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## Hilltopics: Volume 5, Issue 1

Hilltopics Staff

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# HILLTOPICS

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volume five, issue one  
week of september 8, 2008

## An Update on Immigration

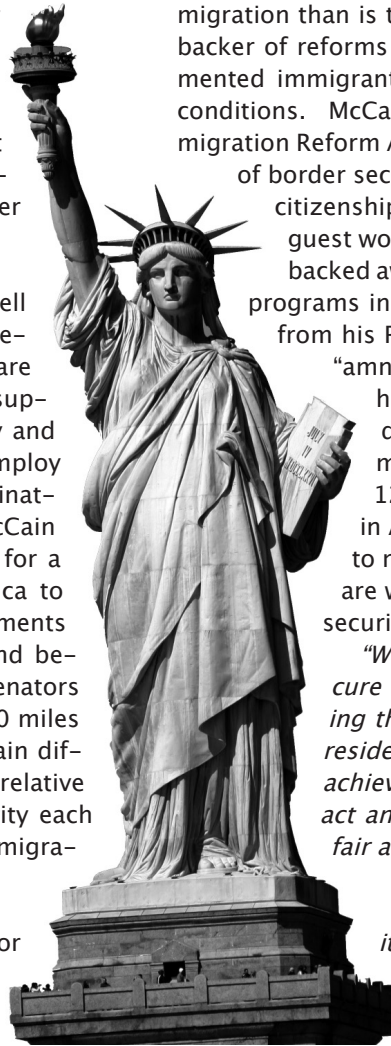
Having just read Luis Urrea's *The Devil's Highway* (you did read it, didn't you?), many of our first year students are no doubt wondering what impact the November election will have on U.S. border policy. With that in mind, we present to you a short overview of each presidential candidate's stance on illegal immigration and border control.

### Striking Similarities

Judging from their respective websites as well as their public statements on immigration reform, the candidates' stances on immigration are strikingly similar. Each candidate has voted in support of measures to strengthen border security and to crack down on employers who knowingly employ undocumented immigrants in the hopes of eliminating incentives to cross the border illegally. McCain and Obama have also both expressed support for a pathway for illegal immigrants living in America to gain citizenship after meeting certain requirements such as learning English, paying back taxes and being in good standing with the law. The two senators also both voted in support of a plan to erect 700 miles of fence along the U.S.-Mexico border. The main difference between the two seems to lie in their relative experience with border issues and in the priority each candidate gives to border security vis-à-vis immigration reform.

### Presumptive GOP Candidate John McCain

John McCain has served as a congressman for Arizona, a border state and the location of the infamous Devil's Highway, since 1983, and has expressed less conservative views on im-



migration than is typical of his party. McCain is a long time backer of reforms that would grant legal status to undocumented immigrants already living in America, with certain conditions. McCain co-sponsored the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 which proposed strengthening of border security and included provisions for a path to citizenship for immigrants as well as an expanded guest worker program. Since that time, McCain has backed away from his strong support of legalization programs in response to voter feedback and criticism from his Republican peers accusing him of offering "amnesty" to illegal aliens. Recently, McCain has repeatedly told the press that the border must be secured before Congress can move on to addressing the situation of the 12 million undocumented immigrants living in America, a sentiment most likely designed to mollify conservative Republican voters who are worried that McCain is too soft on national security.

*"We must prove we have the resources to secure our borders and use them, while respecting the dignity and rights of citizens and legal residents of the United States. When we have achieved our border security goal, we must enact and implement the other parts of practical, fair and necessary immigration policy.*

...  
*John McCain's top immigration priority is to finish securing our borders in an expedited manner" - www.johnmccain.com, official website of the McCain*  
**continued on page 2**

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**Olympics:** One student reflects on the recent summer olympic games, and how America represented. Read more page 3

**SMU Football:** Will June bring change? More on page 5.

**SMU Radio:** SMU has a Radio Station!?! Read more on page 4.

**Election:** Andrew Shaw weighs in on the Republican Parties political campaigning, page 6.

**Be Heard:** *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic!

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@gmail.com](mailto:hilltopics@gmail.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.

