

# STUDENT LIFE

## A major musical hangover

By Ryan Gallagher  
contributing writer  
1/26/07

After glancing at the top five best-selling albums of 2006, I got a feeling similar to when I wake up most mornings. To experience this same feeling, either take a quick glance at the charts or drink one-fifth of cheap whiskey with a roommate until two in the morning, whichever sounds more appealing.

I have not had the opportunity to listen to the soundtrack from "High School Musical," however I did notice that below its position at number one, sits Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood, and Nickelback. Now I understand that some people enjoy country because they were raised in farmish/country surroundings, and that was all they knew. That's fine. However, the last time I checked, the entire country of America was not raised on the farm, so why don't we support some music that uses a little more variety. If you've heard one country song, you've heard them all.

And isn't it a bit strange that country band sounds an awful lot like contraband? Chris LaFuria made me aware of this the other day and I had a good five minute guffaw.

But let's put the country music aside and get down to brass tacks. In case you weren't reading to your fullest potential, the number four position was filled by Nickelback.

Do not get me wrong here, I have enjoyed many drunken nights listening to my old roommate do outstanding impressions of Nickelback's work. But any day now, I am waiting for lead-singer/guitarist Chad Kroeger to come out and laugh in America's face, revealing that the whole project was a joke that he got rich off of.

I have yet to figure out why 2.7 million people paid good money for the band's latest "All the Right Reasons" in 2006. To make an attempt at

solving this mystery, I unfortunately had to sit down and listen to the band the other night and had to turn every song off as soon as the vocals began. This doesn't mean the music was good until the singing started; it just means that I could tolerate it until my ears were bombed with a combination of the most unbearable voice in rock music today and lyrics that actually made me laugh out loud.

The fact that there's a record label out there that even gave these guys a chance disgusts me and makes me wonder if we'll ever hear music comparable to the works of artists such as Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Pixies, etc. These legends contributed some of the finest music to the world that is continued to be exploited in entertainment to this day.

Last and certainly least, we have Justin Timberlake bringing up the rear. I'm not quite sure how this happened, considering you can't go a day without hearing his voice, whether it's via radio, television, nightclubs, etc. So why are people spending money to listen to this music to the fullest extent and when are they listening to it? All it is good for is dancing, if you enjoy dancing in that style, so this just leads me to believe that there are actually people out there that would classify their life as a constant dance party.

The problem is that every form of respectable music has already been originated, so now we're inventing music just to invent it. It doesn't have to be worthy; it just has to satisfy the tastes of a growing number of teens and college students.

I keep getting this picture in my head that 20 years from now, this kind of music can be considered classics from our generation. As far as I can tell, music is doomed from here on out, so please go out and take some advice from musicians and listen to something that wouldn't necessarily be found on the radio or on the charts. It would be great for you.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Justin Timberlake, always on the radio

## "Lost" gets found

By Scott Muska  
contributing writer  
2/09/07

The critically acclaimed and wildly popular television show "Lost" has finally returned from a long, mid-season hiatus that dates back to early November. The show airs Wednesday nights on ABC at 10 p.m., and has been ranked among the highest-rated shows on network television since it burst onto the primetime scene in September of 2004.

"Lost" may attribute its astounding success to the fact that it is an extremely unique show, based on a brilliant idea and foundation of a plot. From this idea the show is made (and kept) interesting through great writing that includes countless obscurities and plot twists that create an inordinate amount of suspense. It is also maintained by above average acting by a cast that consists of actors and actresses that were basically unknown before the commencement of the show.

The general plot of "Lost" centers around a group of strangers that were involved in a plane crash on a remote tropical island and are stranded with no means of escape and no idea where exactly this aforementioned island is even located. The problems that these people begin to experience are problems that one would expect from a group of total strangers that are stranded on a tropical island: the obtaining and rationing of food, distribution of medicine and other possessions left from the crash, and other trials that are often associated with being marooned. Things have since become much more sophisticated, difficult, and ultimately dangerous for the inhabitants

of the island. They have found that the island has certain mystical and magical qualities that have influenced the inhabitants in both good and bad ways, which has given the show a sort of science-fiction twist and enhances the suspense and element of surprise.

The crash victims also have also that they are not the only people living on the island. They live amongst another group of people that they refer to as "the others," they are an extremely enigmatic group. For lack of a better term, these two groups are waging a war against one another. The crash victims are simply trying to survive and get off of the island and back to their homes, but "the others" have their own agenda that has not yet been revealed to the audience of the show.

This may be confusing, but this is the only way to attempt to explain this extremely complex television show. It is, however, extremely entertaining. There will be 16 new episodes airing consecutively, and they started last night. If you are interested in watching this show but have not seen it before, a synopsis of the previous episodes that have been aired from all three seasons can be found on the official "Lost" website: <http://abc.go.com/primetime/lost/index>.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Lost" begins its third season at a new time, 10 p.m., on Wednesdays.

