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A Google™ WORLD

By: Stark Riedesel

In the early 1900s, monopoly was a dirty word. Under the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, giants like Standard Oil and US Steel were broken up to allow fair competition. A century later the laws still stand, but the public sentiment against giant corporations has eroded. Today we live in an age dominated not just by national conglomerates, but multi-national behemoths like Microsoft, IBM, Walmart, Nike, and ... Google. Some of the above companies have had bad press relating to treatment of workers, but Google has always stood as the gold standard. Fortune Magazine named Google one of the top 100 places to work in both 2007 and 2008. In fact, Google's own (unofficial) motto is "don't be evil," but how well does Google really stand up to this self-imposed ethical standard?

In 2005 the Authors Guild sued Google for illegally scanning thousands of out-of-print-but-still-in-copyright books. In 2008 there was a \$125 million settlement that allowed Google to continue to scan and make millions of books available for search. Such an

agreement gave Google a complete monopoly over digital libraries. Smaller competitors simply cannot afford the multi-million dollar bribe to skirt copyright laws, and instead of being held culpable for their blatant disrespect of the law like smaller companies would be forced to do, Google is presented with an unbeatable deal. Google recently announced that they would be offering print copies of any books in their library at a cost of about \$3. Printing and profiting from out of print is a clear breach of a three-century-old copyright law, yet Google is given a free pass. In September, the US Department of Justice announced that it would be reviewing the settlement on the ground that the Authors Guild did not actually have the authority to make the deal and that the deal creates a monopoly in favor of Google and publishers. Google still awaits the outcome of the settlement, but in 2007 alone Google scanned nearly 7 million books.

It's not just books: Google has been moving farther and farther from simple search and ads. First, Google encroached on Microsoft with Google Docs, an online replacement for Microsoft Office. Second came Gmail, threatening the reigning email leaders, Microsoft's MSN and Yahoo Mail. Most recently was Google's their new browser Google Chrome, aimed at replacing Microsoft's Internet Explorer, Apple's Safari, and



the freely available and wildly popular, Firefox. Google has also announced their plan to completely remove the operating system (Microsoft Windows and Apple OS) in the traditional sense, integrating Google's own services from boot up to shutdown.

So does Google break its "don't be evil" ethical code? I don't know. People debate both sides all the time. Many see Google's massive, multi-billion dollar takeover of the Internet as a great prospect for centralization of services, while others cite security, privacy and ethical concerns. One thing is clear: Google is striving for a vertically integrated monopoly, controlling every aspect of your Internet experience. Mail brought to you by Google. Videos brought to you by Google. News by Google. Books by Google. The Internet by Google. Your entire world: A Google World.

Stark Riedesel is a freshman Computer Science major. He can be reached at (riedesel@smu.edu).

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LEHMAN ONE YEAR LATER

By: Mark Gelbart

One year since the fall of Lehman Brothers, the ice is beginning to thaw as financial markets continue to show signs of improvement. The collapse of Lehman Brothers, now a common reference point for the financial crisis, caused a systemic infection of financial markets on September 15, 2008. Credit lines froze quicker than even Mr. Freeze could ice things up, as Batman and Robin, also known as Ben Bernanke and then Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson, sat back in painful anticipation. After half a dozen bailouts ranging from Bear Stearns to Freddie Mac, the duo called it quits and let a big one go. As Lehman toppled, the ice spread quickly as banks questioned each other's subprime assets which were inauspiciously located off-the-books in SIVs (structured investment vehicles), thereby further complicating who would or would not be able to repay loans.

The collapse of the Lehman Brothers, a major player in securitizing subprime loans, triggered a panic in the commercial paper market. The lifeblood of the U.S. economy, commercial paper provides over 3.6 trillion dollars in funding, often overnight, to thousands of U.S. businesses. Businesses that rely on this funding were left choking with little cash on hand and unable to fund day-to-day operations. As Lehman fell, instead of being merged, similar to the fate of Bear Stearns, the firm filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy as creditors and shareholders were wiped out. Commercial paper rates soon doubled and swap spreads widened to dangerous levels. The notional 592 trillion derivatives market stumbled as trades were covered or abandoned entirely like the one million derivatives Lehman had outstanding when it fell.

