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HILLTOPICS

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Church spreads election year lies

by Robbie McDonough

Election years bring out the best in the political rhetoric of our country. Finger pointing, character attacks, and my favorite, downright lies, are what the American voter looks forward to in an election year. It is no wonder that voter turnout in the U.S. lags behind most of the western democracies. Even the institutions that are supposed to be standard bearers for morality are taking a time out from honesty and ethics for the elections.

This became painfully apparent when a few weeks ago, the Wesley Foundation received an email entitled "Mandatory Draft Legislation Please Read." The email was written by the Director of the Campus Ministry section of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry-- a major agency of the United Methodist Church (UMC). Trusting the source of this email, and shocked by its message, the Wesley Foundation forwarded the email on to the members of its listserv. Upon reading the email, I, too was shocked by what I was reading. But I was skeptical.

So, I decided to do the ridiculous and conduct a little research to find out a) if this legislation actually existed, and b) if it did exist, who was writing it and why. Come to find out that this is not a bill supported by those who currently agree with our military efforts abroad. Instead it is legislation sponsored by members of the left-- not the current administration, as the email led many to believe. Many of these individuals are aggressively anti-Bush and in opposition to American actions in Iraq. Some of these upstanding individuals even led protests on the streets of New York City during the Republican National Convention (i.e. The "Reverend" Jesse Jackson, Jr.).

So why would these Democrats write, present, and support such legislation? The answer is sad but obvious. These people are attempting to scare the American public away from supporting the current administration. They are attempting to make it appear that the president is trying to slip draft legislation under the radar. In politics today the media focus is placed primarily on the presidency; as a result, President Bush receives the glory or the blame for any government action regardless of his involvement.

But the Democrats cannot stick this legislation to the president on their own; they need others to help disseminate their propaganda to an un-expecting public. This is where groups like the media, and sadly, the UMC come into play.

When my research led me to conclude that the email I

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Outsourcing: the non-issue of the year

by Craig Zieminski

The biggest (and most meaningless) anecdote of the 2004 election is outsourcing. Admittedly, the anecdote is several hundred thousand strong, and I do feel for anyone who has lost a job overseas. However, from a macro perspective, the outsourcing of American jobs is a positive and natural economic progression. Additionally, America seems extremely hypocritical when complaining about this distorted issue.

The Kerry campaign cultivates the idea that the primary cause of unemployment is outsourcing, but data says otherwise. A statistic taken from democrats.org cites a Forrester Research study, which estimates that 3.3 million jobs will be outsourced by 2015. Unfortunately, the site fails to mention that this figure represents less than one percent of the total number of jobs that will be lost between now and 2015.

Additionally, Kerry never mentions the positive aspects of outsourcing. Fundamentally, outsourcing increases productivity. New technologies, such as advances in communications, are making it possible for resources to be reallocated to a more efficient use. Workers are one of the primary resources necessary to produce output, and outsourcing frees workers from less productive uses so that they may fulfill the labor needs of new industries. For instance, if a factory buys a machine which eliminates the need for 1,000 employees, those workers will eventually begin working at a second factory, and America will have two factories operating instead of one; thus, more output.

Of course, opponents will pounce upon the term eventually and begin telling tales of displaced employees. Unfortunately, these citizens must endure excruciating hardships during the transition phase. My mother once unexpectedly lost her job, and I do not wish upon anyone the fear and uncertainty she suffered while attempting to provide for two children and simultaneously locate employment. However, the natural ebb and flow of the labor market as industries shrink and expand, a process economists call frictional unemployment, is an inevitable consequence of a free market society. Governments cannot - nor should they - attempt to curtail frictional unemployment from productivity advances, such as outsourcing; they can only hope to mitigate the discomfort of those caught in the process.

Also, consider how this fervor makes America appear to other countries (as if perception could become any worse). Our country has lived beyond its means for decades by borrowing from other nations, and now, we have the audacity

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Health: Gaines Greer and Douglas Hill debate second-hand smoke, page 3.

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Media: Jon Stewart tackles American history, Daily Show-style, page 4.

