

1-24-2005

Hilltopics: Volume 1, Issue 11

Hilltopics Staff

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Recommended Citation

Hilltopics Staff, "Hilltopics: Volume 1, Issue 11" (2005). *Hilltopics*. 10.
<https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics/10>

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HILLTOPICS

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volume one, issue eleven
week of january 24, 2004

Condoleeza Rice lacks understanding of political climate of modern world

by Michael Hogenmiller

Condoleeza Rice, in the opening remarks of her Secretary of State confirmation hearing, compared the global atmosphere of today to the challenges the United States faced at the end of World War II. According to Rice, the challenges of the War on Terror equal the challenges of the realization of the Holocaust, the introduction of nuclear weapons to the world, and the impending threat of an arms race with the Soviet Union.

"The challenges we face today are no less daunting," she said. "America and the free world are once again engaged in a long-term struggle against an ideology of hatred and tyranny and terror and hopelessness. And we must confront these challenges with the same vision and the same courage and the same boldness that dominated our post-world war period."

However, Rice's claim that America's challenges today are as daunting as they were after World War II is complete political nonsense. World War II was a global conflict that fought the politics of fascism, the inhumanity of genocide, the pro-

paganda of nationalism, and introduced the moral and ethical complications of nuclear power. It introduced America to its conscience.

The Secretary of State at the time, under President Harry S. Truman, was James F. Byrnes. Byrnes came into office facing the difficult tasks of rebuilding a war-torn Japan and dealing with the diplomatic intricacies of holding Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and Communism at bay in Eastern Europe. One of his major diplomatic goals was to assure that the peoples of Germany and her allies would be allowed to choose their own forms of government, and he was instrumental in nearly all of the postwar peace conferences. Interestingly enough, he was also committed to establishing the United Nations as an effective international peacekeeping body.

In her confirmation hearings for Secretary of State this week, Rice was questioned by various Senators about whether or not her loyalty to President Bush and support for the Iraq conflict "overwhelmed her respect for the truth." Some

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Parking on the Hilltop is bad and not likely to get any better any time soon

by Craig Zieminski

From the heated comfort of a luxury sports coupe, Johnny jealously eyes the frigid student squeaking down the street on a rickety bicycle. Sure, he is protected from the biting January cold (and balmy March heat waves), but the fortunate Mustang on the Huffy has a distinct advantage. For she, you see, does not have to park an automobile on the Hilltop.

Parking. At SMU, it's the business-world equivalent of griping about the weather around the water cooler. Whether you're a Fiji or a flute major, everyone is unified in anger at the parking situation. Lately, commuter parking spaces are disappearing faster than Uggs on a sale rack. The commuter lot was opened to all students, Dedman Center construction eradicated an entire lot, the senior lot by Boaz became a new Cox building, and Moody Garage has opened its (stainless steel) arms to all-comers, including a healthy reserve of visitor spaces.

Commuters aren't the only ones complaining. Every other Saturday during the fall semester, resident cars are banished to the far corner of the campus to make space

for the six hundred fans that show up for each home football game.



The time has come! Let's stage a revolt! We can form a human chain around the perimeter of Moody Garage or lay down in the posh, reserved spaces of our top administrators.

Or perhaps we should step back and think about it. Is parking really a major crisis? I curse loudly every time my car finds a home on the roof of Moody, but honestly, I think we might expect a little too much from the Buildings and Grounds Committee. Parking at college is not supposed to be as convenient as at the 7-11. Some people speak as though they believe that sufficient space should be available immediately in front of every building.

In writing this article, I spoke to several people, and nobody had ever seen the commuter lot completely full. I know, I know, it's a good ten-minute walk from the far end of that lot to most of the classrooms, but the bodies of our student body are probably among the most

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Student's inauguration trip demonstrates best and worst of our democracy

by Andrew Baker

I wanted to punch someone. I had spent about thirty minutes trying to get into Fort D.C. (formerly the Capitol grounds and the Mall) for the inauguration ceremony. Once inside, I began looking for signs directing me to my ticketed section; and, I accidentally stepped out of the security zone—not an easy thing to do, I realize. After wasting several minutes trying to persuade two officers (first a male, and then a more pleasant-looking, although equally unforgiving, female) to let me back inside, I found myself back in another line—this time for about an hour. Eventually I made my way through the obnoxiously necessary checkpoints into the Capitol grounds and caught the President's address—which I must say was quite moving and one containing familiar themes. Our President spoke of spreading freedom to other nations, which I'm pretty sure those points on the Statue of Liberty's crown (thank you, France) represent—but I digress.

