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HILLTOPICS

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Immigrant 'invasion' is a hollow fear

by Jason Shyung

In recent memory, there has only been one policy proposal by President Bush that has been able to unite Democrats and Republicans, and it is most likely a proposal that you have long forgotten.

One year ago, the President proposed the implementation of a guest-worker program to ease the problems with our current immigration system, and it is this proposal that was able to unite Democrats and Republicans in defiance of it, albeit for different reasons. I have been amazed by the extremely negative reaction to the President's policy from individuals on both sides of the aisle, and I have been floored by the negative rhetoric that has surrounded the President's proposal.

It is ironic that our nation, which revels in its immigrant heritage, is so critical of allowing immigrants into our country, and I am shocked at the ignorant social arguments that have been made by individuals who are against immigration. Immigrants are often branded as criminals, and some have even linked immigration with the downfall of our society's religious beliefs and values.

One of the arguments that I hear constantly is that immigrants are criminals and that wherever they go crime is sure to follow, but if one looks at the facts, this claim is simply not true. In a study conducted by the General Accounting Office, which analyzed FBI data, "foreign-born individuals accounted for about 19 percent of the total arrests in 1985 in six selected major cities," and considering that they represent about 19 percent of the total population, immigrants are not disproportionately represented amongst the criminal element in our nation. Another interesting fact is that the INS discovered in one of its studies that those immigrants who are arrested show a lower recidivism rate (the likelihood of being re-arrested) than native-born individuals, 37 percent for foreign-born individuals versus 66 percent for native-born individuals. The majority of the research suggests that there is little connection between immigrants and crime, and people need to consider this fact before they go out deriding all immigrants as thieves and murderers.

Another argument that I have heard against immigration is that the current inflow of immigrants will result in the polarization of our society and the loss of our "Anglo-Protestant" roots, to use the definition of Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington, who has recently written a book on this topic. Some of these cultural arguments can be connected to the
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Disaster raises religious questions

by Andrew Baker and Jared Dovers

Picture this: in what can only be described as a terrible act of God, nearly all of the Park Cities—including SMU—is leveled in a freak series of explosions. All the major roads are destroyed, including Central Expressway, Mockingbird, the Tollway—all of them. All area hospitals are inaccessible and/or non-existent. Krogers, Central Market, and Tom Thumb are piles of rubble. To top it all off, you've lost most of your friends and all of your family in one fateful moment. You have no belongings, no money (and what would it buy you?), you're hungry, tired, probably injured, and God doesn't seem to be taking prayer requests.

For those of you who stuck with us, we're sure that was equally as hard for you to imagine as it was for us to construct. The truth is, we can't really picture what South Asia has gone through, and we can't really draw parallels while sitting in the middle of a Western, prosperous metropolis. Just imagine sixteen SMU's disappearing from the face of the Earth. Read that again. The point of doing this exercise is not only to point out what we here in the West often take for granted but also to prompt the reader seriously to ask: why does this happen?

We're not here to recycle geological explanations of this event. While that may be the reason, we're here to talk about why, or rather how, we happily profess an all-loving, all-powerful God, but we constantly witness these heinous events in no way caused by our fellow man: California mudslides, random sinkholes, tsunamis, volcanoes, all the way to cancer. These are just the "perks" of living on the planet. This problem isn't new (read: the Plague), nor will it go away any time soon.

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On the web: Go to www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics to read all of the stories in this issue and more. You can also submit your thoughts to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

The brutal truth: a rape victim's story

by Courtney Underwood

"After a rape you go on breathing; you go through the motions of living, but your soul has been invaded and despoiled." These are the words of Florence Holway taken from the HBO documentary "A Rape in a Small Town: The Florence Holway Story." Holway was raped, sodomized, hog-tied, and beaten at the age of 76 in her quiet farmhouse in the small town of Alton, New Hampshire. Her rapist, 25 year-old John LaForest, was given a plea bargain that allowed him to plead guilty to two counts, one of rape and one of sodomy. If he had been tried on all five counts LaForest could have been given up to 46 years in prison; instead he was sentenced to 12-25 years.

Holway tells her story now, at the age of 87, and she has been telling it for the past twelve years; her blunt and honest words move from heart-wrenching to amusing and back again. She went public with her story when she was informed that County Attorney Fitzgerald had given LaForest a plea bargain. With a room full of supporters beside her, Holway met with Fitzgerald, who disregarded her request for a trial. So, she went to the media, and the media loved her. But despite the thousands of calls that Fitzgerald received, he refused to change his mind on the grounds that no semen had been found. Despite the absence of semen, it seems as though the woman's beaten, bleeding, and torn up body coupled with the fact that LaForest was arrested while still sleeping naked in her bed would have been enough evidence to convince a jury that he raped her beyond a reasonable doubt.

