

7-17-2009

Hilltopics: Volume 5, Summer Issue

Hilltopics Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics>

Recommended Citation

Hilltopics Staff, "Hilltopics: Volume 5, Summer Issue" (2009). *Hilltopics*. 94.
<https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics/94>

This document is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hilltopics by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

HILLTOPICS

SPECIAL SUMMER EDITION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Employers Getting Ready for "RUSH"

page 4

Conscientious Consumer Beware

page 5

KPNI SMU Radio Starts Living Up to Its Name

page 6

The Invisible Tweeter

page 6

'Hub of SMU Spirit' Needs Hub Completed

page 7

Defining Our Bike Community

page 7

Visit us online at

[http://smu.edu/
univhonors/hilltopics/](http://smu.edu/univhonors/hilltopics/)

From the Honors Director

Dr. David D. Doyle, Jr.

What do book discussions over dinner, the King Tut Exhibit at the Dallas Museum, performances of the Texas Ballet, the Dallas and Fort Worth Operas, the Texas History Museum, a Spring Ballroom dance, and an outdoor film screening on the quad all have in common? Together these myriad events represent a sampling of University Honors programming this year. While I believe our seven honors seminars continue to constitute the heart of our program, the UHP attempts to go further in a holistic education for our students. Building on two of SMU's strongest traditions—close relationships between faculty and students, and a broad Liberal Arts education for all—the UHP strives to enhance our students' education.

With great enthusiasm I report below on both this year's highlights as well as our plans for the upcoming year.

- Through the work of our Provost's office, SMU has designated an "Honors Commons" scheduled to open sometime next year. Future plans for these commons include a large comfortable lounge, complete with seating and work spaces, books, magazines, daily newspapers, meeting rooms, coffee and soft drinks—and free printing. Along with our newly designated Honors Advisor Sally Spaniolo, I will have an office here along with others associated with various honors programming across campus. Most importantly, this space will allow an intellectual exchange to develop, further enhancing the academic experience.

continued on page 3

My Spring Break in New York City

by Ashley M. Howe

An Honors Cultural Formation Class Tours the Big Apple

While I was attending my freshman AARO session, I heard a lot of great things about the University Honors Program. Most people I talked to liked their honors teachers and classes. But I never dreamed that I would end up taking a trip to New York City with one of my honors classes. The trip was sponsored by the Richter Trust, which sponsors unique learning opportunities within the Honors Program.

The trip was so much fun. Our days were full of activities which focused on immigration, the subject of the class. Our teacher, Dr. Caroline Brettell, had tons of scholarly connections in New York City, and so we

were able to go places and to meet people the average tourist is not able to. Our nights and late afternoons were spent on making whatever excursions we felt like.



continued on page 2

My Spring Break in New York City

continued from page 1

We all kept journals of what we did, and turned them in when we got back. Here are some excerpts from mine:

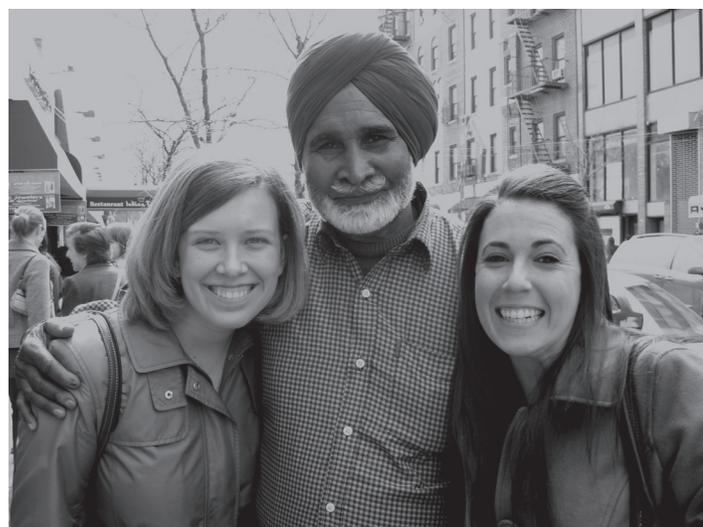
March 7, 2009

We toured the Lower East Side and saw the ten story building of the Jewish Daily Forward, founded in 1897. This newspaper was written in Yiddish and widely read by New York City Jews. It was sympathetic to Socialism and busts of Marx and Engels top the entryway to the building. Ironically this building was next to sweat shops. The building itself has been converted to luxury apartments running \$1 million per floor.

