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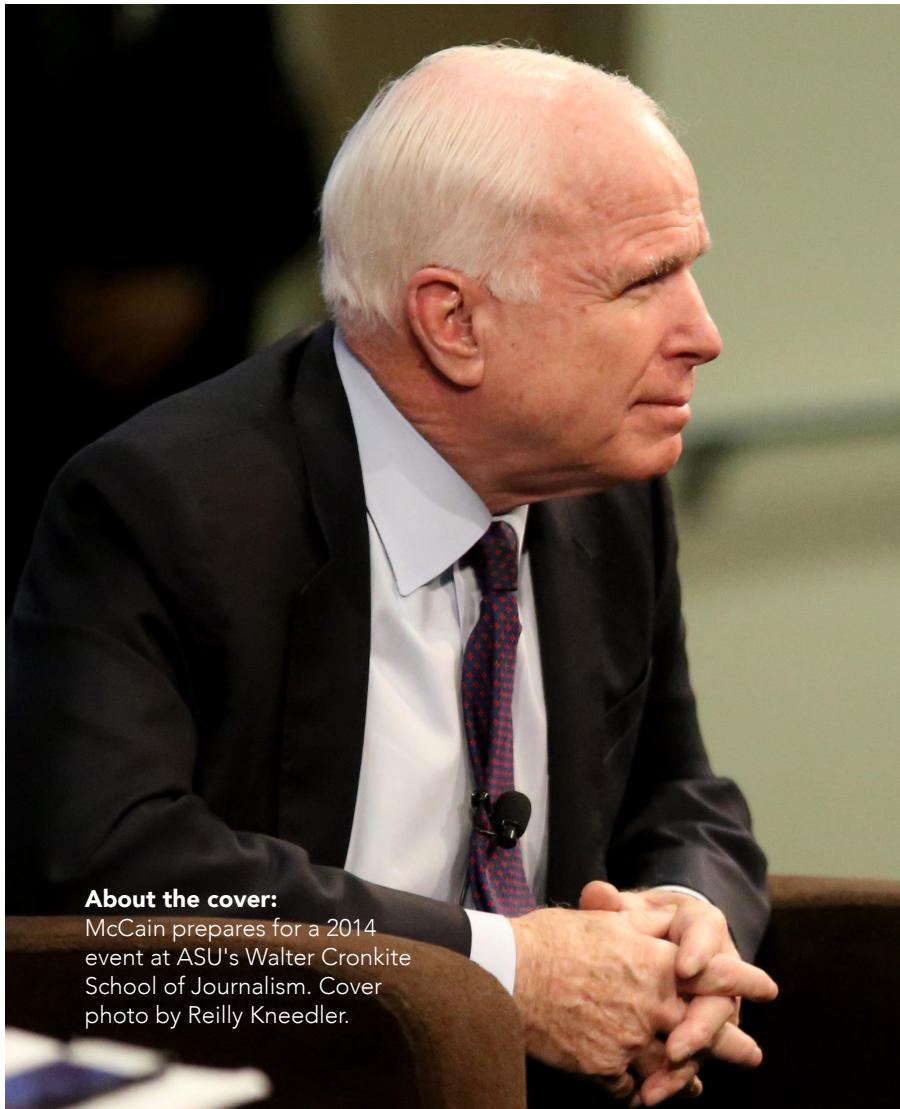
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McCain prepares for a 2014 event at ASU's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism. Cover photo by Reilly Kneedler.

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## EDITOR'S LETTER

Our decision to put John McCain on this semester's first issue cover was not a light one. Reading the exhaustive posthumous coverage of his life as a politician and public servant was certainly, for many Arizonans, a nostalgic experience. But, we decided there was still a piece missing in McCain's story. Maybe it is a minor piece, but then again, maybe not.

Digging through hundreds of issues of old State Press newspapers to piece together McCain's legacy as it appeared on our pages was no small task. As it turns out, the problem became choosing what to leave out, rather than what to leave in. This probably means something when it comes to McCain's relationship to ASU and its students. I'll leave the reader to decide.



## ASU TOO CLOSE WITH TEACH FOR AMERICA

BY BEN COOPER | ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM DEADRICK

**T**each For America, in less than 30 years, has risen to become perhaps the most influential organization in education. However, for over a decade, education researchers at ASU have pointed to the pernicious nature of the organization's approach to education.

In 2017, 51 Arizona State University students joined Teach For America, the third most of any university in the United States, a fact that ASU President Michael Crow touted on his Twitter account. At an event held at the Arizona Capitol building honoring ASU students joining the program, Cindy Parnell, a senior administrator said, "At ASU, we are especially proud of our partnership with TFA and our shared commitment to ensuring broad access to education and opportunity for all."

The marketing of Teach For America is also echoed in ASU's own marketing, which shares much of the same lingo. For example, a page on ASU's website, titled "Changemaker Central" bears a striking resemblance to the front page of the Teach for America website, which also has a slide with the phrase "Changemakers start here." Other similar instances can be found — terms such as "social entrepreneurship," "service," "leadership," "innovation," etc. — all of which seem to have a political dimension.

Recruits to the organization are routinely given glowing profiles in ASU Now, the University's official news service. Each profile in turn pays homage to the generosity of individual ASU students in their decision to grace what is portrayed as the ailing teaching profession.

The founder of Teach for America, Wendy Kopp, has delivered two prestigious speeches at ASU: She took part in the University's Frank Rhodes lecture series in 2011 and gave the commencement address to the University's class of 2016, where she received an honorary "Doctor of Humane Letters."

In the latter address, Kopp said, "(t)his institution is a dear friend to Teach for America ... and I'm thrilled that graduates from the Arizona State community make up one of the largest groups of Teach for America teachers today."

Teach for America was founded by Kopp in 1989 after laying out the blueprint for the organization in her 1989 Princeton undergraduate thesis. The premise underlying this blueprint is that of service and social activism in pursuit of education equity — specifically, academically successful college graduates are recruited to spend two years teaching in under-performing schools in both urban and rural areas.

A model of social change rooted in individual service and social activism is the basic approach to education reform, which Kopp adopted when she conceived Teach for America. But it would be a grave mistake to think that Teach for America is only involved with volunteer work.

Teach for America and its alumni are startlingly influential in education at large. For instance, the infamous charter-school advocate and education policy "savant" Michelle Rhee is a TFA alumna. Kipp Schools, the largest charter school operator in the United States with 212 school locations, was founded by two TFA alumni.

Staff in both the Obama and Trump Departments of Education claim alumni status, a fact that President Obama bragged about in a welcome video shown at TFA's 25th anniversary event. Republican Arizona Governor Doug Ducey is a former regional board member at Teach for America, and Reginald Boldin, a Democrat and representative for the 27th Legislative District of the Arizona House of Representatives, is an alumnus.

In addition to its affiliations with Arizona State University and the country's top politicians, Teach for America draws tens of millions of dollars in donations from some of the largest corporations. Among these are the Walton Family Foundation, the ExxonMobil Foundation and the Monsanto Fund.

Several prominent Arizona companies are also featured on the list: the Arizona Diamondbacks, The Arizona Republic and the Phoenix Suns. In 2010, with the infusion of an \$18 million donation from billionaire philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, ASU launched the Sanford Education Project in partnership with Teach for America.

Teach for America is one of, if not the most, in-

fluential organizations in education policy in the United States. Given all of the donor money from billion-dollar corporations, prestigious awards doled out, speeches given by its members, ties to powerful politicians such as Doug Ducey and influence within educational institutions — within ASU in fact — it should be obvious that the approach to education proffered by the organization has been wildly successful, right?

Not quite.

