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HILLTOPICS

week of October 19, 2009

Vol. 6; Issue 3

ON THE DOTTED LINE, PLEASE

By: Mark Gelbart

On the Dotted Line Please Across the pond, member nations of the European Union are on edge as the future of the conglomerate is left to one man. Vaclav Klaus, the current President of the Czech Republic, became the last required signature for the overdue Lisbon Treaty after Ireland overwhelmingly ratified it on October 2, 2009. The Lisbon Treaty, which was intended to be ratified in late 2008, is expected to take Europe into the 21st century with the ability to address globalization, climate change, and bring with it greater democratic rights for citizens. Eurosceptics however, claim the treaty centralizes Europe and spins power away from the states. The real question though is whether it will better Europe's stance on the global stage. Europe has lost a bit of its swagger since WWII, but a stronger unification of Europe could strengthen foreign policy and push it further up the totem pole.

Currently the European Union is the world's largest economy, but each country's economic indicators (such as GDP, PPP, manufacturing indices, and unemployment) are calculated separately. This has proven advantageous during this past downturn as Germany, an export led...

DOTTED LINE continued on page 7

IT'S ALL ABOUT BUSINESS

By: Mary Fan

How well does one really know about his major upon graduation? According to a study conducted by the University of Michigan Medical School, more than half of the medical graduates in this country have little knowledge about health care systems and the economics of practicing medicine. The majority of the 58,000 participants said they felt inadequately prepared in the financial aspect of health care, specifically starting and maintaining private practices. This is hugely unsettling; if the doctors themselves do not know how much to charge for a visit, prescription, or dose of vaccine, then who does? They could hire an accountant, but that would only resolve keeping track of the financial records of their business, not jump-start it.

BUSINESS continued on page 2

GUNS ON CAMPUS

By: Jonathan Price

Last year, a bill came in front of the Texas legislators proposing an end to the ban of firearms on college campuses within the state. Although the measure in the end did not pass, it introduced a controversial question into the state with one of the most lax sets of gun laws in the country: whether or not it makes sense to allow handguns on college campuses.

To preface this article, I feel the need to state that I am a staunch advocate of gun rights in most scenarios. I have a firm belief that the citizens of this country should always have the ability to procure the means in which



to rise up and overthrow an oppressive government, should we as a people find this action necessary.

That being said, I do not see a rational case for allowing guns on campus. Advocates of this type of legislation argue that, had Virginia Tech allowed its students to carry firearms on campus, the tragedy that occurred in 2007 would not have been nearly as horrific as it turned out to be. However, since a situation like that is so rare, we must ask

GUNS on page 5

IN THIS ISSUE...

ENTERTAINMENT

BOOK REVIEWS

TECHNOLOGY

THE FUTURE IS HERE

BUSINESS

KIT KAT BIKE SHOP

BUSINESS CONT...

... People have lost tremendous faith in the financial industry because of what has happened in the past year: the collapse of many big-name investment banks with hundreds of years of history behind them, such as Lehman, Citigroup, and Merrill Lynch. The volatility of financial corporations goes to show how essential it is for every individual to understand how his or her own money works, so that we will not irrationally buy in the next time bankers try to sell us inflated stock options or insurance packages. In fact, the aspect of "forensic accounting" in accounting firms is gaining huge importance because illegal financial discrepancies such as money laundry and insider trading have been found to be more prevalent than they were once thought to be.

With this in mind, let us investigate what SMU has done over the past years to ensure higher quality preparation for their graduates. For one, the finance major in the Cox School of Business now requires students to take up to Intermediate Accounting, instead of just Fundamentals of Accounting. Why? Because the job opportunities in

accounting are increasing more than ever, thanks to the merging and flops of financial firms. Cox also introduced a new major in Risk Management and Insurance back in March, designed to provide students with a solid foundation in insurance company operations. The economic crisis has proven that skills such as risk management are crucial for the maintenance of firms. Likewise, in Dedman College, the sociology department holds a relatively new major: Markets and Culture. It's a well-rounded major that combines insights from many disciplinary fields, such as economics, history, and anthropology, to prepare students for the dynamics in the workplace.

