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A Modest Proposal, vol. 4, no. 6

Jonathan Coker, *et al.*

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A Modest Proposal

The Right to Bear Arms



*As Article 2 of the
Bill of Rights remains
open to interpretation,
we debate the pros and
cons of gun ownership
page 12*

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A Modest Proposal

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Cover design by Luke McKenzie. Uranus cover design by Benedict Voit.



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No Butts About It

Why a campus-wide ban on smoking is a bad idea

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We've all seen the cigarette butts littering campus. We all know that smoking harms those who have never even bought a pack. Coming from a tree hugger and a health nut, we both understand why people dislike smoking on campus.

However, we are also practical. A campus wide smoking ban is unreasonable. With the inability to enforce the rules that are already in place, how can we expect smokers to follow a campus wide ban? We're in college, we're over eighteen, and we all have the right to choose whether or not to smoke. Not only is a campus wide smoking ban impractical, but also it infringes upon a legal liberty guaranteed to adults.

Currently, smoking is prohibited within twenty five feet of any campus building. Concurrently, there are also cigarette butts lying within twenty five feet of most campus buildings. It doesn't take an LSAT prep course to figure out the logic behind this one: the current ban isn't working. Most people don't even know it exists. At least we both didn't until our last Student Government meeting.

If twenty five feet is too much to ask, how can the university keep people from smoking everywhere? True, if the ban included the entire campus, it may be easier to spot someone breaking the rules. But it is impossible to patrol the whole campus at once, and smokers will find places to go to circumvent the ban.

Ever since elementary school, teachers have imbedded into our subconscious the effects of nicotine and how smoking turns humans into cigarette-dependent zombies. Certainly this is a matter for



Even though the university posts notices about which forbid smoking within twenty-five feet of a building, it has placed the cigarette receptacles much closer than their own regulation would allow. Photo by Benedict Voit

debate. But whether or not it's a casual smoke after class or a stress reliever after a long day, students as adults have the ability to go outside and have a smoke if they see fit.

Like those of us who feel that we need a cup of coffee in the morning to be any sort of productive, some smokers feel that their cigarette break is the only thing that keeps them awake during that three hour lecture class in Kusch stadium or stops them from going nuts due to that gum-smacking idiot in the second row.

We all have those days when we hardly have time to eat, use the rest room, and breathe because we are loaded with busy work. Similarly, many faculty members are chain-locked to our beautiful campus from nine to five. Let's not forget to mention the TAs that are left to rot in the basement of Founders, surfacing temporarily to find some sanity.

If some of these people have no time to leave campus but still want to smoke, how are they supposed to find time to take that cigarette break? Either we make them kick the habit (which isn't technically within the university's

jurisdiction) or we force them to lose their coveted parking spot and fight Drive A traffic just to smoke.

There is even talk about the smoking ban extending all the way into University Village and Waterview Park. That way, smokers would also be forced to cross Campbell and hover in a nearby neighborhood with their cigarettes. Not only is this completely impractical, but we are in an environment where the vast majority are over eighteen, bearing the legal choice of whether or not to smoke. No university has the right to take that right away. Right?

With a campus wide ban, smokers' freedom to exercise their legal guarantee would be highly constrained because of the inconveniences such a policy would present. In our last Student Government meeting, the question of the ban was part of the agenda.

As representatives of the entire student body, we could not endorse these measures. Although smokers may not be the majority of the student body, we both believe that it would be wrong to alienate this group of students to such an extreme.

“ It doesn't take an LSAT prep course to figure out the logic behind this one: the current ban isn't working...”

We think that it is fair to say that a smoking ban is both impractical and unreasonable. Still, we want everyone to know that we fully support measures to improve air quality and the standard of living for all at UTD.

In fact, we propose a campus wide SUV ban. Personally, breathing in car exhaust isn't any more pleasant than being a victim of second hand smoke. But is such a ban reasonable? No. Is a campus wide smoking ban reasonable?

No. ■

Although Dina and Grace appreciate nice butts, they only like seeing them beyond twenty-five feet of buildings. So be respectful. Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

ART

UTD offers a variety of high-quality art; now it needs the audience

P



by alex garcia topete
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A

The human world is divided. It's split between the material and the abstract, which are more often called sciences and arts. No one can debate that everything "human" is related to one of these realms, if not both, in one way or another. What some may argue, however, is that sciences are more important than arts, since their benefits are more direct — namely more material and, after all, we do live in a material world.

But arts help people understand their world beyond the theorems and the numbers of the hard sciences, or the complex mechanics of the social sciences. If the sciences answer the what and how of reality, then it's fair to consider that arts answer the why behind them all. Science is about manipulating nature; art is adding meaning to nature. In a sense, the abstract craziness of art helps keep the track — a humanistic one.

UTD is no exception. In it, sciences and arts meet, maintaining a neat balance. This preserves UTD as a reliable source for scientific development as well as for artistic production. After all, it's a university (from Latin *universitas*, meaning "whole world") aspiring to educate with the spirit of the Renaissance.

The goal is to turn students into scientists that can appreciate art, and

artists that can handle science; if by chance someone turns out to be a Da Vinci, all the better.

Art is simply the harder field to promote. Scientific development can easily occur thanks only to a single, isolated scientist that gets recognized by a selected few, whereas artistic production requires a broader audience to be fully functional and worthy.

Without such an audience, any meaning conveyed or invoked by a piece of art remains sterile, wasted, and restricted to the piece itself. Just as an example, Da Vinci's anatomical studies needed only the endorsement of biologists and doctors to be branded as a scientific milestone; but *The Last Supper* wouldn't be the work of a genius if it didn't represent such grandeur to everybody besides learned artists.

Art needs to be showed. Unfortunately, proper exposition is one of UTD's worst weaknesses regarding its student-produced art. Not only is the institution at fault, though, the community altogether is to be blamed for this.

