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Hilltopics Staff

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HILLTOPICS

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volume one, issue four

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for BETTER or for WORSE

Objections to gay marriage are founded mostly on irrational fears and beliefs

by Courtney Underwood

Milk and cookies; chips and salsa; bread and butter—many things are better in pairs. Perhaps this helps explain the human phenomenon of looking for a mate, whether it is for forever or for a night.

Furthermore, considering the amount of money people spend on dating services and self-enhancement, it seems clear that most of us do not want to be alone forever. Instead, people dream of finding that special someone and eventually getting married. But divorce is becoming more common everyday and fewer couples enter into marriage really thinking that they are going to be stuck with this person until they die. Instead, they figure if things start going downhill they can get divorced. Now, while I won't subject you to a discussion about the problems involved in a contract that has a loophole as big as divorce, I will suggest that marriage is not nearly as powerful as it used to be.

However, couples still want to get married, and if they are not a homosexual couple, they have this option. Personally, I think it is appalling that both presidential candidates are opposed to gay marriage, and while I expected it from President Bush, it once again leaves me disappointed with Senator Kerry.

Personally, I don't understand what it is that we are trying to protect. Marriage is no longer about being together until death, or more couples would not be getting divorced, even though they might end up killing each other by staying together. Further, if marriage is solely about procreation, then senior citizens and barren couples should not be allowed to marry. Additionally, if marriage is all about religion, then atheists would certainly be banned from marriage, and anyone trying to obtain a marriage license would need to pass a religious test. However, none of these things is currently the case with heterosexual marriages so why are they argued in

opposition to gay marriage?

Moreover, what does it say about our society that we do not allow homosexual couples to get married, but we do allow murderers living out life sentences in jail to get married?

Regardless of whether you think that gay couples should get married, should you really be able to say whether or not they are legally allowed to get married? I think this issue harkens back to a time not so long ago when African-Americans were given "freedom" but were also segregated from restaurants, drinking fountains and bathrooms, just to name a few. We don't tell dysfunctional heterosexual couples that they can't get married, nor do we stop couples that go to swingers' parties from getting married, so clearly, we cannot argue that homosexual marriages are being blocked because of functionality or lifestyle.

As drunken weekend weddings that are annulled on Monday morning are becoming a new thing to do in Vegas, one might even

wonder if heterosexuals should be banned from marriage instead. In fact, since committed homosexual couples tend to stay together longer than married heterosexual couples, perhaps they are better candidates for marriage. Further, if you are one of the irrational and, no offense, stupid people who thinks that gay marriages will unleash a watershed of immorality leading to marriages like one between a man and his goat, a future lawyer and friend of mine would like to remind you that marriage is a contractual agreement that cannot be entered into by animals or children. So, hopefully, all of your irrationality has melted away and you now see with intelligent and enlightened eyes that marriage is a right that should be available to couples regardless of the sex of their partner, and that something is seriously wrong with a government that does not recognize this human right.

Courtney Underwood is a senior psychology major.

"...it is appalling that both candidates are opposed to gay marriage, and while I expected it from President Bush, it once again leaves me disappointed with Senator Kerry."

—Courtney Underwood

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On the web: Go to www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics to read all of the stories in this issue and more. You can also post your thoughts on our readers' message board.

Simpson lip-syncs career suicide

by Andrew Baker

It hurt when my chin hit the floor on Saturday night as I witnessed a most curious thing: Ashlee Simpson doing a hoe-down on live television while electric guitars slowly drowned out the vocal track of "Pieces of Me." Before my very eyes was the end of Jessica Simpson's little sister's career.

In case you missed it, here's what happened: Ashlee Simpson was set to perform her second song of the evening on NBC's Saturday Night Live. Earlier in the show Simpson had 'sung' "Pieces of Me." As the drummer started to play her second song, Simpson began a seductive dance. Quite unexpectedly, pre-recorded vocals for "Pieces of Me" also began to play. Simpson stopped her dance, lowered her arms, looked around, and then began another dance: a hoe-down (think "Cotton-Eyed Joe"). After several discombobulating moments, Simpson abandoned her band, which was still playing, and walked off-camera.