On the web: Go to www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics to read all of the stories in this issue and more. You can also submit your thoughts to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

Complaints about campus safety on the Hilltop are mostly unfounded

The SMU Police Department helps improve campus safety, but the burden of common-sense always lies with the student.

by Brett Warner

Many students complain that the SMU campus is not safe. For those out there who were not aware, there is no such thing as a completely safe campus. The SMU campus happens to be very open and, as convenience would have it, is easily accessible from US-75 and various other major roads. Of course it's not safe, so what is SMU doing about it?

SMU as an institution has responded to these complaints. There are cameras in every parking garage and in the libraries. SMU Police cars patrol campus. University Park Police circle the area. For anyone who does not feel comfortable walking home or to a car at night, SMU PD offers an escort service. The new service Giddy-Up (the student-driven golf carts brought to campus by SMU PD) is another escort to cars and residence halls. If at any time you feel in danger, there are "Blue Angels" strategically placed around campus. All you have to do is press the emergency button, and an SMU Police officer will respond within a minute. Of course, you could always dial 9-1-1.

The SMU Police Department offers many different resources to help campus safety and prevent crime. But what are you, the student, doing about it?

Was your car broken into? Try hiding your valuables or taking them with you. Were you attacked on campus? Perhaps you shouldn't talk on your cell phone while walking

home. (You may think that talking to someone is the safe thing to do, but it only decreases awareness of your surroundings.) Was something stolen from you at the library? Maybe you should take your belongings with you whenever you leave your seat. Have you ever felt as though someone is following or watching you? Well, it sure would be hard to run if you're wearing heels and a short skirt at night when you can't see very well.

Perhaps instead of complaining, we, the students, should take a more proactive stance. How many of us have actually called an escort service? Are we really that ignorant to walk to our cars alone at night? Perhaps we, especially the females, should carry mace and a whistle just in case of assault.

Campus safety works both ways. It is not enough for us to ignore the resources available on campus and then complain about safety. We read the police reports and the campus alerts. (Those of you who don't definitely should.) We have an idea of what happens on the SMU campus. We are only as safe as we allow ourselves to be. Our parents no longer protect us with their walls. As adults, we should take responsibility for our safety. Don't be stupid or ignorant or naïve. Think twice next time before stepping into a potentially risky situation.

Brett Warner is a senior journalism major.

The 2004-2005 Gartner Honors Lecture Series Presents

Joyce King

Journalist and Author of *Hate Crime*

Wednesday, October 20

6:30 PM

Hughes-Trigg Forum

Free and open to the public

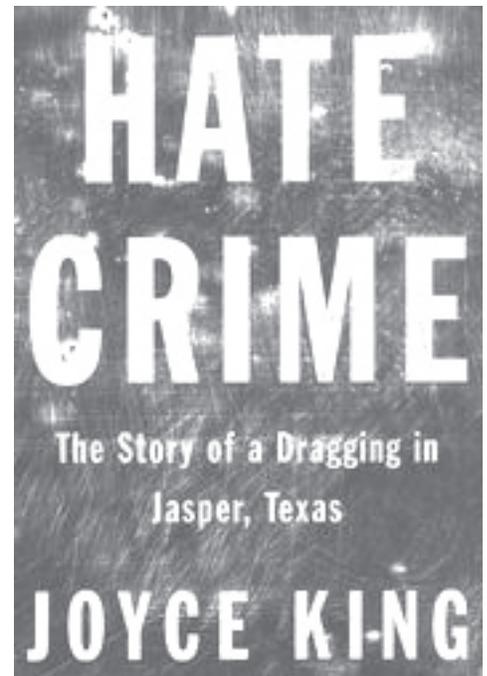
Open to all students, faculty, and staff.

"A heartbreaking story of stupid hatred and the endless ramifications of one cruel and vicious act. This book mocks fatuous notions of closure. Joyce King eloquently demands that we subsume bigotry with respect and love. Her argument is angry, righteous, and tender."

—James Ellroy, author of *My Dark Places* and *L.A. Confidential*

Can't attend the lecture? Come to "Speakerbox," a discussion with the author on Tuesday, October 19 at 5:00 PM in the First-Floor Lounge of Snider Hall.

Questions? Contact Dr. David Doyle, Honors Program Director, at 8-2813 or ddoyle@smu.edu.



