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Hilltopics Staff

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# HILLTOPICS

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volume four, issue four  
week of october 15, 2007

## Are Doctors to blame for prescription drug abuse? A different look at drug issues facing students

Jenny Simon

This past summer I started experiencing what the psycho-medical world calls "stress-related insomnia." After I talked to my doctor about my restlessness she proceeded to write me a prescription that would ease my stress and help me sleep. My doctor also explained that she was giving me a prescription for Zannex to take during stressful situations or when I couldn't sleep. It wasn't until I picked up the prescription from the pharmacy that I realized how easy it is to abuse prescription drugs. My doctor had given me 60 Zannex pills after talking to me for ten minutes about my "stress." It was that easy. Now I'm not saying I conned my doctor into prescribing me 60 counts of muscle-relaxants, but it really didn't take any convincing. I indulged and would take a pill before bedtime until my sleeping medication started to kick in. Now the fifty pills of Zannex I have left sit on my dresser taunting me.

They taunt me in two ways: 1) I'm tempted to take them during the day so I can relax, but I know if I do I will like the way they make me feel a little too much and, well, you know what happens from there; and 2) I could make some good money if I sold these. We all know everyone already does it. The question I want to ask is: Do people sell prescription drugs because they con their doctors into prescribing them medication they don't need, or is the opposite? Are doctors over-prescribing popular medications, making it easy for students to make an extra buck or develop an unhealthy habit?

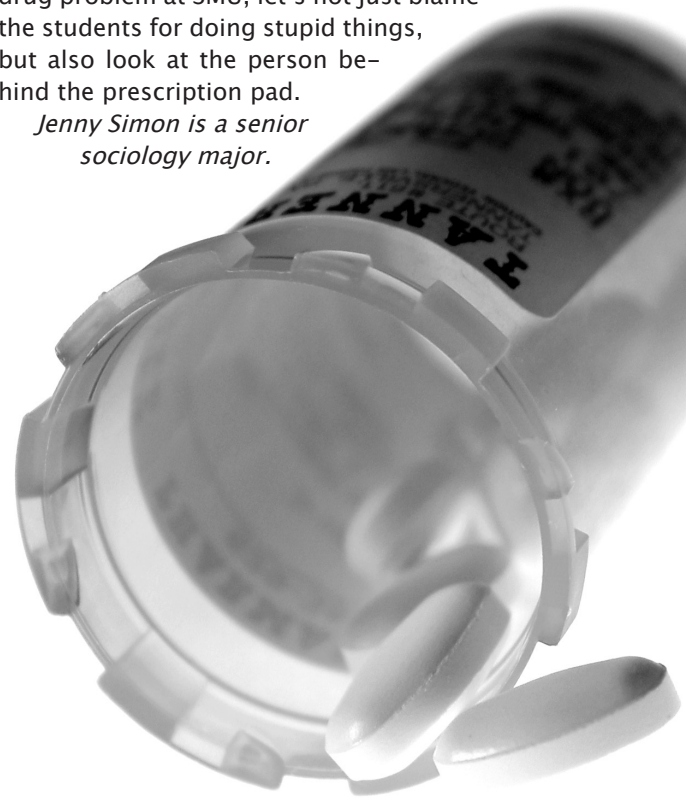
College students get the least amount of sleep out of any group of people. We party, study, write papers, and God knows what else until the wee hours of the morning. So when students visit their doctors to explain they are experiencing high levels of stress and sleepiness, maybe the best remedy is not a bottle full of meds.

I just think all the blame should not be put on students who get caught selling their prescriptions. It is the doctor's responsibility to be able to determine if his or

her patient is stable enough to receive a large quantity of drugs. If the doctor feels the patient cannot properly take the medication, then it is the doctor's responsibility to find another method of helping the patient.

I just believe that anyone is capable of doing something stupid. I have never used drugs or sold drugs, and the thought of selling my left-over prescription crossed even my mind. That tells me that it's not a character flaw within myself but a temptation created by the abundance of pills I was prescribed. So, if we really want to help the drug problem at SMU, let's not just blame the students for doing stupid things, but also look at the person behind the prescription pad.

