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Hilltopics Staff

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HILLTOPICS

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week of november 22, 2004

Hopes high after men's hoops tip off

by Douglas Hill

Four of SMU's five starters put up double figure point totals in Friday night's double figure win over UT-Tyler in the season opener. Not surprisingly, junior Bryan Hopkins led the team in scoring with 21 points, but a breakout game from sophomore Devon Pearson, who had seventeen points and five blocks, was the brightest part of the night.

The team didn't look perfect—Hopkins alone gave up seven turnovers, and despite a large talent gap in favor of the Ponies, the team led UT-Tyler by only six at the half—but more importantly, the game was a blast. The student section was full, the band was loud, and the crowd, though too small, was energized.

For a sports fan and a spirited Mustang, it was a refreshing sight. As our football team finishes a three-win season (and that's a big improvement over last year's goose egg) and is in jeopardy of losing division I-A status, this men's basketball season is a revitalizing prospect. For the first season in my time at SMU, one of the "big two" NCAA sports teams on the Hilltop may be able to experience the success and recognition that a school of SMU's caliber deserves.

But only if the students choose to do their part, too.

Last season started promisingly, but fell apart over Winter Break. The Mustangs beat Texas Tech at home just before students headed home, and they went on to upset Purdue in Indiana and to nearly knock off Wake Forest here in Dallas.

Then things went south. A nationally televised loss to OSU combined with dropping student support during and after winter break, and all the Cinderella momentum in the WAC moved from SMU to Nevada. The low point was a forty-point loss to Rice. It was hard to believe this was the same team that had played at the level of Wake Forest and Purdue.

It would be unfair to blame the students entirely for the loss of momentum. There were coaching problems, a few players stopped playing to their potential, and the team generally ran out of gas. But it's a lot easier to keep the motor of a team going if student support is kept strong: a difficult task over break, when there aren't that many students in town.

I hope Coach Tubbs and the team are able to do their part to keep energy and point totals high while so many students are out of town, but I also hope all the Mustang Maniacs I saw at the game Friday night do their part to keep spirit and support equally high. Our team is good, but it's better with its sixth man.

Douglas Hill is a sophomore philosophy and international studies major.

Adderall abuse runs rampant at SMU

by Craig Zieminski

To all the people in college who illegally acquire and ingest prescription medicines, such as Adderall, to boost their concentration: you suck. Congratulations on dodging another one of life's bullets with a complete lack of honor and disregard for ethical behavior.

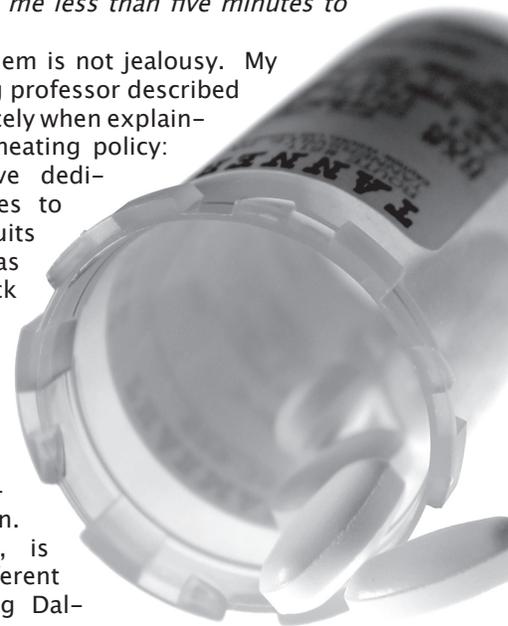
Why do I care so much about you, drug abusing slacker? After all, undergraduate classes at SMU rarely use the Bell Curve, and I'm almost positive that all the Adderall and test banks in the world won't get you a better grade than mine.

Perhaps it's jealousy. We bookworms toil away in our hovels, working diligently all semester, and we perceive these Adderall abusers as carefree party animals who enjoy non-stop leisure until the night before an exam.

However, jealousy implies that additional free time and a carefree lifestyle are valued more than the benefits of hard work. Admittedly, I normally study around 35 hours a week, and for about thirty of those hours, I wish I was doing something else. But if this desire was so intense as to make the alternative more attractive, then I would merely engage in the illegal activity myself. During a test (please don't arrest me) to see how prevalent Adderall abuse is on our campus, *it took me less than five minutes to find a hookup.*

No, the problem is not jealousy. My Cost Accounting professor described the real issue nicely when explaining her strict cheating policy: those who have dedicated themselves to academic pursuits view cheating as a personal attack on their values. You, the cheater, are defiling my exceedingly important and honorable establishment—education. Cheating, then, is really no different than desecrating Dallas Hall.

