

# WESTWORLD



## Attacks on President rather than policies

**w** Adriana Zalloni  
World Editor

Over the course of the last few months, President Barack Obama has been a victim of countless attacks on his plan for universal healthcare.

While healthcare has been a hot button issue for Presidents for nearly a century, with no solution because of strong feelings on both sides, the attacks on Obama has taken on an unparalleled level of vitriol, much of it, frankly, disturbing.

Carrying caricatures of Obama as Hitler, screaming epithets such as “I want my country back,” suggesting that Obama is a Socialist or Communist, carrying placards featuring thinly veiled racial epithets or toting firearms, opponents of healthcare reform disrupted legislators’ town meetings throughout the Congressional in August, often shouting down politicians’ efforts to engage in dialogue.

The hostilities culminated during the President’s Sept. 9 address on healthcare to a joint session of Congress, when representative Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) shouted, “You lie!” in the middle of Obama’s speech, an unprecedented breach of decorum.

Defenders of such opposition, notably conservative talk show hosts such as Rush Limbaugh and Fox News’ Glenn Beck, suggest that the anger results from the President’s policies are flawed, citing components of the bill that call for “death panels” that encourage euthanasia and that offer free healthcare to illegal immigrants, among other controversial issues.

Are such fears legitimate?

According to the September issue of *AARP Bulletin*, the magazine of the American Association of Retire Persons, “a tsunami of rumors, myths, fear-mongering and misinformation about the proposals” are circulating the Internet, making it impossible for the people to know what—and whom—to believe.

Myths such as “the government will take over health care so [United States] will end up with socialized medicine” and “the government will encourage euthanasia to save costs” are spread, instilling fear in the hearts of everyone. In fact, nothing remotely close to total government control of health care has been suggested, but rather, Obama proposed to idea of a single “public-option”, which is available to those without employer insurance. Nor will the government encourage euthanasia. The rumor was that the government would require beneficiaries to take a class every five years to decide how to end their lives. The truth in this statement is that Medicare would have to pay doctors for their time if beneficiaries chose to consult them for planning, such as a living will or hospice care. Medicare would pay for this only once every five years. Doctors already do this; the proposal would merely pay them for the service.

If a non-partisan organization such as AARP (as well as other objective sources, including [www.factcheck.org](http://www.factcheck.org)) disputes such outlandish notions, what, then is the root of this anger, which provoked town hall disruptions, a Congressman’s outburst and tens of thousands to march in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 12?

Former President Jimmy Carter thinks that he knows. On Sept. 16, in the U.K *Guardian*, Carter voiced the belief of many on the Left when he claimed that he believes that “an overwhelming portion of the intensely demonstrated animosity toward President Barack Obama is based on the fact that he is a black man.”

Carter went on to say that he is from and continues to live in the South and that in his experience, “that racism inclination still exists, and I think it has bubbled up to the surface because of the belief among many white people, not just in the South but around the country, that African Americans are not qualified to lead this great country.”

While the White House and some Democratic leaders have distanced themselves from Carter’s comments, his words have a ring of truth. In the absence of actual logic, it seems viable to assume that this disrespect for the President is emanating from antipathy for his race rather than his policies.

The problem is, sadly, that a large percentage of the citizens of the United States are misinformed and/or frightened, making it even easier for Beck, Limbaugh and the health insurance lobbies to rally support for this Anti-Obama campaign. In fact, both Limbaugh and Beck have played the race card. Limbaugh played a parody song titled “Barack the Magic Negro” on his radio program, and Beck flatly called the President “a racist” who regularly displays his disdain for whites after the President committed in the arrest of Harvard professor Louis Gates.

Instead of focusing on myths or race, those who are against “Obamacare” should worry about legitimate problems, like how he plans to fund all these policies, since that has still not been fully explained.

This racism-fueled, irrational anger could cause more serious problems in the future if it is not contained. If right wing extremists already are bringing guns to town meetings and Presidential appearances, how long will it be until someone decides to do the unthinkable?

## Exploding iPods do not alarm

**w** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

“I listen to [my iPod™] almost every day usually in study hall if I can or on the bus,” freshman Arman Bakhshandoh said. “I actually charge it every night.”