Church misinforms its college ministries about important election issue

Email sent to Wesley member from United Methodist Church was politically misleading and factually inaccurate
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received was nothing more than the dissemination of lies by the administration of the UMC, I was outraged. How dare the church participate in what is obviously a direct violation of its principles and values? How dare the church lie to its congregations? Do not get me wrong: I believe the church should have the right to support or oppose the policies of our government, but they should not employ unethical tactics in order to do so.

I don't know about you, but I am sick of politicians and their dirty tricks; I am sick of scare tactics; and most of all I am sickened by the UMC's participation in the dissemination of these lies. And don't think this is only isolated to Democrats or the UMC. It's not. This is just one example out of

many that are found on both sides of the aisle in Washington and in many churches, synagogues and mosques around this country.

The email ended with a call to action, so I, too, am ending this article with a call to action. If you are an honest person, I urge you to get involved in changing this country for the better, encourage others to do the same, and most of all support and vote for candidates who are also honest. If you are not honest, and you know who you are, I ask you to do one of two things: 1) get honest and follow the instructions above or 2) sit back, shut up, and get out of the honest peoples' way.

Robbie McDonough is a senior political science major.

Smoke 'em if you've got 'em

Smokers are already forced outdoors, isn't that enough?

by Douglas Hill

"I have made it a rule," Mark Twain once said, "never to smoke more than one cigar at a time[...]. As an example to others, it has always been my practice never to smoke when asleep and never to refrain when awake."

Twain understood that the way he cared for his own health was his choice. He understood that the luxuries in which he indulged were his choice. And he understood that smoking is really, really fun. So lay off the smokers.

My deepest apologies to anyone who falls down the steps of Dallas Hall, instantly dead from second-hand cancer, but I can't help but laugh a little at the passive aggressive zeal with which non-smokers assault smokers ("Do you mind, pretty please, smoking just a tad bit farther away from me? After all, you're killing us both.").

Our smoking population has been consigned, in nearly every part of the United States (including many bars and nightclubs), to enjoy cigarettes outdoors. Okay, whatever; this seems like a reasonable compromise. My real beef is with the people who bitch about having to walk past a group of smokers standing outside of a building or people who ask their friends not to smoke in their *own* cars.

Furthermore, there are some places that simply shouldn't be non-smoking. Who wants to visit his favorite hole-in-the-wall speakeasy and see a giant, non-smoking sign above the door? And a concert just isn't a concert without cigarettes.

The health risks of tobacco are clear. Smoking causes mouth, throat, lung, and heart disease...in smokers. However, aside from the cases of family members of chain smokers, second-hand smoke is a nuisance, not a health risk. It may be an assault on your sense of smell, but I think mini-skirts with Ugg boots are an assault on my sense of sight. Should SMU girls be forced out of my sight?

It's time for all you anti-smoking crusaders to chill out; you guys won. There is no smoking in hospitals, schools, grocery stores, or shopping malls, but as winter comes, show some compassion. Let the shivering smokers peacefully enjoy their habit in the great (cold, windy, and rainy) outdoors.

Douglas Hill is a sophomore international studies and philosophy major.

The etiquette of long-term suicide

Smokers can bring on their own death, but count me out.

by Gaines Greer

If you want to invest in your own cancer and death, that's your decision, but please don't drag me down into that bear market with you. I don't want to attack smokers for their smoking, and I'm not even going to order them to cease their repugnant huffing and puffing. Granted, I don't understand it and I certainly don't like it, but I recognize that a person has the right to smoke should he or she so please. All I ask is that smokers respect the decision of myself and countless others not to smoke, and therefore suppress their inner chimney until they're away from those who seek to avoid its pollution. It seems like a fair deal to me.

If I were in a smoky club or bar, I couldn't justifiably curse the smokers because I would have willingly entered such an environment. For the record, however, I am thankful that lawmakers have seen beyond the petty whining of smokers who are embittered over recent smoking restrictions in bars, restaurants, and even outdoor events such as concerts. If the lack of one's own, personal cloud of smog seriously detracts from his or her ability to enjoy a beer or a musical performance, then such smokers are even more pathetically dependent than I had previously imagined.