With all the tumult one would wonder how we ever sorted out the mess. Contrary to popular belief in stimulus spending, the Federal Reserve System, or the Fed, played a major role.

Anyone who has taken a macroeconomics course has heard that the Fed has a tool belt ready to fine tune the economy when needed. The key abilities have historically been buying treasuries to adjust the Federal Funds Rate (the rate at which banks lend to each other), the discount window (a rate usually higher than the FFR at which the central bank loans to banks), and the reserve requirement (a rarely touched detail). However, the Fed soon plateaued as the FRR was cut between 0 - .25 percent, TARP was issued by the treasury, and the pump was primed and primed again to no avail. In a liquidity trap, the Fed had to get creative, and in this case it had to do so fast. The Fed quickly began growing its balance sheet by piling subprime, Alt-A, T-bills, commercial paper and all sorts of exotic securities in hopes of stabilizing financial markets. Despite the program's success, doubling its balance sheet to over 2.1 trillion has left the economy saturated in liquidity.

Even as Hilltopics leaves the press, new plans submitted by the twenty largest economies are in the throes. On September 24, the G-20 will convene in Pittsburgh to address the future of regulating systemic markets and financial stability. Likely in the agenda of Germany and France will be the divisive issue of banker's pay. Surely not the chief cause of the financial crisis, haphazard reforms are always made during periods of public anger. The perfect storm, or what Taleb calls a black swan, has finally passed as the DOW buoys at 9800, but the hot winds from Washington are now just starting to blow in Gotham City.

Mark Gelbart is a first year Finance and Economics major, minoring in Statistics and Chinese. He can be contacted by email through (mgelbart@smu.edu).



INDIAN WOMEN FIND SAFETY ON THE ROAD

By: Mary Fan

India recently opened eight trains exclusively for females, which pass through the country's four largest cities: New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Calcutta. Known as the "Ladies Special," the new transportation is both a privilege and relief for Indian women. Because India is a patriarchal society, the millions of women that have poured into the Indian workforce over the past decade have received nothing but harassment and insults commuting on India's public trains. The most frequent kinds of harassments are body groping and verbal abuse.

A woman from a New York Times' article quotes, "Here on this train, you can board anywhere and sit freely." Her liberated tone reminds me of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955. Half a century ago, African-Americans were petitioning their right for a seat in the front of a bus. Fifty years later, women in India are struggling for gender equality. Despite the former case being about discrimination and the latter sexism, the point is that racial and gender differences still exist today, and that indicates that our society is not evolving as it should in this frontier.

Nonetheless, Ladies Special is a significant step towards gender equality in India. It not only serves as a token of liberation for women, but also provides security, especially for young women and working mothers.

Mary Fan is a freshman Finance and Sociology major. She can be reached at (mfan@smu.edu).

BETTER KNOW A HONORS PROFESSOR ANDREA HAMILTON

Which classes you are teaching this semester:

Schools and Society: The Evolution of America's Public School System

What other classes you teach:

I frequently teach the US History Survey courses (I've taught these for Honors & Hilltop Scholars programs, as well as "regular" courses). I also used to teach Honors Rhetoric--so I'm very familiar with Honors Program sequence.

Hometown?

I'm originally an Okie -- various branches of my family have been in Oklahoma since the land rush -- but my family migrated to west Texas during the oil boom of the 1980s.

Married?

Yes, and I met my husband on an SMU study abroad program in Salzburg, Austria, over 20 years ago.

Children?

3 -- an almost 13 year old daughter, a 10 year old son, and a 3 1/2 year old. I have a lively household.

Interests/hobbies:

I like movies, books (okay, what academics don't), spending time outdoors, sharing in my childrens' activities

Educational History?

