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Hilltopics Staff

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HILLTOPICS

always 100% smu-written

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Multiple student-led publications mean more discourse on campus, and ultimately a better SMU

by Kyle Snyder

I walk directly into Hughes-Trigg each Monday after my 10:00 class, eager to read the newest issue of *Hilltopics*. On Thursdays, I pick up a copy of the *Mustang Post* and browse the flamboyantly conservative writing in SMU's newest printed news source. Every other day of the week, I keep up with local and national news from the time honored institution known as the *Daily Campus*. I am proud to say that I have submitted writing to all three papers, and each of these publications allows me to incorporate a variety of reading into my daily schedule. Recent news over the funding status of both *Hilltopics* and the *Post* has stirred debate over this three-headed monster of campus publications, but both Student Senate and the SMU community at large should make every effort to ensure the success of all of them.

So much is said about SMU's "benchmark" institutions – schools that we strive to emulate academically, athletically, and in other areas. While SMU has made tremendous progress over the past few years, increased discourse through campus publications brings an important element of quality to an SMU education. Discourse and debate are the foundations of free society, and the introduction of two new campus publications since 2004 reflects well on the abilities of SMU students and faculty to create new outlets for opinion writing.

When *Hilltopics* was first published in the spring of 2004, its stated goal was to increase discourse and debate on campus. An opinion journal with five to six articles published once a week was not out to challenge the mighty *Daily Campus* as many initially thought. *Hilltopics* provided an-

other outlet by which students could express their opinions, and the staff made every effort to gain a solid reader base and ensure the success of the fledgling journal. Now in its third year in print, I continue to read and enjoy the opinions of my fellow students published in *Hilltopics*.

The *Mustang Post* went into print this year with some students and faculty mocking its blatantly conservative slant. Unlike *Hilltopics*, which relies on funding from Student Senate and revenues from advertising, the *Post* has received a substantial financial contribution from a Dallas area political group. While the writing may be politically one-sided, the staff of the *Post* has included a humorous "Top Ten" list each week as well as a Q&A with new Men's Basketball Coach Matt Doherty in the first issue. Editor in chief Reed Hanson recently asked me to submit a response to a question for the most recent issue, and I gladly obliged. Regardless of anyone's opinion of the Young Conservatives of Texas, they should be commended for their efforts in getting the *Mustang Post* off the ground.

Hilltopics and the *Mustang Post* should not be viewed as enemies, nor should anyone expect them to surpass the *Daily Campus* in readership anytime soon. While each of them should stand on their own merit, a plurality of campus publications only provides greater means for students to express opinion and challenge their own personal beliefs. If you've

read my article this far, you're on the right track, and I encourage you to keep on reading.

Kyle Snyder is a senior finance major.



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Be Heard: *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles 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 7:00 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.

Schumer-Graham bill's failure saves Chinese trade, but should we still be afraid of congress?

by Douglas Hill

Take a second to look through the things in your backpack, purse, car, or pockets. Find anything that says "Made in China?" Now imagine a world in which everything from China costs nearly thirty percent more than it does today. Needless to say, if that happened, you'd want your government to do everything it could do to right the situation immediately. We'd expect economic and diplomatic pressure to be put on China until the prices of their goods went down. The bottom line is, America has the world's most powerful economy, and China is an important trading partner for us. We simply would not tolerate any Chinese policy that pushed our import prices up by thirty percent.

But what if an American policy caused that kind of a price jump on Chinese imports? That was just the aim of Senators Lindsay Graham (R - South Carolina) and Charles Schumer (D - New York), who had been pushing until this weekend for legislation imposing a 27.5 percent tariff on all imports from China. The thinking behind this legislation—assuming thought was involved in the drafting of such a stupid proposal—was that a radical statement from congress would force China to raise the value of its currency, an issue of contention between the United States and China. The legislation has fortunately been dropped from consideration, but the implications are scary.

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, not only would the bill have hurt American consumers by raising prices and decreasing the supply of cheap Chinese imports, but it would also have damaged the tenuous international relationship between the U.S. and China. Myron Brilliant, a vice-president at the Chamber, said the bill would be like a \$200 billion tax on Americans that simultaneously reinforced the position of Chinese hardliners who mistrust the United States. Thankfully, we don't have to worry about such

