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## Hilltopics: Volume 2, Issue 9

Hilltopics Staff

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# HILLTOPICS

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## Debate over abolition of SMU Student Senate special interest seats rages (again) on Hilltop

by Amanda Wall

It's that time of year again! The movement that will (eventually) rock the world—the push to abolish the Student Senate's Special Interest seats—is back with a very real vengeance. Understandably bitter that the student body voted down their truly original and uncompromising plan, the opponents of special interest seats are out to bring down those antiquated beacons of inequality once and for all.

I would like to announce that I, Amanda Wall, have been impressed and gratified by their arguments, and I am joining the movement to abolish special interest seats. What convinced me, you ask? One of my reasons is that this faction has people just like me. Coming from a small, rural Texas school, I never had to deal much with people who didn't look like me. Those were the days—swinging on the front porch, playing Dixie on the guitar, greeting my White neighbors, talking with my White family, petting my White cat, reading my Bible with the White cover: "God said, 'Let there be White.'" And it was good."

But there comes a time when one must leave the White life, and I came to SMU. It was different, to say the least. Left and right were people *not* White. Blacks, browns, tans, yellows and even *Democrats* just a-walkin' around everywhere. It was enough to make Dr. Seuss sit up and take notice. It made me a bit uncomfortable, and I am sure many more white students feel the same White way. In his opinion piece in last Wednesday's *Daily Campus*, Mr. Reed Hanson of the Young Conservatives of Texas calls our attention to the deplorable lack of a first-year orientation designed specifically for people of our race. "The Department of Minority Students Affairs holds a Minority Orientation. Do Whites have anything comparable? No." I applaud Mr. Hanson for his keen observational powers. He is absolutely right—there is no White Orientation to equip Whites with the tools needed

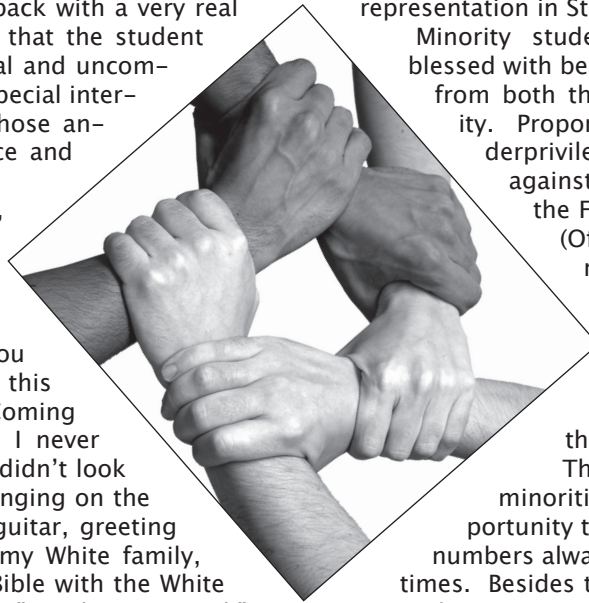
to survive and succeed in a world with so much colorful competition, especially when those other colors are favored in representation in Student Senate.

Minority students, just because they were not blessed with beauty of White skin, get representation from both their school(s) and from their ethnicity. Proponents say that minorities are so underprivileged and degraded and discriminated against. I sympathize, I really do. As Kermit the Frog says, "It's not easy being green." (Of course, Kermit is not quite comparable to minority people; Kermit is more discriminated against for being a puppet.) But that does not excuse the blatant inequality of giving minorities an extra chance at the distribution of *my* money through the Senate.

They say that Whites greatly outnumber minorities at SMU and have far greater opportunity to do just about everything. I say that numbers always lie; I bet they rounded up a couple times. Besides that, the YCT and other opponents of special interest seats only have the best interests of minorities in mind. How typical that the steadfast White people of the YCT have to fight for the full equality of minorities when minorities won't fight for it themselves.