Thus, having a business major or minor may not be such a bad idea whether one's interests are chemistry, music, or literature because let's face it: money is involved in everything.

Mary Fan is a freshman majoring in finance and sociology. She can be reached at (mfan@smu.edu)



Richter Fellows Research Presentation Day

Come learn about other student's studies abroad and how you can travel the world for free!

Last year's Richter Fellows have returned from their studies spread across six continents - all the way from New Mexico to Greece. Their areas of study ranged from dance performance to healthcare to commerce.

Friday, **23 October 2009** at **4 pm**
The Forum, Hughes Trigg Student Center
Lowest Level
R.S.V.P. to Dr. David Doyle at doyoyle@smu.edu

BETTER KNOW A HONORS PROFESSOR

ALEXIS McCROSSEN

Which classes you are teaching this semester:

An Undergraduate lecture course on History of Consumer Culture & a Graduate seminar about U.S. History, 1877-1932

What other classes you teach:

U.S. History, 1877-Present; From Pew to Bleacher: Cultural Institutions in the U.S.; Looking at the 1970S; History of Technology in the U.S.

Hometown?

Albuquerque, NM

Married?

Yes!

Children?

Yes; a daughter who is in the first grade.

Interests/hobbies:

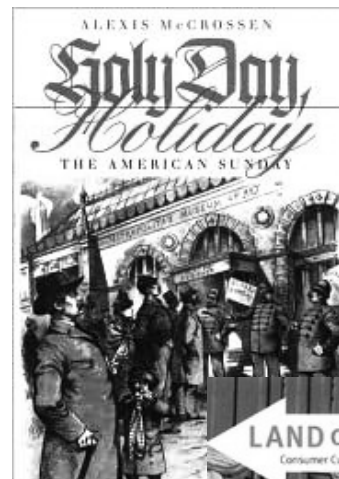
Cooking, traveling, Yoga and spectator sports

Educational History?

BA in History from Carleton College; A.M. in History from Harvard University; PHD in History of American Civilization from Harvard University

Special Research interests:

Author of "Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday" (Cornell U Press 2000); Editor and Contributor to "Land of Necessity: Consumer Culture in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands" (Duke U Press 2009); Finishing a book titled "Marking Modern Times: Americans and Their Timepieces, 1840-1940"; Plan to start researching the history of New Year's Eve.



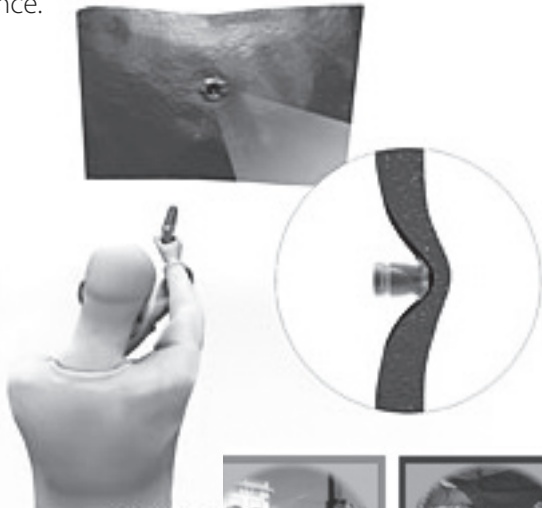
TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY!

By: Stark Riesel

The year 2001 has come and gone and we don't seem to be much closer to moon colonization than we were in 1968. However, many advances in technology are just around the corner. Here's a sneak peak at what's to come in the not so distant future.

Super-thin Bulletproof Fabric

Kevlar, today's standard in bulletproof vests, is very heavy and inflexible due to the need for ceramic or polyethylene plates between the Kevlar fabric and the wearer. Now in development is a new fabric made from carbon nanotubes (microscopic filaments of carbon atoms) that can be woven together into a fifth of an inch thick sheet, which has been shown to be resistant to standard handgun rounds. The Pentagon is nearly solely funding the startup with \$10 million this year alone. The military hopes to replace bulky Kevlar vests with lighter and stronger nanotube vests as well as use them on coatings for aircraft or satellites for durability and heat resistance.