From UTD, what can be demanded is simply for it to provide opportunities for students to display their works. And in spite of not being the best possible, these opportunities do exist, regardless of the specific discipline. Visual artists have their chance in the form of exhibitions at the Barn, or as minor displays in other UTD spots. Musicians, dancers, and other performers get their chance in events prepared specifically for their shows. Mainly, this is why the art festivals of the spring and the fall exist: to satisfy the needs of the widest variety of interested

students possible, those who show and those who serve as audience.

However, the unfortunate side of the matter is that although UTD is a university with thousands of enrolled students, most events normally involve less than a hundred. Audiences and participants are just scarce. What's even worse, the students that do get involved tend to repeat — sometimes they are the participants, other times the audience.

It is a shame, and maybe marvelous, that even with the reduced, recycled student population for these events, UTD as a whole still strives to make everything in the most professional and attractive way. Simply put, UTD's events, such as concerts and exhibitions, imitate major ones of their type.

An example is the upcoming Cosmic Film Festival — an opportunity for any aspiring filmmakers and performers to show their work and get feedback from an audience. And like many UTD events, it will start out small with a few short films. But hopefully, small won't apply to the audience; that is, if more students than the regulars to Meteor Theater go to the festival this next April 11th.

It's the start, and being this small means that the festival can only get bigger and better in the years to come, when hundreds of students, rather than mere dozens, participate in the Cosmic Film Festival. UTD's art environment exists. Now it just needs you. ■

*Alex is willing to pose for art's sake — any takers for the audience?
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Viewing Water in Waterview

When getting wet just isn't fun



by benedict voit

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Never before has the name Waterview been so appropriate. As you may recall, heavy rains marked the end of Spring Break. And boy did it rain. For over a day, the heavens opened, and although the resulting water could be considered inanna, in this case I'm not so sure.

I'll be the first to admit that my planning for these occasional monsoon-ish days is not the most complete. My umbrella was cheap when it came off the Wal-Mart shelf many a moon ago, and, pardon the pun, it hasn't weathered very well. At this point it acts more as a miniature shield which, without terrible winds, can be somewhat directed against the direction of the rain. It was with this, my rain coat, and other protective clothing that I ventured out into the storm.

While I had accurately prepared for the fact that falling rain would hit my upper body first (i.e. hold the umbrella over my head), I was not prepared for what lay below: so much rain hitting the ground in so short a period of time that it formed a rapidly moving stream. It's a good thing there are sidewalks. But alas, therein lies the problem.

The landscaping of Phase III is such that the sidewalks are often the low points of the area, allowing them to beautifully funnel the flowing water. Granted, there are small indentations in the surrounding grass and dirt; *perhaps* they could be referred to as ditches. These parallel the walkways, which provide great assistance when there is a lighter

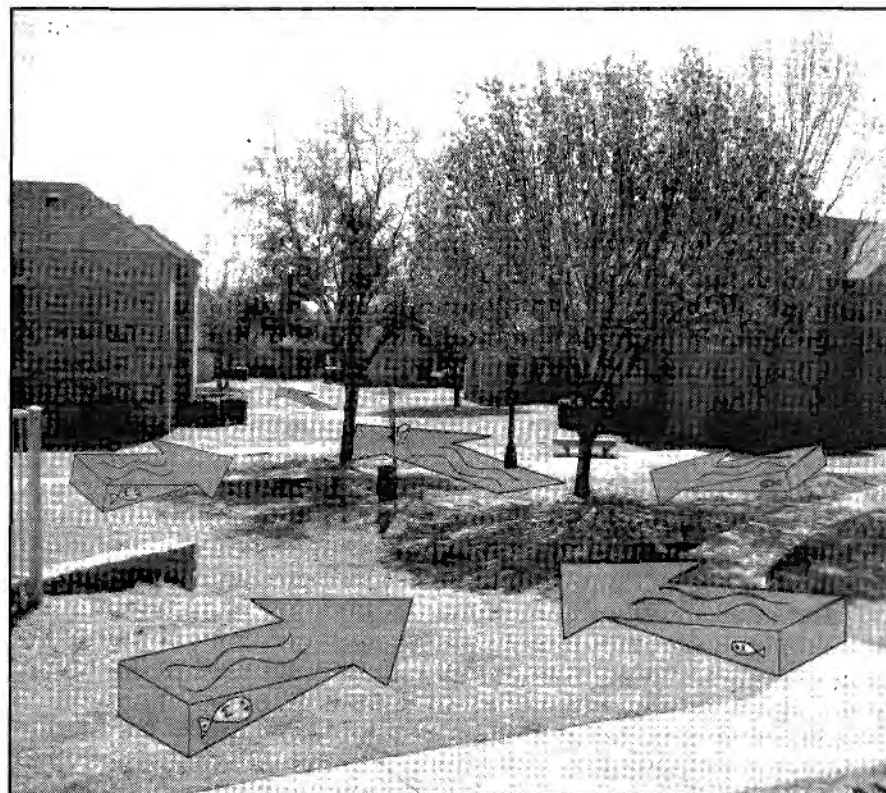
rain. However, for the downpours that we often witness, these areas fill rapidly, overflow, and simply add debris and dirt picked up from these ditches to the flowing concrete-bottomed stream.

Let me be clear in the fact that I am not attempting to cast blame. Whether Waterview did or did not have say in the actual height of sidewalks is moot. The construction was decades ago. However, Waterview does currently have the power to correct the situation.

Two options are available: make the sidewalks higher, or make the surrounding land lower. As the first option would essentially involve rebuilding the sidewalk network—which may result in more efficient pathways but require high costs—this leaves the management with the second option.

The easiest and most practical approach to this solution would be to dig the current indentations deeper and make them real ditches. Further evidence that the current rivets do not do their intended job can be seen by the repositioned wooden bridges that the rising tide has shifted. I thank Waterview (in all seriousness) for adding new wooden planks just this year. Perhaps it would be possible to dig slightly deeper underneath them in the future.

