

9-22-2008

Hilltopics: Volume 5, Issue 2

Hilltopics Staff

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Recommended Citation

Hilltopics Staff, "Hilltopics: Volume 5, Issue 2" (2008). *Hilltopics*. 83.
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HILLTOPICS

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volume five, issue two
week of september 22, 2008

Is DISD making the grade? New policies say otherwise

Back in August, Dallas ISD implemented some controversial grading policy changes. These new policies are widely unpopular among teachers and parents, who claim that the policies are too lenient and that they encourage laziness. In my opinion, the policies do more than that – they cause harm.

First of all, the changes practically make getting a real grade easier than getting a zero. The official DISD document states that students cannot receive a zero without parental notification, as well as additional efforts on the part of the teacher to “assist students in completing the work.” If a student fails a test, he or she may retake it.

Teachers are only allowed to use homework grades when

it will bring up a student’s average to do so. This is especially interesting because it brings up a lot of questions about what education really means. If you can prove yourself on the

test, should you have to do homework? I’m sure we all knew that one brilliant underachiever kid in school who never had to do his homework because he just caught on quicker than everyone else. Even if he got all zeroes on homework, he’d do well enough on

tests to pass. This kid, however, is exactly what I just said – that one brilliant underachiever kid, the exception and not the rule.

Even if I’m wrong, and there are tons of brilliant under-

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INSIDE this issue

Politics: Cody Meador breaks down the presidential debate schedule leading up to the election. page 4

Health: A few tips to stave off the freshman fifteen. page 5

Jobs: The evolution of employee recruitment. Valuable information for graduating seniors. page 2

Music: Album reviews, recommendations and an in depth interview with indie rockers Ra Ra Riot and Electric Touch

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 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.

Employers Getting Ready for "RUSH"

by Marva McGrew

Employers are getting ready for RUSH – Rapid Urgency of Student Hires represents the coming experience that companies will face unless they make a conscientious effort to replace their retiring "baby boomers" (individuals born between 1946 and 1964). RUSH helps us gain a more accurate picture of current and future expectations of recruiting efforts over the next few years. Rapid – the impact that technology has on recruiting will continue to play a major role in the success of employer hiring; Urgency – the need for employers to have a strategy in place to replace the millions of baby boomers who will retire in ten years; Student Hires – expectations of students and employers over the next ten years.

RAPID – Today's high-tech society moves at a rapid pace, including recruiting. Over the past decade, technology has transformed the job search and recruiting processes. While the baby boomer generation searched ads in the newspapers and completed applications on site, the Millennials go online. They are comfortable with the Internet and are considered the most tech-savvy generation. The recruiting process must continue to advance with technology in order to reach and recruit the Millennial generation. Many employers, especially larger employers, are taking proactive steps.

Websites are one of the most utilized resources for job seekers. A survey conducted by Universum asked the Millennials how they learn about future employers. Their responses were: Monster.com (39 percent) and Career Builder (24 percent). But they also use local newspapers (30 percent), school publications (27 percent) and University career centers (73 percent).

According to a survey conducted by Potential Park Communications, job seekers expect websites to be quick to access, easy to use, informative, trustworthy, and fun. In this survey, a male student from Kellogg commented, "What makes a website great is the ability to have depth in a given area if you want it – but not to have to wade through a lot of extraneous information if you don't."

If you are wondering if this is truly the case with company websites, we took an inside look at the top 3 Best Places to Launch a Career: Walt Disney, Lockheed Martin, and Deloitte & Touche (according to a survey conducted by Business Week's Lindsey Gerdes). Each of the websites is quick to access. They are also very user-friendly, well-defined, informative, and a step ahead of many company websites. They included blogs, pod casting, employee video testimonials, step-by-



step instructions regarding their recruiting process, information about career paths, and leadership development programs. Each of these companies has a dedicated web page for students.

There is no doubt that technology speeds up the recruiting process for companies. So how will this impact the urgency to replace the millions of retiring baby boomers in the next ten years? Companies have a great tool in their website. Where do they go from here?

