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Hilltopics Staff

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HILLTOPICS

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RLSH flyers are wrong and offensive: Adderall use not doping for students with prescriptions

by Nate Regan

Students who live in the residence hall probably saw them.

Upon entering my building, I couldn't miss them.

They were red paper door hangers and colorful poster boards set out by the office of Residence Life and Student Housing that decried the academic assistant known as Adderall.

With all due respect (which is dwindling) to the higher-ups within RLSH, their lamentation of the drug presented a skewed view of something that has vastly improved the GPA's of students who suffer from Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and I took personal offense.

Allow me to present the other side of this argument.

If I give RLSH one bit of credit, it is that they were right to look down upon the *abuse* of Adderall. However, let's remember that too much of *anything* can be harmful. So where are the door hangers speaking out against too much Aspirin? How about too much time in front of a computer? Last year, in fact, our campus took center stage when somebody was put in physical danger because of too much water. But do we see posters and door hangers bashing students who graze the Hilltop with Dasani or Ozarka bottles? Of course not.

What the folks at RLSH failed to mention, however, is the fact that some of our very own Mustangs – including yours truly – actually have a legal prescription for Adderall to fix chemical imbalances such as ADD and ADHD. Is this considered abuse? Perhaps it is to RLSH, who enjoys looking at things from a very black and white perspective where there is no middle ground.

Let me give you a personal ex-

ample. From my days as a pint-sized first grader to my days as a pint-sized freshman at SMU, I was always labeled an underachiever. Why did my grades not match up with my SAT scores? ADHD was the problem, and last semester, Adderall was the answer. You want numbers? My GPA at the end of freshman year was just over a 2.7 – hardly an attractive figure to employers in the job market. Last fall, after being prescribed Adderall in late August, I obtained a semester GPA of 3.52. It may not have earned me a spot on any honor roll, but a 3.52 was a welcome surprise for a kid was used to seeing Cs and Ds on his report cards. I suddenly felt like I was back up to par with my peers who did not have ADD/ADHD.

I have a simple request for the people at RLSH and anyone else who only chooses to look at the negative aspects of an otherwise helpful academic tool – next time you are about to publicly bash something, make sure you have all sides of the case covered. Otherwise, you present nothing more than a one-sided view of an unfair argument.

Nate Regan is a sophomore journalism and anthropology major.



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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.

We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be articles of up to 300–600 words on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@hotmail.com by Wednesday at 8:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

Kicking ass and taking notes: SMU's women are much more than Louis Vuitton-toting bimbos

by Jon Grunert

While reading the piece by Jeanette Purvis in the previous *Hilltopics*, I was struck by the number of questions she raises. Purvis bemoans the “blonde, tanned beauties [that] glide around [campus] in heels and polos as if navigating through a J. Crew ad.” But how could these buxom and brain-dead beauties survive at an institution as demanding as SMU? Perhaps it is because they aren't as mentally incapable as Ms. Purvis implies.

Within those Louis Vuitton handbags are textbooks on molecular physics and advanced philosophy, as well as some of the most extensive class notes I have ever seen. After all, she did see them on her way to class. It isn't out of the realm of possibility that they were headed in the same direction.

And, while in these classes, these women are vocal and intelligent. In-class co-ed discussions are more interesting than they would be if the women's hands had been “down their throats” rather than waving proudly in midair. These women are expected to actively engage their peers in stimulating discussions, which they regularly do.

Another issue raised by her article was that attractive women can't

be superheroes, or, in her words, “kick ass.” Ms. Purvis argues that if a woman is the central character in such a film she is “hot with big breasts.” This is absurd. There is a significant number of female action and superheroes. Their ranks include the likes of Sarah Michelle Gellar's Buffy Summers and Jennifer Garner's Sydney Bristow. Garner has also portrayed the assassin Elektra, a revered comic book legend, in two separate films. These are women who stand up for what is right and routinely save the world. At my last count, Buffy thwarted the apocalypse seven times, all while attending high school, college, or holding a full-time job. These women are also anything but “silicone” enhanced. Ms. Garner is an athletic woman who regularly performs her own stunts. However, they are both regarded as beautiful and desirable. Without “big breasts” and “silicone” what can be the reason for this? Perhaps

men are not as staunchly misogynistic as Purvis proposes. Perhaps we see more in these women than bust size. Perhaps we respect them and want to see more women like them. After all, these characters are regularly created by men. Joss Whedon's Buffy is a manifesto of feminism that he has often said was meant to empower women. The modern man does not expect women to be demure, wilting flowers, but they are encouraged to be strong-willed and intelligent. These are the women we look for.