The bloggers were unrelenting, calling her a fake, a fraud, and an untalented lip-synching phony. Ashlee Simpson's fan sites teemed with foul invectives thrown at the would-be singer. Some theorized that Simpson had also lip-synched her first song of the evening, and that the second song's vocals had not been cued properly. I must admit, I thought it was hilarious.

While that incident left my mouth gaping, Simpson's accusation during the traditional post-show rap up, in which she blamed the band for causing her to become confused because they played the wrong song, made me grimace. Yes, the band did play the wrong song, but that was because the wrong song had already been heard by the live audience all across America. The show must go on, so the band rolled with it and played what was already playing—hoping that Simpson would get the hint and sing the same song. She didn't.

Many bloggers were quick to attack the Simpson dynasty and to proclaim that pop music is filled with nothing but untalented wannabes trying to scam a naive public while fulfilling their dreams of becoming filthy rich and, well, popular. Needless to say, I do not disagree. And seeing Simpson's unprofessional and immature catastrophe on Saturday Night Live only goes to prove the point. I would have liked to have seen Lorne Michaels, the show's long-time producer, come out at the end of the show and explain what had happened and take some of the heat off Ashlee—but not really. What appeared to be lip-synching, a hoe-down, and blaming it on the band could yield the end of her career. At least that's the hope.

Andrew Baker is a senior English and political science major.

Greek philanthropies not just parties

by Gaines Greer

Anyone who passed within the vicinity of the Hughes-Trigg Student Center last week was most likely barraged with requests to have pancakes at the Tri Delta Diner, play kickball with Alpha Chi Omega, or eat cookies with Chi Omega. I have firsthand experience with this situation, because last week, I was one of those students who sat outside of Hughes-Trigg behind a table that had Greek letters on its front. I made eye contact with innocent passersby who sought to avoid my gaze, and I asked them all pointedly, and sometimes annoyingly, if they would like to buy a ticket to my philanthropy. A significant number of people purchased tickets, but unfortunately, countless students bypassed all three philanthropy opportunities.

Some of those who declined had seemingly legitimate excuses: they didn't have enough cash in their wallet or funds in their Pony account to pay for a ticket. Others explained that they would be out of town during the actual philanthropy events. But to those students who walked by with money in their pockets and an open social calendar, shame on you! The abovementioned pancakes and cookies may not conform to your South Beach Diet, and you might not be particularly skilled in kickball, but neither of those conditions should preclude anyone from making a donation to charity. After all, when someone buys a ticket or joins a team in a philanthropy competition, he or she isn't just signing up for a good time; that person is also showing a commitment to making a difference—even if that difference seems small.

In addition to raising a significant amount of money for various charities, Greek philanthropies also offer the opportunity to increase awareness about social concerns and unite all Mustangs behind a good cause. As a member of the Greek community, I reluctantly realize that Greek philanthropies can seem like frivolous social events—in other words, one more excuse to make a t-shirt and throw a party. But what I want others—Greeks and independents—to realize is that this is a misconception. An event does not become less philanthropically worthwhile because it's fun, or because Greeks are in attendance, or because Flash Photography is present. Regardless of what preconceived notions or biases a person may have toward Greeks at SMU, one can't deny that when it comes to philanthropies, the Greeks do good work.

The next time you walk past Hughes-Trigg and are asked by members of a fraternity or sorority to take part in a philanthropy event, please look behind the Greek letters and recognize that your money and your time are needed for any number of good causes.

Gaines Greer is a senior English major.

Do you have an opinion about... politics, music, class, television, football, shopping, intramurals, fraternities, movies, tests, the Mavs, sex, restaurants, religion, sororities, driving, study abroad, Umphrey Lee, fashion, news, the war, parking, technology, magazines, bars, baseball, the weather, professors, the Mustang Band, dating, books, nightclubs, Texas, the Daily Campus, pets, club sports, or anything else ?

we're listening at hilltopics@hotmail.com

READER feedback

United Methodist Church is not part of a leftist conspiracy to restart the draft *Legislators have used draft legislation as a form of protest, but many conservatives have misinterpreted their message.*

by Michael Hogenmiller

In reading Robbie McDonough's article "Bringing Back the Draft" that ran in *Hilltopics* the week of October 18, I could not overlook the misleading interpretation of the facts related to House Resolution 163. To label the intention of this bill as a leftist conspiracy to scare the American public out of a Bush vote is as absurd and politically malicious as the email that sparked McDonough's own article.