Following the address and en route to the inaugural parade, I marched past a small gathering of protesters who were thanking God for the tsunami and condemning to hell all of us passing by for not accepting their unbelievably skewed version of Jesus (well, you know, I'm pretty sure Jesus had a thing or two to say about love and compassion, but it's been a long time since I've perused the Good Book—although the Gideons left a nice copy for me at my hotel).

Walking up Pennsylvania Avenue, I, once again, inadvertently left the security zone because a sweet volunteer had given me bad directions. As I was once more trying to find an entrance into the avenue, I was allowed to enter through a gate that I had no business going through. Wouldn't you know it, I ended up walking right past security, past Medal of Honor recipients, and past the private booth for the President! Without proper credentials and without being stopped by anyone, I came within inches of where the President would be in just a few minutes. I was the only one in the area wearing jeans and not dressed to the nines—but still no one questioned me. Hell, I could have watched the parade from the 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue seats; but not wanting to get caught, I kept going until I eventually came to my designated area and sat down. I got a good laugh out of the experience, though. Note to the Secret Service: Don't assume someone is

with a group—he might not be and might decide to break off from the group to snoop around for a bit.

The week wasn't without irony. During his address, the President told other nations that they must trust their people. Trying to get into the barricaded Pennsylvania Avenue, I remembered that statement and laughed out loud to myself. Of course, it is hard to trust the people when they are cursing your existence and sporting the latest in punk fashion.

I had to laugh when my train to the airport was delayed because some parts had not arrived—this after another train had derailed the day before. Not wanting to miss my flight back to Dallas, I found another, more reliable means of transportation involving four wheels instead of tracks. At a stand still in traffic, in a vehicle without a working heater, I noticed that I was stopped underneath a bridge marked Good Luck Road. And when I got back home, I noticed that all of my souvenirs were made in China. God, I love this world so full of unexpected yet wholly appropriate ironies.

So was going to the Inauguration worth missing a week of school? As much as I regret missing some classes during my last semester at SMU (choke), the trip was worth it. On Tuesday night, an event called A Celebration of Freedom took place near the White House. On the way to the Ellipse, I met a gentleman from India. He explained to me that he had created an I.T. company and that he was trying to get to know people in America. I sat next to him at the ceremony, and he kept asking me if I could see President Bush, who was not on stage quite yet. I told him no, but I encouraged him to keep looking. When the President finally did come on stage, the man jumped to his feet, leapt onto his chair, and began shouting "Oh, wow!" repeatedly. This incident alone made missing classes worth while. To see how excited someone could be just to catch a glimpse of the President and to hear his hopes for a better life left me stunned. Here next to me, in the sub-freezing cold, was the manifestation of the American dream. He had come to America, he had built a company, and he was making his dream a reality. How often do you get to see something like that in the classroom? The firework show was okay, too.

Andrew Baker is a senior English and political science major.

Liberalism 101: or, how not to turn your faith in a loving God into bombed clinics

by Jared Dovers

A great professor at our school once told his class that a sure way to make it into the history books was to be a great defender of the declining liberal Christianity in an age of resurgent fundamentalism (i.e., now). As anyone who knows me will tell you, I've always dreamed of making the history books.

In all seriousness, it's about time someone spoke up for this other Christianity and came to its aid. For too long, liberal Christianity has simply shut up in the face of what it views as a temporary fundamentalist coloring of the religious landscape. I think this silence is a mistake, and the consequences are clear: our faith is being hijacked and used by Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell to sway the faithful in mind, spirit, and votes.

I am ready to speak up for the faith that I know and speak out against a Christianity that has the capacity to support—either openly or not—war, bigotry, homophobia, and xeno-

phobia. This Christianity I speak against abides in shameful support of the neo-conservative agenda. Not all fundamentalists practice these things. In fact, I'm convinced most don't, but the fundamentalist mindset is what makes it possible to have my faith wrongly associated with these things. While I can't expect to change deep-seeded religious beliefs in one single article, I can convince some of you who have had the crap scared out of you by one of my fellow Christians that there are different ways of treating the Christian Bible that don't involve you going to a pit of fiery damnation.

To the non-believer: we're not all here to convince you that the world is ending like in the *Left Behind* novels. Most of us don't use the Bible to justify hatred of other faiths like Ann Coulter. And, yes, plenty of us don't think you're going to hell.

And to all my fundamentalist brethren, I hope to show you
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Fondren bells no longer toll for thee

Student misses familiar chiming of a campus landmark's bells.

by Emily Jordan

As a student at SMU, I have heard the chiming of the bells in the Fondren Science Building for almost four years. I have lived directly behind this beloved building since August, and as such, I had grown accustomed to hearing the soft, lazy chiming of the bells every quarter hour. After returning for the spring semester, however, I sensed within about fifteen minutes that something was amiss: the bells no longer sweetly chime to help faculty and students keep track of time.