Dr. David C. Berliner, a Regents' Professor Emeritus at ASU, co-authored a paper highly critical of TFA in 2002. He was Dean of the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education (now the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College) and retired later that same year. When I interviewed him on Thursday, Aug. 30, he said that during his tenure as Dean, he "didn't have any relationship (with TFA)," and "didn't want one." By 2016, the Dean of the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers' College was presenting Teach for America founder, Wendy Kopp, with an honorary degree.

Researchers with the Education Policy Analysis Archives, an international academic research journal published by Arizona State University, have been putting out research critical of Teach for America and the broader education reform movement for over a decade. For instance, in 2002, EPAA published a paper by Professor Berliner and fellow researcher Ildiko Laczko-Kerr stating that "there is no difference between the performance of new teachers from Teach for America and that of all other under-certified teachers. On all tests, and in both years, the certified teachers out-performed the under-certified novice teachers from Teach for America."

Beyond the training that Teach for America instructors don't receive in preparation for their teaching, is the training they don't receive if they leave the profession. Julian Vasquez Heilig, a contributor to EPAA and vocal critic of Teach for America, found in a 2010 survey of studies on Teach for America's turnover rate, that "the empirical literature consistently finds a rate of attrition for TFA teachers of 80 percent or more by the fourth year of teaching," which is much higher than the rate for traditionally certified teachers. The implication is that Teach for America participants typically do not have the chance to improve their professional skills beyond the minimal training they receive.

"I think we made a mistake when we let (Teach for America) on campus," Professor Berliner told me in an interview. "It's saying 'We don't value our own teacher program.'"

Teach for America also frames its programs as a matter of promoting racial equality, but according to another study published in the EPAA, its record on matters of equality in the teaching profession has been dismal as well. Terrenda White, author of a 2016 paper on TFA's approach to diversity, noted that this approach was internally contradictory.

Although TFA corps members are now more diverse than they were before, because they teach in schools that are overwhelmingly black and de facto segregated, they are still unrepresentative of the schools they teach in. Terrenda White



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notes that while Teach for America has responded to past criticism of its predominantly white and middle class teaching corps by increasing the level of diversity represented in the organization, the policies pushed by TFA donors and alumni undermine diversity in schools overall by pushing out black and Latinx teachers already in the profession.

A tension between the purported mission to improve education access and equity and the policies promoted by Teach For America alumni is a common theme within this organization. This tension is structural.

As founder, Wendy Kopp is quoted in an April 15, 2014 piece in *The Nation*: "We're a leadership development organization, not a teaching organization." This statement reflects the more accurate reading of TFA's real approach to education.

This approach is fundamentally about technical and personnel changes (who runs the schools and how they are run), crucially neglecting the context within which schools operate. TFA would have us believe solutions to educational inequality will emanate from the individual, regardless of whether their students live in poverty, funding gets slashed or a disaster strikes.

Particularly illuminating is the example of New Orleans, where, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of predominantly black teachers were fired, and the city's public schools were mostly replaced with charter schools run by private operators extensively linked to TFA and lacking democratic oversight from a school board.

According to another EPAA study published in 2016 by T. Jameson Brewer and his colleagues, the charter schools were staffed disproportionately by TFA corps members as teachers, on the one hand, and TFA alumni as operators and various administrators on the other.

Here in Arizona, the TFA-friendly governor, Doug Ducey, has been no friend to public education. According to the *Phoenix New Times*, in 2015 Ducey submitted a budget that, while slashing school budgets by a net total of about \$100 million, awarded nearly \$500,000 to Teach for America for administrative purposes. In a letter to the organization, 47 corps members and alumni advised the TFA not to take the money in the face of such massive cuts to public schools.

Teach for America took the money anyway.

The authors of "Reframing Teach For America" also collected qualitative data in the form of interviews at Teach for America's 20th Anniversary Summit. They found that "TFA frames the roots of inequality as stemming from the managerial shortcomings of public bureaucracies," and that, despite being ostensibly non-political, "multiple panels reinforced political understandings about the causes of and solutions to educational inequality in terms of market and private sector approaches to schooling, and the types of managerial leaders needed to enact those approaches."

Teach for America's extensive ties with members of the Democratic and Republican parties does not make it non-political. What it instead indicates is that both parties broadly share an approach toward education policy that affirms the centrality of school and teacher quality at the expense of socioeconomic conditions, such as poverty and systemic racism, which they either fail or refuse to address.

Given the power, prestige and influence of Teach for America, it's hard to argue that the organization and its alumni are not the archetype of what "changemakers" and "leaders" should look like. As "social entrepreneurs," they rake in hundreds of millions of dollars from some of the wealthiest donors in the world. But "change" in and of itself has no content; what really matters is the sort of change being pursued and how.

Of course, there's nothing necessarily wrong with community service or philanthropy. However, the basic material premise of service as a model for change will continually produce extreme need. People in need of assistance don't have their basic needs met except through the charity of private individuals.

However, such a social order is not inevitable.

When he first began his research career, Professor Berliner primarily studied education psychology. "51 years ago ... (President) Johnson gave money to a very famous sociologist, James Coleman, and Jim went out to look at whether (school) desegregation was working and how it was working, that sort of thing."

Berliner and his colleagues had trouble accepting what Coleman had found.

"His report said 'schools don't count for much. Family, community, neighborhood and cohort count for more.'"

As a result, Professor Berliner reoriented his research to study the sociological aspects of education. "Housing policy is education policy. Policing policy is education policy," he told me.

The notion that individuals as "leaders" will "innovate" their way out of complex and historically rooted social problems is a carefully marketed fantasy, a fantasy that ASU should stop buying into. Arizona

State University and its students should instead be engaged with challenging the social systems that reproduce inequity in education and society more broadly, problems which cannot be "innovated" out of.

What is needed now more than ever is not so much leaders, and certainly not entrepreneurs, but broad-based social activism that demands substantive education reform: the end of the class-based divide and de facto segregation in American education and the transformation of the system that perpetuates them.



ECSTASIS : PSYCHO-NAUTS

**S**itting in his philosophy of science class, junior psychology major Derek Espinoza noticed a mushroom tattooed on one of his classmates arms.

"Is that amanita muscaria?" asked Espinoza.

"It is!" replied fellow psychology junior Matthew Broussard.

From this quirky connection on a species of psychedelic mushroom, the two would eventually create what is now called "The Ecstasis Club." Espinoza now serves as the treasurer, and Broussard is the communications director, along with sustainability junior and event planner Mayan Earheart.

The trio began the club in spring of 2018, dedicating its purpose to the study of psychedelic experiences and contemporary research.

"We became friends and started talking about psychedelics and how there was not a forum on campus to be able to talk about people's experiences, as well as research or really any conversation about altered states," Espinoza said.

Espinoza was inspired to start the club when he witnessed a woman close to him experience a healing ceremony at the Peyote Way Church of God in Willcox, Arizona. Peyote is a drug derived from the peyote cactus, known for its psychoactive qualities. He said seeing the positive effects this experience had on her everyday life made him think psychedelic drugs should be discussed on a more serious note in the scientific field.

"It set off a cascade of healing in different areas of her life, some of which she did not even realize were issues in her life prior," Espinoza said. "It changed her life."

Despite contrary beliefs, the club stresses that it does not promote the use of any legal or illegal drug. It acts as a forum for discussion and research, rather than execution.

"It is one thing for us to sit in a room and talk about how great they are and how they change our lives, but it is also important to understand their nature from an objective point of view, both the pros and cons," Broussard said. "These things are very powerful and can have negative consequences on people's lives if not used in the right context."

The club holds "integration circles" regularly, where anyone is allowed to come in and talk about their experiences seeing life in an altered state. Broussard said those who have extraordinary or transformative experiences due to altered states can feel isolated or alienated in society, and it can be hard for them to share their stories or integrate them into their lives. This is where the club comes in.

