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Hilltopics Staff

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The friend, good intentions, and repercussions: Why girl's best friend is guy's worst nightmare

by Michael Hogenmiller

So, in the past few days I've come upon a certain phenomena here at SMU, and it strikes me that despite personal circumstance, I may not be the only person who's aware of it. It isn't a science or an art, or even a craft for that matter, but instead it's a product of simple word-of-mouth, and its significance is nearly monumental. It's passed on from friend to friend, always with the best intentions, and the news is almost never good. To be frank, it's simply referred to as "the report," and it's the single most effective, and damning tool, a woman has to go by when she runs into a new guy.

It can be short, even something as short as four simple words: four words that can bury a guy with the greatest intentions. The friend, in simple consideration of her "best friend," checks him out. She follows up on stories, gets the gist of previous relationships, and then, in one quick summary, she reports back, "He breaks girls' hearts." What more can be said after that. What kind of response, no matter what the actual circumstances, can a person really offer up when confronted with that kind of description about himself?

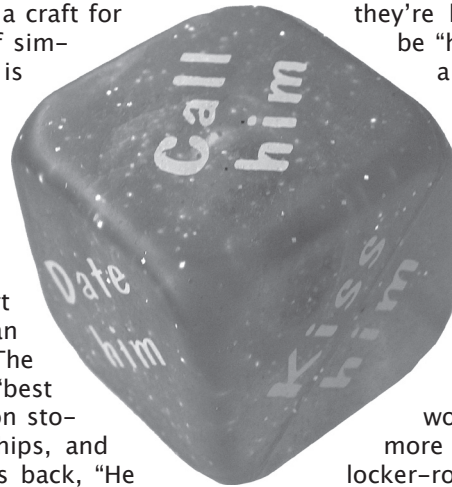
In all actuality, probably a sheepish grin, an awkward pause, certainly nothing witty, but maybe, if lucky, a disarming comment that turns it into a running joke that can eventually be overcome by...well...a lot actually. From here, it's an uphill battle gentlemen, but, a battle that can be won

in stages.

Now, most men will deny it exists, or at least deny that they've ever encountered "the report." And, if they do, they're lying. For some, "the report" can simply be "he's a really nice guy," or "yeah, he dated a friend named so-and-so and now they don't talk." For others, "the report" can be slightly more devastating. Regardless, no matter the degree of condemning, there's one simple fact that remains: people can't be summarized into these Reader's Digest sound bytes prepared by one friend for another. You simply have to find out for yourself.

And realize, it works both ways. There are "reports" passed around between men just as often as there are among women, and believe it or not they are much more thorough than your typically expected locker-room behavior. Whether it's men, women, or a combination of the two that are swapping the latest on whoever's the subject of conversation, realize that the report's only value is retroactive: something to look back on and laugh about, a first impression, provided by another, that ultimately winds up to be the butt of a future joke. A novelty, at best.

Michael Hogenmiller is a senior political science and music major.



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Campus: Political Science Symposium envisions an intelligent design debate that's something more than godless heathens versus crazy radicals, page 3.

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Seniors, we've had 22 years to prepare for this: It's time to grow up and enter the real world

by Kasi DeLaPorte

Last week's *Hilltopics* urged graduating seniors to make the most of our dwindling college days, to take advantage of our last opportunities to act like kids before looming responsibility takes hold, to "play hard."

It's not bad advice. It's easy and natural to wax nostalgic over the good ol' days of our last four years, the oft quoted "best years of our lives." However, I would hope that despite what woes adulthood may bring—the bills, the real consequences, the lack of an excuse for a hangover—that we are ready to embrace it. We are no longer children, so we should no longer act like them. We've had 22 years to prepare for this; it's time to grow up.

Last month, reality dealt me an ugly hand. In only twelve days, both my grandfather and my mother unexpectedly passed away. While my fellow students enjoyed spring breaks in Cabo and Cancun, I held my grandmother's hand as Taps and a 21-gun salute honored her husband of sixty years. While SMUites grudgingly returned to the Hilltop with darkened tans and drunken tales, I returned to my hometown to bury my mother and pack up our house. And when I made my way up to my dorm room a week later, residents made their way out to whatever Thursday night party they planned to attend.

