
Office of Student Affairs

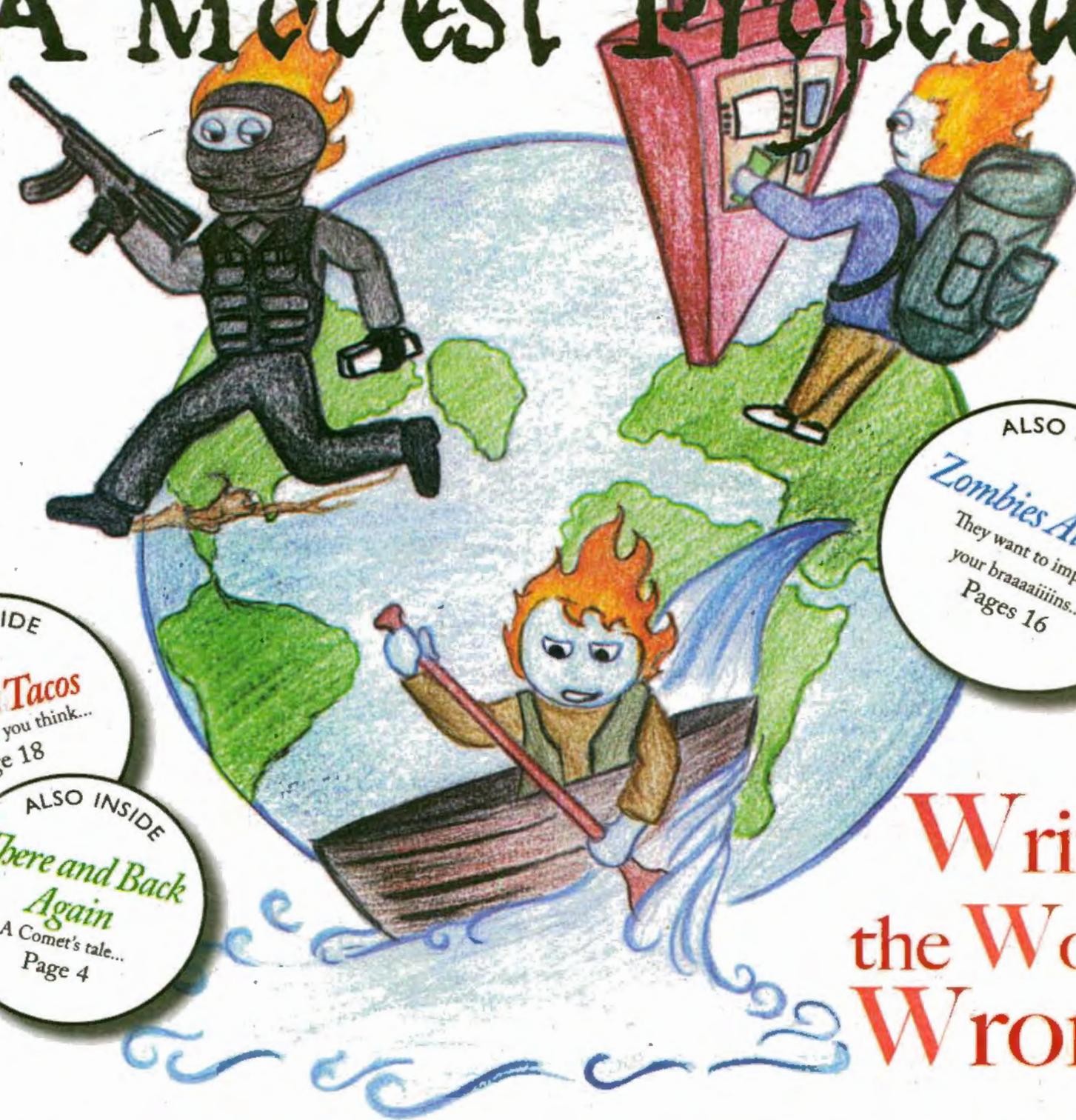
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A Modest Proposal, vol. 7, no. 2

Alice Post, *et al.*

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A Modest Proposal



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Writing the World's Wrongs

From our
Website

Gay couples can be compelled to testify against their partners in court. They're not allowed to make decisions about whether their brain-dead partners must remain in coma. They cannot inherit unless a will specifically names them. They will never have these benefits unless their already extant though as yet unacknowledged right to marry is recognized.

Calling it a civil union is absolutely a case of "separate is inherently unequal" unless all marriages, at least insofar as the state is concerned, become civil unions. Let people call their marriage whatever they want, but either grant gay couples state recognized marriages, or have everyone engage in civil unions.

After all, the only reason this is a public issue at all is the civil rights that accompany marriage. Those rights shouldn't be predicated on a religious ceremony. Call all of them civil unions, and let's move on.

Homophobia is totally gay, "Don't H8 on 8" post No. 13

"...this appears to do what human culture and history have done for thousands of years, define marriage as between one man and one woman."

That's a loaded statement if I ever heard one. What culture are you referring to? Western/Abrahmic religious culture may have defined marriage as such for years, but I don't think the people that fall under that group speak for the entirety of humanity. Normative statements such as the one you have made will do you no good in making an effective argument, sir.

Furthermore, assuming you are correct in your statement, how are you so sure? Are you somehow omniscient? Do you have some sort of insight into history and sociology that most experts don't even possess?

Overall, I'm going to have to say: "Nice try, but please put in more effort next time."

Amateur Philosopher, "Don't H8 on 8" post No. 4

Look, here's the deal. Poop and saliva are both gross, which is why I brush both my mouth and anus nightly. I don't want to even think about the unsightliness of engaging in poop intercourse, so, let's just make it illegal like God intended when he wrote the Texas constitution. (It's clearly written by God. It's nearly as long as the bible and has almost as many contradictions.)

The only acceptable intercourse is penis(es) in vagina, or vagina to vagina, but absolutely not penis to penis because the only thing that makes semen an acceptable sex fluid is an acidic vagina to accept and neutralize the semen. If you want to call it theocracy, telling people what to do in the bedroom on the basis of ick factor and GOD'S HOLY WORD, than so be it. I'd live in Ahmadinejad's theocracy and rug emporium before I let my neighbor get poo on his zipper wookie.

hanging chad, "Missionary Style Only" post No. 1

I have no sense of humor, so I can't tell whether the above post was serious or not. Will someone confirm that it was intended in jest before I try to write a rebuttal, which will largely consist of the word, "Really?" with varying numbers of letters and use of capitalization.

Kanye West, "Missionary Style Only" post No. 2

Sept. Issue Corrections:

Prashant Raghavendran's last name was mistakenly spelled 'Ragavendran'.

In 'Not Your Parents' WMDs', the bottom of the article and the accompanying image by Scott Ungchusri were mistakenly cropped.

In 'Letters to David', the image of the Spring 2010 editors is courtesy of Alex Garcia Topete.

In 'Wireless Inauthentication', the UTD VPN service only provides secure connections to UTD campus servers.

A Modest Proposal apologizes for these errors.

Want to get involved?

AMP is looking for talented people! While we are always looking for more people to submit articles, there is a large variety of things to do even if you are not interested in writing.

Please send an email to amodestproposal@gmail.com if you would like to become involved with illustrating, photoshopping, layout design, copy editing or just being funny.



GO HERE!

Upcoming AMP deadlines:

Story Meeting — Oct. 6, 5 pm. MC 3.612

Oct. 7, 8 pm. MC 3.612

Articles Due — Oct. 14, Midnight.

Production Weekend — Oct. 22-24. MC 3.612

Calendar of all events available at amputd.com/calendar

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Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in *A Modest Proposal* are those of the editor or of the writer of the article and are not necessarily those of the university administration, the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System, or of the operating board of the newspaper.

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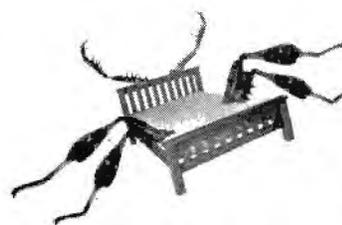
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Contents images by lewis chang, rafael calvo, and alice post.

Coming Full Circle

AMP founder reflects on his return to UT Dallas



by walter voit
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UT Dallas is a place of ideas. Early in its young history, the founders realized what Dallas (arguably Texas Instruments) lacked: people. Intelligent people. Creative people. People with a rigorous background in mathematics and the necessary problem solving skills to take the torch from the Jack Kilbys of the world.

UT Dallas invested in ideas. It recruited people with ideas. It began with focused post-docs and graduate students who needed basic training in the hard sciences to compete for hot jobs during the Cold War. A culture of excellence, pride, and problem solving was instilled early into the fibers of the university. From rigorous beginnings, ideas blossomed on the corn fields in North Dallas. By the early 90's, high-caliber undergraduates began building a full-fledged university. Their incoming test scores were, and continue to be, among the best across Texas.

UT Dallas attracted ideas. Collegium V, the honors college, took shape. Academic Excellence Scholarships, McDermott Scholarships, The Academic Bridge Program, Terry Fellowships, and other financial and

educational incentives drew people with ideas from across the city, state, country, and world. The Executive MBA program became integrated into the corporate fabric of high-tech Dallas.

The allures of Dallas and the promise of having input and say in the direction of a young university brought me to UT Dallas as a freshman in 2001, with a chip in my calculator instead of on my shoulder. I joined the UTD Mercury, wrote and designed the first Uranus as a comic center spread on April Fool's Day, wrote crossword puzzles and found my voice, whatever that was. In 2004, ideas began fighting. As Polonius may have put it, instead of HG Wells, it was a War of the Words.

Words. Words. Words.
Ideas. Ideas. Ideas.

One of the factions in this World of Wordcraft asked budding journalists (aka engineers with "free time") for (pseudo) full-time commitments. It demanded rigor. It was based on finding and exposing truth. It wanted to make sure journalism was done right, with an "All the news

“Articles were meant to make people with ideas stop and think. Or laugh and think. Or become outraged and think.”

that fits, we print” sort of attitude, and an emphasis on “news.”

A second faction spawned in World of Wordcraft that wanted to opine. It wanted to look more at tomorrow than yesterday. It wanted to proffer, to propose, to dream. And there was not enough room for that in the real news...

In 1729 Jonathan Swift published a thought-provoking work in the spirit of the great Roman satirist Juvenal who had pursued a style to address social evils through outrage, irony, sarcasm, moral indignation and savage ridicule. Swift's parody was called *A Modest Proposal For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*.

This essay went to great lengths to support the argument that impoverished Irish families could sell their children for food to higher class citizens. Swift added in recipes for preparing the children and calculated the financial benefits of the proverbial killing of two birds (one child) with a single stone. Swift states: “A young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or a ragoust.”

So the second faction, without infraction or retraction, took action, and gained traction as a thought distraction. *A Modest*

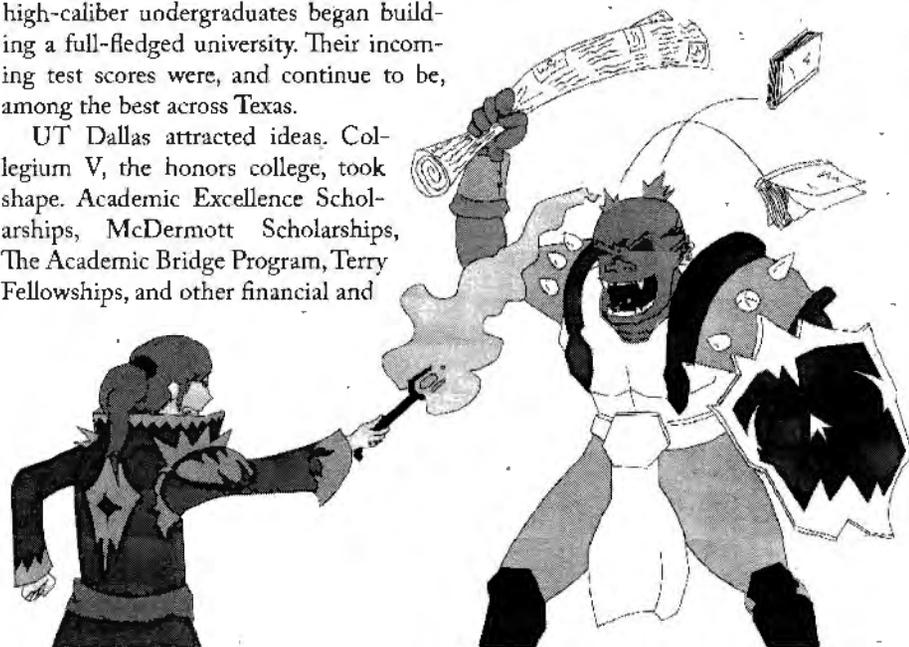
Proposal became a new forum for ideas—a place to entertain, yet cause pause. Articles were meant to make people with ideas stop and think. Or laugh and think. Or become outraged and think.

AMP thrived for two fragile years out of my own Phase III apartment at Waterview Park. A few times per month, we would hoist up the AMP servers and monitors onto my kitchen table and set up a wireless network that would serve internet to a score of editors, designers and contributors on their laptops.

We would argue, we would debate, and we would take action—in fact, we once bought \$50 dollars worth of Ramen noodles, stacked them up 10 feet high in front of the Waterview Park Office and handed out the rest to each freshman apartment with a copy of the paper to protest an unwarranted \$50 rent hike in an aptly named piece called “Oodles of Noodles.”

Dreaming and taking action, AMP foretold the rise of “Nanotechnology and Supercomputing” in February of 2006. A new nanotechnology minor on campus was approved last year and the Materials Science and Engineering Department now routinely uses massively multiple clusters to run simulations and drive ultra-high vacuum systems that deposit digermanium monolayers in a quest for atomically precise manufacturing.