I am a 1989 graduate of SMU (with majors in English & History, minors in Medieval Studies & Art History. I was in the SMU Honors Program when it was very new & much smaller than today). M.A. from Indiana University & PhD from Tulane University -- both in American History.

Special Research interests:

History of Education. I've written on the history of girls' education in the US, particularly, and I'd like to write a history of homework--that is, how schools' and educators' beliefs about the value & purpose of homework for students has changed over time ---because, unlike today, there have been times in history when leading voices argued that homework damaged children & should be minimized.

INTERVIEW WITH A FRAT BOY

The Frat Boy, a male human specimen in his prime; he's sexy, confident and has his whole life ahead of him. At SMU the Frat Boy is, so to speak, in his natural habitat. When someone joins a fraternity they gain a social circle, a lifetime of networking, and tons of preconceptions and stereotypes to boot. And while there are certain untouchable mysteries that only the pledges and brothers will ever really know about, it seems like a good idea to get to know this particular breed of domesticated Mustang. Across from me at a table outside of Fondren Library he sits, pastel polo and all, ready to tell us at Hilltopics a little bit about himself. For the sake of this interview, we've changed his name to "Frat Boy" or "FB" for short.

HT: So how much about Frats and Greek life can you learn from watching Animal House?

FB: Well, it's kind of obvious there are parties. There's alcohol. About fifty percent of that movie seems right - or at least what I've seen; it just depends on the frat.

HT: Well do you guys party as much as we think you do?

FB: (He leans back and laughs) Depends on how much you think we party ... and well, we don't necessarily party, but we know how to entertain and have a good time.

HT: It's mostly about socializing then?

FB: More like getting to know people and becoming close with your brothers, stuff like that.

HT: When you meet people and you tell them that you're in a fraternity, does that make them think anything about you initially, which they might not have thought otherwise?

FB: Depending on which frat you're in, of course, because every frat has a reputation. But that doesn't necessarily reflect who I am. You always get an idea of who someone is, but you don't know them until you actually get to hang out.

HT: What about sex? Is getting laid a big part of being Greek?

FB: It just depends on the type of person you are. The guys in the house aren't going to pressure you to do anything. If you're the girlfriend type, you're the girlfriend type, or if you're the type to go out and try new things, then that's you, but we all have our stories to tell. I've

had my fair share of weird nights.

HT: What made you rush?

FB: I've always wanted to be in a fraternity. I mean, you've seen the movies. I didn't know anybody coming here, and I really liked it, the guys here. The sense of brotherhood, it's great.

HT: What's your favorite memory from Greek Life so far?

FB: My favorite memory would have to be (he hesitates) pledge-ship. It has its ups and downs, but you get so much closer to the guys in your pledge class. It's the most fun you'll ever have but also the worst time you'll ever have.

HT: Okay then, how do you feel about sororities?

FB: It seems like, for girls, being initiated is more of a social thing for them, whereas we go through a time where we earn brotherhood, but it's worth it, and so we have pride.

HT: So you think Sorority sisters aren't as connected?

FB: Not like a fraternity is. I've met girls who are in the same pledge class of the same sorority and have no idea who the other person is. I know all active members of my fraternity, their names, where they're from, everything.

HT: How do the fraternities relate to each other?

FB: There's definitely a sense of competition. I mean the fraternity with the best parties and the cutest girls around them are going to get the best pledges, and your pledge class can change everything.

HT: Any advice for guys who want to rush?

FB: Have fun with it, be yourself. Don't be fake. It's going to come down to who you are and what kind of person you are and whether they like you or not. Don't do it if you're anti-social and don't like meeting people. But if you're not Greek at such a small school, you're kind of...eh.

So there you have it. This could be pretty useful to the freshmen out there! Next week we will interview a sorority sister on campus and see what she has to say. Maybe Animal House didn't have it all wrong, but it seems like our Frat Boy takes his loyalties to his Greek brothers very seriously and will for the rest of his life.