URGENCY – With any major change, having a plan and executing it is key. What does your company forecast look like over the next ten years – how many retirees? Companies that are

getting candidates in the pipeline now will have an advantage over those that are waiting. Companies such as Raytheon and Blue Cross Blue Shield are taking proactive measures by recruiting first and second year students for internships. They have developed aggressive recruiting initiatives such as, "Hire the Future"(Blue Cross Blue Shield). The idea is to mentor and train, with the long-term goal of offering students a full time position upon graduation.

According to World Wide Learn, "Businesses of all kinds have found themselves locked into the equivalent of an arms race with their competitors. Companies must provide their teams with the best equipment and resources, or face defeat." The number one most critical resource is employees. Companies must be willing to look at what will attract the Millennials to their company, as well as what they must do to retain them.

STUDENT HIRES – As employers focus on student hires, it is important to understand this new and upcoming generation. This is a generation that has grown up with diversity, technology, social and collaborative group work, and praise.

According to the Department of Labor, “as a group, the Millennium Generation are 60 percent more likely to be from minority groups than their parents’ and grandparents’ generations, those Americans boom-aged and older. No less than one-third of young Americans aged 15–25 are black, Latino, Asian or Native American.” For those companies that have not adjusted and/or put strategic plans in place to address a diverse workforce, they might find themselves struggling to recruit the human capital that they need.

Millennials want answers right away. There is no need to wait. They have instant messaging, computers, cell phones, BlackBerrys, iPods, and social networking. These things are all part of their everyday life style. They will definitely bring an added value to the workforce, as they know what it is to work in groups without having face-to-face interaction.

From a very young age, whether it was soccer, ballet, football, basketball, or speech trophies, every member of the team was rewarded. It wasn’t about who did the best job, it was about the fact that they made an effort, or warranted an award. Of course, we cannot forget about the continuous praise from their parents, which has continued into their young adult life.

Companies are continuously seeking ways to reward and retain their young employees. In Zaslów’s article, “Most Praised Generation Craves Kudos in the Office,” states, “Employers are dishing out kudos to workers for little more than showing up. Corporations including Lands’ End and Bank of America are hiring consultants to teach managers how to compliment employees using email, prize packages and public displays of appreciation.”

What changes, adjustments and processes will companies need to make the RUSH? How will they recruit and retain the Millennials? What will make your company their number one choice? To sum it all up, companies will need to stay on top of technology, make the most of their websites in the recruiting process, know the characteristics of the millennium generation and put a strategy in place to understand and recruit a diverse group.

Marva is the Associate Director of Employer Relations at the Hegi Family Career Development Center

DiSD policies raising concerns

continued from page 1

achievers out there just waiting for these new DISD policies, does that mean that we should forget the idea of education as a process? A real education is about much more than tests and grades. It’s about intellectual curiosity and gaining deeper knowledge of a subject.

The next real problem is that the new policies could effectively detract attention from students who make an effort. Will kids who genuinely want to learn end up getting ignored because the teacher has to help others finish their homework?

Obviously, DISD defends its own decision, but the new policies have some other fans as well. David Chard, the dean of the School of Education and Human Development here at SMU, voiced his support in the September 3rd edition of *The Dallas Morning News*. In his opinion, the changes will help to discourage students from dropping out of school.

On the surface, handing out good grades looks like a fine idea. It increases the students’ self-confidence and gets them more interested in their schoolwork. But what real worth does a high school diploma have if you earn it without discipline or hard work? DISD is both failing to prepare its kids for employment and devaluing the diplomas they hand out.

Need more convincing? I have gotten the word straight from business professionals – standards like the ones DISD is promoting will not carry over well into the workplace. One of these professionals was an accounting professor who has had extensive experience in the business world. The other was one of my bosses.

I believe that Dallas ISD made these changes with the students’ best interests at heart. Unfortunately, even if you have the best of intentions, it doesn’t mean that you have the best of plans.