Literacy Center coordinator Andrew Jeter is fond of his iPhone™.

“[My iPhone™] is addicting,” Jeter said. “I sometimes forget it is a phone because I am doing other things: I am checking my calendar; I am looking up how to spell words; I am making grocery lists. I listen to music while I am at the gym.”

Apple™ gadget-loving students and staff might be inclined to take another look at their iPod™ and iPhone™ use after a report on Yahoo! News regarding the possible health hazard presented by some devices. The article reports that iPhone™ and iPod Touch™ users in the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom have been injured by the devices’ exploding in their owner’s faces.

The reports have inducted sophomore Warda Chaudhary to worry about her iPhone™.

“If it happened to a lot of people, it might happen to me too,” Chaudhary said.

Senior Mark Schmitt does not share Chaudhary’s concern.



Photo courtesy Wikipedia

“I am not worried [because] my iPod™ doesn’t get heated,” Schmitt said.

The Yahoo! Reprort notes that, so far, these cases have been few and isolated. The lack of coverage on this issue made some Niles West students dismiss these accidents.

“I have never heard of this happening before,” senior Jovy Jensen said. “I am not too worried about it because even though my iPod™ overheats sometimes, it just becomes frozen.”

Junior Ryan Olen agrees.

“Probably in the cases they overused their iPods,” he said. “Sure the iPod™ can get hot, but it is not going to explode.”

The problem is not unique to the iPhone™ and iPod Touch™. There have been at least 15 cases of fires caused by different versions of Apple™’s portable devices in U.S.

According the Yahoo! Article, the cause of these explosions can often be traced to the “built-in lithium-ion battery” in the players and phones. This rechargeable battery is used to power the device. Under certain circumstances there is a chance that this battery can overheat and cause a spark, which in turn can turn into a flame.

Junior Emily Rotblatt feels that Apple™ needs to rectify the problem.

“[Apple™] has got a lot of money,” Rotblatt said. “They should be able to do the best they can with their products and make them safe.”

## Multitasking proves to increase homework time

**w** Sofiya Pershteyn  
Staff Writer

“I multitask when I am doing my homework,” junior Hiba Ghani said. “When I am doing my homework, I listen to music, or I listen to music when I clean my room. That way I can get more things done at one time.”

Ghani’s comments contradict a recent *Time* magazine study that reinforces what many parents and teachers have told students all along: multitasking lengthens time spent on an assignment and increase the amount of errors in students’ work. West students expressed mixed reactions to this study.

“I noticed when I’m doing my homework I work faster with music,” Ghani said.

Senior Matt Moy disagrees.

“I need quiet when I do my homework or else I don’t concentrate,” he said.

While research shows that a little stimulation, such as a cup of coffee or a few upbeat songs, can increase performance, the *Time* study suggests that the brain needs time to rest and absorb thoughts and memories.

“I think if multitasking is done properly it can actually be beneficial because you get more stuff done in less time,” sophomore Vikram Shah said, but added, “If you don’t have that capacity to handle that certain amount information at one time, separating the information later can be a hassle.”

According to *Time*, routine multitasking may condition the brain to remain in an “overexcited state.” This makes concentrating and focusing on one thing difficult.

Sophomore Michelle Leong agrees.

“I don’t really multitask because I couldn’t be able to focus,” Leong said. “I cannot focus on two things at once.”

The *Time* study points out that while multitasking may seem like simultaneously completing multiple tasks, the brain regards the process as frequent starting and stopping of different tasks.

Senior Eva Huzieran sees both sides of the issue.

“I think in some ways, multitasking can slow one down and make [him/her] not do [his/her] best on a certain thing, but at least it gets [him/her] through the task,” Huzieran said. “In some ways, I think multitasking is beneficial, because having little breaks in between a long boring assignment helps ease my mind and not just throw [the assignment] aside from boredom.”

For more on multitasking and its effects, go to: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1174696,00.html>.

## Majority disagrees with plan for more deployment

**w** Morgan Quilici  
Copy Editor

“I don’t think that you can accomplish a peaceful solution through war.” With those words, English teacher Paul Wack, co-creator of the literature of peace and nonviolence English course, commented on the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

“If we could help Afghanistan by building schools, increasing hospitals, health care and by making sure people are housed properly, I think that would do much more to eliminate terrorism than war,” Wack added.