The legislation he refers to, a bill presented to the Senate (S. 89), and introduced by Dem. Senator Ernest Hollings has not one single cosponsor. For you mathematically disinclined, that's a startling 1% of the Senate that supports this bill. It's what people in political circles call "dead on arrival."

The identical legislation presented to the House, (H.R. 163) is sponsored by Dem. Rep. Charles Rangel of New York and is signed by 14 cosponsors. That's fifteen people and equally insignificant considering California alone has 53 House seats. That's less than one-half of 1% of the House that supports this bill.

So why are Democratic Senators and members of Congress introducing draft bills that have absolutely no possibility of ever being passed? They wrote them to call attention to the fact that our forces are overstretched and that this level of military involvement in Iraq and elsewhere can't be sustained with our current volunteer army. They wrote them essentially to ask this question: Would America support this war if its sons were eligible via a draft to fight and die in it?

Shouldn't we give this question some consideration before we go and allow our President to decimate more Arab countries in the name of the war on terror, weapons of mass destruction, Osama Bin Laden, or whatever the hell else works politically today but is found to be untrue tomorrow?

Out of the millions of democratically minded people in America that fall under what McDonough labeled as the "left," those whom he accuses of scaring the American public, 16 people support this bill. Because there is a 16

person constituency of the political left on Capitol Hill that is anti-war doesn't mean that Democrats as a whole don't support American troops or the American cause. The political left is diverse, too diverse to fall under McDonough's generalization.

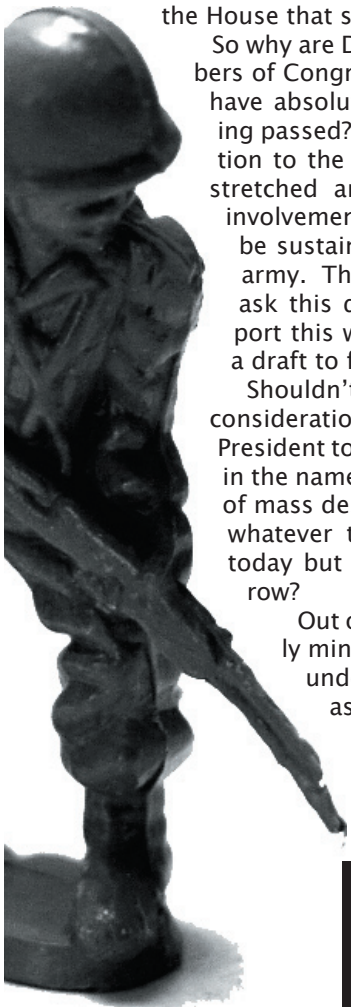
As a Republican, McDonough can relate to political diversity. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. and his anti-war group weren't the only people protesting at the Republican National Convention. Log Cabin Republicans also walked down New York streets looking for a political voice. Because *these* Republicans are proponents of homosexual rights, now the entire political right is going to become one giant advocacy for gay marriage. Right? Clearly not, but now we can understand why generalizations don't make for good very arguments.

The record of these Congressional Representatives clearly indicates their anti-war positions. This was not a leftist political campaign to spread rumors of a draft; it was a leftist political campaign to hold a President accountable for the military action he is taking. Their intent was to wake up the people, not to scare them needlessly. Self-government depends on an aware citizenry thinking through the ramifications of governmental action.

I'd appreciate it if McDonough would stop developing mass left-wing conspiracies out of Methodist youth group emails. In his article, he asked the dishonest, to sit back, shut up, and get out of the way. Before McDonough calls for the removal of members of Congress, perhaps he should come to a more comprehensive understanding of the positions of these legislators. Silencing these men and women because of their anti-war stance is as politically dastardly as the left-wing email conspiracy he fictionalized.