Although I can be relatively tolerant of situations like those above, my irritation becomes almost unmanageable when said smokers bring that atmosphere to the Hilltop and force me to walk through a haze of exhaled formaldehyde, ammonia, and tar in order to enter a building or walk to class. Worst of all are the people who smoke on the west bridge of Hughes-Trigg and drop their ashes down upon the people eating at the tables below. The stench is already bad enough; the least these smokers could do is keep my chicken nuggets free of cancerous embers.

I scoured the entire SMU Student Code of Conduct to see if I could find some specific ammunition to use against you people, but aside from a restriction about campus housing, I found nothing I could use. The only weapon left in my arsenal, then, is simple common courtesy: won't you please employ it the next time you light up? After all, you're killing us both.

Gaines Greer is a senior English major.

Jon Stewart's *America (The Book)* teaches history with a sarcastic twist

by Jared Dovers

While you may not be able to use Jon Stewart's *America (The Book)* to study for Professor Kobylka's midterm, this book will help you laugh away the F+ that man is sure to give you. Written as a spoof of a high school textbook, *America* has Thomas Jefferson back from the dead to write the introduction (TJ: "Oh, and is it true that Halle Berry is single...? Oh how I loves the mochachina."), and also includes a nude Clarence Thomas, Supreme Court Justice trading cards, and a poster-sized diagram of "The Shadow Government." The book also is a clever satire on our democracy, our leaders, and especially the way we, as students, learn about both.

The book follows the basic path of an introductory course to Government, starting off with the history of democracy and running through the various branches and functions of government—laying the jokes on pretty thick along the way. The book opens with a general word on American democracy, and makes the case for its special invention, even when compared to the original Greek system: "Imagine a system in which anyone could wind up serving on the Supreme Court. Anyone. Think about [...] those guys you knew in college who would eat dog feces for ten dollars [...] and you'll appreciate just how f****d-up this system was."

Through the dark ages, all the way to the founding of the U.S., Stewart and company—the book was actually written by over 18 people—impress with witty jabs ("The Founding Fathers: Young, Gifted, and White") and general irreverence for history. One great example—the Federalist/Anti-Federalist debate gets boiled down to review headlines: "'Reads more like a Con-s**t-ution.' –Patrick Henry, *Inside Politics*" or "'The Constitution grabs you right from the preamble and doesn't let go until the last Article...the must-ratify document of the summer!' Alexander Hamilton, *New York Post*".

From the writing of the constitution, *America* dives into

the three branches of government. In the chapter on the presidency ("the King of Democracy") we are told about the various jobs of the president, but, Stewart is sure to point out, that the executive cannot make laws: "The president can suggest laws [...] can promise that if these congressmen pass the laws the president likes he will make them a delicious sandwich [...] can hold his breath and pound his fist and threaten to run away. But the president cannot make laws." We see the same treatment of the Congress (complete with the section on "The Making of Congress: Hot Bicameral Action), and the Supreme Court. Ever wonder what the the definition of a Strict Constructionist is? Stewart will tell you: "Interprets the constitution according to the language and original intent of the text at the time of it's writing [...]. Fortunately for [them], they have been endowed by God with the super-human gift of being able to read the minds of people who died 200 years ago. Naturally, they use this power only for good."

The best thing about *America* is that, while a satire, it constantly points to missed issues in the textbooks we all actually did have in high school. Why do we never talk about the founding fathers being all white? Or the constitution and slavery? Is the media "democracy's guardian angel" or "democracy's valiant vulgarians"? With only the wit soaked in irreverence that can come from the minds of *The Daily Show*—yes, I'm one of those audience members that Bill O'Riley would call a "stoned slacker"—this book points out the missing parts of your government education (unless, of course, you actually do have Prof. Kobylka), and makes you laugh about and think about the system that your teacher, and your presidents, told you was the greatest democracy in the history of the world.

Jared Dovers is a senior philosophy and religious studies major.



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Economics facts ignored in campaigns

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to complain because a few hundred-thousand of our jobs are going to impoverished people in economically developing nations.

Substantial shifts in the makeup of the labor market have occurred numerous times in our nation's history. According to the 1890 census, farmers constituted forty percent of the U.S. population. By 1990, that figure had dropped to less than two percent, yet crop production had increased precipitously. Does anyone still complain about the lack of employment in the farming industry?

Craig Zieminski is a senior accounting and economics major.

We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be 300-600 word articles on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@hotmail.com by Wednesday at 8:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events.