I am thrilled to be back at UT Dallas as an Assistant Professor in this place of ideas. I encourage all Comets young and old to learn from our young history, to be excellent and to champion ideas. Think. Dream. Solve problems. Thus, I leave you with a final thought from Bertrand Russell: “Many people would sooner die than think; in fact, they do so.” ■



Your level 5 essay sword is no match for my level 9 satire! illustration by rafael calvo

Walter knows that once you go AMP you never go back.
Discuss this article at [amp.utd.com!](http://amp.utd.com/)

Administrators on Tap

A review of Dine with the Deans



by prisha gaddam
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On what seemed to be a very typical Wednesday, a group of around 40-50 students gathered in The Pub to attend an event entitled Dine with the Deans. Some of the students seemed to know exactly what they wanted out of the one hour they had with the new dean of undergraduate education, Dr. Sheila Amin Gutiérrez de Piñeres, and the new dean of students, Dr. Gene Fitch. Others were simply bystanders who got caught up in the excitement and couldn't resist the urge to join the large and seemingly important-looking cluster of students gathered around the pair.

Likewise, there were still many others hovering around the crowd to see if the food provided was worth the time they will have to spend at the event or if the students talking to Dr. Piñeres will indeed score a free ticket to Studio Movie Grill. Equally as out of place and even more in number were the freshmen attending the event to get credit for their RHET 1101 classes.

However, amongst all of these different groups, lost in the crowd of numerous

“ Although they are quite clearly interested in the students' views of the campus, the deans seem to underestimate the interest they themselves generate. ”

dominating and distracting personalities, were students who came to get to know their deans and perhaps even have a word with them. Often the serious, quiet types of students were not the most noticeable group in the crowd, but they ultimately succeeded in getting the deans' attention. They asked the right questions, made the clever comments, and soon enough, had the deans all to themselves.

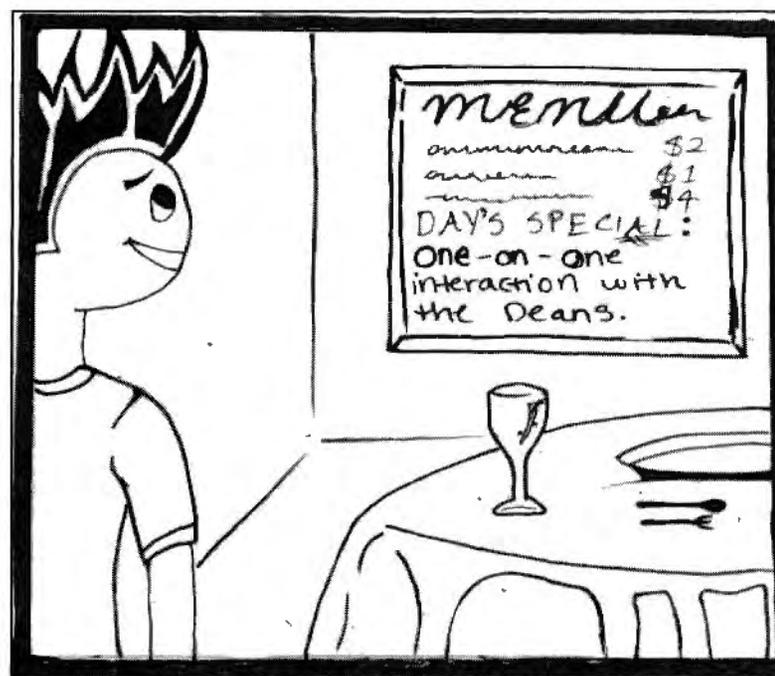
It was then, after the first half hour of the deans wading through the pool of distracters, jokers, and lost graduate students that the event truly began, and those who came to have a word with Dr. Piñeres and Dr. Fitch had their chance.

For their part, the deans fulfilled their roles as concerned advisors quite well. After exchanging pleasantries, they cautiously broached the topics many of the students hesitated to bring up for discussion. They asked of the quality of our classes and were often surprisingly specific about their inquiries.

It was nothing short of a thrill to know that, despite being responsible for thousands of undergraduates, the deans are aware of exactly what the freshmen are doing in their RHET 1101 classes. Explicit questions such as “What did you think of the academic dishonesty presentation?” were down right shocking but pleasantly welcomed.

Even more unexpected were questions discussing the aspects of university life unrelated to academics. An individual student's opinion on the ongoing campus construction was worthy of both the deans' attention. Dr. Fitch promptly pulled out a pen and began taking notes as soon as students began voicing their opinions. Whether the students maybe complimenting or criticizing the current state of the university, the deans continued to stay interested and often prompted those in attendance to give advice.

Needless to say, with all of that encouragement, many began to do so. Al-



Temoc's meal plan includes dean dip. illustration by amrutha patil

though some of it was impractical or ill-conceived, occasionally, someone would share something comprehensible and realistic, causing the rest to be mildly surprised that this event with its whimsical title and bold aspirations was actually becoming a success. Developed as a means for students to share their thoughts with the deans in a more informal setting, Dine with the Deans could in fact be considered a triumph. However, there is still much to be improved in the future.

A primary step would be for the deans to make the event more interactive. Rather than asking the students to state their dissatisfaction regarding university life, they could begin by discussing the developments occurring within the university, and then asking the students' opinion of them.

Although they are quite clearly interested in the students' views of the campus, the deans seem to underestimate the interest they themselves generate. If the students express a genuine interest or concern regarding a campus activity during one

meeting, the deans should continue discussing that same campus activity at the next meeting to keep the students continuously updated on whatever it may be that genuinely interests them.

It is entirely possible that many of the students at Dine with the Deans didn't ask questions because they weren't interested in being listened to but rather in listening to the deans. It seems rather easy to envision Dine with the Deans as an ongoing campus tradition, but perhaps it will be easier to make it so if the students at the event were provided more information from the deans. If this were to become a practice, then there is little doubt that The Pub will be filled on every third Wednesday of the month with eager undergraduates waiting to get first hand information regarding campus developments from the deans themselves. ■

Dinner's on Prisha.
Discuss this article at [ampub.com!](http://ampub.com/)

It's All Greek to Me

Greek life has great potential



by **andrew previc**
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I first learned about fraternities and sororities through the movies *Old School* and *Animal House*. While both these movies are hilarious, they do an injustice to Greek letter organizations at colleges. It's true that many individuals who are a part of Greek life drink alcohol and party, but that's not all they do. Both *Animal House* and *Old School* focus solely on the partying, the excessive drinking, the hazing, the antics, and the mischief the men and women in the film engage in. There are few references, though, to the volunteer work these organizations perform, the group study sessions they hold, or the support they provide to their members trying to meet new people at the university, hold an event, or run for an officer position.

To me, Greek life is about family. The earliest Greek letter organizations, formed in the second half of the 18th century, aimed to provide members with friendship to confront the feelings of isolation present at many of the north-eastern universities, but many college students still face feelings of isolation today. The routine of going to class, working out, eating, sleeping, and writing a few papers in between can really wear some students down, especially if, after all of that, they return to a single room in an empty apartment.

Those problems can be especially hard for commuter students. For commuters, college becomes simply the place where one takes classes and grabs a bite to eat before returning home. If our campus lacks school spirit, it is not that students are anti-social or are ungrateful for the opportunities UTD provides, it's that getting involved is very difficult for students that have to drive 15-20 minutes every time there is an event on campus that they would like to attend.

I see Greek life one day working to end this social disconnect that exists at the university both individually and collectively. Organizations, fraternities, and sororities promote friendship among members and ensure that every individual has a place on campus. At chapter meetings, members gather to manage the business of the organization. It is easy for someone to feel that sense of belonging while sitting next to brothers or sisters that

have taken a pledge to help him or her in all their endeavors. Greek letter organizations also have the power to drive spirit at the campus. Current attendance at sporting events is pitiful and fraternities and sororities, with their large numbers, can come together to fill those stands and provide the support our athletes deserve.

However, Greek Life has a lot to learn if it is to develop a secure and welcomed place at the university. While Greek letter organizations promote wonderful community within themselves, they are largely removed from the student body. For those independent of Greek Life, their only introduction has been through the news and media, not through their friends, classmates, and co-workers. I encourage all Greek students on campus to wear their letters and explain to others what values each of your organization promotes.

Fraternities and sororities also need to stop messing up and quit the internal bickering. Our chances of being the social

powerhouse our campus needs decreases everytime a party is busted, MICs are handed out, men and women are sexually abused, or members get bashed on College ACB.

Anytime members are hazed, or individuals' GPAs slip, we are failing to uphold our oath to make the men and women in our organization the best people that they can be.

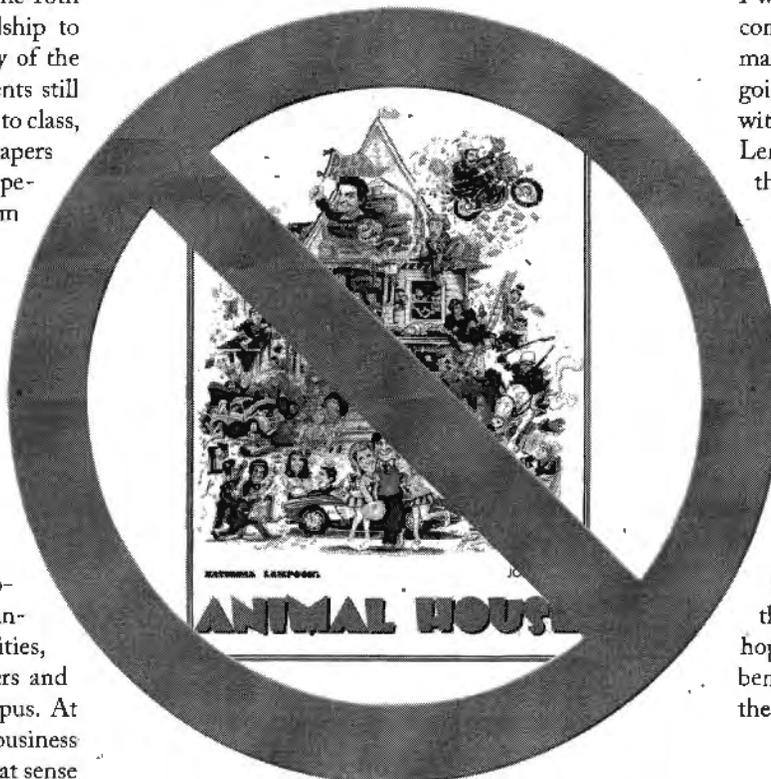
Now, to all those aloof or independent of Greek life, I urge you to take heed of this growing movement. This last recruitment, the IFC member chapters alone boasted a whopping ninety-eight new recruits. This year

“ Many individuals who are a part of Greek life drink alcohol and party, but that's not all they do.”

we were blessed with the addition of another fraternity, FIJI, and hope to welcome some others in the future. The different fraternities and sororities on campus represent a wide variety of personalities, values, and interests. Look out for rush fliers in the spring as there might be an organization out there for you.

To all those opposed to Greek life, I think many of your concerns and complaints are valid. The other word I would like to use to characterize your discontent is unconstructive. If Greek-letter organizations are to work to make the university better, we need to know where we are going wrong. I encourage you to take up your concerns with either Dean Kecia Baker or the two advisors Brianna Lemos and Zach Shirley, and I ensure you they will make the concerns known to the individual chapters.

And finally, to all Greek students, know that this period is a critical juncture in our history at the university. We are at the brink of a huge expansion of on-campus students with the addition of another residence hall. It is difficult for me to express the pride I feel at the wonderful recruitment period for Greek life this fall. If we keep up the hard work, get out there, get involved, and be the guiding force for school spirit at the university, we may be able to maintain a presence here for years to come. My dream is to be at a campus that is fond of Greek life, where people are excited to join fraternities and sororities, and where Greek-letter organizations accept only the best and brightest that the university has to offer. My hope is that both Greeks and non-Greeks will realize the benefits co-operation reaps and will share in my dream for the future. ■



Tooooga! movie poster courtesy of freemoviesonline.com

Andrew is on double secret probation.
Discuss this article at amp.utd.edu!

M.D.s “R” Us

Pre-med students kiss their free time goodbye



by finny philip
fphilip2008@gmail.com

As pre-med student 1.34e20 at UTD (at least that's what my ear tag says), I believe that we, like sheep, have gone astray. Our problem is that we mindlessly follow the herd into the fold of obligatory volunteerism and passionless memoriza-

tion. We memorize, we test, and we forget. Don't feel bad if that's you; it's just what we do. The typical pre-med student just wants to graduate with a high GPA and get an MCAT score worthy of putting on the refrigerator door. Many neglect to think about what they actually want to accomplish in life, or if a career in medicine matches what they want for themselves.

While being pelted by tests and deadlines, I often wonder if I am really meant to be a physician. Surely not everyone who aspires to wear the white coat will earn the privilege. While there's a spot for everyone in the Caribbean, I would rather aspire to achieve true success in a field where I belong than obscure success earned only by a title. Still, many students press on toward medical school despite the fact that every fiber of their being tells them to become a poetry-writing hippie.

Not everyone can follow their passions, and we all

need to make money. Some fields make more money than others. In a globalized world, the emphasis will always be on careers in math and science, but the world still needs its chefs, welders, and florists. It's great that we're so focused on getting to medical school, but are we missing other opportunities that would make us happier?

While we're searching for what makes us happy in the four years we're here at UTD, we should also strive to make our undergraduate experience enriching, rather than arduous. If we aim to broaden our perspectives on learning and the human condition, we'll understand how to diagnose and treat ourselves and others better.

We live in a blessed age where lifetimes of research are summed up on half a page of our textbooks. This is great and all, but we must learn a scientist's lifetime's worth of thought at an incredible pace. This leads to most of us memorizing the material we've been asked to master. A little bit of memorization never hurt anyone, but a significant amount of pre-med students end up forgetting what they crammed into their mind. “Weed-out” classes prey on those students who use rote memorization to study, because professors have a little secret. They're going to test you on those concepts again in upper-level classes. I think someone who has the drive to make it into medical school should go beyond the level of rote memorization.