However, before undertaking the project of digging real ditches, Waterview should consider two additional points: that not all sidewalks actually need the ditches, and for those that need ditches, there should be a discussion as to the best method of digging them. They not only need to collect the water, but also divert the water onward. The apartment complex certainly does not need ditches filled with stagnant water, especially this time of year, which provide suitable breeding grounds for mosquitoes.



The water flow in Phase III is convenient if you live atop the hill. Otherwise, be prepared.
Graphic Illustration by Benedict Voit

I must admit that the sidewalks at present do at least funnel the water away from the apartments and into the parking lot, where at night it meets up with the artificial lake caused by the sprinkler systems.

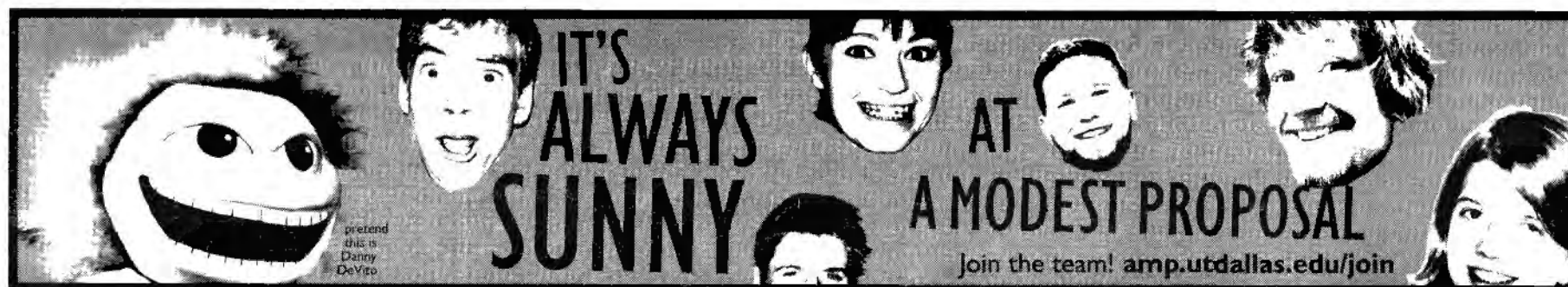
Although my focus is largely on the apartment complexes, this observation is certainly not limited to them. With the University already underway in the conceptualization of the new freshman dorms, I am confident that appropriate measures will be taken to keep the students dry when necessary without sacrificing too much visual appeal. Perhaps a more daunting task would be on campus outside of the Library and Student Union, where a small lake

appears. With nothing but concrete all around, there may be no easy solution.

I will concede that these projects may not be worth the costs, although I can't imagine digging a few ditches to be terribly expensive. For the few times a year that it really rains, perhaps these ditches are not worth the loss in aesthetic appeal, soaked possessions, or the potential mosquito problem.

Hopefully this is not the case and the project can be completed quickly. Until then, though, it may not be a bad idea to buy a better umbrella, a heavier coat, and potentially even some waterproof shoes. ■

*Benedict's fishing gear is ready for next time.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*



Giving Campus Life a Sporting Chance



by liam skoyles
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Intramural Sports at UTD has long been a bright beacon in what some contend is a lackluster on-campus experience. Of all the events on campus, intramural events are some of the best attended and most anticipated; every fall the flag football championships draw huge crowds.

Intramural (IM) sports represents not only a way for the campus as a whole to come together, but also for organizations to recruit members, gel as a team, and have great fun. Intramural teams are necessarily small and, therefore, an organization does not need to be enormous to field a team. Many other universities divide the campus organizations and Greek life into separate divisions, however, at UTD all organizations are on equal footing. In fact, teams are often created by groups of students unaffiliated with a campus organization.

The Intramural program has also embraced our unique freshman living arrangements by organizing a freshman league that pits buildings against other buildings. This activity cultivates a real sense of community in Phase 8, as many Comets meet their neighbors in a setting that doesn't involve an Xbox for the first time.

Sometimes people misinterpret IM sports to mean flag football alone, but the IM program has a wide variety of

competitions, from traditional sports like flag football, volleyball and soccer, to fun activities like kickball, squash, and weight-lifting, to hilarious events like the belly-flop smackdown, and cardboard boat regatta.

UTD is not alone in its love of intramural sports, nearly every campus has an active IM program, most of them larger than ours, but the growing student life options on campus, as well as the addition of dorms, will

“...the IM program has a wide variety of competitions, from traditional sports like flag football, volleyball and soccer, to fun activities like kickball, squash, and weight-lifting to hilarious events like the belly-flop smackdown and cardboard boat regatta.”

continue to fuel our vibrant IM program.

At UTD, the crowning achievement of intramural sports is the Comet Cup. This award is given at the end of the academic year to reward across-the-board participation, sportsmanship, and achievement. The Comet Cup currently has four divisions: Men's, Women's, Co-rec, and Freshman.

For the past several years, ZBT has constituted an unstoppable force when it came to the Comet Cup.

The major advantage ZBT had over most other organizations on campus was their immense membership base, Comet Cup standings are determined mostly on number of teams participating, with relatively small bonuses for placing in each sport.

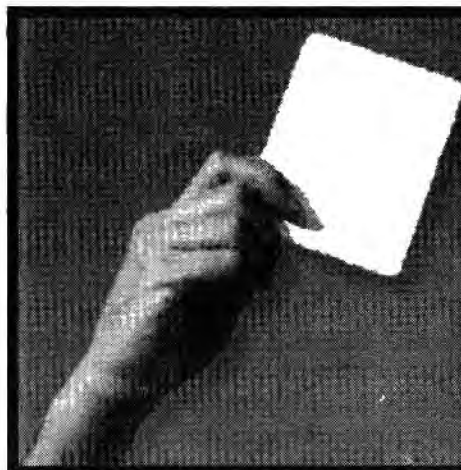
In response to this domination, and in true *Revenge of the Nerds* fashion, AMP took on the task of unseating this powerhouse. AMP's casual contributor network, open to anyone who wished (or wishes!) to contribute, meant our organization had the resources to defeat ZBT, although perhaps not the coordination.

