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Geoff Barry, *et al.*

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a Modest Proposal

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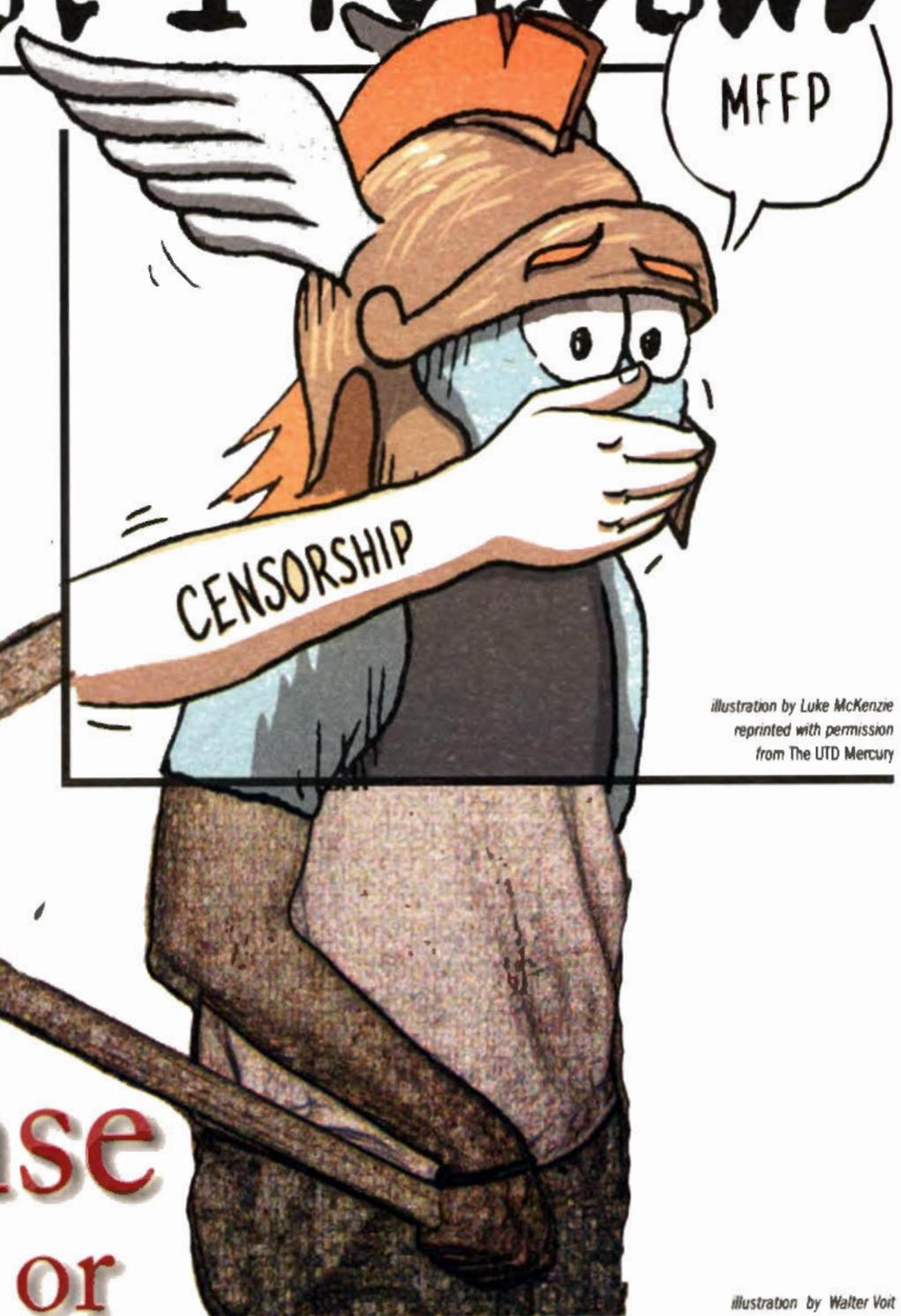
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*illustration by Luke McKenzie
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Sense
or
Censorship?

illustration by Walter Voit

- see the full story p.3 -

Do you want a revolution?

by **Benedict Voit**

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There exists a torture camp in the midst of Europe that sprung to life a few weeks ago. It is continuously expanding, much to the glee of many Americans. Its inmates? The minds of the European leaders who are pondering one torturous thought over and over again: "Could George W. Bush have actually been right?"

As Bush pushed his strategy of a domino effect of democracy, most of the world and even much of America laughed in his face. But as the saying goes, whoever laughs last, laughs best.

The events in Iraq have created an unstoppable avalanche of freedom that is crashing against the walls of tyranny, and is beginning to reshape both the region and the world.

Bush has continuously reported that such a reshaping is a process of change, not an immediate occurrence. It is now undeniable that this process has begun.

And it is not the outsiders who recognize the change. In fact, the biggest revelations have come from the local people themselves.

Walid Jumblatt is a Druze leader (the Druze is a Syrian sect of people who believe a 10th century caliph to be the embodiment of God) and one of the many people who believe a power of change has swept the Middle East:

"It's strange for me to say it, but this process of change has started because of the American invasion of Iraq. I was cynical about Iraq. But when I saw the Iraqi people voting three weeks ago, 8 million of them, it was the start of a new Arab world...The Syrian people, the Egyptian people, all say that something is changing. The Berlin Wall has fallen. We can see it."

What may be even more historic is that age-old enemies are beginning to share similar views. After eight million Iraqis proved their bravery on January 30th, the people of the region have started to question, "Why not me too?"

And in that context, for the first time in generations the radical factions of the Palestinians and Israelis have begun to deem their lives and futures more impor-

tant than murdering the "enemy." When a bomb exploded recently in Tel-Aviv, killing four Israelis, the Palestinians shouted in protest against the murder and disruption of the peace instead of cheering in the streets.

Throughout the region, fliers and pamphlets are being spread preaching that murder is not part of the Islamic doctrine and that tolerance and acceptance can coincide with age-old beliefs.

When it all boils down, the Arab communities are more interested in securing their futures than disrupting those of others. And now because of January 30th, their futures are starting to look remarkably different.

Besides the lull in violence between Israel and Palestine, consider the following:

The Saudi government warmed slightly to the United States since September 11th, but the motive to truly embrace democratic ideals has been questionable. However, when the winds of change blew south out of Iraq, the Saudis agreed that women may actually be more sensible voters than men.



Illustration by Benedict Voit

The Syrian army has been in Lebanon for a good while. But after January 30th, when the Syrians assassinated Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, that "while" was long enough. The Lebanese realized that freedom may not be so foreign after all. And when they stood up for their beliefs and for their freedom, the Syrian power of fear began to crumble.

The Syrian army can fight bullets and bombs all day; but when it comes to a weapon as powerful as freedom, no army of any size can overpower such a force. And so when their power began to fade, astonishingly they just happened to find terrorists such as Saddam's brother hiding in their country and promptly handed them over to the Iraqis.

The Lebanese continued to peacefully protest and some 14,000 Syrian troops have crossed the border home.

The winds have blown west as well. In Egypt, President Mubarak has issued allowances for opposition on the ballot for the next election. The media in Egypt is referring to the move as part of the 7,000-

year march toward democracy. For those pessimists who might believe much of the movements arose irregardless of events in Iraq, for Egypt to instantiate such a change now is rather coincidental.

It may be a very small step for Egypt, seeing as some opposition leaders still sit in jail. But it certainly is the biggest step in the last 7,000 years, and that's a step worth noting.

The dam has broken; the snowball is rolling; the domino has fallen. And now after the U.S. generosity following the tsunami and these elections, for the first time in history a high percentage of people in Islamic countries, from the Middle East to Indonesia, have a positive perception of the United States.

While the Bush administration has been more tact than to laugh in the faces of the doubting world powers, it does have the heart and the charm to smile along with the millions of people in the Middle East as they race their way towards a new and prosperous start as members of the democratic community.

COVER STORY

Incensed by nonsense in censorship

by Bobby Janecka

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In a recent issue of *The UTD Mercury* a seemingly innocuous pair of articles slipped under the radar of most readers. Two pieces by editor Chad Eggspuehler painted a picture of UTD both hopeful and grim, but there's an unspoken truth to them that underscores a much more important debate in the role of a newspaper, any newspaper, and may offer insight into a trend of the changing role of *The Mercury*.

In Eggspuehler's February 28th column, "Mercury rising over silence," he tackles one of the formidable hurdles to the newspaper's publication: censorship, or at the very least, reluctance of some administrators to provide information for fear of being mis-quoted or burned for their words.

As a former *Mercury* contributor, I know firsthand how dead-on Eggspuehler is on calling out the bull-headed administrators of UTD. With a publication as credible as *The Mercury*, it's insulting to the University that some administrators are still so uncooperative. That said, I suspect that Eggspuehler's claim of censorship at our University is a bit exaggerated; I can only offer the facts to let you make the judgment call.

It's very likely, though unconfirmed officially, that Eggspuehler's column was in part inspired by an incident with Dean of Undergraduate Education J. Michael Coleman and an article in the same issue, "Mid-term grade proposal passes first round of tests."

In the article, Eggspuehler reports on

the wonderful progress Coleman is making in instituting a new University policy of mid-term grades for all students. Eggspuehler and *The Mercury* learned of the proposal at an SGA meeting, where Coleman was presenting it in hopes for an endorsement of student support.