## College legends and myths unmasked

By Patrick Webster  
managing editor  
2/9/07

College is a place of open and free communication, which leads to a sharing of ideas and knowledge. For the most part, this serves to speed the educational process by making it easier for everyone to learn. However, such open communication also has the drawback of allowing unverified and untrue information to spread even more rapidly than the real story. As a result, college campuses are often a hot spot for the spreading of myths and rumors, such as the ones below:

### The backwards PIN

Another myth that has been floating around since at least 1998 is that entering your PIN (Personal Identification Number) backwards into an ATM or similar banking machine will alert the police and your bank that you are doing so under duress.

This tale likely has its roots in a patent issued to Chicago entrepreneur Joseph Zinger, who in 1994 came up with the idea for a system installed in bank teller machines that would alert authorities when the PIN was entered backwards. This system has never been implemented by any bank, though a few states have either passed or considered legislation that would allow banks to do so. The most famous incident related to this myth was the carjacking and murder of Kimberly Boyd, who was forced at gunpoint to withdraw all her money for the carjacker before being murdered. Her husband Michael immediately lobbied the Georgia State Legislature to enact a law that would require banks to institute such a system. A bill was introduced in December of 2005, but has never been voted or acted upon.

### Favorite Chinese dish: cat

College students are always on the lookout for one thing: cheap, good food. As a result, Chinese restaurants are often popular choices on college towns for their offerings of large quantities of food for a reasonable price. Naturally, cultural xenophobia quickly supplies a reason why the price is so reasonable.

There is rarely a college student that has not heard a joke or tale about a favorite Chinese restaurant that actually serves cat meat in its dishes instead of chicken. This myth is in fact very old, with British newspapers printed as early as the 1850s alluding to cat being on the menu in new Asian eating establishments. As exemplified by the longevity of this myth, it is very ingrained into popular culture. In 1995, this rumor spread like wildfire in the city of Chicago after a popular Chinese restaurant closed, even after weeks of advertisement that the whole national franchise was closing for business reasons. The United States Department of Health reports that no restaur-

ant, Chinese or otherwise, has ever been closed for keeping cat meat in its freezer.

While it is true that dog is consumed in very few parts of Asia that have poverty-level economies and in times of famine, the use of what are considered pet animals in the western hemisphere as food is rare even in China and Korea.

### Mystery shopping

Money is always on the mind of a modern college student. As a result, an offer that would be readily dismissed by someone who is financially secure has a way of worming itself into the mind of someone always looking for a few extra bucks. A currently popular fraud is that of "mystery shopping," or being paid to go shopping and writing reports about certain places of business.

While there are a few legitimate mystery shopping jobs offered by stores themselves, the vast majority seek to separate gullible young adults from their money quickly. In short, the Federal Trade Commission advises that any mystery shopping offer that includes the use of the prospective shopper's own money is almost certainly a fraud. This includes fees for "handling" or "training" that one must undertake before being given assignments, and programs that promise to reimburse the shopper after certain items are purchased. An offshoot of these practices is called "reshipping," in which a victim is instructed to purchase and reship items from online auction services such as eBay and Amazon, in return for promised compensation.

The good and bad offers can be difficult to differentiate; oftentimes they both advertise in the same media, including newspapers, radio, and the internet. An easy way to tell if the job is on the up and up is to look at who is offering it: if Sears is looking for mystery shoppers to test its customer service, it's probably real. If, instead, some third party is offering you the opportunity and insists on certain fees or is not up front with information, it probably isn't.

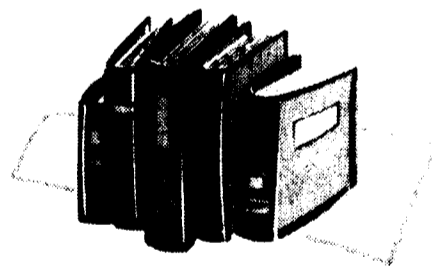
### The roommate's suicide

One common myth among many college students is that the death of a roommate or similarly close friend or relative will result in the instantaneous award of a 4.0 or other high grade for the semester to the emotionally devastated student. While many educational institutions have policies in effect that will provide special consideration for a student in such a situation, such as extra time to complete work or waiving certain attendance requirements, no school, including Penn State, will award grades without the completion of the necessary coursework.

This myth is so prevalent that at least two feature films, "Dead Man on Campus" and "Dead Man's Curve," have plots that are generally based on the same premise. It has also found its way into numerous television shows, including "The Simpsons" and "Law and Order."

## Top Five Best Summer Albums

1. Beach Boys - Pet Sounds
2. Bob Marley & the Wailers
3. Outkast - Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik
4. Sublime - 40oz. To Freedom
5. Creedence Clearwater Revival - Down On The Corner



### BOOK BUYBACK

- **WHERE:**  
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- **WHEN:**  
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- **FINALS WEEK (MAY 7 - 11) HOURS:**  
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