For all that IM sports is at UTD, it could still be much more. Our campus is full of organizations, groups of friends, and even individual students who could make IM sports even better than it already is. As more teams compete, the competition will get more fierce for those who are gung-ho, and the lower divisions will be more fun, for those who are just playing around.

On the whole, IM sports remains one of the most active parts of UTD campus life, its huge participation and almost limitless potential begs for more people to get involved. New sports competitions and activities are being considered all the time. In this, its first year, the Cardboard Boat Regatta attracted nearly 15 teams to construct seaworthy vessels out of cardboard and duct-tape and race them across the AC pool. Also new, a Guitar Hero competition rocked out in the Auxiliary Gym of the AC, showcasing what is really important to students on campus.

The IM program at UTD gives its students to come together in athletic (and not so athletic) competition and have a great time doing it. From Frisbee to mini-golf to dodgeball, IM sports has something for everyone. All they need now is you! ■

Liam Skoyles gets a red card
for designing the advertisement seen below.
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Rethinking American Poverty

Homelessness in our backyards isn't an issue to dismiss



by stephanie shasteen
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Two months ago, AMP published an article on what was, ostensibly, a level-headed exposé of the latest advances in vagrant housing. Unfortunately, the article took what I felt was a sharp turn into unfounded, though not wholly invalid opinions on homeless people in particular.

I'd like to share some information from my own experiences in and out of the classroom that many people may not have considered before. Not all homeless people are insane or willfully poor. Additionally, it's not as easy to lift oneself up from the depths of poverty as we'd like to think.

The very implication that most people "choose" to perpetuate their homelessness is just a vain attempt to displace guilt. If we can look away from misfortune and claim it is entirely their fault, we free our consciences to buy frappuccinos and add new leather boots to our wardrobes while we avoid eye contact with a problem we wish would just solve itself. To be truthful, there are people who get a kick out of living on the edge, sleeping in railroad cars and living on donations. I'm sure you'll trust me when I tell you their numbers are absolutely negligible.

It's a pretty sick hobby, though, when there are children born into poverty without their consent. What do you expect a two year old to do about his situation? Even if he's lucky enough to go to a school that can give him the attention he needs, he still has to come home to a pretty awful life. Children born into poverty suffer as well from a social stigma among their peers that can be devastating to their mind set, self-esteem, and desire to improve.

Older people have a hard time too. There are grandparents having to keep their grandchildren off the streets when the parents, for whatever reason, can't or won't take care of the kids themselves. Children are an enormous expense, and that's something that a 75-year-old woman



A homeless man sits next to his sign asking for aid. Public domain photo courtesy of Flickr.

doesn't have the money or energy to handle. Yet it's difficult to say to your grandchild, "Sorry, I can't afford you and your dad doesn't want you; you're the state's problem now," especially considering the difficulties in foster care and government aid.

The stories of how people ended up on the streets are endlessly varied. I could try to persuade you, reader, by sharing the most compelling stories of strife and woe dealt by the indiscriminate hand of fate. What's more important than how people got there is how hard it is to get out. How much of your current success and comfort is the result of entirely your own actions? I'm sure many of you get far more support from your parents than you'd like to admit. You also have at least some college under your belt by now. Your potential for success is heavily reliant upon income and education.

Well, imagine trying to get hired at what most consider a "decent job" if you have no internet access, no friends, no family support, no decent clothing

for an interview, you smell like piss and sweat, and your biggest accomplishment to date is a GED. Not even with a basic minimum-wage job is it possible for some to escape homelessness and even with a tiny place to live and a job, they'll still have to battle a society that continually sees them as lesser citizens.

No matter how much we may see America as the land of plenty, there simply is no conceivable way for everyone to be a successful D.C. lawyer or Conan O'Brien—or in many cases, even a paid employee. Complete laissez-faire capitalism, as some seek, isn't flawless and it hardly creates equal opportunities for all.

Eliot Liebow, a former government employee and volunteer at homeless shelters, proposes another interesting point: we're quick to assume that the only "deserving poor" are mentally ill. Well, how can you be so sure? Certainly, in the late 20th century, there was an idea among our mental health physicians that "insane" people needed to readjust to regular society

by simply being thrown back out into the world. You can imagine how well adjusted those patients ended up.

However, most "crazy" people on the streets, Liebow says, have simply buckled under the extreme emotional and psychological pressures of being homeless day in and day out. Think of all the stressed out Prozac users who live in nice homes; now imagine the people on the streets, clearly in exponentially worse conditions, who can't even afford Tylenol. The streets may have caused the problem, rather than the problem being the reason they're on the streets.

It's impossible to tell, so it's not fair to mislabel what could just be a bad mood/outlook on life perpetuated by nasty circumstances. Mr. Liebow is a rewarding read, and a quick Google or Amazon search can direct you to his book on the lives of homeless women.

No matter if you're motivated by religious faith or just a basic sense of human compassion, if we're born with a healthy mind and body and more resources than most, one of the best things we can do with our lives is to help ease the suffering of others. The cost of living has risen sharply since 1970 while the average American wage has nearly stagnated in comparison.

Luckily, there are charities that actually help educate poor and homeless people about various skills so they can get on their feet and stay there. If you want to find such organizations, take a look at the website <http://www.charitynavigator.org>. Many have volunteer opportunities if you'd like to give your time but can't give much money.