Eggspuehler smelled a big news story and rushed to gather facts on the proposal. When he consulted Coleman, however, he received the warning that publishing the story would, "place our missions at risk. Issues will not reach the Committee for Educational Policy (CEP) until March and the Senate until April. You do us no service by placing it before the public eye months before we're prepared to discuss it with faculty," Coleman said.

When Eggspuehler protested that the SGA meeting was fully public and *The Mercury* had every right to print the story, Coleman conceded: "Premature public exposure forces us to battle strong wind we could have easily dismissed with frank discussion. Having said that, you're absolutely correct that we've discussed these issues in a public forum leaving the public record for anyone's review and open to free discussion. If you and the staff choose to write on this topic, than I am duty-bound and happy to help you so we will now change gears."

These are hardly the words of a censor. As it turns out the incident of censorship that Eggspuehler may have been complaining about was really only an example of an administrator pleading for consideration by *The Mercury* for a potentially sensitive proposal and subsequent rush to pass said proposal in anticipation of a media splash.

But would this have really hurt the proposal for mid-term grades? Said Coleman, "It's been my experience that when you have a new initiative and you go public with it before you have it well organized... then people's opinions can galvanize about it and it makes it harder to discuss."

Eggspuehler, for his part, hoped that such policies would be able to stand on their own merit, but it's a difficult question to be sure.

Later in his column, Eggspuehler mentions an incident regarding donors, President Franklyn Jenifer and "a telephone call from a dean." Walter Voit, former Managing Editor at the *Mercury*, actually remembers the incident firsthand and he remembers it slightly differently.

"It wasn't really censorship, the call came down to me and I decided not to put it in the article," Voit said.

As per his account, Jenifer mentioned a specific company as an example of an annual university donor requesting to be forgiven its pledged donations until the fallen market could turn around. Though this was indeed on public record, Voit was informed that releasing the donor's name in as public a forum as *The Mercury* could seriously damage university relations with the donor. Voit consulted the staff and ultimately deemed that detail unnecessary: "it contributed nothing to the article, nothing to the issue, and it could have hurt the university so I decided to leave it out," said Voit.

Admittedly, these examples could be considered censorship but only as an appeal to common sense. UTD administrators have no formal power of censure; in fact, "at our university, we don't have prior

review by the faculty," Eggspuehler said. They appeal only to the prudence of the paper's editors, hoping that they would reconsider how vital certain information is if it is in part harmful to the university.

Admittedly, this highlights two examples of *Mercury* judgment over the span of two years. In the Jenifer example, we find *The Mercury* deferring to the benefit of the university over a policy of free information. The example with Coleman, on the other hand, shows *The Mercury* choosing unlimited access to information to the detriment of the university, which in this case, thanks to a very able administrator, was not as problematic as it could have been.

Outcomes aside, it shows that *The Mercury*, a publication whose content is always shaped by the judgment and hubris of its editors, is one that, for the moment at least, prints first and asks questions later. But this isn't necessarily a bad thing, no one but the players politically involved ever complained about free information in the media.

It begs a deeper question: just what is the role of a publication? As a very direct beneficiary of UTD's success, does *The Mercury* have a vested interest and bias favoring the university?

From the way things look now, decidedly not. But in our present media-driven world, questions of media bias, professional interest, and selective dissemination of information are raised everywhere. We must ask ourselves whether all information is really worth knowing, but more importantly, we must ask how we are to regard the organizations that take it upon themselves to deliver it.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I wish to commend you on the publication of *A Modest Proposal*. As a staunch supporter of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, I am always encouraged to hear voices being lifted in the name of free speech.

I am also happy to see that one of your articles discussed the much-maligned topic of re-

ligious belief, which continues to be a source of irritation to many at UTD, especially those on the north side of the campus.

Now the criticism: As a Christian, I always like to take the opportunity to respond to the criticism Christians receive on this campus, often unfairly. I'm not sure where these "Bible-pushers" are at UTD.

I haven't seen them, and I am not one of them. In fact, it often

seems to me that the anti-religious voices are the loudest and the most grating on this campus (once again, on the north side of the campus).

What is needed, perhaps, is a bit of mutual respect. After all, those who are "left of center" have a pretty strong voice on this campus, not to mention a great deal of support by the faculty and administration. I think the pendulum swings in both directions.

Religious people don't want to be told they are wrong, nor do they want to be accused of being mindless puppets who ignorantly embrace a morality forced on them in childhood.

Many of us "religious types" have studied our own, as well as other religious belief systems, and have found -- quite purposefully -- the common threads that link us, rather than focusing on the differences that separate us.

It would seem that Bree Szostek may have stumbled upon some overzealous religious fanatics, which is indeed unfortunate, because it really is the religious belief system itself that has value, even if the messenger makes a mess of it in the telling.

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IT'S ALL GREEK

TO MΣ

by Eric Kildebeck

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photo by Jonathan Lane

Nerds vs. Greeks: the unfortunate nature of bias and arrogance in social cliques

Harking back to long before such classic cinematic works as *Revenge of the Nerds* and *PCU*, the tension that exists between stereotypical nerds and fraternity brothers has been palpable on college campuses. During my time at UTD, however, I have begun to understand that generally, this tension stems much more from bias and arrogance on both sides than any fundamental difference between people.

I for one would be accurately described as a nerd, to the point that my girlfriend once got me a t-shirt that read: "Caucasia knows how to party" and depicted two

adults in leggings sipping tea engaged in a thrilling conversation. That aside, let's look at the creation of my own bias and the uniquely invigorating process of discovering my own arrogance.

During high school, my twin brother and his friends could only be described as my opposite in every possible way. I'm not sure what it was exactly, but the repeated threats of bodily harm and visions of people throwing up on themselves in bathtubs did not make me fond of any of them.

Coming to college, I clearly associated partying and casual relationships with

people that I didn't like. I had never actually done any of these things, but I felt confident that they were associated with a certain type of person. During the course of my undergraduate experience, however, I did finally throw some parties and had an awesome time hanging out and drinking with my friends. After experiencing a few of these parties and even trying out a more casual short-term relationship with a girl then I'd ever had before, I started to realize that some of these things could actually be fun.

Despite this realization, I continued

to perceive Greek life as negative and had serious biases towards it. In my mind I justified this by focusing on specific events and people that I didn't like and thinking that there was a fundamental difference between me and them. While I could have maintained this perception for quite some time, I was forced to look at the actual type of people in Greek organizations when some of my best friends became active in Greek life.

When some of the most impressive,

see **SOCIAL BIAS** p. 5

STUDENT LIFE

On beer, boys and bananas

by Neha Chinai

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When I was younger, I believed in two different categories of people: those who did their math homework and ate bananas at their desk during recess, and those who whispered to each other all through class only to get thrown out and played boys catching girls during recess. That was when I was twelve. Now that I'm nineteen, the world is not quite that simple. Thank God for that, or else I would still be on a banana diet.

I for one have grown up and so now I do both: math homework as well as catch boys. Unfortunately there are still some people who believe in the high school stereotypes. It's rather pathetic really, these poor souls still clinging onto their old classifications for dear life. Greek Life becomes a prime target for these individuals who just don't seem to understand that partying and having a life do not equal a bad person.

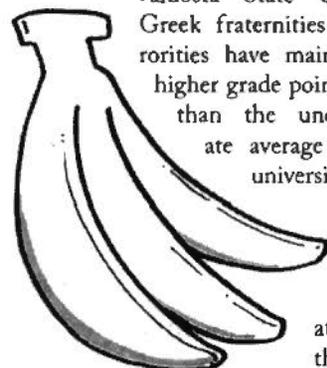
I laughed my head off when I read an article on how events like "Underage Beer Bash 2005" and "Drunken Groping Tuesday" are "staples of (a) fraternity's schedule" (UTD Mercury, March 21, 2005 issue). It is PRECISELY for their beer pong skills and promiscuous sex lives that 25 fraternity members became Presidents of the United States of America.

So I'll be honest - do Greeks have their vices? Of course they do - just about as much as the members of any other organization, including the Disappearing Languages Club or the Abacus Revivalist Guild. Is debauchery the only face of Greek Life? I think not.

According to research conducted by Valdosta State University,

Greek fraternities and sororities have maintained a higher grade point average than the undergraduate average at most universities and

Greeks have a higher graduation rate than non-



SOCIAL BIAS

continued from p. 4

generous and fun people you know begin participating in something like Greek life, it becomes much more difficult to keep disliking it so much. Harder still was having to admit that I knew my friends wouldn't be having so much fun going Greek if they were only surrounded by chauvinistic assholes.

The amazing thing, which I'm not proud of, is how long I was able to continue viewing Greek life irrationally. During this time I got to go through the surprisingly painful process of looking at reality: I've had some friends in fraternities ever since I came to UTD and I can think of people I like and dislike in every social group. While there are certainly assholes who try to get girls drunk and take advantage of them, the arrogance of intellectual elitists on the other side makes them treat girls like crap as well.

Any rational person would simply admit that all social groups are made up of some nice and some mean people, all of whom are trying to enjoy life. Discovering this showed me simply that my continued bias towards Greek life was much more a result of my own arrogance about my preferences than it was a reflection of

members. Perhaps they should apologize for having a good time while they make their way through the arduous journey that is college. Perhaps they should also apologize for their choice of lifestyle, because God forbid a college student actually goes to a party on Friday night and then participates the next day in a bake sale to raise money for cancer patients!

Arguments about the exclusive nature of Greek life have often been made as an attack against the establishment. It is a ludicrous argument, because if one applied it to every facet of life then the Honors society should accept all those who apply and the Pre-Law society should include puppets. Organizations exist because groups of people with similar interests and goals decide to get together and accomplish these goals. Selection of members exists in every organization, whether

reality. While tension exists within every social group, I believe the heightened tension between stereotypical nerds and Greeks actually comes from the arrogance each side has about their preferences and the resulting elitism on both sides.