SURVIVAL IS NOT NEGOTIABLE

By: Cody Meador

Someone spoke with me the other day about the lack of activism at SMU. They wanted to know why there are not more protests, boycotts, and critical commentaries coming from the SMU student body. Well, what do SMU students have to be upset about? Not much, generally, but here's something that all people - young, old, and in between - should be riled up about: survival.

That's right, life or death. Desertification, heat waves, droughts, hurricanes, epidemics, and floods are all effects of climate change, and they are all challenging the survival of people across the world. Such disasters, as well as gradual changes, are increasing competition and violent conflict over basic resources like land and water. They are causing migrations of populations, thus increasing pressure on already unstable governments. For example, desertification and increased competition for basic resources have been linked to the conflict in Sudan because of the huge strain placed on people living there, many of them Darfur refugees (1). All over the world lives are changing and ending as a result of climate change. The survival of many depends on the actions of a few decision-makers this December at the UN climate talks in Copenhagen. As world leaders come together to construct a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, the international environmental treaty meant to curb carbon emissions worldwide, activists across the globe will be communicating needs and watching closely.

One such group of activists is Project Survival Media, a global youth effort to report on the effects of climate change in people's lives through the use of new media. Coordinated by Shadia Fayne Wood, an experienced and successful student activist, Project Survival Media is an international network of youth journalist teams, one for every continent, who will be documenting the most compelling stories of people affected by the changing climate until the December climate talks. The reporting teams for Project Survival Media will focus on the individuals who feel the impact of climate change the most: factory workers, farmers, mothers, organizers, and health care providers. The goal is to represent these people, woefully underrepresented in mainstream media coverage

and spread awareness of their stories and the human costs of climate change. The goal is to make more people understand the issues of survival, the immediacy of the problems, and the tangible solutions. Major politicians have frequently

defended that the scientific solutions to climate change are not politically viable. The point here is to emphasize that we are dealing with survival, and that survival is not negotiable.

Many involved in this effort have been working for the past six months to press the urgency of climate change within the United Nations. Their survival campaign has made impressive gains, with more than one hundred countries signing their declaration for a treaty that "ensures the survival of

all countries and peoples" to follow the relatively weak Kyoto Protocol (1). This achievement is evidence of the organization and determination behind this effort.

Project Survival Media will use areas of new media to share the stories they find. Incorporating blogging, photography, videography, and any other means, reporters will operate seven blogs in fifteen different languages. Importantly, they will rely on a grassroots network of people to constantly stay informed and promote their efforts.

Despite a general air of satisfaction and happiness at SMU, with the exception of the daily stress of school, remember that tremendous social and political forces are at work all the time and that, most importantly, you can affect them! You can help with Project Survival Media by posting it online and talking about it in your social circles. Don't hesitate to get involved further if you feel motivated. The beautiful thing about a project like this is that it is created by young people and fueled by youth energy; the more people who get involved, the stronger the effort becomes. Visit the website (www.projectsurvivalmedia.org) to learn more and find out how you can help.

Cody Meador is a senior political science major. She can be reached at cmeador@smu.edu

1. Baldauf, Scott. "Climate change escalates Darfur crisis." Christian Science Monitor 27 July 2007.
2. www.projectsurvivalmedia.org/about/imagine/



No NAME CALLING, PLEASE

By: Jack Swearingen

Politics can be defined as the discipline in which everyone has an opinion, but no one has the facts, and regardless of your political orientation, that much can certainly be said for the current state of affairs in our nation. From town hall meetings to nationally broadcasted news stations, average citizens and political pundits throw heavily loaded terms around with ease because, obviously, employing hazy stereotypes is much more effective than actually investigating a matter and properly defining it.