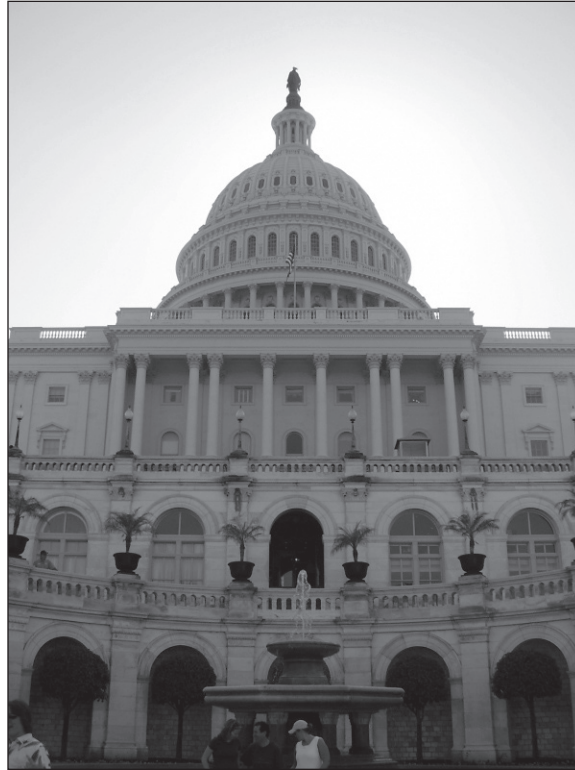
a bill being passed—at least not in the short term.

But the real problem with Schumer-Graham is the message it sends. At a time with Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson is returning from the most successful U.S. diplomatic mission in China since Henry Kissinger's, the United States should be confident in the ability of free trade to advance American economic interests. The Chinese are being relatively cooperative, and the "undervalued" Chinese currency is currently at a record of roughly 7.9 to 1 American dollar. Furthermore, things look to be improving, with China expert Paulson establishing a foundation for the first regularly-scheduled, ministerial-level trade negotiations between the two nations.

While it is true that China does not have the kind of free market economy Americans hope it will one day have, efforts that exclude China from a mutually beneficial relationship with the world's strongest capitalist markets are not solutions. So if you like your cheap Chinese electronics and apparel, it should be more than a little worrying that when China

pushes back against American power, our congress tries to isolate itself with protectionist bills like Schumer-Graham. And it should be even more worrying that Schumer and Graham have promised to come back next year, in cooperation with Senators Charles Grassley (R - Iowa) and Max Baucus (D - Montana), with a new bill to force China into cooperation. President George Bush, Secretary Paulson, the American business community, the International Monetary Fund, and Chinese policymakers have all recognized that protectionism is no solution to trade disagreements—will our elected representatives come to this conclusion before it is too late?

Douglas Hill is a senior international studies major.



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SMU Panhellenic Council delivers a devastating poke to girls' privacy with new rush rules

by Sterling Morriss

SMU Panhellenic Council has enacted a series of changes in the past year with regard to recruitment rules. Laudably, the umbrella organization for the eight Panhellenic sororities on campus has made strides in creating a more comfortable and natural environment where sorority members can form friendships with first-year women without fear of censure. As outlined in a recent *Daily Campus* article, the Panhellenic Council has relaxed recruitment rules so that, for example, sorority women may now eat on campus with first-years and can ride in cars together for SMU-sanctioned events. This relaxation of Panhellenic's strict legality is a positive step towards making campus a warm and friendly place to be a first-year woman. Again, I openly applaud these alterations to the Recruitment regulations and welcome them as positive changes.

Recently, Panhellenic has also taken strides to increase the unity of the eight chapters, essentially by asserting more power over them. For example, this year they are exerting more control over Panhellenic Preview Day in October by making it into a recruitment event for women to "Go Greek," rather than just "Think Theta" or "Try Tri-Delta." The point is not to promote your specific sorority, but to promote being part of the Panhellenic community at SMU. As a member of a smaller chapter that primarily benefits from these changes, I see the merit in a lot of these new Panhellenic power plays.

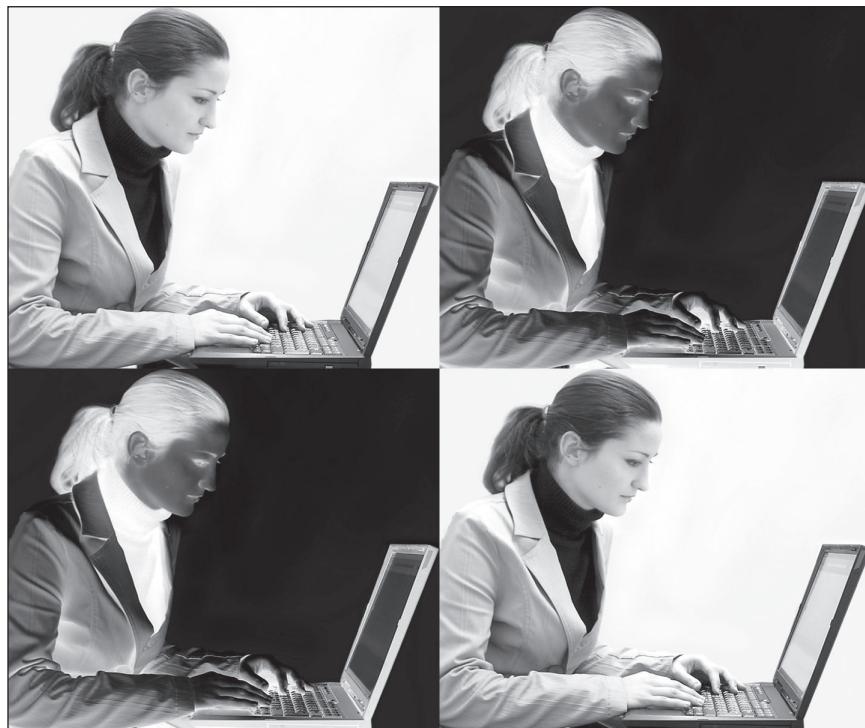
At the same time, however, Panhellenic has just announced a new rule that is hugely invasive and will most likely prove highly controversial. For over a year now, Panhellenic has taken it upon itself to include Facebook regulations as part of its regulation of "dirty rushing." Sorority women are not allowed to be friends or have any other contact with first-years on the site. I understand the need for this form of regulation prima facie, as women certainly could abuse Facebook and inappropriately communicate or "dirty rush." But here's where they go too far: Panhellenic now says if a woman is found with a Facebook infraction, her Facebook account will be frozen until bid day in January. They intend to enforce this by checking for accounts of ladies