COURTESY WIRED/NEURON



Self-Charging Cell Phones

Sick of charging your phone every night? A professor at Texas A&M is working on a method of charging a cell phone battery using the very sound

waves that are created when it is in use. Other groups have been developing ways to harvest power from just walking. These advances in power usage can also be applied to any small low-power technology, from iPods to laptops. Wireless power is currently in production; HP will soon be releasing a laptop that powers by sitting on a power pad, no wires necessary, and the technology to "beam" power may not be science fiction much longer.

Mind Reading Computers

Researchers around the world are attempting to unlock the secrets of the brain in hopes of using fMRI scans to read minds. At Carnegie Mellon University, researchers are developing computers that can identify whether a person is thinking about a hammer or a barn or one of eighteen other objects cataloged. In Germany at the Bernstein Center for Computation Neuroscience, researchers are developing a system that can detect intentions simply by reading fMRI results. Also in development is a system that can read from your brain whether you are familiar with a place or circumstance simply by beaming a light on our forehead. In India similar technologies have already been used to convict a woman of murder, but the legal status of fMRI or EEG results are untested in the states.

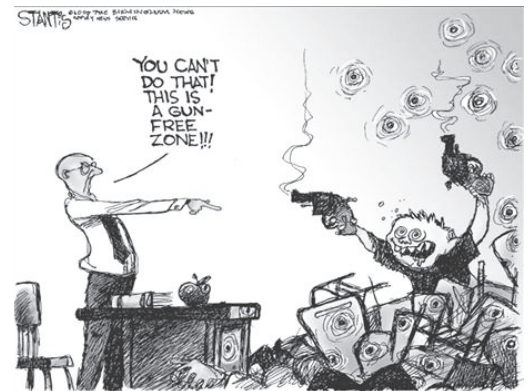
GUNS CONT...

...whether or not that can really be justification to allow handguns to be carried on campus. According to campus police officers around the state, particularly those here at SMU, this is not. They feel that in a situation where there is an active shooter committing a massacre on campus, it is more likely that a vigilante will be mistaken as the perpetrator and shot by the responding police officers, than he will be able to effectively take down the shooter himself.

Beyond this scenario, there are many other considerations that need to be taken into account. Whether or not the SMU faculty or alcohol-edu will acknowledge this fact, SMU is a place where alcoholics come to flourish. Now let me state, the concern I have is not whether we, as college students and as people, are mature enough to handle firearms; I believe unequivocally that we are. However, my question is whether or not this is a situation where guns provide a net positive or a net negative. I do not think that 40 year olds are immature, but I do not think that they should be allowed to carry guns into bars and clubs. This is the lens through which I look at college, which, like a bar, has an overabundant amount of alcohol and where many, if not most, take full advantage of that fact. From this perspective, I think that it would be foolish to allow guns on campus where there are so many dynamic situations, many of which include alcohol.

Allowing guns on campus may be a well-intentioned idea, but it is naïve to think that the activities that go on here will not make them as dangerous as firearms at a bar. Therefore, my position is this: that we leave our guns at home and enjoy the privileges and pleasures of college life without the fear that comes from some drunk idiot waving his gun in the air.

Jonathan Price is a first year finance and political science double major and can be contacted through email (jdprice@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?