Surprisingly, **Little Italy** is juxtaposed right next to Chinatown. The changeover takes place in the space of one single block. Less than 5% of residents of Little Italy are actually Italian. This area used to be more Italian, but is becoming increasingly Chinese. There is some resentment that Chinese are taken over so much real estate, but this is what makes New York such a stunning example of the free market. Those with greater means can obtain more.

March 8, 2009

We took the Subway to **Queens**. It was representing different ethnicities. One corner had a burrito stand, but then the next thing we encountered was a row of Indian stores. There were numerous shops selling Saris and golden jewelry. Author Johanna Lessinger told us that gold jewelry is a major status symbol in the Indian community. Only having one simple piece of gold jewelry would elicit pity. Bangles, necklaces, rings, and earrings are a must. Lessinger also said that much of the Sari stores sell to American brides having traditional Indian weddings.



March 9, 2009

We took the Subway to Battery Park. After security screening, we took the ferry to the **Statue of Liberty**. Many immigrants or foreign tourists seemed to be on the ferry with us, and this made the trip seem more authentic, like immigrants approaching America for the first time.

Ellis Island had a surprising appearance. On one side, there were lots of buildings like hospitals and dormitories. These buildings looked very foreign in style and not at all familiar. I thought it looked like a Dutch river walk. The main hall was very grand and open—tall ceilings with unaffected luxury. The Café where we ate lunch had only American food—hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken strips. The gift shop was interesting because it had some traditional toys from feeder countries like Russia. The exhibit halls had very creative ways of representing immigration. If any of your immigrant forefathers passed through Ellis Island, you can view their handwritten ship manifest and also see a picture of the ship that brought them here on the computer.

March 10, 2009

At the **Apollo Theater**, our tour guide had very entertaining stories about the building's history. For instance, it had once been a cabaret. Three members of our group (including me) were invited onto the stage to do an impromptu amateur hour. We toured the dressing rooms afterwards.

Later in the afternoon, we had a panel discussion in the **boardroom** of the Rockefeller Foundation. Several of the authors we had read in class met us there, and took questions about immigration. We all felt so privileged to be there. The room even overlooked the Empire State Building.

March 11, 2009

My friend Pia Lara and I got up early in the morning and headed over to the **Today Show**.

We had made signs the night before, saying that we were Honors students from SMU. Al Roker came and talked to us while the camera was rolling, and later Meredith Vierra came over to us. We were able to take this picture with her.