If you're still not convinced, that's fine. The American dream isn't geared toward a compassionate mind set—Pepsi, McDonald's and Disney World have seen to that. But I hope you'll keep in mind those who are less fortunate next time you go to the Cheesecake Factory in a car you didn't have to pay for. ■

Stephanie knows there's another problem plaguing American society – a severe deficit of funk. Emergency shipments of booty-shaking bass are on their way.

Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

Our E-Wasteful Society

Electronics waste is piling up and third world nations are paying the price



by **laura miller**
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Last week my five-year old, twenty-seven inch television went into early retirement. It was about time for an upgrade anyhow, but I'm left with 150 pounds of electronic gadgetry that, apart from satisfying some ingenuous curiosities, I have absolutely no use for. Millions of Americans face this same problem as our computers, cell phones, and televisions quickly fade into obsolescence almost faster than we are able to purchase them.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 30 to 40 million PC's, 25 million televisions, and 98 million cell phones will be obsolete within the next few years. Part of this has to do with President Bush's "Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005," which requires all televisions to be HD-ready by 2009. Of course, you can't fail to mention the public's growing obsession for faster, smarter, and smaller devices.

Until recently, the solution was what it has always been: toss it into a Dumpster and let someone else worry about it. The UN Environment Programme estimates that about 70% of the world's fifty million tons of electronic waste ends up in landfills each year, and those numbers are growing. Despite government regulation, much of this waste is shipped overseas to places like China and West Africa where the people are even more incapable of proper disposal.

So what's the big deal? If developing countries want to use our electronics for scrap, then why not let them earn a few extra dollars? The problems lie not with the salvaging of valuable metals such as silver, gold, and copper, but in the methods used to strip the circuitry.

When computer wires are burned or circuit boards melted to extract the valuable elements, harmful toxins are released into the air, water, and soil. Electronics contain toxic elements and compounds like lead (a neurotoxin); mercury (which has been linked to brain damage and is potentially hazardous to developing fetuses); and beryllium (a known carcinogen). These are just a few.

Manufacturing giants, such as China, are often the graveyards for much of the developed world's dying and dejected waste. Improper recycling procedures have resulted in toxic chemicals being

re-manufactured into products such as jewelry and shipped back to the U.S. Factories or individuals that dispose or dismantle machinery improperly are placing us all at risk.

Fortunately, legislation is beginning to be passed that requires manufacturers to take share in the responsibility. Although it has not been a priority in the U.S., some progress has been made. As of September 2006, Dell has offered a free recycling program for any product at any time. Other companies, such as Hewlett-Packard, Apple, Sony, Toshiba, IBM, and Gateway, offer rebates or trade-in value

for old equipment. Cost-Co will take any brand of used electronics, giving store credit for objects with value, and recycling valueless merchandise at no cost to you.

In 2005, electronics from San Antonio and Houston were found in waste dumps in Nigeria. Shortly after, the Texas Campaign for the Environment and Computer Take Back Campaign was developed, and in 2007, Texas passed an Electronics TakeBack Law that requires manufacturers to provide an accessible way for their consumers to responsibly dispose of electronic waste. It is believed that such programs will lift the burden from individuals and local governments and conserve the allocation of public funds.

Weak waste and landfill laws in Texas threaten to undermine the entire process, so it's important to do careful research before donating or disposing of electronics. Although some companies advertise safe recycling, they have not all been thoroughly investigated, and many of them sell their waste to salvage companies who ship it overseas. There are three companies in Texas who have signed a pledge of "True Stewardship." They are Intechra in Carrollton, ECS Refining in Terrell, and Corona Visions in San Antonio.

Keep in mind that replacement is not always one hundred percent necessary. Many computers, cell phones, and televisions can be upgraded or repaired for a fraction of the cost of a brand new machine. Usually, if the problem is with performance, the issue can be resolved. If it's simply time for a change, then try to repress the urge to toss your antique television off of a rooftop, or smash your malfunctioning laptop with a sledgehammer. The social, environmental, and political repercussions may come back to haunt you. ■



Constantly updating cell phones creates massive waste. Photo courtesy of Greenpeace USA

For more information please visit:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/01/high-tech-trash/carroll-text.html>

http://www.texasenvironment.org/ewaste_localresolutions.cfm

<http://www.texasenvironment.org/texasakeback/index.cfm>

http://www.greenechoices.org/electronicsrecycling/el_whatyoucando.cfm

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa>

Laura loves her new phone!
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu

The Misnomer of Darwinism

Creationists maliciously label the science of evolutionary biology "Darwinism"



by richard badgett
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I'd like to make a plea to all AMP readers. The next time someone uses the word Darwinism in a debate on evolution, or biology, or really anything, please walk away. Right then. Nothing else they have to say is worth hearing.

One of the favorite tactics of a number of creationists and ID proponents (who are also creationists, but I'll flatter them) is to portray evolutionary science as a sort of personal ideology centered on the historical person of Darwin. They are loathe to use words like evolution or evolutionary biology, as these are well-established fields of science whose understanding is absolutely essential to even a surface-level comprehension of broader biology. By creating the straw man of Darwinism, they can attribute to it any qualities or claims they might like, because, in fact, no such thing actually exists to refute them.