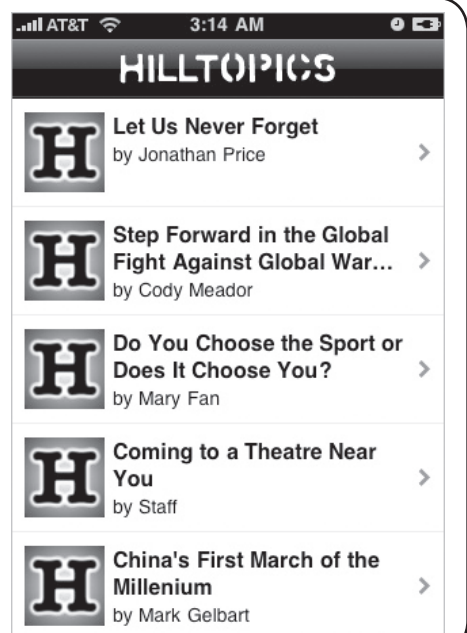
*we're listening at
amhowe@smu.edu*

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

Get it for FREE at the App
Store today!



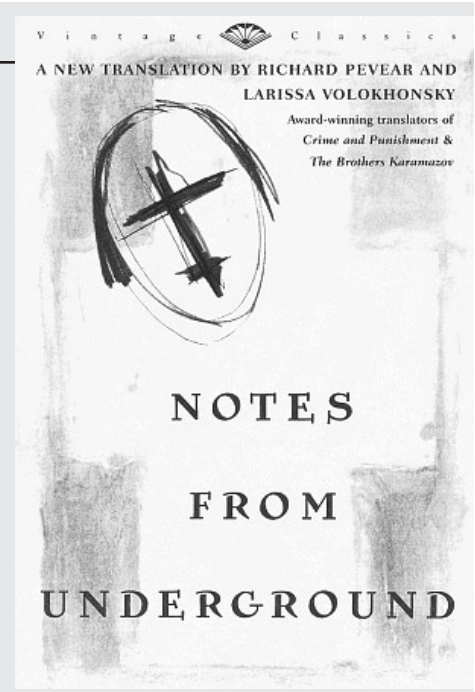
IN REVIEW...

By: Jack Swearingen

"NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND"

"Which is better - cheap happiness or lofty suffering? Well, which is better?"

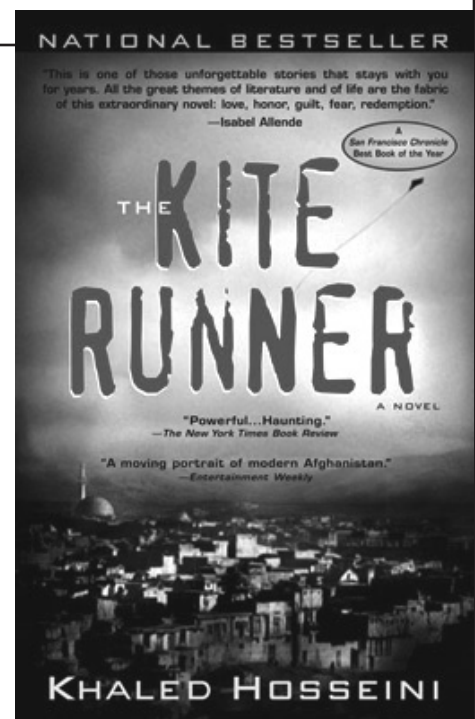
Written as an interrupted stream of consciousness novel, *Notes from the Underground*, by Fyodor Dostoevsky, describes in a random series of flashbacks and present day scenes how an unnamed character has lost all faith in life. Centered on an embittered protagonist who has born his hatred for himself and for humanity to total isolation and depression, this is not a book for rainy days or for the already mildly to moderately depressed, to say the least. This is a book for those looking for another avenue by which to examine humanity and the horrendous results industrialization and capitalism have had on the collective and upon the individual heart beating so desperately among the soulless, teeming masses. Representing one of Dostoevsky's shorter and more approachable works, *Notes* presents a lesson to us all on the necessity of individual development and, by contrast, a renewed hope in the prowess of man and the potential success of humanity over despair and self-destruction.



"THE KITE RUNNER"

"There is a way to be good again."