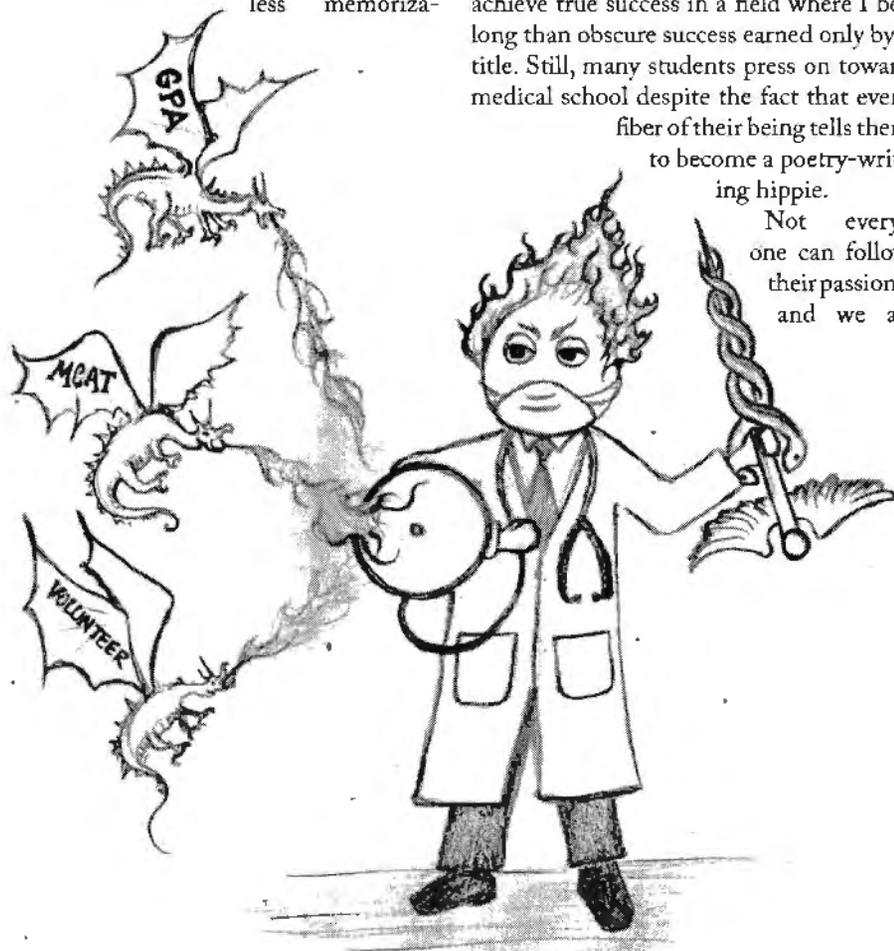
As a neuroscience major, I've cultivated a love for learning about learning. Two of my professors, Dr. Miller and Dr. Kilgard, incessantly emphasize the need for students to fully grasp concepts rather than facts. This isn't something a disengaged pre-med major does, but a person who has genuine interest in what they study.

Of course, a medical school applicant shouldn't just have a perfect GPA and a 40 on their MCAT. They should also be “well-rounded.” Pudgy intellectuals who spend their days and nights studying

“ I would rather aspire to achieve true success in a field where I belong than obscure success earned only by a title.”

should also experience the world in a new light and volunteer. Organizations such as Alpha Epsilon Delta and Health Occupation Students of America may supply you with many chances to volunteer, but you must supply the passion, if you have any energy left. Volunteering can demonstrate how committed you are to medicine and learning more about your own interests. Since many medical schools want to see some kind of experience in the medical field, volunteerism has become obligatory. This is the part where people who want to become doctors “because I want to help people” turn into the people who want to be helped out with a recommendation letter.

Not all of us want to become doctors. Some of us just want jobs. Others want to live their passion. With the lifetime commitment that it takes to become a physician, why would anyone want to be one? The uncommitted are following an exhausting path that might end up leading them to the realization that they are in the wrong place, but for those consumed with a desire to help others, it only makes sense. ■



I thought doctors fought disease, not poor grades. illustration by lewis chang

Finny puts the lime in the coconut and drinks it all up.
Discuss this article at [amputd.com!](http://amputd.com)

Don't Let the Bedbugs Bite

Imagined pests cause havoc



by clinton pleake
cjp093020@utdallas.edu

It was a pleasant summer morning when it all began. I awoke to find my roommate, Basel, talking to two men from Terminex. They were doing an inspection for bedbugs at his request. Earlier that morning, he had seen two bugs crawling on the wall next to his bed. In a preemptive strike, he called in the extermination squad. After a brief inspection, the two men nodded their heads. "We see no signs of bedbugs, but if you want to have the room sprayed just in case, we can go ahead and do that." This seemed like the most logical solution, so he elected to get his room sprayed for bedbugs. Had I been given the decision, I would have done the same. This, as it turned out, was actually a very large mistake.

The next day, I had just returned from class when I noticed a piece of paper clipped to our door. Our room number was written on the back in a deceptively cheery bright blue highlighter. I picked it up and began to read. The further I read, the faster I moved. I burst into Basel's room in a spectacularly angry fashion only to find he was at class. I heard the television going in the next room, so I made a second melodramatic entrance. I told my second

roommate, Kyle, exactly what I had found. He had already read it. As my anger had been expelled by the double failure of two dramatic entrances, I decided to read the paper more closely. It said:

During a recent inspection of your apartment, Terminex discovered an active bedbug infestation was found. We have scheduled your apartment for a mandatory retreatment on: Tuesday, September 21, 2010.

At first, I had been baffled by how someone could discover that something was found. As I read on, though, the small grammatical anomaly was soon forgotten. The letter began to read out a long list of things that we had to do to prepare for the retreatment.

First, we had to remove all cloth from all furniture, then wash and dry it at high temperatures. This included pillows, sheets, blankets, all of our clothes,

and every other cloth material small enough to fit in our washer and/or dryer. Next, all cloth items too big to put in either machine were to be put in plastic bags and somehow dried. This included couch cushions and any large pillows. Next, we were required to remove everything from inside and on top of closets, dressers, tables, night stands, and bookshelves. Also, nothing could be on the

floor besides furniture.

We also needed to vacuum every carpeted floor in the apartment. Therefore, we had to vacuum every room, except the bathrooms and the kitchen, with a vacuum cleaner we didn't have. In short, we were expected to clean the apartment and remove all of our things. We also could not enter the apartment for four to six hours after the treatment.

As you can imagine, we were slightly disgruntled. We all decided to cancel the treatment, so I called the leasing office. When I said that we were trying to cancel

a bedbug spraying, the woman said, "Once you get the notice on your door, you can't cancel it." I hung up. After a long string of unprintable expletives by all parties in the room, Basel made a second call, actually told them the whole story, got put on hold for five minutes, and then was told the same thing by a different person, but this time, we were informed that not being ready when the exterminators showed resulted in a large fee. When asked about how large the fee was, the woman replied, "Large." More expletives obviously ensued.

When we had been presented with the option of having our apartment sprayed, the man did not go over the fact that we were basically being kicked out for a day. He made it sound like a "stay-out-of-your-apartment-for-an-hour-and-your-stuff-will-be-fine" sort of thing. Now, we are stuck not just with moving our things, but also finding a place to put them for a day. As we tend to sleep in our beds, some of the moving would have to wait until morning.

Finally, as a last ditch effort, I called upon our reliable PA, Finny, to help us out at the last second. He called Terminex directly to find a way to stop the spraying. While he was able to find a way to possibly stop the heinous act, it was, unfortunately, too late. As consolation, he offered up a small corner of his apartment for storage.

I now sit, staring at the sun set over the horizon. I'm surrounded by trash bags and empty furniture as we prepare to move our things from our apartment to a car or two. Misinformation and bad business practices now leave my roommates and me to the Herculean task of packing and moving out in less than a day. As I go to sleep, I will tell myself, "Goodnight, and let the bedbugs bite," just so I can feel that this sad series of events is justified. ■

“ Misinformation and bad business practices now leave my roommates and me to the Herculean task of packing and moving out in less than a day. ”



THIS is your worst case scenario. photoillustration by alice post

Watch out: Clinton wants to sink his pincers in you.
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Vote, Dammit!

Why the reasons you have for not voting are wrong



by phil harris
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Everybody has an opinion. If you disagree with me on that point, then you've just expressed an opinion. Whether to voice praise or criticism of a politician or policy, the expression of political opinion in the United States is incredibly common. Even people who claim no interest in the political process continually evaluate policies and procedures of their government when they pay their taxes, mail a letter, or apply for a renewal of a driver's license. The problem is that many people who fully and freely exercise their right to be vocally opinionated choose to go no further in their political involvement. If however, you don't vote when legally able to do so, you have absolutely no place to criticize or opine about the conduct of your local, state, or federal governments.

Our system is one of indirect democracy through elected representatives. Instead of every law and policy being voted on by every individual, the voting populace elects politicians who pass laws for us. Admittedly, it's much more complicated than that, but that is a basis for the importance of voting. Choosing which candidate is best for an office is the very foundation of political participation in the United States. Without it, all other campaigning is meaningless.

Now I'm sure there are some pretty common reasons why people don't vote, so I'll attempt to preempt them and explain why they are completely short-sighted and misinformed.

"I don't have time! I work on Tuesdays from 7am until 7pm and then I have to take care of my kids, cook dinner, blah blah blah..." Well then you're in luck! Texas has

a method of voting called early voting, and it will run continuously this year from October 18 until October 29. That includes a Saturday and a Sunday. In addition, from October 25 to October 29 early voting locations will be open from 7 am to 7pm. The state of Texas has removed any time related excuse you might pitifully try to employ, unless you work over 65 hours per week.

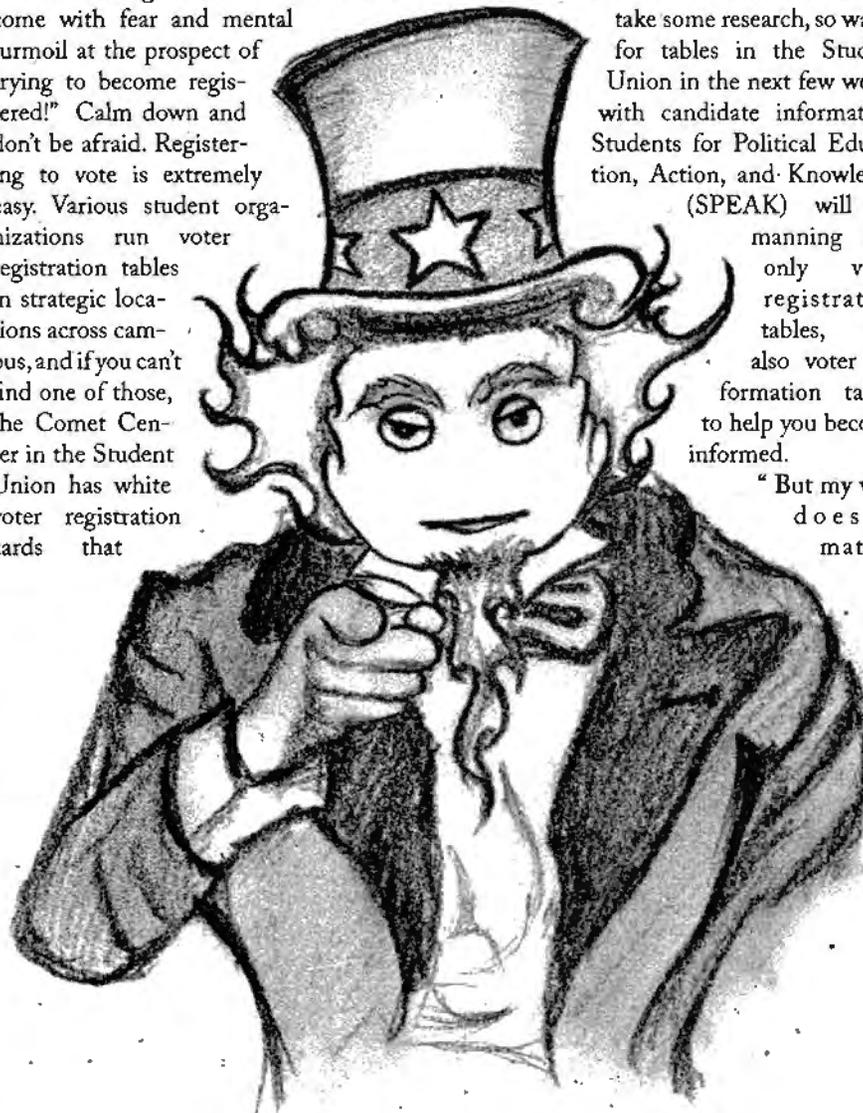
"I'm not registered! And I'm overcome with fear and mental turmoil at the prospect of trying to become registered!" Calm down and don't be afraid. Registering to vote is extremely easy. Various student organizations run voter registration tables in strategic locations across campus, and if you can't find one of those, the Comet Center in the Student Union has white voter registration cards that

you can fill out and mail in.

"What if I don't know who to vote for?" That's an understandable problem. In a non-Presidential election year, the candidates are not as high-profile because they don't have a party leader at the top of the ticket to galvanize the electorate. TV coverage is lessened, and the public awareness is much lower. To become truly knowledgeable

about all of the candidates will take some research, so watch for tables in the Student Union in the next few weeks with candidate information. Students for Political Education, Action, and Knowledge (SPEAK) will be manning not only voter registration tables, but also voter information tables to help you become informed.

"But my vote doesn't matter."



Uncle Temoc wants YOU...to get off your ass and vote. illustration by lewis chang

“ If you don't vote when legally able to do so, you have absolutely no place to criticize or opine ”

Nothing I can do will change anything in Washington. Whine, whine, whine..." The only way to truly make your vote not count is to stay home and do nothing. Simply watch as politicians you had no hand in electing debate policies that will affect every area of your life. Instead, you can take the minimal time and energy to cast a ballot for somebody. Don't like the candidates? Write somebody in! Don't feel informed enough about every race on the ballot? Just vote for the offices you are familiar with.