Beth is a senior majoring in accounting and French. She can be reached at ejanders@smu.edu.

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

Tune in or miss out. Watch the debates!

During the last week of August and the first week of September, Barack Obama (D) and John McCain (R) solidified their campaign teams and messages at the national nominating conventions. Now that those major events are over, the candidates are moving on to another important aspect of the campaign: the debates. While the national conventions are largely spectacle, staged for TV and meant to energize the party, the debates provide an opportunity for us to really see the candidates in action, one on one. Three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate will be held between September 26 and October 15. The dates of all the debates are listed below. Each debate will be ninety minutes long and begin at 8:00 pm central time. Gain some political insight by watching the coverage on any major news network like CNN, MSNBC, or FOX.

First presidential debate:
Friday, September 26
University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

Vice presidential debate:
Thursday, October 2
Washington University in St. Louis, MO

Second presidential debate:
Tuesday, October 7
Belmont University, Nashville, TN

Third presidential debate:
Wednesday, October 15
Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

The first presidential debate will focus on domestic policy. The candidates will likely be asked to discuss energy, the economy, and healthcare, education and social security, and the list goes on. No doubt Obama will work in a bit about cutting taxes for the middle class, and McCain will work in a counter argument that Obama just wants to raise all of the taxes.

The third debate will focus on foreign policy, and is likely to be the most heated. Barack Obama will surely attempt to take John McCain on and prove his worth in the realm of international politics, an area which critics have focused on as a weakness. It should be a good show since McCain will have to fight to keep his self-ascribed title as the experienced candidate who puts country first.

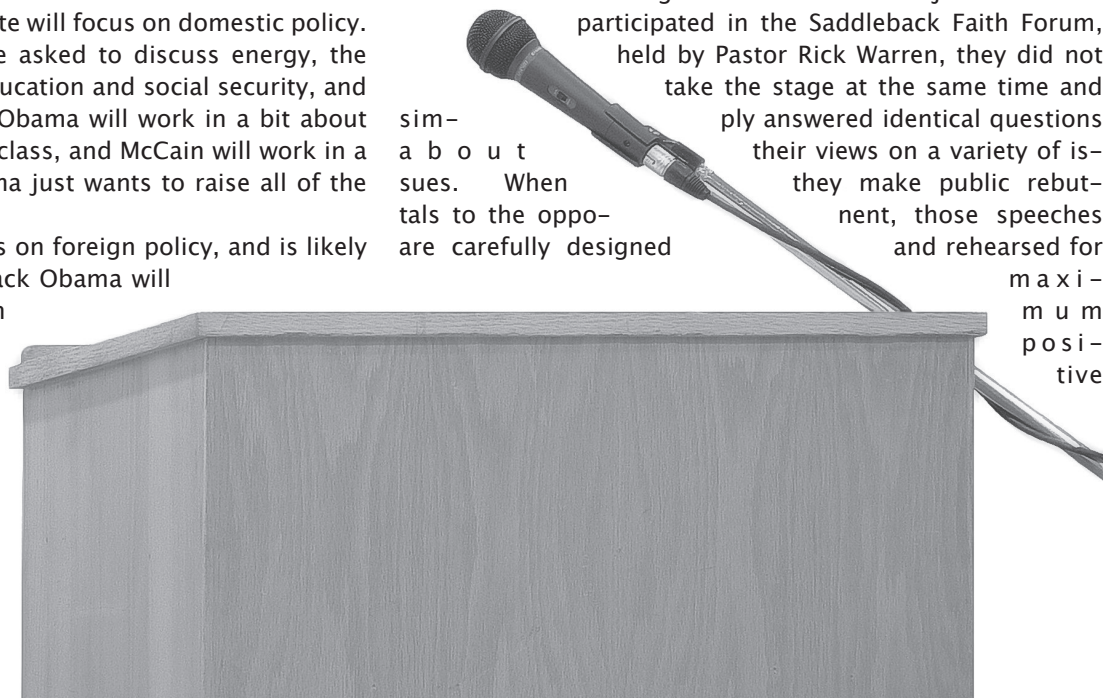
The vice presidential debate between Senator Joe

