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No matter how uncomfortable or awkward, safe sex education is a vital part of growing up

by Kasi DeLaPorte

We all remember the awkwardness that was sex education. Mine would have been taught by my ninth-grade biology teacher who was nearing retirement and smelled of formaldehyde. She, however, broke her hip and was replaced by the even older, toupee-wearing substitute who passionately lectured us on the dangers of syphilis.

What makes sex ed even worse at my high school is the abstinence-only policy, which means when a guest speaker tells students that condoms do nothing to stop the spread of AIDS and STDs, no one in the administration can correct the obvious falsehood. The abstinence-only camp generally thinks educating teens about safe sex will only promote sex, so the best idea is just to tell them not to have sex at all. This view is dangerously naïve. Eventually, these adolescents are going to do it, so it is imperative that they are equipped with information (not misinformation) that will minimize any negative consequences of their actions.

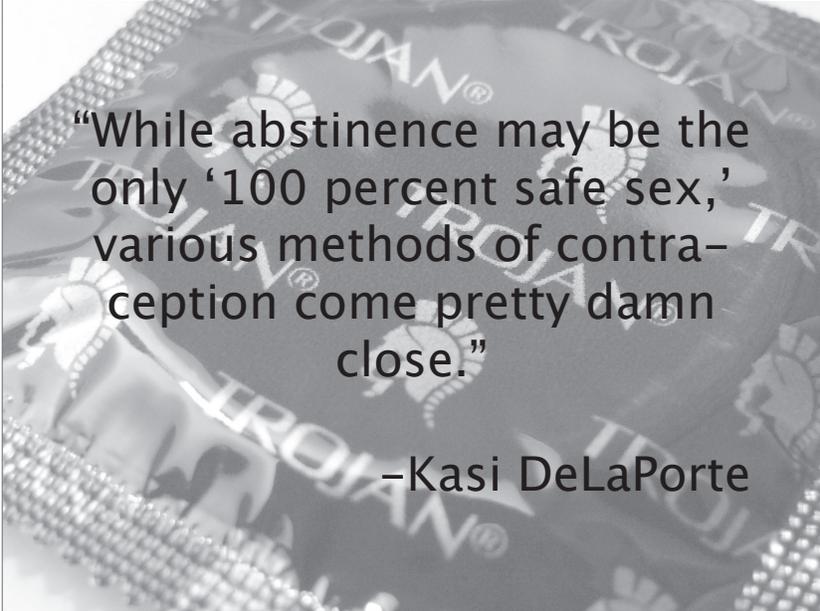
Most of the anti-safe sex ed groups are backed by the religious right - you know, the same people who think Sponge Bob's alleged homosexuality is harming children - to whom I feel I can personally comment. Some of my closest friends and I were raised Southern Baptist in the Bible Belt, and though our beliefs have since broadened from the narrow doctrine, there was a time when we were pretty hard-core. At

church camp one year we actually signed a "True Love Waits" Wall, pledging abstinence until marriage. I won't give you the actual percentage who are still true to that vow after seven years of relationships and random hook-ups, but it only takes common sense to deduce how much a Sharpie signature on a cinder block in central Oklahoma weighs in the decision-making process.

Please know that I am in no way disrespecting the decision to abstain. Waiting until one is completely ready and in the right form of a relationship for him or her is absolutely the commendable choice. While abstinence may be the only "100 percent safe sex," various methods of contraception come pretty damn close. Not offering America's youth comprehensive sex education is not education at all.

I have wondered how, as a future parent, I will react to my son or daughter's decision to start having sex. Will I choose to ignore the possibility, demand that they just say no? Or will I choose to have the uncomfortable conversation that leads to a pack of condoms or a birth control prescription? Unless I'm prepared to sacrifice blissful ignorance for early grandchildren or communicable diseases, I hope it's the latter. And my kids' schools had better do the same.

Kasi DeLaPorte is a senior advertising and journalism major.



"While abstinence may be the only '100 percent safe sex,' various methods of contraception come pretty damn close."