*Jenny Simon is a senior sociology major.*



## INSIDE this issue

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**SMU:** Professor John Lewis sits down with *Hilltopics*, page 4.

**Internet:** How would you like to spend more money on bills? Us neither, page 7.

**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).

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## Overcoming the pre-election blues: to waste a vote or lose true representation?

by Monica Chavez

As the caucuses and primaries draw nearer and nearer (Texas' is scheduled for March 4 of next year), I find myself less and less certain about who I'll be supporting come that time, and whether I will be full-throttle behind that person at the polls. For myself, as for many voters, the most important factor this election cycle is the situation in Iraq, and as such, I have been strongly behind Barack Obama as the only front-running candidate to have opposed the war since 2002 when he was still a state legislator.

Nevertheless, now that Obama is a serious candidate, he seems to be taking the more mainstream view that "phased redeployment" is the best option for Iraq. And, quite frankly, I am sick of these kind of half-hearted stands on the issue. Exactly how many phases and over how long a period is this "redemption" going to take place? Among the Democratic candidates, only former senator from Alaska Mike Gravel has stated unequivocally that he supports immediate troop withdrawal, and current polls show he'd be lucky to get two percent of the vote in state primaries. But that gets to the heart of the election conundrum: how can you support a candidate who best represents your beliefs when the chances that he or she will win are close to nil?

And more importantly, will mainstream candidates ever go out on a limb and truly distinguish themselves from their party's competitors? I was shocked and dismayed, for example, when Obama said in an August speech that he would support U.S. military action in Pakistan if that nation failed to adequately address the issue of terrorists operating within its borders. I quickly realized, however, that Obama's statement was an effort to toughen up his image in the face of Hillary Clinton's berating him for so much as suggesting he might like to engage in unconditioned talks with the leaders of Cuba, North Korea, and Iran (an idea which I happen to think is brilliant and distinguishes Obama from the rest of

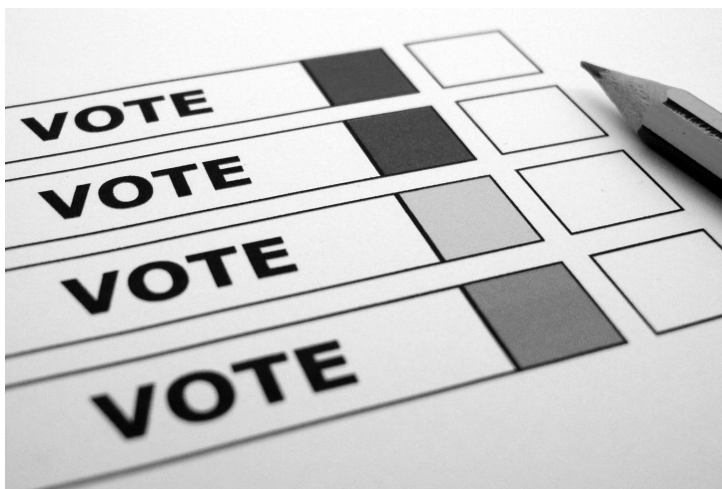
the candidates). I think it extremely unlikely that he would actually move to invade Pakistan, but the statement was disconcerting nonetheless and detracted from the overall impression I got of him as a candidate who could actually stand out from the rest of the pack.

It's been only recently that I've done any serious kind of research on the lesser-known candidates of either party, and through that I've been surprised to find that candidates such as Mike Gravel hold the beliefs they do. Besides the Iraq issue, Gravel also supports same-sex marriage and holds an enlightened view on illegal immigration, including support for a guest worker program and an improvement in trade policies that would curtail illegal immigration by addressing the issue at its source. And unlike Obama or Clinton, Gravel opposed the construction of a U.S.-Mexico border fence, labeling it a "cosmetic solution."

But even as Gravel's viewpoints line up with mine, how can I support him in the primaries without feeling like I've wasted a vote? Given that I am registered in Texas, my vote in the primaries is the only one that will count anyway, and if I prefer any of the front-running candidates to the others, I should probably back one of them.