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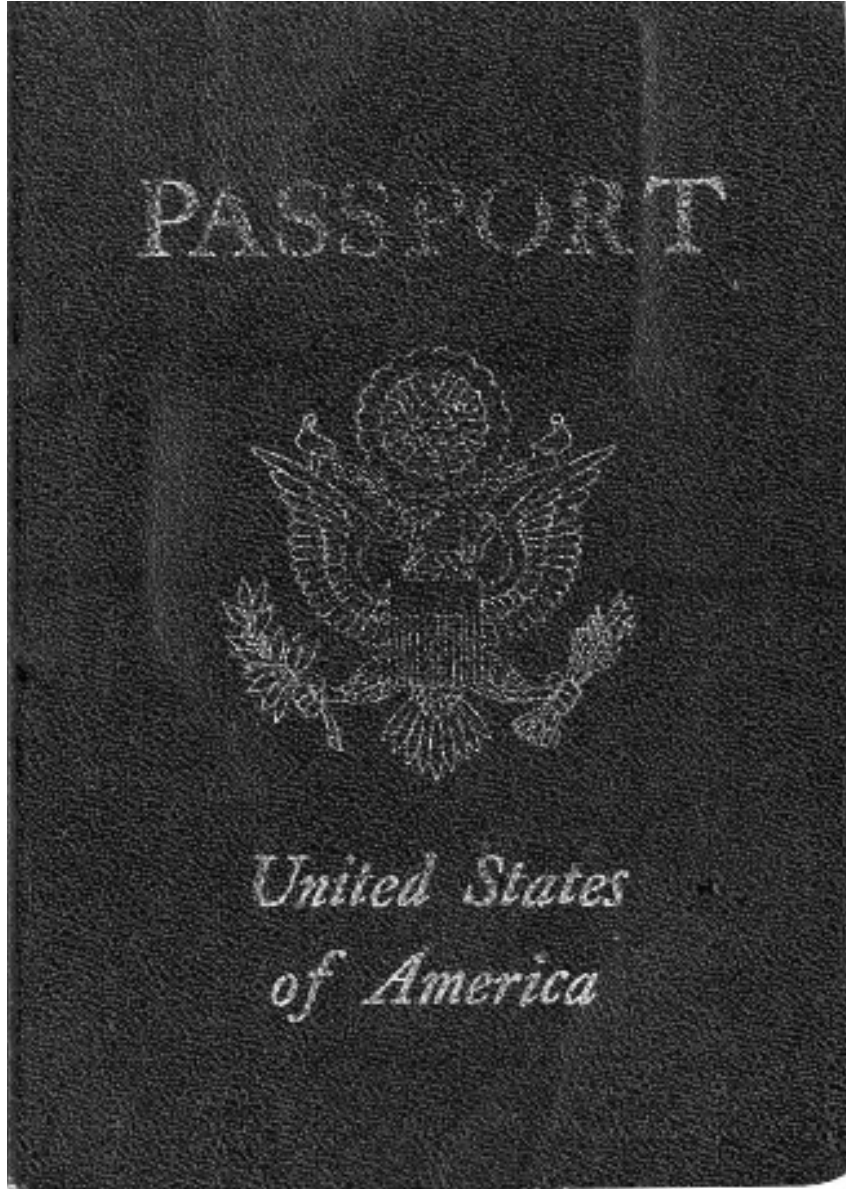
Campaign

## Democratic Party Candidate Barack Obama

As a senator representing Illinois, Obama's direct experience with border security issues is significantly less comprehensive than that of senator McCain. Nevertheless, Obama's statements and actions on immigration reform in recent years have closely resembled those of his opponent and in some areas have gone farther toward legally integrating undocumented immigrants into American society. Obama voted in favor of the 2006 Immigration Reform Act along with McCain and has echoed McCain's desire to create a program to legalize undocumented immigrants who pay a fine, learn English, and obey the law. In addition, Obama co-sponsored the Citizenship Promotion Act of 2007 which would set a limit on immigration application fees and allocate \$80 million a year to promoting citizenship. Obama has differentiated himself from McCain by committing to immigration reforms not contingent upon border security achievements; while Obama advocates strengthening the border and has a similar voting record to McCain on that issue, he has not explicitly placed border security before immigration reform in his agenda.