If we actually tried to consider each other simply as people with different preferences who are all simply trying to have fun then we would be more reasonable about accepting each other.

It is clear that those who spend inordinate amounts of time playing video games do not wake up saying, "Hmmm, I would be happy today if I could experience some invigorating hatred towards those who enjoy athletic activity." Similarly, those who spend their time partying do not think, "You know, this party would be a lot more fun if we could go make some other people feel bad about themselves." Obviously we've all had both of these thoughts at some point or another, but we're not usually motivated by them.

The main point is that we should all reconsider the belief that there is a fundamental difference between these groups of people. Some people, both in and out of Greek life, prefer spending more time playing video games with their friends than partying with their friends. Some people, both in and out of Greek life, prefer more casual romantic relationships to

more serious ones. Some people, both in and out of Greek life, are active in athletics and care a lot about academics.

In fact, the polarity that now exists between these social groups has created one of the most significant problems on college campuses: extremism. Instead of spending some time partying, playing video games, and going to the activities center, students spend six hours a day in front of a computer or drink four night a week.

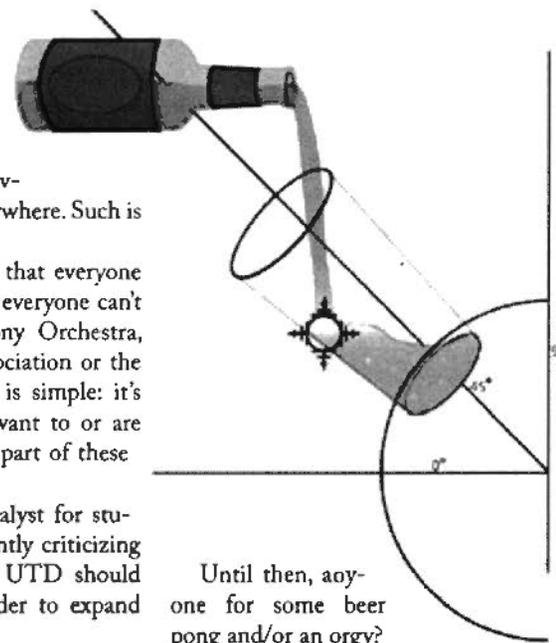
I for one still spend about ten times as much time playing video games as I do partying. The amount of time a friend of mine and I have recently spent on Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas is a ringing example of how extremism in any of these activities can be deleterious to a happy life. Obviously, getting drunk all of the time or spending obscene amounts of time studying have severely negative effects on people's lives as well.

In reality, almost everyone I know likes all of these things to some extent. The differences between us and our social settings are not caused by a fundamental difference between types of people, but by differences in preference that should not be the cause of tension. Simply put, a nice frat guy has a lot more in common with a nice geek than he does with a chauvinistic womanizer.

it is a newspaper, an honors society, a lobby group or a discussion club, though the selection may be implied or direct. Sorry to be the dasher of dreams, but everyone is not welcome everywhere. Such is life, so let's get on with it.

So, what I am saying is that everyone CANT be Greek, just like everyone can't be in the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Textile Merchants Association or the Free Masons. The reason is simple: it's either because they don't want to or are not skilled enough to be a part of these organizations.

Greek life is a great catalyst for student life. Instead of constantly criticizing Greek life, perhaps we at UTD should reevaluate its merits in order to expand student life on campus.



Until then, anyone for some beer pong and/or an orgy?

Daniel completes seventh of twelve presidential trials Retrieval of golden apples, capture of Cerberus still ahead

RICHARDSON, TX (AP) - Dr. David Daniel, newly selected president of the University of Texas at Dallas, has completed seven of the dreaded 12 Presidential Trials that any new president must undergo before being deemed truly worthy by the Council of Regents that sits in glory within the Capitol building in Austin.

Daniel, who in his righteous strength has killed both the Hydra and the Lion of Nemea, captured the Cerynitis and the boar of Arcadia, cleaned the Augean stables in a day, shot down the ravenous birds of Lake Strymphalus, and defeated the mad bull of Crete, must still shoulder on through five more tasks before he can accept the mighty responsibility of being in charge of one of the most respected public universities in Texas.

"People asked us what kind of man we wanted for this job. I will tell you. I want the kind of man who, when encountered with a lion whose flesh deflects arrows, fights it hand to hand, strangles it, and wears its pelt as body armor. I want a man who smashes together two giant bronze plates made by Hephaestus to scare birds out of their hiding place and then kills all of them with poison-tipped arrows. I would not trust the future of our student body to anyone less than this," said Hobson Wildenthal, provost of the university and avid watcher of "Xena: Warrior Princess".

Daniel ran into trouble when he momentarily offended the gods by wounding a sacred animal on the slopes of Mount Cerynaea in his quest. He was also fined \$50 by campus police for wielding a crossbow without a license and for leaving the head of the Hydra on the porch of his Waterview apartment, which was a clear violation of his lease.

The esteemed doctor is no alien to these types of tests; to become Dean of Engineering at his previous university, Daniel was forced to answer the riddle of the Sphinx, who had been terrorizing Indiana for quite some time. By answering the question correctly, the Sphinx ran directly into Lake Michigan, flooding Chicago.

If he completes all the tasks, Daniel will earn the title of UTD president, the eternal favor of the gods, and a "Sub Club" card from Subway with most of the holes already punched out, allowing Daniel to earn a free sandwich with fewer purchases than most mortal men.

Waterview fines itself for burning

by Furst Wurthing

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When a fire began to burn on a Waterview porch this past weekend, fear and panic began to sweep through the minds of the young tenants. When Waterview caught wind of the smoke, money signs began to cha-ching.

Double checking the lease agreement, one employee saw a chance for a big fine.

"I just imagined charging them fifty dollars for each individual flame," she claimed triumphantly. "I knew this would get me a promotion to the 11:00 shift."

The fire department rushed to the scene only to be given a rush themselves.

A UTD police car followed close behind, not as an escort, but because the fire truck was going over 15 mph down Drive H. Lack of a parking permit also resulted in a fine.

The trucks raced to the building and were unloading the hose to save the building when they were stopped in their tracks.

The Waterview employee ran to the fire waving the highlighted lease

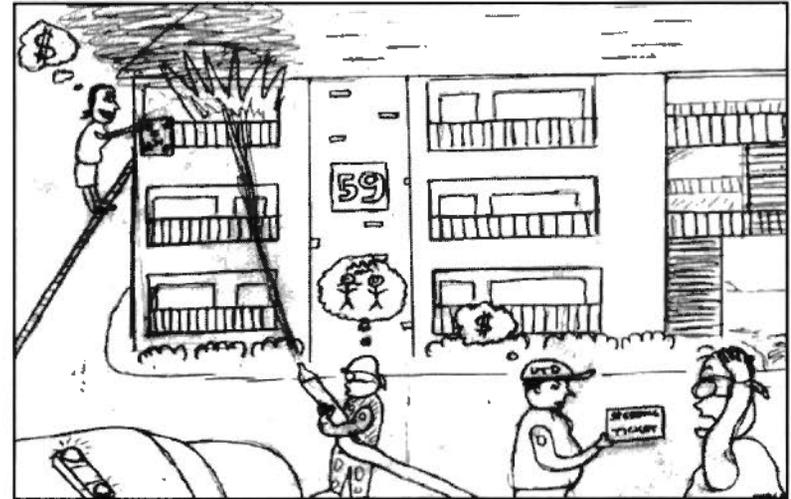


illustration by the Visual Art Barn

where it explicitly stated that only proper outdoor furniture, plants, and bicycles could be kept on the apartment balcony.

Water, clearly not falling into one of those categories, was obviously a violation.

In a bold move, the fire department defied the explicit commands of the Waterview administration when it put the view of water into and onto the apartment.

"The fire was starting to get out of control and the group was about to hose down the balcony when some-

one from Waterview halted us," one fire-fighter reported. "They literally pulled the plug on us. It wasn't until the other command-truck hosed some sense into the employee that we were allowed to spray down the balcony."

Eventually the fire was put out and all life was saved.

So, just remember kids, if a fire begins to burn, one fine is one too many. So sit back, roast some marshmallows and enjoy the moment. Oh, and if you get a chance, turn in a maintenance request form.

Satan, UTD work together on parking policies

Dark Prince "excellent team player," says staff

HELL (AP) - Satan, the manifestation of pure evil in the universe, and the University of Texas at Dallas have come to a rough agreement on a method through which to inflict the greatest amount of torture and suffering on unknowing students.

"While we felt we were already annoying the Be-Jesus out of students searching for a decent parking place, there was still something missing," said

an unnamed staff member, now only known by the brand of "666" across his forehead.

"That's when we decided to call in Satan to help us reach that final pinnacle of irritation," he said.

Satan heartily approved of the difference of approximately 10 yards between gold and green parking in the Hoblitzelle parking lot with a price difference of \$50. He also was extremely pleased with the extreme competition for parking spots in Phase 3 with actual residents and students from other phases attempting to park there to walk

to class.

Satan was also tickled with the miniscule extra parking lot in Phase 8 which magically turns logical human beings into total assholes over a space of cement.

However, new policies were also recommended. Satan suggested the fine of one's eternal soul for backing into a parking space or breathing.

Lucifer said he was "pleased with this new dark alliance," and that he was eagerly awaiting a partnership with the Waterview Leasing Office, whose evil plots often matched his own.