Sarcasm aside, these past months in the news brought to my attention a serious need to redress a now common place phenomenon in our political lives- that of name calling. Now we are all used to the argumentum ad hominem “debates” of blatantly insulting one’s opponent, and even Socrates was known to be a bit too aggressive in his line of questioning. The simple fact of the matter is that this will never go away. What is in dire need of eradication, however, is the haphazard use of mature, complex political terms without regard to accuracy. Thus I write to proclaim that regardless of your level of support for one side or another in the health insurance debate, President Barack Obama is not a socialist by any conventional definition.

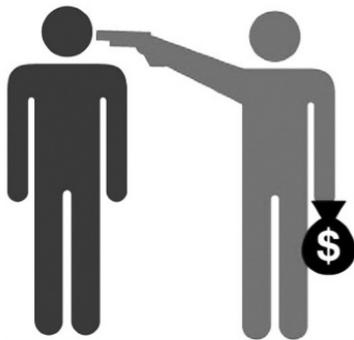
Socialism has multiple definitions from differing political scientists and is seen from different perspectives depending on one’s own political system. But for the sake of discussion, let us define economic socialism as “Communism lite” in which the government has control over the means of production and wishes to radically redistribute wealth but does not have the utopian dream for society that communism strives for. I must stress that this is not a definition to cite in your political science essays, but it is a working definition that has merit in the current political culture. Archie Brown, a political scientist you should cite in your essays, adds to our definition of socialism as being the springboard from which a revolt by the proletariat will push the modern state into the utopian ideal of communism. The terms “socialism” and

“communism” have been, for the last half of the 20th century, ingrained into our democratized brains as synonymous with “evil” – to such an extent that we fail to even understand them as political terms worthy of investigation before we pass invalid normative judgments. Again, opinion without facts.

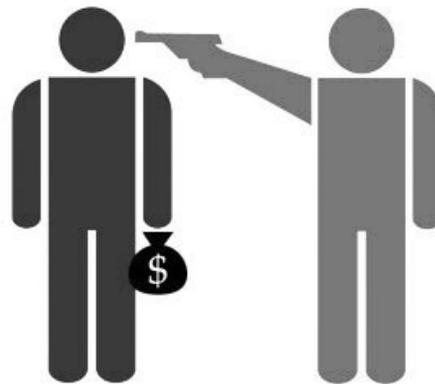
Specifically looking at President Obama’s agenda, we must conclude that even based on our rudimentary definition, the label “socialist” does not stick. Should we adopt a universal health insurance plan, in which all citizens pay the exact same amount, as it is in Europe, then perhaps the label would stick, but that is not what is being argued in our marble halls of justice. What is being debated is whether or not the government should offer a plan to those who want it or to those 46 million Americans (according to the 2007 U.S. Census) who do not have health insurance in the first place. Looking back to our definition, adding a government option for health insurance is neither a major takeover of the means of production nor a major redistribution of wealth. In a weird way it just adds the government into the capitalistic competition for your money along with the other private insurance providers. The individual making a choice about whom to economically subscribe to, in the scope of a health insurance supplement, is not socialistic.

Again, I do not write this article as partisan rhetoric to blindly support a cause but rather to clarify an important issue before us and invite the reader to research the issue further. Regardless of your opinion on health care reform, I think we can all benefit from a system of politics in which people have clear definitions of terms and are able to effectively formulate opinion based on objective fact and not loaded connotations. We could all use a little more fact and a little less opinion in our daily lives, and certainly in the realm of politics.

Jack Swearingen is a first year political science and philosophy double major and may be contacted at jswearinge@smu.edu



capitalism
(described by socialists)



SOCIALISM
(described by capitalists)

QUALITY TRIUMPHS QUANTITY

By: Mary Fan

Although the US economy has been showing gradual signs of recovery, many people still can't afford to buy a house. However, that's what Congress was pushing for last winter, when it passed an \$8,000 tax credit for first-time home buyers. It's understandable that their purpose was to stimulate the economy, but perhaps they should remember that the financial crisis stemmed mainly from unpaid mortgages and vague loan terms? Underneath Congress's sugarcoated plan, people are basically being encouraged to spend money that they don't have, and, as a result, sink further into debt.

