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Hilltopics Staff

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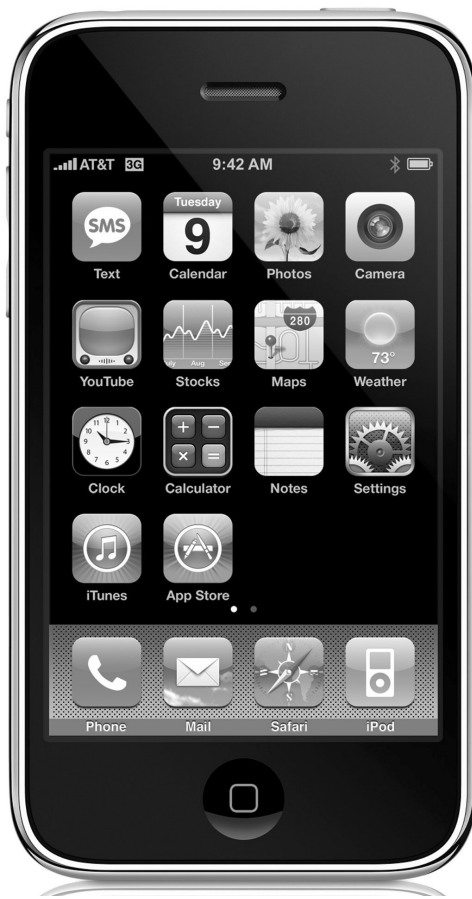
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Origins of the iPhone

by James Justinic

Nearly two years ago, in January 2007, Apple fans gathered for the opening keynote address of CEO Steve Jobs. As always the case with Apple, no one knew for sure what to expect, but all the rumors pointed to something big. After the routine presentation of facts and figures, the time came to reveal just what it was that they had been developing. This is when the public caught the first glimpse of the device we all now know as the iPhone. Apple plugged the iPhone as a revolutionary new device that combined a phone, iPod, and Internet navigator, all in one device. Compared to most smart phones on the market at the time, the iPhone boasted some significant differences. Instead of a keyboard, like present on the Blackberry, it used its large touch screen as the primary method of user input. Mobile Internet browsers normally could only display minimalistic versions of websites, but the iPhone had the ability to show most in their full-size version. Finally, true to the company's reputation, the new device was easy to use.

Even with these new features, some were still skeptical. While there were some great new features, there were also some features missing that were present on most competing devices. This first iPhone did not support the faster 3G networks, a ca-



ability that many considered necessary to make the new capabilities useful. Users also had to pay full price for the phone, a very different concept in a market where the service provider subsidizes most phones. Additionally, the new offering did not support changing the battery, applications not written by Apple, sending picture messages, copy & paste, or synchronization with the type of servers that many companies use. Apple attempted to downplay any shortcomings by emphasizing the many things the iPhone could do, even in some cases explaining the reasons why the device was better without some of these so-called missing features.

The demand was evident when lines started forming outside of Apple and AT&T stores. Extra personnel were called in to handle the volume of customers hoping to get their hands on an iPhone. Apple has manufactured more than enough, and anyone could walk into the stores and purchase one by closing on release day.

The launch was a success, but there was still more potential. The iPhone's capabilities were limited to what came with the device and web applications, and the Blackberry was still preferred by businesses. Finally, in March 2008,

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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.

Local News is Bad News, Even When it's Good News

by Ashley Howe

When I am watching TV and someone turns on the local news, I almost always want to get up and leave. I don't think it's boring – I just think it is always poorly done and thrown together like an essay at 4 AM. Of course, news happens fast, so there's not always enough time to edit thoroughly. However, with news so readily available through other forms of media, local news shows may not survive if they don't improve the quality of their presentation.

Just moments ago, I forced myself to watch some local news and right away I was reminded of the things that make it so difficult to tolerate:

1. When the news story is just left without a conclusion.

For example, a story stated that a man was shot in a rough neighborhood. Nearby children heard the gunfire. Rather than say who is suspected of shooting him or what progress is being made on the investigation, the story just shows a young mother saying that she doesn't like her children to see violence and she might move away. Wasn't the story about the man being shot? What happened to him?

2. The interviews of people never add anything to the story.

Usually this is a misguided attempt at humanizing events that happen all too often. In every common situation (car accident, beating, robbery) there is a very typical and expected response that the involved parties will have. There is a point at which these statements like– “I don't like to think that someone can walk into my house and steal my TV and get away with it”– don't even need to be included because they are so obvious. If the interview doesn't illuminate the story, you're either not asking the right questions, or you should interview someone with more insight. I think most of the time, the latter is a better suggestion.