It is, in fact, because of this restriction on true choice at the polls that I am voting in the primary election in the first place. Strictly speaking, I am an independent voter, with views that are in general far too left-wing for Democrats. If there were such thing as a viable third party, I'd probably be a member. But with the American political system the way it is, I am forced to compromise my beliefs with a realistic outlook on who's actually got the chance to win this race, and I wonder if in the end my choice really has any effect at all.

*Monica Chavez is a senior political science and foreign language 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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## One candidate hope for America: Join the Ron Paul Revolution

by Beth Anderson

I'm sure many of us face the upcoming 2008 election with about as much excitement and passion as someone facing a root canal. We are college students, notoriously apathetic when it comes to politics, especially when it comes to dragging ourselves to the polls. Who can really blame us? The most well-known candidates are all promising to give us the same old, tired answers. I want a new answer – and that answer is Ron Paul.

Ron Paul is a Libertarian running as a Republican, but don't let that fool you – he voted against the Patriot Act and the war in Iraq. He advocates personal liberty, smaller government, lower taxes as a result of decreased government spending, free market economy. He opposes the draft, domestic surveillance, regulation of the internet, and the national ID card.

His respect for the Constitution is unequalled on Capitol Hill, as he refuses to vote for any legislation “unless the proposed measure is expressly authorized by the Constitution.”

He wants to abolish the individual income tax and eliminate most government agencies, which he believes are “unnecessary bureaucracies.” This would allow American citizens to keep their hard-earned money without any detrimental effects to society. It would also eliminate some of the more unconstitutional aspects of the government – the IRS, for example. Since when is our country based on the concept that you are guilty until proven innocent? Last time I checked, we aren't France.

He opposes socialized healthcare. Before you condemn him, think about it. Socialized healthcare is exactly what it sounds like – socialism. If you believe in it, that's fine. But it does not conform to the ideals upon which this country was founded.

He opposes federal welfare, instead supporting welfare at the state, local, or personal level. In the words of the Republican Liberty Caucus Position Statement, “All Americans have the right to keep the fruits of their labor to support themselves, their families, and whatever charities they so choose.”

His position on foreign policy is basically for America to

mind its own business and stop trying to be the world's policeman – which is exactly what the Founding Fathers wanted. We have simply become so far removed from these ideals that they are now considered radical.

We forget that Thomas Jefferson himself said, “Commerce with all nations, alliance with none, should be our motto.”

Whatever you think of his politics, you've got to admit that at 99% of his funds have come from individuals that he has almost as much support from as all the other Republican candidates combined, and that in 25 out of 31 straw polls held across the nation he has come in third place or better, winning in first in 14 straw polls).

He has raised an astonishing \$5 million in the last year, and Ron Paul is already doing better than everyone expected. Not only does he have to face the normal challenges of running for president, but he also must deal with the fact that the corporation-controlled, establishment media is ignoring him, neglecting to inform us of Ron Paul's sweeping success in the Republican debates and in the straw polls.

Perhaps they feel threatened by his fresh, non-nonsense attitude. Perhaps they are

choosing which candidates to cover based on personal bias—a serious crime in the world of journalism.

After the first Republican Presidential Debate, CNN's own Glenn Beck called Ron Paul “crazy” and asked, “How did this guy get on stage?”

What a remarkable display of non-partisan reporting. (Cough.)

We are all hungry for change, for an end to corruption, and for true freedom. This “crazy” man is exactly what America needs.

To my fellow college students – it is our responsibility to inform ourselves and to fix the mistakes of previous generations. Most important, it is our sacred obligation to uphold the principles of liberty. I urge everyone who reads this—even if I have not convinced you to vote for Ron Paul—go to the polls for the good of your country!

To learn more about Ron Paul, or to donate to his campaign, visit <http://www.ronpaul2008.com/>.