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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.

Christian principles under-represented in TV picture of homosexual lifestyle

by Tabari K. Skillman

Homosexuality is a lifestyle that is taking the world by storm and has a huge following. Almost everywhere you turn, you hear of gay rights, gay districts and gay-friendly clothing (www.urbanbody.com). There are even programs on television that cater to the lifestyle of homosexuals and their supporters. Let me take a stab at the dead horse by saying I do not like it!

America needs to get back to those so-called "Christian principles" that we were founded on. Any avid reader of the Holy Bible would know that God is totally against homosexuality and goes as far as to say that it is an abomination (Lev. 20:13).

Now, I am not writing this commentary to preach 500-600 words of abominations; I simply want to address the widespread presence of homosexuality on television. In many television shows and films, there are homoerotic themes and jokes, which, in ages past, were not even an issue. The average American family consisted of a husband and wife, two kids and a dog. Nowadays it might consist of an ex-talk show host, her wife, and four adopted children. (I have no problem with adopted children, just as long as they go home with the average American family).

Let me remind you of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, when God destroyed every homosexual in the town and saved only two people—Lot and his wife—because of their righteousness. America is going back to the days of Sodom, and we obviously feel that the same God who turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt won't do it today. Well, I'm here to serve you notice that He can and He probably will if we don't go back to the way things used to be.

Now please don't get me wrong, I am not against gay people—I love everyone, including homosexuals. I believe they

are entitled to some equal rights because they are human beings and God created us all. However, if the media can constantly shove gay marriages and lesbian fantasies down my unwilling Christian throat, surely you can bear with me for 266 more words.

An example of homosexuality on TV is the NBC hit "Will & Grace." I applaud the longevity of the show, but I don't applaud the message the show gives. Shows like "Will & Grace" and Bravo's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" try to make homosexuality just as innocent as "Sesame Street," and it sends the wrong message to our youth. These are not the values taught by our grandparents and great-grandparents, and, if it were possible, they would be turning over in their respective graves.

This is a perfect example of lost morals and mixed messages. These messages confuse children and children lose the idea of what is natural and what is not. Children are like sponges; they soak up everything they hear and retain it until it slowly leaks out. It is unfair to expose them to things like this and then expect them to grow up to be ethical and decent. How can they be ethical and decent when everything that used to be private and sacred is being prostituted with the help of TV, radio and print?

I think we need to get back to the time when television was family time and there were shows that actually meant something. Nowadays all you find on TV are shows like "Jerry Springer," "The Real World," and "Boy Meets Boy." Bring back "Family Matters" and "Life Goes On." Give our children a sitcom that they could walk away from having learned something besides "10 Ways to Please Your Mate" and "The Fabulous Life of J-Lo."

Wake me up when "The Cosby Show" comes on.

New NBC reality show sacrifices the dignity of both contestants and network

by Laura Healy

"I feel like a slab of meat," admits an embarrassed contestant on NBC's newest reality TV show, "Big Loser."

"Big Loser" shows 20 overweight contestants living in one house trying to lose the most weight. Sounds innocent enough? The contestants also compete for \$250,000.

NBC somehow finds people willing to display their overweight bodies on TV. Networks like NBC bank on trashy shows like "Big Loser" by shocking their audiences. With shows like "Big Loser," NBC runs the risk of ruining thousands of viewers' body image and self-respect. NBC threw their values and morals out the window, and this time, they went too far.

Contestants learn how to exercise and eat healthy. If NBC goes and puts on an immoral show like this, they should at least try to help these people actually lose weight, but apparently, NBC does not think a show that helps people sells. Instead, NBC gives them each a refrigerator containing their favorite unhealthy foods to tempt them to cheat.

Every show, the contestants must weigh in—on TV—wearing bathing suits. The dramatic reality TV music plays as the scale clearly displays their weight. Many of the contestants tear up as they weigh in. The team losing the most weight does not eliminate anyone from their team. The other team must send someone home; more times than not, the contestant who loses the least weight goes home.

For a half an hour, you see overweight people cry and complain about being overweight as skinny "abs-fabulous" trainers yell at them to keep running and stop eating. You watch them struggle not to eat their favorite foods, which will make them "fat and disgusting." For those insecure people who think they are already too fat, this show could push them over the edge, straight into an eating disorder.

The most outrageous part is that the show is a race to lose weight. The show pressures the contestants to lose as much weight in as little time as possible. "Big Loser" throws their contestants in an eight week program of rapid weight loss, instead of teaching them life-long weight loss skills and positive body image.

Dusty Saunders of the Rocky Mountain News says NBC's ratings dropped 8 percent this season, noting, "NBC premiered a series Tuesday night that inadvertently describes the network's current audience situation."