3. The stories are almost never relevant, enlightening, or useful.

Segments that are intended to help the viewer are always extremely obvious. A special on 'how to stretch your dollar' includes things like “cut back on things you don't really need” and “use coupons.” A special on 'staying safe during the summer'

suggests “using sunscreen” and “drinking lots of water.” Suggestions like this are an insult to the viewing public but will continue until these news teams stretch beyond their comfort zones and learn to produce something of quality. As far as relevance goes, just watch the headline news and ask yourself how much of it actually per-

tains to you. I think you will find that when it does pertain to you, you already knew about it from somewhere else.

4. The reporter is always shown on site, whether or not anything is happening.

Say, for instance, there has been a wreck on some obscure country highway one hundred miles away from Dallas. For some unknown reason, the reporter dispatched all the way out there so she can report on the wreck (which has been cleared hours ago) from in front of the bridge. As a viewer, I am not impressed that you are standing where something happened earlier. I have the capacity to visualize a bridge myself. I will be impressed if you actually catch something happening, hence the motion picture camera, not the Polaroid.

5. Words are misspelled and mispronounced.

Why is someone who can't pronounce 'economical' with the correct emphasis [on the -nom, not the -con] reading the news? How does someone who writes captions for the videos not get fired when he writes “The Councilman Needs to be More 'Excepting'”? I just saw a headline (Channel 8) that read



verbatim: "Neighbors Upset at Teachers Flag." The neighbors weren't objecting to a flag for some teachers union. They were upset that the teacher hung his American flag upside down. Maybe it seems like I'm making too much of little things, but if delivering the news is your job, shouldn't you at least be able to do it right?

6. Anchor is shown too much.

Some oversights just leave me speechless. Just a few days ago, WFAA news was running a story on a missing boy. The anchor (Gloria Campos) read the story and then held up the poster with his picture and information. Rather than zoom in so the viewers actually have a chance at recognizing the child's face, the cameraman kept the anchor's face at full frame and just showed her holding it. Brilliant, now we'll find him for sure! Also, why does the news play in a little box over the anchor's shoulder? Why do we need to see the anchor's face? Is it so we can know how to feel about what we are watching? The anchor is not the most important part of the news!

All things aside, I can commend the sports anchor and the weatherman. Their segments are the only segments that are ever delivered with finesse and expertise. The weatherman always knows his stuff and he never fumbles over names of cities or which county is which. And the sports anchor is often the most passionate and knowledgeable of the news team. Dale Hansen is an oratorical genius and excellent commentator. His tirades against Jerry Jones this year have been a source of constant entertainment and delight. At least the last half of the news is worth watching.

The problems with the news are so aggravating, though, that I just watch the parts I like from the internet. If I actually want to know anything else, I will read the Dallas Morning News. Most of my friends do the same, which leads me to believe that such poorly executed examples of the American press may not be around much longer.

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iphone

continued from page 1

Apple provided a solution to both of these problems with the release of an iPhone Software Development Kit and addition of Microsoft Exchange support, the key to making business use feasible. The update that made both these things possible was scheduled for July 2008, but that wasn't the only thing planned. At the developer's conference in June, Apple once again had a big announcement. The iPhone would now support 3G, include a GPS chip, and have a significant drop in price. Lines formed again, but this time, those who waited were rewarded when stores couldn't stock enough phones to satisfy the entire queue.

iPhones are now readily available, and popping up everywhere. However, there is still more work to be done. Some users complain about application crashes, and others still wish for picture messages and copy & paste features, but strides are being taken in the right direction. Apple developers are hard at work tweaking the iPhone software, and Apple recently lifted a non-disclosure agreement that prevented developers from discussing problems encountered while writing applications. Both of these things will help the iPhone climb to new heights.

Combined with the increasing popularity of the Mac, Apple is developing a position of power where both products are causing people to take a closer look at its other offerings. In addition, the growing support of college students, who will be partial to Apple products as they enter the work force, may soon give Apple the dominance needed to define how we use technology for the next several decades.

James Justinic can be reached at jjustini@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

The Invisible Tweeter

When I was just a wee highschooler I got an internship (through quite a bit of nepotism) at a record label. This internship lasted only a week or two before I was let go. Apparently there was actually no work to be done there and they decided having too many interns was annoying. Anyways that week or two was long enough for me to decide that my two bosses were pretty much the coolest people ever and I followed them on various social sites for a while. I mention this only because maybe a year after that one of my previous bosses was posting updates on an average of 5 per hour about something called "twittering." At first I thought he was just incredibly excited or enthusiastic. After all, I was sure he led about the coolest life anyone could ever live. This shouldn't have been a stretch. But day after day? And then he started declaring that twittering was the future. It took me about a year to find out what twittering really was and then probably another few months and the endorsement of various hipsters to convince me that I should be interested in checking it out. I know a lot of bloggers have been making excellent use of Twitter for a while now but I've really only considered it for personal use.

