

11-21-2005

Hilltopics: Volume 2, Issue 13

Hilltopics Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics>

Recommended Citation

Hilltopics Staff, "Hilltopics: Volume 2, Issue 13" (2005). *Hilltopics*. 33.
<https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics/33>

This document is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hilltopics by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

HILLTOPICS

always 100% smu-written
visit us at www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics

volume two, issue thirteen
week of november 21, 2005

Thanks for nothing: Why the Thanksgiving holiday isn't always such a happy time of year

by Yasmin Awad

It's that time of year again when many people get as stuffed as their turkeys. Families get together (sometimes unwillingly) to celebrate genocide (against Native Americans) by committing another (against turkeys). I refuse to celebrate Thanksgiving this year because of its many problems:

- To Native Americans, Thanksgiving Day is a reminder of the genocide of millions of their people, the theft of their lands, and the relentless assault on their culture.

Are we trying to flaunt that we have living family members and can gorge on the food they taught us to grow? As Mark Twain points out in his War Prayer, wishing and being thankful for one's own success and victory is, at the very same time, wishing and being thankful for another's defeat and destruction. What if Germany or Austria were celebrating a Holocaust Memorial Day, where Germans and Austrians got together with their families for dinner on their official day off, joyously remembering the things that are important to them?

- Many people have Thanksgiving dinner with their family members. But family is not always a good thing – especially all of them at the same time. They only make the holidays more stressful. Personally, I'm still trying to get over the Awad Family Reunion of '01.

- The average American gains three to seven pounds every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Doesn't that tell you something is wrong when 40 percent of the population is overweight by 30 to 50 pounds and 20 percent has more than 50 pounds of excess fat dripping off their flesh?

Don't you think we could give up eating for one day to save some lives of truly starving people?

- Thanksgiving is not only politically incorrect, but historically inaccurate. Indians and Pilgrims did not dine on turkey. Their main course was venison. They didn't have corn on the cob, apples, pears, potatoes, stuffing or even cranberries. They didn't have the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or the NFL either.

- What about the turkeys themselves? Have you ever gone in a slaughterhouse and listened to the turkeys' souls crying out in mass? They are breathing, thinking, skin, heart, and brain, like you.

- Why be thankful only one day of the year? Do we really not have enough to be grateful for? Give thanks on Thanksgiving Day, but make sure to be appreciative all year-round for the many bounties we are given.

Yasmin Awad is a sophomore journalism major.



In the Nov. 14 issue of *Hilltopics*, Eric Johnson wrote a commentary piece falsely accusing *The Daily Campus* of sending an editor on a Fall Break volunteer trip to New Orleans with the intention to have that editor write an article about the experience.

To set the record straight, *The Daily Campus* did not send an editor on this trip to write about the experience. She planned to attend the event because she enjoys volunteering. She was invited on the trip by a friend who lives in the SMU Service House. --Jessica Savage

INSIDE this issue

Holidays: Find out what your *Hilltopics* editors are thankful this year on page 3.

Life: Want a nice dress? Or a big ring? Find a better reason to get married, page 4.

School: Amanda Wall helps you decide if an individualized major is right, page 2.

Nation: Why God *obviously* doesn't want those pesky gays settling down, page 3.

Be Heard: Got an opinion? *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions and interesting feedback. Email 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.

Ready for something new? Individualized majors allow students to pursue their own interests

by Amanda Wall

A couple of months ago, over stale pizza and Slurpy's, my friends and I had a discussion about what we would major in if we didn't have to be practical—if we didn't have to worry about jobs or grad school or parents. I decided that I'd major in English and women's studies. I wanted to figure out what it means to be a woman, how it's different from being a man, and why the hell it matters. It was a fun idea; the only problem was that SMU has no women's studies major, just a minor, and that I was already majoring in English and Spanish. For all those practical reasons I listed above, I couldn't drop either of those majors.