Regardless of whether "Big Loser" loses or wins in TV ratings, shows like this should never air because they invade what's left of people's privacy and display it in front of anyone who's willing to watch. What happened to fun TV? Are networks so money-hungry that they willingly expose people's flaws and ruin people's confidence? I guess they are.

Laura Healy is a sophomore French and history major.

Republicans change rules mid-term

by Courtney Underwood

While Republicans are still basking in the glow of their most recent victories, and they aren't wasting any time taking advantage of their increased majority. You may not remember what probably seems like years ago now, but not so long ago, three associates of Majority Leader Tom Delay were indicted by District Attorney Ronnie Earl for illegally using corporate funds to help Republicans win the 2002 elections. Now, while no one will dispute that Earl and Delay are anything but the closest of friends (they seem to hate each other), it has remained unclear whether Earl was just trying to cause trouble for Delay before the elections or if there was something unethical happening—imagine that in politics.

The "scandal" is now back in the headlines because the Republicans are changing their party rules just in case Delay is indicted as well. Back in 1993 the Republicans voted on a party rule requiring party leaders to step down temporarily if they are indicted; however, the main motivation was political rather than moral—surprise, surprise. In 1993 the Republicans were in the minority, and they passed this rule to spotlight the legal problems of prominent Democrats. But now that they have a strong majority, the rules have changed and a steering committee will judge whether it is necessary for an indicted party leader to give up post.

But, before you begin to focus on the audacity of the Republican Party, it may be important to note that the Democrats only require committee leaders to step down if they are indicted. This hasn't stopped them from screaming about the audacity of the Republican Party—yes I would be bitter as well. Let's face it, most of us aren't really sure about how the Republicans pulled off their overwhelming victory in the last election, and while it is unclear what kind of dirty politics is occurring—I think Delay and Earl are both sketchy—it seems slightly disturbing (though not surprising) that both sides of the political spectrum are acting like angry teenage boys.

However, the real kicker will only become apparent when Congress reconvenes in January. The Democrats have currently been using filibusters to block all of Bush's extremely conservative nominees, and with a 55/45 Republican majority the party still can't get the 60 votes necessary. However, there is another avenue being discussed, the "nuclear option," which only requires 51 votes. Under this rule the Senate's presiding officer, Vice President Cheney, would say that the block of judicial nominees by filibusters is unconstitutional, and while the Democrats would most adamantly oppose this, the Republicans would only need 51 votes to pass this.

Courtney Underwood is a senior psychology major.

'Like'-Ness Monster invades language

by Andrew Baker and Emily Jordan

The following is an excerpt from a conversation we overheard on the steps of Dallas Hall: Student One: "So, like, what did she say? I hope she wasn't, like, too mean to her."

Student Two: "Oh, she was totally, like, rude and, like, made the situation way awkward." To these two students and far too many of our peers, we say: "Stop the insanity!"

Is there any need for the word "like" to pervade the English language? In case you didn't know, "like" is an adjective and a verb, not a free-floating time/space-filler. Perhaps "like" has replaced "um" and is nothing more than a vocalized pause, but we would encourage you to consider trying the following experiment if you feel that you are a victim or perpetrator of "like-ness."

Here's our little test, which we learned in 4th grade when studying similes, which include "like" or "as." Try replacing "like" with "as," and if it still makes sense, then you're good to go. If not, try again. Here's a practice run. "So, like, did you have fun last night?" By applying our simple formula, we arrive at the following: "So, as, did you have fun last night?" Clearly, this is unbecoming of degree-seeking Mustangs.

Open your ears to any discussion in class, and they will begin to bleed from the bombardment of those pointy little "likes" that dart directly into your eardrum. Golly gee, gang, we don't *like* it because it hurts like hell! In fact, we are embarrassed for those who incessantly use "like" when speaking not only in front of their peers, but also in front of professors and professionals, who, hopefully, have higher expectations than for 50% of what you say to be the single word "like."

We, too, have found ourselves dropping the L-bomb far, far too often; however, we are completely committed to eradicating "like" from our vocabulary, unless it is used properly (see above). Over time, the dependence on "like" can be overcome with the support of family and friends. In fact, there's talk about making an "anti-'like'" facebook group if you're interested.

Here's a fun little exercise to pass the time during a mundane lecture: count the number of times that "like" is said incorrectly, and you're sure to hone those math skills! Be warned, however, you may soon be brought to tears. Although the invasion of "like-ness" does not discriminate based on sex, we highly encourage those from the Deep South, such as ourselves, to take pride in that fine Southern heritage and refuse to succumb to the California Valley Girl dialect, which includes interjecting "like" mid-sentence for no apparent reason. Good luck, y'all.