English-speaking Math professor hired

Yep that's it guys. That IS the news. Not a whole lot more to say, here. English. I repeat. E-N-G-L-I-S-H. What, are you still reading? What more do you want to know. This is news damn it. What, oh about the fact that he learned English second hand at a private school in Mumbai. Whoop dee freakin doo. Yeah so what, he can communicate. Communication is what we are writing about here. What, oh you want to know about the 36 students in his average class who don't speak English. Who cares? We pay these guys to turn coffee pots into theorems and publish it, do you read me, PUBLISH in ENGLISH, not to teach classes. What kind of naive world do you live in buddy?

ZBT frat house erected

Members of Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) sat and giggled for 12 hours at the erection ceremony. "From cupid's dream to this enormous erection we have had a very successful year," erections chair Dick Jonsson said.

"We'd like to thank all of the ladies from Kappa Alpha Theta who were instrumental in this erection and for their superb hands-on role in the team effort," another member said. "We have really come together on this one."

Other fraternities have had large



UTD Zeta Beta Tau members celebrate during the erection ceremony of their new on-campus fraternity house.

April

erection problems this past year and are using the ZBT experience to build on. An Alpha Phi Omega spokesman said he hopes to have a fully functional erection process in place by the beginning of June and be ready to "go at it" by the end of the summer.

UTSW rethinks partnership with UTD

Citing the difficulty in working with schools with three letter acronyms, UT Southwestern (UTSW) dropped all collaborative efforts with UTD and UT Arlington (UTA) this past week.

"The royalties were getting ridiculous," said one UTSW spokesman. "Jesus Christ, ever since God patented the holy trinity, you have to pay out the wazoo for three letter names or acronyms, and frankly it just wasn't worth it anymore," he said, commenting that UTSW would begin work with Rice, pending the outcome of their legal battles with the continent of Asia over name rights, or with Texas A&M University (TAMU).

A high UTD official, James Moses, said UTD has spoken with The University of Dallas (UD) about a potential name swap to alleviate this three-letter problem. "God doesn't charge Catholics the 'Power of Three' royalty anyway," he said. "This money is already taken out as a fraction of 1 percent of tithes given each year at mass."

However, Moses said the deal was not yet set in stone (God only did that once and look what happened), but that in the meantime, UD would put in a good word for UTD to the big guy.

Mercury becomes news arm of AMP

Difficulty with humor and original opinions and the apparent lack of readership on campus has led the UTD

Mercury to seek a role as the news arm of A Modest Proposal.

Previous efforts in this endeavor all failed as AMP didn't exist yet.

"I finally wanted to be part of a paper that was worth censoring," said Mercury editor Bo Thai, adding that he was getting fed up with stale news from UTD press releases.

"For years we have harbored the delusion that people actually care about these things that come out of the Office of New Information," he said.

The Mercury Managing Editor agreed. "I am tired of journalistic integrity and AP style. I have long longingly longed for the day when I could freely use '-ly' words and write with an interesting not-so-formulaic style," she said. "A Modest Proposal gives me this chance."

AMP was lukewarm with the decision, but figured a bit of real news once in a while couldn't hurt. The AMP staff was also disheartened when they realized they would have to find a new target to pick on.

Final Four of Chess Rescheduled

Stanford, MIT and UMCB showed up at UTD on April 1 to take on what they thought would be a formidable UTD chess team in the annual Final Four of Chess.

"APRIL FOOLS!" Tim Microsoft said as he did the chicken dance in front of a confused group of students and their personal translators.

After about four seconds, the chess wizards all began to scowl.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, UTD was forced to push the event back one week and had failed to notify anyone. Similar policies are in place across the school.



Kim Jong Il II has accepted an invitation to attend UTD's 18 separate graduation ceremonies, which would boost his popularity at home and persuade him to come to the United States and lead the country.

"This flexibility to change dates of times at our whims is really convenient for us," said Andy Stevenson. "That way we don't have to plan ahead and can just take things as they come, baby. Hakuna Matata."

Campus In a by Aramark ing hour lized emp "We



...ss to deliver the keynote addresses during ...ean dictator and maniac said he hoped this ...s country's finest scholars to obtain student nuclear weapons.

ours. 12:23 each afternoon," one worker said. ...r tensions, "I have to actually stay behind the cash ...ack work- register during this span to handle all ...l over-uti- six students that buy lunch after their ...t Café. class. I just can't go that long without a ... 12:19 to smoke break."

Fools

UTD adopts rabbit as new mascot

After an extensive search to replace UTD's flaming sperm mascot, the Student Government Association (SGA) voted unanimously 4-0 in their March meeting to pick a new mascot. The SGA settled on "Tibbar" the rabbit after a heated debate spurred other names such as "Repmuht," "Yppolf," and "DTU."

"We just thought it was corny having a mascot spelling the name of the object backwards," one of the voting members said. "So instead we spelled an *animal* backward."

Stew of pet-nappings reported

In a wake of reports of recent pet-nappings in across campus, UTD officials are beginning to question exactly what is going into the sushi at the Comet Café.

"Comet Café sushi staff, you just thought that was fish," a police chief said after a month-long investigation that began with the disappearance of Fufu, the pet hamster and mascot of Homage. Since this first vanishing, 13 other pets have been reported as lost or missing. The connection was made after a Korean student noticed that his sushi had tasted too much like home and wondered whose dog he was eating.

Revolution in Bishkek hits close to home for UTD students

"Where the hell is that?" asked graduate historical studies major John Smith, adding "for the hundredth time" that Pocahontas was not his long lost great-great grandmother.

In a survey conducted by AMP and paid for by the Society for the Proliferation of the Exact Whereabouts of Kyrgyzstan (SPEWK), 3 students correctly identified that Kyrgyzstan was not a



"Tibbar" the rabbit becomes new official UTD mascot after a unanimous decision by the Student Government Association.

variety of South American tree frog, but none of the 109 questioned could identify it as a country, much less one in central-central Asia bordering China, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan surrounding the Naryn, Talas and Syr Darya Rivers.

SPEWK is currently accepting donations to take out a full-page ad in the Mercury with a large geo-political map of central-central Asia.

UTD celebrates International Week in 'little' pieces

International Week featured flowers, flair, and foreign fun as UTD was flooded with wholly un-American culture and entertainment March 28 - April 1.

The centerpiece of the week was the creation of international ghettos: Little India, Little Pakistan, Little China, Little Singapore, Little Korea, and Little Rest of Asia.

The little groups of foreign students then all faced off in a week of intense competition that included a Martha Stewart Bake-off, a giant game of tug-o-war, an English spelling bee and a the

final game of Computer Science Cricket (CSC).

Little India and Little Rest of Asia made it to finals to be held April 1-2 and must face off in this new game of CSC invented by the Office of International Education. The objective of the game is to stay at bat as long as possible, so the rest of your team can furiously program on the sidelines and attempt to solve as many problems out of an unlimited set as possible. The caveat is that each player who touches a computer must go up to bat at some point during the two-day event.

Acronyms take over the world

In a closed door meeting (CDM) last week (LW) the Associated Press (AP) released its official line on (OLO) the printing and usage of acronyms in syndicated and non-syndicated publications (PAUASNSP).

So lately (SL), with passage of the PAUASNSP, the AP has delivered a blow (DAB) to independent publications (IPs) across the United States of America (ATUSoA).

IPs were previously allowed (WPA) to create acronyms as they saw fit (TSW), but in response to these new rules (NRs), IPs must now meticulously manage minute nuances (NMMMNN) and must make huge sacrifices (MMHS) when editing articles. To the detriment of (TTDO) the originality and flair of the journalistic process (OTJP), and in order to (AIOT) achieve consistency, the PAUASNSP ruling really is detrimental to the free press (TFP). IPs who won't take freedom (WTF) of speech seriously and fight these NRs should really rethink their mission and those things they take for granted (FG).

IPs WTF OTJP FG AIOT NM-MMN, IPs MMHS TTDO TFP ATUSoA.



Kyrgyzstan is a former Soviet republic in central-central Asia.

Daniel excited at his own prospects

by Eli P. Seas

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The Uranus' lone staff tape recorder was a bit finicky during the voice-over of the Feb. 13 Dallas Morning News Editorial, so we only caught words here and there. We sincerely hope a meaningful impression can be gleaned about our future president, Dr. David Daniel, who is a remarkable fellow and has a great vision for the university and North Dallas. And I "quote:"

North Texas has a... jewel. I'm talking about... I am convinced... me. ...Aspire to... move... or... within... reality... have no chance.

There are two reasons... that are legitimately... rank. While... making... moves... one mark of... greatness... is... insistence on continually getting better -



President David Daniel

and having the resources to do so, ...simply not... to succeed.

Many have... different needs. Not all can or should be... intensive. Others lack the... mass... necessary to catapult themselves. Others are... challenged, estranged or... hopeful.

Fortunately for residents of the Dallas region... I am ... nationally recognized ... in such areas as ... brain... arts and technology ... to say nothing of being ... phenomenally high-quality ... and ...

exceptionally rare... as the beneficiary of an economic... agreement, whose signatories include Texas Instruments, the State of Texas and the U. T. System,... of up to \$300 million in public and private funds.

UTD would die for ... unambiguous ... fundamentals, right? They include: proven ability... the presence of a world-class ... one, and the potential to partner.

None of this is going to be easy... for... the effort ... is going to take a great deal of people. So... I... assume the presidency... of... the world.