It was at this point that I remembered that SMU does have an individualized studies program and that, for a lot of classes, women's studies overlaps with quite a few English classes. I spent three hours on my floor, counting English hours and Spanish hours and women's studies hours and GEC hours and everywhere they overlap. Finally, I found that, wonder of wonders, I could add an individualized major in women's studies. That was the easy part, though. Declaring an individualized major takes a bit of doing. Before you take the plunge, consider these pros and cons:

Pros:

1. You get to study *what you want to study*. No more wallowing around in majors that don't quite cover or encompass your area of interest.
2. Grad schools and employers will admire your resourcefulness and determination for designing your own major and following through.
3. When they say "design your own major," they mean it literally. You get to choose what kinds of classes you'll be taking and how many of each kind you'll need. This plan will have to be approved by your advisors and Dean Hayes, though, so make it good.
4. If your individualized major is related to your other major or minor, you'll be able to double count any classes that count for both of them!

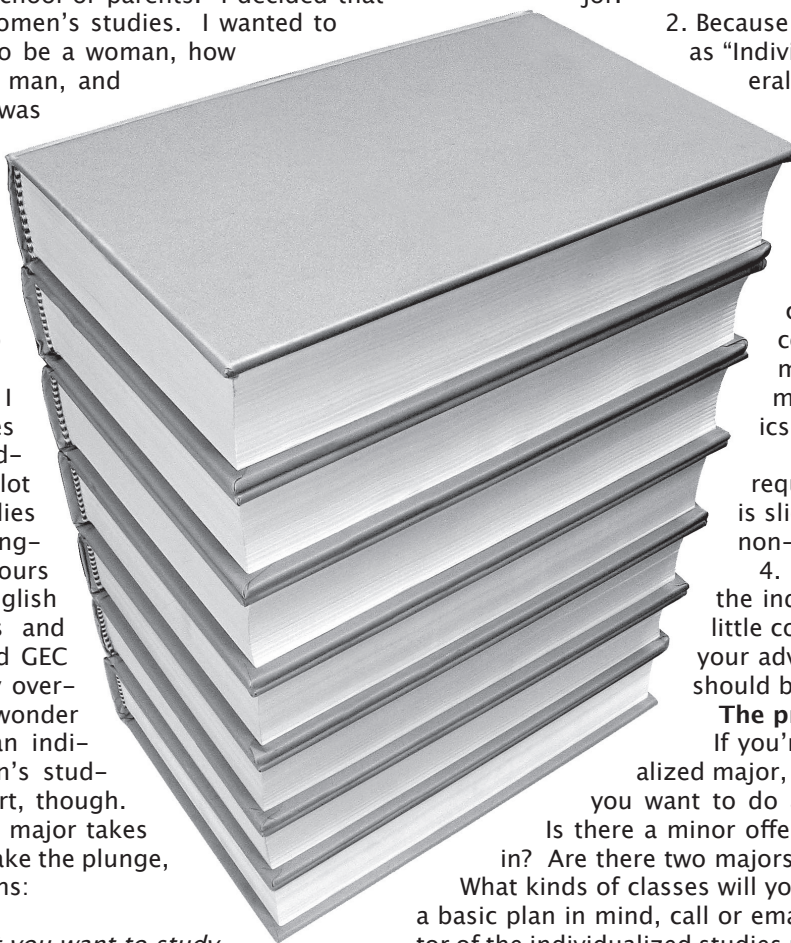
Cons:

1. You must have a 3.50 GPA in your first 24 hours taken at SMU in order to even qualify to have an individualized major.
2. Because it's listed on your transcript as "Individualized Studies in the Liberal Arts" with your specialization beside it, grad schools and employers may see it as less disciplined or useful than if you were attending a school that actually offered your specialization as a major. To counter this, I recommend combining the individualized major with a more traditional major (i.e. history, economics, English, biology).
3. The individualized major requires 36 term hours, which is slightly more hours than other non-science liberal arts majors.
4. The process of declaring the individualized major can get a little complicated. With the help of your advising committee, though, it should be much easier.