"I'm a big acid head" said a man sitting in the first meeting of the semester, during an open discussion. "I believe life itself is not real."

Heads around him nod in agreement. A girl next to him reveals she is a community assistant in one of the dorm buildings. She shares her struggles with the University housing's anti-drug policy and how it has afflicted her. She is a medical marijuana cardholder that uses the plant to help cope with anxiety and depression.

The circle begins to open up, and philosophical conversations about drug policy start to arise. This mixes with distant chatter about LSD trips and meditation, and it is suddenly clear the meetings truly do welcome all types of discussion, no matter how far out.

"By the way, if you know anyone who would be interested in this club, preferably some who are not white males, let them know!" announces neuroscience graduate student Broc Pagni, after a quick glance of the room shows there are not many women or people of color in attendance.

Broussard brings the meeting back together and reminds the group once again that, although they always welcome discussion

about out-of-body experiences on psychedelics, that is not the main focus of every meeting, as their core values are education, community outreach and integration.

Dropping acid is not the only way to have an out-of-body experience, though. These unique experiences can come from something as simple as playing sports, or meditating, Broussard said. These activities can put those practicing them into a "flow state," which is, in other words, a euphoric state.

Flow states are a topic largely discussed during meetings and are often a part of their workshops and activities. One of their workshops titled "Waking Up: An Introduction to Ecstatic Living" features a guest speaker named Sydnee Earheart, who teaches breathing techniques to put those who participate into a supposedly psychedelic state.

When Broussard asks for members who would be interested, hands quickly shoot up.

While there is, as Espinoza said, a big cultural shift happening toward the acceptance of the use of psychedelics, there are still many against the legitimacy of these drugs from a scientific standpoint. Both Espinoza and Broussard say they struggled to find support for the research of altered states of consciousness from many professors.

"Going into a scientific field and also studying philosophy, I want to talk about the nature of these altered states of consciousness," said Broussard. "However, when I talk to my professors or people in my life who may be a little more conservative, they kind of look at it as unimportant or not reality, but for me, it is reality. It's my experience, and I feel there's a little alienation that comes from that."

Broussard said that despite the amount of relevant scientific research he has found on these drugs, professors still have shunned him away.

"Some conservative professors will tell you that there is no literature on it, but when you actually do your own research, you find that that literature is more promising than most of the stuff that we learn in classes," Broussard said.

The club's current goals are to get a team together to do research on the positive effects of psychedelic drugs and to participate in a conference in early 2019 to open a discussion between professors and students regarding the topic of drug research.

They are not in this alone, though.

The club is working to collaborate with many organizations, both on and off campus. They are working particularly close with is the Multi-disciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, for which Broussard and other members have provided research assistance. MAPS is currently researching the effects of MDMA, also known as ecstasy, in treating veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. Espinoza said the research, thus far, has shown it to be effective.

"The research now is finally caught up. These things are going to be legal, they're going to be more mainstream," Espinoza said.

Despite the scientific evidence that psychedelics can be helpful, both Broussard and Espinoza say it will be a struggle to break down the stigma around psychedelics.

"We only have caffeine, alcohol and nicotine as our accepted drugs of choice, so anything that goes against that tends to scare people," Espinoza said. "Altered states tend to scare people in our culture."

Despite their keen interest in something society has felt continuously unsettled about, they are aware of the consequences that can occur when taking these drugs and take them into consideration in their discussions.

"We're just putting out objective information," Broussard said. "We want people to look at the facts and make decisions themselves."

# I'm deadass 6'4"

BY KIERA RILEY | ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAM DEADRICK

**I**t felt like a secret — a spark that rattled and hummed within the air, always present, never put into words. The red tinted box, the ominous white flame that flickered on my phone, glaring at me from my home screen. Minutes, hours, even days after downloading it, I could feel its power. Upon clicking the icon, it was scarily evident to me that this place was a jungle. Reaching past boundaries of formalities or traditions, the app is riddled with pheromones and desperation.

As a first time Tinder user, I felt the full force of the app from my fateful initial swipe. Tinder is a social entity, a cul-

tural phenomenon especially affecting university students. So, as a newly minted college student, I felt that Tinder deserved some close attention.

More specifically, Tinder's new feature, Tinder University, needed some love. Tinder U allows college students to use their university email account to connect with peers from their own campus as well as surrounding universities. The goal of my specific experiment was to explore the new Tinder U algorithm and experience the raw power of collegiate lust.

Creating my account was pretty standard: I typed in my name, threw a few pictures on my profile, and crafted my bio, which read, "for research purposes only." I would come to regret this decision. What I felt was a no-nonsense summary of my purpose actually turned out to be used against me in covertly sexual one-liners followed by unspeakable strings of emojis. Lewd emoji chains aside, I strode on and acquainted myself with the hottest bachelors and bachelorettes within a 50-mile radius.

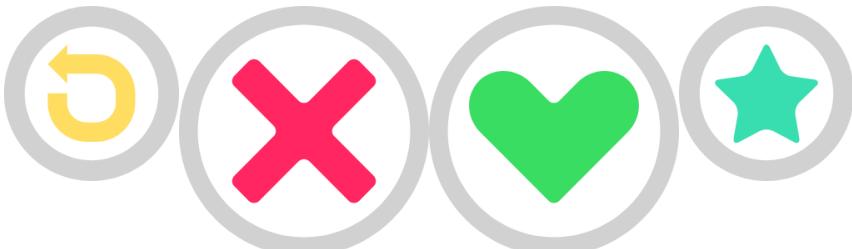
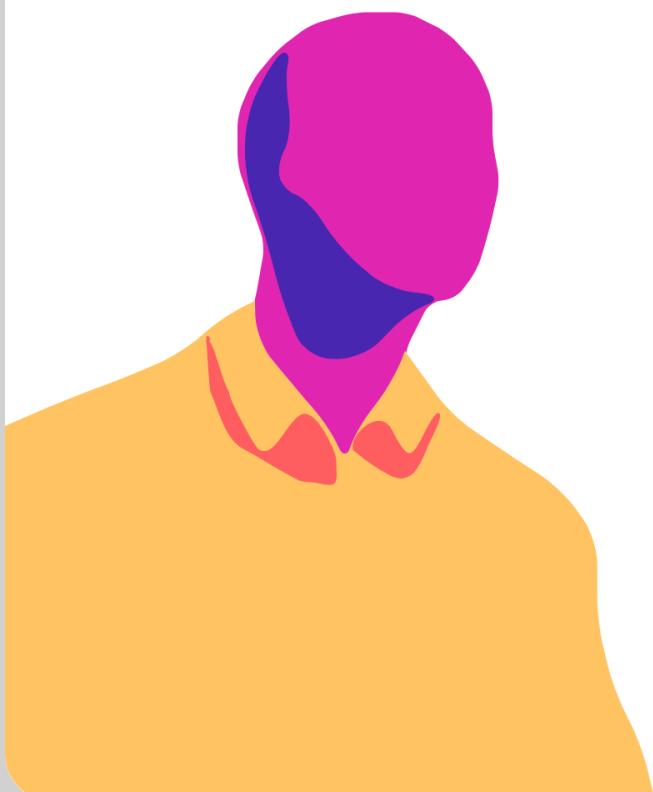
The first shining face on my screen sat slouched back, straddled by a neon green inflatable alien. His bio read, "just tryna hook up tbh." As any reasonable person would do, I swiped right.

This was, unfortunately, just the beginning. From there I made the executive decision to swipe right on every single person, yet another choice I would eventually regret.

My first few matches seemed nice enough. Their messages, though predictably flirtatious, contained nothing too alarming. That was until five minutes later. This message was so bold, so bizarre, I almost had to respect it ... almost.