To get the full scoop, see *The UTD Mercury* archives at <http://www.utdmercury.com/news/2005/02/14/Opinion/Daniel.Charting.Utds.Path.To.Greatness-862632.shtml>.

The Uranus would like to point out aht our brothers at *The Mercury* can afford working telephones and tape recorders.

Sperm theory blown out of the water

**SWEET dissovles,
hatred of sperm
spreads, Mercury's
Dick discredited**

by Poor Piss

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In yet another instance showing a complete and utter lack of journalistic integrity, *The UTD Mercury* and staff writer Moby Dick rushed to print March 21 with a story entitled, "Sperm whales unearthed in SU mall, Pinocchio found," without the true facts.

After further inquiry into the matter, *The Uranus* found that the whales lying underneath the SU Mall were in fact NOT sperm whales, but rather short-finned pilot whales, or *Glopicephala macrorhynchus*.

Resident whale expert, UTD's own Bay

Lean has set the record straight. "These specimens are clearly short-finned pilot whales," she said. "The short sickle-shaped flippers and white patches on their chins that extend dorsally to the anus are distinctive of these animals and would never be found in sperm whales."

UTD students were indignant.

"We have all been Dicked," said sophomore geoscience major Pompous Pilate. "Falsifying a report of this magnitude was a whale of a mistake."

Dick's dubious source of information, freshman geoscience major Archy Ologist had been looking to promote his organization, the only UTD activist group - Sperm Whale Environmental Extinction Team (SWEET) and fabricated identifying information to dupe the press into believing these pilot whales were really sperm whales, Lean said.

Ologist has since been publicly tarred and feathered and has become a social science major.

"I thought the only cheaters on campus were in the Erik Jonsson school of Engineering and Computer Science," said Associate Dean for Dealing with Buried

Whales, Pakemupan Moovemout. "To think this cheating problem extends to our 'lesser' schools is simply shocking," Moovemout said.

A dissolved SWEET was another consequence of this large dupe.

Temoc, who was recently fired and replaced by "Tibbar" the rabbit was disappointed in his fellow SWEET member. "This has given a bad name to lovers of sperm across campus," Temoc said adding that Ologist "tarnished my reputation to the point where some backwards-cockneyed flaming rabbit can take my flaming job."

The Mercury and their elusive Dick were unavailable for comment at *Uranus* press time when this new information came to light.

Gepetto and Pinocchio each also declined to comment as they had been whisked away to Washington D.C. after the Amber Threat Alert was called.

For incomplete information that led to this scandal, see <http://www.theutdmercury.com/news/2005/03/21/Fearure/Sperm.Whales.Unearthed.In.Su.Mall.Pinocchio.Found.april.Fools-897949.shtml>

Hate poor people?

Dislike public schools and roads?

Become a
Libertarian!

For more information contact Justin Appleby at appleby@utdallas.edu

Tired of seeing your way of life destroyed by moral-less INFIDELS?

Fed up with peaceful interpretation of "mainstream" clerics?

Join the Muslim JIHAD!

For more information contact Justin Appleby at appleby@utdallas.edu

Wanna be a radio UTD DJ?

For more information contact Justin Appleby at appleby@utdallas.edu

Struggling with incontinence or Tourettes Syndrome?

SHIT!

For more information contact Justin Appleby at appleby@utdallas.edu

Simpligan's ~~GULLIVER'S~~ TRAVELS

by Bobby Janecka

Dominick Simpligan, our valiant protagonist and student at UTD, has had quite an adventure since becoming lost in the Gulf of Mexico months ago. Following a stay on the strange island of Majorita, he set off in a crude raft and became stranded in still seas. Facing certain death by dehydration, he is saved quite unexpectedly by the arrival of a hot air balloon where we join him now.

As I sat on my raft, shielding my bleary eyes against the sun, the stranger in the hot air balloon dropped the end of a rope down to my raft. I clambered up the rope and fell unceremoniously into the basket of the balloon.

"Thank you so much for saving me!" I said gratefully to the two men and one woman I found standing with me in the basket.

"Hello down there," the shorter of the two men said cheerfully. He looked to his companions with an expectant smile, and the rest of us stood there, markedly confused.

The taller man thought for a moment and then bowed to me saying, "Robhgien taobria ruo ot emoclew."

I was taken aback by the strange words and said nothing, but my confusion must have been obvious as an understanding look came over his face and he sat down at a laptop computer on the floor. After typing a few words, a mechanical voice came over the computer's speakers, "Welcome to our air-boat, neighbor!"

The shorter man nodded his head at the laptop's statement and added as an afterthought, "Hello down there!"

I smiled and replied, "I appreciate your help, but where are we?" After a moment, the laptop croaked out, "Ew era erehw tub pleh ruoy etaicrpa i." It was in this way that we managed to communicate.

As we floated soundlessly through the sky, I learned that the strangers were three scholars intent on making their air craft the best balloon in the land through sound logic and scientific research. In fact, right before they rescued me, they were just about to take the first of many steps in making a great hot air balloon: they were about to decide on a name. This discussion they continued after we concluded our introductions.

"So it is agreed then," said the taller man (who was named Nylk Narf). "We shall call our craft the Noollab!" I confess that it was years before I realized that Noolab is merely Balloon spelled backwards. After much self-congratulations and laughter, they recommenced their planning for what would be a first rate balloon.

By this time it was very clear that an extra passenger added too much weight for the Noolab to handle. As the balloon descended closer to the ground, the crew became

frantic and held a meeting to discuss what should be thrown from the craft. Reaching a decision, they consulted me, the passenger, and (before I could answer) continued the meeting.

In the Noolab's basket, I should add, they had stored a few very formidable pieces of computing equipment and a large stack of books and portfolios. There was room enough for the four of us in the large basket, but all of the combined weight was too much to bear.

Finally the committee reached a decision, and Nylk stood regally. Silencing his short-er companions simple repetitions (Mr. L. Trebor as I recall, was only able to repeat that one meaningless phrase), he issued the findings of the committee. "The crew of the

Noolab agrees that in order to preserve the course of the balloon we must jettison the collection of art, unimportant science, and literature."

With that we set to earnestly flinging every document, book, and manuscript as far from the basket as we could. Within minutes only the computing equipment and the crew remained, and we were again slowly ascending.

We all let out a triumphant cheer and the three members of the crew resumed their meeting to discuss forming an inquiry into the direction they might consider for the course of the Noolab. The meeting began to drone on and my attention quickly wandered.

I leaned my elbows on the basket's edge and looked out across the span of skyline coasting silently past, far below.

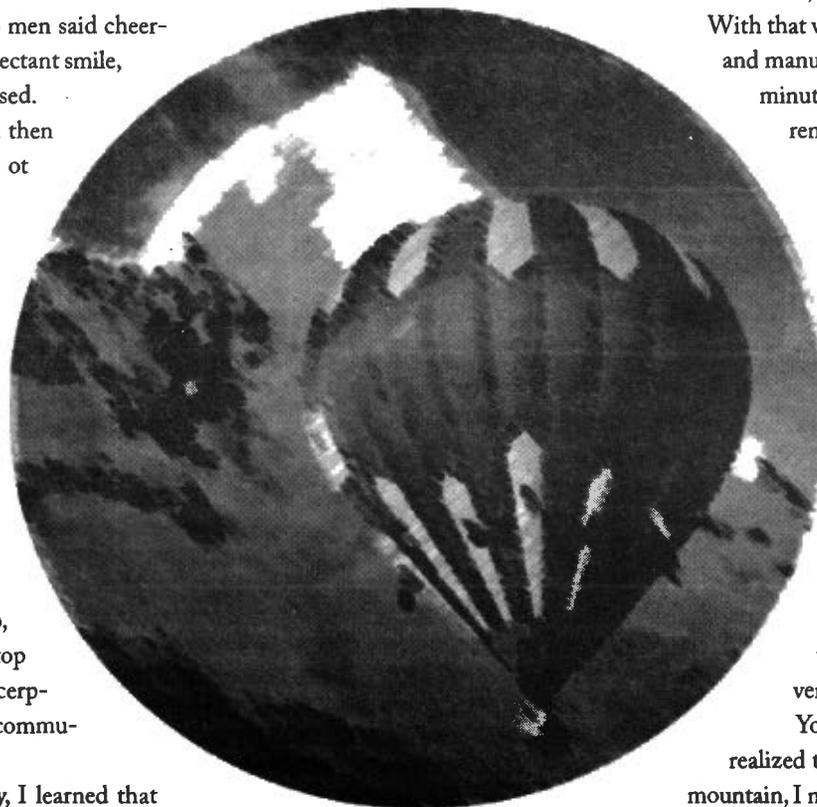
In the distance a mountain loomed up through the clouds and I began to day-dream as the balloon's gentle spin carried it out of my sight. By the time the balloon rotated back around and I could see the mountain peak again, it was considerably closer and very clearly in our path.

You will excuse my excitement, but the moment I realized the balloon was set on a collision course with the mountain, I must say that I lost my head. Unfortunately, at the very same moment, the three members of the Noollab began arguing about how best to market the technical virtues of their balloon.

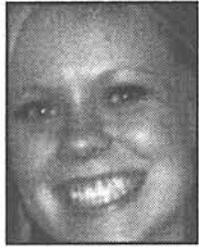
In the ensuing flurry of "We're going to hit that mountain!" and "But there's just no research money to be had with an artistic balloon!" and even "Surely if we attract the technical passengers greedier ones would follow," you may well imagine how very little was actually heard.

I can only offer the humblest of excuses, therefore, that I was unable to do more in that hectic foray; and the balloon inevitably collided with the mountain peak. I don't exactly remember the events immediately following the crash, but I am quite certain the Noolab ended its prestigious voyage on the mountain that day.