-Kasi DeLaPorte

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Be Heard: Got an opinion? *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions and interesting feedback. Email your thoughts to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

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 7:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

Dr. Google: Where are our docs getting their info?

by Sterling Morris

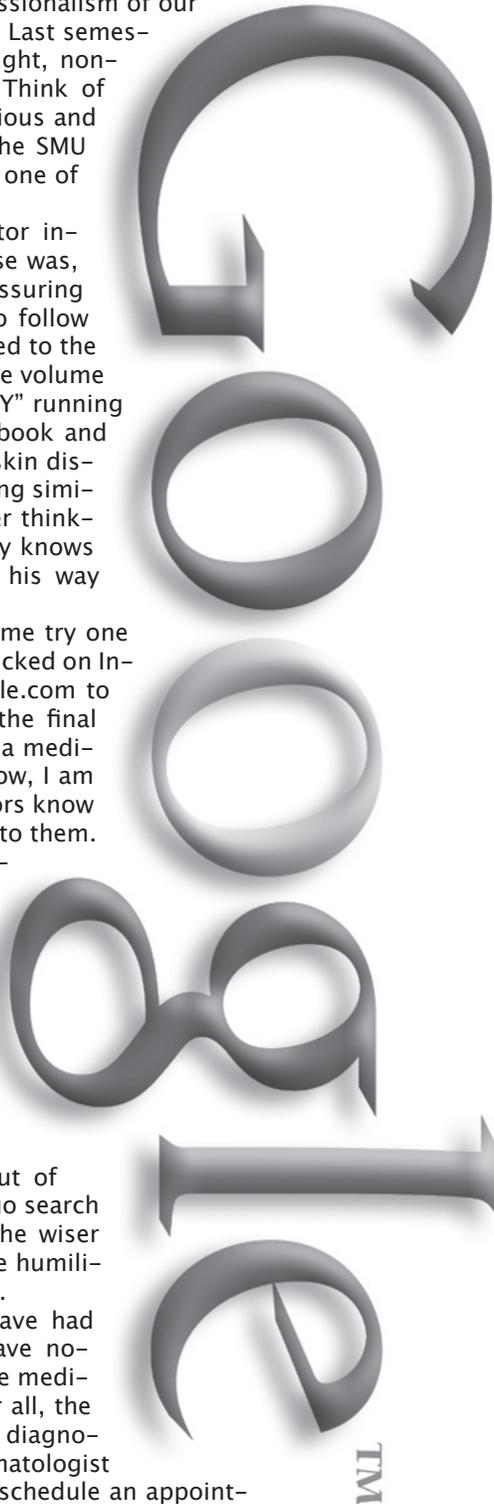
I am here to shed light on the professionalism of our on-campus medical facility's practices. Last semester, I noticed a small assortment of light, non-raised spots on my neck and chest. Think of them as "anti-freckles" if you will. Curious and searching for answers, I signed into the SMU Health Center for an appointment with one of their on-staff doctors.

In the examination room, the doctor inspected the spots and his first response was, "Hrm...I don't know what that is." Reassuring words, I promise you. He asked me to follow him back into his office, where he turned to the bookshelf behind him and pulled a large volume with the capital letters, "DERMATOLOGY" running down the spine. He then opened the book and scanned through its many pictures of skin diseases, obviously searching for something similar to my malady. I distinctly remember thinking to myself, "Oh great, this guy really knows his stuff" as he hemmed and hawed his way through the book.

Unsuccessful, our doctor said, "Let me try one more thing," turned to his computer, clicked on Internet Explorer, and brought up Google.com to continue his quest. To me, this was the final straw. I was actually being googled by a medical doctor right in front of my eyes. Now, I am not asking that the Health Center doctors know the diagnosis for every case presented to them. And I understand that general practitioners do not commonly know special dermatology cases. What I do ask for is that a doctor show a bit of professionalism when dealing with patients. When he turned to google me, I thought that maybe I was on Punk'd or something, because it was that awkward. He could have at least waited until I was out of the room to show his lack of expertise. Heck, he could have even stepped out of the room to "consult a colleague" and go search elsewhere. I would have never been the wiser and would not have been subject to the humiliation that is being googled by a doctor.

I do not know if other students have had similar experiences to mine, but I have noticed a general lack of confidence in the medical professionals on our campus. After all, the conclusion to my doctor's visit was no diagnosis and an offer to refer me to a dermatologist with whom it would take six weeks to schedule an appointment. I suppose when it comes down to it, the question is not whether the university's doctors are unfit for practice at our fine institution, but whether or not our friend the doctor would have found a diagnosis for my skin disease had he used Yahoo or MSN to search instead.

Sterling Morris is a junior art history major.