Holway talks about how she believed that she was going to die while she was being raped. This is a common fear for rape victims. Though 70% of female rape survivors do not sustain serious injuries, 49% of these women report fearing death or serious injury during their rape. Furthermore, her attacker choked her on two separate occasions and hit her so hard that he broke many of her teeth and knocked her unconscious.

Despite County Attorney Fitzgerald's stubborn demeanor and ineptitude when handling this case, Holway continued to fight for changes. However, she finds no solace in the changes that have been made. She says that as people patted her on the back, she cried because "there was not a thing done...that was done for prevention." New Hampshire law was changed to include stiffer sentences for rape offenders for the first and second offense and mandatory life in prison for the third offense.

But do we really need to give sex offenders three strikes before they are out? At a parole hearing for LaForest in 2003, Holway recounted the story of the Fleming case in Maine; Fleming raped 2 women and served 15 years of his 20-year sentence. Shortly after being released on parole, Fleming knocked a 15 year-old girl from her bike, raped her, and murdered her. The parole board released LaForest to a halfway house the following year; he was back in prison within two months for harassing a woman. Apparently, the sex offender program did a fantastic job, as usual.

Despite Holway's humor and strength of character, she discusses the fact that she and her family now live in fear. She said, "I didn't realize what a rape does to a person. You look over your shoulder constantly because someone is coming around the corner after you; your life sort of falls

'Sorority-ing hat' does its magic

by Jared Dovers

DALLAS, TX—Independents everywhere were elated to finally find that one of the largest mysteries to the non-Greek community has been solved. That mystery: what the hell goes on during Panhellenic rush? Rush week, filled with ear-piercing chants that sound like a strange cross between cheerleaders at camp and zealous cult members, freshman girls wearing more money than Bush pledged to the tsunami victims, and the "pig run" have always left the non-Greek with a nagging feeling of "...what the [CENSORED]?"

For years, non-Greeks, anti-Greeks, GDIs, faculty, staff, and non-affiliated parents have sought to understand the inner workings of the "recruitment" process or "rush" (which every person not employed by the University calls it). "Since I started working here," said one high-ranking SMU official, "I've always held a deep sense of wonder at a week where girls are paraded around in designer pumps and high dollar clothing in a quest for a jersey that the bag lady on Central Expressway wouldn't be caught wearing. I'm glad we've at least come up with a theory."

What does it all mean? How do these girls go from one bonded community of SMU first-years to another (bonded?) community made of several distinct houses set apart by letters, reputation, and a fairly nasty cutting process? After much thought and research, independents have come up with the only logical answer to explain the awesome mysteries of this week: sororities, like the magical Hogwarts of the popular *Harry Potter* series, must have some sort of magical "sorority-ing" hat, say experts. According to this theory, the magical hat (probably ordered special from Neiman's), when placed on the head of a non-affiliated lady, has the ability to peer into the girl's innermost soul, and then label that soul with a combination of up to three Greek letters.

Unlike Panhellenic, with their shroud of secrecy, the Inter-Fraternity Council has been fairly straightforward with their rush activities, which (as previously supposed by independent think tanks on campus) involves nights of always-deniable binge drinking, clandestine visits to gentleman's clubs, and the occasional don't-ask-don't-tell off-campus party. (Our reporters, again, find that everyone was familiar with these facts except those employed by the University).

"It sounds crazy, but it's the best we've got," said the chief of the Gamma Delta Iota think tank, located in the basement of Meadows. "We know something crazy is going on down there. So far, the hat's the best we've come up with. It accounts for all the data, and, to be honest, we sleep better at night thinking there's some voodoo involved with this."

Jared Dovers is a senior religious studies and philosophy major.

apart. You're not the same person you were, that's all there is to it." Furthermore, Holway recounts that she was raped once by her assailant and once by the justice system; however, her courage and determination in telling her story illustrate that the voice of one victim can make a difference and lead to changes. Furthermore, while she was unable to keep the "monster" from doing to another woman what he did to her, she at least succeeded in preventing prosecutors in the state of New Hampshire from giving a plea agreement to an alleged rapist without the victim's approval.

Courtney Underwood is a senior psychology major.

History 101: this year's NFL playoffs resemble previous years in many ways

by Douglas Hill

After three of the four wildcard games ended with the lower seed advancing, the NFL playoff season is down to its final four, and they're the four teams that started the playoffs seeded first and second in their conferences.