Missing the full story. Check out <http://simpligan.blogspot.com>



“Liberal Media” Is A Conservative Myth



by Clarisse Profflet

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Rob Corddry of Comedy Central's fake news phenom — The Daily Show — revealed the effects of sinister “liberal media filters” on March 23, 2005. The transparent blue film, when placed over the camera, says Corddry, can turn host Jon Stewart's glowing praise of our current administration into sardonic criticism.

Amusing, but why one laughs at this joke is just as dichotomous as the issue at hand — is it because it points to a truth or that it points out the absurdity of a liberal media bias claim?

The question of whose interests the media protects — and how — has achieved holy-grail-like significance. So is media bias keeping us from getting the whole story? If so, who is at fault?

Is it the liberals who are purported to be running the newsrooms, television and radio stations of this country, duping an

unsuspecting public into mistaking their party line for news?

Or is it the conservatives who have identified media bias as a reliably inflammatory rallying cry around which to consolidate their political base as they cynically “work the refs?”

A simple network news hierarchy provides a concrete answer — anchorman, station manager, producer, NBC News President, and finally the CEO of General Electric Corporation.

Partisan interests on their face are a less likely cause than faceless, financially-centric corporate interests. The fact that most of these corporates are conservative elites make it more likely that the battle call against liberal media is heard, but since their interests are still more corporate than conservative, media content is far more likely to be reliant on advertisers — who want sensationalized reporting under the constraints of a community standard of decency — and business elites — who are far more concerned with area cleanup initiatives than the reason sanitation teamsters are on strike.

Ideological orientation is introduced and enforced by those high in the organizational hierarchy who have the power to hire and fire, reward and punish. Working journalists, despite some high visibility,

usually do not call the shots in the nation's media corporations: The media is not controlled by the likes of Peter Jennings or Dan Rather.

It sounds ominous and it should. The story of NBC's corporate entanglement is fairly extreme in nature, but it drives the point home:

Jack Welch, the autocratic chairman and CEO of General Electric, was watching the evening news on NBC, the network his company owns. It was October 19, 1987—Black Monday. GE's stock had been hammered along with the rest of the market. And there was Tom Brokaw, the anchorman whose generous salary was paid for by GE's shareholders, whipping viewers into a panic.

Welch was incensed. He picked up the phone and got NBC News chief Lawrence Grossman on the line. “You're killing all the stocks,” Welch angrily informed him. Replied Grossman: “This is not an appropriate discussion to be having.”

Then, after objecting in the interest of journalistic ethics, Grossman was then tersely reminded, “Remember, you work for GE Corporation.”

Within a year, Grossman was removed.

This is a sad but logical chain of events: The norms of “objective journalism” and

the powerful corporate interests which own and sponsor the news media ensure that news content never strays too far, for too long, from protecting the status quo.

The critique of the liberal news media rests on two assumptions—first, journalists' views are to the left of the public and, secondly, that journalists frame news content accordingly.

You don't understand the corporate ideology of General Motors by studying the personal beliefs of the assembly-line workers, the argument goes. But even if you did, it is unlikely to prove fruitful in the environment of media conglomerates.

To quote David Broder, “dean” of the Washington press corps, “There just isn't enough ideology in the average reporter to fill a thimble.” Besides, many critics are conceding to research showing that journalists are in fact more conservative than the general public, according to the Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) survey.

Media content is far more indicative of media ownership than a liberal bias. And while media ownership is typically quite conservative, the output is more representative of perpetuating the status quo — creating a comfortable environment for Pepsi™ to advertise — than of partisan leanings.

Local Museum Leads Double Life

by Hannah Frank

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Chinese lion dancers, martial artists, and children in pajamas — these are definitely not your average museum patrons.

Stroll through the galleries at the Dallas Museum of Art on most afternoons and you will see more or less the same scene as in most museums in the country: pretty pictures, stunning statues, and (sadly) hardly any people. That is on MOST afternoons.

One Friday each month, the doors of the DMA stay open well past the usual 5 p.m. closing time. At six o'clock, Late Night at the DMA begins. Offering a variety of activities aimed at everyone from youngsters in PJs to the young-at-heart in suits, just about anyone can find

something interesting to do that wouldn't normally be associated with a day at an art museum.

In case the hassles of the work week have tired you out, Starbucks is there with free samples to keep you going. And if the coffee doesn't perk you up, the music might — the museum's Atrium Café (that's the big room with the pretty glass on the window) is the place to be for various forms of live entertainment. The February Late Night provided an additional way to wake you up; rumbling down the concourse, through a sea of nearly 5000 art lovers (or in some cases just lovers), came a train of traditional Chinese lion dancers.

Each Late Night has a different theme. Just in case the lion dancers and martial artists weren't enough of a clue, this past month's theme was the Chinese New Year.



This fit in well with the museum's current special exhibition — “Splendors of China's Forbidden City”. The pieces in this collection all relate to one of China's greatest emperors, Qianlong, and are set to go back to China forever in May. If you can't make it to the Late Night series, you might want to make the trip down to the museum just to see this exhibit — it is well worth it.

The next Late Night at the DMA is scheduled for April 15, and will include many activities sure to strike your fancy. Whether you're in the mode for poetry readings, jazz happy hour, or a casual stroll through the museum's magnificent galleries, your visit to the Dallas Museum of Art will certainly be different from any visit before it. And you get all this for the spectacularly low price of ten dollars.



TEN DOLLARS! You can easily spend more than that going to the movies. Why not try something more enriching for a change?

MUSIC REVIEWS

Spin Cycle (albums you can miss but shouldn't)

We're three months into 2005 and it's already shaping up to be, by a pretty good margin, the best year for new music in a long time. Brilliant new albums are hitting left and right from both established artists and up-and-coming acts. This section is designed to give you a taste of albums too low on the mainstream radar to be played 24/7 on the radio, but accessible enough to be purchased at your local record store without selling your soul. Without further ado, here are three recent albums worthy of your attention.



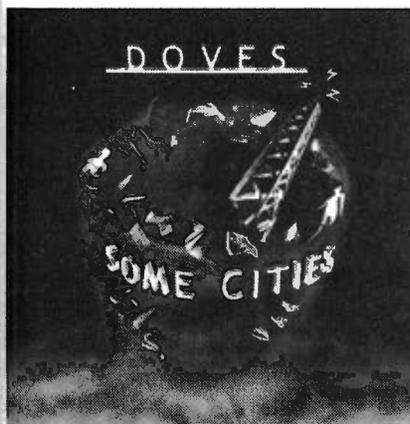
BLOC PARTY SILENT ALARM

If there was any justice in the world, you'd be walking down the street listening to cars rattling with the snaking bass line from "Positive Tension" or walking to class with your iPod nodding your head to last year's single "Banquet". Considering the amount of buzz around these guys in independent music circles and in their native Britain, you might eventually; this quartet has the potential – and the songs – to be this year's Franz Ferdinand-esque breakthrough act here in the States. Don't be

fooled by the rather tepid cover art which oddly resembles Travis' *The Man Who*; Bloc Party's brand of angular post-punk contains a pulse much more rapid than the aforementioned Britpop band. Front man Kele Okereke sounds like a possessed version of Blur's Damon Albarn, yelping and howling over effect-laden guitars and a rhythm section driven by the blistering drums of Matt Tong, who gets his showcase immediately in the opening track "Like Eating Glass". While the album does hit its peak early on (with the best leadoff four-song set in a very long time), the band proves itself more than a one-

trick pony with current single "So Here We Are", combining shimmering guitars and keyboards with a slowly building vocal that crescendos into the prom theme you should've had, and the call-and-response vocals of "This Modern Love". Buy the album now and insult your friends later after *Silent Alarm* starts ending up sold out at Best Buy and you hear "Helicopter" right after Good Charlotte on the radio.

TRACKS TO TEST: "Like Eating Glass", "Helicopter", "Banquet"



DOVES SOME CITIES

Doves haven't exactly been unknown to American audiences; their last album *The Last Broadcast* met with limited radio airplay of the singles "There Goes the Fear" and "Pounding" along with rotation on MTV2. Compared to their platinum success back home, however, these three guys from Manchester are hitting the wall that has frustrated so many of their peers across the pond – making a name for themselves in the U.S. *Some Cities* has the potential to remedy that problem, tearing down some of the majestic wall-of-sound guitars that have been their staple for a grittier, more basic ap-

proach. They've also packed the tunes as well, with leadoff single "Black and White Town" being the best thing they've written since their debut album *Lost Souls*. A simple three-chord piano riff is driven by thudding Northern Soul drums, pulsating bass, distorted guitars, and a soaring chorus that demands a stadium audience singing along in unison. "Snowden" isn't content with simple backing vocals for the chorus, instead sending a whole choir in their stead while lead vocalist Jimi Goodwin demands "Why should we care?" in the verses. "One Of These Days" drifts in on echoing synthesizers only to be interrupted by a low-end bass thump, an insistent snare, and glistening guitars;

"The Storm" samples a string section over harmonica, acoustic guitar, and a trip-hop rhythm that recalls early Portishead. The album isn't perfect; the drums and chorus of "Walk in Fire" are a bit too reminiscent of "There Goes the Fear", and "Shadows of Salford" tries to recall earlier low-fi efforts like "M62 Song" or "A House", only forgetting the melodies that made those songs memorable. On the whole though, it's another very strong outing for a band that deserves to make it big in the States.