It read, "Would you be my Tinderella and listen to the Frozen soundtrack as I ..." I'll omit the last part as most could fill in the blank. I find it tough to choose between a Cinderella or a Frozen reference, so let's do both. It was bippity boppity bad, but I decided to let it go, kind of.

On account of the inconsistent Disney reference and



vulgarity, I had to change my approach radically. I swiped left from that point forward.

In my continued research, I started noticing patterns in the types of pictures, bios, and people. A few common themes emerged, the first being that if someone happened to be over six foot, they made sure to let you know that they are, in fact, over six foot. My personal favorite boldly declared that he is, and I quote, "deadass 6'4." Congrats, dude.

Many also entice others using pictures of their most valuable assets: their dogs. Love truly is a battlefield, and those poor puppies are caught in the crossfire. The cuteness quota also unfortunately extends to babies. As one baby-toting bro said, "she's my sister, not my child, but you can still call me daddy."

Then, Tinder showed me a whole new world. I stumbled upon some gems, true diamonds in the rough. One of the bios read, "great with moms." Heartwarming, maybe there is some vague sense of companionship on here. Another claimed he was, "more interested in your brain than your butt." Who wouldn't hit this gentleman's line?

But alas, not every single man was in it for the brains. For all my honors college ladies, you'll be disappointed to hear that "Barrett girls are to smart" for one of the fine bachelors on the app.

At the conclusion of my swiping, I encountered a moment of sweet nostalgia when a familiar face appeared on my phone screen. I found the profile of a former Culver's employee who asked for my number while I was decimating an order of fried cheese curds. Nice to see you again.

Exasperated by heterosexual Tinder, I decided to leave no stone unturned. With a switch of my settings, I went off to browse the local ladies. In short, women's motives for the app differ greatly from men.

Many were seeking companionship or friendship. Others sought out party addresses or extra funds, and most had better selfies on their profiles.

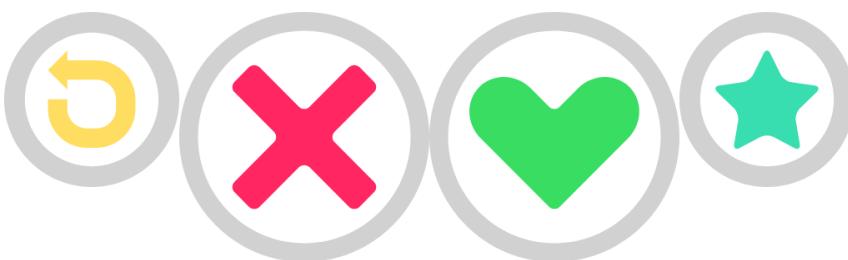
My personal favorite quote from my searches read "No hookups, no Trump supporters, no negotiations." Another asserted, "I WILL ruin your life." After a few more swipes, I found enough evidence to support my claim that girls rule and boys drool.

I also checked out the option that included people of all genders and found more of the same. It doesn't matter how you identify or who you're attracted to, everyone's a little bit of a freak.

Aside from a few commonalities, there truly is not one type of person on Tinder. I felt that the people I encountered came from every walk of life. From gym rats to furries, student athletes to anime cosplayers, everyone is just looking for a little love, whatever form that might come in. Still, the jungle might not be a hospitable abode for all of us.

Following my first romp about the fiery app, I decided to call it quits forever. For me personally, I found each minute I spent on the app entertaining but excruciating. But, this is not to knock Tinder.

Tinder makes a lot of sense for a lot of people. It's a cruel world out there, and if an app makes it just a little bit easier to find someone to tough it out with, by all means, use it. Some find true love, others find fleeting satisfaction, and as for me, I found a lot of quotable material for this article.



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SUN DEVIL DINING

# THERE WILL BE NO SECOND ARK

BY PARKER SHEA | PHOTOS BY DELIA JOHNSON | ILLUSTRATION BY JOEY COALTER

**T**here is a dark side to environmental activism, one unconcerned with hugging trees and rather convicted in its authority to burn them down. Not the living ones, of course — rather the dead, milled, compressed and, sometimes, constructed ones. They want to burn down buildings, complexes of buildings, even neighborhoods. They want to burn them down not because they are built but because they are built by professionals, who, in turn, compete against other professionals to build more buildings.

These people, self-styled activists, have meetings. They chatter on, joke and even rationally conspire to go out to the movies together. Just last week, one of them probably put the tofu in the fridge to thaw before mounting her bicycle to ride to work in the morning. That night, I really do think she read a book on something trite before bed. It might've even been a James Patterson novel. In her sleep, she dreamed about an old friend, but her friend had someone else's face. In the morning, this didn't concern her. Dreams can be weird sometimes.

The people I'm talking about, none of whom I know personally nor have met, are members of the radical environmental activist group known as Earth Liberation Front, often called ELF. They call themselves 'The Elves,' apparently not ones to get caught up in their own metaphor.

The Elves have pulled some pretty major "pranks" in the past. Except they weren't pranks because The Elves don't care much for running around egging houses. They also don't throw toilet paper all over the school or emblazon in spray paint "Fuck the man!" across government buildings downtown. Well, maybe they do that last one, but that's certainly just the tip of the iceberg.

These people, like many extremist parapolitical agitators, are painted in the national press as at least delusional. This is probably true. But insane? Not even close. Insane people don't put the tofu in the fridge in the morning, ride a bicycle to work, meet their friends in the evening and plan to burn down an entire housing development project in San Diego, California.

But that's what The Elves did in 2003 to a 206-unit condominium building that was under construction. They even left a signature at the scene of the, uh, activism that read, "If you build it, we will burn it." The 'you' in there definitely refers to someone, but they didn't leave any footnotes or appendices for us. I'm guessing it's on their website somewhere. I didn't bother to check.

So why do The Elves do this? Like any other environmental activist group, they are upset by the degradation of the Earth's fragile ecosystems and the exhaustion of its natural resources. They like trees, sure. They like rivers, sure. They like people, sometimes. They even like buildings, but that one comes with an asterisk. For the most part, The Elves are probably perfectly sane, even if ideologically convicted, people who want to steward a healthy Earth into the care of future generations. So what am I missing? I think San Diego should have one more 15-year-old, 206-unit condominium complex than it does right now, and I am also sane. Where does the gap lay between The Elves and myself?

This is a good place to bring in Professor Jeffrey Cohen. He's a really slick dude. Even though he's spent most of his life in places like New York, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., talking to him didn't seem much different than talking to an easygoing bookworm who enunciates words like someone who surfs and collects geodes in his spare time. He's definitely into books, but that's all I can say for sure. Furthermore, during his days on the East Coast, Professor Cohen wasn't just shooting the shit in Old World-looking pubs and partaking as a responsible taxpayer in excellent public transportation systems. He was busy studying Medieval literature at Harvard University and then later serving as a full

professor for 23 years at George Washington University.

The occasion for my speaking to Cohen is that he is ASU's new dean of humanities, a hefty administrative position within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. His closest professional connection at ASU seems to be Lindy Elkins-Tanton, director of the School of Earth and Space Exploration and reportedly heir to the Origins Project. This, if you'll remember, is ASU's prominent public-facing education program cut loose this year from Lawrence Krauss, who founded the project but was dropped after the University found he violated its sexual harassment policy.

But the details of Cohen's new administrative duties turned out to be of less interest to me than his research. A medievalist by training, Cohen has spent the better part of his career studying, for lack of a better term, the ecology behind works of literature. However, it would be best not to boil down Cohen's research, which has ranged from his early career studying how monsters are represented in literature to a book of essays, co-authored with aforementioned Elkins-Tanton, reflecting on the Earth itself to his most recent project on climate change discourse.

It was while discussing with Cohen this last item that I realized what might have been going on 15 years ago with our politico-pyromaniacs a bit farther West. Weirdly enough, the answer I found takes us all the way back to Noah's Ark. Figures.

