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Hilltopics Staff

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# HILLTOPICS

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## So you want to be both a Pony and a *Playboy* Bunny? Let's get naked with a purpose.

by Amanda Wall

If it had been another reality show on the hunt, no one would have batted an eye. If it had been a model search or a talent search or even a religious group seeking out new members, no one would have noticed or minded. Heck, if it had been the communist party passing out hammers and sickles on the Boulevard, there would not have been the immediate, passionate, sensational response that was provoked when *Playboy* magazine announced that they were recruiting SMU women for a special college edition. When it's about bodies—especially women's naked bodies—the whole world gets nervous.

SMU issued a statement carefully separating itself from the auditions, sororities discouraged and forbade their members from participating, and many students, faculty, and staff heatedly discussed the serious implications for women on campus and in general.

The thing is, I think some women might audition anyway. Why? Amber Campisi, for one, has always talked about it as a great experience. There's possible modeling and acting exposure, travel, and good money. What's the allure of this job in itself, though? Let's face it: having people look at you, photograph you, and publish you as a definition of female sexiness and beauty is pretty damn attractive.

And being a Playboy bunny carries its own status. Getting naked is a relative thing. Tell people you hang out with Hugh Hefner and you'll get a completely different response than if you say you have a webcam in your bedroom. Being naked in a men's magazine is different than being naked in a women's magazine. A naked man in a woman's magazine is different than a naked woman in a men's magazine. And getting naked in a blockbuster or a music video is different from all of these.

There's just something different when nakedness has some imagined purpose. In the doctor's office, it definitely has purpose. When it's for a movie or a painting or a shampoo advertisement, it also seems to have a purpose, an artistic or commercial one if not a medical one. Of course, it gets sticky even in these cases when that purpose seems to be to titillate or arouse, as we have seen in recent debates

about sex in the media. However, we still make a distinction between these more mainstream kinds of nakedness and the nakedness in *Playboy*, *Hustler*, *Penthouse*, on adult TV channels, or in *Girls Gone Wild* videos. Nakedness for nakedness sake—intended solely as a kind of sexual pleasure—is not what good girls do. Using our bodies for the sexual pleasure of others in exchange for money has rather bad associations in this culture.

Let's not pretend that these magazines are aimed at a general and diverse audience though; their audience is men. If women made up as many consumers of sexually-focused pictures and videos, the market would look a lot different. Women are being looked at; we aren't doing any of the looking. And that's what people mean when they use words like "objectification."

I'm betting that there are some SMU women out there who considered auditioning, but rejected the idea because their friends would find out. Their partners and families would find out. They might laugh at them, sneer at them, preach at them, or stare at them. Or they themselves might have doubts. We all grew up with the "girl power" campaigns of the 1990s; we grew up being encouraged to have educations and dreams and careers—to do anything we want.

Of course, we all, at some level, want to be beautiful. We want to be admired. We want to be sexy. But we don't want to be the crumpled pictures with which millions of men jack off. We might want to have access to well-paying careers in modeling or acting, but we don't want professors to point to our pictures as examples of exploited women.

We're stuck, in some sense. We want to feel feminine and womanly and sexy; we want to feel strong and respected and whole. I don't know if there's really a way out of that—but it might start with the decision to get naked. Let's get naked with purpose—not just to be looked at, but to look back. Let's make nakedness something we do, whether to make love or art or cleanliness, instead of a thousand hungry gazes that do us.

*Amanda Wall is a junior English, Spanish, and women's studies major.*

**INSIDE**  
this issue

**School:** SMU to offer new program in Human Rights, page 3.

**Campus:** A true horror story reminds Mustangs how important safety is, page 2.

**World:** Janet Arnold and Clare Taylor advocate a different plan for students looking to help change the world. Learn more about the Peace Corps on page 3.

**Be Heard:** *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles to [hilltopics@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## As Halloween approaches, a true SMU horror story reminds us how important campus safety is

by Sterling Morriss

It was a dark and stormy night at SMU. Students in the Fine Arts Community were either slumbering quietly in their beds or still off at rehearsal, innocently unaware of the ensuing danger. Due to unforeseen and unknown reasons, the locking mechanism on the front door of Peyton was malfunctioning, rendering it possible for anyone to approach and enter the building. Around this time, a male student went out to the benches between Mary Hay and Peyton to get a little fresh night air. This late at night not too many people were stirring, even on our active college campus. Soon thereafter an unfamiliar man approached the benches with a dark and ominous air about him. But then again, it is the Fine Arts benches, where students are used to unusual characters, so our male student didn't even think twice about it. The man asked to buy a cigarette from the student, which the student offered to him for free. The man struck up a conversation.

"What is this place?"

"Well, its SMU."

"What's SMU?"

"It's a university."