And if, against all of my urging you still don't want to vote, still refuse to take part in the most basic form of political involvement, and are so indifferent to the course of public policy in the State of Texas and the United States that you can't take one hour to fill out a ballot or make some selections on a computer screen, then I can't help you. What I can do is politely tell you to shut the hell up. You cannot credibly comment on the political process, or the actions of its members, if you have refused all available options of participation in that process.

So this November, Students for Political Education, Action, and Knowledge encourages you to get out and vote. You don't have to make any phone calls, knock on any doors, or donate any money. Just vote! ■

Phil just wants to be a write-in candidate on EVERY ballot.

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High Fidel-ity

Castro considers Cuba's communism



by alex garcia topete
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"History will absolve me", said Fidel Castro in his memorable 1953 speech as a rising revolutionary. The Cuban leader, however, seems to have not been patient enough to wait for history to judge him, rather resorting to self-criticism and journalist Jeffrey Goldberg to redeem and renew himself on the global stage, even after abdicating his position as Cuban head of state. The frank interview featured in *The Atlantic*, while unusual for the hermetic Castro, should be regarded as significant historical evidence that, as Bob Dylan said, "the times, they are a-changing."

Castro himself seems to be the first

to have changed. Because Goldberg goes into detail about Castro's behavior and sharp remarks, each part of the interview seems to reveal more and more of "Castro the Man," the lesser known persona of "Fidel the Revolutionary" and "Castro the Communist Statesman". Some critics argue that those personas mean nothing; that, in fact, they are misinterpretations that distract from one single true identity: "Castro the Inhumane Dictator".

However, considering history and the interview itself, that also seems to be an oversimplification of Castro's character. The oppressive tactics of his regime, including censorship and deadly political incarcerations, might put Castro more in tune with autocracies of the 1800s than in line with the monsters of the 20th century.

In short, Castro has been no Hitler, Stalin, or Hussein submitting his own country to abominations (such as ethnic

cleansing) out of sheer hatred. Rather, Castro's self-criticism—self-deprecation, even—hints at a more complex leader, one not inherently evil, but who has made evil choices as part of his leadership.

healthcare possible, but he failed at making Cuba keep up with the world.

That is not to say Castro made his country lag because he didn't know the world outside it. On the contrary, in the

“ The Cuban model doesn't work because it has failed to adapt to today's world in the name of the *Revolucion* ”

The most revealing statement suggesting said complexity came in the second part of the interview: "The Cuban model doesn't even work for us anymore," which proves the Cuban leader's level of awareness. With those words, he doesn't quite recognize a failure, but at least suggests that something has changed.

The geopolitical order has changed since Castro built the Cuban model. The economy is more globalized, with socialist-leaning Latin American countries adopting certain capitalist policies that have boosted them to the top (Brazil, to be more specific).

But most importantly, the Cuban model is now different because it's a whole new generation of Cubans—one that can neither find a life purpose in the ideals of the *Revolucion* nor resent the loss of liberties since they've never had any in the first place. The new Cuban generation knows only about poverty regardless of politics, which stems from obsolete Cuban policies and archaic international sabotage spearheaded by the United States (for instance, the embargo).

Indeed, the Cuban model doesn't work because it has failed to adapt to today's world in the name of the *Revolucion*—and Castro seems to know that, to a major degree, that is his fault. He may have gotten rid of a very impoverishing and unequal Batista government, and he may have made universal education and

first part of the interview, Castro shows that he knows the current geopolitics because, for better or for worse, he has been one of its architects.

Castro, learning from his past, recognizes the threat of a confrontation between the Middle East and the West because it would be a problem cemented in something worse than political ideologies—it would be about religion (not to say that it isn't already). As Castro suggests, if non-religious conflicts such as the Cold War have had the chance to escalate to the brink of catastrophic proportions, current leaders must be wary of the apocalyptic danger of a conflict of religious dimensions.

Ultimately, Castro, "the man of history" (both because he's that old and has experienced history), might be able to contribute more to the geopolitical scene as a critic of his past, commentator of the present, and oracle of the future than "Castro the Marxist Statesman" ever could, through this extended interview and his publications to come. And perhaps that will indeed be his historical absolution and his share in the development of the new global order. ■



Castro ponders his magnificent beard. photo courtesy of bbc.co.uk

Alex wants to read you his Washington Diaries
Discuss this article at [amputd.com!](http://amputd.com/)

Amazon Smackdown

A student perspective on the elections in Brazil



by liz organ
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Almost all the campaign materials I have seen here in Brazil leading up to the presidential elections on October 3 involve the verb *mudar*—in English, change. Sound familiar?

That's not where the similarities between Brazilian and American politics end, either. Radio and TV are constantly congested with advertisements that do little more than throw rhetoric around; candidates run around the country, posing for photo ops while shaking hands and kissing babies; and debates rage about taxes, infrastructure development, and environmental conservation. Brazil even has its own "Obama Girl," except he's a guy, his name is "Dilmaboy", and his song on YouTube touting Dilma Rousseff for president is sung to the tune of Lady Gaga's "Telephone".

Yet, despite having some traits in common, Brazilian and American politics differ in certain ways. For one thing, advertising campaigns here play by different rules: candidates are allotted specific times in which they can advertise for free on local radio stations (provided they attach the required disclaimer announcement to their propaganda), and one of the most popular forms of advertisement is hiring people to stand on street corners and wave flags for a particular candidate or party. Candidates here even hire musicians to write songs for them; someone on a motorbike with a loudspeaker strapped to the back scared my roommate and me half to death when he sped by within inches of us, blaring a hard rock song that promoted one of the state deputy candidates.

More importantly, voting is mandatory in Brazil. As a result, public interest in elec-

tions is much higher. Though it theoretically sounds like a good idea, obligatory voting has its drawbacks: yes, it may lead to a more pure form of "democracy", in the definitional sense of the term, but it also means that a large, disinterested portion of the population still has to vote. That portion does not care about the elections, let alone research the candidates, and they just pick out names on the ballot or vote for shallow, superficial reasons. Even without mandatory voting in the U.S., we still have a significant percentage of the population that votes without knowing anything about the candidates; imagine how much higher than number would be if we imposed compulsory voting.

What's really interesting about the current presidential election is its significance for modern-day Brazil's place in the world and (most interestingly for us) its relationship with the U.S. Eight years of economic growth and development under President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva (better known as "Lula") has reached its end, and the three major contenders for his office are Dilma Rousseff, José Serra, and Marina Silva.

Rousseff, a member of the leftist *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Worker's Party), is Lula's handpicked successor and is favored to win, polling at over 50% of the popular vote. Serra, on the other hand, is from the more centrist *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (Social Democratic Party) and has fallen far behind in the polls, only capturing a little over 20% of respondents' votes. Both have backgrounds in economics and extensive political experience at local and national levels. Truthfully, and to the chagrin of many citizens here who crave more political diversity in presidential candidates, their proposed platforms are very similar, consisting of boosts in social welfare programs, a focus on infrastructure development, and the usual promises to improve education and health care.

The third candidate, Marina Silva of the Green Party, is more unique: the main tenets of her platform involve environmental conservation and pro-green policies, developed after she resigned from her post as Minister of Environment under Lula out of frustration with the political preference for economic development at the expense of envi-

ronmental preservation. But she is polling at just under 10% of the vote and therefore has no chance to win.

The most important, and most polarizing, differentiating factor between top contenders Rousseff and Serra is their respective policies toward the U.S. Rousseff, as Lula's successor, will continue in his footsteps, which means that she will flex Brazil's muscles and contend with the U.S. as a regional power in Latin America, as well as exercise more independent strength on the global stage. Despite Brazil's increasing international political presence, these policies got Lula in trouble; his recent skirmishes with the international community over economic sanctions against Iran have resulted in harsh censure at home and abroad. Critics assert that he is only buddying up with Iran to try to exercise a "unique" political identity from other world powers (most notably, its powerful hemispheric neighbor, the U.S.) and not because he really supports Iran, a country with which Brazil has little in common.

Serra promotes more U.S.-friendly foreign policies, notably stronger economic ties with the U.S. Some argue that such a relationship will be beneficial for the economic growth of Brazil, while others see increased ties as a regression back to dependency on the U.S. and a recognition of the U.S. as the more powerful actor on the Latin American stage—a backward step that no Brazilian with even a modicum of national pride wants to see.

Should Rousseff win, as expected, Lula's policy of exercising political individuality will continue. But don't expect that to be the end of the discussion: the Brazilian population is largely split on how closely to relate Brazil's foreign policies to those of the U.S., and if Rousseff missteps (as Lula has with Iran), the debate will rage on and affect Brazil's relations with the rest of the world, especially with the U.S. ■



From left to right: José Serra, Dilma Rousseff, and Marina Silva. photo courtesy of wordpress.com

*Liz blares hard rock when convincing people to vote. . .
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—Swept Under t

Pakistan Washed Away



by sana mahmood

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Lately, the news seems to be covering a lot of controversial subjects. For instance, the burning of the Quran in Florida, the building of the Mosque near Ground Zero, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and the Chilean miners trapped underground for over four months have all been repeatedly shown and talked about on TV, newspapers, and the internet. However, one catastrophic event has not generated much attention.

The disastrous flood in Pakistan that occurred in July 2010 ravaged the land and has so far killed more than two thousand people. It destroyed many homes and farmlands, including wheat crops, causing harm to Pakistan's economy. What I can't seem to understand is why this wide scale traumatic event has been cast in the shadows. Why is it that every day the news reporters seem to say less and less about the conditions in Pakistan? And why has the U.S. donated so little to the relief effort when other countries have generously given much more?

In the past, the U.S. has jumped at any chance to help restore countries struck by devastating natural events such as floods, hurricanes, or earthquakes. Just this past January, the U.S. made sure to have the earthquake in Haiti depicted across front pages in noteworthy newspapers throughout the country and televised in the evening news on many stations. At the same time, it donated millions of dollars in relief effort and urged citizens to give more. It should be pointed out that the flood in Pakistan caused twice the amount of damages and injuries as the earthquake in Haiti.

One question comes to mind whenever I think about this situation: does the U.S. have something against Pakistan? I understand that government conditions in Pakistan are declining day by day as the Taliban tries to gain control, but this flood was a natural disaster and has nothing to do with Pakistan's government or the Taliban. The focus should be on rescuing innocent people who are in unfortunate circumstances and on restoring peace and order in a ravaged country.

The U.S.'s slow effort to help Pakistan might cause a greater rift in their already failing relationship. Ever since President Barack Obama came into the presidency, he has tried to strengthen ties with Pakistan and mollify any tensions between the two countries. He has been

widely successful since Pakistan aims to build a stronger relationship with the U.S. in order to rid its own country of the Taliban's hold on its government using military funding from the U.S.

Back in January, UTD held fundraisers to raise money for the victims of the Haiti Earthquake, many students eagerly participated in the relief efforts. Many people talked about the horrific event and displayed sympathy for the losses that occurred. It seemed that every person knew about it and wanted to contribute in some way. However, for the Pakistan flood, it's apparent that not many people care too much about it. Some people are just now finding out about it.

Why hasn't UTD come up with more high-profile fundraisers for the flood? I don't see anybody putting any time or effort into coming up with many fundraising ideas. How come people were so eager to help out the Haitian victims but not the Pakistani ones? The media doesn't even show other schools across the country raising money for Pakistan. Do people really not care? Is it their fault for being so apathetic, or is it the media's fault for producing that apathy in the first place?

How do other countries around the world view the U.S.'s slow response to Pakistan's tragedy? I'm pretty sure many eyebrows were raised when they found out that the U.S. provided less relief for Pakistan than it had for previous countries in an unfortunate event. At this present moment in time, the U.S. is not viewed in a favorable light due to recent events that have fueled many protests and criticism from countries around the world.

For instance, the War in Iraq was not supported by many countries or many U.S. citizens, and the fact that the U.S.'s involvement in other countries' problems and disputes creates a lot of tension between the U.S. and countries like Iraq and Pakistan.

A number of students at UTD are from and have families in Pakistan, and the U.S. has many citizens originally from Pakistan. It's probable that these people wonder why the U.S. isn't helping out their home

country as they have with other countries. Here at UTD, these people probably want the school to rally together and raise money for Pakistan just as they did for the people devastated by the Haiti earthquake. Students at UTD can set an example for the rest of the U.S. by holding more fundraisers and helping out people in need. ■

*Sana's really just hydrophobic.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/*



illustration by becky aguilar

Under the Rug—

If a gun is shot in Mexico...



by alice post
alice.a.post@gmail.com

Public rhetoric gushes about democracy and rule of law. But what happens when a pillar of democracy cries out in desperation?

El Diario, a newspaper in Ciudad Juarez, printed a front-page editorial literally asking cartels "What do you want from us?" and commenting that the cartels are the people running the town. This was published in response to the

shooting of a young photographer on September 18. Over 22 journalists have been shot and seven others have gone missing in Mexico since 2006. *National Public Radio* remarks that these numbers are only seen in "conflict ridden countries like Iraq or Somalia." Reports from the *Associated Press* indicate that most newspapers in Mexico have long since resorted to self-censorship. *El Diario*, however, had bravely continued to report, until recently, on the violence along the border.

The Mexican military has occupied Ciudad Juarez for three years and the number of people killed, whether innocent or not, increases every day. Protection for reporters seems minimal at best, as demonstrated by the numbers of journalists killed and the general state of surrender from the media. *El Diario* says they are not backing down, but they will now limit their coverage of the drug violence.

That is shameful. The whole condition is shameful.

The shame bag is overflowing with contributions from all parties involved. Shame on the cartels for turning trafficking routes into war zones. Shame on the Mexican government for not providing security to their citizens. Shame on the police for being too corrupt to be trusted or functional. Shame on the judiciary for not punishing violent offenders of the law. Shame on the media for self-censorship.

So, without an effective police force, courtroom, or government, the one remaining agent of change or bulwark against atrocity is supposed to be the free press. Daring reporters can facilitate peace in any number of ways. As sources of information, reporters can change the rules of the game from mindless shooting into a game of chess. Fighting against known impasses is far more justified than unknown ones, and neither side knows when mentalities have changed if the media is not able to keep a pulse on it.