who shouldn't be online; should one be found, that woman and her chapter will be sent through a judicial process. This new rule is a huge invasion of personal privacy and an abuse of power.

Facebook is an important communicative tool for people, and is not exclusive to SMU's campus. Many students use it to keep in touch with old friends they never would have normally, or even to share information easily with family members (it's how I pass pictures on to my sister, for example). Taking this tool away is highly invasive—I liken it to freezing a sorority woman's email account, or forcing her to uninstall Instant Messenger, because she could "dirty rush" with those as well. It doesn't make sense that extra-sorority relationships should suffer in a woman's life because of her actions against Panhellenic rules.

Of course, I'm not saying there shouldn't be consequences for wrongdoings; I'm just saying that the punishment does not fit the crime. Maybe Panhellenic has let its recent acquisitions of power inflate its sense of purpose and place in a sorority woman's life. Overall, it must be remembered that the SMU Panhellenic community is comprised of eight very different houses that happen to be placed under the umbrella of the Panhellenic Council. Yes, the council is vastly improving and is by all means needed on this campus. But overexerting its power and thereby trampling on the liberties of its members is not the way of doing it.

Sterling Morriss is a senior art history major.



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Todd Baty presents part 3 of the 10 things I love about SMU. This week: campus beauty

#8: Campus Beauty

Perhaps one of the most obvious reasons to love SMU is also something that most visitors notice upon first stepping on university soil—our campus is amazingly beautiful! With its finely-manicured lawns and carefully-arranged flowerbeds, the campus of SMU is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful places in the world to learn and live.

However, “campus beauty” doesn’t have to be limited to just flowers and architecture. In many ways, the most beautiful things about SMU’s campus are not its physical aesthetic, but are the ideas, thoughts, and expressions that the campus houses (and ultimately, reflects). Indeed, it is the beauty of a Meadows performance, a Dedman lecture, or a Cox symposium that really makes SMU shine. Without these elements, the pretty flowers and stately buildings are nothing more than a recreational garden—a place for people to come and focus on the beauty of their surroundings.

But SMU is not (or at least shouldn’t be) a destination for mere recreation. It is a destination for inspiration—that is the purpose for a beautiful campus; to reflect and remind one of the assiduous creation of beauty through education that occurs all around campus. How else can one justify the use of resources on such ephemeral things? The beauty of campus serves as a constant reminder of the splendor and order we all strive to achieve in our studies. Indeed, it is the iconography of our campus that best epitomizes the reason we are here, the reason why there is a campus at all.

However, perhaps the most important way in which physi-



cal campus beauty provides inspiration to this community is how it serves as a reminder of the privilege of our position. As Dead Bowen highlighted in his address during Commencement last month, the opportunity we are afforded as students of SMU is truly elite. We are denizens of a very special and narrow percentile, and it is important to remember that with such opportunity comes great responsibility. The

beauty of campus helps remind us of that charge, for it best embodies that which separates us from the rest. How better to be reminded of such privilege than to witness it on your walk to class?

While campus beauty serves the university community in a variety of fashions, its greatest contribution is not that of physical splendor or magnificence. Rather, the true value of campus beauty is found in its symbolism, for it personifies that which sets us apart—that which charges and inspires us to do great things. So the next time you notice that the flowers have been changed or the grass has been mowed, remember: we are here to create our own “beauty.”

Next week.....#7 Cox School of Business

Todd Baty is a junior music and history major.

Miss parts one or two?

Check out the last two installments of Todd’s “Things I Love About SMU” column online: www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics.

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