The process:

If you're interested in an individualized major, first get a good idea of what you want to do and how it might be done. Is there a minor offered that you'd like to major in? Are there two majors that you'd like to combine? What kinds of classes will you be taking? Once you have a basic plan in mind, call or email Dean Kathy Hayes, director of the individualized studies program (khayes@smu.edu). She can direct you to the professor or professors who can help you get your plan off the ground. Next, you'll need a supervisory committee with at least three members—professors whose disciplines are related to your specialization and who can advise you about the best classes to take. Once these advisors have approved your plan, you'll present a final copy to Dean Hayes, who will present it to the Undergraduate Council for approval. It's a pretty elaborate process, and the number of people who must sign off on your plan is absurd, but in the end, it's worth it.

Amanda Wall is a sophomore English, Spanish (and soon-to-be women's studies) major.



Do you have an opinion about... politics, music, class, television, football, shopping, intramurals, fraternities, movies, the Mavs, sex, restaurants, religion, sororities, driving, study abroad, fashion, the war, parking, magazines, bars, the weather, professors, the Mustang Band, dating, books, nightclubs, Texas, club sports, or anything else ?

we're listening at hilltopics@hotmail.com

Counting our blessings

by the Hilltopics editors

No matter what Yasmin says (see page 1), we still think Thanksgiving is a time to think about all the blessings you have, big and small. So before we take a break for the holiday and start to prepare for our final exams, we here at *Hilltopics* have taken some time to list the things we're thankful for this year. Maybe you could do the same, even if you don't have a publication in which to print them.

1. Senate Funding (thanks Jaelyn!)
2. The University Honors Program and our number one fan and supporter, Dr. David Doyle
3. Contributing writers
4. The Associated Press
5. The first-floor Virginia-Snider lounge, where we meet every week.
6. Images Copy Center
7. The First Amendment
8. Diversity of opinion
9. SMU Webmail
10. Our founding editorial staff

So before you rush home to eat turkey or to Umphrey Lee for an extra special bowl of Thanksgiving Rice Crispies, take a moment or two to think about how lucky you are. You're a student at an outstanding American university, so you're already in the luckiest one percent of the world. Even if you're not too cheery this holiday season, thinking about what's going right can really brighten your day.

Happy Thanksgiving, from:

Michael
Yasmin
James
Rebekah
Mark
Kasi
Dawn
Amanda
Doug
and Courtney!

The Godly fight: Religious faith means Prop. 2 was a Godsend

by Zach Stokes

Last week, I was happy to discover that about 70% of my fellow Texans and I are going to heaven. As most of you know, those darn homosexuals (henceforth referred to as 'demons') were trying to stop us Godly folk (henceforth referred to as "Saved") from approving legislation that would prevent the demons from having the same rights as us Saved. If the Bible has taught us anything, it's that, if you hate something enough and you convince enough people that God hates it too, there's nothing you can't do. That is what the Saved did, and we succeeded.

Like the blacks did a long time ago, the demons are trying to get special "privileges" that we just don't think they deserve. The only reason we Saved are winning with the demons is because about three fourths of the Bible is dedicated solely to bashing homosexuals. People respond well to Bible-speak, even if they're not particularly religious. It appeals to their sense of morality. We capitalize on that.

Besides the whole religious debate (as if any other debates have merit), demons just plain ole gross the Saved out! For this very reason, the Saved are working very closely with conservative religious groups to propose constitutional amendments to outlaw spiders (eek!), plastic surgery shows on TV (puke!), and homeless people.

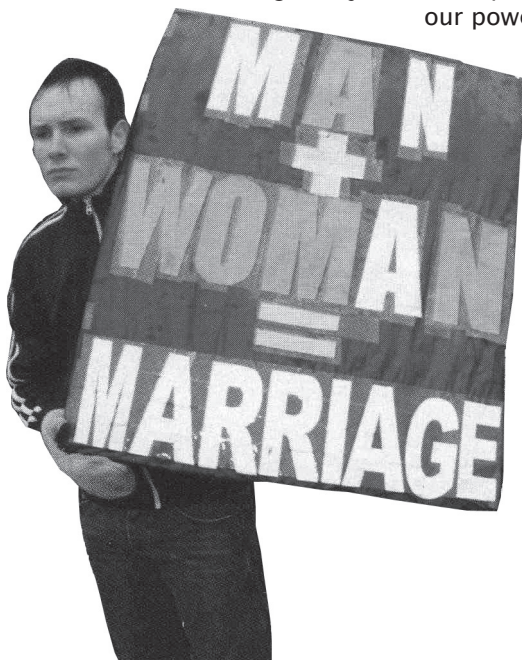
A point many homosexuals aren't seeing in this debate is that if we allowed them to marry (because yes, we Saved do have the power to take away basic human rights, praise Jesus), it would mean that people would suddenly start marrying animals.