From the Honors Director

continued from page 1

- For the third year we will continue our Honors Mentoring program designed to bring together students and faculty. As faculty involvement has always been strongest within the context of a class, beginning this fall each professor teaching an honors course will be eligible for a small grant that will allow them to add an experiential component to their teaching. These activities are only limited by the professor's imagination. Mentoring opportunities (or activities) include everything from a museum visit to cooking dinner for the class at home. Our student mentoring will continue as well, with each upper class mentor assigned two or three entering first year honors students. These peer mentors will host an informal lunch, coffee, etc., will reach out to their mentees twice, and will attend at least one UHP event per semester.
- As with every year since 1999, the UHP has awarded a number of independent research grants to our students through the Paul K. Richter and Evalyn E. Cook Richter Memorial Trusts. This summer our Richter Fellows will travel to such countries as China, Ghana, Spain, Italy, and Argentina. Further, we have used these funds for student experiences outside the traditional classroom in a variety of ways: from independent research for those studying at our Taos, New Mexico campus during the June (or Honors) term, to a cultural formations seminar on Immigration in the United States with Professor Caroline Brettell that took each student to New York City over spring break to tour the sites they had studied. Next year we will again offer all three Richter Honors Scholars programs, with the honors seminars focused on, and traveling to, Italian Cities and the World of Henry James, London and Rye England.
- With a proposed new University Curriculum emerging, this is an exciting time to be at SMU. Naturally, the UHP is developing new courses to both fit into the new requirements and provide greater coherence to the honors curriculum. Building on the success of our first year honors rhetoric sequence, we are creating a second year honors course centered on the city of Dallas—"The Dallas Experience." To debut in the fall of 2010, this course will study Dallas history, architecture, literature, arts, government, as well as current social and economic issues. With the Big D as our laboratory students will not only read about Dallas but will also tour our neighborhoods, attend a plethora of events and meet local leaders and ordinary citizens. Future honors plans include a science requirement and a senior capstone experience.
- As I grow older and wiser each year I am convinced that rituals and markers are needed for significant moments in our lives. Within the Honors undergraduate context these include the beginning and ending of the first year, the completion of requirements, an awarding (and presentation of) independent research projects, and ultimately graduation. To better bind our increasingly cohesive Honors community, the UHP holds dinners and parties to celebrate such significant moments. On Tuesday the 12th of May at 6pm the UHP graduation party will be held at my house. With dinner prepared by student volunteers and music performed by our own students, all in our community will raise a glass to toast our graduating students.
- The UHP's success is dependent on involvement not only with our current students, but with our alumni and parents as well. In the coming year we will be at work at developing events that will bring you back to campus, but in the meantime, if you are going to be on campus please contact me so we can have a cup of coffee and talk. Anyone interested in making a donation to the University Honors Program should contact me at [ddoyle@smu.edu](mailto:didoyle@smu.edu) or Ms. Candice Cunningham at candice@smu.edu.

Richter Fellowships

Preston Kyle Osborn will travel to Oxford, England through the SMU-in-Oxford program and will research the nature and volume of crime in early Modern England.

Kale Konow will travel to the south of France to explore Religion and impact of Monastic Life on French life and culture.

Victoria Kean will travel to Germany to study the effects of the Holocaust on the Jewish people of Thuringia, and how these people are still dealing with the aftereffects.

Kate Kirk will travel to the Republic of Zambia, Africa to research and analyze non-profit organizations to determine their effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

Patrick Littlefield will travel to London, England to study the Emerging Church movement—a worldwide movement that seeks to adapt Christianity to a post-modern world.

Rebecca Quinn will travel to Barcelona, Spain to study the relationship between nationalized Catholicism and church architecture in the 1940's, 50's, and 60's—the years of Francisco Franco's regime in that country.

Ashley Bruckbacher will travel to Nanjing, China to study foreign teachers and their influence in that country.

Steve Hader will travel to Madrid Spain to study the e-commerce environment present in modern day Spain.

Vivian Costady will travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina to the fall out still resulting from the "dirty war" resulting from the 1976 military coup.

William Elder Will travel to Osnabruck, Germany and Cambridge, England to study "Barbarian Threats to Early Imperial Rome."—a study of early military history.

Astrud Villareal will travel to Australia to study the effects of Health Care in Dealing with the Child Obesity Epidemic and its implications in terms of Human Rights.

P.J. Gardner will remain in Dallas to continue reading, researching, and writing his senior thesis for Political Science on the idea of expansionism and American politics.

Andrew Coit & Erica Ritz will travel to Greece and London, England to study the controversy surrounding the ownership of important cultural artifacts such as the Elgin marbles. Should they be retained by the English or the Greek government?

Taos Scholars

Alexandra Davis – The Psychology of the Modern Religious Image in the Southwest

Kyle Hobratsch – Mabel Dodge Luhan and the early 20th century artists community in Taos

Jacqueline Wilcher – Allocation of Water as a Scarce Resource—the Taos Context

Caroline French

Thomas (Drew) Washington

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, podcasting, 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 Zaslow'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

Conscientious Consumer Beware

by Rachel Porter

Lately there seems to be a growing interest in ethical consumerism, or buying products that are made with the particular goal of avoiding exploitation of humans, animals or the environment. According to some sources, ethical consumerism has increased at a rate as high as 15% per year since 2002. While by no means rampant, this trend certainly has a growing presence on the SMU campus. In the bookstore you can now buy not only recycled but entirely sustainable notebooks printed with soy ink, and the Hughes-Trigg market now offers several varieties of fair trade tea as well as vegan meal options. Though ethically conscious products such as these have long been available to those who knew where to look, they are becoming more and more available and appealing to people who don't belong to the granola-munching crowd. In the past week alone I have discovered a decorative line of sustainable school supplies at Target, vegan Adidas basketball shoes, and even vegan Urban Decay make-up at Sephora.