TRACKS TO TEST: "Black and White Town", "Snowden", "Someday Soon"



THE DECEMBERISTS PICARESQUE

After two albums on the roster of *Kill Rock Stars*, the Decemberists seemed destined to the same fate as spiritual predecessor *Neutral Milk Hotel*: write intelligent, fiercely literate pop songs about everything from architects to pirates to stillborn children to a small devoted audience of indie kids at small clubs around the nation. While a few songs dipped too far into lead singer/songwriter Colin Meloy's fantasy realm without bringing along a strong enough melody to keep listeners there, tracks like "Los Angeles, I'm Yours" and "Leslie Ann Devine" not only deserved a larger crowd to hear

them, they demanded it. On this, their third full-length album, the Decemberists have suddenly opened a door to potential large-scale success, with opening song "The Infanta" barreling along with insistent drums and frantic vocals. Songs like "Sixteen Military Wives" and "The Sporting Life" display Meloy's usual wit and poetic skill over glossy pop melodies that bounce along with new-wave keyboards and jaunty drums. "Of Angels and Angles" and "Eli, the Barrow Boy" recall the simple acoustic joys of songs like "Red Right Ankle", and the glorious "The Engine Driver" is the best thing Meloy has even written – a simple acoustic melody filled by mid-tempo drums, accordion, and one of the most compact, affecting sets of

lyrics that he has penned to this point, culminating in the lines "I am a writer/a writer of fictions/I am the heart that you call home/and I've written pages/upon pages/trying to rid you from my bones." Ideally, it would become "The Scientist" of this spring and summer, having all the potential of Coldplay's lovelorn ballad. Of course, more than likely they'll end up playing those same clubs again, but at least you can have the chance to enjoy the band's brilliance on your own.

TRACKS TO TEST: "The Sporting Life", "The Engine Driver", "On the Bus Mall"

All of these bands – and these tracks – can be heard on Radio UTD along with equally deserving unknown bands that are far better than the majority of material on the airwaves. I'll be playing all three bands on my show, which airs on Saturdays from 6 to 8 PM at the radio website, radio.utdallas.edu. Support college radio and tune in at any time!

Teaching our children: Creationism vs. Evolution

by Daniel Erwin

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The way to solve the debate about creationism and evolution theory being taught in our schools is along the lines of what proponents of Intelligent Design have been doing; we must make children aware that evolution is "only" a theory.

However, it is also necessary to present the other side of that fact: Intelligent Design, or Creationism, or even the Bible itself are "only" belief structures. No matter what you think of these important ideas, you have to admit that they have a context and a meaning. They can be considered truth, or even Truth, but I think it's safe to say that the ideas we all agree on (food, time, life) are also important to focus on.

Those things we all experience and share and - most importantly - HAVE THE SAME NAMES FOR are the part we can leave unquestioned, and they form an important starting point. Everything beyond that is an individual's viewpoint, and our country's constitution (as I see it) guarantees our right to adopt whichever one we feel like.

Anything that describes the world beyond the limits of what we all must agree on to live and work together is, for the purposes of legislation, an opinion. Furthermore, it is a perspective which an individual may adopt and see the world through, if he or she chooses.

I do not wish to confirm or deny the truth, importance, or usefulness of either

the Bible or of the scientific method - if you are able to read these words then you have the ability and the responsibility to figure that out for yourself. (Personally, I see no need to choose - they are both right. But that's a different discussion.) In American schools, however, we present only a very small part of that responsibility and that decision.

We are in the habit of giving students information which they must memorize and regurgitate and don't prepare them for a world where the Ultimate Answers are in dispute or possibly unknown. Even in the best situations, grade-school students are expected to understand and be able to apply only the most specific and trivial parts of scientific, historical, artistic, or religious knowledge.

In order to keep ourselves and our government from imposing a particular belief structure or a world view on them, we must teach students about the meaning and purpose of explaining and describing our world.

I know that this is a nearly impossible task - I have almost completed my under-

grad degree and I am still uncertain about the nature of perception and understanding. (Maybe when I get that diploma it will come to me.) But we don't have to

teach fifth-graders about Sartre in order to let them know that there are different ways to see things. A class vote on the subject of that famous optical illusion with the old lady and the young lady is a good starting place.

Don't tell the students there are two pictures, and don't let them talk about it until they've each written down their interpretation. (An interesting lesson in world history would be to make the students who only see the old lady go sit in the corner for the duration of the semester.)

Next, hold an old, tattered shoe up for the class to see. Who will label it trash? Who will label it useful? Who will see a flower-pot, or material for making art, or a priceless relic once worn by a saint?

Point out these options, and more, and then force the children to vote on which one it REALLY is, on which viewpoint is the truth. Ask the students about the relationship between this exercise and the previous one. Then

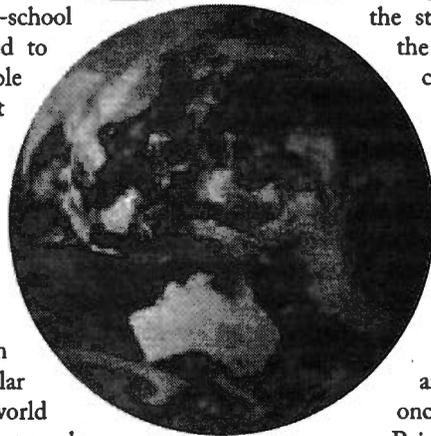
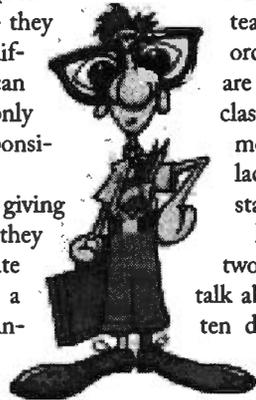
take the choice that had the majority of the votes and apply it to the shoe, making it reality.

This would be the most important part of the experiment, although the meaning might be too abstract for the younger ones to see.

Finally, take a noisy, perhaps half-broken object and put it in a sealed box. Let each student shake it and guess what is inside. When they have all told what they think it is, explain that this guessing game, as well as the previous ones, is just like science; we see something and we think we know what it is. We label it and use it, and if it works then we assume we were right. But can we ever really know?

Some people say God tells them what is right, what is real, what is true. Science, however, relies on physical evidence and reproducible experiences. Since the teacher is not God, he or she cannot tell the class what they are really seeing (or whether it is wholly physical) but can only educate them in some of the ways to see things.

In terms of the origin of our species: some people say there is a higher power which, in one way or another, gave rise to humans. Since the teacher is a teacher of physical sciences, he or she cannot say whether there is a higher being or order, but can only show us how to see some order in the physical artifacts we have to study. To drive the point home that students must choose for themselves what to believe, the contents of the sealed box should never be revealed.



Talking English ~~correctly allows~~ ~~me~~ ~~to function in normal society~~ ~~right makes you and I~~ ~~experts on grammer~~

by James Fickenscher

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I don't know exactly when it happened, or why, but it has. Somewhere in the passage of time, people stopped learning the English language correctly, and since then have dilapidated into speaking some cheap imitation.

As an example, sometime in the past decade people have started shifting out the word "me" in their vernacular, instead thinking that the pronoun "I" is appropriate in all circumstances. This, of course, is definitely

not correct. I hear this happen constantly, and I cringe every single time.

Now, of course, people have started using the word "I" correctly more often, but in an attempt to sound intelligent they don't use "me" and thus speak incorrectly. The pronoun "me" is to be used when referring to oneself as an object, and "I" when referring to oneself as a subject.

As an example, when asking someone to come with you and a friend, you should say, "Would you like to come with my friend and me?" You would say this because you are part of the object of the preposition "with". But

when saying that you and a friend are doing something, you should say "My friend and I are doing this." This occurs because you are now part of the compound subject.

Basically, if you could substitute in the pronoun "us", you should use the pronoun "me" and not "I". And when you could use the pronoun "we", use the pronoun "I" and not "me".

Now I am no English teacher, and by no means have fully mastered the English language even after twelve years of teaching. However, this simple error just shows a lack of thought on the speaker's behalf.

While I am on this soap box, there are more common errors that can easily be avoided if one just takes a little time to think before speaking.

Another commonplace error that occurs is the usage of adjectives where adverbs are appropriate. It's really not any more inconvenient or any more difficult to use the adverb form of a word than the adjective form, and using the incorrect form just makes one sound uneducated to those that can tell the difference.

see TALK GOOD p. 15

SOCIAL COMMENTARY

Gun control: Searching for the silent majority



by Bobby Janecka

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Last month, I had the privilege of going 'spotlighting' at a bachelor party of sorts in the small Texas town of Runge, population 1,080.

I call it a privilege, because this pastime is one that is probably limited, sadly, to the Red States of the political world. If more Democrats and Blue State moderates had the opportunity to enjoy the nighttime thrill of blasting woodland creatures from the bed of a truck, it would end the question on the issue of gun control.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his 18th century letter *To the Republic of Geneva*, praised his native land and likened it to an ideal. In his ideal State, the citizens would not be armed for defense, but "to maintain in them that warlike ardor and that spirited courage which suit freedom so well and whet the appetite for it."

Some people thought that Rousseau was crazy and regarding this statement; I agree with them. When a state has successfully eliminated the need of the citizenry to defend itself, it should be celebrated as a

victory for the state and not a cause to tote weapons in the name of virility.

But this debate is irrelevant by over 200 years since the Second Amendment, right? Maybe. But spending a night on a Texas farm with seven other young men and two to three firearms to the man may have caused me to rethink things a bit — might we have changed in society and state since the time of our nation's founding?