If neither side can move past continuous death and destruction, the only hope is for pressure from the international community to encourage peace. However, the world has to know and understand the violence before outsiders are willing to advocate the cessation

of hostilities.

Currently, the U.S. and the Mexican governments operate under a hard-line military approach with the ultimate goal of eradicating cartels. This has killed 22,700 people since 2006. To put this in perspective, this is more than the number of students

at UT Dallas. Everyone on campus, dead.

The drug war zone south of the border seems to be a constant buzz in the background that everyone ignores. It is an election year in the U.S., but the violence has been atrocious for more than three years.

Since the U.S. public has shown a determination to ignore the violence in Mexico for so long, it may be time for the bullet slingers to think of alternative strategies for advancing their goals.

El Diario asserts that the cartels, not the government, run the border, in spite of the large military presence. Both the government and the cartels should be offended. The government should lick its wounds and then reassess its goals because it currently cannot provide a basic level of security. The cartels should reconsider their turf war because if they are the ones with power, the continued violence shows that they're wielding it in a self-destructive manner.

For the cartels, this poorly implemented power is a matter of profitability and responsibility. With power comes the need to wield it effectively... and revenues have been taking a hit as shown by the increased street price of illegal drugs in the U.S. market. Shootings and unpredictability in daily life takes a toll on any business operation, legal or not. The profitable, responsible, and peaceful thing to do is establish a balance of power, as soon as possible.

For the official leaders of Mexico, violent measures have resulted in more than 22,000 deaths and anti-government sentiment. Such carnage is often justified if horrendous killers rot away in prison cells, but in Mexico arrests of kingpins rarely lead to substantial prison sentences. If staying the course is the plan, then establish some safety and justice. The government may not have the capacity to get rid of the cartels, but it may be able to re-establish peace. With some semblance of order, Mexico's judicial and political offices, along with police agencies, can be reformed to be less susceptible to the influence of drug money.

In the light of power plays, clearly the thousands dead along the border and across Mexico do not constitute a war on drugs: It is simply a war because of drugs.

Draw up the battle lines. Convert the zones of chaos into strongholds of safety. Get creative with strategy and negotiation. Win the hearts and minds of the people. And, for the love of humanity and the hope of democracy, do not forget to protect the journalists. ■

Alice has the biggest shame bag.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/



We Come in Peace

Unfortunately, you bury us in red tape



by **basel musharbash**
inc2006@gmail.com

"Give me your tired, your poor, your ruddled masses yearning to breathe free—as long as they come from Western Europe, are not too tired or too poor or slightly ill, never stole a loaf of bread, never joined any questionable organization, can speak fluent English, can document their activities for the past two years, and can afford the egregious costs of applications for residency that we will charge them." That is how Emma Lazarus' poem at the foot of the Statue of Liberty should read today.

I write this article as I bear in my hand that first token of being a part of America—a Permanent Residency Card. I am proud, yet I am disturbed. I have had to obtain this Card through a process which no immigrant should have to undergo in the United States; through a six year process that is dispiriting and confusing, expensive and erratic. I was young when we first came to this country—but I undoubtedly saw the disillusionment in my father's eyes.

Immigration to the United States of America must be made easier—it's the only way fit for a land built by immigrants.

Most Americans do not have an understanding of the impossibly complicated immigration process. I did receive my Green Card—but it was only after countless mistakes and confusion, two lawyers, six applications, six years, and more than twelve thousand dollars in lawyer and application fees. The final application alone cost \$1,010. Whenever we asked what we were supposed to do next there was

also this answer: "Sorry, I am not allowed to counsel or help you. If you wish, you may contact a lawyer, or visit our website for more information."

That is immigration in America, and it is a disgrace. Today, as half the people of the world are living on less than two dollars a day, the United States expects those men and women to have several thousand dollars to pay for application fees and lawyers, while denying them even the most basic guidance in the process. Eight hundred million people around the globe today are battling starvation, and the United States asks them to keep organized and detailed legal documents. While some 47% of Mexicans battle poverty, and nearly 15% of Mexicans are illiterate, we ask that they comprehend the entire process of immigration, fill out every application accurately, and then bear the waiting, year in and year out, with no promise or even hope of success in the process. As the

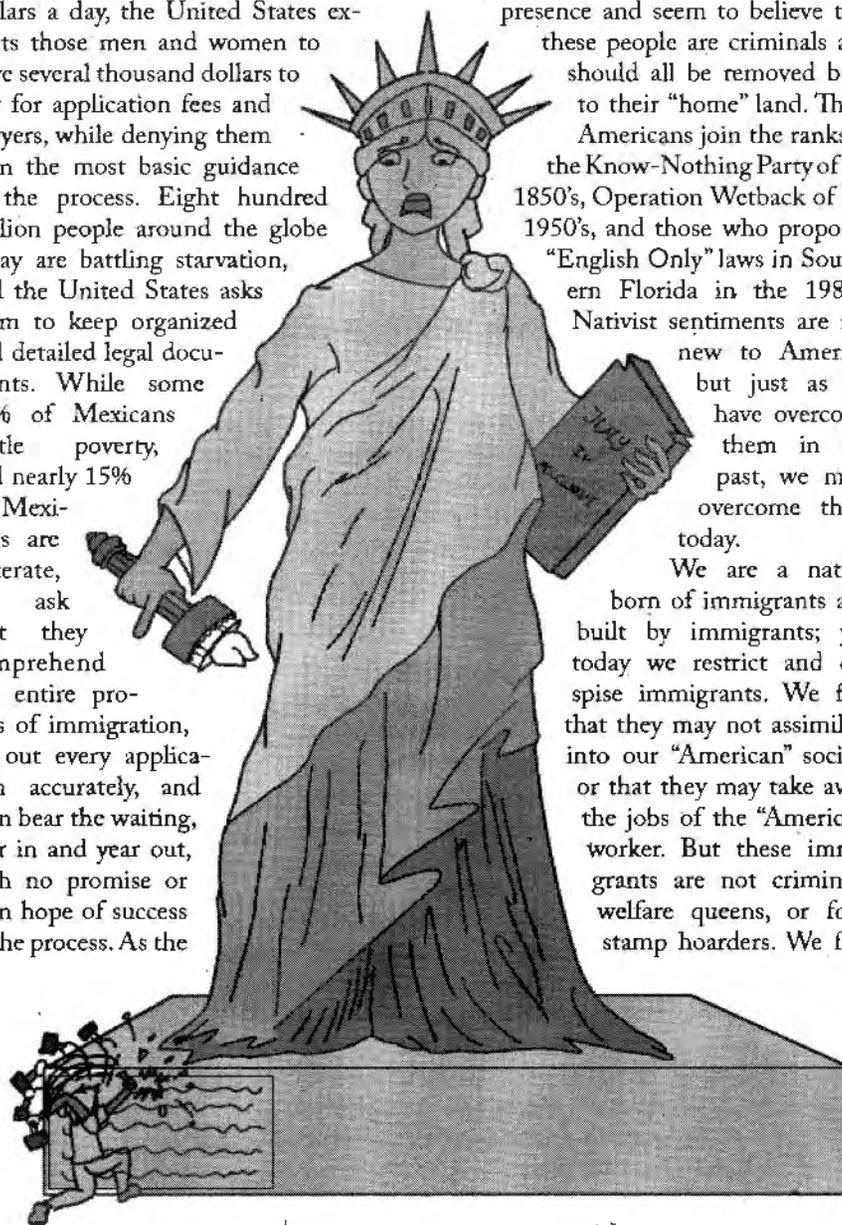
world struggles, we have a rate of immigration that is twenty-fifth in the world.

Yet, we cannot address immigration without addressing the question of the twelve million or so illegal immigrants who have come here. There are many Americans who are troubled at their presence and seem to believe that

these people are criminals and should all be removed back to their "home" land. These Americans join the ranks of the Know-Nothing Party of the 1850's, Operation Wetback of the 1950's, and those who proposed "English Only" laws in Southern Florida in the 1980's.

Nativist sentiments are not new to America, but just as we have overcome them in the past, we must overcome them today.

We are a nation born of immigrants and built by immigrants; yet, today we restrict and despise immigrants. We fear that they may not assimilate into our "American" society or that they may take away the jobs of the "American" worker. But these immigrants are not criminals, welfare queens, or food stamp hoarders. We for-



Don't mind me, ma'am. Just a few "creative" changes. illustration by rafael calvo

Immigration to the United States of America must be made easier—it's the only way fit for a land built by immigrants.

get that it is the height of hypocrisy to force scorn and discrimination upon immigrants when we ourselves are but older immigrants, when the "American" is a mixture of every race, language, and culture on Earth. These immigrants are not "others". These immigrants are the epitome of the American. We must consider their case with the best of American compassion, rather than the worst of American prejudice.

Compared to the rest of the world, we have a very poor immigration process. Australia has an immigration budget of almost 1.6 billion dollars, while ours is only 0.06 billion dollars. We fund our immigration agency almost entirely from application fees. The world has more than thirty five million refugees, yet the cap we placed on the number of refugees granted asylum every year is not high enough.

We are not doing nearly enough to show the world how much a free society can help the world, to show the best of America to the world—to bear the burden and the glory of being the greatest nation on Earth. ■

Basel wants to form the Know-Everything Party.
Discuss this article at [ampatl.com!](http://ampatl.com/)



Bank Heist

Wells Fargo's super-sticky fingers dip into international transactions



by lindsay bernsen
lindsay.bernsen@yahoo.com

You've been accepted and are on your way to college, but there are still some applications left—housing, parking, banking—and banking is easily the most confusing. There are lots of choices out there—staying with the credit union near your family's house, switching to a bank that has great student rates and benefits, or possibly forgoing some of those benefits for the sake of several convenient on or near campus ATMs and branches. It could be that private student loans are

your priority, or perhaps interest on your savings.

However, one thing many students are not considering is how their bank will treat them once they leave America behind to gain enlightenment abroad.

I chose to bank at Wells Fargo because their rates are reasonable, their branches are ubiquitous, and on our campus in particular, their ATMs are convenient (and therefore, so is fee-free withdrawal). I was even able to open a college checking and a college savings account the summer before my freshman year and directly deposit my summer earnings into them.

When I was preparing for my exchange semester to Hong Kong, it seemed obvious I would stick with Wells Fargo. My mom told me to get a credit card in case of an emergency, so I got a Wells Fargo Visa: I knew that I had good credit with Wells Fargo from our previous interactions, which would get me a credit card with a high(er) limit, but I also felt secure knowing that that limit would still be a college limit—low enough to protect me in case of theft.

I thought that I had done my research, and that I was getting the best, most

“ I thought that I had done my research, and that I was getting the best, most reliable deal I could. This wasn't exactly the case. ”

reliable deal I could. This wasn't exactly the case.

The first thing I didn't consider was that the favorable exchange rate in my country of study (approximate interbank: 7.8 Hong Kong Dollars to 1 USD) meant that not only would I be able to purchase things more cheaply here in Hong Kong, I would also feel every fee or fine charged in USD seven times more heavily. It seemed reasonable when I was in the U.S. to read that Wells Fargo would charge me \$5USD for every ATM withdrawal but had an agreement with a bank here to avoid charging me any fees on top of that. However, now that I'm here, it doesn't seem so reasonable. If you still don't see the injury, consider that, in total, those ATM fees come at an opportunity cost of between one and two weeks of lunch, a month of air conditioning, or over 100 trips on the Metropolitan Transit Rail.

I also couldn't tell in advance exactly how many vendors would take the brand of credit card I brought. The bankers at Wells Fargo seemed to think that a Visa card would be fine in Hong Kong, as did everything else I could find to read on the matter. Alas, while this might be the case in the most ritzy

parts of the city, it isn't true in the parts of the city near my exchange university.

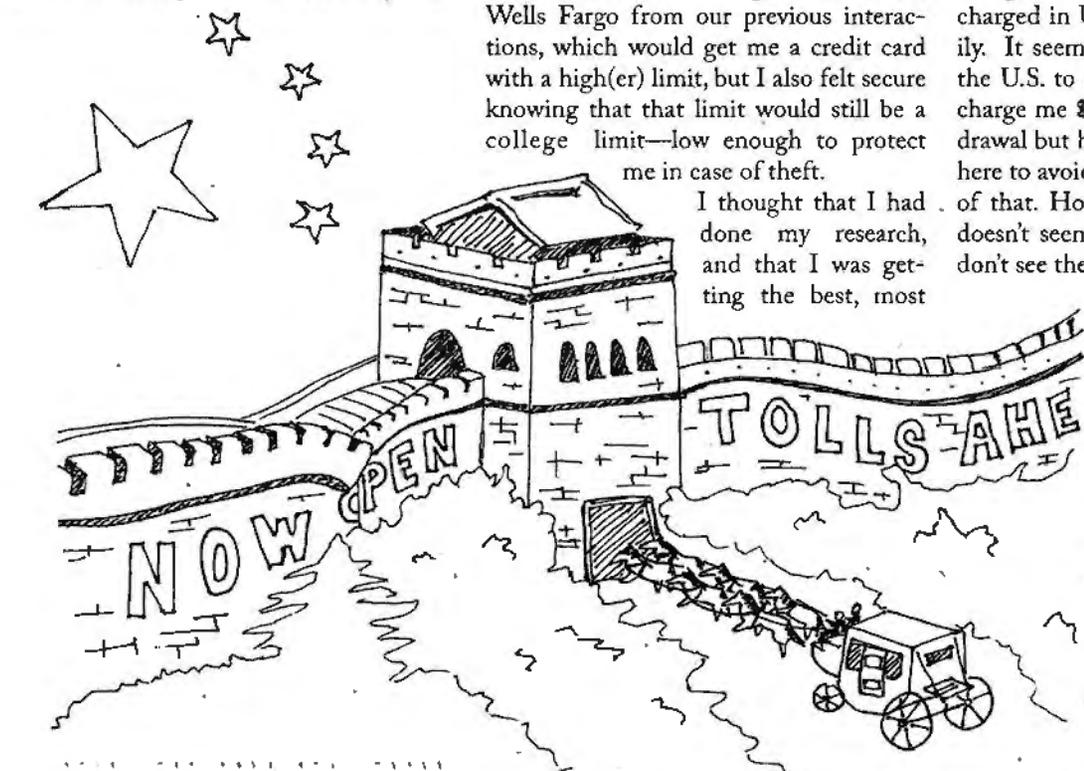
The third miscalculation was the exchange rate I would personally receive on each credit transaction or ATM withdrawal (because no average consumer is receiving the interbank rate of 7.8).