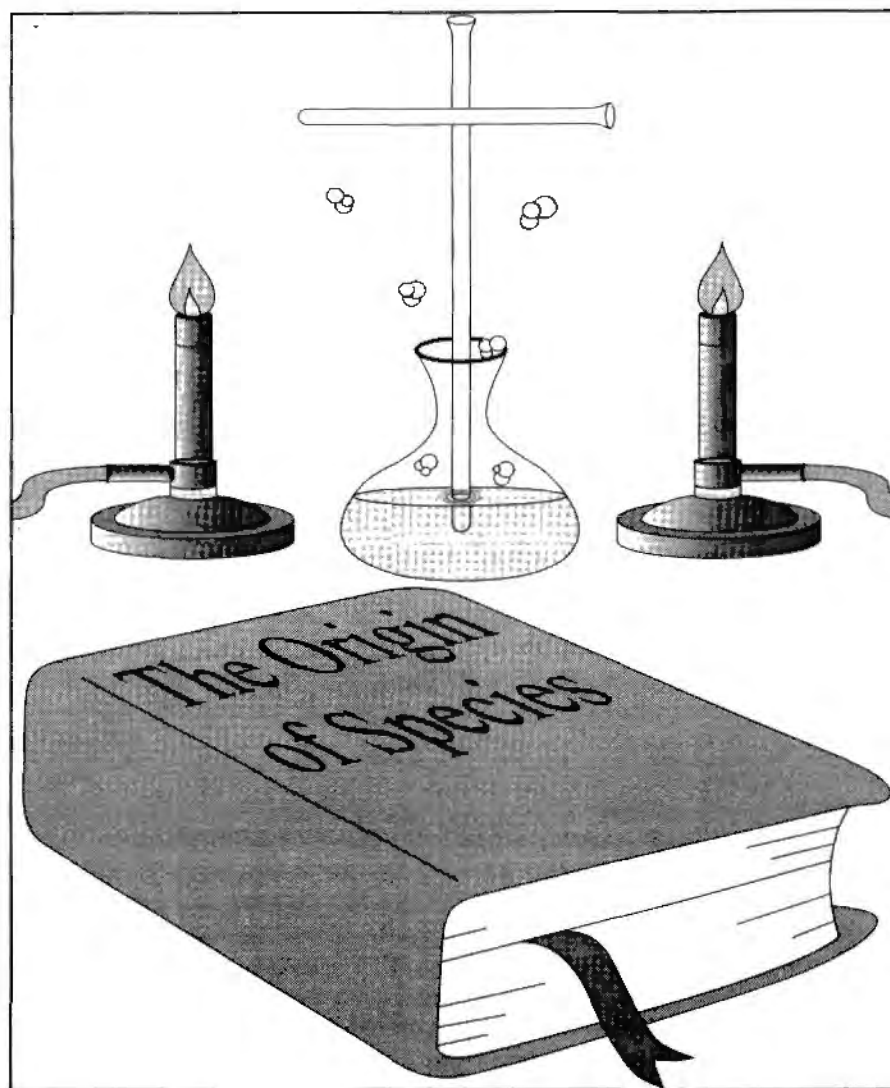
The problems with dignifying the term Darwinism with a response (except a rabidly negative one) are many-fold. First, as expressed above, there is simply no such thing as Darwinism. Physicists don't call what they do Einsteinism, astronomers never refer to their work as Copernicanism. By using such terminology, creationists are trying to imply that the scientific theory of evolution can somehow be contained within a single individual, and a badly outdated individual at that. They're trying to turn back the clock a hundred and fifty years to make the claim that current evolutionary biology and Darwin's original works are somehow the same thing. Evolution has come a long way in 150 years, and Darwin, while a brilliant scientist, got plenty of things wrong. We have since gotten many of them right. Using the term Darwinism is denying a century and a half of scientific research.

Another reason we must deny "Darwinism" is that the term belies a

fundamental misunderstanding of what is, and is not, science. Unlike religion, science functions independently of, and at times in spite of, any individual, however great his contribution. Science is not a thing, it is not a philosophy. It is a methodology. Science is the process of explaining things; it is not any single one of those explanations. What's more it is an ongoing process that continually re-examines its findings. In science, nothing is sacred. Darwinism as a term implies that evolution is somehow a personal ideology, rather than a systematic approach to solving problems. It limits and personalizes science in a way that is simply inaccurate.

Another irrelevant criticism is Darwin's use of race. Now to be fair, Darwin was a bit racist. He reflected many of the cultural prejudices of his day held by virtually all members of his society. However, before we denigrate Darwin for being a product of his times, though, let's take off our 20th century glasses for a moment. When Darwin used the term race in his original title *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, he did so in the parlance of his times. A better term today would be breed, or species. In *The Origin* Darwin talks of races of pigeons, races of horses, and races of fish. In 1850, the term race meant to a biologist essentially what the term breed does today, and as such any attempt to portray Darwin as a racist on the basis of his title demonstrates two things: first, that whoever is making this claim is simply trying to distract you from the substantive scientific issues, and second, that this same person has clearly never actually read *The Origin*.

On the same note, the criticism of evolution for being "just a theory" is equally invalid. When something is called a theory in science, it has a different meaning than when we use the word theory in everyday speech. In the vernacular, a theory is just a guess, maybe an educated guess, but while it may be predicated on a logical framework, it is conjecture. In science, when something has graduated to the distinguished title



May the Bunsen burners of reason burn forever. Graphic Illustration by Liam Skoyles

of theory, there's a lot more at work. To be considered a theory, something must not only explain natural phenomena but put in place a framework that should accurately predict as yet undocumented phenomena. Wild, unsubstantiated ideas like "gravity" and "relativity" are merely theories as well, yet somehow they fail to attract the same nincompoop argument. This vain attempt to invalidate evolution, like the above, stems from a profound ignorance of the most basic aspects of science.

We must not allow such distractions and tangential criticisms from preventing a real scientific discussion of the facts. What I propose – or rather what I am attempting to convey, as the original author is Dr. P. Z. Myers – is that any

time someone uses the term Darwinism, or refers to an evolutionary biologist as a Darwinist we immediately call them on it. We correct the statement and force them to use the proper terminology before we move on. There can be no playing along here, because what's at stake is so important. If we dignify these liars and charlatans by discussing a fabricated issue, we undermine the cause of real science. There can be no truth, no understanding, and no progress when consensus trumps reality, and straw-man arguments are a deliberate attempt to mislead people when appeals to logic are insufficient. ■

Richard didn't just appear here; he evolved.
Discuss this article at amp@utdallas.edu

The Hidden Side of Math



by nate hannon
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People hate math.