*"We're going to have to secure our borders. And this past year, the Senate invested billions of dollars in improving border security. I think that's important because I think all Americans think that we should be able to regulate who comes in and out of this country in an orderly way, not only*

*for the sake of our sovereignty, but also to avoid the hundreds of people who have been dying across the desert, the enormous costs that are placed on border states and border towns."* - "Larry King Live", March 24, 2007



## A Lesson From Luis Urrea

Although national security may require the strengthening of border security, I feel that both candidates were in the wrong in their support of a fence across the U.S. - Mexico border. Perhaps senators Obama and McCain ought to give *The Devil's Highway* a read. The erection of a border fence would do nothing to address the poverty that drives Mexicans and Central Americans to risk a border crossing in the first place. It would only force Coyotes to take more extreme and reckless measures to get their clients into America and would likely put the travelers' lives in even greater danger - perhaps driving more and more people into places like the Devil's Highway. The real answer, in my opinion, is not to concentrate on deterring illegal crossings but to improve the economies of the immigrants' home countries;

more economic opportunities and a higher standard of living would make leaving home less desirable and fewer people would choose to risk the dangerous trip to America. I find the suggestion of erecting a fence across the border not only naïve, but offensive and psychologically damaging. It likens the people crossing the border to dogs or beasts, a slavering mob which can only be controlled by physical force. If Urrea's book shows nothing else, it is that the humanity of those "aliens" crossing our borders must not be overlooked.

## US Misses Golden Opportunity at Olympics

When a gymnast does a floor routine, he or she is judged not just on what he or she can do, but how he or she does it. The execution matters just as much as the difficulty; however, while advanced combinations may win medals, grace and polish make legends.

At the Olympics, each country has an opportunity to showcase both its talent and its grace. Team USA athletes have the crucial responsibility of defining American values. What they do and how they act speaks for all of us here at home.

The Olympics in Beijing have certainly left us no worse off in the public eye than we were before. We have successfully avoided that minefield of scandals and notoriety that all too easily lends itself to sports – think steroids, drugs, payoffs. We also managed to rack up an impressive medal count. In spite of these achievements, it seems like our sportsmanship has not really set us apart to the degree that it could have. With an already bedraggled international image, we really needed to glow like angels if we were to improve our country's reputation.

US tennis player James Blake made quite a scene during his August 15th match against Fernando Gonzalez of Chile. In a desperate attempt not to lose a point, Blake hit the ball directly at Gonzalez. According to the referee, Gonzalez dodged it. Blake disagreed and let the referee know. After the match, Blake said in a press conference he thought Gonzalez knew the ball touched his racket, and that he was disappointed in Gonzalez's dishonesty. Ironically, he continued to lecture on sportsmanship.