Biden (D) and Governor Sarah Palin (R) will cover domestic and foreign policy. This will be the show to watch, as we are all eager to see how Palin measures up to Biden on foreign policy. Biden has served in the United States Senate since 1973 and is the current chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I can imagine Palin each night before going to bed, running through her flashcards on Iraq, Iran, Russia, Georgia, Britain, on and on and on. However, while she has minimal foreign policy experience that is no reason to assume that she is not knowledgeable on the subject. The same criticisms have, after all, been levied against Obama. On domestic issues, the playing field will be a bit more even. Both vice-presidential candidates are from small towns and claim to be the model of an average American and they will most likely use this claim to legitimize their policy positions. While Palin may win over the true small towners with her humble origins in Wasilla, Alaska, home of roughly 7,000 residents, at least Biden has all fans of the hit show *The Office* in the bag – he is originally from Scranton, Pennsylvania. Maybe he should get Dwight to campaign for him.

The second presidential debate will follow a town hall format. This means that issues covered will depend on what questions the audience asks. John McCain is known for being most comfortable at town hall events as opposed to formal speaking events and may have the upper hand in this setting. Obama has been criticized at events of this nature for giving nuanced answers and rambling. Give him a crowd of 84,000 and no problem, but we'll see how he stands up to McCain in a relatively personal setting.

We have heard a lot of the rhetoric by now, but the fact is we have never seen Obama and McCain face-to-face on the same stage. When the two major candidates participated in the Saddleback Faith Forum, held by Pastor Rick Warren, they did not take the stage at the same time and

simply answered identical questions. When they make public rebuttals to the opponent, those speeches are carefully designed and rehearsed for maximum positive



Pizza

by Matthew Gayer

That extra slice of pizza looks good! I'm sure we've all had that thought at one time or another. A little midnight snack couldn't hurt! And once in a while, you would be right. But it is when this becomes a pattern that problems start to arise. A similar scenario also happens quite often: you plan on going to the gym, but somehow can never find the time or energy to go when it comes time.

Well, those extra pizza slices and days of inactivity eventually add up. The vast majority of unhealthy adults started their unhealthy habits during high school or college. There are three simple steps for avoiding these unhealthy life habits.