Okay, maybe I should qualify that statement. Certainly not everyone hates math. However, it is clear that math is not one of the most popular subjects around. When I tell people that I am a math major, I usually get one of two reactions.

The first is something along the lines of, "What will you do with a math degree?" I might look at this as an attempt to make friendly conversation. Most likely, a lot of the time it is. However, I cannot help but think that what some people really mean is, "Why would you study math when there are so many more career

opportunities available in engineering or computer science?"

For the record, my answers to these questions are "I'd like to become a professor" (although I should stress that this is by no means the only career open to a mathematician), and "because I really enjoy doing math;" there will be more on this later.

The second reaction that I often get might be paraphrased as, "Wow, that's really cool! I could never do math." While I appreciate compliments, this article is about math, not about me as a person. It sounds to me like some of these people view mathematicians in the same light as, perhaps, firefighters or soldiers – heroes who brave situations that most of us find downright terrifying.

I do not know exactly, or even approximately, how many people have such an opinion of math. However, I do have a pretty good educated guess as to why math has acquired such a poor

reputation. The reason is that most people don't know what math is. Perhaps the story of my own education in math will help to clarify what I mean.

The first topic I learned in math, as is probably the case with most people, was arithmetic. To solve an arithmetic problem, I needed only to look at the very simple symbols that I was given and apply very simple rules to them. Algebra was a bit more difficult, as it introduced more symbols and more complicated rules that had to be applied.

The same trend continued through trigonometry, calculus, and differential equations. Geometry was a bit of an enigma – it involved proving things, and there was less manipulation of symbols. However, it was the exception and not the rule. When I took calculus, I began to doubt my ability to continue as a mathematician. Many of the calculations had become too complicated, and I struggled with some of them. Other

freshman- and sophomore- level math classes were similar.

Eventually, however, I took a class called Introduction to Abstract Mathematics (at another university). This class was very different from any of the above classes. There was hardly a number in sight. The focus of this class was not on applying rules or learning formulas, but reasoning. It was impossible to look in a textbook to learn how to solve the problem – I had to figure it out on my own. Sound like a nightmare? Not quite.

The rules were much simpler than those to which I had become accustomed – no more complicated than those in high school algebra. For me, this class was, on the whole, much easier than other math classes, because I could figure out how to apply simple rules to prove things more easily than I could apply complicated rules formulaically. In most of my upper-division math classes at UTD, the same has been true.

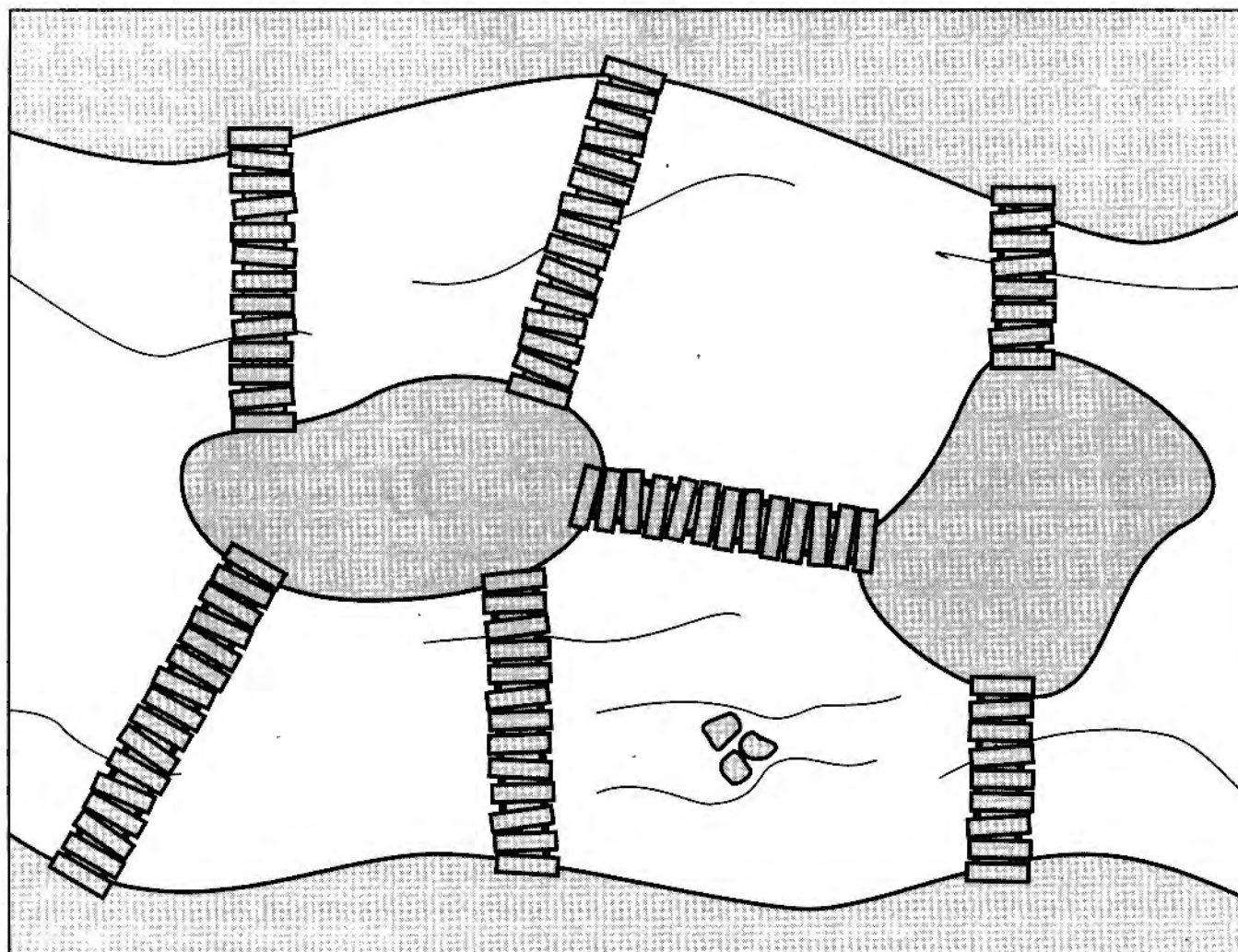
Now, everyone's brain is different. Some people are better at doing calculations and not as good at concepts. However, I would be willing to bet that a significant number of people would enjoy abstract mathematics if they could get past all of the calculations.