The oldest and most useful consumer trick in the book: discounts. Whether it is an \$80 or \$8,000 tax credit, people will be more inclined to spend money because they believe they are scoring a great deal on the merchandise. It's just like an apple that costs \$1.99: even though it is only one cent cheaper than \$2.00, \$1.99 will still seem like a good buy comparatively. The same mentality

applies to houses: people want to own something just for the sake of owning it, to show that they have fulfilled the

New York Stock Exchange Stats

52 Week Stats

High

4181.75
06 Mar. 2009

Low

7,890.37
29 Sept. 2009

American Dream and have earned enough to purchase a piece of real estate.

This tax credit will hurt not only consumers, but also the government. It is estimated to cost the government

\$15 billion because at least 40 percent of people will be qualified for it. Furthermore, one of the sponsors of the bill is inducing a new bill involving a \$15,000 credit to buyers that stay in their house for a minimum of two years. This will only confuse people more. Say a person becomes dissatisfied with his home after a year. Should he cut his losses and move out, or pay for another miserable year just to obtain the credit? Either way, it's a lose-lose situation.

The worst scenario is to buy something just because it's cheap or affordable and then end up either never using it again or selling it. You simply can't do that with houses because it's not a pair of shoes we're talking about. A house is a big investment that will probably cost the average person a large chunk of his life savings, so factors such as income and future living plans should definitely be put into consideration.

Mary Fan is a freshman majoring in Finance and Sociology. She can be reached at mfan@smu.edu

Do you have an opinion about...

politics? music? class? television? football? shopping? intramurals? fraternities? movies? tests? the Mavs? club sports? sex? religion? driving? Umphrey Lee? technology? baseball? the weather? dating? books? nightclubs? the Daily Campus? pets? Texas? study abroad? sororities? news? the war? magazines?

or anything else?

*we're listening at
amhowe@smu.edu*

DID YOU KNOW?

Hilltopics has its own iPhone App?

While nothing can really replace a paper copy, getting a free update on your iPhone is pretty close

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Hilltopics

Latest Issue: Summer 2009

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by Dr. David D. Doyle, Jr.

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by Ashley M. Howe

Employers Getting Ready for "R..."

by Marva McGrew

Conscientious Consumer Beware

by Rachel Porter

KPNI SMU Radio Starts Living...

by Thomas Dunlap

The Invisible Tweeter

by Thomas Dunlap

'Hub of SMU Spirit' Needs Hub...

by Ashley M. Howe

Defining Our Bike Community

by Thomas Dunlap

THUMBS UP

New TV Season
 Fall Break
 Beautiful weather
 Caffeine, no matter what form it comes in
 State Fair!



THUMBS DOWN

Steak and Shake on 75 is closing!
 Losing your ID
 Continuing construction
 Low hiring rates
 Halloween megastores



CAMPUS EVENTS

Human Rights Education Program Series

Now Until November 23

Race Judicata 5K Fun Run

October 3

SMU Football at TCU

October 3

Brown Bag Dance Series

October 5-9

Fall Break (No Classes)

October 12-13

Intramural Signups Begins

(Flag Football, Climbing, Tennis, Golf)

October 15

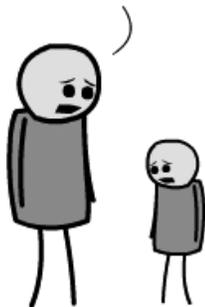
Want to Have YOUR Organization's Event Placed Here? Email aoldham@smu.edu and Tell Us What's Going on in Your World!

DID YOU KNOW...

...Time Travel has Already Taken Place?

Russian Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev time traveled into the future 1/48th of a second when he spent 803 days on the Mir Space Station. When he returned to Earth, those around him were 1/48th of a second older than him. The special theory of relativity proves that moving clocks run slower.

Son... You were copied and pasted...



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