*Beth Anderson is a junior accounting major*



# Ron Paul REVOLUTION

## Professor John Lewis sits down with *Hilltopics* and shares his thoughts and many current issues

by Todd Baty

*This academic year, Hilltopics will be sitting down with various members of the SMU community in hopes of initiating a very open and frank conversation on our university and its future. This week, I spoke with John Lewis, Associate Professor of English and currently one of the longest serving faculty members at SMU.*

**How long have you been a professor at SMU and how did you come to teach here?**

I came here in 1970, so that's 37 years ago, and have been here ever since. My initial contact with SMU happened because a member of [the English Department] was recovering from a major illness in the greater Boston area, and he dropped in at Harvard to conduct some interviews during the hiring season. One of the questions he asked me was this: 'If you could design

any course you wanted, what would your dream course be and why?' I'd just come off a rather disastrous interview at another school, so I was rather depressed. Thinking of certain texts like Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*, I said, 'I'd teach a course called the Death of Literature, in which we dealt with various predictions by past and present writers about the imminent demise of literature, both as a profession and as an object of cultivation.' He liked that answer; I have no idea why. So, he invited me to interview on campus in the winter of 1969.

**How has the university changed during your time here? Has this change been good or bad?**

That's an interesting question, and I would probably answer it a little differently now than I would have answered it a few years ago. First of all, let me begin with Dallas. Dallas is considerably less provincial than it was in 1970. That isn't to say that it has overcome its various complexes—inferiority,

superiority, what have you—but I think on the whole it's a more broad-minded place than it was years ago. As for SMU, in 1970 it was, oddly enough, a rather more traditional-minded university than it is now, not that it followed generic university traditions, but it was more concerned with main-

taining its own traditions than it seems to be today. This was a folksier place, let's say. The student body in 1970, was probably, in its ideas, somewhat in advance of the Dallas population. The faculty, of course, as seen from the perspective of downtown Dallas, was a bunch of raving anarchists with a red tinge to them, which always strikes us as being a little bit odd because we don't see ourselves as being that far out. I was shocked to realize, in stark contrast to Harvard, that the student body was to the

right of the faculty, whereas at Harvard we students were used to being to the left of the faculty. You don't expect to have to teach young people how to be rebellious and question authority. But we did in those days, and luckily there was a tiny, tiny fringe of more radical students. I keep reminding students today that they owe a great deal to the radicals of past generations. You, for example, would never have been allowed in a college classroom in the [19]50s wearing jeans.

For a long time I was unaware of any particular difference between one SMU generation of students or the next, in terms of general ability, but as I look back now, I have to say in the last few years I think the anecdotal reports we've heard about rising SAT scores and all that are paying off. The students today are in many ways quite remarkable. One thing has always been true of the SMU student body, and it's not commonly understood or appreciated by many outsiders: although there is a stereotype of the SMU student, when you



get to know the students here, the stereotype turns out to be rather less true than seems the case when you view them from a distance. They are a more interesting, more diverse, and more mindful group of people than you might think.

**What do you think is SMU's niche in academia and how does that relate to our goals as a university?**

This, of course, has been a very long debate. I have a dear friend in the administration here who is always amused when SMU announces its intent to become the Harvard of the Southwest, and his question is always, 'Why doesn't it content itself with being the SMU of Dallas?' That takes us back to the local complexes I spoke of earlier, I guess. Perhaps the ambition of regional leadership makes less sense in a mobile and rootless society like ours. SMU was originally founded to play a strong regional role in developing Methodist clergy and community leaders, but that ambition has long since ceased to dominate SMU's sense of itself. It now aims to achieve national recognition, and that is not going to change any time soon.

The direction the school takes is pretty well set by a number of very powerful backers, and they have a hybrid image of the place—a Division I football power—which I think is an interesting if somewhat futile goal, given our size—whose professional schools have a national profile. The current hope is that the Bush Library and Institute will bring [this profile] about. If you look carefully at various decisions that have been made in the past seven to eight years, you see the library behind them all. Couple this with institutional timidity—the tendency to zero-sum thinking and decisions based on an assumption of scarcity—and you're led to downplay other functions of the university. Whether we can maintain a correct balance between creating a strong liberal arts core to the undergraduate experience and developing strong professional schools remains to be seen.