What was at the root of my persistent misunderstandings? A lack of transparency on banks' websites. Wells Fargo alone had a foreign exchange rate posted, so I could hardly make a comparison of the rates I would be receiving in advance. Fortunately, the rate they actually provide is far higher than the rate they list. Many banks restrict access to the personal services area of their websites—the part where you would see exactly how good a deal they offer on individual services—until after you have signed up for an account. What's a deal-seeking consumer to do?

Of course, every country is different, and you should always thoroughly research any area to which you wish to travel.

Ultimately, you should make sure that you take more than one kind of card with you—each from a different network—if you want to ensure that you have service and maximize your thrift. You should look at the perks offered in your proposed destination country by each provider (and if merchants in that country will even take your card of choice) and consider just how valuable any cash savings might be to you—what is that ATM fee trading off with? A night out? A train ride into a neighboring country? It doesn't cost you anything to order a new card or set up a new account (as long as you maintain habits of good credit), so keep your college accounts and set something up specifically for your time abroad—you'll be grateful later. ■

Lindsay plays Donkey Kong in Hong Kong.
Discuss this article at [ampud.com!](http://ampud.com/)



Wells Fargo actually offers a Great Wall, Enormous Price carriage ride. illustration by jeff blackman

Brain Food

Why pop culture makes for great academics



by melissa kenfield
fruitcakeknits@gmail.com

Recently in the “weird” section of the news, the University of Baltimore’s Zombie Studies course has sprung up as a “so what?” moment in academia. If the purpose of higher education is to create a better workforce, what could the point of zombie studies possibly be? And if the purpose of higher education is to create a more educated populace, regardless of their employability, how does zombie studies contribute toward this goal?

“For the best educational experience, I believe classes on zombies should contain zombie survival strategies.”

The course, taught by Dr. Arnold Blumberg the author of “Zombiennania”, involves analyzing the meaning of zombies. More importantly, the course focuses on understanding the undying appeal of groups of mindless automatons. Zombies in each era function as allegories for what troubles that culture – be it the Cold War undertones in “The Night of the Living Dead” (1968), the nightmare of consumerism in “Dawn of the Dead” (1978), or medicine’s inability to contain infections in “28 Days Later” (2002).

If zombies can provide an insight into the culture of the United States, it would be

a shame for universities not to embrace this and offer courses in zombie studies.

Here at UTD, classes in Oz, Narnia, and Hogwarts have been offered for several years, and still fill in a flash. Any student who paid attention in his or her History II class would remember that “The Wizard of Oz” was not merely a happy fantasy about a land of animated scarecrows and tin men, but an economic commentary and political allegory about Populism and the gold standard. The Chronicles of Narnia has a deeply religious undertone, that is presented in a manner accessible to anyone willing to seek it out. And Harry Potter has proved to be a wildly popular escape from our lives. What about these books has given them such a common appeal?

Literary examination of popular culture and entertainment do provide an insight into what is meaningful in our culture; but it raises the question, “so what?” Students may leave the class with a better understanding of what has shaped our society or what draws people to a given form of entertainment, but is that what education should be about?

At some point, universities have accepted that education means more than vocational training and employability. Education is about expanding the mind and developing critical thinking skills, even when it pertains to topics such as popular culture studies that may seem purely, well, academic.

This spring, I had the opportunity to take a class titled “Motherhood and the Technological Womb.” Throughout the semester, when I would tell friends what classes I was taking, this one would elicit the same response, “that’s actually a class?” After all, how could something related to childbirth be a legitimate class for anybody, but future nurses? In two different ways, though, this class proved to be an excellent educational experience. Not only did I learn about politics and economics, but also how those have shaped reproductive experiences around the world and shifted our concepts of what is



Harry Potter and the Necronomicon. illustration by scott unghusri

natural. I came out with eminently valuable information about childbirth, surrogacy, and how much it sucks to be a gay or lesbian person who is trying to get his or her own biological offspring. And so, with this in mind, I suggest that classes that may seem at face value to be a “so what?” class usually includes practical information.

Classes on popular books offer an introduction to literary studies in a fashion accessible to students from other disciplines. The average computer science major would likely never be interested in taking “Literary Analysis,” but a class all about Harry Potter could draw in a wide range of students and then teach them how to analyze literature and look beyond the apparent plot for meaning. Or maybe these classes are ambushing people into learning, by drawing them in with interesting class names.

How, then, is zombie studies practical? I can’t say in much detail how universities thus far have approached the class, but for

the best educational experience, I believe classes on zombies should contain zombie survival strategies. Do you retreat to a home or to a public place such as a mall or supermarket? Should you team up with friends and form a coalition against the zombies, or is it better to travel solo? If a lone zombie is nearing you, do you shoot it from a distance and risk alerting others to your location, or do you wait until it nears and whack it with a baseball bat? And ultimately: in the case of the zombie apocalypse, why fight at all?

If “Shaun of the Dead” could give us any insight, it seems like many peoples’ current existences are not unlike that of zombies. Why do we not simply accept our fate to join the rest of what used to be humankind, and join the ranks of the undead? ■

Melissa will be hiding from the zombie apocalypse at the Winchester.

Discuss this article at [amputd.com!](http://amputd.com/)

Player's Choice



by taylor buttler
taylor.buttler@gmail.com

Halo Reach

For the past 9 years, Bungie Studios has given us *Halo*, one of the best franchises to ever grace the world of gaming. Now, before completing their split away from Microsoft, Bungie has given us their last adventure in the *Halo* universe: *Halo Reach* (hereafter referred to as *Reach*). As far as swan songs go, *Reach* is a phenomenal way for Bungie to leave behind their biggest franchise ever.

The game takes place only a few weeks before the events of the first *Halo* game, on the planet from which *Reach* derives its name. It follows Noble Team—a group of Spartan-IIIs (genetically-enhanced and well-armed super-soldiers)—as they defend the planet from the Covenant, a collective of technologically advanced aliens bent on the total annihilation of the human race.

The story is very well executed and is a lot darker than some of the previous *Halo* games, following the planet's defenders as they struggle valiantly but futilely against a force that is stronger in both technology and numbers in order to save one of humanity's last strongholds.

The gameplay uses the standard first-person shooter gameplay of the previous *Halo* games, but adds on its own special touches. Added to *Reach* are new vehicles, tons of new weapons, and armor powers—like cloaking, holograms, and jet packs (which automatically make everything better).

As with all previous games in the franchise, you can customize your character's appearance in multiplayer, but your custom character is also your player

character in the campaign mode of *Reach*. The amount of customization is extraordinary: you can change every piece of the armor individually, and you have a plethora of styles to choose from. You can also change the armor color, your emblem, and even your character's gender (with a different voice actor for each). Performing well in multiplayer games and completing daily challenges will accumulate credits which increase your rank and allow you to buy even more customizable gear for your character.

As great as the campaign is, however, the multiplayer in *Reach* is where the game really earns its replay value. Using the system from the wildly popular *Halo 3* multiplayer game as a base, *Reach* builds upon its predecessor, adding new game types and seventeen new maps.

Among the new game types is the runaway hit Invasion, a team-based game variant that involves a team of six Spartan-IIIs taking on a team of six Covenant Elites in an attempt to achieve various objectives during various phases. In the first phase, only a small portion of the map is open, but as the match progresses, more of the map (including more vehicles and weapons) become available for use.

Also added to *Reach* is the ability to play the popular Firefight variant (in which you and your friends fight against increasingly difficult waves of AI enemies) with matchmaking, which randomly assigns you to games with players from all over the world. In *Reach's* matchmaking, you can now specify what types of players you like to play with (chatty or quiet, rowdy or polite, here-for-fun or here-to-win, high-skill or low-skill, etc). This is extremely useful if you, like most people in the world, want to avoid playing with the loud, obnoxious, and often-racist pre-teens known to scurry about Xbox Live.

“As far as swan songs go, *Reach* is a phenomenal way for Bungie to leave behind their biggest franchise ever.”

If there's one thing to be said about video games today, it's that they're getting prettier and prettier by the day, and *Reach* is no exception. This game is phenomenally beautiful. There were some moments where I just stopped playing to stand on a ledge and look off into the horizon at the gorgeous landscapes that Bungie has put together. Even the many things that already existed in the *Halo* universe got a graphics boost. The level of detail that goes into every alien, weapon, and vehicle is extensive.

Ultimately, *Halo Reach* is a perfect way for Bungie to gracefully split from Microsoft so that they can move on to new horizons. It is a fantastic game with some of the most impressive visuals I've ever seen, the gameplay and story to match, and a multiplayer that will have me playing this game for months and years to come. ■

Story: 10/10
Gameplay: 10/10
Visuals: 10/10
Multiplayer: 10/10

Overall
10



He has a jet pack; those Grunts never stood a chance. illustration by robert connolly

This is Taylor's sixth video game review; he is the epitome of UTD.
Discuss this article at ampatal.com!

The Menu

This month: Fuzzy's Taco Shop Richardson



by brady spenrath
bds062000@utdallas.edu

As the resident restaurant reviewer for AMP, if there's one thing you should know about me it's my addiction to all things Mexican food. So when the Braum's moved out of its old location at Campbell and Nantucket, in front of Off-Campus Books, I drove by the deserted building and said, "I wish a taco shop would open up there." I had no idea I was foreseeing the future until I drove by a few months later and saw "Fuzzy's Taco Shop Coming Soon" on the building. Fuzzy's Taco Shop is a chain that originated in Fort Worth, and grew from one location to 15 satellites and franchises in just seven years, with more locations coming soon around Texas, Oklahoma, and even Wisconsin. With so much demand for their food, I was more than a little excited for the grand opening just before last spring semester ended.

After my first visit, I wasn't dis-

appointed, but I was surprised by their style. Rather than following either the Tex-Mex or Traditional molds you typically find in Texas' Mexican cuisine, Fuzzy's takes the Californian "Baja" approach to their Mexican foods, making it tangy instead of spicy, and favoring feta cheese to cheddar or Monterrey Jack. My tacos were tasty and topped with fresh ingredients. My second trip, however, was not as smooth.

I went with a small group during their peak hours. The restaurant was chaotic and a little messy, with spills on the floor, and many tables not wiped clean. Our portions of meat were smaller; a couple orders had been made slightly wrong, and it looked like the toppings had simply been thrown in the tacos' general direction.

However, that visit wasn't enough to deter me from Mexican food so close to campus, and I can safely say that returning when Fuzzy's was less busy yielded better prepared food and a cleaner store.

The most disappointing offering is their own brand of hot sauce, Fuzzy's Butt-

Original Nachos.....	\$5.99
Baja Tacos.....	\$1.99 Each/\$5.99 for a combo plate
Jumbo Burrito.....	\$5.49
Enchilada Plate.....	\$5.99
Fajita Plate.....	\$7.99
Grilled Sandwich.....	\$5.99
Big Salad.....	\$5.99
Frozen Margarita.....	\$5.00

Burnin' Hot Sauce. The name inspires images of a sauce so spicy just tasting it leads to regret, but it's surprisingly mild. I'm also not too fond of the bland Enchilada Plate, which only comes with two small enchiladas, and a couple of just-okay sides (go with the Tex-Mex Fried Rice and Refried Beans when given a choice). The Fajita Plate has great flavor, but not much meat considering its price.

Despite all the things I don't like at Fuzzy's, there are dishes I love. The Grilled Sandwiches are served with your choice of meat, and topped with cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and an addicting, creamy garlic sauce. They come on a slightly sweet bun that brings all the flavors together wonderfully. The Big Salad is also fine, served to you in a huge metal bowl containing fresh lettuce, tomatoes, onions, shredded cheese, feta cheese, cilantro, and crispy tortilla chip strips. The Jumbo Burritos are a delicious alternative to the tacos, but the name is misleading; it lacks a side, and I was left hungry.

The Original Nachos are definitely my favorite. A king-sized bed of impossibly thin, crispy tortilla chips is topped with an amazing white cheddar queso, crumbled feta cheese for a kick of extra flavor, some cool pico de gallo with cilantro, and your choice of meat. The list of ingredients might look short, but they're all you need to make what I'm willing to call the best nachos in the DFW area.

In order to truly evaluate a place with "Taco Shop" in the name, I had to wrap up with the tacos themselves. Fuzzy's gives you a lot of options. First, any taco can be soft or

crispy, regular or habanero. The difference between regular and habanero is the inclusion of a hotter version of Fuzzy's tangy sauce. After that, you choose from a wide range of fillings for your taco: garlic shredded beef, ground beef, grilled chicken, shredded pork, grilled veggies, or grilled or tempura (lightly fried) fish or shrimp. Every taco also includes your choice of lettuce, tomato, cilantro, feta cheese, and garlic sauce.

I've tried most of the meats, and can say that any choice is just as good as the others. The pork, chicken, and beef all taste pretty good, and two tacos and two sides will fill you up. The seafood, though, both grilled and tempura, is sometimes too salty for me.

The restaurant also offers some alcohol choices, including a huge range of beers and some frozen cocktails. Their frozen margarita is refreshing, delicious, and huge.