I realize that there are quite a lot of misguided people actually in favor of the seats that will end up voting down our freedom-loving idea. But if we must give in to these ridiculous defenders of inequality, if they must have the seats, I propose that, in the interests of true equality, we take a page out of our forefathers' book: let the votes of the special interest senators count three-fifths of a whole vote in order to outweigh the extra representation so arbitrarily bestowed on them. That, my friends, is the American way.

*Amanda Wall is a sophomore English and Spanish major.*



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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](mailto: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](mailto: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. 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.

## Time's up: Why we've waited long enough for results from Phil Bennett. It's time for a new coach.

by Douglas Hill

If I could change one thing about SMU, it wouldn't be the heat. It wouldn't be the stereotypes. It wouldn't be the rule that freshmen (oops, first-years) have to live in dorms (oops, residence halls). It wouldn't even be parking. If I could change one thing about SMU, I'd give us a top tier—or at least mediocre—football team.

It probably wouldn't make my life any better 20 years from now, and it probably wouldn't help us in the *Princeton Review*, but every Saturday I watch Southern Cal and UT football and think about how freaking cool it would be to watch ESPN and hear my school's name. Unfortunately, I can't do anything about achieving that goal. But Phil Bennett can. In fact, he was hired to do precisely that.

But in the nearly four years since his arrival on the Hilltop, little progress has been made. I'm an upperclassman, and I can count on one hand the number of wins Phil Bennett's teams have accumulated since I came to SMU. A losing season is a sign of a bad team, and that might be the players' responsibility, but the spectacularly awful performance over the past four years is a sign of a bad program, and that's definitely the coaching staff's fault.

Despite being named "Top Recruiter" on various occasions, we've seen little from Bennett's great classes. It's not that the label is inaccurate; it's that he just doesn't know what to do with good recruits when he gets them.

Take Chris Phillips for example. This sophomore quarterback led Bishop Lynch to a State Championship and is one of the many examples of Bennett's recruiting prowess. He was highly sought-after in Texas and elsewhere, but since arriving at SMU, he's thrown more interceptions than touchdowns and suffered a passer rating of 47.0. Phillips didn't

lose his talent—despite a rotator cuff injury last year, he's still a strong passer and an outstanding rusher—but he's not been groomed into the star he was supposed to be. While there's no guarantee he won't develop as his career progresses, I'll bet he'll never be the player Mack Brown or Pete Carroll could have made him.

But I'm not asking for a national championship. I'm not even asking for a C-USA championship. I'm asking for a .500 record, please? Or maybe a bowl game before I graduate? The chances of either of these are slim.

I'm loyal to the bone to SMU football, but this season has finally made me give up hope. It's easy to blame our problems on the death penalty, but the players on our team when we got the axe are now almost 40 years old. When Forrest Gregg didn't produce results immediately after the death penalty, it was understandable. So what's Phil Bennett's excuse? We've won two games this year, and I think we'll probably beat Rice, but no one else. Another three-win season.

Before the Marshall game Bennett said, "This is a tough job...I just haven't got it on track yet." Does anyone, including athletic director Jim Copeland, think Bennett is going to get it on track this year? Or next? Copeland dismissed Mike Cavan as coach after he averaged 4.5 wins a year over the course of four years. Bennett hasn't even proven he can match that number, and I don't see things getting better anytime soon.

Copeland hasn't proven he can hire great—or even good—coaches (Cavan, Bennett, and basketball flop Mike Dement), so maybe he's the one I should be upset with. But all that means is that Bennett shouldn't have been hired at all.

*Douglas Hill is a junior international studies major.*

## Ooops: The Bush team may be realizing it has made a political misstep in Miers' nomination

by Michael Hogenmiller

When President Bush nominated John Roberts to the Supreme Court, the White House avoided an extra confirmation battle, and it set the stage for a second nomination that would welcome an outspoken candidate, a candidate with strong positions that strongly resonated with the president.