"Whenever we tell a climate change story, we replicate the Noah's Ark narrative," Cohen tells me with conviction. "As a researcher you have hills you'll die on. I'll die on that hill."

Cohen believes that the way we talk about climate change is framed in the drapings of one of humankind's oldest myths. Those who've taken an ancient history class or something similar might remember The Epic of Gilgamesh, where Gilgamesh, king of the ancient

Sumerian city-state Uruk, travels far and wide to find Utnapishtim. It was supposed that Utnapishtim had the secret to immortality since he'd been around for so long. The text mentions the hermetic sage surviving a great flood that had supposedly happened many years prior to the events of the story.

This epic poem is thought to have been written before 2,000 B.C. It is one of humanity's oldest surviving stories, predating even the Hebraic bible's version of the flood myth. Even though Cohen's project concerns the latter, it is worth mentioning The Epic of Gilgamesh if only to show how old are the rough contours of this motif.

My exchange with him was as enlightening as it was concerning, because his insights hinted at what could drive an environmental activist to extreme acts of violence. My conclusions don't have the endorsement of Cohen, who never explicitly mentioned the activist group.

As it turns out, we (and I say 'we' to include myself) who are concerned with the protection of the environment are not many degrees removed from The Elves. All it takes is a powerful, even mythic, idea to drive one's convictions to threats. My conversation with Cohen follows.

"Almost always, when Noah's Ark is depicted, it's depicted from the outside, from the perspective of those who aren't inside of it while it sails away," Cohen begins, describing the motivation behind his forthcoming book. "So you get all these pictures of the drowning people as they watch the Ark floating away. That's not in the Bible, but it's the perspective that's been realized through art. So it's the thing that leaves you behind."

"That explains some of the pessimistic tints of it as it manifests in the climate change (debate)," I suggest. "Exactly."

"Well what does that even mean? There's Elon Musk in his spaceship, and we're all going to be left behind?"

"Well, it feels very comfortable because that's how the climate change story goes: Some get left behind, most get left behind. A few people get their safety in a spaceship or a walled city or you name it."

"So where we're at right now though, should we set the Noah's Ark story down?

The way we've been interpreting it in the past, we should —"

"We should return to how we used to think about it or return to what we used to know about it. We carry the story forward, but we're not interested in how complicated it is. And if we went back and saw how over the ages it's been spun up to be one of the most complicated myths ever told — in fact, you know, it's the first recorded history we have. It's the Epic of Gilgamesh, where the world is submerged because the gods are tired



of humans being so noisy and overpopulated, so they try to submerge the world, yet an ark gets built that sails away and saves people. That's the Noah's Ark story. It's the story we've been telling as long as we've been recording stories that we've been telling. Except most of the time, we've told it in a much more complicated way than we tell it now, when we're so resigned to climate change."

This exchange got me thinking about the flood myth and its cataclysmic finality. The Great Flood is what wipes everything else out. It's what cleans the landscape of all imperfections and by doing so makes clear to us, the humans, our wrongs going back long before the waves break over our heads. In the Bible, those imperfections are called sin. Recall from Sunday school that God asked Noah to build an ark for a reason. It's because the inhabitants of the world became sinful, and Noah was the last decent one among the bunch.

Once again, without Cohen's endorsement, my mind skips over to Houston, which was battered by Hurricane Harvey in 2017. Though the storm was devastating on its own terms, Houston's laissez-faire approach to zoning laws proved catastrophic. Maybe this is our modern-day version of what can be called the 'Sin Before the Storm,' though we should hesitate to blame the bureaucrats or their now-conspicuous absence from the scene.

But then, my mind also wanders back to The Elves. Maybe Cohen's perspective on the Noah's Ark myth can help us understand what drives a sane person to political extremism when it comes to the environment. After all, The Elves are anything but resigned when it comes to the future of our climate. They will not wait around for some last-minute human innovation to swoop in and save us. No technology — no ark — is up to the task, according to The Elves.

So the question, which I won't attempt to answer, becomes: What lengths are too far when one has abandoned any hope of a second ark? This is obviously not advocating violence à la The Elves. Rather, it is worth taking a hard look — in a similar manner to how Cohen is tracking down the difficult details when it comes to the flood myth — at what our options are once we've given up the idea of building a spaceship to Mars. This could make for an interesting follow-up to Cohen's forthcoming book. If those who are resigned to climate change frame the narrative in the Noah's Ark myth, as Cohen insists, then there must be something ancient behind the converse position, that of the activist. What myths do The Elves tell themselves?

Maybe a better question, certainly a more daunting question, is: What better myths are there for those who know there will be no second ark?



# **JOHN MCCAIN**

## **A STATE PRESS HISTORY**



PHOTO BY REILLY KNEEDLER

# 1980s

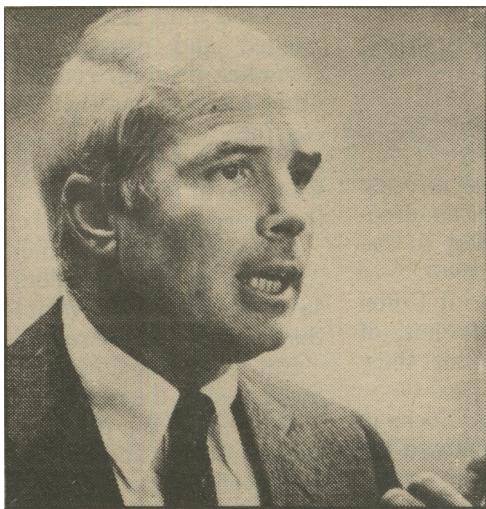
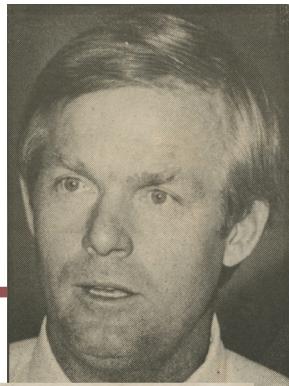


Photo by Andy Arenz

## 1983 - House of Representatives

The State Press covered Sen. McCain in his early days as a member of the House of Representatives. Quotations from an Oct. 13, 1983 article show McCain sticking to his convictions from the very beginning during an exchange with a small group of students in the Memorial Union. The Senator called for more involvement from Americans in the political process and spoke on various platform issues. But when the topic arrived at the Democratic candidates of the day, McCain openly joked at his rivals' expense.

"Calling Sen. Alan Cranston the father of E.T.," according to the report, "and claiming former California Gov. Jerry Brown was named the ambassador to Jupiter, McCain made a jab at nearly every Democratic candidate."



## Senate candidate protests high cost of campaigning

## 1986 - First Senate Run

Though McCain was the favorite to take Barry Goldwater's seat after the elder senator retired in 1986, he was still met with optimistic opposition from Democrat Richard Kimball. Kimball ran a campaign that was infamously torn into by local press pundits, with one Phoenix Gazette writer describing the former state senator's run with the term "terminal weirdness."

"With his own polls showing him trailing McCain, Kimball, forever the underdog, said he remains confident," according to the article. "I've never been closer to an opponent in the polls than I am with McCain," he said. Asked what he's going to do after the election, Kimball said, "I'm going to sit in my office in Washington, of course."

McCain would go on to win the election by 20 percentage points.

# 1990s

## McCain addresses students at ASU

### 1990 - The Keating Five

The Keating Five was perhaps the biggest scandal of McCain's career. Five U.S. senators were accused of intervening in a federal investigation against the Lincoln Savings and Loan Association because the chairman had donated large sums of money to the senators' campaigns. All four of the other senators involved happened to be Democrats, something that probably tested the young McCain's public image.