Yes, the women of SMU are attractive. Yes, they regularly exercise. But they are not “suffocating.” The women of this campus are clever and capable and can do anything they want. If they choose to wear stilettos and Prada to class, that is their choice. What Ms. Purvis fails to notice is that they are in class, thinking, questioning, and kicking hardcore ass. These are the women of SMU.

Jon Grunert is a sophomore theatre major.

Franklin Who? New honors community founded

by Darci Spencer

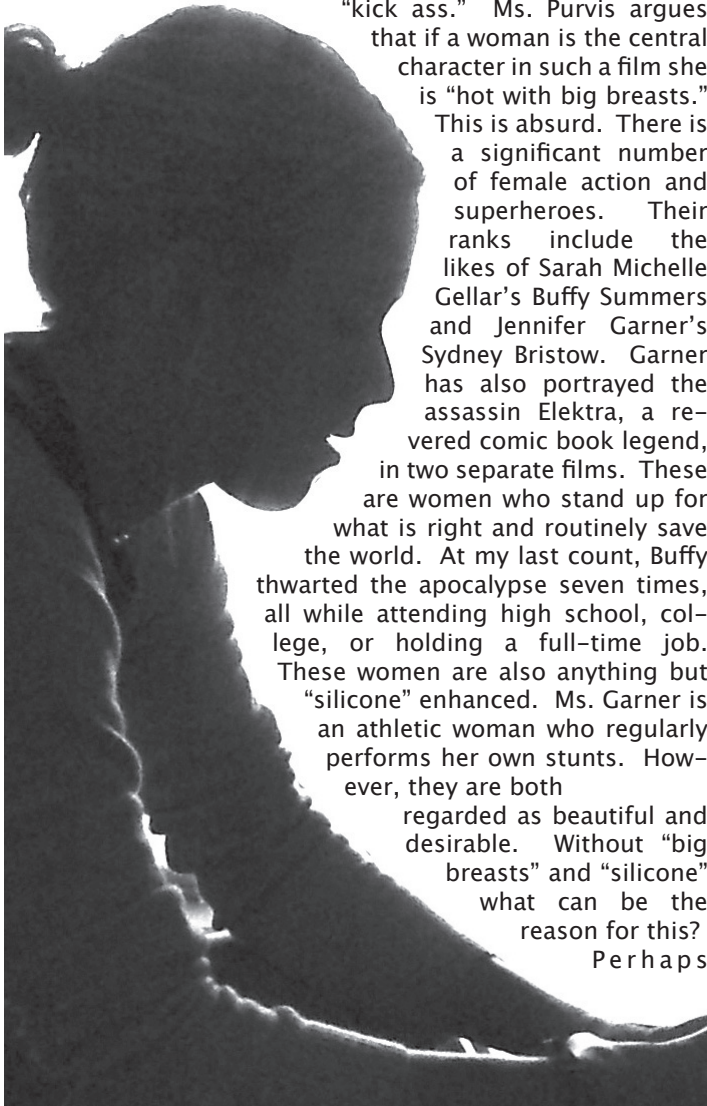
Last spring, a group of students met to discuss ideas for building community within the University Honors Program. From this informal meeting of the minds, the Franklin Balch Society for Honors Advancement was born.