In the end, I have to recommend you give Fuzzy's a try. Avoid peak hours, try a couple choices, and decide for yourself. I have to hand it to Fuzzy's for being unique, with a large, interesting repertoire, including breakfast served all day, which I haven't tried yet. It's not my favorite Mexican restaurant in the area, but they do serve some killer nachos, all of the food is very reasonably priced, and it's close to campus. It's not perfect, but still a welcome addition to the neighborhood, and I'll definitely be going back for more. ■

*Brady knows the right way to eat a fuzzy taco.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*

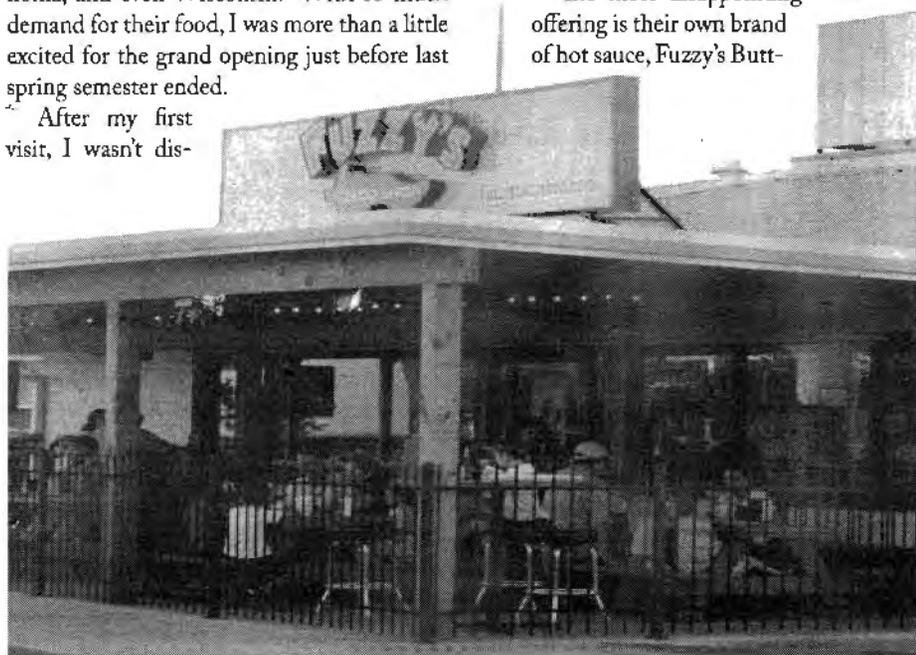
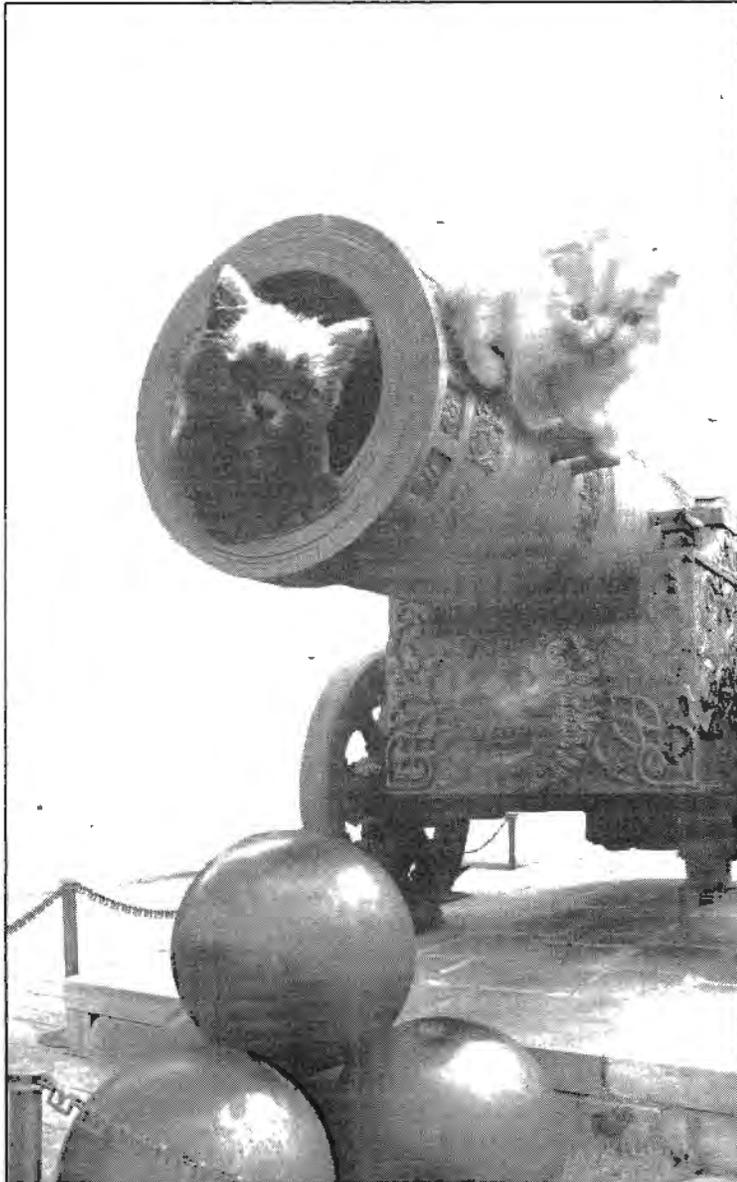


photo courtesy of brady spenrath



Caption Contest



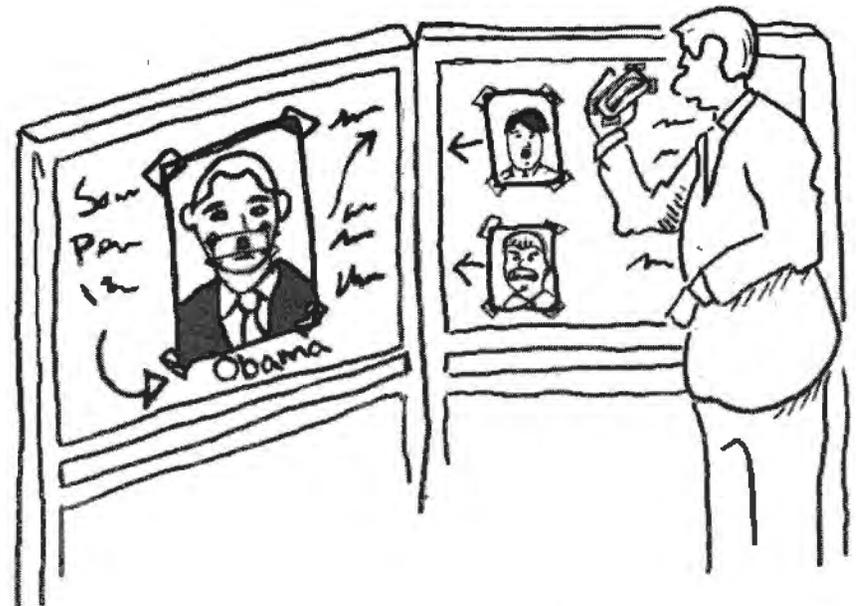
photoillustration by alice post

Sample Caption:
Best. Flashgame. Ever.

Caption Contest Rules

Post your captions as comments on the website AND email them with your name to amodestproposal@gmail.com. The editors will select the best one at the end of the month and it will be published in next month's issue of AMP! The writer of the winning caption shall receive a free AMP T-shirt, but only if the caption is emailed!

Comic Corner: Moustache Confusion



TV shows and logic grind to a halt as Glen Beck attempts to describe President Obama's "Commu-Nazi" agenda through visual aids.

comic by jeffrey blackman

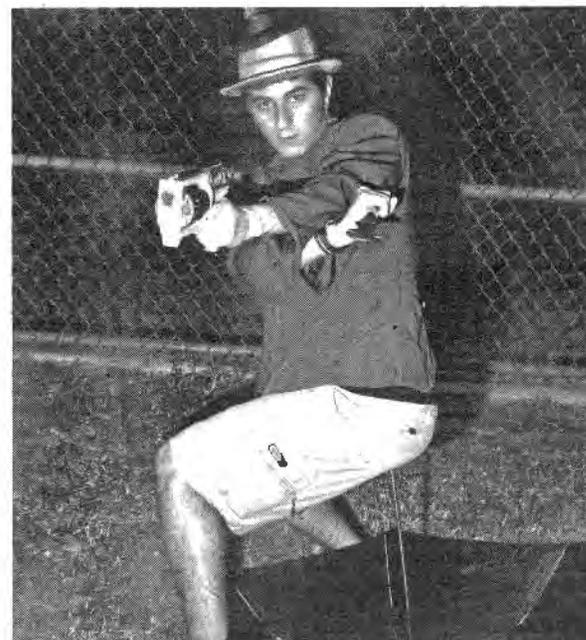


photo by mark lauman

Convocation Photo Caption Results!

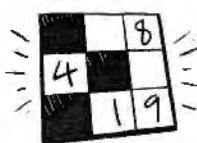
The winner is "dubstep":
Winning Caption:
"Well Officer Awesome, he attacked me like this."

Runner up submitted by Art Zachary: Michael Cera's stunt double is Umbrellass in Umbrellass2: The Nested Hats Wizarding.



by chelsea and
christina wolfe

Huzzah!



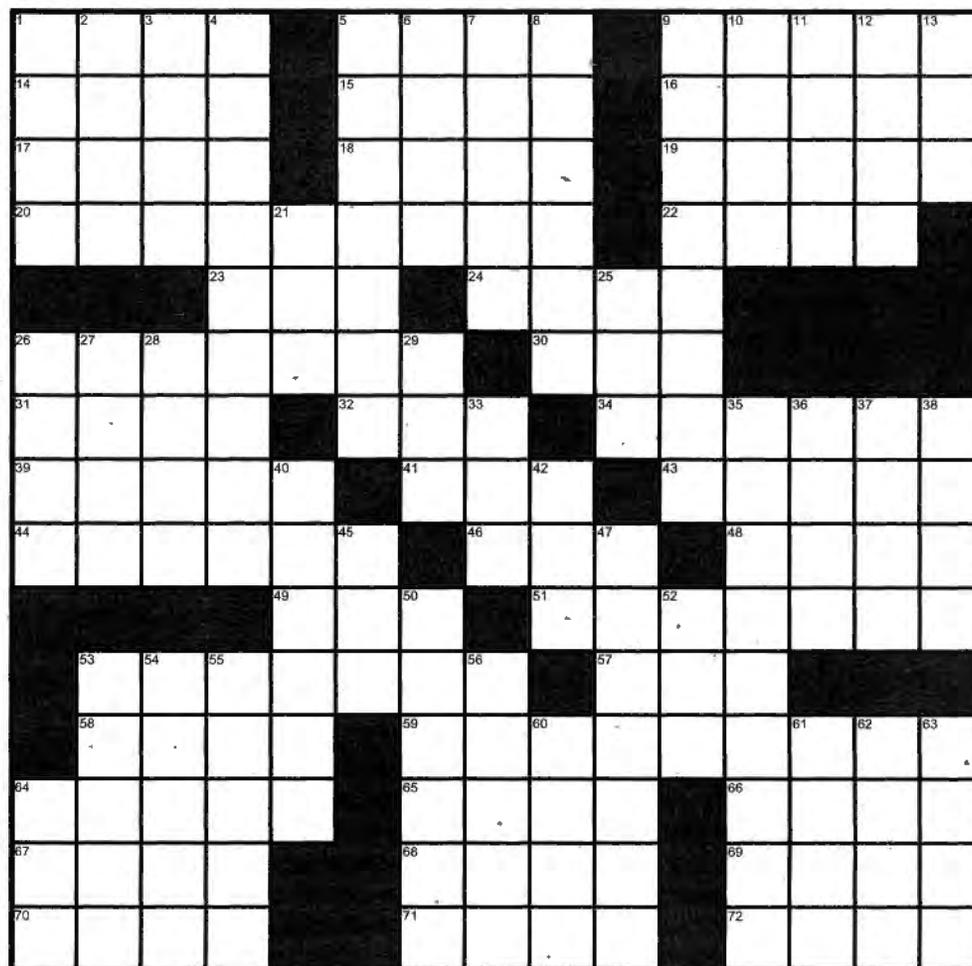
Cross Words

Across:

1. A gamble
3. Poets of Ecuador
9. _____ of the Union
14. Not different
15. Gad Elmaleh comedy
16. Celestial belt owner
17. Where all of Wile E.'s money goes
18. South American cape
19. She don't care about her ticket to _____ (plu.)
20. _____ the Opera (2 wds.)
22. Gender equality dorms are _____
23. Vote in the affirmative
24. A rose by any other would smell as sweet
26. AL West Division champs
30. Experimental animal, backwards
31. Every fairy tale's beginning
32. Test high schoolers dread
34. To connect
39. Unwelcoming growl
41. UTD males' failed attempts at love
43. The Golden _____ is found everywhere
44. The equator has only one
46. Birdie + 1
48. Some Christians are this again
49. Fast and Furious solution to everything
51. Keyboard actions, again
53. A man's worst hairline fear
57. As opposed to against
58. Priest role in MMO
59. Once in a while
54. Exclamation in retaliatory board game
55. Aladdin antagonist minus the J
66. Point of intersection
67. To revise
68. Possesses Y chromosome
69. Watch out for that _____!
70. Busted apparel (plu.)
71. Spooky body of fresh water
72. Egg layers

Down:

1. Immediately; without delay
2. Johann Sebastian and PDQ
3. Hermione's alter ego
4. Age XIII to XIX (plu.)
5. Those who respond to themselves
6. Holds the warp
7. Doctor son of Xe
8. Lacking lipids
9. The apprentice's teacher
10. A group of three
11. _____-de-camp
12. Amphibious foot characteristic, web _____
13. Dutch village in Flevoland
21. Knot
25. Fourth planet, if it were singular
26. Awkward paleontologist on Friends
27. Henry VII's second queen
28. College Athletic Organization
29. Namesake of VII horror movies
33. Honest Abe's hat
35. David Bowie + muppets
36. At the highest point
37. Old-fashioned swing
38. Geology's billions of years
40. _____ Island populated by Andy Samberg
42. Boat propulsion tool
45. Head's sign of sleepiness
47. Paid off by the winning team
50. Street that doesn't like Katy Perry's cleavage
52. Sonic's potato palindrome
53. _____ Island populated by Peter Griffin
54. Spooky
55. Golf, utility, and shopping
56. At this point in time (2 wds.)
60. Landlocked West African country south of Algeria
61. Author of Utopia
62. Biblical garden
63. Famous old-time candies



Have a puzzle you
want to see? Want
to write your own
crossword?