Amid this scandal, McCain came to ASU as part of a series of political forums. The senator wanted to speak about healthcare, but students pressed him on his involvement in the Keating affair. In a State Press article published April 11, 1990, a student present at the forum was quoted accusing McCain of being "caught in bed" with four Democrats, an obviously incendiary claim.

McCain was quick to shoot down the charge, saying with iconic humor, "The last liberal I was in bed with was my wife."

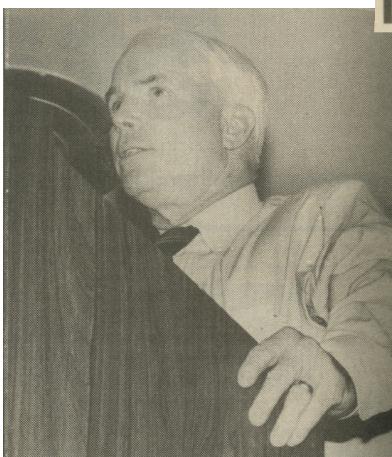
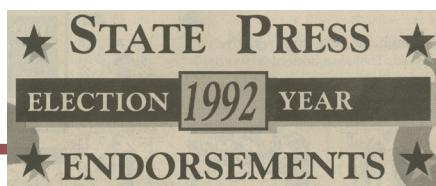


Photo by T.J. Sokol



### U.S. SENATE

John McCain

The Democrats must be kicking themselves over this lost opportunity.

In what has shaped up to be the true battle between evils, the race for the U.S. Senate seat currently held by Republican Sen. John McCain could have been the Democrats' for the taking. Instead, this newspaper must grudgingly back McCain, whose experience lends him a decided edge over his two non-viable opponents.

## McCain, Rhodes lead in races for Arizona seats

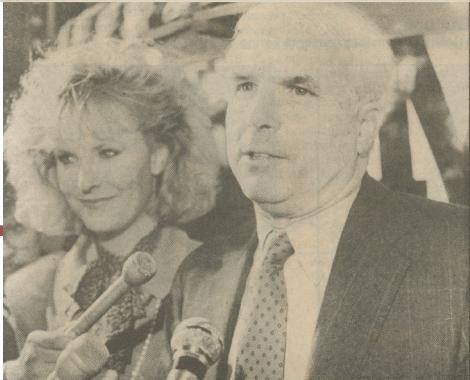


Photo by Rick Wiley

## 1987 - Iran-Contra Affair

ASU history professor Lewis Tambs was under investigation by the CIA for setting up a "southern front" against Nicaragua during the Iran-Contra Affair. This was a political scandal during the second term of the Reagan Administration that at its height threatened Reagan with impeachment.

Lt. Col. Oliver North diverted money — originally meant to free U.S. hostages — from weapon deals between Israel and Iran to fund the supposedly anti-leftist Contra rebel groups in Nicaragua. The State Press covered Sen. John McCain, Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., and Arizona Republican Reps. Jim Kolbe, Jon Kyl and John Rhodes coming to ASU to discuss Tambs' role in the affair.

This oft-forgotten ASU connection to the international scandal is captured on the front page of our March 2, 1987, issue. Though McCain's interest in the affair was brief, tertiary and without scandal, Tambs was indeed directly involved, and the conservative remained politically a Contra supporter long after the fact.

## 1992 - State Press Endorsement

The State Press editorial board voiced their endorsement for John McCain to retain his senate seat in the 1992 election. This came at the tail end of the Keating Five Scandal. McCain was running against Democrat Claire Sargent and Independent Evan Meacham. The board agreed that his opponents "[stood] little chance of defeating McCain, as Arizona voters at last have decided that they wish to be represented by credible persons." The endorsement concluded with a note of cautious acceptance of McCain's victory.

"Let us hope that McCain can work off the Keating Five stigma in Congress by redoubling his efforts on the part of Arizona's citizens."

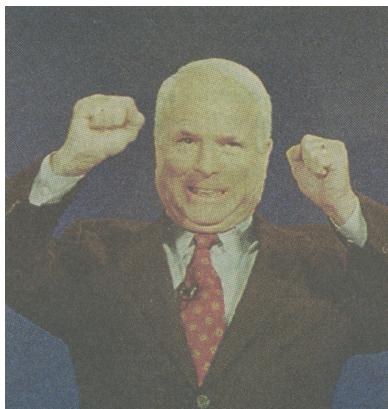


Photo by Erlend Aas

## 1986 - First Senate Victory

The sly look of assured victory was evident on McCain's face as he stood aside wife, Cindy McCain while the 1986 election ballots were being counted. Insistent on humility, McCain was quoted saying, "It's still a race."

The soon-to-be senator was the speculative victor from early on in his race against Kimball. This was a metaphorical hand-off from one conservative Arizona legend, Goldwater, to another, McCain, who would eventually attain similar status in the GOP.

## Tambs under investigation for Iran-contra link

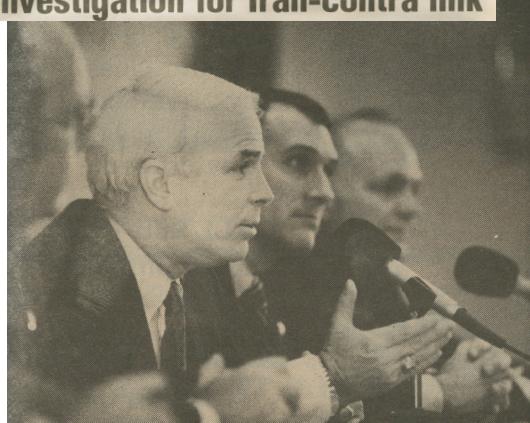


Photo by Ron Kuczek

# STATE PRESS

## 1999 - Presidential Debate

In 1999, McCain was a GOP presidential ticket hopeful alongside Alan Keyes, Orrin Hatch, Steve Forbes and George W. Bush. All of the GOP primary candidates besides Bush showed up to ASU's Gammage Auditorium for a nationally televised discussion.

According to a Nov. 22, 1999, article, "they all fought against Bush."

The results of that primary are obvious to us today, but at the time the buzz centered on Bush being conspicuously absent from that night's stage.

"I don't think this election is about talking to G.W. Bush, because he doesn't want to talk to us," said Keyes, a GOP contender and less the maverick than McCain when it came to toeing the Republican party line. The 2000 primary loss was to be the less painful of McCain's two runs for president.

# 2000s

## 2004 - McCain and Bush



Photo by Lisa Olson

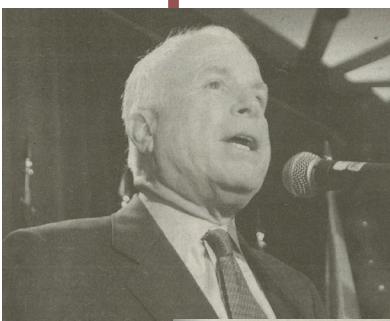


Photo by Lisa Olson

## 2004 - Presidential Surprise

On Oct. 14, 2004, The State Press decided to juxtapose two pieces detailing the rallies of then presidential candidates John Kerry and George W. Bush following a debate the two had in Tempe. These pieces are important in telling McCain's story because the senator showed up in support of Bush at Bank One Ballpark. After losing the Republican ticket to Bush in 2000, McCain wholeheartedly supported Bush in 2004, showing his commitment to the GOP. This rallying of Bush for the upcoming race on McCain's home court helped the incumbent win by a margin of 10.5 percent in Arizona, which was the last time the GOP won the state by a double-digit margin.