Established to build community among Honors students and named for the first director of the Honors Program, the FBS will serve as a collection of upper-class mentors to entering students as well as a group of ambassadors for events on and off campus. Most importantly, it represents the first opportunity for a large number of Honors students to become actively involved in the program. Past initiatives like the Honors Advisory Council, the Gartner Lecture Committee, and Richter Fellowship Selection Board allowed for only limited student involvement in the present and future of the UHP. The Franklin Balch Society is an organization for all students who are interested in forming connections with other Honors students as well as raising awareness of the UHP among prospective students, campus administrators, and the larger Dallas community.

Since the FBS is a student group, the “Balchites” will have control over what they want the FBS to be. Is it a mentoring program? An assembly of ambassadors? A benevolent secret society—say, the “Hasty Pudding Club of the Harvard of the South”? A planning council for community-building field trips and social events? Rather than shouldering additional responsibilities, Balchites have the option to be as involved or uninvolved as they like. The only requirements are a vague interest in promoting the cause of Honors at SMU and a willingness to attend the Welcome Barbecue to meet and informally mentor entering students this fall—essentially a one-hour time commitment complete with free food.

If you're interested in becoming a Balchite, attend the official launch in the Blanton Building this Tuesday, March 8 at 6:00 pm. You can sign up to attend the barbecue and be a founding member of this fledgling society—as well as express your ideas for what you want the FBS to be.

Darci Spencer is a senior English and marketing major.



Dude, where's my ride? SMU Rides was a needed service, and students need to get it back

by Dawn Jenkins

SMU Rides: Free, safe, and anonymous....until recently. For those of you who don't know why those crazy SMU Rides volunteers have stopped answering your calls, let me explain: SMU Rides is out of commission, and has been since the summer of 2004. You heard me right; SMU Rides has been shut down—not because of any oversight on the part of its directors, but only because they were trying to serve you better.

SMU Rides is a campus service dedicated to ensuring that all students make it home safely from their evening excursions. The program was proposed by Student Senate over ten years ago, and SMU's chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, a national community service fraternity, pledged to manage its implementation. SMU Rides is funded by Student Senate appropriations and by generous private donations. Here's how it worked: Student volunteers gathered in the SAC on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights to man the phone lines. When the calls came in, volunteers arranged for a cab to pick up the students and return them to their places of residence. The callers were not required to pay, and they were guaranteed that their names would remain confidential. SMU Rides maintained a special account with the taxi company to pay for student fares.

Over a year ago, Alpha Phi Omega members began questioning how SMU Rides could be improved and streamlined to better serve the campus. The result was a new contract with a different cab company, drawn up in the spring of 2004 to replace the existing contract, which was set to expire. But faster than the ink could dry, the agreement got stuck in SMU's red tape—I mean, legal—department, where it has been gathering dust for the last ten months.

