punishable by death to bring food and/or drinks into a movie theater, a person has to make a pit stop at the theater concession stand. Why do the movie snacks cost more than the movie tickets? After selling your soul to afford the jumbo-sized popcorn, it only takes the chewing of one or two kernels for you to realize that your bag of popcorn

contains more salt than the Atlantic Ocean. Now you need something to drink, so you have to get back in the concession stand line behind some guy who is waiting for his bank loan to go through so he can get a box of Gummy Bears. After Gummy Bear man leaves you have to plunk down about \$25 for a 32 oz Pepsi which contains about 29 oz of ice. Twenty-five dollars for 3 oz of Pepsi? A person could get a better deal on heroin.

After you have your snacks, it becomes time for the fun task of searching for a seat. Just your luck, the only seat left is between some fat guy and a teenage hormonal couple who seem to be engrossed in sexual acts so perverse they would make Madonna blush.

Once seated, you realize that you have to keep your feet constantly moving because, if you kept them in the same place to long, the nacho cheese/Mountain Dew mixture the floor seems to be covered with will create a permanent bond to the bottom of your shoes.

And once the movie starts you cannot decide which is worse, the trash on the floor or the trash on the screen.

Movies are getting worse and worse. Love stories are nothing more than sex stories; comedies are a joke; and horror films are just horrible films. Note to Hollywood: Quit putting singers who can not act in movies! No matter how popular a person is, if they cannot act, there is no need for them to be in a movie. For

example, Brandy's cock-eyed self should not be allowed to watch movies, let alone be in them.

To make matters worse, in every theater in America there is always some jerk who thinks he is Cinematticus, the Greek god of motion picture destiny. Somebody should tell him no matter how loud he screams, the people in the movie cannot hear him.

As long as the movie-going experience continues to be filled with idiots who talk back to the screen, outrageously priced snacks, and blistering cold temperatures, the home movie rental industry will continue to grow

Demond Reid is a sophomore journalism major.

Corps, military offers value-based education



JASON STARCH

Walk around campus any morning around 6:15 and you will be witness to another world within Texas A&M. It is a world filled with the smell of sweat and the camaraderie of the members of the Corps of Cadets who sacrifice their time and energy to develop leadership, character and physical fitness. Most have determination in their eyes, as they push themselves beyond their preconceived limitations. A few of these cadets, who will take commissions in the armed forces this spring and in the years to come, are learning what their military advisers already know: too many are asking for granted the blanket of freedom provided by the military because of a selfish perspective and pursuit.

This is a major cause for the increasing separation between today's military and the rest of America with regard to morals and ethics.

On a smaller scale, the same split exists right here on this campus: the Corps versus non-regs. Is this a disturbing problem? Unfortunately, it is.

In his book, *Making the [Marine] Corps*, Thomas E. Ricks states, "In a society that seems to have trouble transmitting values, the Marines stand out as a successful and healthy institution that unabashedly teaches values to America. ... But over the past 30 years, as American culture has grown

more fragmented, individualistic and consumerist, the Marines have become more withdrawn; they feel they simply can't afford to reflect the broader society."

The country is witnessing a great shift in experience in Washington, due in large part to the exodus of the last of the "soldier-statesmen," men and women who have served their country in uniform before holding public office.

This changing of the guard in these public offices is playing a large role in widening the gap between the military and civilian sectors, caused by a new era of leaders ignorant of personal military experience.

No one reasonably expects all to serve in the military, for it is as unnecessary as it is impossible. However, it would do America, from New York to Los Angeles to Bryan-College Station, a lot of good to reflect deeply on our commitment to each other and to solid values, much like the ones the military teaches on almost a daily basis.

What Ricks was pointing out is a fundamental difference between the military and society. Simply stated, the American military, unlike many of its civilian counterparts, is still a servant of the Constitution. The military does not serve the rich over the poor, neither does it distinguish between race, color or creed. It only requires, in the words of the Marine Corps' core values, "Honor, Courage and Commitment."