Now it might be true that Gonzalez *did* feel the ball hit

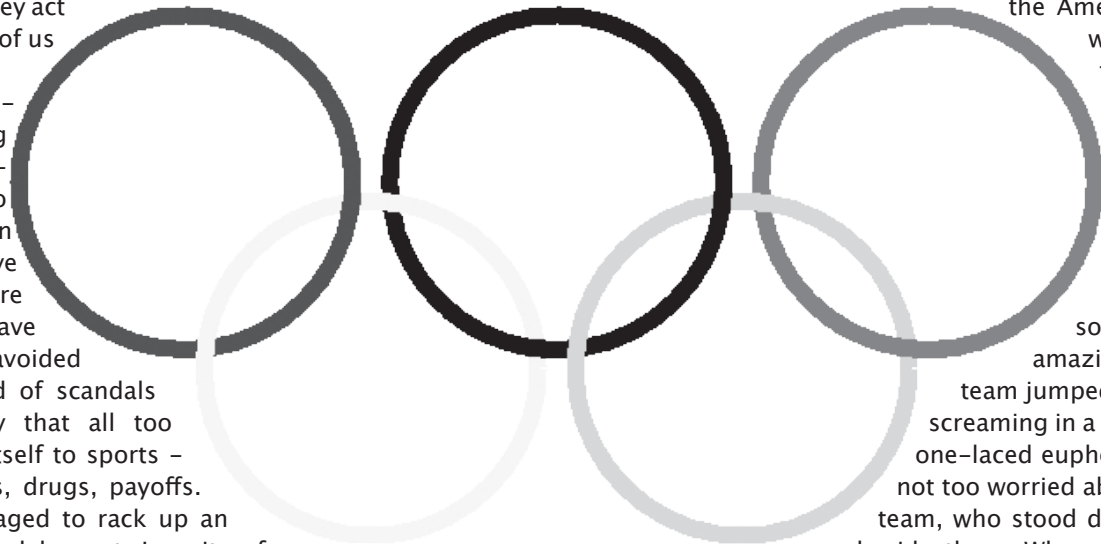
him, but either way, sportsmanship also involves knowing that not every call will be right – that's part of the game. And how does Blake know whether or not Gonzalez was aware of the ball hitting him? He doesn't. In my opinion, taking cheap shots at your opponent's integrity is in pretty poor taste.

The much-anticipated men's 4 x 100 m freestyle relay started with some harsh words from the French. Team member Alain Bernard promised that his team would "smash" the Americans. "That's what we're here for," he said. When the race was over and the US had won by eight hundredths of a second thanks to Jason Lezak's amazing effort, the team jumped up and down, screaming in a fit of testosterone-laced euphoria. They were not too worried about the French team, who stood devastated right beside them. When asked how the American team felt about the French team's earlier expectations, Phelps responded, "I think we showed them."

As much as I'm glad we won, I'm not sure we can realistically count this as a decisive victory for the record books. Had the race gone any differently, they might have "showed" us. I mean, 0.08 seconds, come on! A more thoughtful response to the interviewer would have been to acknowledge the closeness of the race and how well the French swam. We could have walked over there and shaken hands with them and really shown how much we respect their efforts, not mention those of the other teams.

Micro examples like this dot our 2008 Olympic experience. It may seem like I'm being way too negative, but I can't help but feel that we missed a chance to remind the world what America is all about.

*by Ashley Howe*



**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 ?

**we're listening at [hilltopics@gmail.com](mailto:hilltopics@gmail.com)**

## KPNI SMU Radio Starts Living Up To Its Name

SMU has a radio station. In my experience, just saying those words is a bold statement. Generally, the people I am addressing will raise their eyebrows and look astonished. "Really?" they ask. "I had no idea." Perhaps after this year I will never have that experience again. After struggling to keep its head above water for years, not to mention facing a slew of problems, KPNI SMU Radio seems poised to break out and make itself heard.

Chances are you've unwittingly sat right under KPNI staff in Umphrey Lee during a broadcast. The fact that so many students can walk through community centers unaware of these broadcasts is unquestionably frustrating to the DJs and staff, especially considering that at one point the station was quite popular throughout the city of Dallas. Relatively recent legislature has limited the number of frequencies in the area and confined KPNI to SMU campus. Several years ago, renovations of the school's dormitories ruined KPNI's ability to be heard via radio on campus, and the station was relegated to internet-only broadcasting. The new arrangement, which allows the station to broadcast in student hubs like Umphrey Lee, Hughes-Trigg and the Dedman Center, is perhaps the most significant and exciting change for KPNI this year. Station manager Courtenay Paris is excited by the prospect of the SMU community finally getting to hear the product of the staff's efforts. She expects a smooth shift from the old programming to the new, saying that the KPNI station is a well-rounded representation of SMU. "Because

*by Thomas Dunlap*

positions are open to anyone, we have all types of shows, from two new DJ's starting a hip hop show to the Red Zone, our sports show. We've had political talk shows and shows run by student organizations in the past. I'd say we have a really good mix of people who all bring their own outside interests to the station. One girl was asking about being a DJ and she wanted to know if the station was just journalism majors, and it's totally not. There is a quick training session, and then you're good to go. Anyone can do it."