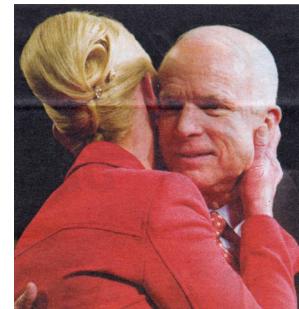


Photo by John Battaglia

Sen. John McCain says he's not running for president in 2008 but doesn't rule it out

# 2010s



## 2014 - Ducey Wins GOP Support

McCain's loss did not detract from his leadership image in the GOP, even well into the millennium's second decade. On Aug. 26, 2014, the former senator showed his support for Doug Ducey, who had just won the Republican primary for the gubernatorial race in Arizona.

A quotation from an Aug. 26, 2014, article reminds us of the great changes both Arizona politics and national politics have seen since Trump's election.

"A large crowd of supporters welcomed (Ducey) at a GOP primary elections party at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix." According to the report. "Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake, Gov. Jan Brewer and Sheriff Joc Arpaio were among the Arizona leaders present."

# At his campaign launch, a mixed crowd

## 2007 - Campaign Announcement

Follow McCain just three short years later to April 30, 2007, and the senator is on his presidential announcement tour, which featured a stop at Tempe City Hall. The State Press covered the first moments in what would become a monumental period in U.S. history.

By the end of Bush's second term, the GOP was in hot water, and it could be argued that McCain's continued support for the Iraq War was a big part of the senator starting his campaign off on the wrong foot. However, Sen. McCain cut loose with his stances on government corruption, cementing the "maverick" symbology that would follow him tenaciously in the campaign as well as for the rest of his career.

## Obama: Trust me, trust yourself



Photo by Andrea Bloom



Photo by Morgan Bellinger

# THE STATE PRESS

## 2008 - Historic Loss

On Oct. 22, 2007, The State Press reported on a campaign rally Barack Obama held at ASU on Hayden Lawn. Despite the crowd appearing to support Obama, McCain would still end up winning his home state. This insular victory was still something to be proud of, but the 7,000-strong turnout for Obama's speech in Tempe was more indicative of the national climate that would lead to his historic victory. This marks a turn not only for the nation at large, but also foretells the increasingly liberal college-aged vote that would overwhelmingly, yet unsuccessfully, rally behind Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders in 2015 and 2016.

In the end, history notes that McCain handled his loss with dignity, delivering a concession speech from the Arizona Biltmore in Phoenix that acknowledged the powerful significance of the first black president's election victory.

"Tonight — tonight," McCain began his speech, "more than any night, I hold in my heart nothing but love for this country and for all its citizens, whether they supported me or Sen. Obama, I wish God-speed to the man who was my former opponent and will be my president."



Photo by Johanna Huckeba

# The State Press

## 2016 - "Iconic Voices"

John McCain was invited to ASU to speak for the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications "Iconic Voices" series on Feb. 19, 2016. The State Press covered McCain, who spoke on the 2016 election, himself and other pressing issues of the time.

The senator specifically mentioned high rates of student debt and shared his fear of the possibility for terrorist attacks on American soil. McCain held firm to his love for America, "My friends, America is the greatest and strongest nation on Earth. Have no doubt about it."

# IN MEMORIAM



Photo by Delia Johnson



Photo by Stella Atzenweiler



Photo by Stella Atzenweiler



Photo by Delia Johnson



Photo by Delia Johnson



Photo by Delia Johnson

McCain was diagnosed with a form of brain cancer known as glioblastoma in July 2017. The senator battled with the disease for over a year before dying on Aug. 25, 2018 on his ranch in Cornville, Arizona.

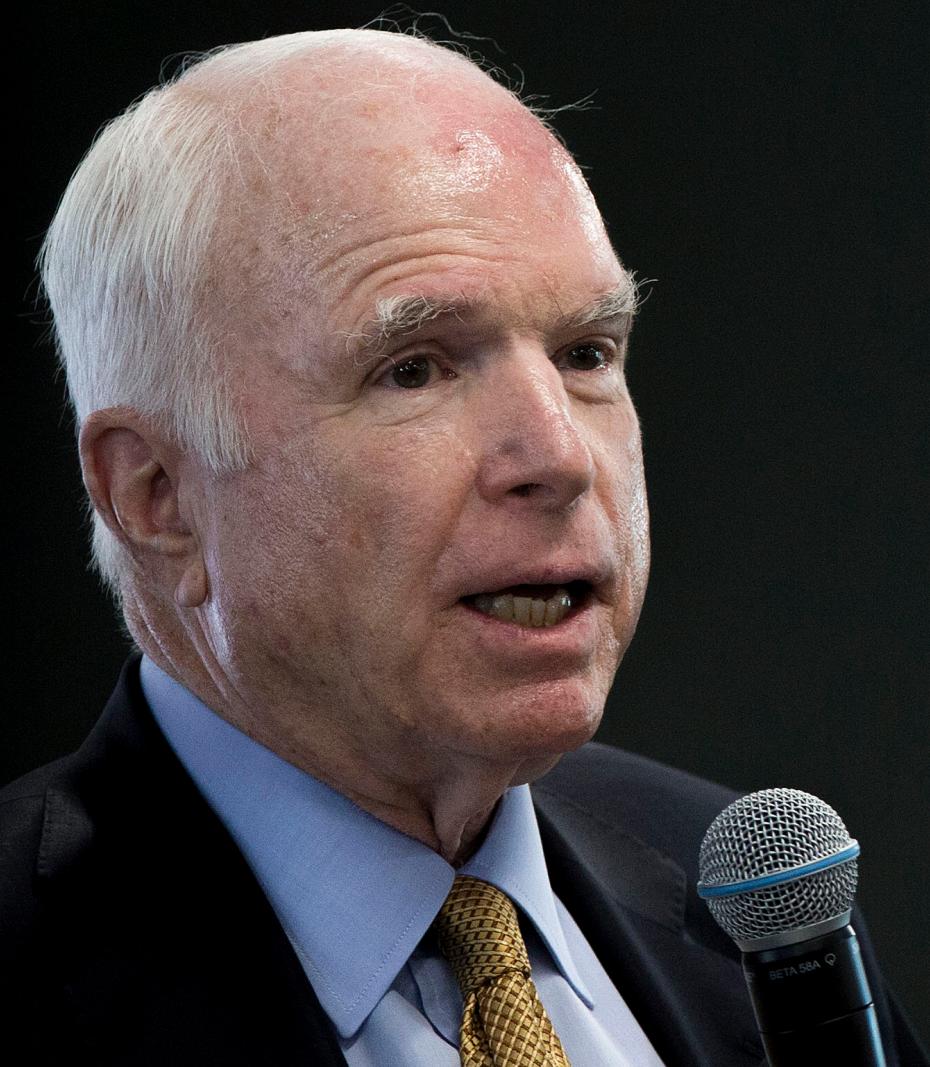
Many prominent figures released statements on McCain's passing, but ASU president Michael Crow delivered a particularly poignant testament to the senator's significance to the ASU community. "For the countless lives he impacted through his leadership, courage and compassion, we are grateful," said ASU President Michael Crow, who first met McCain while working at Columbia University. "And while today our community grieves the loss of a friend and colleague, Sen. McCain's legacy will

continue to inspire the work done in his namesake."

The Arizona legend had a long and storied relationship with ASU spanning as far back as the beginning of his career in Congress. McCain was a force through our pages from the start of his long history with Arizona and his appearance in our stories show many of the ups and downs of what was a life lived true to the man's convictions. His engagement with the ASU community was particular to our state and to our school. Our publication will continue to cover ASU's relationship with returning Sen. Jon Kyl, McCain's interim replacement, and will be sure to hold McCain's successor to as high a standard as McCain held himself.

**"When it comes your time to die, be not like those whose hearts are filled with the fear of death, so that when their time comes they weep and pray for a little more time to live their lives over again in a different way. Sing your death song and die like a hero going home."**

**– John McCain**





THE SEARCH FOR  
**SPARKY**

*Disney?*

"The grapevine": a phrase coined after the telegraph but sounds like it should have been named after the Grecian practice of gossiping in the vineyard. In much the same way, when I heard that the story behind ASU's beloved mascot was mired in controversy, it inspired a quest to find the writing on the wall. This became my great white whale.