The separatist stance often taken by the military, even evidenced in the

Corps of Cadets, is a reflection of a strong underlying desire to hold on to a greater purpose. That purpose is to defend not only the Constitution, but in doing so, protect the values that have built this great nation and its citizens.

What values? If you are asking this question, you may already have fallen victim to the degradation of traditional values in our culture.

Values like a sense of community, and being unselfish with our lives, our time and our resources are important, even if it costs us these resources now and then. The exercise of self-restraint to protect the rights of others, rather than only protecting our own rights, is a noble value. Self-discipline to do right, even in the face of adversity, is fundamental.

From the American Revolution to the Persian Gulf War, the span of our national character has been, in part, forged by wars. We as a people have developed the basic principles the military still holds dear by the shedding of American blood. And those values that the Founding Fathers upheld are still evidenced today.

The military is a great example of this ethos of honor because it teaches honor constantly, so that when a new enlistee or officer enters service, they have a profound respect and devotion to serving that honor.

The members of the Corps of Cadets are being taught these same values from their military advisers who learned them in the service.

It is absolutely true that the mili-

tary, like the Corps of Cadets, has its share of problems, but both organizations have a lot to change because they must train into their ranks values that should have been taught throughout childhood by families, schools and religious institutions. In a time where Americans are pushing "value-free" education and relating controversial issues to the youth of America without instituting judgment skills, these young people find themselves plagued by a lack of purpose and direction in their lives.

They are victims of materialism, rebellion to authority, and the profound knowledge that they have been failed by a system that cares more about protecting its own interests than those of its constituents. These children are the same ones recently witnessed in the nation's school shooting tragedies.

The meaning Aggies can gather from this small glimpse into the split of our society from our military and its traditional values is this: we have the responsibility to change our generation and those to follow.

The Corps of Cadets, like the military, needs to be humble in its relationship to the world. Honor cannot be passed through arrogance.

Let us be the keepers of the traditions, not just Aggie traditions, but American traditions. If we do not, we are likely to continue to speed the departure away from the values that have made us successful as a nation.

Jason Starch is a junior rangeland ecology major.

MAIL CALL

Reader offers list of advice, tips to Mail Call contributors

1. Begin with a personal attack on the writer of the article or letter in question. Unwarranted insults always persuade the writer to mend his or her ways. Catch phrases: "So-and-so and her following," "Join us in reality," etc. Note: indirect insults ("His article reminds me how stupid and thoughtless people can be") are a sure winner.
2. Miss the entire point of the article and take sarcastic comments seriously. Heck, don't even bother to read the whole article carefully. Little words and phrases like "not," "supposedly," and "according to so-and-so" can't make much of a difference.
3. Remember, the article writer is completely wrong. Concede nothing, not even their humanity.
4. Correct grammar and spelling are optional. If no one can understand you, they'll give you the benefit of the doubt.
5. The rest of *The Battalion* readers can't think on their own, so just assume everyone agrees with you.
6. *The Battalion* staff is superhuman, so every little slip of the tongue (or pen) deserves a full-page sermon. After all, they're well-paid professionals, and you can certainly write better than they can anyway.
7. If you're not a religious person, be sure to rant and rave intolerance over every religious event the Battalion writes about, especially Christian events. All Christians are hypocrites who are out to get you anyway.
8. If you are a Christian, exploit your falsely-assumed majority hold on Texas A&M. *The Battalion* shouldn't cater to opposing viewpoints, which are immoral and inferior to yours.
9. A sneaky way to increase your believability is to gripe about something the editorial writer does, and then do the same thing in your letter. Examples: "The writers should use better grammar and spelling, its really annoying." "I hate all people who are intolerant; they don't belong at this school."
10. No supporting evidence. Everyone besides your victim thinks like you anyway, so it's a waste of time.
11. Finally, generalize. Your opinion is the only correct one, and it's valid in every possible situation.

Jason Placette Class of '02