Because of the jargony nature of "positive buying" it is easy to get lost in terminology. In case you aren't exactly up to date, here is a quick guide:

Fair trade: This is when the producers (in developing countries) get a fair payment for their product. Most fair trade products are marked with an official label, so you know what you're buying.

Cruelty-free: This means the product was not tested on animals.

Vegan: These products do not contain leather or any sort of animal by-product. Their production does not involve the exploitation of animals in any way.

Organic: These are products (food, cotton, wine, shampoo) that have been grown or produced without genetic modification or pesticides. Organic produce does not pollute the Earth (unlike its chemically enhanced counterpart) so it's more environmentally sustainable.

Second-hand or recycled: This reduces waste because the product now has a new owner, instead of being tossed into a trash pile.

Locally produced: The term "local" is used fairly flexibly, but these are products that are sold in the general region in which they were produced. In theory, locally produced products give the local economy a boost and keep local people in jobs. Local produce also has a smaller carbon footprint (amount of energy taken to make and transport the product).

The fact that the ethical consumerism movement is brimming with technical terms, in conjunction with the growing popularity of ethical products is perhaps what is enabling "greenwashing," a word invented to describe products which are inaccurately described as being environmental in some way or another in order to raise prices or promote sales.

An environmental marketing firm called TerraChoice in a survey last year of 1,018 products that made environmental claims shockingly found that the majority of them were fraudulent in some way or another. They composed a guide called "The Six Sins of Greenwashing," to help consumers determine which products are actually environmentally conscientious and can support their claims. Most of these "sins" should also be kept in mind when shopping for ethical products in general. npr.org provides this summary:

The Sin of the Hidden Tradeoff is committed by suggesting a product is "green" based on a single environmental attribute (the recycled content of paper, for

example) or an unreasonably narrow set of attributes (recycled content and chlorine-free bleaching) without attention to other important environmental issues (such as energy, global warming, water, and forestry impacts of paper).

The Sin of No Proof. Any environmental claim that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information, or by a reliable third-party certification. TerraChoice says "no proof" occurred if supporting evidence was not accessible at either the point of purchase or at the product Web site.

The Sin of Vagueness is committed by every claim that is so poorly defined or broad that its real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the intended consumer. Examples include: "chemical free" (nothing is free of chemicals; water is a chemical), "non-toxic", "all natural" (Arsenic is natural. So are uranium, mercury and formaldehyde. All are poisonous.)

The Sin of Irrelevance is committed by making an environmental claim that may be truthful but is unimportant and unhelpful for consumers seeking environmentally preferable products. It distracts the consumer from finding a truly greener option.

The Sin of Lesser of Two Evils. These are "green" claims that may be true within the product category, but that risk distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole. Examples include organic cigarettes and "green" herbicides and insecticides.

The Sin of Fibbing is committed by making environmental claims that are simply false.

The fact that so many counterfeit products are surfacing is a testament to the popularity of this movement. However, it is too soon to tell whether positive buying will continue to be a growing trend, or if it's just a passing fad. People are willing to spend an extra dollar or two for a cute notebook printed on recycled paper, but are they willing to make significant sacrifices or lifestyle changes? PETA, or People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals recently sent a letter to Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, cofounders of Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc., urging them to replace cow's milk they use in their ice cream products with human breast milk. This letter was a reaction to reports that a Swiss restaurant owner will begin purchasing breast milk from nursing mothers and substituting breast milk for 75 percent of the cow's milk in the food he serves. While this proposal is to most people a bit stomach-turning, it makes for a good indicator. If ever I witness someone eat ice cream made from human breast milk rather than risk harm to a cow, I will truly have faith in the longevity of consumer consciousness.