The political formality of John Robert's confirmation allowed the White House to gain valuable insight into the Democratic senators on the Judiciary Committee, insight that would lend to a strategic and more daring second nominee. Also, Roberts' impeccable credentials left Senate Democrats with little to criticize, and this took ideology largely out of the picture. An attack on Roberts purely on ideological dimensions would have alienated the public and cast Senate Democrats as intolerant and overly political.

Once ideology was taken off the table, and with their preview of the Democratic senators on the committee, the White House was positioned to nominate a more vocal conservative candidate provided that candidate had a strong judicial background. The administration had better insight into which Democratic senators would be targeting the nominee, and it could tie the second nominee to Roberts by emphasizing both judges' strong legal backgrounds and professional respect within the legal community. This parallel in legal aptitude and de-emphasis on ideology would insulate a second nominee's more vocal conservative positions.

This strategy depended on two key factors: knowing where

the opposition on the judiciary committee would originate and preparing for it, and nominating a candidate that was as legally impressive and respected as Roberts. Harriett Miers is not the legal scholar that Roberts proved to be, and that is why Bush's conservative base may fight the nomination.

Miers' nomination is a strategic misstep for the administration and has revealed possible cleavage in a portion of the Republican party that previously has been viewed as rock solid. Knowing what to expect from the opposition doesn't matter if the White House can't rally conservative senators behind Miers. It will only take a few key republican senators on the judiciary committee to oppose the nominee before it won't matter what committee Democrats have to say.

In fact, they won't say anything because they won't have to. Roberts' credentials were appropriately impressive, but Miers' was quickly recognized as under qualified and unprepared, characteristics that will be easily criticized by Democrats later, after the committee convenes, when the Senate floor opens for debate. After having her ideology scrutinized by Republicans who are nervous about her lack of paper trail, Democrats will question her lack of judicial experience and there will be little left to this confirmation except an empty promise to trust a President who chose a personal friend over his electoral base.

*Michael Hogenmiller is a senior political science and music major.*

## Think pink and feel your boobies: College students not too young to be breast cancer-aware

by Kasi DeLaPorte

"While most women agree that their breasts are only part of what defines them as a woman, they are still deeply affected by the loss of a breast."\*

As Breast Cancer Awareness Month draws to a close, I wonder how many of my sister students share my concern about the disease. Though young adults often fall victim to "It Won't Happen to Me" syndrome, *all* women are at risk for getting breast cancer, and most who do get it have no known risk factors outside their gender, nor have a family history of the disease.

Basically, it could happen to me. Or you. Or our mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends.

Women have a one in seven chance of getting breast cancer some time during their lives. Immediately, this makes me think of the six close friends I've had since eighth grade and myself. Could it happen to one of us? A family history increases the risk of getting the disease. My mom is adopted and has not had access to her medical background. Could it happen to her?

To me, one of the most intimidating aspects of this disease is that it attacks the core of womanhood. "A woman's breasts symbolize so many positive things - motherhood, sexuality, being a woman." They are part of us, from that first training bra until they sag down to our waistbands, and we spend too much time and energy wishing they were bigger/smaller/more perky/less lopsided/more attention-getting/less look-at-my-eyes-when-you're-talking-to-me. Despite the grief they sometimes cause, it would be a challenge to feel like a confident, sexy woman without them.

So what can we confident, sexy women do to help prevent breast cancer from spreading into our lives? (I will take time here to point out that, while I am focusing this article on women, breast cancer affects men as well. Though instanc-

es are more rare in men, they are often more fatal because of late detection. And, any man who has women in his life also has a one in seven chance of encountering the disease.)

• **Lead a healthy, active lifestyle:** Risk factors include having more than one alcoholic beverage a day and smoking, so we should strive to minimize these activities. Also, research suggests we should exercise regularly and improve our nutrition - eat five servings of fruits and vegetables, at least 1000 mg of calcium a day, more whole grains, and fewer high-fat foods and processed sweets.