**With regard to that balance, what is the purpose of an undergraduate degree? What should SMU's goal be in this regard?**

The graduate programs are an important part of SMU's existence. The proportion [of undergraduates to graduates] is

not too different from that at Harvard or Yale, but at the core of Harvard and Yale is a much more intense academic experience for undergraduates. This is largely a result of factors that are apparently beyond SMU's ability to change, such as the absence of a College or House system, in which undergraduates and some faculty live in residences with their own libraries, intramural teams, dining halls, and so forth. You literally lived, studied, ate, and slept as part of a community, so it was a shock when I discovered that SMU undergraduates could live off-campus and that many of them routinely did so (at Harvard unless you lived at home the only way you could get out of the House system was to get married). As a result, SMU is a commuter school, more like a state university than an Ivy League school, and those SMU undergraduates who identify with it usually do so through the Greek system or participation in strong extracurricular activities like the Mustang Band and not so much through the aspect of intellectual life that is based on residence—this is largely a commuter school. Even the Honors program here struggles for a sense of community, and Dr. Doyle labors valiantly to bring this about. But obviously, unless SMU stops building parking garages and starts building colleges—an expensive proposition—or finds a visionary who can create a community in the hostile physical environment that's our present campus, you're not going to see the revival of undergraduate learning in these parts.

Another problem is posed by the official Methodism [of SMU], which bans alcohol from campus, a policy that seemingly entails that we provide buses to send students over to Greenville Avenue to contract alcohol poisoning. At Harvard, this prohibition was not in effect. So long as a student was of age, he or she could drink with faculty members at pretty much any place on campus. Overindulgence happened, from time to time, among both students and faculty, but on the whole we behaved like the civilized adults we were (or aspired to be). But SMU is not going to move in that direction. It took an enormous investment in the 1930s to redesign Harvard and Yale to accommodate the house and collegiate

continued on page 6



## Professor Lewis Interview

continued from page 5

systems, and that isn't going to happen at SMU unless and until we find a billionaire who is interested in building a true collegiate system on campus. So once again we're pretty well committed to the state university model, with maybe an Honors College somewhere in our future, that is if we can find the will and guts to bring about that modest change in the accepted patterns of living here..

**What is your assessment of the deaths of three students last year and what does that indicate about SMU's academic culture?**

Terribly sad. Students should not die before their teachers, any more than children should die before their parents—it's too heart-breaking. I'm also aware of three alcohol poisonings which have happened already this term. We have done what we always do in this circumstance, which is to create a task force to study the problem and come out with a report, and that may be about all the action we take, which is another way of saying that for all of the talk of SMU community, there is no SMU community. We are not a company of persons who hold one another in respect and caring and even sometimes in awe; as faculty and students we have our eyes on quite other prizes. Perhaps that's as it should be: maybe the university ideal is an expensive anachronism in times like these.

**Today in education it is popular perform the next level of work at lower levels. That is, perform high school level work in middle school, college work in high school, graduate work in undergraduate programs. How you**

**think SMU's current GEC is adequate or inadequate in providing every student a basic college education and does that education fall into the trap previously stated?**

As one of the architects of the CORE [SMU's previous GEC, before the CF and Perspectives model currently used was implemented], I'm tempted to reply, 'What basic college education?' Okay, let's be serious and ask what a useful common educational experience might be. Is there common

content that we should make available to every undergraduate? I'm not now, nor have I

ever been, wedded to any kind of

canon, but. there are habits of

mind that should be cultivated

as well as an active cherishing

of differences across world cultures.

Then there's the cliché 'Those who

do not remember history are condemned

to repeat it.' The world has shown

remarkably little ability to conceive

alternatives to time-honored ways

of acquiring resources and opening

markets. And until an education

actually impacts the moral imagination

of the student population, I don't

want to call it liberal at all, regardless

of the books you read. Here at SMU

does what we do in the classroom

foster a sense of public purpose.

Does it instill in students a

sense that human beings can make a

difference in their world? In some

classes, in some programs, with some

teachers, yes. Are these shining,

exemplary figures what we think of

when we think of the culture of SMU?

**What is the most influential book you have ever read and why?**

What an odd question to ask an English teacher. I read so many books I barely know where one ends and another begins. Certain books brought discoveries: I was reading James Joyce's *Dubliners* when I realized I could analyze a text. Reading Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* at least partially lifted the veil from the nature of language. In any case, rereading books is much more important to me than reading them. Some books just get better every time you read them, like Plato's dialogues or the novels of William Dean Howells. But on balance, I guess, there's no book that having read it for the first or the fifth time I'd turn around and say, 'That book changed my life.'

