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HILLTOPICS

always 100% smu-written

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Keeping doors open: One senior considers her options and looks at Teach for America

by Sterling Morriss

Last week, SMU students were given an opportunity to avail themselves to information on the Teach for America program. Recruiters were on hand to meet with interested parties one on one throughout the first part of the week. On Wednesday students gathered at an open information session held in the basement of Hughes-Trigg. As an Art History major whose mother forbid her to go into elementary education, I never really gave Teach for America a second thought. Then last week, I received an email from a recruiter who wanted to meet with me to talk about my qualifications for the program. At this point, all I knew is that it is a two-year commitment to enter a poorly resourced school and teach on a teacher's salary. The official website (www.teachforamerica.org) made me believe not only that they weren't interested in anyone but future lawyers and shapers of public policy, but also that they wouldn't be interested in anyone but said persons. On a whim and through some encouragement from a friend, I decided to meet with the recruiter and assure myself once and for all that Teach for America was not for me.

Here's what I learned: It's not just for pre-law students. Teach for America has partnered with dozens of major universities' graduate programs to offer deferred acceptance and even scholarships for corps members once they finish their teaching tenure. This doesn't only apply to law schools, but to graduate and medical schools too. The program also awards roughly \$5000 a year in educational grants for corps members to continue their studies. Teach for America members are a close-knit group of successful individuals in all fields and areas of interests - perfect for networking later in life. It is true that the program usually attracts people interested in politics or public policy, probably because of the intrinsic good for society accomplished. But the program definitely has a place for a more diverse group of individuals. Overall, Teach for America looks for people who have succeeded as leaders on their campus. Their research shows that the qualities inherent in people who have been an active part of their col-

lege campus are the same qualities that make them great in the classroom. Regardless of major, these students are capable of standing up to challenges in their lives, and that is exactly what Teach for America is

looking for. It is a quality that will need to be called upon as a teacher in rural Mississippi or inner-urban Chicago. I think it is important for all majors and career interests to consider such a program for its lasting benefits to our country and rewards to its participants as well.

As for me, I consider senior to be a dirty word. I am definitely not ready to admit the fact that this is the last of the best four years of my life. And yet, this week has reminded me that I must. As I look to the future I know that at least for now, it is impractical for me to limit my choices. So who knows, maybe I will go ahead and fill out my application to Teach for America. It is not like companies are bending over backwards to hire art history majors. Regardless, I am sure I will not be the only one keeping my options open.

First round of applications are due September 30, 2006. For more information, check out the website at www.teachforamerica.org.

Sterling Morriss is a senior art history major.



TEACHFORAMERICA

INSIDE this issue

World: Are we safer since 9/11? Mark McDowell weighs in on page 2.

Health: HPV vaccine gives girls a chance to avoid cervical cancer, page 3.

School: Todd Baty starts part one of a new ten part series: "Ten Things I Love (or Love to Hate) about SMU." This week: Spirit, Traditions, and Sports, page 4.

Be Heard: *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles 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.

Ongoing discussion: A lot can change in five years. Are we safer now than we were before 9/11?

by Mark McDowell

This question is an issue that most people have strong opinions on. It's been over 5 years now since the attacks on September 11, 2001. While some people say Bush's actions after 9-11 might have made the United States a more dangerous place, I believe that they are not looking at this from the right perspective. While we have better security than we did before September 11th, we also have more potential attackers. I feel that the additional measures taken in the wake of 9-11 to try to disrupt terrorism is justified in the long run to stop the rise of terrorism from Islamic extremism. Our government and its security forces are better organized to deal with emergencies and the public is more vigilant and aware of suspicious activity than we were before September 11.

I hope everyone can agree that it is harder for a terrorist to hijack an airplane now than it was 5 years ago. The obstacles to hijacking a plane have grown tremendously. Now there are air marshals on nearly every flight, reinforced cockpit doors, and better security screening in the airport. Not only are airplanes safer, but illegal border crossing has dropped too. Better boarder patrols are so important to stop extremists and weapons from reaching the American public. Our intelligence in this country is better which helps prevent attacks from occurring. Some intelligence has been kept secret for good reason. The new interrogation methods used to obtain information from captured terrorists are proving

vital to stopping attacks that have could have gone completely under the radar.