Let us know. Send
emails to:
amodestproposal@
gmail.com

September
Answers

	2				7		1	9
		3						
		6	5	2				8
			8			9		3
3								2
9		1			4			
8				7	5	4		
							3	
6	7		9					8

Difficulty: LOLZ



	8	7			6		4	
			2	9		8		
				7		6		
	5							4
		6				7		
9								8
		4		1				
		3		2	9			
9		8				2	6	

Difficulty: ROFLCOPTER



Sudoku



						3
5	3		6	1		
				6		
	2					
	5	6		2	1	
4						

AMP is not responsible for GPA loss due to obsessive puzzle solving; AMP takes credit for increased GPA due to obsessive puzzle solving.

Discuss these puzzles at amp.utdallas.edu/

Difficulty: OMFG



Greek X Word

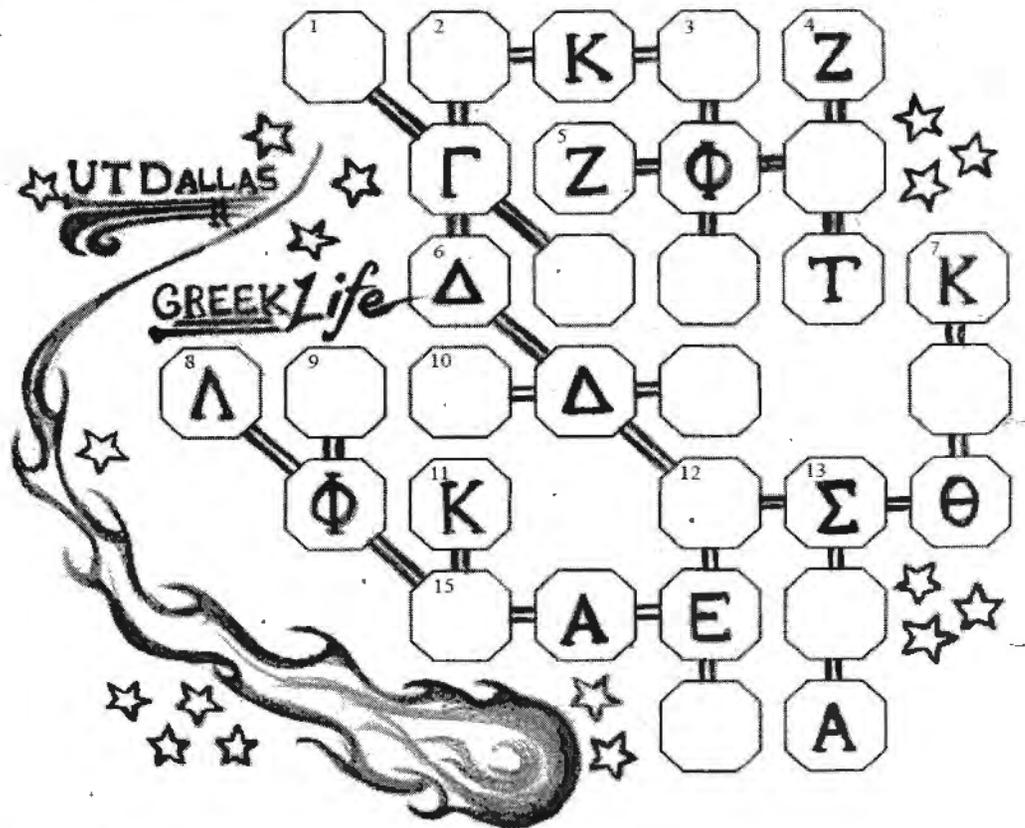


illustration by lewis chang

There are sixteen Greek organizations on campus and their Greek letters intersect like a crazy crossword. Please do enjoy practicing your ancient alphabet skills.

HIDE YO KIDS!
HIDE YO WIFE!



"We gonna find you!"



"Dey rapin' errbody out here!"



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ON THE PLANET

URANUS

■ To Piñeres: "You shall deny me three times!"

**URANUS
EXCLUSIVE**

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LAST SUPPER WITH THE DEANS



■ Fitch Declares Temoc
"The Way, the Whoosh, and the Light!"

■ "Why did we all sit on one side of the table?"



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NOT on Sesame Street...

BOOBS



LOL

G.O.P. to Finance Camera Literacy Classes for Christine O'Donnell

DELAWARE(AMP) - Inexplicably notable senate hopeful, Christine O'Donnell, has been enrolled in what Republican Party officials are calling "learn when not to talk" lessons.

Specifically geared at learning how to tell when a camera is recording, Ms. O'Donnell's media re-education will also include Pavlovian defense responses to visual and aural stimuli. Specifically, the sight of Katie Couric and the sound of legitimate questions will cause Ms. O'Donnell to froth at the mouth and claw out the eyes of her nearest captor.

G.O.P. leadership hopes that the courses will help to "save us from this hell, oh God please." ■

Joe Biden Celebrates 25,000th Consecutive Day of Not Giving a Fuck

WASHINGTON D.C.(AMP) - Vice President Joe Biden held a press conference on the lawn of the White House earlier this week, to commemorate his 25,000th consecutive day of "being completely oblivious to social mores and the world around [him]".

"I've been dropping truth bombs on you freaks for decades," Mr. Biden declaimed, "and today I want to be recognized for all my hard work."

The press conference was cut short when Mr. Biden threw off all of his clothes, streaked across the White House Lawn, pointed at his genitals and yelled "THIS IS A BIG FUCKING DEAL!!!" ■

Santa Claus Demands Return of Reggie Bush's Presents

THE NORTH POLE (AMP) - In a rarely seen event, Santa Clause has demanded the return of Reggie Bush's Christmas presents after being declared "permanently naughty".

"What he's done is just ho-ho-horrible," said Mr. Claus, "He has besmirched the honored name of the NCAA and the fine institution of USC athletics."

Following Father Christmas' lead, the Tooth Fairy is demanding a refund for her "periodic investment in Mr. Bush's future." ■



Tax my hurbies? Over my melted body!

by Heinrich Sprenger
Hocus-Pocus Expert

ROMANIA (AMP) - In a bold move this past month, Romania rejected a tax on witches and fortunetellers. Details about the vote are sketchy but *Uranus* has it on good authority that just before the session could be brought to order, a hook nosed, green skinned woman burst into the room flying on a broomstick, threatening the pets of the Romanian senators.

This is just one more act in an era of increasing political violence and intimidation from the paranormal community.

"After the global recession hit, governments became desperate to find new sources of revenue," explained paranormal economist Egon Venkman "the paranormal has traditionally been regarded as off limits, but politicians began to see them as a more viable revenue source."

This has set off a global struggle of state vs supernatural. From Ireland's attempt to finally locate the "pot o' gold at the end of the rainbow", to America's formalized manhunt of Sasquatch (in order to force him to pay his back taxes), the world is out for the magical and legendary.

A brief from the N.A.A.M.P (National Association for the Advancement of Mummified Persons) has come out strongly against the proposed "human organs in jars" tax in Egypt. Another proposed tax on genies is facing significant resistance from the Make A Wish Foundation.

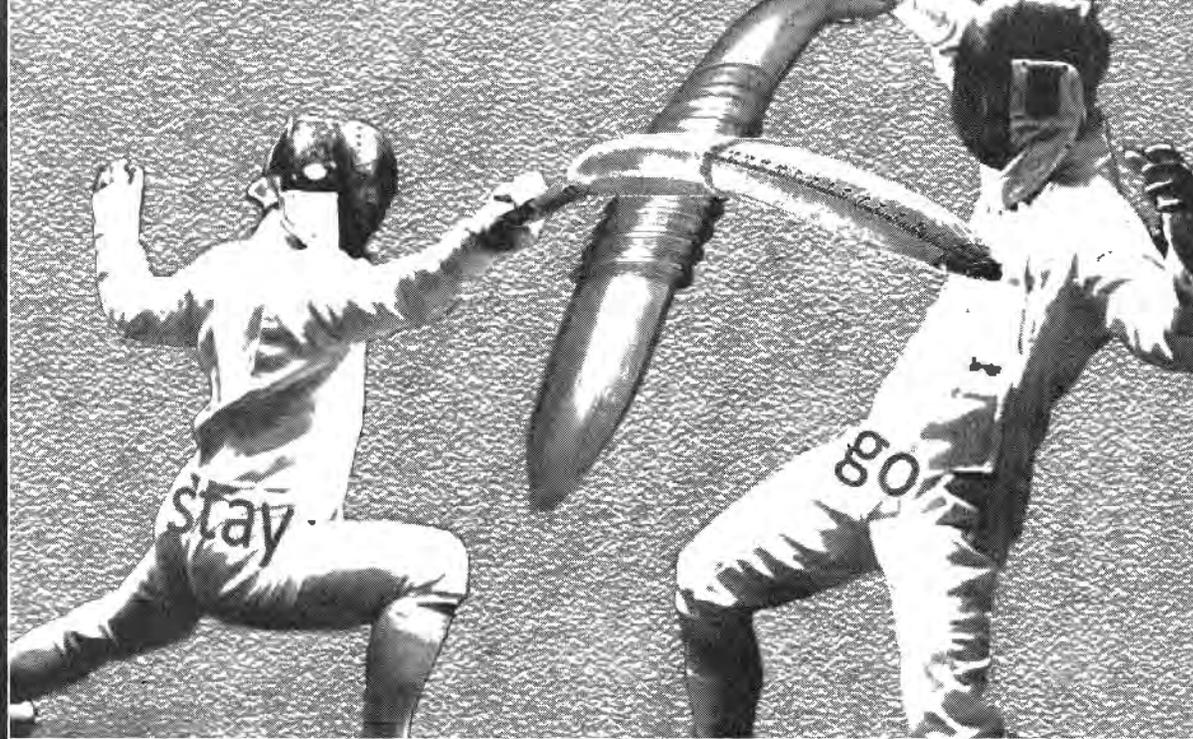
Not all of the strife is between governments and their possibly fictional citizens- Rome and Athens are in the midst of an intense jurisdictional dispute regarding the whole Hermes/Mercury debacle.

Private groups are also beginning to get in on the movement- Mexican goat farmers, as represented by trade group El Guapo Rancheros is filing a massive law suit against "any current and past chupacabras".

The Loch Ness monster is now cooperating with Somali pirates in reaction to a proposed boat tax. When asked for a comment, Nessie said, "BRaaaaAAA AAAAR R R GG G G. WAAANNRRRRRAA *snort* rraaaaaGGC!!!"

Meanwhile, the AFL-UFO, the American organization concerned with labor unions and life beyond our galaxy, has been deemed "batshit" and subsequently ignored. ■

THE CONDOM BATTLE



This is how all disputes should be settled.

by **Richard O'Toole**
Sexual Finance Reporter

RICHARDSON(AMP) - Chain store 'Condoms to Go' has new competition in town. *Uranus* was live at the scene for the grand opening of 'Condoms to Stay'. In an exclusive interview with owner Joe Wood, *Uranus* went inside the condom business.

"I always thought, when you have the balls to actually enter a sex store, you don't want to have to drive somewhere else afterwards," Wood explained. "In other words, that drive needs to be fulfilling without another drive."

The idea, as told to *Uranus*, is that customers come and purchase their packages, and, like a fast-food restaurant, consume everything they need right away, right there.

Wood refused to say whether the store provided free refills. However, he did admit one downside. "Of course the tricky part," Wood noted, "is bringing those other pieces you need to fulfill said 'drive'. If it's just you alone, well, you don't need to come to our store for that."

Local resident, Penny Swallow, though, could not have been happier. "I am seeing this great guy, Ken, and sometimes after that late night What-A-Burger run, we just know what's going

to happen," Penny admitted, looking smugly at her boyfriend Ken Love. "Instead of running red lights and stop signs to get home, now we can just run down the street."

Mr. Love said that he especially felt in the mood if he drank Dr. Pepper at WhatABurger. "One of those 23 flavors is more than just a flavor," he grinned. "Kind of like me..."

Rival chain store 'Condoms to Go' wasn't sure how to react. At first, management was obviously somewhat bummed considering a new rival was in town. But the marketing department was already in full swing.

"This could be great for us," exclaimed marketing specialist Peter Johnson. "A lot of our customers don't quite know where to take their condoms after purchasing. Now, we can say, 'our condoms are the best. Take them to go over to that other store where they will stay.'"

Whether this was the plan all along or not is unclear. But regardless the level of collusion, Dallas residents are upbeat about more options. Escaping the doldrums of the recession isn't always easy, but the condom market may have provided a new option. ■

SG "Chock-Full of Good Ideas"

RICHARDSON (AMP) - Inspired by the not-at-all inappropriately named "Govern The Vote" drive, *Uranus'* inside scoop is that similar Student Government initiatives are on the way.

"We really wanted to address the problem of uneducated voters," said Chad Hanglsy III, "so we thought we would help by telling students where to vote, how often to vote, and most importantly, who to vote for. After all, who better to tell you who to vote for than the people who already won a popularity contest this year?"

Further proposals include an academic integrity drive called "Plagiarism and Getting Away With It" led by Gavin St. George, "Check (out a) Mate" a lecture series on dating for geeky (see: all) Comets, and SG President Bielawski's own effort "Clubbing For Seals" a charity drive where students binge drink for environmental causes.

Vice President Dina Shahrokhi recently held a meeting about her project "Smoke 'Em Out", an anti-cigarette campaign where all of the smoking areas on campus will be lit on fire. When concerns were brought up if Student Government was even allowed to do this, Shahrokhi laughed over the sound of her flamethrower and said "It's not 'who's going to allow me?', it's WHO'S GOING TO STOP ME!?!"

With these great initiatives on the way, *Uranus* looks forward to another splendid year from Student Government and hopes it continues its fine tradition of professionalism, efficiency, cordiality, and generally staying drama free. ■