The student could tell there was something wrong with this man, but regardless continued to be friendly and talk to him over the shared enjoyment of a cigarette. It wasn't until a few minutes into the conversation that the student noticed something unusual sticking out of the man's pocket: a butcher knife. Like anyone, the student was immediately taken aback. Instead of alerting the man to his knowledge of the knife, the student finished up his conversation and returned to his residence hall. Once there, he called the SMU Police Department and told them of the man and his knife's presence. When the police arrived a few minutes later, they found the man with the knife in hand, attempting to rob a different student behind Mary Hay. The police were able to disarm him and handcuff him safely, thereby ending the nightmare that could have been on SMU's campus.

It may sound like the premise for a good horror story, but this tale is true, and it happened last week right here at SMU. It turned out that the man in question was high on cocaine and had not only the knife on his person but also large amounts of the illegal drugs as well. Thankfully, our student acted reasonably and left to alert the police without confronting the man. According to our own Officer Jemott, this is always the correct thing to do. At a hall-wide meeting to inform the students of what happened, Jemott referenced an incident last year where an SMU student tried to help a woman being sexually assaulted across Hillcrest at 7-11 and

ended up with a knife inside of him. He stressed how important it is to always leave potentially threatening situations and call the police immediately. Had our brave student waited even 3 more minutes before making his phone call to SMU PD, the other student involved in the incident might have been seriously hurt. It's even scarier to think about when you realize that the front door to Peyton happened to be malfunctioning during this period of time. Jemott stressed to students how important it is to lock your room doors if you live on campus.

I've heard both positive and negative reactions from the student body with regard to this incident. Many say that it was just a freak accident and that SMU over-tries to instill us with fear through their constant warnings. These students are sure that our campus is safe. Other students were outraged that such an incident could happen right here on campus - they had no idea that it was even possible that our campus could not be safe. I think both of these reactions are in fact over-reactions. Yes, it is true that this is the sort of crime that we don't see too often on this campus; but the fact remains that it does happen. Almost every year we hear about a student sexual assault or two, even some on campus. This is a reality that we need to face. On the other hand, this does not mean that students should feel unsafe walking around the campus. But they should be smart, and realize that the university doesn't give us warnings for their own amusement. In this regard, Campus Safety is a balancing act. Those students whom already feel safe, this can still be regarded as a freak accident and can continue about their everyday lives on campus in the same manner. It is important however that they realize that they take any risks associated with their behavior. On the other hand, for those students who feel the need, there are many ways to feel safer on this campus, such as the Giddy-Up golf carts. Yes they can take a long time, but if someone truthfully feels unsafe to walk across campus, he or she should be willing to wait. Also, our campus police department, though-often criticized, must be commended for their quick response and resolution of this particular situation. It gives me confidence in them to handle other sticky safety situations that could potentially affect me. I know I feel safer knowing that they are on campus. Hopefully their presence can help prevent any other possible horror stories lurking around.

*Sterling Morriss is a senior art history major.*

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

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## Do you love America? Talk is cheap; prove it by signing up for the peace corps.

*by Clare Taylor and Janet Arnold*

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy called on Americans to volunteer their time to share in the "great common task of bringing to man a decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace." Forty-five years later, about 182,000 volunteers have been sent to 138 host countries all over the world through the Peace Corps.

This past week, a Peace Corps recruiter visited campus to give interested students information about the program. The Peace Corps gives people of all different ages (minimum age is 18 with no upper age limit) and backgrounds (at all stages of education and career level) an opportunity to devote 27 months of their lives to promote peace and cultural understanding in developing countries all over the world. The first three months of the experience is devoted to intensive cultural and safety training in the host country. Also integral in the training process is language immersion, designed to get volunteers ready for life on their own in their host country. Volunteers work on projects ranging from education and teacher development, to agricultural projects, health initiatives, business development and information technology. The Peace Corps provides transportation to and from the host country, a living stipend while living abroad, a readjustment allowance upon return to the U.S. There are opportunities in 68 countries around the world located in Africa, Central and



South America, Asia, eastern/central Europe and the Middle East. In addition, those wishing to do graduate level work can participate in either the Masters International program (those interested complete a year of graduate work before leaving for the Peace Corps) or the Fellows USA program (graduate work completed after return to the U.S.).

President Kennedy acknowledged that life in the Peace Corps would not be easy, but with the effort, would be "rich and satisfying." In a world where violence and war are common place, the Peace Corps gives Americans an opportunity to fight against violence with peace and understanding. Little by little, one volunteer at a time, volunteers make a tangible difference in people's lives to promote peace and cultural understanding in all corners of the globe. Although the Peace Corps is not for everyone, it provides those interested a non-violent way to give back to your country through service to another.

If you're interested in the Peace Corps and would like more information, visit their website at [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov). Applications are rolling; however, students should note that the application process takes between 6-9 months.