In addition to expanding its broadcasting capabilities, KPNI has also expanded its pool of resources. In previous years, most of KPNI's finances simply went to maintaining the station and fixing serious technical problems. With the funding from their new charter, KPNI plans to bring the radio to the people. "We're really reaching out this year," says Paris. "We just started doing more events at the end of last year, and we're going to keep it up and make it bigger and better, with prize tickets and shows at the Granada Theater." In addition to setting up on the Boulevard for other school events, KPNI will be having Laptop Deathmatch events every Friday. At these events, DJs' set lengths are determined by crowd response, and bands like the Avett Brothers will perform.

Maybe this year people will be telling me about the station.

The first Laptop Deathmatch is Friday September 5th from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M at the Varsity. You can listen to KPNI at [kpni.smu.edu](http://kpni.smu.edu)



## A new, ineffective ad campaign cometh.

June Cometh. You have undoubtedly seen the billboards around town, but are they really working? Is the city of Dallas finally excited about its only NCAA football program? Are the students even that impressed? Rewind to this time last year. Our football program was coming off a 6-win season, and we were receiving predictions about winning the C-USA West. At the beginning of last season, a revitalized ad campaign, sporting that now oh-so-familiar "PONY UP" graphic, permeated the Dallas area. Some people instantly knew what it meant

(e.g. most of us students), while others were confused. Some thought the pony and arrow sign simply meant that the university was in that direction. Others complained that it was distasteful to have a slogan that



translates to "pay up" for a football program that, well...I don't have to tell you that story. Regardless of the mixed reactions towards the ambitious and expensive campaign, hopes remained high that Gerald J. Ford Stadium would fill up, and that the season would end with our first bowl game since 1984. Unfortunately, the Mustangs started the season 1-3. While attending many of the home football games, I couldn't help but notice that there were more empty seats than full ones. It was then that I realized no advertising campaign would ever make more than a negligible impact on SMU football. In spite of an intense and costly offseason effort by Marketing and Promotions and the Richards Group, we could only sit and watch as our team fell to a 1-11 overall record, keeping those seats unceremoniously empty. The experiment had failed.

Enough of dwelling in the past. Let's discuss the new sea-

son and the new campaign. There is a tangible reason to get excited about SMU football again - the hiring of June Jones. The brand of football he brings with him is fan-friendly, not to mention unfriendly towards opposing defense. The high energy run-and-shoot offense is fun to watch and should draw large crowds by itself. Jones also owns the NCAA record for win percentage turnaround in a single season, taking the 0-12 Hawaii Warriors to a 9-4 season and a bowl win. The man is a program resuscitator, without a doubt, and I am extremely

grateful that SMU managed to hire him. However, doesn't everyone in the Dallas area already know that he is here? Ticket sales for SMU football are up 50% since the announcement, and that

