

OPINION | ETHNIC IDENTITY

Ethnicity not as clear
as it used to be

Tim Olmeda
Opinion Editor

I've often wondered about how one identifies him or herself when it comes to their ethnicity. For most, it's pretty cut and dry: a white person is Caucasian, a black person is probably going to be considered African-American, and so on.

Looking at my own ethnicity, however, it's hard to understand just how complicated this seemingly trivial matter seems to have become.

My uncle recently asked me what I called myself. I told him I normally go by "Tim." It's shorter and a lot easier for most people to say than my real name, plus it sounds a lot better than my full name, which I'll just keep to myself for the time being.

"No. Do you call yourself Mexican?" he asked me.

I stood there transfixed for a moment before I started laughing. I then told him I have never considered myself to be a Mexican; to me, I am Hispanic.

"What's the difference?" he replied. I couldn't answer him at the time because I didn't really know the answer. However, I've come to realize that the differences between the two categories have more to do with sociological reasons than anything else.

To me, when I think of being Mexican-American, I think of it as being someone who embraces his or her Mexican roots and culture.

They speak Spanish fluently, have relatives who barbecue

pigs in holes in the ground, and think the perfect breakfast consists of homemade tortillas, refried beans and a helping of chorizo and egg. Ironically, true Mexicans don't do any of this; all of it stems from Tejano culture, which is a different topic entirely.

Mexican-Americans are also more likely to be more attached to their families than most. Gatherings usually consist of everyone from your uncle to your mother's sister's cousin's kids.

Hispanic gatherings are generally limited only to those in the immediate family. They also pale numerically in comparison to those of Mexican-Americans and many Hispanics today would rather eat a sandwich at a restaurant instead of cooking at home.

Also, many of today's Hispanic youth don't speak or understand a word of Spanish. In essence, they've been vocally "bleached" by the English-speaking society we live in today.

Now, most people won't be happy that I seem to have split our "proud" and "traditional" culture into two wholly unrelated categories - I say, "Get over it." I'm just pointing out what I've observed over the last few years of my life.

I don't speak Spanish fluently, but I do understand it and can reply in simple phrases if I need be. I can cook pretty well, but with my schedule, would rather eat a sandwich than stand at a stove for two hours cooking for myself.

Like I said, I am Hispanic.

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Daniel Maldonado | FOGHORN

EDITORIAL | REPUBLICAN PARTY

Government has to change parties

Since 2002, the Republican Party has held majority control over both the Senate and House of Representatives. In that amount of time, the party has led the government on a downward spiral that has resulted in a rising federal deficit, catastrophic global unpopularity, and growing partisan divisiveness that threatens to undo the very fabric of our nation's political system.

Recently, the controversial Patriot Act was approved for renewal by the

Senate. The act allows law enforcement officials to maintain unprecedented control over civil liberties in the name of national security. The Patriot Act is expected to pass the Republican-majority House of Representatives, where it is now headed after its approval in the Senate.

The Republican Party, under the administration of President Bush, has seemingly moved away from the ideals on which it was founded. The idea of "smaller government" seems to

have been lost in the middle of this "war of terror" only to be replaced by a government that now has the power to implement wiretaps at will and spy on Americans without just cause.

Under Republican control, the nation has watched the federal deficit balloon to just over \$8 trillion and a war in Iraq that has cost almost \$250 billion to date as well as the lives of over 2,000 American troops. With numbers like these, it's clearly obvious the Republican Party can no longer govern

our country in a way that is beneficial to future generations.

In November, elections will be held to determine which party gains seats in both the Senate and House of Representatives. Voters must make their voices heard and signal a call for change by not allowing Republicans to maintain control over these two bodies of Congress. The future of the United States depends on Americans' ability to oppose a government that is no longer capable of working for the people.

EDITORIAL | SEWAGE FACILITY

Council made wrong selection for site

The City of Corpus Christi has recently revealed its intention to purchase land for a new wastewater treatment plant to be completed some time in 2010. The proposed facility is scheduled for construction at a site near the Hillcrest neighborhood by Flint Hills Resources.

Originally, the City Council had been considering an alternate site with Citgo Refining but decided on the Flint Hills site due to a lower cost for taxpayers. It's an unfortunate decision for the residents of the Hillcrest neighborhood because there will no doubt be some ramifications from the construction of the plant.

Residents spoke before the City Council to voice their concerns about the facility, mainly that there would be a stigma associated with property near the plant that could cause property value to decrease over time. However, it seems their arguments fell on deaf ears.