I am inclined to heed the advice of John Donne when he admonishes us to ask not for whom the bell tolls because it may, in fact, toll for thee. Similarly, I am not even sure if I want to know why the tower is no longer home to the gentle chiming. (Although, I imagine it probably has something to do with the scaffolding currently surrounding the tower.) But I do miss the gentle reminder the quarterly chimes provided during any given Monday/ Wednesday/ Friday class that only five minutes remained.

Perhaps, what I loved best was hearing the bells from my apartment. If I were performing a household chore or procrastinating so as to avoid catching up on my homework, I always knew when fifteen more minutes had passed. This helped me not waste away entire hours on end. Moreover, the chimes were sometimes responsible for lulling me to sleep at night, or for a short catnap, and even more frequently for getting me out of bed in the morning. Aside from all the practical and personal use the chimes provided, they reminded me—ninety-six times per day—that I was on a beautiful college campus where any student's only true time crunch is found in the fact that in just four short years, one will leave this institution of learning. Why am I asking for whom the bell no longer tolls? Because I wish to be reminded that as a student, my time here is precious and fleeting so that I will be sure to make the most of my days here. Long live the chiming of the bells, bells, bells, bells, bells!

Emily Jordan is a senior political science major.

Parking woes are not a major problem

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physically fit in the nation so this argument also falls on deaf ears. Just consider those ten minutes part of your daily exercise, and remember that students in Austin must take a bus across the highway to get from their commuter lot to classrooms.

Adding parking spaces at a university is understandably seen as a necessary evil to administrators. No prospective student in the history of college has ever chosen one school over another solely because of superior parking, and no benefactor in the history of philanthropy has jumped at the opportunity to have his or her surname plastered to the side of a garage. While I'd love to have more convenient parking on campus, I'm afraid there are no easy solutions. If you have one, or if you think I've grossly underestimated the severity of this situation, we'd love to publish your thoughts. Otherwise, we might just have to lace up our tennis shoes and keep that umbrella handy.

Craig Ziemiński is a senior accounting and economics major.

Religion is a gift, not a weapon

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that those of us on the other side of this inner-faith debate are (despite what you've heard from pulpits and parents) prayerful, dedicated believers. We don't secretly worship Satan; we're not (all) communist; and we're not going to hell, either. The Christian faith is not just what you may think it is, and you may actually come to think that a Christian can also be a progressive. Rather than going along with the status quo you can be a political rebel, yearning (and hell, acting!) for meaningful change in the world. Jesus totally was.

The biggest gulf separating these two types of Christians is how each side approaches our common text: the Bible. Whenever you see a Christian carrying a sign that says "GOD HATES FAGS!," you can be damn sure he or she practices a literalist/ fundamentalist reading of the Bible that, despite what the PR people for the extreme Christian right would have you think, allows a certain type of Christian to say that. By the same token, when you see Christians at a pro-gay marriage rally (these days—even a peace rally) you can be pretty sure that they've adopted a more liberal stance on the Bible.

Ever hear a woman freely say she knows she cannot be the head of her household by virtue of her anatomy? Ever hear a preacher say that God still keeps his covenant of salvation with both Jews and Christians? Then you, too, have seen the difference between the fundamentalist and the liberal Christian.

To the fundamentalist Christian, the Bible is inerrant, meaning that the Bible contains not a single mistake, contradiction, or historical inaccuracy. God forced the hand of the biblical authors to create a perfect work. God Himself (God is definitely a male in this view) is the author, not man. This is a pretty interesting position in which to find oneself. Basically, one mistake in the entire 2,000+ pages and your argument quickly becomes SOL. One contradiction, one historical inaccuracy, and God didn't write it. You can see where this is going.

I'm here to tell you that there *are* irreconcilable contradictions in the book: genealogies don't match up, events are repeated in different sequential order, and the authors tell contradictory narratives. Besides that, there are historical issues to consider. If God didn't write the Bible word for word, men did. As humans, these people existed in a certain period in time, had certain cultural values, and perhaps even their own agendas. Once you accept this, the liberal side of Christianity starts to make a lot of sense.

Both groups are Christians regardless of whether one claims to be a liberal or conservative, Universalist Unitarian or Interdenominational Evangelical. However, as a liberal Christian, I want the Christian right to realize that both approaches to Christianity are legitimate even though we disagree. We both deserve to be considered in the common conception of what a "Christian" is. When a non-believer closes his or her eyes to imagine the prototypical Christian, he or she pictures an evangelical on TV screaming about purple Teletubbies and South Park. As a liberal Christian, I want to reiterate the fact that we don't all boycott Disney, and we don't all think dropping bombs is something that Jesus would do. Trust me.