Andrew Baker is a senior English and political science major.

Emily Jordan is a senior political science major.

Do you have an opinion about... politics, music, class, television, football, shopping, intramurals, fraternities, movies, tests, the Mavs, sex, restaurants, religion, sororities, driving, study abroad, Umphrey Lee, fashion, news, the war, parking, technology, magazines, bars, baseball, the weather, professors, the Mustang Band, dating, books, nightclubs, Texas, the Daily Campus, pets, club sports, or anything else **?**

we're listening at hilltopics@hotmail.com

Adderall not solution to poor studying continued from page 1

Yes, abusing Adderall is cheating (five points to those who noticed and questioned this unsubstantiated connection in the above paragraph). My claim is somewhat bold, since Adderall is not a miracle drug that bestows the reasoning ability of Einstein upon its users. Popping a pill five minutes before an exam will not provide a thorough understanding of the Balkan Wars, though it may get you wired and suppress your appetite. I'm not quite naïve enough to make arguments along those lines, but I will claim that it acts like an academic steroid, giving an unfair concentration boost to students without a legitimate need for assistance.

Is the notion of an "even playing field" just an idealistic myth? If I claim that Adderall's benefits are "unfair", then it is arguable that God-given intelligence, upper-class private education, and old-fashioned caffeine also provide "unfair" advantages. Perhaps I am naïve after all.

Screw that. Adderall is meant for people who have a chemical imbalance in their brains and therefore lack the physiological ability to study. If you use Adderall to compensate for a simple lack of will power, then you are a cheater.

Decent editorials outline a possible solution after ranting about the problem. As always, there is no easy answer. Naturally, my inclination is to demand that using Adderall without a prescription becomes a violation of the Honor Code. However, since possession of controlled substances is already a felony, the threat of expulsion will do little to deter use, though official recognition of this problem by the University would be welcome. If the issue was of true concern to the administration or local authorities, then undercover operations could easily be implemented to catch transgressors. Mr. John Sanger, Director of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, believes that illegal Adderall use is widespread at SMU and should be addressed, though no specific research has been conducted. I ask the Honor Council to consider this issue, and I offer my assistance in your endeavors.

To all the people in college who will study for finals without committing a felony: I salute you with honor and respect. Best wishes.

Craig Zieminski is a senior economics and accounting major.

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Hilltopics reader feedback: abortion

by Anonymous

I happened to be visiting the campus during the week of November 15, and while passing through the Hughes-Trigg Student Center was handed a copy of *Hilltopics*. Since I was on my way to a meeting, I didn't have an opportunity to read the various opinions until I was waiting to catch my flight home at DFW. Reading "point/counterpoint: abortion" moved me to write to you with this personal perspective.

First of all let me say up front that it is not my intent to change any opinions as it relates to the pro-life or pro-choice positions. That is a deeply personal, intimate and life changing decision. What I have to say is from an old alum that has "been there, done that" and how my life was impacted every day thereafter. By the way, I happen to be a male.

One year shy of my graduating from Southern Methodist University, my girlfriend (who five years later became my wife) told me she was "late". There had been another scare some months before, but unlike the earlier episode, she was certain it was for real this time. Obviously, I hadn't learned from the earlier near miss, as we continued to have unprotected sex. I totally blame myself for that act of stupidity.

She was right, and from the moment we knew for certain, we began weighing all our options (note that I said "our" options). For reasons that were important at the time, we opted to terminate the pregnancy, and although I personally was uncomfortable with it, I supported the choice.

What neither of us expected by taking that course of action is how so many years later, thirty to be exact, terminating that pregnancy still haunts both of us. There is seldom a day that something doesn't remind us of what we did those many years ago. Call it what you like, but to put it bluntly, one life was denied so that our lives were not inconvenienced.

The memory has never gone away.

So is there a message to pass along? For starters use good judgment if you are going to have sex and understand that there are serious consequences when you make that choice. It's just as important (more so) for the guys to use the right "head" when making the decision to have sex and do the right thing for your partner and always use a condom. If you do all the right things and still get in this difficult situation, no matter how much you may be afraid to talk to your parents, please do. If they are any kind of parent, and I'm sure that they are, after their initial disappointment they will be the best friends you ever had. The more important message I want to leave you with is to understand that making the decision to terminate a pregnancy doesn't mean you forget and move on once the procedure is finished. No matter how you come to that decision, nearly every day thereafter, you live with something that can't be undone...ever.

I can't say for sure, but we might have made a different choice thirty years ago if we had known how much this changed our lives from that day on.

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 articles of up to 300-600 words 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.