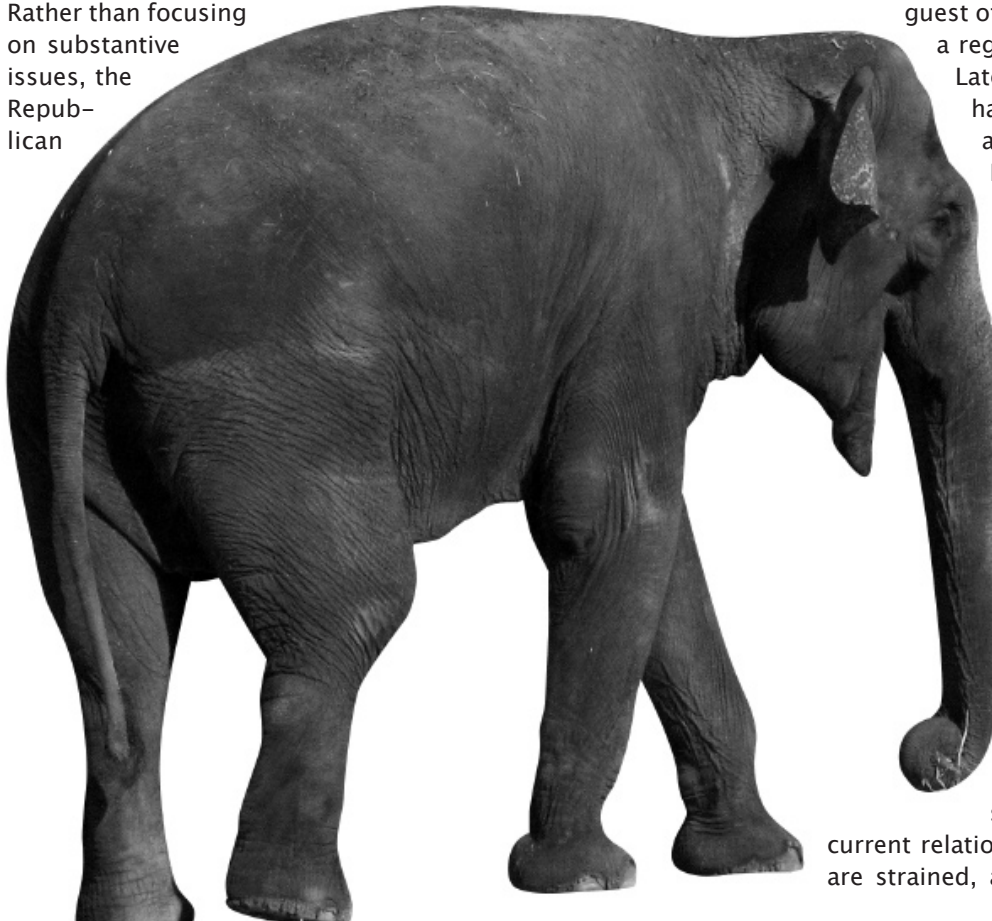
was before any gigantic ads were placed up and down Greenville and 75. Why then should we invest so much more money into advertisements that are ineffective? If we start the season poorly, it absolutely does not matter that SMU put up snazzy billboards about our new coach. If SMU wants to fill up Gerald J. Ford Stadium for the first time since that SMU brochure aerial photo was taken (back when the stadium first opened), it will require one simple ingredient: wins. Winning programs have no problem filling seats. Winning programs do not rely on expensive advertisements to create buzz. Should Coach Jones string together some good wins with his exciting system, you can be sure that attendance will rise sharply. Sure, the ad people will think they had some hand in it, but a full Ford Stadium will be the result of those Mustangs on the field and the new guy calling the plays.

*by Josh Wood*

## G.O.P. Campaign: Grasping for Straws

We all know it by now – this November’s presidential election will pit a relatively inexperienced Democratic politician against a seasoned veteran (both literally and figuratively) Republican candidate. With this clear advantage in hand, you may think that the G.O.P. would base their presidential campaign around this solid potential cornerstone – the lack of experience on the part of the Democratic nominee. But that isn’t the case.