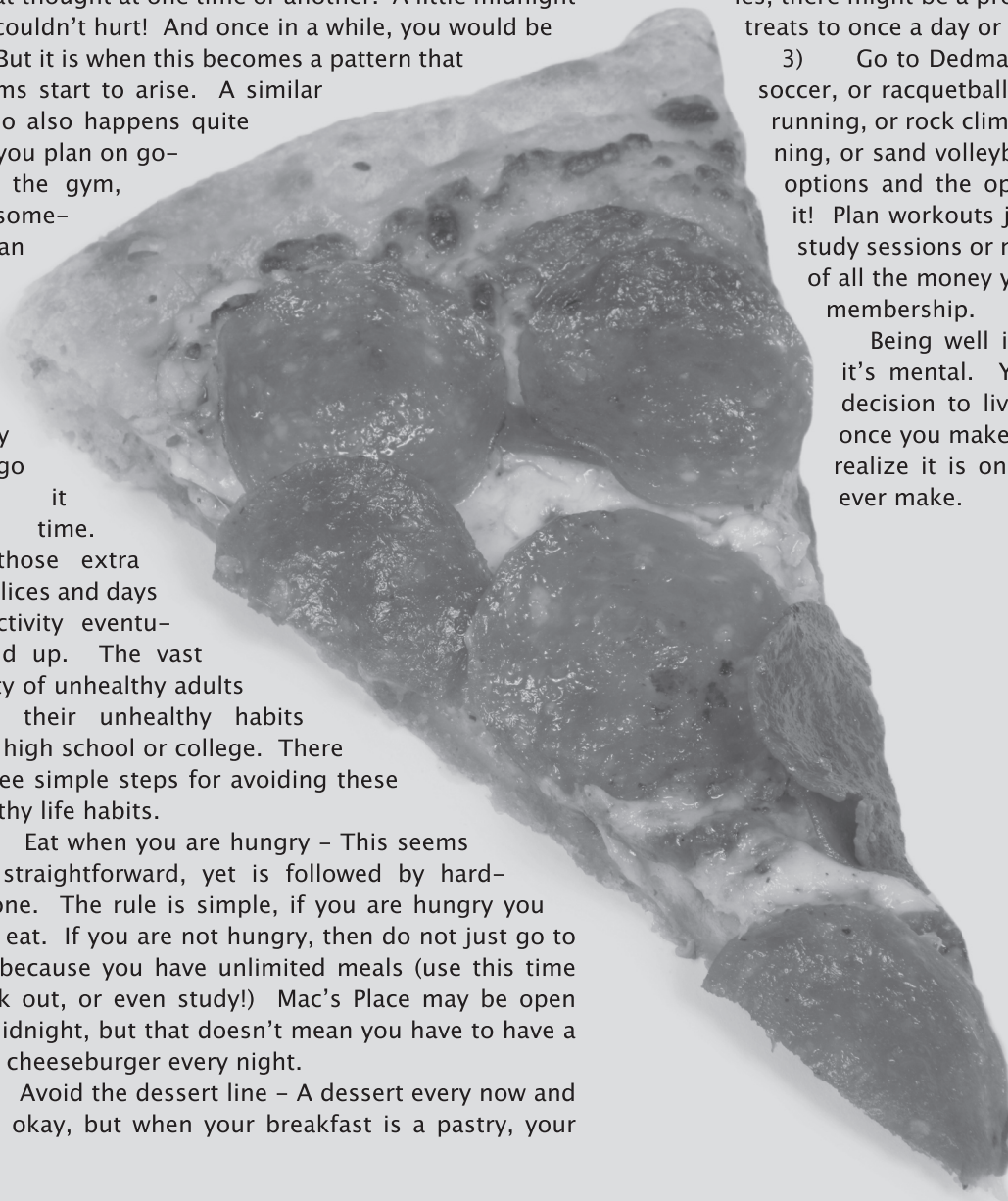
1) Eat when you are hungry – This seems pretty straightforward, yet is followed by hardly anyone. The rule is simple, if you are hungry you should eat. If you are not hungry, then do not just go to Umph because you have unlimited meals (use this time to work out, or even study!) Mac's Place may be open until midnight, but that doesn't mean you have to have a double cheeseburger every night.

2) Avoid the dessert line – A dessert every now and then is okay, but when your breakfast is a pastry, your

lunch is ice cream and your dinner is a couple of cookies, there might be a problem. Try to keep the treats to once a day or every other day.

3) Go to Dedman – Play basketball, or soccer, or racquetball, or lift weights, or go running, or rock climbing, or yoga, or spinning, or sand volleyball, etc. You have the options and the opportunity, now go do it! Plan workouts just as you would plan study sessions or meals. If it helps, think of all the money you're saving on a gym membership.

Being well is more than physical, it's mental. You have to make the decision to live a healthy life. And once you make that decision, you will realize it is one of the best you will ever make.



outcome. As for Biden and Palin, not only have we never seen them together on the same stage, we've hardly seen Palin on a stage at all with the exception of her vice presidential acceptance speech. By the time of her debate, she will probably have made a handful of press appearances, but so far the McCain campaign is keeping interviews to a minimum. These debates are valuable because the candidates give us more information than the usual sound bite about their policy stances, and although they try to exert what control they can, they may be taken by surprise and let a little bit of genuine feeling or personality slip through.