• **Support the cause:** Race for the Cure or Relay for Life, buy myriad pink products with proceeds supporting breast cancer research, or simply write a check. Every bit helps.

• **Feel your boobies:** Our breast exams should not consist of getting felt up by our gyno once a year. We need to do it ourselves as well. The SMU Health Center has instructional charts that can be hung in the shower as a daily reminder. (A t-shirt bearing this slogan was featured in an Oct. 14 article in *Quick*, worn by a woman who found a pebble-sized lump in her breast when she was only 26.)

This article is not meant to spread fear about breast cancer, but awareness. When breast cancer is detected and treated early, the five-year survival rate is close to 100 percent, and new drugs are proving very effective against early forms of the disease. If we educate ourselves and others, we reduce the risk of breast cancer continuing in the future.

*Kasi DeLaPorte is a senior advertising and journalism major. \*Web sites referenced: Susan G. Komen Foundation (www.komen.org), Imaginis (www.imaginis.com), Quick, "How breast cancer affects sex life," "Shirt with a message" (www.quickdfw.com), Dallas Morning News, "Drug proves effective against breast cancer" (www.dallasnews.com), www.feelyourboobies.com*

## Despite long hours and hard classes, surviving a pre-med track is possible...for some students.

by Yasmin Awad

Medical school. It's every parent's dream and most college students' nightmare. Since SMU is known to be a liberal arts school, the science departments often get ignored. However, I've found the smartest, most dedicated students and faculty tackling the complicated world of science.

After a year and a half of pre-med courses and a lifetime with my dad, a radiologist, I've learned a few things about preparing for medical school (I'm still working on actually getting in). Here are some general warnings - err, tips - to keep in mind when doing pre-med at SMU:

o You need to be a 110% sure you want to go to medical school.

o In your pre-med classes, look to the person to your right and left. Only one of you will be there by the end of the semester. Two thirds of pre-med students drop a class each semester, and it's said that about 80% of students eventually drop their science majors.

o Most passing pre-med students have to commit social suicide. Many successful students reassure themselves that they will work hard now and party with nurses later.

o You might need to move into Fondren Library.

o Practice tests, office hours, and help sessions will be-

come your best friends.

o Medical school is complicated, but knowing how to get in is even harder. Counselors and professors have a plethora of information - just be careful who you listen to.

o Competition is fierce. Try to befriend outside of the pre-med department.

o To pass, you need to study, study, and study a little more. And you still might not do such a hot job.

o Sleep is no longer a necessity. It becomes a privilege.

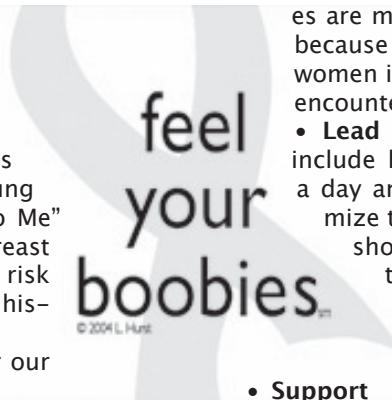
o Loving "Grey's Anatomy" and "ER" is not enough of a reason to go into the field.

o After a few classes, you'll never look at the human body the same way again.

o Keep in mind: A mediocre medical school accepts less than 1% of its applicants.

So why would anyone put themselves through so much misery? Because after all the hard work and disappointments, saving lives and getting a decent pay at the same time is worth it.

*Yasmin Awad is a sophomore journalism major doing pre-med.*



## Not the same: Comedy Central's *Daily Show* spin-off, *The Colbert Report*, fails to satisfy

by James Longhofer

When Jon Stewart went on the show *Crossfire* last year and berated hosts Tucker Carlson and Paul Begala, it was clear that Stewart saw *The Daily Show* as something more than a TV show: it was a movement against the failures of America's media. The new spin-off of *The Daily Show* is merely the next step in this protest.