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politics, music, class, television, football, underage drinking, shopping, intramurals, Java City, school spirit, fraternities, movies, study groups, tests, the Mavs, night classes, sex, the CMIT, restaurants, ping pong, religion, sororities, the Park Cities, driving, study abroad, Umphrey Lee, fashion, news, the war, parking, the Boulevard, technology, Boaz Hall, your iPod, George W. Bush, history, adderall, magazines, bars, *Hilltopics*, baseball, the weather, professors, all-nighters, the Mustang Band, dating, books, nightclubs, community showers, SMU PD, Texas, Peruna, economics, the *Daily Campus*, pets, club sports, Fondren Library, or anything else ?

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Supreme decision: Roberts' confirmation goes from formality to high-stakes battle for Bush

by Michael Hogenmiller

Two weeks ago, an article ran here that claimed the John Roberts' nomination would be a political formality, an event where both parties would proselytize with constitutional interpretations in hand and maybe even shoot a few questions Roberts' way. Since then, in the wake of a hurricane and the death of a chief justice, the landscape of the Roberts' nomination has changed.

At first glance, President Bush's appointment of Roberts to the chief justice seat seems unusual. Why would the President bypass conservative justices who were already seated on the Court? Both Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas have very conservative and restraintist methodologies that the Bush administration would like to see elevated into the chief justiceship. Roberts worked under both Reagan and Bush Sr. on key legal issues, but his record is vague in places, and there's no judicial guarantee he'll follow through with Bush's agenda once confirmed. Scalia and Thomas would be governed under precedent. Roberts will soon make it. Why take the risk?

The Bush administration, buried in both international and domestic crises, saved itself an entire nomination and confirmation by appointing Roberts to the chief justice seat. If Bush had promoted a sitting justice to head the Court, then the Senate would have three confirmations on its hands: the newly promoted chief justice, John Roberts, and whoever was nominated to replace the promoted justice. By sending Rob-

erts directly to the top of the Court, the administration will only have to manage two rounds of confirmation hearings.

Further, radical Scalia opinions and the sex scandal that plagued Thomas during his first confirmation would embolden Senate Democrats to dig in and battle it out. Roberts' mediocrity and an overall lack of opposition from Democratic Senators will give the Bush administration cover while sorting out the political fallout of Katrina. It'll also give the administration an idea of what it's dealing with in the Senate judiciary committee as it heads into a second round of nominations. This could open the way for a second, more polarized nomination, a candidate more outspoken on issues that resonate with the president.

In a sense, Roberts' specific nomination hasn't changed much. It's still a political formality, barring a scandal, but the stakes and the game surrounding Roberts are completely different. Roberts is no longer the replacement for an O'Connor swing vote. Instead, he will have to anchor down a long-standing conservative chief justice seat while Bush searches for someone tastily right of center to replace O'Connor. If Roberts blinks on key conservative issues once on the Court, it won't matter how conservative O'Connor's replacement will be.

Michael Hogenmiller is a senior political science and music major

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Do something.

Hilltopics supports SMU's efforts to bring relief to the victims of hurricane Katrina. This is a sad time for everyone, but SMU's response to this disaster should make us all proud to be Mustangs.

Bra Wars: Dispute unfastens textile trading

by Courtney Hebb

Staying abreast on international affairs, a deal was recently reached between China and the European Union regarding the European-imposed sanctions on Chinese textiles.

China, which attempted to pad its textile quota, sent almost 80 million goods to Europe, including bras, trousers and t-shirts, all of which have been blocked at European ports for the past week. Often referred to as the "Bra Wars," this incident is reflective of the summer textile disputes between China and Europe. After the global textile trade quotas were lifted at the beginning of the year, European manufacturers complained for fear of survival at the influx of Chinese textile imports. This led to the creation of the European sanctions in June. However, for some, these regulations were a bust, for prior orders between European retailers and Chinese manufacturers exceeded the quota for the year, broadening the cleavage of the dispute.

Now the hostage garments have been released, after an intense 24-hour long negotiation between the EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson and Bo Xilai yesterday in Beijing. The deal involves no more exports of pullovers, trousers and bras this year and the counting of half of the blocked items towards next year's quota. The UK's Prime Minister and current EU President Tony Blair is confident that the 25 other member states will support this compromise as they vote on the issue in the upcoming days. For now it appears as though this could be a bustier for the international textile agreements and a common thread for trade between China and Europe.

Courtney Hebb is a senior marketing and political science major.