It's a harsh juxtaposition I won't soon forget: me, struggling to carry a box of my deceased mother's belongings up the ramp; they, happily running in their short skirts and high heels down it.

I don't write those words to ask for pity, or to make any student feel guilty for living it up. I don't claim that I'm the only person who has ever gone through hard times; I've been comforted and saddened by the growing number of people who have shared unfortunate experiences similar to mine. It's just an observation, but with a relevant message for

those of us who prepare to embark on the next phase of our journey.

I have never felt more out of place than I felt when I came back to campus that night. And I've felt out of place on this campus before—without Greek letters, a designer handbag, an expensive car, or any good "I was so wasted last night" stories. This time, however, the incongruous feeling wasn't for those reasons. Nor was it entirely from stress or exhaustion or even grief.

It's because it's time to leave. It's time to pass the torch. It's time to stop being college students and start being the men and women this university helped us become.

While this obviously doesn't mean we should stop having fun or never occasionally entertain our inner child, I do think it means that something in our attitude should change. Some itch should grow inside that makes us different from those students who remain, a maturity that separates us from those who have growing left to do. We *should* feel out of place. We don't belong here anymore.

Remember leaving high school, when we thought nothing could beat those four years? Now, I reminisce about my blissful ignorance and naiveté, but I wouldn't go back for anything. So, yes, enjoy what the next few weeks have to offer. Don't take anything for granted, because the experience will be over before you know it. But don't think that ugly reality is all that stands before you. There will be hard times, but somewhere among them, the best is yet to come—something better than beer binges and one-night stands, better than noon classes and midnight take-out and football games and frat parties.

Our time here is over. Finally, it's time for the rest of our lives.

Kasi DeLaPorte is a senior advertising and journalism major.

TCU sucks

by Douglas Hill

Rivalries are part of what makes a college experience complete. Here in Dallas, we witness every year the frenzy caused by collegiate rivalry at its best, as the Texas-OU game pits neighbor against neighbor around North Texas. Ask a Michigan alumnus about his college memories, and you're guaranteed to hear about at least one Ohio State game. And even here at SMU, a considerable amount of school lore centers around the SMU-TCU rivalry. But with football games (this year's game excluded) getting less and less interesting and conference shuffling disturbing scheduling, SMU fans are losing sight of just why it's okay to hate the Horned Frogs. We all like to chant, "TCU sucks!" but it's important to understand *why* TCU sucks.

The case is easy to prove. For starters, look at rankings. *US News & World Report* has SMU ranked 26 schools higher than TCU, and *Princeton Review* gives TCU the tenth spot on the "best party scene" list—right behind SMU, in the ninth spot. SMU also ranks fourth on both the "happiest students" list and the "great college towns" list, neither of which feature TCU at all.

But everyone knows college rankings are meaningless. Look at some of the less objective, but more meaningful rea-

sons TCU sucks. First, it's in Fort Worth, a city whose biggest attraction has a classy name like Billy Bob's. Fort Worth might have, say, a better zoo than Dallas, but that can't make up for Dallas's better skyline, shopping, sports, neighborhoods, restaurants, nightlife, and job market. TCU has a nice campus. But SMU's is nicer. TCU has strong academics. But SMU's are stronger. TCU has a good business school. But SMU's is better. You get the point. Everything, save athletics, that TCU does well, SMU does better.

And what about athletics? The Iron Skillet belongs to the Mustangs right now, and scheduling conflicts have forced the rivalry into hiatus until at least the 2007 season. So for two more football seasons, at least, TCU has literally nothing to brag about.

Plain and simple: TCU sucks. Horned Frogs are a lame mascot. Purple is a terrible school color. This is supposed to be a rivalry, but the two schools aren't even in the same league. Indeed, the only thing an SMU student and a TCU student have in common is that they both got accepted to TCU.

Douglas Hill is a junior international studies major.