According to Yahoo! News, on Aug. 24, U.S. senator Russell Feingold (D-WI) urged the imposition of an immediate timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan. Feingold spoke in response to the current speculation that the U.S. military commander in Afghanistan General Stanley McChrystal will soon recommend a troop increase.

“It is time we ought to start discussing a flexible timetable,” Feingold said. “After eight years, I am not convinced that simply pouring more and more troops into Afghanistan is a well thought out strategy.” He also expressed concerns that an increase in troops could destabilize the region.

“There are pros and cons to both staying and leaving Afghanistan,” senior Danya Snowsky said. “If we leave, that will cause chaos in Afghanistan because there won’t be any stable

control, but if we stay and send more troops, that could possibly upset the extremists and backfire on the U.S.”

Perhaps even more surprising, some Republican legislators who supported former President George W. Bush’s decision to send to troops to the embattled nation are now calling for withdrawal. According to [www.gop.gov](http://www.gop.gov), “as fighting intensifies in Afghanistan with a surge in U.S. troops, some on both sides of the political spectrum have called for U.S. disengagement from the war.”

Sophomore Karolina Ostapkiewitz expressed agreement with Feingold’s plan and frustration with the war’s long duration.

“I think that there is no point in fighting any longer,” Ostapkiewitz said. “The U.S. is not helping or changing anything by being there anymore. I feel as though we are wasting our nation’s time and money, and we should definitely come up with a timeline for withdrawal.”

Social studies teacher Matthew Wiemer concurs.

“To see that troop levels have been increasing in Afghanistan is frustrating. I think setting a timeline for Afghanistan would be a pretty good idea because I don’t think in a case like Afghanistan increasing the troops is going to help,” Wiemer said.

Wack suggested an alternative strategy.

“There are positive things we can be doing that are not military to help people in that country,” he said. “[Helping Afghanistan civilians] would build more good will, which would reduce terrorism, rather than by fighting, which creates bad will and increases terrorism.”



# WestWord

## West Word explores dangers of drug and alcohol abuse

**w Sarah Espinosa**  
Photo Editor

In recent years, the amount of underage drinkers and drug users has significantly increased. Parties are held each weekend, and students are able to obtain drugs as easily as walking into a local grocery store for a pack of gum. Students at Niles West prove this to be true through pictures on Facebook™, hallway conversations and student norm surveys. With the help of student assistance program coordinator Michelle Amaro, *West Word* has compiled information on the most commonly used drugs at Niles West. The effects students may not understand are those of marijuana and alcohol and how they can be life-threatening.

According to [www.AA.org](http://www.AA.org), alcohol is the leading cause of death for teens ranging in ages from 15-24. Each year, over two million deaths are caused from alcohol related automobile crashes, homicides and suicides. It has been estimated that over three million teenagers are out-and-out alcoholics, alcoholics that understand they have a problem but do not wish to do anything to fix the addiction. According to [www.AA.org](http://www.AA.org), several million more teens have a serious drinking problem that they cannot control. Many students



do not know that the younger they start drinking, the greater the chance of becoming addicted. True enough, more than four in 10 people who begin drinking before age 15 become alcoholics.

Marijuana is a common plant smoked to make people "feel good," according to [teens.drugabuse.gov](http://teens.drugabuse.gov). This drug contains dopamine that creates good feelings to the user. Though users can feel short term sensations, marijuana causes many negative long term effects. The drug affects the user's memory, perception and judgement. The website also states that marijuana can disrupt the brain's normal functioning and lead to problems with learning, studying and remembering recent events. Another consequence to marijuana is that if teens use it, they double their risk for becoming depressed later in life.

The student norms surveys concluded that West students are heading in the right direction. According to the study, 87 percent of West students have not used marijuana in the past 30 days, 83 percent feel that their parents do not approve of the use of marijuana, 88 percent do not approve of pressuring students to drink alcohol and 76 percent prefer to date a non-drinker.

For students who have friends who abuse drugs, isolate themselves from friends and family or party too much, they should seek help. For more information, visit the websites below or contact the agencies by phone.