Jared Dovers is a senior religious studies and philosophy major.

Rice is unfit to lead State Department

Future secretary seems more interested in politics than policy.
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Senators also pointed out what they said were significant inconsistencies in Rice's statements about the imminent threat of nuclear weapons in Saddam Hussein's Iraq. And most disturbing of all was Rice's unwillingness to admit to the administration's mistakes, including the decision to go to war over weapons of mass destruction that were later found not to exist.

Rice's comparison—drawing parallels between the post-world war United States and the War on Terror—is more embarrassing than anything else in her testimony. Byrnes was a Secretary of State who argued fiercely for a fair and lasting peace, though he was willing to compromise when political and ideological differences threatened to seriously cripple efforts to continue important negotiations. He also held fast to his beliefs that “even a battle of words is better than a battle with bombs.”

Rice has been anything but an advocate for international peace. Diplomatically frustrated with the United Nations, she's toed the political line whenever the Bush administration's case on weapons of mass destruction has been called into question.

Comparing post-world war America to our country today just emphasizes how differently a statesman like Byrnes would deal with the difficulties of international terrorism. America has paid a high price for the Bush administration's mishandling of the war in Iraq. Now with Rice at the diplomatic reigns of the nation, we can only expect a continued emphasis on ideology rather than detail, and rhetoric rather than promises for which the Bush administration could be held accountable.

I think Byrnes, with his actual post-world war experience in international diplomacy, said it best, “Nations, like individuals, differ as to what is right and just, and dashing appeals to reason may in the long run do more to avert a clash of arms than a lot of pious resolutions which conceal honest and serious disagreements.”

Michael Hogenmiller is a junior political science and music major.

Time to drink and talk about sex

by Courtney Underwood

Do you like food, sex, and alcohol? Well, we have the perfect afternoon or evening entertainment for you. The theater is the Magnolia; the movie is Kinsey. If you haven't seen a movie at the Magnolia, you're missing out. Where else can you go and drink alcohol while you enjoy the movie of your choice? Alright, there are a few other movie theaters that allow you to take part in this sort of debauchery, but the Angelica and the Magnolia are most definitely at the top of the totem-pole.

Furthermore, the student rates at the Magnolia make it cheaper than going to one of the monster movie theaters, which are always dirty and overcrowded. The Magnolia boasts clean, non-stinky seats with arm rests that go up and soft, comfy cushioning. Did I mention that they have a bar in the theater? You can get the poison of your pleasure for prices that won't make you choke. Right now they have a \$2 draft night and you can get a \$15 bottle of wine with two adult tickets anytime. Besides, if you have never tried to pour yourself another glass of wine in a dark movie theater while you are slightly tipsy, then you just haven't lived.

But what were we supposed to be talking about? Oh yes, sex. Well, if you like talking about sex, maybe you will like listening to other people discuss it as well. Kinsey does a beautiful job of tracing some of the work done by a scientist, Dr. Alfred Kinsey. Dr. Kinsey spent 15 years of his life interviewing 18,000 people, and his book, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, was one of the first recorded books that looked at sexual behavior from a scientific perspective. Additionally, his work squelched myths and rumors about sex such as the old wives' tale that if a girl experiences oral sex she will have difficulties with pregnancy later in life.

While Dr. Kinsey was a pioneer in his own time, the movie also depicts the problems that occur when sex is viewed solely from a scientific perspective. Not only does the movie depict Kinsey's bi-sexuality and extra-marital affairs, but it also illustrates the way that sex got out of hand for Kinsey and his research assistants. For example, Kinsey's research assistants slept with each other's wives, and they also slept with many of the volunteer participants while they were doing research for Kinsey's book on female sexuality. Did I mention that they videotaped most of these sexual encounters—for research purposes of course? Perhaps the most shocking moment in the movie occurs when Kinsey interviews a man who is very clearly a pedophile admits to having had sexual encounters with hundreds of pre-pubescent girls and boys.

However, Kinsey's work helped many people discover that their sexual desires (toward consenting adults) were anything but abnormal. He uncovered the normalcy of homosexual and bi-sexual behavior, and he also opened his door to students and newly married couples to answer their questions about sex. Kinsey is a movie that is based in reality and depicts the strengths and weaknesses of a man who began changing social norms to allow discussions about sex.

Courtney Underwood is a senior psychology major.

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Hilltopics is a weekly publication, published Mondays. It is financed in large part by the SMU Students' Association and sponsored by the University Honors Program.

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