Political Science Symposium looks to have intelligent debate about intelligent design

by Spencer Wise

Next Tuesday, the Political Science Symposium, an organization of which I have been a proud member for the past three years, will be hosting our annual debate at 7 p.m. in the Hughes-Trigg Theater. This year, the debate will address the scientific merits of intelligent design. While I look forward to the debate with great interest, it took enormous effort on the part of Symposium members, specifically Cynthia Halatyn, to coordinate an event that would uphold the Symposium's tradition of academic honesty and public responsibility. While the Symposium welcomes students of all political affiliations and thus possesses Swiss-like neutrality on political issues, it does stand for open and fair political discussion. So, while my opinions in no way represent the Symposium as an organization, I wish to address how the unique political situation regarding intelligent design influenced the structure of our upcoming debate.

Intelligent design is a hot topic, generating interest both from within the SMU community and on the national level. This interest made it a popular choice for this year's debate issue. However, after learning about many unsavory tactics used by intelligent design proponents in Professor Goodnight's Biology 1302 and Professors Scalise and Cotton's "Scientific Method" classes, I was reluctant. After studying the topic for myself, I found that the public "debate" over intelligent design is more often political theater than reasoned academic discussion. We owe this undue political controversy creeping in to what should be a purely scientific discussion to certain deceitful intelligent design advocates, who are disproportionately represented in the public square. These groups are motivated more by their personal take on mythological references in religious text than by the desire to give students a legitimate scientific education.

Much like the row over the effectiveness of abstinence-only sex education, the controversy surrounding intelligent design exists as part of the larger issue of providing students with the most unbiased, apolitical instruction possible. As with some abstinence-only proponents, some intelligent design zealots demonstrate how aggressively "special interest" groups will attempt to push their personal beliefs on the mass public, even to the detriment of modern scientific understanding.

Politically interested intelligent design advocates have taken advantage of the implication that pitting intelligent design versus evolution on various media outlets insinuates that the two concepts are equally valid scientific explana-

tions for the origin of all life on Earth. These advocates try to fool the public using a misinformation campaign against scientific evidence that rages in our nation's school boards and cable television scream-offs to gain favor with the public. Like all charlatans, they thrive on the usage of bumper sticker-ready slogans and simplistic examples that, if not scrutinized, seem plausible to the layperson. The downfall of the dishonest intelligent design proponents is their assumption that you are not very smart. This makes the culprits easy to spot, as they must resort to the same logical fallacies that dishonest parties have to discredit everything from heliocentrism to the age of the universe.

For example, take the misguided attempts to impugn evolution as "just a theory," not to mention the false dilemma that if evolution does not make sense to everybody, then intelligent design is the most valid explanation, and you have a recipe for public deception. Dishonest intelligent design advocates also attempt to dress up their straw man in the accoutrements of scientific legitimacy. Yet, when pushed to give their own explanation, they are left with nothing but "God did it" – a close second to "magic" as the answer most odious to the scientific mind. Such voices are simply trying to put a lab coat on creationism, another antiquated rejection of empirical evidence that has been rejected by the scientific community as well as the U.S. Supreme Court for over twenty years.

Initially, the preceding concerns put me in opposition of holding our debate over intelligent design. As an organization with a responsibility to enhance knowledge among the student body, the Political Science Symposium would be in dereliction of duty if we provided a venue for any group to spread false or misleading information. However, as the role of intelligent design in science education serves as a critical political issue of our time, we would be foolish to neglect it. However, after an exhaustive search by Ms. Halatyn, we have found speakers I believe will be fair, honest and engaging. Both speakers have strong scientific backgrounds and impressive public speaking resumes, which should make for interesting discussion. In spite of all the pitfalls put in place by a few charlatans, I believe that our hard work will result in a constructive debate of real academic substance. Admission is free, so all civic-minded citizens or anyone who enjoys spirited discussion is welcome to attend this Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Hughes-Trigg Theater.

Spencer Wise is a senior political science and English major.

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Preference of Position: (please rank 1-6, 1 being your first choice; note that actual positions filled may vary from those on application)

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