KPNI SMU Radio Starts Living Up To Its Name

by Thomas Dunlap

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 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. You can listen to KPNI at kpni.smu.edu

The Invisible Tweeter

by Thomas Dunlap

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 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 arming about seeing your status in writing. Not just in writing I guess. I don't think saving a word document would be very satisfying. 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

'Hub of SMU Spirit' Needs Hub Completed

by Ashley M. Howe

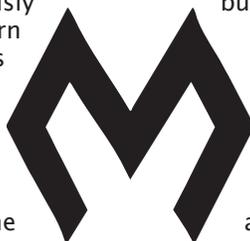
SMU has a reputation for having exceptionally high standards for the school's appearance. All the buildings must be of the same Georgian Revival architecture. Mulch must be put out wherever grass will not grow. The interiors of buildings must look like the lobbies of four star hotels. This preoccupation with facades, however amusing, sometimes excludes the places that only students see. Namely, all the places your parents never get to see on the Mustang Monday campus tour.

The SMU band hall is definitely one of those places. The current band hall is located under the Perkins Natatorium. A steep spiraling ramp leads ominously down to a drab, poorly lit room. The flooring is worn and spotted. Low-hanging eaves around the edges make getting to the instrument shelves difficult. During rehearsals, drums are constantly knocked over by people simply trying to get through. Latecomers have to interrupt rehearsal to have stands and chairs passed across the room to them. Handicapped band members have to play from the edges of the ensemble because there is no way they can get anywhere else. Ceilings are very low, and this greatly diminishes the effectiveness of the ensemble's tuning and dynamic efforts. The Wenger Guide to Music Facilities suggests that for an ensemble the size of the Mustang Band, the rehearsal space should be at least four times larger.

Thankfully, the band finally found a new place to call home. The new band hall space is located in the Dedman Center for Lifetime Fitness. It has all the elbowroom a marching band could ever want. It is literally a very large, open space. The problem is that everything which makes a space functional has yet to be built: dividing walls, lockers, shelving, etc. The cost to have the space outfitted is estimated at right around two million dollars.

This is an amount that SMU can usually raise with just a few phone calls and the wave of a generous hand. Construction can actually begin when 80% of the total cost has been met. The Office of Development and External Affairs oversees

fundraising for building projects like this. Facilities such as the Crum Center and 'Caruth 2.0' are funded by donors with specific purposes in mind. Unless a donor specifically designates that his or her gift should go to the Mustang Band, the money will likely go to bigger name projects. This is understandable, since more visible projects benefit more people and elevate the school's reputation, which is good for everyone. However, if this pattern continues, it could be several years before enough money comes down the pipeline to make the new band hall usable. Even once the funds are raised, it will take an additional year and a half just to build.

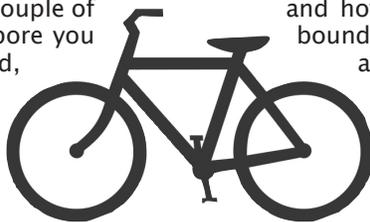


Sure—the group can still play well, march well, and come to all the games even if they don't have adequate rehearsal space. That is certainly true. The flaw in this reasoning comes from viewing the band as a means rather than as an end in itself. Don Hopkins, director of the Mustang Band, would describe the group's outward function as a "PR Band." The group plays at pep rallies, groundbreaking, football, basketball, and volleyball games, and lots of other things most students never even hear about. While band members enjoy this, many just like 'being' in band—rehearsing, performing, and taking part in the rich tradition. Ask any band alumni and they will describe being in band as their most memorable college experience. There is something to be said for this. Musicians are always passionate about what they do. It is because the experience deeply touches so many individuals that one must consider the ensemble an end in itself. A nicely equipped band hall would be the best reassurance that the university recognizes the value of the band, not only to the school, but also to those who participate in it. This attitude would be mutually reassuring to the band, and greatly help recruitment and retention of band members since their participation would finally seem validated by the school. As long as SMU 'can't find the money,' band members past and present will wonder what they really mean to SMU.