Rather than focusing on substantive issues, the Republican

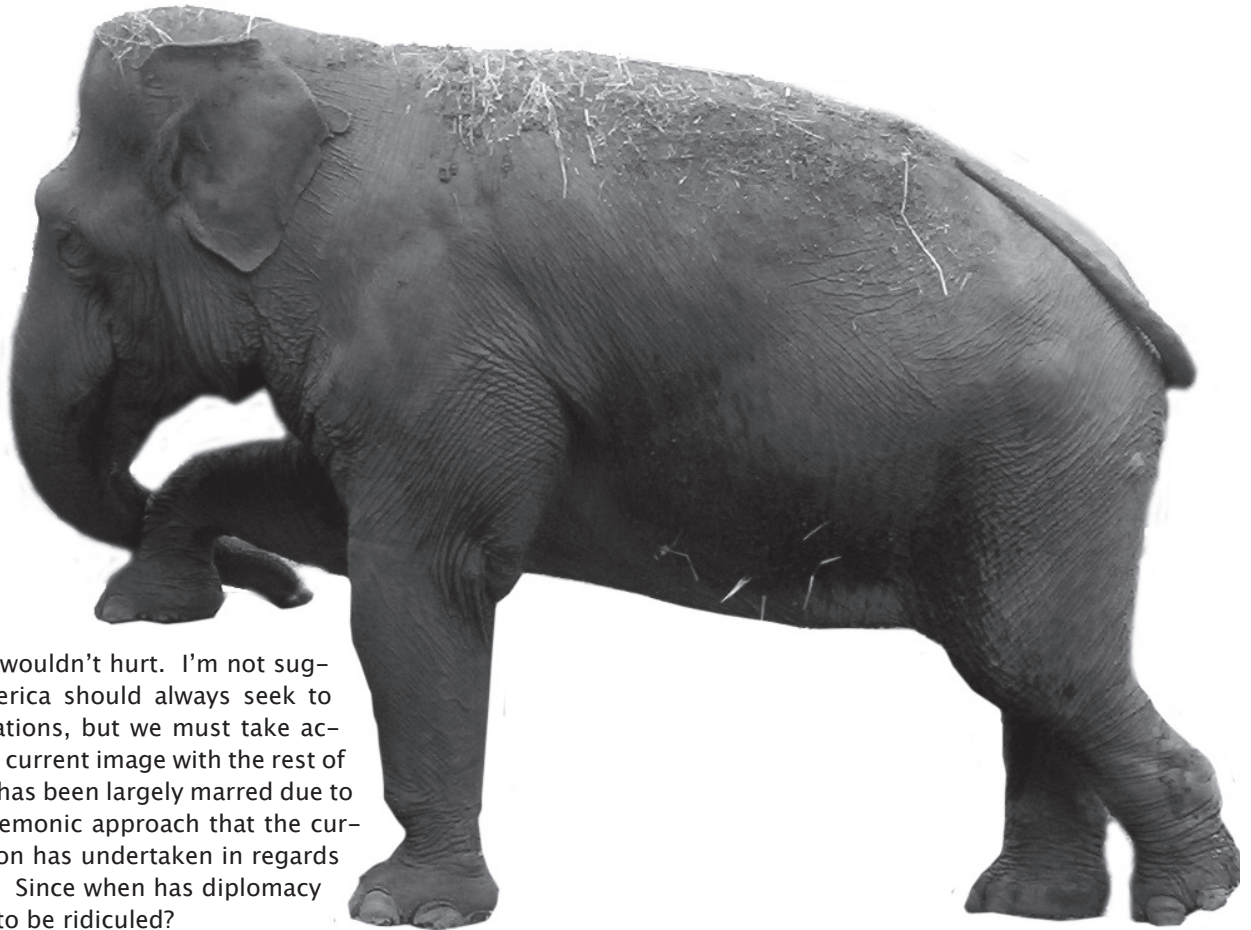


campaign so far can be best described as desperate and superficial. To exemplify this, there were all those “Celebrity” advertisements. These ads criticized and attempted to vilify Barack Obama’s domestic and global popularity. Not only is this a silly attack, as popularity and recognition are essential in winning an election, but it’s also hypocritical in the fact that the G.O.P.’s own candidate, John McCain, has his own celebrity status. McCain has been a frequent guest of Comedy Central’s *The Daily Show* and a regular contributor to sketch routines on *Late Night With Conan O’Brien*. He’s also had a bit part on the show *24*, as well as an appearance on a World Wrestling Entertainment program. He has even hosted *Saturday Night Live*. The hypocrisy isn’t confined to the current campaign, as it wasn’t too long ago that the Republican’s own candidate, Ronald Reagan, became president after a long movie career.

Closely aligned with the G.O.P.’s bashing of Obama’s “celebrity” status has been the criticism of his “world tour” over the summer. The Republican campaign as well as Republican pundits like Sean Hannity have denounced the tour, saying that Obama’s visits (which were met with warm receptions) indicated that he was running “for the president of Europe” rather than America.