### Visit these websites:

[www.AA.org](http://www.AA.org)  
[www.sadd.org](http://www.sadd.org)  
[www.addiction-help-line.com](http://www.addiction-help-line.com)  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)  
[www.drughelp.org](http://www.drughelp.org)  
[www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)

### Call these numbers:

**National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (212)269-7797**  
**Alcoholics Anonymous (877)947-5900**

## Myths and facts

**MYTH:** You think it is okay to drink alcohol often because you are in a group and not alone.

**FACT:** Just because you are not alone while consuming alcohol does not mean you are not recognized as an alcoholic and need to seek help.

**MYTH:** Your friends drink four beers, so you can as well.

**FACT:** Everyone has a different blood alcohol level, so while your friend who weighs 30 pounds more than you can consume four beers with no problem, that quantity probably will have a different effect on you.

**MYTH:** Marijuana doesn't affect me, and I have total control over what I am doing.

**FACT:** Marijuana does affect you. It affects your motor skills, depth perception and heart rate and can cause difficulty in your thinking and problem solving.

**MYTH:** Taking prescription and/or over-the-counter drugs is okay because they are meant to help people and hold no harm.

**FACT:** Medical drugs are the easiest drugs on which to overdose. Prescription drugs are prescribed for a reason, and even doctors might not know how it will affect you, that is why they are used in a controlled environment.

**MYTH:** If I try drugs or alcohol once, I will not get addicted.

**FACT:** You can never be sure if you will be one of the unlucky ones who become addicted to drugs and alcohol. It is possible that once you try drugs, you will find it impossible to stop.

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# WESTWORLD

## Flashback: month of September

### September is dedicated to:

- Apples
- Library card sign-up
- Coupons
- Ethnic foods
- Sewing
- Women of achievement



### Sports highlights

- Sept. 3, 1895: first professional football game was played in Latrobe, PA
- Sept. 3, 1921: the first U.S. bowling league was established
- Sept. 30, 1947: the New York Yankees played the Brooklyn Dodgers for the first televised World Series
- Sept. 7, 1979: ESPN premiered
- Sept. 21, 1970: NFL Monday Night Football premiered

### September's flower



Aster

### Entertainment

- Sept. 7, 1921: first Miss America pageant premiered
- Sept. 18, 1927: CBS goes on the air for the first time
- Sept. 18, 1947: the New York Times began publishing
- Sept. 24, 1968: 60 Minutes premiered
- Sept. 15, 1982: USA Today was first published
- Sept. 20, 1984: The Cosby Show premiered
- Sept. 22, 1994: Friends premiered

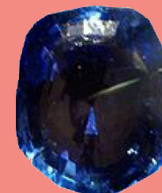
### September Babies

- Sept. 7, 1533: Queen Elizabeth 1 (queen of England)
- Sept. 24, 1896: F. Scott Fitzgerald (author of The Great Gatsby)
- Sept. 9, 1966: Adam Sandler (actor and comedian)
- Sept. 21, 1967: Faith Hill (singer and musician)
- Sept. 11, 1977: Ludacris (rapper)
- Sept. 4, 1981: Beyonce Knowles (singer and actress)
- Sept. 4, 1981: Serena Williams (tennis champion)
- Sept. 15, 1984: Prince Harry (son of Prince William and Queen Diana)
- Sept. 16, 1992: Nick Jonas (singer and actor)

### History

- Sept. 29, 1789: U.S. Army established
- Sept. 10, 1846: the sewing machine was patented by Elias Howe
- Sept. 10, 1850: California becomes the 31st state
- Sept. 4, 1888: first roll-film camera was patented
- Sept. 1, 1939: World War II began
- Sept. 27, 1950: answering machine was patented
- Sept. 23, 1952: Richard Nixon delivers his famous "Checkers" speech
- Sept. 24, 1956: first transatlantic telephone was completed
- Sept. 21, 1981: Sandra Day O'Connor was announced by the Senate as the first black woman Supreme Court justice
- Sept. 10, 1990: Ellis Island opened as a museum
- Sept. 11, 2001: 2,793 people died in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania due to terrorist attacks

### September's birthstone



Sapphire

### Art in the Square

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