The completion dates for both projects were only nine months apart with the Flint Hills site scheduled for completion in March 2010 and the Citgo site in December 2010. There is nearly 1400 feet between the facility at Citgo and the nearest neighborhood residence compared to only about 650 feet between the Flint Hills plant and the closest domestic residence.

While it is prudent to argue that \$3 million is a lot of money for the City Council to save taxpayers, one has to take into consideration just how much the residents of the Hillcrest neighborhood stem to lose from this project. To have councilmen like Mark Scott say they will provide landscaping so residents won't have to look at the plant offers little consolation to residents. In fact, the proposal is almost insulting.

The job of a local city government is to act with the best interests of its citizens firmly in mind. Hopefully, the council will make decisions in the future with that moral obligation in mind.

OPINION | COST OF WAR

Administration's lies hurt troops



Edwin Vasquez
Associate Editor

Last week I had the opportunity to attend a reception d i n n e r given in honor of the producers of the documentary "The Cost of War," which details the negative effects of war on soldiers.

I am not a politician, so I tried to remain objective. However, when these people started to share their war experiences, especially the veterans, I changed my mind completely.

My first impression was that these people were against the war because they desired peace and didn't like

the job the government has done with the war in Iraq. But there is more to it than that - these people were extremely angry with our president.

They believe our president to be a liar about the weapons of mass destruction that were never found in Iraq. These people questioned the validity of U.S. Intelligence agencies then and now. They had to know the truth.

Some veterans spoke of death and suffering, while others talked about the millions of dollars our country and the Bush administration spends every day to maintain this war.

The irony of the situation was that after these good men and women serve their country, many face a miserable life because of injuries sustained in combat or from chemicals they were exposed to.

The cost of War documentary brought the message home even more. I began to think as to why this administration and other elected officials don't give the proper care to these soldiers? It's unbelievable. Does the administration just not want to know how many veterans need help? Do they care how many veterans need health-care insurance after the service when they come back?

This government, like many governments, deceives, and sadly, it lies to its citizens. The people at the gathering were mad, not totally at the war, but at the lies the Bush administration has told.

I remember when my father, who was a Colonel in the Salvadoran Army, told me that all governments have secrets. I understood what he meant. Sure, there

were secrets there in El Salvador, but this is the United States. Deception should not be a factor when it comes to dealing with our own government.

If my father, who was killed in the revolution of El Salvador, were alive today, I know what he would say to me.

He would tell me that soldiers are the most important element of a nation's defense. The government has the responsibility to care for them after they return. It doesn't seem like that is the case with the U.S. military.

He would also tell me, "I support your troops, but I can't support your government."

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OPINION | FEMALE PRESIDENT

Women deserve
chance at presidency

Dianna Hamilton
Editorial Board

Since we declared ourselves a country in 1781, we have had 43 presidents, all of whom have been male. These well-educated and confident men have served the United States to the best of their ability. The 19th Amendment, however, was the most significant act. Passed in 1920, it granted suffrage to every woman in the nation.

Yet despite this formal induction, women's advancements in the political realm have been relatively limited. According to 2002 statistics, only 19 women have been elected governor in our country's history. Furthermore, in 2002, just 59 women sat in the House of Representatives and a stunted 13 in the Senate.

Only two members of the female gender, Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Ginsburg, have occupied Supreme Court seats and, as everyone is aware, there has not been a female president - yet.

Failed attempts to integrate into the male dominated society of the presidency include Geraldine Ferraro, who campaigned to be the first female vice president in 1984 and Elizabeth Dole, who fleetingly strove for the presidency in 1999 but was forced to abandon her efforts due to an absence of funding.

Part of the problem for women is they are haunted by a long-standing prejudice throughout our society. Many Americans, male and female,

subconsciously cling to archaic and erroneous stereotypes that portray the feminine gender as overly emotional, vain, and too weak to stand their ground.

Another disadvantage plaguing women is they are the minority in law classrooms. For example, in 1996, women comprised only 40% of the enrollment at the Washington University School of Law.

I firmly believe that a woman could fulfill the position of Commander-in-Chief with great poise and strength. Issues such as foreign policy and the war in Iraq could potentially benefit from decisions from someone who has personally given birth and possesses first hand knowledge of its consuming pain and its irrevocable capacity for love.

In 2008, another opportunity will be available for women to ascend the political ranks and be elected president of the United States. Hilary Clinton, former first lady and current senator of New York, is expected to run. Condoleezza Rice, national security advisor from 2001-2005 and United States secretary of state to George W. Bush since 2005, is speculated to be interested in the position as well.

I hope these or any other female candidates are seriously and fairly scrutinized based solely upon her accomplishments and stances on relevant issues, such as abortion, gay marriage, and education. They should not be automatically dismissed by voters simply because they are women.

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