*Hilltopics would like to specially thank Dr. John Lewis for taking the time to share his thoughts with us.*

*Todd Baty is a senior history and music major*



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## The Internet Freedom Act is set to expire November 1, 2007: not a positive thing for your wallet

by Janet Arnold

The 1998 Internet Tax Freedom Act, signed into law under President Clinton, was an effort to help foster and influence the growth of the Internet. The law bans federal, state, and local governments from taxing Internet access or use. Twice this law has been extended, but it is currently set to expire in November of this year.

Recognizing how the Internet has revolutionized commerce, it is easy to understand how the Internet hurts sales tax reviews, and the expiration of the Internet Tax Freedom Act isn't expected to change sales tax with respect to online purchases, but rather a variety of potential tax sources.

An Internet Access tax would be levied through the Internet Service Provider (ISP). This type of tax would look similar to the taxes you pay on your cell phone, which can be as much as 20% of the total bill.

Another really scary venue for taxation that has been suggested is a Bit Tax. With a bit tax, much like a utility bill, taxes would be based on the volume of data transferred. So downloading the power

point slides for class, that new album, and the pod-cast you have to watch before lecture all of a sudden get a lot more expensive.

One really surprising avenue of taxation would be



an e-mail tax. Having come under the consideration of the United Nations, in an effort to raise funds to boost Internet technology access in developing nations, an E-mail tax of \$0.01 for every 100 lengthy e-mails is believed translate into \$70 billion a year in revenues.

If it were not for the tax ban, some 30,000 taxing jurisdictions have claim to taxes on the Internet. The legislation was enacted so as to protect the benefits of knowledge, trade, and communications that the Internet brings to people. Its proponents argue that these benefits are well worth any loss of tax revenues. Some opponents claim that the Internet is so entrenched in society that it will continue to prosper even if taxed.

Congress has an upcoming vote on a piece of legislation designed to replace the old temporary ban with a new permanent one. I encourage you to e-mail your representative, while it's still free, and support the new legislation. Not sure who your representative is? Just go to [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org) and you can easily find your representative and search for their contact information.

*Janet Arnold is a senior marketing and psychology major*

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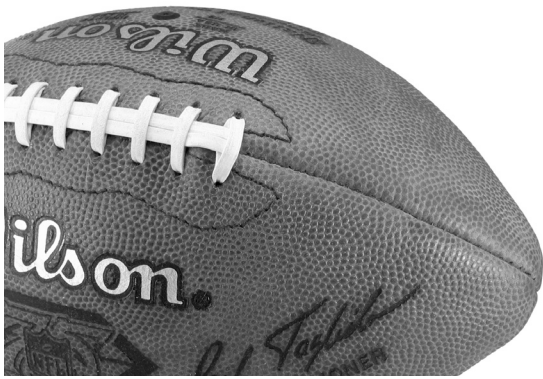
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**SMU vs. Tulane**  
**Saturday, October 20, 2007**  
**7:00 PM**



**Headline of the week:**

“Warner’s Robinov Bitchslaps Film Women; Gloria Allred Calls For Warner’s Boycott.”

<http://www.deadlinehollywooddaily.com/warners-robinoff-gets-in-catfight-with-girls/>



**Thumbs up:**

- To 200 people showing up for the candlelight vigil for Burma
- To Fall Break. Oh, wait...
- To SMU successful Men’s Soccer Team



**Thumbs down:**

- To 90 degree weather in mid-October
- To getting frisky in the West Stacks
- To artery-clogging fried cookie dough at the State Fair (because it’s too delicious)

**Events of interest spotlights:**

**Substance Abuse Taskforce Townhall Forum**

Monday October, 22  
 6:30 PM in the HT Theater

Do you have questions or comments about the Substance Abuse Task Force? Attend the Hall Forum to voice your opinions, and hear others concerns

**Business Etiquette Dinner**

Wednesday October, 24  
 5:00 PM in the E&Y Gallery  
 Cost: \$20  
 RSVP is Required

Enjoy a four course meal and explore the do’s and don’ts of business dining etiquette. Please contact Jill Branson to register. Seats are limited.

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