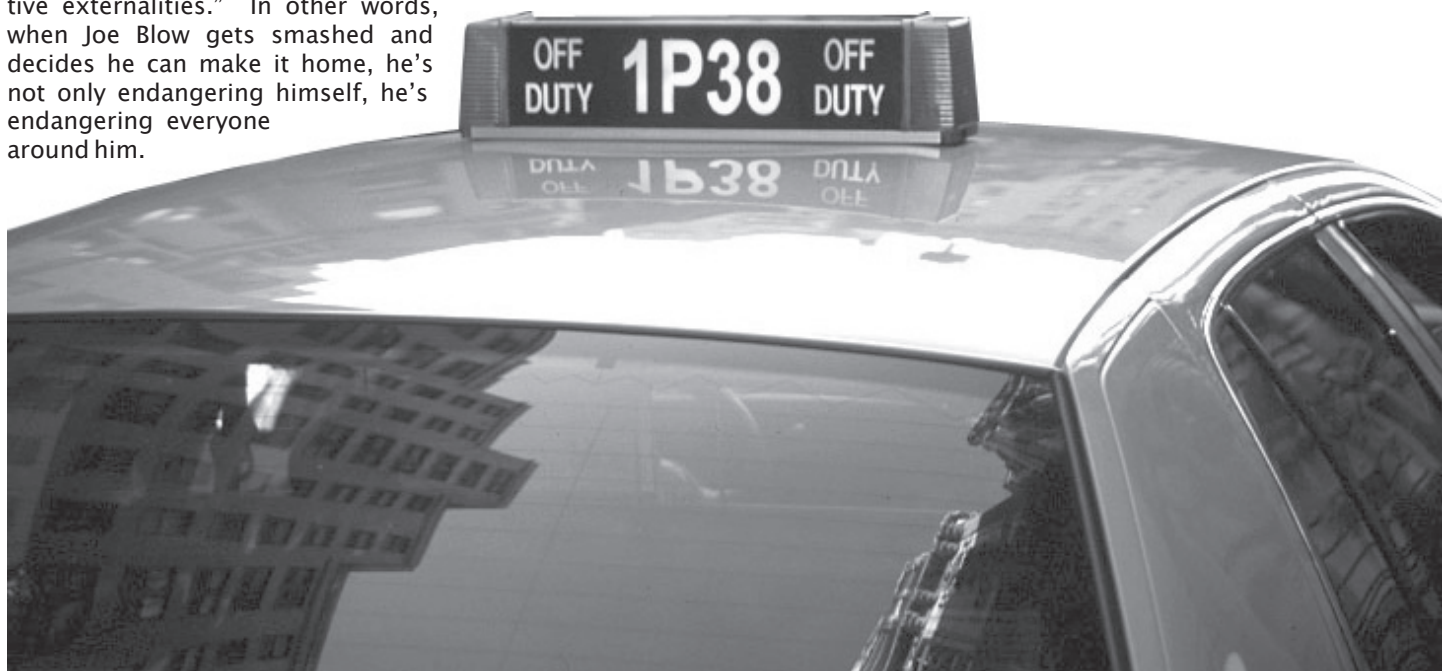
Now, you may be thinking: "Wait a minute here. I don't drive drunk. I always have a designated driver," or maybe even, "I don't drink at all. Why should my tuition fees help pay for students who are too irresponsible to look after themselves?" The answer is a little something economists call "negative externalities." In other words, when Joe Blow gets smashed and decides he can make it home, he's not only endangering himself, he's endangering everyone around him.

Let's not be naïve here: there are quite a few idiots in this world, and some of them even attend our university. Why should we risk turning them loose on the streets of Dallas? The option of a free taxi ride home leaves students without an excuse to drink and drive.

Even more importantly, SMU Rides is not only for students too drunk to drive themselves home. Picture this: You're an innocent freshman girl at your first bus party at a club in Deep Ellum....except, where's the bus? You teeter on your five-inch heels, peering down the dark street, but the bus is nowhere in sight. Or, consider this scenario: You're out at a bar with your buddies. You were supposed to hitch a ride with your roommate, but you realize he's ditched you to follow the girl he's been eyeing all night. SMU Rides is for any student in a bind, strapped for cash, and desperately in need of a safe ride home—whether or not they have consumed alcohol.

Chances are that you or someone you know has been in one of the above situations. Both the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M offer safe ride programs to their students, and their tuition fees are significantly cheaper. Shouldn't SMU care enough about student safety to provide such a service? Alpha Phi Omega members have been working tirelessly to promote the cause, but it is increasingly clear that without the larger support of the student body, nothing more can be accomplished. Here's where you come in: SMU Rides needs you! Campus newspaper editors, student senators, organization leaders, and plain old students: make your voices heard! Convince your fellow students and "the powers that be" that our University cannot afford to ignore this issue. If you would like more information about the current status of SMU Rides, or how you can help spread the word, please contact djenkins@smu.edu or Brittany Touchon, at btouchon@smu.edu.

Dawn Jenkins is an international studies and French major.



Point-Counterpoint: Should the Ten Commandments be displayed on government property?

Protect the First Amendment: Keep religion out of government

by James Longhofer

Last week, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in an important case: *Van Orden v. Perry*. The question at the heart of this case is when it is appropriate to display the Ten Commandments. The case deals with a monument on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol that depicts the Decalogue. Having spent plenty of time at the Capitol Building in Austin, I have seen this monument many times and I hope that the Court decides to remove it and other monuments like it.