The vice presidential debate will be shown at an event called Rock the Boulevard on the lawn in front of Dallas Hall. It will be Thursday, October 2 in the evening. Ditch that Thursday night party, come listen, learn, and take sides. If you need to register to vote, stop by the Mane Desk in Hughes-Trigg for a voter registration application.

Cody Meador is a junior political science major, and campus coordinator of Democracy Matters. She can be reached at codylm@gmail.com.

Band Reviews

by Joshua Boydston

Bloc Party

Intimacy

London rockers Bloc Party don't disappoint on their third full-length effort, *Intimacy*. It combines the frenzied, rocking guitar and powerful choruses of *Silent Alarm* and the electronic sensibilities of *A Weekend In The City*. It is, according to lead singer Kele Okereke, the record Bloc Party has always wanted to make, and an absolute must-own in my book. "Ares" launches the record with eerie echoes followed by frantic guitar and booming bass. Kele switches from distorted shouting to a delicate whisper halfway through the song, only to come roaring back. Matt Tong's drums sound drum corps-esque, and when combined with Kele's vocals, transform "Ares" into a call to arms. The single "Mercury," sure to be a hipster dance club staple for the next several years, features looped vocals and an infectious rhythm, and can easily be lodged in one's brain for days. "Trojan Horse" is a tortured farewell to an ex-lover, featuring some of Kele's best singing and rip-roaring guitar. The highlight of the album is "Halo," a song of love and lust, so catchy and rocking that it's near impossible not to sing along. Bloc Party loses a little steam at the end of *Intimacy*, but all the songs are enjoyable, and the album picks back up with "Better Than Heaven." *Intimacy* is both entertaining and proof that Bloc Party will be around for a long time.

Rating: 9.0/10

Key Tracks: "Halo," "Ares," "Trojan Horse"

Available for download at blocparty.com

The Stills

Oceans Will Rise

The Stills haven't quite broken through to top tier band status yet, but this album, along with an upcoming tour with Kings of Leon and We Are Scientists could very well do the trick. Their newest disc, *Oceans Will Rise*, is the follow-up to the disappointing *Without Feathers*, and picks up where *Logic Will Break Your Heart* left off. "Don't Talk Down" opens up the album with seesawing guitars, grooving piano, and Tim Fletcher's beautiful voice, evoking thoughts of *Interpol* throughout. "Snow in California" sounds much like the title; a siren going off in the middle of a snowstorm with swooping guitars and precise, tight drumming. "Snakecharming The Masses" is a dark and broody tale of confusion, and the album's single, "Being Here," has a chorus that displays what amazing potential the Stills possess. "Everything I Build" is one of the most hauntingly beautiful songs from the album, but afterwards the Stills seem to start holding themselves back, though "Eastern Europe" and "Statue Of Sirens" are worth several listens. The Stills show their aptitude with *Oceans Will Rise*. Hopefully, with their next release, they will rise to premiere band potential.

Rating: 8.3/10

Key Tracks: "Snow In California," "Don't Talk Down," "Being Here"

Ra Ra Riot

The Rhumb Line

Ra Ra Riot's debut album is full of promise and beauty. Buzz about the Syracuse-based band has been building since their self-titled EP, released in 2007, and several impressive showings at SXSW. With *The Rhumb Line*, Ra Ra Riot proves they are worthy of the hype. Though they mix equal parts Vampire Weekend and Arcade Fire, their sound is their very own. The album swells up and simmers down seamlessly, always demanding one's attention. *The Rhumb Line* might just be the ultimate "study rock" record of the year. The opener "Ghost Under Rocks" builds into a dramatic crescendo, featuring breathtaking violin that steals the show. "Each Year" has to be one of the best songs of 2008, captivating in every way. "St. Peter's Day Festival" sounds straight out of a Shout Out Loud record and "Winter '05" is the most poignant song on the album. We witness Ra Ra Riot picking up the pace with "Dying Is Fine" and it is one of the most enjoyable songs on *The Rhumb Line*. Watch for Ra Ra Riot in the future, make sure to catch them live if you can, and definitely pick up this album.