Defining Our Bike Community

by Thomas Dunlap

I can still remember when I first learned how to ride a bike. I would imagine that most people can. When I say most people I don't just mean most people that ride bikes. I mean most people. Period. More than anything else I've found that this is one skill virtually everyone I know shares in common. I think I have maybe two friends with absolutely no exposure to biking and I maintain that this is because their parents didn't love them. I remember it for a couple of personal and nostalgic reasons that I won't bore you with. I'd rather talk about the effects. As a kid, learning how to ride your bike opens up your environment to an unprecedented degree. I initially began taking mini tours of the city with my father and as I grew more competent I could rove the city with friends in a way that was never quite duplicated when we got cars. I've been thinking about this a good deal recently because I've rekindled my long dormant relationship with bicycles and I'm noticing quite a few aspects of being a cyclist that I missed the first time around.



You should be aware that I have not had a car in Dallas in three years. I brought my faithful Altima out with me for one semester freshman year and drove it exactly twice. I was lost all the time and found Dallas' dependence on freeways stressful and irksome. Since I picked up cycling again I've had that wonderful sense of a city completely opening up again. In a short period of time my sense of where things are and how the city works has increased by leaps and bounds. Certainly far faster than the last three and a half years combined. For one thing, cycling creates a pace that allows one to really examine their surroundings and check and double check their location which makes learning easier. For another, it changes your relationship with the terrain. In a car you might have a vague notion that the shop you're looking for is on a hill or maybe a vaguely hilly area. When you're on a bike you know that that shop is on a hill. There's a sense that you conquered that route. When someone mentions a place to me now I can say, "Oh,

continued on page 8

Defining Our Bike Community

continued from page 7

I know what you're talking about. It's got that new silky smooth pavement next to it. I'm flying when I go by it." or what have you. A related result of this is that biking seems to make for better locals. Speaking from a perspective where I have my car, I found myself actively trying to frequent places in my area because I like the feeling of getting out in my own personal area. My new traveling range is perfect for establishing a good sized personally identifiable stomping grounds.

So if biking makes people better locals, why do other Dallasites seem so opposed to increased cycling levels? Many of the people I've talked to since deciding to bike here have expressed outright annoyance and outright anger at the prospect of another biker on the roads, viewing cyclists as usurpers of their god/nation given right to the road, which struck me as odd because I've also heard people say that Dallas is one of the more bike friendly cities in the country.

WANT TO JOIN HILLTOPICS?

Now Filling:

Hilltopics 2009-2010 Executive Positions

Business Manager – someone to oversee our budget and deal with printing orders, checks, etc. Anyone can be trained for this position, no experience is necessary. Works with the Student Senate. Candidate should be responsible and easy to get in touch with.

Cartoonist/Sketch Artist – someone to produce either stand alone cartoons or drawings that help to illustrate a theme in the issue.

Copy Editor – someone to proofread and correct submitted articles before publication.

Distribution Manager – someone to coordinate the distribution of every issue. Must keep track of all our bins and make sure they are filled adequately. Should design signs accompanying each new issue. Must be reliable.

Writers – may write for every issue or only occasionally

Meetings are once a week, and usually do not last long. Issues come out biweekly. All executive positions are expected to contribute articles as needed. Total average time commitment for each position is less than 1 hour a week.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Email your name and other basic information to amhowe@smu.edu

Explain what qualifies you for this position, and why you want to do it. Applicants for sketch artist should submit a digital copy of a sample sketch or cartoon also.

IMPORTANT FALL DATES

Opening Convocation, McFarlin Auditorium
August 25, 2009

First Day of Classes
August 26, 2009

SMU Football vs. TCU
October 3, 2009

Fall Break
October 12–13, 2009

Homecoming
November 7, 2009

Family Weekend
November 13–14, 2009

Thanksgiving Holidays
November 25–27, 2009

Last Day of Classes
December 9, 2009

Final Exams
December 11–17, 2009

Hilltopics Summer Edition 2009

Ashley M. Howe: Editor-in-Chief
James Justinic: Layout Editor
Thomas Dunlap: Contributing Writer
Rachel Porter: Contributing Writer

Hilltopics is sponsored by the University Honors Program.

Get the latest articles at our website:
<http://smu.edu/univhonors/hilltopics/>