Maybe it’s ignorance, or perhaps denial, that lends to the inability of such critics to realize that America’s current relations with much of the rest of the world are strained, and that a more diplomatic approach





to foreign policy wouldn't hurt. I'm not suggesting that America should always seek to appease other nations, but we must take action to rectify our current image with the rest of the world, which has been largely marred due to the brazenly hegemonic approach that the current administration has undertaken in regards to foreign policy. Since when has diplomacy been something to be ridiculed?

One last questionable campaign strategy by the G.O.P. has been their attacks on Obama's campaign themes - hope and change. Again, instead of focusing on specific substantive issues, the Republican campaign has attempted to vilify universally appealing themes in Obama's campaign. In recent decades, there has been some success on the part of the right to make "liberal" a dirty word to followers of the conservative political ideology. This has proven to be an effective tool in election campaigns, but can they pull off this new attempt at language manipulation? The chances are unlikely, as the words "hope" and "change", unlike "liberal", aren't political in nature. They are words that, not surprisingly, inspire optimism in people. For the Republican campaign to try and malign these terms for political effect is a dangerous move that is almost certain to backfire. By attacking a campaign for being based on hope and change, the G.O.P. are simultaneously labeling their own party as one antithetical to these ideals. By criticizing the notion of change, they're announcing that they want to continue the failed policies of the current administration. By denouncing the ideal of hope, they're sending a message of despair. While the election is still over two months away, and there is still time for the G.O.P. campaign to change its tune, these past months have proven that Republican campaign strategists in the post-Rove era have lost their touch. With more

and more Americans becoming unhappy with the American presence in Iraq, and with fear-mongering becoming less and less effective, the Republicans have lost their trusty campaign cornerstones. And instead of finding substantive new ones, they're grasping for straws. Indeed, the only hope for the G.O.P this November is for them to change their current message.

**Want to be heard?**

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**SMU v. TCU**  
**Saturday, September 20, 2008**  
**7:00 PM**  
**Gerald Ford Stadium**



**Headline of the week: "Feisty N.J. puppy scares off 3 bears"**

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/offbeat/default.htm>

So I guess that makes puppies the greatest threat to America? - Ed.



**Thumbs up:**

- The beginning of a new football season with June Jones at the helm. Get 'em boys!
- Being able to get a free (kind of) burger at 11:59 at night again. Ah Mac's Place, how did we live without you?
- Hillary and Bill swallowing their pride and throwing in with Obama. Way to show some integrity. Hillary's voters, on the other hand...



**Thumbs down:**

- Comedy Central not sending Colbert to cover the DNC. For shame.
- Four hours of homework the first night of school. C'mon, seriously?
- The Olympics ending (even though NBC will probably show replays for another month)
- The death of Don LaFontaine, the voice of movies

**Upcoming Events:**

September 9  
 Career and Internship Fair prep day;  
 HT lower level, 1-7 pm

September 17  
 Career and Internship Fair;  
 HT Ballroom, 1-4 pm

September 20  
 Family Weekend  
 Clean Up Your Rooms!

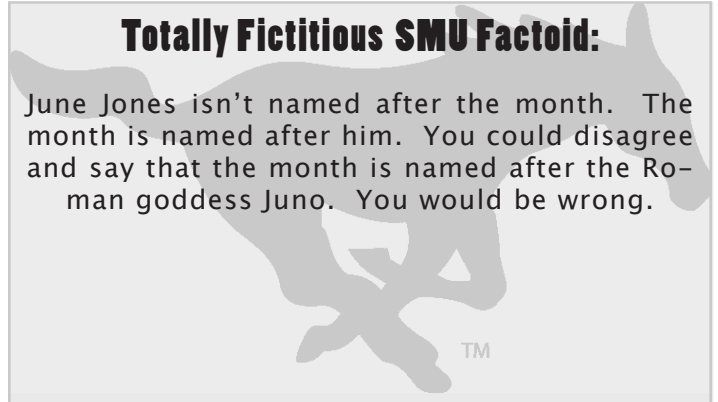
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**Totally Fictitious SMU Factoid:**

June Jones isn't named after the month. The month is named after him. You could disagree and say that the month is named after the Roman goddess Juno. You would be wrong.



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