While Stewart's show took on the nightly newscast by parrotting its format, *The Colbert Report* (both pronounced with the "t" silent) takes on cable TV news personalities. Men like Bill O'Reilly, Chris Matthews, and Sean Hannity are tempting targets, thanks to their confrontational styles and bloated onscreen egos. On *The Daily Show*, Colbert was the primary correspondent, where his self-absorbed character bounced off Stewart's straight-man anchor. Colbert's ability to stay in character, regardless of whatever craziness the script required him to say, made him one of the best parts of the show. However, *The Colbert Report* doesn't seem to work just yet.

The problem isn't with Colbert's performance. He has managed to ape O'Reilly perfectly, even down to the body language. Colbert's character is pompous and loud. He even cites O'Reilly as his inspiration, or "papa bear." In the first episode of the show, Colbert showed his proficiency with a technique that has been a staple of O'Reilly and Hannity: framing the debate as elites (bad) against normal Americans (good, and which somehow includes multimillionaires like O'Reilly). He perfectly parodies these men's phony populism with quotes like "On this show, your voice will be heard...in the

form of my voice." The satire continues with segments like "The Word," where fake pieces of advice appear on screen while Colbert rhapsodizes about a specific subject for the day. Colbert takes all the flaws of the news personality and blows them up to gigantic proportions. While the news is the joke on *The Daily Show*, Colbert is meant to be the joke on *The Colbert Report*.

Yet, in spite of Colbert's talents, something's not quite right. Part of it has to do with the interview segment. This segment has been a weakness for Stewart on *The Daily Show* as well. Stewart's sin is that he does not stand out from his late-night competitors in this area and instead throws softballs to the movie star, author, or politician of the day. Colbert's mistake is bigger than that. Neither he nor his guests have any idea what to expect in the interview section. He doesn't seem sure if he should continue in faux-confrontational style or if he should drop the act. Instead, he muddles the two, which makes for awkward interviews as he switches between fight mode to normal human being. This was most clear when Colbert interviewed Fareed Zakaria (a favorite guest on *The Daily Show*). Zakaria tried to talk reasonably about Middle East policy, but Colbert kept wavering between his two settings, and it threw Zakaria off and made the interview weak. The first night's interview with Stone Phillips went better because Colbert tried to be as absurd as possible. This culminated in a "gravitas-off" with Phillips, where both men tried to sound as dignified as possible while reading nonsensical phrases such as, "If you have ever sat naked on a hotel bedspread, we have a chilling report you won't want to miss." That night's interview worked because Colbert was consistent in his interview technique.

Another problem with the show is that it requires the audience to watch the same joke every night. It is funny to take potshots at the overblown egos of our news personalities, but I am afraid that after a while the joke will wear thin. There are only so many ways that you can make fun of O'Reilly for fake populism or Chris Matthews for endlessly talking over his guests.

Finally, there is the issue of "irony overload." *The Colbert Report* depends on its audience's ability to stomach a constant stream of irony. Things like berating foreign news services for filling up airtime by holding up newspapers while doing the exact same thing is funny in small doses, but it can also get old as well. Stewart avoids this problem on *The Daily Show* by being the straight-man and giving the show's correspondents free rein to be as wild as they wish. This allows Stewart to express the audience's confusion about what is going on and injects earnestness into the show to balance out the irony. *The Colbert Report* can't have a straight-man, so it is more prone to this irony overload.

*The Colbert Report* is definitely funny and has earned a spot on my TiVo, but it has yet to reach its potential. Colbert needs to figure out how to keep it fresh. If he isn't careful, people will get tired of constantly hearing his voice as he parodies his cable news targets. Then again, judging by the ratings for *The O'Reilly Factor*, people apparently have not gotten tired of hearing Colbert's "papa bear" talk, so there may be hope for *The Colbert Report* yet.

*James Longhofer is a sophomore political science, economics, and public policy major.*



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