The rumor this time was that the innocuous Sparky the Sun Devil was a scorned man's retribution for work unfulfilling or talent unrecognized. Upon hearing this, it seemed the grapevine had produced an oh-so-juicy parcel, and it was my duty to deliver the truth of the matter to the masses. There is a bottom to this urban legend, and I had barely begun to scratch at the top.

The only thing I can confirm is that Sparky was originally drawn by former Disney employee Berkeley "Berk" Anthony, but beyond that, the rest of the mascot's history is shrouded in uncertainty.

According to popular rumor, the upbeat devil was meant to be a caricature of Walt Disney. Anthony had supposedly become disgruntled in his time working for Walt Disney Studios. Whether our Sun Devil was created in anger or jest was the rabbit hole between me and this mystery's wonderland.

Research revealed that this is a road well-traveled, but none had gotten this canary to sing. The path was littered with PR statements that amounted to nothing more than smoke and mirrors. Both Disney and ASU made statements meant only to confuse in an attempt to end the road in an ocean of inconclusiveness.

Legendary former Disney Chief Archivist Dave Smith was asked in a Q&A online if Sparky was, in fact, a satirical cartoon of Walt Disney and replied, "The mascot, Sparky, was designed by former Disney artist, Berkeley "Berk" Anthony. Anthony worked at the Disney Studio from 1935 until he was drafted for World War II in 1941. Some people have speculated that Sparky looks somewhat like Walt Disney, but Anthony never confirmed that."

I could not let the mystery end here, even with word from a Disney legend. I looked elsewhere, and the closest thing available to an ASU statement came in a cryptic online game released online for the University's 50th anniversary. According to the website, "While many accounts make that claim, there is no evidence to back it up. Sparky was created by artist Berk Anthony. Anthony did work as an artist at Disney Studios in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but was not there when he first designed our playful imp."

Unhindered, my journey to find out if Sparky was in fact a counterpart to Walt Disney continued. I looked back in The State Press' history, in leather-bound books, covered in dust. I dredged up a piece from ancient history: Feb. 19, 1987. What I found there shook the investigation to its core.

On Oct. 10, 1981, the Tempe Daily News published an article stating that former ASU track coach Donn Kinzle

had employed more than just a Disney employee, but Walt Disney himself to design Sparky.

Throwing more fire on this proverbial flame, the writer of this 1987 piece, Carolyn Nelson, cited a 1961 State Press story that said Phoenix attorney Walter E. Craig, who had been Anthony's schoolmate, had been the one to get in contact with Anthony to illustrate what was then called Arizona State College's new mascot.

Perplexed, my gut told me I could trust the word of Dave Smith and The State Press. Especially so because Sparky actually appeared for the first time in The State Press pages all the way back on Sept. 26, 1947, in an advertisement for Bright's Style Shop.

Left maybe worse for wear after only having seen public statements from Disney and ASU's big wigs, I felt I had one boot stuck in the mud. Next, I took to finding an ASU alumnus who might have been around when Berk first sketched our famous Sun Devil in the late 1940s and hoped this branch of the vine would bear a fruit big enough to feed this curious hunger.

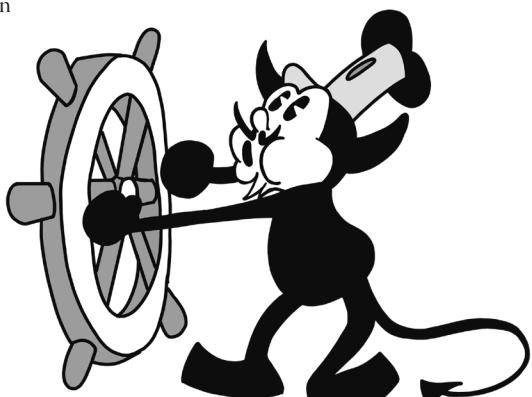
I soon came to realize that the alumni from this time period were going to be hard to reach. To have gone to college during the purported date of conception, around 1947, the youngest would be nearing 89 years old. More than that, this must have been a conspiracy played close to the vest, a secret that may not even be real.

The ASU Library Archives were the next stop in this attempt at finding some form of sojourn in the sweet embrace of truth. Oil lamp and matches at the ready, I prepared for a dive into the depths of Hayden Library. Little did I know that the archives had been scattered at the behest of "renovations" to make the library "better." There was a skunk, and I could smell it from a mile away.

I was at the end of my rope. Not a dime to my name and my deadline was fast approaching — if I didn't produce something this time, the boss would kick me to the curb. I turned to the only truth I have ever known: the internet.

To leave no stone unturned, I scoured the very crevices of the internet from backwards forums to underground message boards. What I saw there changed me, but it did not illuminate the truth. Some

form of salvation  
came in the last  
place I would  
ever expect to  
look: Wikipedia. This  
haphazard  
source turned  
out to be the  
only duck that  
would quack.



In March of 2013, the Walt Disney Company conspicuously signed on to redesign our sunburned imp — innocent enough until one begins to digest their potential motives. This couldn't have been a cash grab, as Disney owns everything except Nintendo at this point. It could have been an attempt to gain more support in Arizona, but people already watch more than enough TV since it is 120 degrees out for at least six months of the year.

The only logical motivation I could deduce was that in the old design, there was something Disney wanted to hide — something about Sparky bothered the company, and it was not his three-pronged pitchfork.

The design was quickly scrapped after its inception because fans felt it was too cartoonish, and, as they say, "ball don't lie." Though this insider scoop could barely fill a cake cone, let me add some toppings, on the house.

If things were simple, this is how I believe they would have gone down. The following will be based on a mixture of conjecture, history and a little elbow grease. Here's what I speculate really happened ...

Berkeley Anthony began working for Disney as an assistant to Ward Kimball around the time "Pinocchio" was beginning production in 1937. Anthony was a young, creative man, with intelligence to boot. More than working with Kimball on "Pinocchio," Anthony also assisted him with his work on "Fantasia." Both films were released in 1940, which was also around the time the young assistant got drafted into World War II.

WWII was a sticky affair that could jade any man, even enough

to slander a boss whom he never really talked to. There is not a much better way to be memorable than to be

“Something about Sparky bothered the company, and it was not his three-pronged pitchfork.”

— Azzam Almouai



perplexing, and every time someone makes a connection between Sparky's moustache and the dude who drew Mickey Mouse, Jesus probably gives Anthony a high-five.

During his stint with Disney, Anthony likely experienced one of three things that could have led to him creating the bedeviled parody of Mr. Disney. Possibly, Disney was just a harsh boss. Some sources report him as being unforgiving towards any employee who was even slightly unappreciative.

Another possibility is that, growing up during the Depression, Anthony wanted to poke fun at the rich and powerful to compensate for

his own humble beginnings.

The happier horn of the three is that Anthony actually liked Disney so much he wanted him to live in the burning Arizona sun forever.

Pick the ending you like best.

Though my harpoon did not land in the belly of truth, it may be better this way. The mystery lives on for another detective to stumble through, and maybe, just maybe, the technology of the future will give that young spud enough of a leg up in this cruel world to find out who Sparky really is. Maybe Sparky is all of us, and the only way to find him is to find ourselves.

Whatever the case may be, Anthony returned from war and penned a logo for ASU that has lived on for the better half of 100 years. Disney should be proud to be our Sun Devil, and I hope Anthony is up there somewhere smiling, the truth forever hidden in Sparky's impish grin.

*If you have any definitive evidence on this evolving case, please contact statepressmag@gmail.com*



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