Some individuals disagree though. CNN recently had a poll in which 45% of Americans felt that Bush was responsible for the September 11th attacks. Bush was in office for roughly 7 months before the attack took place. It's ridiculous to think that Bush somehow caused the hijackers to form the plan within that short of a window. He barely had time to even start enacting his own legislation.

One day America will have to get the groups that promote terrorism to lay down their arms. First, the people most responsible for terrorism today are the groups that make it possible for terrorist cells to operate and carry out attacks. The worst of these is obviously Osama bin Laden. Secondly there are governments and groups that enable terrorism to continue to operate. Iran is the biggest example. It uses part of its oil profits to shell out tons of money to finance terrorist groups. They need to stop financially supporting them. We might never be able to convince some people that it's not productive to blow themselves up, but perhaps we can prevent them from getting the means to do it. The world as a whole might not be as safe when we realize that some countries haven't improved their security at all, but here in America I am more confident that we are protected than I was before September 11th.

Mark McDowell is a junior accounting and economics major.

Gartner Lecture Series

"Improving the Honors Experience"

with Professor Cornelius Delaney
Monday, 18 September 2006, 4pm
Texana Room, DeGolyer Library

The Honors Program is proud to present this event as the first Gartner Lecture of the semester. This original lecture series is one of the most prestigious components of the Honors Experience.

The University Honors Program will be evaluated during this academic year by a committee composed of SMU Faculty members. The goal of this committee will be to evaluate where the program stands now, and to suggest improvements for the future. In its endeavor to host a structured analysis, the UHP has invited Cornelius Delaney, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the University Honors Program at Notre Dame University to share his experiences with us; there will be an open discussion on improving Honors to follow his talk.

Visit www.smu.edu/honors for more info.

If you want to make Honors better, this is your chance!

Controversial STD vaccine stirs debate

by Jenny Simon

It was my freshman year, and it was STD day in Wellness. The professor asked if anyone knew what the most common STD was on campus. When I answered the question correctly with the response of HPV; my classmates shockingly stared at me in a questionable manner. To end the awkward gazing stares I confirmed sternly, "I don't have it!" Now with the amazing breakthrough in the medical arena I can get a vaccine to prevent the contraction of two types of HPV; the virus that infects 6.2 million people yearly. HPV is the Human Papilloma Virus and is the main cause of 70% of cervical cancer cases, so you can see how this is an astronomical breakthrough in cancer prevention. This vaccine is offered to males and females with extra emphasis on females because of the health risks connected to HPV. The FDA, medical associations, and government organizations nationwide are so confident in the vaccine that slowly across states the discussion of requiring this vaccine be given at a certain age may be part of the legislation.

In Michigan on Tuesday September 13, a bipartisan group of female lawmakers proposed that all girls entering sixth grade next year be vaccinated against cervical cancer. This means that girls will have to have this vaccine to be able to enroll into school; like the flu shot. Critics opposed to this possible legislation express concerns arguing that requiring this vaccine would infringe on parents rights and portray the message that young sex is okay. Like other programs, such as sex ed, parents are allowed restrict their daughters from getting the HPV vaccine, whether it be reasons of medical, moral, or philosophical ideologies. While the circumstances allow parents to decide individually what is best for their child, critics emphasize that parents should be able to opt in rather than opt out; stressing that the vaccine should not be required for enrollment but available through the school for whomever wants it.

This is a difficult situation to approach. Should state legislation be able to overthrow what parents want for their daughters or should parents always decide what they want for their children even if it means denying them a vaccine that will prevent a common virus? Whatever each state decides individually every person eighteen and older has access to this vaccine. Talk about it, so people know what it is and where to go to get it.

Jenny Simon is a junior sociology major.

Recovering from that "fashion crash"

by Liza Oldham

Have you ever opened the newspaper expecting to find a topical story of merit, and instead are confronted by a gender-biased diatribe comprised of superficiality and generalizations? That is what greeted me when I opened the *Daily Campus* a few weeks ago and found Jordan Traxler's "Fashion Flash," a disparaging commentary about the women at SMU disguised as a self-help article. In it, Mr. Traxler whines about being forced to sit next to "the ugly girl," and then proceeds to give ten suggestions, most of which are inane, as to how "a three [can] start to look a lot like an eight," and thereby make his classroom experience more pleasurable.