While this is less than surprising in the NFC, where one-third of the playoff teams didn't boast a winning record, the AFC story is slightly different. Not very many people expected the Indianapolis Colts to dominate the Denver Broncos in the playoffs. Again. And not very many people expected the New England Patriots' secondary to entirely shut down Peyton Manning in the playoffs. Again. History seems to be repeating itself, and that sounds like bad news in Philadelphia, where the Eagles are trying to avoid a fourth straight conference championship loss.

But, conversely, it seems somewhat appropriate that in the vastly uneven NFC the two playoff teams who are actually good professional football teams are meeting for a chance to go to Jacksonville. And who could ask for a more exciting chess match than Bill Belichick's defensive scheming against Big Ben Roethlisberger, the rookie QB whom, until this weekend, no one seemed to be able to figure out? All four teams feature electrifying quarterbacks who have the potential to break open any game, and at least in the NFC the quarterbacks seem to be the keys to victory.

Eagles vs. Falcons (Sunday, Jan. 23, 2:00, FOX)

This game really seems to come down to two key questions: can Philly contain Michael Vick, and can Donovan McNabb continue to make due without Terrell Owens?

With regard to Vick, the Eagles' defense has a good record against running quarterbacks. Vick ran for only 30 yards two years ago in the teams' last playoff contest (remember: history seems to be repeating itself this year). This season, an opposing quarterback has gained more than 30 rushing yards only twice against the Eagles' defense. Unless Vick has a truly magical day, the Eagles shouldn't have too much trouble restraining Vick, which will put the entire burden of the Falcons' rushing game on the 5-foot-9 shoulders of Warrick Dunn: more of a load than he's used to carrying.

On the other side of the ball, McNabb—along with significant help from running back Brian Westbrook—demonstrated this week that life after T.O. is possible for the Eagles' passing game, but that was against a Vikings defense that gave up nearly 25 points and 250 passing yards per game (and one-fourth of Minnesota's schedule was against division patsies Detroit and Chicago). This week will be a bigger test for McNabb, as he faces a somewhat better pass defense.

Prediction: Eagles' defense shuts down Vick; McNabb struggles, but manages to get the job done. Prayers are finally answered in Philly: Eagles win, 27-10.

Steelers vs. Patriots (Sunday, Jan. 23, 5:30, CBS)

Roethlisberger looked plain bad last week in a weak win over the Jets. He barely completed half of his passes, threw two interceptions (one of which nearly cost Pittsburgh the game), and seemed to crack under the pressure of a big game after a week off. In short, he looked like a rookie, and he is a rookie. He's a very talented, composed rookie, but still a rookie. Against a Patriots' defense that has made Peyton Manning look like Eli Manning in two straight playoff match-ups, this could spell trouble for the Steelers.

Steelers fans are quick to rebut that Big Ben and the Steelers' hefty running game handled the crafty Patriots' D in the regular-season meeting in route to snapping New England's record-setting winning streak, but that was without Patriots' star running back Corey Dillon. The Patriots had only six rushing attempts in that game, and couldn't play their game. Dillon is back, and that's bad news for the Steelers, as the Patriots should have their typically solid offense and a defense that demonstrated last week that it can overcome injuries, even against an all-pro quarterback.

Oh yeah, remember that history theme? The Patriots made the Super Bowl in 2001 by beating the Steelers in Pittsburgh in the AFC Championship.

Prediction: Big Ben plays like a rookie; Belichick works his playoff magic. The Dynasty continues: Patriots win, 24-6.

Douglas Hill is a sophomore philosophy and international studies major.

Students have opportunity to send more than prayers to help Tsunami victims

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How is it that God, who loves you, and is all-powerful will smite you with random acts of geological or biological violence? If we think of things this way, we have to view the California mudslide as a sort of geological drive by. What's the deal?

You, the theist, have two options in answering this question: either God isn't the man (woman?) you thought he was cracked up to be, or there's some other explanation. God has a plan, and it must involve the random deaths of 165,000 Asians. Fundamentalist Christians say the world is coming to an end—and this is just more proof. We believe the New Testament is pretty clear on this point: we can't know the hour of the end nor the mind of God. Not to mention, adopting this take on the ills of the world would probably make you pretty apathetic regarding humanity's ability to fix things. If it's gonna end, it's gonna end. Right?

For those of us who choose not to sit idly in church pews while the world is going straight to hell, we try to rec-

oncile our faith in God with the deluge of news coverage. We're not here to provide a definitive answer—the question is old, and a lot of smart people have given their take on it. Writing this article, we thought back to the Judeo-Christian narratives found throughout the Bible. Time and time again, when God brings suffering, it's man's chance to respond.