Displays of the Decalogue are problematic, to say the least. While I agree with the content of the Decalogue and strive to follow those commandments, the placement of a monument does violate the Establishment Clause in the Constitution. There are two reasons why this display is unconstitutional.

First, not all denominations of Christianity and Judaism agree on what the Ten Commandments are. Different groups define the Commandments differently. Religious groups work from different translations, and different versions have different prohibitions. For some, the Decalogue says "thou shall not kill" and for others it says "thou shall not murder". When the government posts one version of the Decalogue, it has implicitly chosen to support one religion over another.

The second reason why the Decalogue is unconstitutional is that not all religions recognize it as a sacred text. Because of that, the government is effectively discriminating between religions and saying that certain religions are more valid than others. That is not the role of the government.

Just like most other things in Texas, the monument has an interesting story behind it. The display didn't come from a religious group at all. Instead, it came from that most godly place: Hollywood. The monument was donated by Cecil B. DeMille as part of a large campaign to publicize his movie *The Ten Commandments*. Over 400 of these monuments were created, and DeMille even made the stars of the movie, Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner, attend some of the dedications. Who ever would have thought that the Christian Right would defend anything that came out of Hollywood?

As much as I respect Charlton Heston, Guns N' Moses himself, I think that a monument that was created to promote a fifty year old movie and that violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment should be removed from our state capitol. The state has no business placing a monument that says "Thou shall have no other God before me."

James Longhofer is a first-year political science, economics, and public policy major.

Let them stay: Why the Ten Commandments are good for America

by Andrew Baker

We are a society built around the rule of law. While I do not subscribe to the belief that humans are naturally evil, I am not wholly optimistic about the human condition either. I ask myself, "What is the role of laws?" Laws keep us in check by reminding us what is acceptable to society. They serve as deterrents to crime; yet, they also guide us in our day to day lives. In short, they try to get the bad people to be good and the good people to remain that way.

But what does 'good' mean? Are we to define it in terms of utility? Are we all supposed to follow the law to be good, useful, and productive members of society? If that is the case, then it seems this whole journey called life can be boiled down to economics, which is rather frightening.

Beyond the laws are certain, universal truths. We know right from wrong not because the law explains the difference to us but because we feel the compulsion to act rightly out of our nature. Atheists know right from wrong, too.

One must view the Ten Commandments, like other texts, through two lenses: the lens of religion and the lens of history. While the Ten Commandments are religious texts that provide guidance to the believers of specific faiths, namely Judaism and Christianity, they also function as a historical record of basic truths understood by all.

The Ten Commandments are an explication of the reason for laws. We do not have laws simply to regulate society. We have laws to direct society toward some purpose removed from the day-to-day operations of the citizenry. We have outlawed murder not only because it is detrimental to society in terms of utility but also because we have collectively realized that there is inherent dignity and value in every life. Something exists beyond the rule of law that guides our actions. I do not kill others not because the law tells me not to murder but because my heart lets me know it is wrong.

Displaying the reason for our legal system—that is, the promotion of catholic truths—in the form of the Ten Commandments is no vice. It is a reminder of not only the historical roots of our legal system but also the truths we all know—whether we follow them or not.

Should the Ten Commandments be the only texts displayed on government property? I have no problem with displaying appropriate texts from other faith backgrounds or even wholly secular sayings on capitol grounds or in the Supreme Court itself.

Indeed, two camps exist: those who say religion is bad for government and those who hold that the government is bad for religion. Perhaps a middle ground exists, in which the state embraces the universal truths present in a variety of religious traditions while not subscribing to one in particular—i.e. the establishment of a state religion by the Congress of which the Constitution speaks. Let the Ten Commandments remain where they are and let them continue, as reminders of the history of American jurisprudence, to guide our government toward right decisions; but, let us also realize that other faiths have some good advice to give and that they, too, should contribute to our attempts to define higher truths—the things toward which all governments should strive and without which the law cannot stand.

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