*Janet Arnold is a junior marketing major. Clare Taylor is a senior French and International Studies major.*

## SMU's new Human Rights Education Program gives students an exciting opportunity

*by Stacy Wohead*

Here at SMU, there are several courses offered that change the way students approach the world around them. Few classes can claim this effect, but Professor Rick Halperin's introductory human rights course does just that. Dr. Halperin is a longtime activist and current Chairperson of Amnesty International USA. His introductory human rights class is taught every semester including both summer terms, and a class on America in the Age of Genocide has just been added to the catalog. In his courses, students are required to do a large amount reading, watch documentaries and films, write analytical essays, compose an art project, keep a current events journal, and participate in community service. Although it seems extremely daunting at first, the time spent doing work for this class raises awareness and changes perspectives on global issues. The courses intellectually challenge students to involve themselves in issues of which they were previously unaware.

Twice per year, Dr. Halperin takes a group of students on a human rights trip. The location of the Spring Break trip varies each year, but the Winter Break trip is always to Poland. This trip involves visiting several World War 2 concentration camps, and students spend Christmas Day at Auschwitz. On a recent trip to Poland, a graduate student found herself moved to do something more. The student and her sister made a donation to create a Human Rights Education Program at SMU.

Professor Rick Halperin has been appointed the Director of this new Human Rights Education Program. This program seeks to educate SMU students and the community about human rights and to raise awareness of worldwide violations of these rights. Through this program, Halperin hopes to bring human rights scholars to campus and to conduct symposia for students. In addition to campus events, a Minor in Human Rights has been created and is in its final stages of formation. According to plan, students can declare a Minor in Human Rights as soon as January of 2007. Although this program originated in the Clements History Department, the Human Rights Minor will be interdisciplinary. Tentatively, the 18 hour minor will require Dr. Halperin's introductory class, Human Rights: America's Dilemma, and the students' choice of 5 other courses in various departments dealing with issues in human rights.

At the outset of his classes, Dr. Halperin declares to his students that his goal is not to make you think like him. His goal is to make sure that when you walk out of his class, you cannot say that you didn't know. Ignorance is no longer an excuse, and raising awareness brings about forces of change. Our new Human Rights Education Program should be a source of pride for all SMU students, and you owe it to yourself to take advantage of all it will have to offer.

*Stacy Wohead is a senior math major.*

## Todd Baty presents number 6 of the top 10 things I love about SMU. This week: President Turner

by Todd Baty

### #6: President Turner and the Board of Trustees

On a campus of increasingly diverse interests, President Turner and the Board of Trustees are not afforded the recognition and appreciation they deserve in leading this university. With great eloquence and sophistication, President Turner and the Board of Trustees have provided a sense of direction and purpose to SMU despite the competing voices of faculty, staff, alumni, and students. Ever since matriculating to SMU, I have been extremely impressed with President Turner's ability to balance all of these voices, and yet still retain a clear vision for the future of this great university. And while I have disagreed with some of President Turner and the Board of Trustees' decisions in the past, I have the utmost confidence in their ability to guide SMU to the goals that it seeks.

However, one grievance I have against President Turner and the Board of Trustees is the amount and *quality* of the student input they are receiving when making decisions that impact the future of SMU. While there are student representatives to the Board of Trustees and other administrative councils, I am concerned about the ability of these students to accurately guide the adult leaders of this university. This is not an assault on those student representatives, but merely a recognition that one student can not accurately represent the various interests of over 11,000 students; more students should have voices on these influential committees. Why should there be only one student on the Board of Trustees, especially when there are thirty-nine non-student members?—no other member of that board represents 11,000 constituents. And would not students have more interest (and stake) in the decisions being made for SMU, since they are the ones that such policy change would ultimately effect?

Furthermore, on the issue of applicant recruitment and the raising academic profile for matriculating students, President Turner and the Board of Trustees are not afforded the ability to listen to the opinions of its current brightest students.



How does SMU expect to attract increasingly more competitive applicant pools if it doesn't listen to its current Honors students? Taking representatives that reflect the status quo perpetuate the status quo. Obviously, the quality of student input is limited by the quality of the student; the student representatives should not reflect how SMU currently is, but how SMU hopes to *become*.

Too often, Student Body Officers or Student Senators have occupied these positions and diluted the aspirations the more academically minded. When was the last time an Honors student served as the student representative to the Board of Trustees? I question the quality of student input when the smartest, most academically minded students on campus are not afforded the opportunity to voice their opinion to President Turner and the Board of Trustees.

However, I stand by my earlier testament of faith in President Turner and the Board of Trustees. While I have explicated the problems in the system that I perceive, I still believe that SMU has a bright, exciting future, mainly due to the work of these people. Thus, in essence, this article is the beginning point for a greater campus discussion: how can students best be represented and their concerns voiced to the President of the University and the Board of Trustees? It is time that SMU students take ownership of their education and demand to be heard. If SMU ever hopes to achieve its goals, it can not continue to largely ignore its students.

Next week.....#5 The University Honors Program

Todd Baty is a junior music and history major.

**Miss one of the other parts?**

Check out the last three installments of Todd's "Things I Love About SMU" column online: [www.smu.edu/honors/hill-topics](http://www.smu.edu/honors/hill-topics).

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