The uni-name: From Bennifer to Tomkat, the merging of celebrity names has got to be stopped

by Courtney Hebb

The only thing worse in Hollywood than the uni-brow is the uni-name. Yes, you know the one, the commingling of two names to create a single taxonomy for this media's beast. Whether this monster is a result of an economic effort for publishers to save ink by reducing word count or gossip reporters attempting to display the wittiness of their limitless vocabulary by creating new words, the result is an onslaught of annoying headlines boasting the hybrid name.

So what is the origin of this species? In recent history, it all seems to spawn from the notorious "Bennifer," the marquee of the headlines several years back when there was no place to hide from Affleck/Lopez's demonstrative displays of affection. Now, despite the fact that the original "Bennifer" is extinct, the uni-name is still breeding with recent appearances of "TomKat" (Cruise and Holmes) and "Brangelina" (Pitt and Jolie).

So what are the social implications of being defined by one singular name? Surely, one involves the loss of identity, existing as only half of the whole without the merit of having a freestanding individuality or name. It brinks on the sad phenomenon that one's entire self worth and subsistence is dependent on another half - like someone saying, "Oh, you are so-and-so's girlfriend?" In other words, "You are nothing without your better half."

However, maybe my cynicism should ebb to the possibility that a cosmic force could be dictating the success of the relationship by the ability to fuse the two names together. Look at some of the famous great couples that have endured. There are Barbie and Ken, who conveniently merge into "Barken," and the yellow delicious "Homarge" Simpson. It is easy to get swept away with Scarlet and Rhett

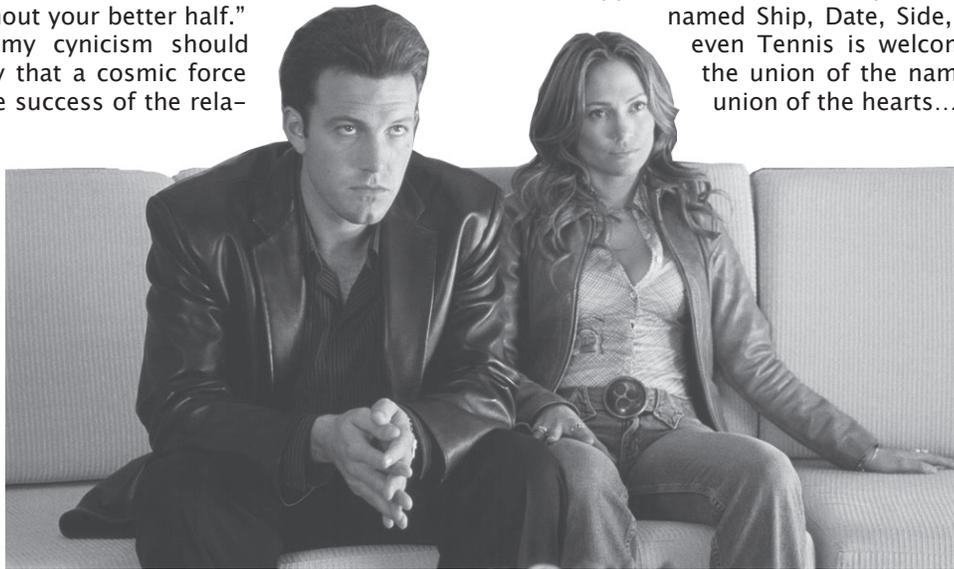
or "Scarhett" in *Gone with the Wind*, or party it up on Sesame Street with "Bernie" (Bert and Ernie). Focusing on animal passion, we have the famous mice, Mickey and Minnie, making "Minnickey," and you can always get "Kermiggy" with Kermit and Miss Piggy.

This leads me to ponder if this annoying invention of the tabloids isn't actually the key to a successful relationship. Many of the aforementioned couples have lasted longer than the curdling milk in my fridge. For all intensive purposes, I am going to ignore the fact that they are fictional and continue with this theory that may revolutionize the dating world. Refocusing on Hollywood, let's look at the infamous "Bennifer." Sure, Affleck and JLo fizzled out, but she was replaced by the true "nifer" (Garner) for his Ben. And who knows, maybe "Brangelina" will actually reach the successful point of devotion by wearing vials of each other's blood in true Jolie fashion. After all, Pitt and Aniston were never christened with their own hybrid name.

Therefore, based on these observations, I have decided to take a new approach to finding potential mates. From this point forward, I will agree to dates only with those whose names can easily be fused with mine, in effect ensuring eternal happiness. To successfully match my Court, anyone

named Ship, Date, Side, Jester, Supreme or even Tennis is welcome to discover that the union of the names may lead to the union of the hearts...or maybe not.

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