Rating: 8.7/10

Key Tracks: "Each Year," "Dying Is Fine," "Ghost Under Rocks"

Bands You Should Know

Air Traffic- This British band is knocking on the door of international success. They released *Fractured Life* in 2007 to some minor acclaim, but hopefully they will continue to gain more and more exposure in the next couple of years. It is very piano-driven rock music with amazing power ballads and blazing, catchy guitar-riff-based songs. The songs "Charlotte" and "I Like That" are perfection and sound like little else out there.

For Fans Of: Coldplay, Keane, Nada Surf

The Subways- This English trio consists of Billy Lunn, his ex-fiancé, and Billy's brother, Josh. A tight-knit group, the Subways serve up infectious rock n' roll songs.

Right on the brink of worldwide acclaim, they have put out two fantastic albums, *Young For Eternity* and *All Or Nothing*. They create some amazing sing-along songs with bubbling melodies and rocking guitar riffs, and switch effortlessly from garage rock to acoustic bliss. Listen to "Rock & Roll Queen," "Oh Yeah," and "Lost Boy" to get an idea of what the Subways are all about.

For Fans Of: Oasis, the Vines, the Libertines

Ryan Lindsey- Ryan Lindsey is based out of Norman, Oklahoma, but he doesn't let that hold him back. You have probably already heard his music, even if you don't realize it. His songs have been featured on several shows and movies, including "American Teen" and "One Tree Hill." Continue to listen for him in the future. He has a talent for making poppy folk music that doesn't become bleak or boring. Ryan possesses a unique, charming voice and a talent for guitar and piano. *White Paper Beds* is one of the most complete solo

folk albums I've ever heard. Be sure to listen to "Friend For Life," "Let's Go Out," and "An Introspective Personality."

For Fans Of: Ben Kweller, Sean Lennon, Badly Drawn Boy

INTERVIEWS

Ra Ra Riot

Ra Ra Riot has been buzzing since their EP release in 2007. After several successful stints at SXSW and the full-length release *The Rhumb Line*, they are headlining their very own tour, which comes through Dallas on October 2nd. They took time out of their hectic schedule to give me a brief interview.

How'd you come up with the name Ra Ra Riot?

It's a name that a friend of Milo's came up with. We borrowed it at

first, and then couldn't think of a better one.

What or who has had the biggest influence on your music?

My friends have had the biggest impact on my music. Most music that I listen to or am inspired by, I've learned about from friends or has

been written by them.

What's the most rock-star thing you have done on tour?

Probably crowd surfing at Bowery ballroom.

And the least rock-star thing done on tour?

I've fallen asleep during sound check more than once, sometimes on top of empty cases. (Also could work for most rock-star thing I've done, depending on your perspective)

What's been the biggest challenge in your musical career?

Defining a unique identity.

Which band(s) do you dream of going on tour with?

Most often I dream of hanging out with Sting circa 1981. Or John

Lennon anytime after 1965.

Why should we pick up *The Rhumb Line*?

It's only what? \$10? You can't find a better value for the jams we packed on there. Except for maybe the original Jock Jams.

Why should we go to the show October 2nd?

We always have a lot of fun when we play so it's bound to be a good time.

Electric Touch

Austin-based group Electric Touch has been tearing up the music scene in the past year. After making appearances at a number of music festivals this summer and releasing their self-titled debut in August, Electric Touch will be on the road supporting the Fratellis until October. They will also be at Austin City Limits Music Festival. Front-man Shane Lawlor answered a few quick questions about the band, who will be in town on September 28th.

How'd you come up with the name "Electric Touch?"

We were throwing some different ideas around. Then, inspired by *A Clockwork Orange*, we thought of Electric Touch. We think of it as a paradox or an oxymoron. That being said, on first hearing the name, most people say Electric Touch

reminds them of a vibrator. Go figure! Ha ha!

