

GENERATIONAL DIVIDE

Popular phrase creates animosity between generations

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Editor-in-Chief

For the past few months, the phrase “OK, boomer” has been used by many teens as a verbal eye roll to the older generation. Some have referred to the spread of this phrase as the “end of friendly generational relations.”

The phrase was popularized as a reaction to an online video of an older man that stated “millennials and Generation Z have the ‘Peter Pan syndrome’” and that they “think that the utopian ideas they have in their youth are somehow going to translate into adulthood.” It then rapidly spread as a phrase used to dismiss even mock attitudes or ideals stereotypically attributed to baby boomers. “OK, boomer” is often used to respond to any person who is over the age of thirty who says something condescending about young people or the issues that they find important.

Many younger people believe that older generations are stubborn, unaccepting and unchanging in ways that are harming future generations, which has helped the phrase to grow in popularity. Members of Generation Z are finding themselves progressively worried about the future—including the increasing cost of nearly everything as well as worsening environmental problems—and they see older generations as having a hand in creating or perpetuating these problems.

“The stereotype of a boomer is someone who’s slow to change and not accepting of changing cultural norms,” sophomore Caleb Crowe said. “Older generations have sort of screwed up the environment for us, but overall it’s now just used as a meme we throw around.”

Many boomers believe that this phrase is ageist

and condescending based on something that they cannot control and find themselves hurt by this new trend.

Eileen Hostetter, college and career center coordinator and boomer, was taken aback when she noticed the phrase spreading online.

“When I first saw it, I was kind of surprised because it struck me as a really overt, ageist putdown, and a really derogatory insensitive thing to say I didn’t expect from this generation,” Hostetter said. “Every generation when they’re young wants to fix the world, so I understand that; I think part of being a young person is that you have hope. By the time you’re 50 or 60, you get a little jaundiced and depressed about the situation because you see that all the best intentions of your own generation didn’t really follow through.”

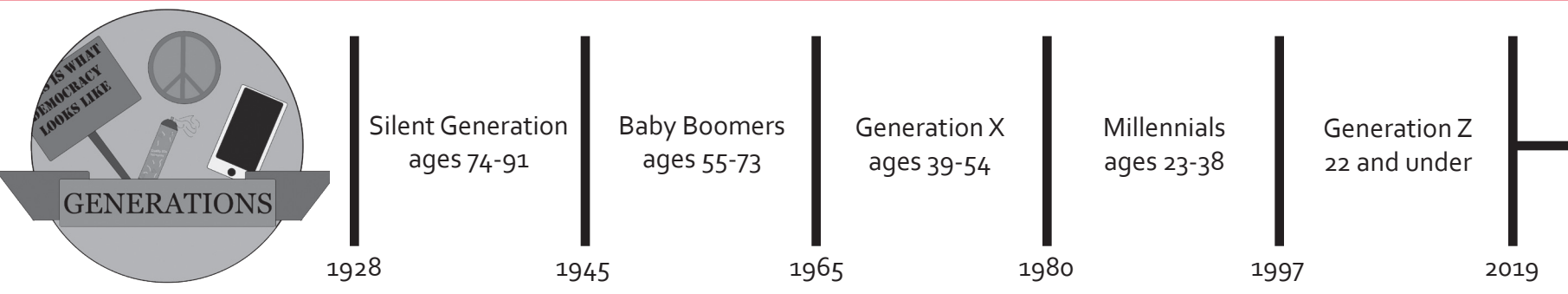
The spread of “OK, boomer,” is working to widen the gap between generations in ways that are preventing further positive action. This November, a young New Zealand lawmaker was giving a speech

“OK boomer.”

in support of a climate crisis bill. When she was interrupted by an older member of Parliament, quieted him through responding, “OK, boomer.”

This led many people of older generations to not take the lawmaker seriously and, in turn, the bill. Hostetter suggested one of the problems with the trend is that it has the potential to divide people and get in the way of progress and the collaboration necessary to addressing the world’s problems.

“There’s always been a gap between the generations, and this doesn’t help, of course,” Hostetter said. “What people don’t always realize is that we’re all the same. We’re just on a different way at a different phase in the same journey.”



Alumna shows continuous Lambkin pride

Chloe Hager

Guest Writer

At the Homecoming assembly in the middle of the day, a delicate older woman with white hair, pale skin, and powerful spirit for the school wheeled in with her daughter. As she was clearly happy to be back with the people she loves and love her too, a grin spread across her face.

Since her graduation in 1937, alumna Shirley L. Johnson has led a full life living in various places in the U.S., getting married to the love of her life and having kids with him, and attending her high school reunions no matter where she lived.

“Oh, my gosh, it really has been a barrel of fun, especially when I come back and see some of my school mates,” Johnson said.

At age 100, Johnson said she no longer sees many of her classmates at reunions due to the simple fact she has outlived them all.

“I have never missed one (a reunion),” she explained. “I’m the only one that hasn’t missed one. Yup, I’m the only one left, unless there are two up in Cheyenne. And I don’t hear from them, so I don’t think they’re alive. They used to come down every year, but they haven’t been coming down, so I don’t think they are alive. I’m the only one there is.”

During her time at FCHS, beginning in 1934, Johnson participated in a number of different extracurricular activities. Among the clubs she joined were the Sweater Girl Club, Boosters Club, and Press Club. The Sweater Girls were part of the Girls’



Alumna Shirley Johnson waves to the crowd at the Homecoming assembly as alumnus Matt Yemm claps.

Athletic Association (G.A.A.), and the Lambkin Boosters Club grew out of that group in the 1930s.

Johnson joined because she was an avid golfer, and she was enthusiastic in her school spirit. In Boosters Club then, as now, they worked to promote athletics and activities and improve the school culture. In 1937, she was joined by approximately 40 other people in the club.

The Press Club at the time had recently been reorganized by members of Spilled Ink and the Lambkin Yearbook “to promote fellowship among press members,” according to “The History of Fort Collins High School” by Robert H. Pike.

Her own senior yearbook shows her with her classmates and with her fellow club members. Unlike the Lambkin Yearbook today, students were asked to provide the title of their favorite movie instead of a senior quote. The movie Johnson, then Liggett, picked was “The Gay Deception, a romantic comedy made in 1935.

Shirley Liggett became Shirley L. Johnson when she married, and she and her husband had three children, a girl and two boys. Though she always had pride in her school, her children did not attend FCHS because the family lived in Montana and Nebraska when they were attending high school.

Now, Johnson passes her time in the nursing home painting china, playing bridge, and knitting, but a constant in her life will always be her devotion to her alma mater. At the Homecoming assembly at which she was honored, no one was cheering louder when the principal delivered the unofficial motto: “Once a Lambkin, Always a Lambkin.”