The first thing I realized when I signed into my twitter account was, "I don't know anyone here." I can't think of any real analogy. It wasn't like walking into some awkward mixer party because at least everybody there should theoretically have something in common (going to a new school, job etc.) and it wasn't like being in an empty room because TONS of people are twittering constantly. I quickly found a couple of people I was internet acquaintances with and began following some of their friends who I deemed interesting but I

was still left with the problem that no one was following me. What incentive should I have to post updates? The answer should be none. What rational person would talk about what they're doing to no one? Apparently I am not a rational being because I discovered that I absolutely love twittering to to myself. Of course I like trying to be witty in @responses to strangers but I've been having just as much fun examining my own actions. There's something incredibly affirming about seeing your status in writing. Not just in writing I guess. I don't think saving a word document would be very satisfying.

by Thomas Dunlap

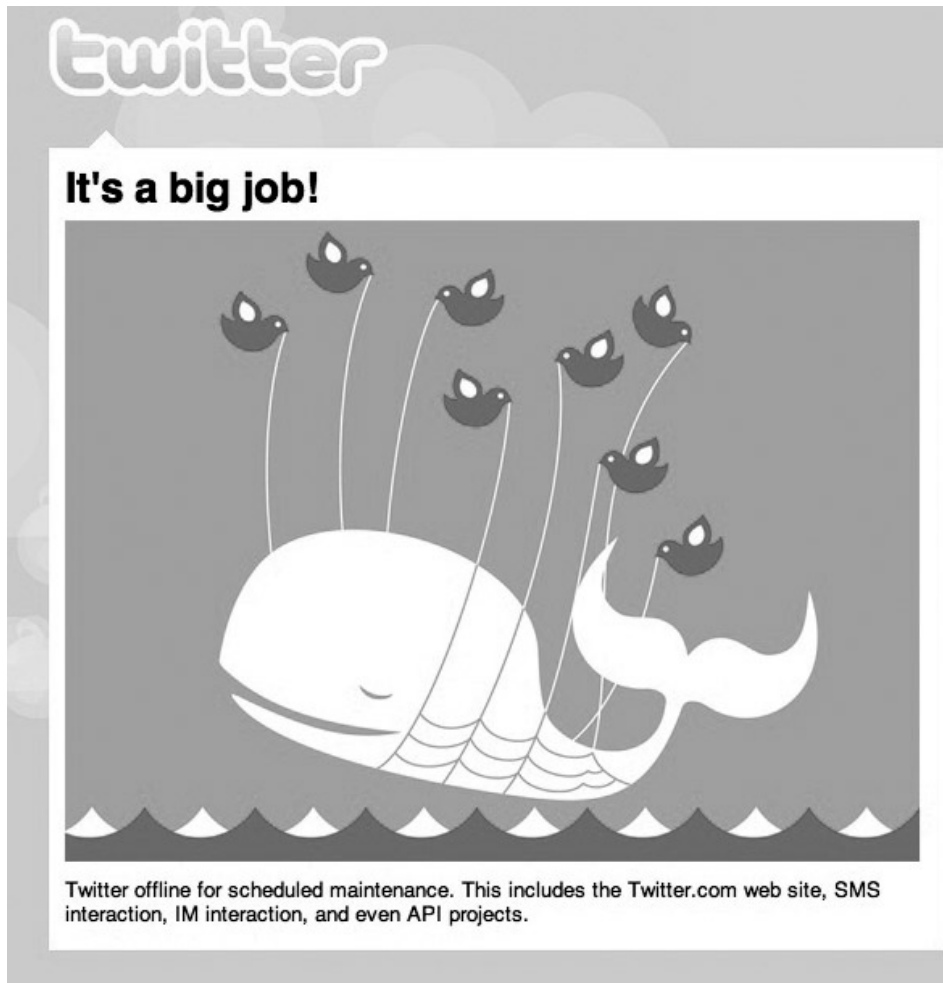
Is it the possibility of people seeing it? Maybe that's it. I think it is in some way tied to the minutiae of it.

When you get a phone call and someone asks you what you're doing you have to say "oh nothing," even though maybe you're watching Venture Bros. commentaries and eating some popcorn. But on Twitter this is just the type of activity people are encouraged to write. We are supposed to revel in the little details of our day. The only problem I see with this system is that it implies that we have become so disconnected from those tiny details that we must take

ourselves out of that moment and type up a virtual update to enjoy those small pleasures. Instead of asking myself what the point of talking to no one is it seems that my twitter experience has led me to the question "If I do something and no one sees me, does it mean anything?"