What exactly does this ever-quoted Amendment actually say? "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." Sound a little vague? That's no surprise; an issue like arming the populace begs debate and the compromises that produced the Constitution and its Amendments were touchy enough to begin with.

So we must seriously ask ourselves — does this Amendment provide for the security of the state against threat of foreign power or for the security of the populace against the threat of oppressive government? It's a difficult question that's debated vociferously to this day, but my take is that only the first point is really valid today.

Set aside the historical context of a revolutionary people fearful of tyranny and look at the present reality: our country is no longer dependant on local militias for national defense. The founders' inclination towards federalism has shifted dramatically to a policy of centralized authority, and the fear for safety has long since been replaced

by fear for liberty.

Of course, this is a hard sell to the conservatives and gun-lobbyists that abound in our country. But if you buy that line, you may be surprised that polling data consistently shows proponents of reduced gun-control laws to be in the minority.

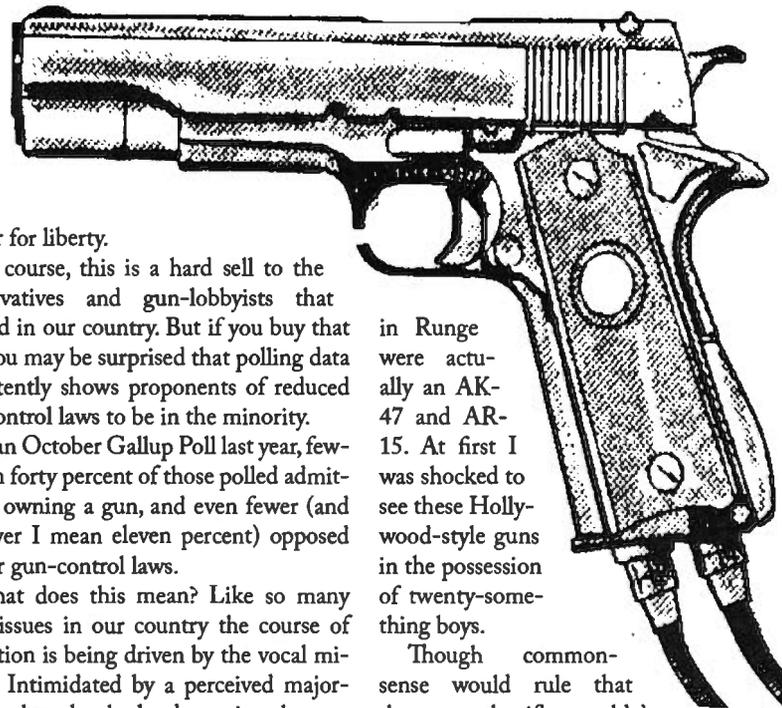
In an October Gallup Poll last year, fewer than forty percent of those polled admitted to owning a gun, and even fewer (and by fewer I mean eleven percent) opposed stricter gun-control laws.

What does this mean? Like so many other issues in our country the course of legislation is being driven by the vocal minority. Intimidated by a perceived majority or at least by the loudest voice, the true majority of gun-control advocates and the complacent moderates allow themselves to be bowled over by the law-makers.

Take the September 14th expiration of the assault weapons ban, for example. In an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll the week after, only a slight minority of twelve percent were satisfied by the lapse of the ban. A full sixty-one percent were unsatisfied by its lapse and about a quarter of those polled thought it made no difference or were not sure. Though a government should certainly protect the interests of the minority it should by no means so aggressively assert and enforce them.

Of course, the lapse in the assault weapons ban doesn't make things much different than they've been in the past ten years.

Two of the many firearms at the ranch



in Runge were actually an AK-47 and AR-15. At first I was shocked to see these Hollywood-style guns in the possession of twenty-something boys.

Though common-sense would rule that these assault rifles couldn't possibly be legal, I found later that they were completely legal to possess because they only had one of the following: a collapsible stock, pistol-style grip, flash suppressor, bayonet mount, or grenade launcher. Alright, so I'm pretty sure they didn't have a sub-mounted grenade launcher, but those rifles are just two examples of how ineffective the ban was in the first place.

Ultimately, the firearms issue remains a complex one. There is an indisputable correlation between possession of firearms and violent crimes, but there's no easy solution to recalling all these violent tools already in existence. However, one thing is clear: Until the silent majority of us speak up about our position on gun control, nothing will really ever change.

TALK GOOD

continued from p. 14

An example of this is when one is told to "drive safe" in advertisements. One cannot drive "safe"; one can, however, drive safely. I have seen that phrase advertised on several billboards and posters, and every time I see it I wonder how in the world the creator of that ad got their job.

Growing up in a small West Texas town, I had the pleasure of hearing the English language butchered and ripped apart every day by students and adults alike. I always found

it humorous but depressing when listening to the average West Texan say phrases like "do it quick" and "I'm fixin' to".

I mean, I understand that people are good at certain things and not so good at others, and that sometimes people literally cannot speak English correctly.

I also understand that the whole concept of language is the ability to convey your thoughts to one another; as long as the idea is conveyed sufficiently, the language has served its purpose. But none of this, by any means, justifies the uneducated speech that is infesting our society.

People at a collegiate level especially

should have learned how to speak and write effectively and correctly. Another just plain ridiculous commonplace error that I see constantly is when people confuse the words "your" and "you're" when writing, or when the words "its" and "it's" are used where the other should have been.

I know that English is supposedly one of the most difficult languages to learn, but those that have grown up in American schools for their entire lives should have a little better grasp on it than is apparent.

Now I have no right to judge anyone else, and especially not over little picky things like these, but these are common mistakes

that I see prevalent in our society. And as much as these mistakes bother me, I will never say that I speak English correctly all of the time either. All of these ramblings are just the opinions of some nerd who has obviously spent way too much time thinking about this.

So no worries y'all, it's all good; as much as I try to repress it, the inner West Texan in me still comes out once in a while. So maybe the next time your talking English, you'll see it's common mistakes and hopefully speak it good instead.

From your friendly neighborhood Math major, signing off.

EVOLUTION OF THE STRUGGLE

JOSE MARTI

by **Andres Correa**
and **Amir Boroujerdi**

History tells us of infrequent characters known as "warrior-poets." There are few examples of men and women that battle with both the pen and the sword, and Jose Marti towers above most.

Born in Havana in 1853, Marti opposed the colonial hold of Spain over Cuba from his earliest years. At only seventeen years of age, he was forced into exile in Spain over his activities in opposition to Spanish colonial rule.

After an education in law, theology, philosophy, and literature at the University of Saragossa in Spain, he reached Mexico City as a writer. He then spent time in Guatemala, and finally returned to Cuba in 1878 under a general amnesty.

His loyalty to values of political freedom drove him to speak out against the Spanish authorities once again, including some participation in conspiracies against the colonial government. He was exiled this time to the United States, spending a year in New York and then leaving it for Venezuela.

The establishment of a military dictatorship in Venezuela forced him to return to New York, where he would stay for the next fourteen years. During his time in New York he continued writing and began organizing what would become the war for Cuban independence.

In 1895, he departed New York to join the struggle for Cuban independence from Spain. Death found him in one of the first battles, where he struggled against Spanish troops with pen and gun both in hand.

Marti's thought encompassed all aspects of freedom and justice within society. A firm believer in the natural potential and strength of the human spirit, he dedicated his writing to the elaboration of the ideals of reason, liberty, and even love.

Furthermore, Marti understood key geopolitical considerations behind Cuban independence within the context of the Western Hemisphere. He shunned all foreign



photo courtesy of forgottendelights.com

This stature in Central Park commemorates the death of Jose Marti on May 19, 1895 where he was wounded at the battle of Dos Rios in his fight for Cuban independence.

domination of Caribbean territories, including U.S. expansionism.

He considered free and independent Caribbean nations as essential towards the balance of power in the Western Hemisphere.

Throughout the history of the Americas, few men have fully embodied the courageous virtue of a warrior and the visionary intellect of a scholar.

Before dying at the age of forty-two, Jose Marti con-

tributed to the development of a Latin American identity through his masterful literary works and organized revolutionary movements to battle the forces of Spanish imperialism. Although Marti gallantly fought to bring his political and social beliefs into fruition, he should more importantly be remembered as a poet of the oppressed and a theoretician of sociology.

Like his revolutionary predecessors, Marti envisioned a Latin America free of racial and social discrimination. However, Marti viewed the diversity of Latin America as not only a cause for celebration, but as a reason for the rejection of foreign cultural and social norms.

Marti urged the leaders of Latin America to structure their young nations according to their specific social and cultural environment. Latin America did not exist as an extension of Europe across the Atlantic Ocean, but as an independent continent that generated the new cosmic race of man.

Although Marti believed in the deeply rooted strength of his fellow Latin Americans, he frequently warned of the ever-lurking forces of imperialism in his works. Marti often referred to the United States as a preying tiger, slowly creeping through the bushes, waiting for the perfect opportunity to pierce the tender jugular of the southern Americas.

Rightfully so; Marti had come to realize the true nature and intentions of the forces of imperialism, for he had "lived inside the monster and knew its entrails."

Cultivo una rosa blanca

*Cultivo una rosa blanca
En Junio como en Enero,
Para el amigo sincero,
Que me da su mano franca.*

*Y para el cruel que me arranca
El corazón con que vivo,
Cardo ni ortiga cultivo
cultivo una rosa blanca.*

-Jose Marti

**A MODEST
PROPOSAL**

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Amir Boroujerdi
Neha Chinai
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Daniel Erwin
James Fickenschier

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