Beginning in the final years of Afghanistan's proud monarchy, before the Russian invasion, the Taliban, and Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini tells the coming-of-age story of a sensitive young Afghan boy and his development into maturity as the result of external tragedy, both in his personal life and in the overarching identity of his culture, and his quest to return to the country of his birth and atone for his mistakes. While incorporating the typical themes of friendship, loss of innocence, and cultural cohesion, *The Kite Runner* provides an insightful "insider's" view of Afghanistan and its people beyond the shallow news coverage the West is presented with. Interestingly enough, the novel largely ignores the impacts of Islam and focuses more on the secular cultural phenomenon of Arab countries. With an emotionally moving plot, fascinating cultural analysis, and a terrible accompanying movie, *The Kite Runner* can definitely be one of the few pieces of modern literature that ought to endure into posterity as a groundbreaking example of Middle Eastern culture and its struggle into modernity.



KIT KAT BIKE SHOP BUSINESS PROFILE

5214 E. Mockingbird Ln.
near Ford Stadium
www.fleetwoodskitkat.com

Meet the Owner:

Fleetwood, a former fashion designer, picked up a passion for cruiser bikes along the boardwalk at Venice Beach. He later moved to Dallas and started to acquire cruiser bikes for a few of his friends to enjoy with him. Kit Kat was originally opened to liquidate Fleetwood's leftover inventory of clothes. However, frustrated with the lack of creativity in the bike market, Fleetwood quickly turned his focus to cruisers. With an eye for style, and a knack for business, the rest is history.

About the Product:

Starting Price: \$247 (a basic, ready to ride bike) A fully customized bike can run as much as \$700, but you can get something cute and original for much less. Kit Kat also rents bikes for \$15 the first hour and \$10 every hour after. This is a great way to check out the Katy trail, which runs through Highland Park.

A cruiser bike is upright, so you don't have to hunch forward to ride it. It also has a much simpler mechanical design, so out-of-adjustment gears or hand breaks are never an issue. You can customize the rims, tires, fenders, chains, seat covers, and grips. Cruiser bikes are a fun way to bring back classic style, which SMU is all about!

***"If everyone had a cruiser bike,
the world would be a much better
place."***

DOTTED LINE CONT...

...economy, emerged first from the recession quickly followed by France. Other EU members like Spain show signs of a sluggish recovery as the unemployment rate hovers at 18.9%. Having a safety net of diverse economies in the region, it has been recognized by surrounding nations like Bosnia, Kosovo, and Serbia which now show their interest in membership. None can speak of seeking the benefits quite like Iceland who, if it were an American company, would have filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy. The aluminum, silicon-alloy, and machinery driven economy had to call on the IMF, which normally provides loans for distressed developing countries, to provide a 3.1 billion dollar credit line. Icelandic banks leveraged up so heavily the years prior to that resulting in debt outstanding that exceeded the world's 18th largest island's GDP. The Lisbon treaty would help further guarantee this security as the European Central Bank would be recognized as an EU institution expanding the power of the almighty euro. A two year term president would replace the current rotating president; the previous Prime Minister of England, Tony Blair has been mentioned frequently as a candidate. Other changes include a permanent Charter of Fundamental Rights, a high representative for foreign policy, and restrictions on member states to block EU measures even if they fail counter to that particular nation's interests.

A few structural changes won't advance the EU onto the global stage this time around. However, as time progresses and countries flood into it, expectations to become a more competitive player will grow and bring with it treaties of measurable significance. Until then, denizens watch on in aguish as Klaus looks out for Czech interests by snapping pencils in refusal to sign the treaty.

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).

European Union Member States



THUMBS UP

FlashForward on ABC
Where the Wild Things Are
Our much improved football team
Peruna
Windows 7
Paranormal Activity



THUMBS DOWN

Excessive rain
Football losses in overtime
More celebrity DUI's



CAMPUS EVENTS

Women's Soccer v. UCF

October 23, 7 PM
Wescott Field

Volleyball v. Rice

October 23, 7 PM
Moody Colliseum

Face and Form: Modern and Contemporary Sculpture

October 25, 11 AM-4 PM
Meadows Museum

Warren Corbett Lecture and Book Signing

October 29 6 PM
Degoyler

Meadows Opera Theatre Halloween Performance

October 30 10 PM

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

The Headless Horseman



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