That said, I'm still going to keep using Twitter and you're more than welcome to stop by and give my tweets meaning. Username: Spladow

Thomas is a senior english major and can be reached at whatscene@gmail.com



SMU Football: A New Hope

by Josh Wood

If you just glanced at SMU Football's overall record for the 2008 season, you would most likely be under the impression that we stink...and that the possibility of this program's resuscitation from the NCAA "Death Penalty" is hopeless. These reactions are somewhat justifiable; two or three wins total in two seasons doesn't exactly elicit confidence in our beloved Mustangs. I believe I speak for all of Mustang Nation when I ask: Just what exactly went wrong? Surely there was some catastrophic event on which to blame our poor season—something simple that answers the question posed above and satisfies our need for closure. Unfortunately, there is no such simple answer, because nothing went wrong this season! Here are some key issues regarding the 2008 season that may have initially seemed disadvantageous but ultimately revealed their silver lining.

The 2007 Season: It is important to consider the past, and where the SMU Mustangs are coming from. To put it very lightly, 2007 was a disappointing season. We started the year off with bowl hopes and some momentum, only to end with one win and head coaching vacancy. The upside of that season is this: the young players that survived that baptism by fire emerged with a chip on their shoulder, hungry to prove themselves. Oh, and lets not forget that new coach they found...

Preseason Hype: I believe we all got a little caught up in this one. Don't get me wrong; the off-season acquisition of June Jones was huge. SMU (or that wealthy group of boosters actually paying his colossal salary) is getting its money's worth; Coach Jones' superior ability to turn programs around and reputation as a stellar recruiter will surely allow the 'Stangs to get over the hump—in time. Unfortunately, everyone's expectations for the 2008 season far exceeded even the mighty Coach Jones. The "June Cometh" ads and general hype might have filled the seats very early on, but all of that quickly fizzled, much like our

win percentage. The advantage here is that any hype is good exposure for a program in need of some positive press. To hear some encouraging discussion about SMU football was quite refreshing, regardless of the brevity of said discussion.

Youth of the Team: Sure, you could construe the term "youth" as a euphemism for lack of experience, and you would be correct. Our team this year was VERY young. I remember some of the negative reaction to the news that two true freshman, Bo Levi-Mitchell and Logan Turner, had higher roster spots than the proven but ill-fitting Justin Willis. Coach Jones made the gutsy yet very necessary decision to start his personal recruits and other younger players immediately, which doesn't translate into fan-appealing wins early on. Of course the benefits of this decision outweigh the negatives—when it matters most (read: the next few seasons), our team will have a great deal of game day experience, which will certainly lead to wins.

I know it sounds really hokey, but the night is always darkest before the dawn. With such significant changes occurring within our football program, from a new-look coaching staff to a brand new playbook to a chic throwback jersey aesthetic, things are certainly going to seem worse before they get better. By following this logic, you can see why a one or two win season already has me excited about next year.

Josh Wood is a senior electrical engineering major and can be reached at jlwood@smu.edu



CD Reviews: Friendly Fires and Kyle Andrews

by Joshua Boydston

Friendly Fires

Friendly Fires

This newest buzz band out of England has more than lived up to its hype with its self-titled debut. Friendly Fires are crafting a unique sound, mixing equal parts electronica, shoegaze, and indie-dance rock, both refreshing and interesting. Sounding a little more abstract than MGMT, yet more pop grounded than Cut Copy, we have Friendly Fires striking a perfect balance and dazzling the entire way. The first single and opening track "Jump In The Pool" feels both spacey and

immediate, demanding attention but allowing you to explore for yourself. The jangly guitars and heavy synth create a watery backdrop to the musings of plunging into a new life, the ideal soundtrack to rebirth. The jittery groove of "In The Hospital" dares you not to shimmy, with "White Diamonds"

sounding like a modern recreation of "Tainted Love," both haunting and alluring, and also featuring a chorus that grabs on to you and won't let go. "On Board" can't help but draw comparisons to the Rapture, yet they twist the sound into something of their own. The wispy "Photobooth" will have you both nodding your head and tapping your feet, with the blipping, shaky "Skeleton Boy" having you do more of the same. Friendly Fires really hit their stride with the anthem "Paris," a song of promises and hopes of a better life, the luscious chorus, bouncy synth, and quick beat forming the perfect compliment to the song's message. This debut has an overall tone of hope and new life, something that I believe we are all full of. Sometimes this music will hit you at the perfect moment, and when it does it is such a surreal experience. Friendly Fires aren't so much creating music as they are creating moments, and with continual growth and experimentation, we may find these boys creating the perfect dance rock

record, something I'm sure we will all be hoping for.