I'm aware that part of my audience is in that unholy 30% who were trying to disapprove the marriage amendment. Those people include my sister, my hairdresser, and two of my cousins, not to mention countless people I interact with on an everyday basis. To you I say this: Even though I completely disagree with your lifestyle and devote quite a bit of my time to thwarting your chances of equality and happiness, I will still be very friendly to you, send you Christmas cards and hope to see you regularly. I think you are great, creative, fun and amazing people. I'm glad to know you, but I'll never, as long as there is breath in my body, allow you to have the same rights as me.

In summation, last week we won a great battle, but we are far from winning the war. There are still many more states to convince, not to mention countries, continents, and eventually the world. I, for one, am against living in a hell on earth. I'm fighting the Godly fight, with Jesus at my side spreading understanding and justice. I hope you will help me win this; it is in our power.

For more information, go to landoverbaptist.org.

Zach Stokes is a sophomore business major.



Forget the wedding bells: Find yourself before you start searching for a soulmate. Or a dress.

by Ashley Davis

Last week's *Hilltopics* featured the article "Going to the chapel: is it just us, or does it seem like everyone is getting married these days?" This article struck an unnerving chord from which I'd like to share my views.

I too know people who are getting engaged, but they are by far the minority. These special cases are just that – special. For those of you who are anxious to tie the knot, here are a few helpful suggestions to solace your woes. Is it a big party you are seeking? A gargantuan diamond? A white dress? How about planning yourself a big blowout where you wear a white dress and wear a sizable CZ ring! If it's companionship you're after, then better your relationships, explore your faith, or if all else fails – get a dog. If you're having trouble dealing with the "what am I doing with the rest of my life" question, go to the career center. And if you're looking to feel complete, DON'T GET MARRIED.

Getting married, at least in my book, requires that you are already a whole person. So ask yourself: Who am I? And what defines me? From someone who once thought she had it figured out – go abroad. Going to Paris for a semester turned my world upside down. Without the comforts, friends, and activities that filled my life while at SMU, I was confused and unsure. I share this difficult yet exhilarating time in my life to illustrate that getting married right now or even soon for someone like me is a ludicrous notion. Instead of feeling anxious about wedding bells, and thinking about the "kids before 30 + a few years of marriage without children= betrothal ASAP" formula, let's think about answering the more important question of "who am I?" and start actively seeking to define it. (To help you in this quest, I recommend *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Covey.)

Remember that this is the only time in your life where you can live on your own terms. "Finding yourself" once you're married has the potential to kill a relationship and even lead you to discover that you've married the wrong person.

So ladies, chill out and always remember that things will happen for you when they're meant to.

Ashley Davis is a senior economics and international studies major.



Are you boring?

(if so, ignore this ad)

We're always looking for interesting submissions.

Send your commentary, proposal, letter, editorial or cartoon to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

All pieces become property of *Hilltopics* upon submission.

Hilltopics Staff

Michael Hogenmiller: Editor-in-Chief
Yasmin Awad: Managing Editor
James Longhofer: Business Manager
Rebekah Hurt: Director of Administration
Mark McDowell: Advertising Manager
Kasi DeLaPorte: Copy Editor
Dawn Jenkins: Copy Editor
Amanda Wall: Copy Editor
Douglas Hill: Graphics Editor
Courtney Hebb: Senior Writer

Hilltopics is a weekly publication, published Mondays. It is sponsored by the University Honors Program.

Want to be heard?

Our advertisements are affordable, attractive, and effective.

contact hilltopics@hotmail.com for more info