Please allow me to make one thing clear: the women of SMU are not here for your aesthetic enjoyment. We are here for the college experience, both the educational and the social, and that does not include being your ideal seatmate with that "sexy, windblown look." Appearance, of course, plays an important role in our culture, and I am not going to deny the allure and fabulousness of fashion. Looking great is a fantastic feeling, but we all have days where all we want to do is get through class without the bullshit involved in looking stylish. Why not take advantage of this time to dress down while the standards are still lax? College is one of the only times where it is just as acceptable to wear lounge pants as it is designer jeans. We have the rest of our lives to conform to a dress code and worry about what our co-workers think of us. Now, I am not going to be foolish enough to say that SMU is not an image conscious campus. However, I do not see why it was necessary to further the concentration on how women look at a campus that already has a reputation for—dare I say it?—superficiality.

The stereotyping of women who sacrifice a shower to be on time for class, or still have X's on their hands, as "ugly girl[s]" is offensive and misogynistic. I do not see Mr. Traxler commenting on the number of men who appear in class unshaven, unwashed, and still X'ed. And shouldn't there at least be a little bit of credit for the X'ed person who showed up to class after a late night as opposed to rolling over and hitting snooze? Learning, contributing, and being attentive are more important in the classroom setting than adding to its color scheme.

To the Mr. Traxlers of the world: stop. Stop telling us to drink Red Bull instead of coffee. Stop telling us how to dress. "Fashion Flash" was not about fashion. It was not an effort to help women look or feel better about themselves either—it was a list of the requirements supposedly needed for a woman to come to class without being scorned. Women have the right to look however they please without suffering from objectifying commentary. I should be able to wear anything from Zac Posen to the Salvation Army, and if you don't like my look, fine. Just don't confuse my character with my clothes, and assume to have me all figured out by my choice of lip gloss—or lack thereof. So instead of handing out dated beauty tips, my advice is to pay attention to the professor and not the naked earlobes of the woman two seats away. Chances are that listening and participating in class will impress the professor more than a pretty new Lacoste shirt.

Liza Oldham is a senior art history and advertising major.



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Todd Baty presents: The 10 things I love (or love to hate) about SMU. This week: spirit

Over the next ten weeks, in an effort to expand campus appreciation and rejuvenate university pride, I will explore the top ten reasons why I love SMU. While I expect some of these reasons to be shared by many of my readers, I also hope to accentuate some aspects of SMU that are perhaps frequently overlooked, if not unknown, to the greater university community. I heartily encourage those that agree or disagree with my “reasons for love” to write articles of their own, and submit their work to *Hilltopics*.

#10: SMU Spirit, Traditions, and Sports

As a member of the SMU Mustang Band for the past two years, I have truly loved being an “ambassador through music for the university” (as our director would say). I know the words to “Varsity” (our alma mater), as well as “Pony Battle Cry” and “Peruna” (two of our fight songs). I love to support our athletic teams, and I have been to every home football game since my freshman year, even attending most of the men’s and women’s home basketball games. I love to yell and shout in support of SMU, so everyone can know the pride I have in our school.

And indeed, SMU has much to be proud of, but the pride and school spirit that I hold closest to my heart are not derived from our athletic teams’ successes or failures. Instead, it is a measure of something greater: an appreciation for the experience that is SMU. While I thoroughly enjoy intercollegiate sporting events and the traditions that accompany them, the true essence of SMU school spirit is not contingent upon the football team’s win to loss ratio. I love SMU for the education and undergraduate experience it has



to offer—for its faculty, staff, and students. And increasingly, I feel that I am not alone in this sentiment.

However, this sense of school identity is relatively new. For decades, SMU’s image was connected to its athletic heritage, since the school gained national recognition not for its academics, but for football hall of famers like Doak Walker, Craig James, and Eric Dickerson. And although many view the “death penalty” of 1987 as one of the most crippling blows to SMU spirit, I believe otherwise. In fact, I perceive it as the beginning of a new, improved university: one where intellectual discourse and educational standards, rather than athletic accomplishments alone, foster and nurse school pride.

Today, the spirit of SMU continues to grow stronger and stronger (despite its current football record), for it is winning a much bigger game in a much bigger arena—the “game” of academic performance. SMU students are given one of the most unique and valuable undergraduate experiences in the nation; it is hard not to have pride in that.

So this weekend, go out to the game and support our football players as they battle Arkansas State, but remember: a true display of SMU spirit is not in how

loud you yell or how many pony ears you display. True Mustang fans show their spirit best in the classroom.

Next week... #9: The Tate Lecture Series

Todd Baty is a junior music and history major.

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