Key Tracks: "Jump In The Pool" "Paris" "White Diamonds"
9.0/10

Kyle Andrews

Real Blasty

You may have not heard of Kyle Andrews yet, but you are sure to hear more and more from him in the future, and many of us are being first introduced to him with his newest release, *Real Blasty*. The record is light and fun, drizzled with electronic

piano, dizzy synths, and a thick precise beat. It is a pleasurable listen, but Kyle manages to lose himself on several occasions. The record opens with the superb "Sushi," an ode to hipsters, with a glowing rhythm and irresistible melody as well. The song hooks on to you and won't

let go. Up next is the almost equally stellar "Naked in New York," adding acoustic guitar to the electronic backdrop, slowly building before imploding into the loud, blistering chorus. We find Kyle at his most introspective and delicate with "Polar Bear," as radiant as snow and just as gorgeous. The tracks following the first three tend to hit and miss. With "Tennessee Torture Dream," Kyle sounds like a dance rock Conor Oberst, and he gets a little gritty with "Wavering Between the Real and the Abstract." However, in between we see Kyle getting a little formulaic ("Put Your Hands Up"), too noisy ("Blow It Out"), and even a little boring ("Take It to Heart"). The last highlight of the album comes with "Cut and Paste," a well-crafted pop song with just enough sparkle. We can see that Kyle has some talent, but he will definitely need to polish his skills a little bit before making that next step towards fame. Sometimes *Real Blasty* comes off real boring, but he shows that he can definitely blast off with songs like



"Sushi." He might have me hooked, but he still needs to reel me in.

*Key Tracks: "Sushi" "Naked In New York" "Polar Bear"
7.4/10*

Bands You Should Know:

The Silent Years

The Silent Years have just as much passion and talent for creating sprawling rock songs as they do crafting delicate, gorgeous acoustic ditties. Both melodic and enchanting, their songs will dance in your mind for days, and you won't mind a bit. Songs like "Black Hole," "The World's Worst Birthday Gift," and "Someone to Keep Us Warm" are sure to warm you up and leave you wanting more

For fans of: The Dears, Fleet Foxes, Blitzen Trapper

No Age

*This LA-based duo is cranking out fuzzy, distorted jams like nobody's business. After the critically acclaimed release of *Weird Rippers* in 2007 and endorsements from bands like Radiohead and Deerhunter, No Age was signed to Sub Pop Records and unleashed *Nouns* upon us earlier this year, chocked full of raucous, hazy songs. Check out No Age at their finest in "Eraser," "Sleeper Hold," and "Brain Burner."*

For Fans Of: Sonic Youth, Deerhunter, Times New Viking

White Rabbits

This six-piece indie rock band out of Brooklyn is sure to have you hopping and bouncing along to every song. With three singers and two drummers, each song is layered and complex, but still sounds uniform. In addition to their stellar sounds, they are heralded for their live shows, featuring unique cover songs and high-energy performances from each member. Be sure to check out "The Plot" and "While We Go Dancing."

For Fans Of: Spoon, Sunset Rubdown, Yeasayer

Joshua Boydston is a freshman psychology major and can be reached at jboydston@smu.edu





SMU v. Southern Miss
Saturday, November 29, 2008
3:00 PM
Gerald Ford Stadium



Thumbs up:

- Basketball season is upon us!
- Celebration of lights to look forward to
- It's easier to look fashionable when it's not 90 degrees outside.
- Happy Holidays from the Hilltopics editorial board!
- New X-Box Live Experience just in time for finals.



Thumbs down:

- Pundits comparing Obama to Lincoln. Don't jinx him!
- The deluge of Christmas cheer (i.e. advertisements) began before Thanksgiving this year.
- The inevitable wave of sickness that will hit right before finals.

Upcoming Events:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| November 29 | Football vs. Southern Miss
Ford Stadium |
| December 4 | A Service of Nine Lessons
and Carols
Perkins Chapel |
| December 5 | Basketball vs. Texas A&M
Moody Coliseum |
| December 7 | Celebration of Lights
Dallas Hall Lawn |
| December 13 | December Graduation
Ceremony |

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SMU Totally Fictitious Fact:

It takes a month to put the Christmas lights up on the trees in front of Dallas Hall because squirrels keep running off with the bulbs. If you see one of the little buggers, please chase it down and take it to the Blanton building for your reward.