We understand the concept of "humanity" best when our fellow man is in dire need—not when we're all "sittin' purty." We can't solve the problem of evil for you, but we do wonder if events like the tsunami don't remind us of a common humanity. We shouldn't have had to try to bring this disaster home with a silly example at the beginning of the article—man suffering anywhere should be enough to move us to action. Maybe that's the point. In closing, as Jerry Springer would say: "In the meantime, take care of yourself, and each other."

Andrew Baker is a senior English and political science major. Jared Dovers is a senior religious studies and philosophy major.

Immigration plan would help America

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current debate over multiculturalism in our nation, because those who are against a multicultural view of our society are also staunchly anti-immigration, since immigration reinforces multiculturalism by increasing the number of languages, cultures, and traditions amongst the people in our nation. The multicultural argument is primarily one of ideology and cannot be easily addressed by facts alone; however, there are studies that contradict the belief that immigrants are leading us away from our "Protestant" roots.

The Hispanic population, due to its sheer size and Catholic background, are often viewed as the primary threat to our "Anglo-Protestant" tradition, but in a recent study done by the University of Notre Dame, the Hispanic population is actually becoming more and more protestant and evangelical. In the next twenty-five years, "half of all American Hispanics will not be Catholic," and currently, seventy-seven percent of non-catholic Latinos are either Protestant or other Christian. Among Latino Protestants, 6.2 million are evangelical Christians and 4.5 million are members of "Pentecostal or Charismatic denominations." Hispanics also feel that "religion provides a great deal of guidance in their day to day living," a sentiment that echoes that of the conservative religious right. Clearly, a large part of the Hispanic population is becoming a part of our "Protestant" tradition, and those on the right who fear the "Catholic threat" actually have little to worry about.

Immigrants do not come to the United States to murder and pillage; rather, they often make the long journey to America in search of a better life for themselves and their families.

The immigration issue is not simple, but any argument made against immigration that is purely built upon inflammatory social claims must be closely questioned and vigorously scrutinized. We must never forget that we are a nation of immigrants, and to deride the immigrants of today as criminals and cultural destroyers betrays that immigrant heritage.

Jason Shyung is a senior economics and international relations major.

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Students being forced to buy grades

by Emily Jordan

Although being a senior in high school may have been a highlight of growing up, being a senior in college is nothing short of awkward. It is a time of transition when you crave total independence, but finances typically do not allow for such freedom. Difficult (not to mention important) decisions must be made: will I work or pursue further education like graduate school or law school? Where in the world do I want to go next? Who will go with me? It seems as if there are more unknown elements than known elements for most seniors. Personally, I am "keeping my options open" by pursuing both admission to graduate schools and full-time employment after May and hopefully one of the two will work out.

Despite all the unknown aspects of being a senior and what is next for you in life, the single most frustrating part is something you do know: an official SMU transcript should not cost \$9.00. Assuming you want to truly keep your options open, any given senior might apply to 10-15 graduate programs. I won't insult your intelligence by doing the math for you, but I will tell you that it is frustrating to watch the entire process of a person behind a desk hitting "print," and then watch your transcript be printed to the tune of \$9 per copy. Granted, I can't speak for the entire class of 2005, but I'm trying to stop knocking at my parents' door for more money. Such an endeavor for independence seems impossible, though, if one is to actively pursue plans for the immediate future.

In completing graduate school applications, I found that most applications required a transcript from each secondary institution I attended. For me, that list of schools included SMU, American University in D.C. where I completed a semester "abroad," and Arkansas State University-Beebe near my hometown where I took 3 hours of summer school before coming to SMU. After forking over my credit card information to the SMU registrar's office, I expected to have to pay for my transcripts from American University and ASU-Beebe. But much to my surprise, they were free!

Yes, American University, which is a private school much like SMU and ASU-Beebe, which is a state school on a strict budget, had no qualms about providing me with my transcripts free of charge. Perhaps it is because these schools acknowledge that I already paid for my tuition and the privilege of taking classes at these institutions so they feel that I have already purchased access to my grade (after all, I made the grade!). Thus, they do not charge for the ability to prove to others (like the admissions committee at various graduate schools) how a student performed in their classrooms. Whatever the reason, SMU should recognize that it is not behaving like other schools by forcing students to pay a hefty fee to receive a transcript. It is quite a shame that a student should feel restricted in the application process simply because the cost of transcripts is so high. Rather, students should feel that SMU has prepared them for the next step in life and would be happy to assist them in their pursuits.

Emily Jordan is a senior political science major.

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