What or who has had the biggest influence on your music?

We draw inspiration from all around us, from music we love, television, films, newspapers, stories we've heard, episodes we've been through, dreams we have, and above all, life and love. Art imitates life and we think of our music as tales from ordinary life in glorious Technicolor.

What's the most rock-star thing you have done on tour?

I wear a brand new pair of underwear for every show. That's about as rock-star as we get. We are not rock stars in ivory towers and we are huge fans of music - we are normally the ones at the front of the stage watching bands play. The past year has been a whirlwind, from our first recordings, to getting signed, to playing SXSW, Coachella, Bonnaroo, Lollapalooza, Summerfest, Toronto's V festival, and now to being on tour with the fantastic Fratellis with our brand new debut album.

What's been the biggest challenge in your musical career?

The biggest challenge so far was deciding which songs to leave off the album. That was a tough one!

What's been the biggest highlight?

Every day is a highlight. Hitting the stage at Lollapalooza was amazing - there were thousands of people there, and we loved every second of it! Holding our debut record in our hands was a dream come true. Just being able to play our music to appreciative, wonderful people all over the country is an amazing experience.

Which band(s) do you dream of going on tour with?

We'd love to tour with Aerosmith, Oasis, Green Day, Kiss... those amazing stadium bands that put on fantastic shows night after night. Newer bands that we admire and would love to tour with are Arctic Monkeys, and of course The Fratellis.

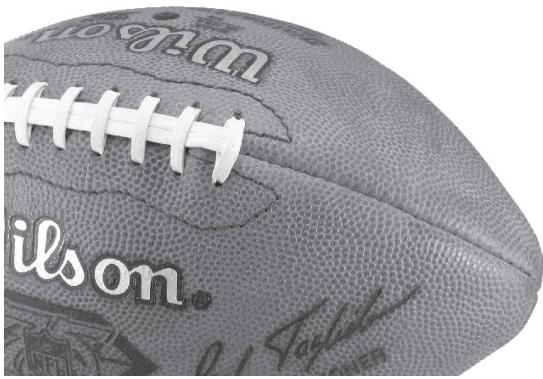
Why should we pick up your debut album?

It's fresh and exciting. It's honest and true. It's music to dance to, to feel good about, and to really enjoy time and time again. There's no filler and we think it's never been done before, not like we do it. We are at the start of something amazing and you can share that by picking up a copy of the record...you won't be disappointed

Why should we go to the show September 28th?

Because it will be one of the most energetic, exciting live shows you've ever seen. We lay our heart out on stage every night and give it everything we've got. You can leave your troubles at the door and have a great time with us. See you in the front row!

Joshua Boydston can be reached at jboydston@smu.edu



SMU v. Tulsa
Saturday, October 11, 2008
7:00 PM
Gerald Ford Stadium



Headline of the week: "Mouth to Meow-th: Mass. firefighter revives cat"

USAtoday.com

Insert your own "cat's got his tongue" joke here. - Ed.



Thumbs up:

- Politics taking over our lives. Well, some of us anyway.
- The National Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Programs has named SMU's Professor Rick Halperin, director of the Human Rights Program in SMU's Dedman College, as this year's recipient of its National Faculty Award. Congratulations, Professor Halperin!
- New Windows Vista ad campaign.



Thumbs down:

- - Hurricane Ike. Our sympathy goes out to anyone with relatives in the Houston area. Unfortunately, you got no sympathy from Ike.

Upcoming Events:

Political Panel and Mock Election
Sponsored by the University Honors Program

October 8th from 4-5:30pm
in the HT Ballroom

With Professors Matthew Wilson and Dennis Simon, and two SMU students. Food, refreshments, and a mock election to follow the panel discussion.

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Hilltopics is published every other Monday. It is sponsored by the University Honors Program.

SMU Totally Fictitious Fact:

That statue of Doak Walker in front of Dedman is haunted by Doak Walker's ghost. Just remember that next time you decide to stick your gum on his cleats.