As a response to McDonough's article, I propose my own call to action. I'm all for changing this country for the better, but in order to do that you have to realize that honesty not only deals with the truth, but with a fair representation of the facts.

Michael Hogenmiller is a junior political science and music major.



In last week's issue of *Hilltopics* Robbie McDonough wrote a piece arguing that the United Methodist Church had been dishonest with its collegiate representation, such as SMU's Wesley Foundation, about the possible reinstatement of compulsory military service. The above piece is a response to McDonough's article, which is available for viewing in the archives section of our webpage, www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics. The original email sent to Wesley Foundation members is also on the webpage.

Presidential campaigns fight the war of the words

Kerry and Bush supporters voice their opinions—which can be irreverent, uncouth, and downright funny—through various means: t-shirts, bumper stickers, etc.. With the election just days away, the editors highlight the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Kerry-Edwards supporters have made a science out of poking fun at President Bush's Southern ways. They have also been particularly good at painting the administration as shady and devious. Here's what they've had to say:

- "Bush-Cheney '04: Don't change horsemen mid-apocalypse."
- "Eliminate WMD: W Making Decisions."
- "Bush/Cheney/Ashcroft: Asses of evil"
- "No-CARB diets work! No Cheney, Ashcroft, Rumsfeld Bush!"
- "Bush is proof that empty warheads can be dangerous."
- "Bush-Cheney: Malice in Blunderland"
- "Who would Jesus bomb?"

The Bush-Cheney camp has done its fair share of mud-slinging, too. In its effort to slander Senator Kerry, it has done its best to make John Kerry look like a flip-flopping, elitist, leftist, wannabe war hero. Some creative slogans:

- "Voting against John Kerry would be like giving Vietnam vets the parade they never had."
- "Kerry lied while good men died."
- "One Dick and one Bush: just how God intended it."
- "Kerry-Edwards '04: uncertain leadership for uncertain times."
- "Bush-Cheney '04: 50 million Frenchmen *can* be wrong."
- "Osama agrees: anyone but Bush!"
- "Flush the Johns!"

Campus safety discourse needs to show more respect for the victims of crime

While students can take certain steps to minimize the risk of crime, it is important to recognize that victims are not at fault.

Upon reading last week's article entitled "Safety Goes Both Ways" by Brett Warner, it seems to me that the victim of a crime is being accused just as much as the person committing the crime.

We all live by the choices that we make. However, in some cases—including the instance of a crime—we live by the choices that the criminal makes. A woman is not assaulted because she inadvertently "asked for it" by walking alone after dark or by wearing a short skirt. Rather, the assault happens as a result of the perverse and twisted mind of the person committing the crime.

Hilltopics Staff

Craig Zieminski: Editor-in-Chief
Courtney Underwood: Managing Editor
Andrew Baker: Business Manager
Gaines Greer: Copy Editor
Emily Jordan: Copy Editor
Jared Dovers: Development Manager
Douglas Hill: Graphics Editor

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by Betsy Holmes

If, by referring to a girl walking to her car alone at night as "ignorant," Ms. Warner means "trusting," then we should breathe a sigh of relief that some are still clinging to the belief in a better world. However, to imply that the victim of a crime is somehow responsible for that crime *is* ignorant. Allow me to clarify: by ignorant, I mean inconsiderate and offensive.

Through my experience as a friend, a counselor and an RA, I have heard numerous accounts of assault from women who were victimized. These women were not responsible for what happened to them, and because of their strength, they have survived. To imply that they are in any way responsible because they neglected their own safety only victimizes them further.

While Warner's article presents several truths about active steps that can be taken to help avoid crime, it needs to recognize the truth that even with all these precautions in place, crimes still occur, and they are nobody's fault but the criminal's.

Betsy Holmes is a junior biochemistry major.

In last week's issue of Hilltopics, senior Brett Warner authored an article outlining steps that students can take to decrease the risk of crime on campus. Her article is available online in the archives section of the Hilltopics website, at www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics.

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 300-600 word articles on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@hotmail.com by Wednesday at 8:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for late-breaking campus events.