If you think that math is drudgery, try solving the illustrated problem, known as the Königsburg bridge problem. The problem is simple: is it possible to find a path that crosses each of these bridges exactly once? (Obviously, no flying, swimming, or otherwise cheating is allowed.)

The Königsburg bridge problem is a simple problem in graph theory, one of many branches of math (some would argue all of true math) that is focused on logical reasoning rather than manipulating numbers. However, very few people think of this type of problem when they hear the word "math." I fully believe that many people would have a far better impression of math if they learned about its hidden side. ■

Nate: Dr. Spock :: Deep Blue :: Garry Kasparov
(Can you find the six nerdy references in this story ender?)
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

The answer to the Königsburg bridge problem is no. Because except for its start and end, the path must leave any area it enters. Hence, it can't cross an odd number of bridges from any place, except for its start and end. Since all four places have an odd number of bridges, no such path exists.



Königsburg bridge problem, can you cross all bridges before you cross one twice? Graphic Illustration by Liam Skoyles

Constitutionally Confirmed

How the Second Amendment establishes your individual right to bear arms



by wen fa

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The Supreme Court of the United States will decide for the first time in the nation's history whether the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, commonly known as the "right to bear arms," is an individual or collective right.

The Supreme Court will rule on *District of Columbia v. Heller* (previously known as *Parker v. District of Columbia*), a case which challenges the constitutionality of a 30 year old ban on handguns in the District of Columbia. The Supreme Court, which heard oral arguments in March, will hand out its decision in June on what kind of right the second amendment protects.

The collective rights interpretation of the second amendment is one that has been adopted by 9 out of 11 circuit courts. Collective rights proponents argue that the right to bear arms is bound by an individual enrollment in a militia and they claim that the purpose of the second amendment was to ensure that the state militias would be maintained for the safety of the state.

In contrast, the individual rights interpretation of the second amendment contend that the right to bear arms is not contingent on that individual's service to the militia or on the relation of the weapon in question to militia use. A third viewpoint, which states that the second amendment grants an individual's right to bear arms as long as the weapon is related to militia service has been called both "semi-individual" and "quasi-collective."

I believe that the second amendment confers an individual's right to bear arms. This view not only goes along with the common-sense understanding of the right to bear arms but also with the text, history, and placement of the amendment within the Bill of Rights.

As noted by the District of Columbia



“The right of individuals to keep and bear arms for purposes such as hunting and self-defense predates the formation of the Constitution. The second amendment expresses that the right (instead of a right) to bear arms “shall not be infringed.”

Circuit Court of Appeals, the second comma in the second amendment splits the amendment into two clauses: the prefatory clause and operative clause. Consequently, just as a preface in a book does not bind the content of the book, the prefatory clause in the second amendment does not legally bind the more inclusive rights of the second amendment.

Instead, as noted in *Parker*, the clause only cites its “most salient political benefit—and thus the most appropriate to express in a political document.”

Furthermore, “the people” as it appears in the second amendment has already

been ruled to be as meaning individuals by the Supreme Court in *United States v. Verdugo-Urquidez* and other amendments (the 1st and 4th amendment) that include “the people” have been clearly defined as individual rights.

There has been significant debate over whether to keep and bear arms refers to one right (keep and bear arms) or to two rights (keep arms or hear arms). Regardless, the word “keep” has an apparent private and individual connotation.

The word “bear” is traditionally implies a military use, but it does not do so exclusively and when read in

conjunction with “keep,” can be held to have an individual meaning.

The right of individuals to keep and bear arms for purposes such as hunting and self-defense predates the formation of the Constitution. Accordingly, the second amendment expresses that the right (instead of a right) to bear arms “shall not be infringed.”

It is interesting that the second amendment is the only amendment within the bill of rights with a prefatory clause. Nonetheless, various state constitutions such as New Hampshire include an introductory clause with the amendment which describes a purpose but does not narrow the scope of the amendment.

The Second Amendment's placement within the bill of the rights also seems to suggest that it is an individual right. Amendments 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (amendments one through four were grouped together before ratification as amendments three through six) all provide individual rights so it would seem that the second amendment would be an aberration if it did not provide an individual right as well.

As the D.C. Circuit noted, canon of construction known as “*noscitur a sociis*” applies here in which an ambiguous statute is thought to have a certain meaning by reference to associated statutes.

The standard of review in this case should be decided in later cases. What we do know is that the second amendment (consistent with other amendments such as the first amendment) is not an absolute right. However, it's generally recognized that guns are not and should never be contraband simpliciter (or illegal for all purposes).

The standard of review necessarily falls in between the two extremes. Because Supreme Court review on the second amendment is almost non-existent at this point and just as the standard of review for first amendment clauses were decided at various times, the standard of review should be decided at a date in the future. ■

*Wen legally packs the beat to protect himself. Wen's hotness, though, may be too much to be legal.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*

Interpreting the Second

Defend Your Rights—and Yourself

One of our most misunderstood rights is in front of the Supreme Court: the second amendment, also known as the right to bear arms.

One misunderstanding is thanks to people believing that “guns cause crime.” The DC handgun ban that’s currently before the Supreme Court was made as an effort to reduce gun crimes, violent crimes, and other things thought linked to gun ownership. The only problem is that there’s no evidence (or close to none) that shows the ban working. Instead, gentrification, increased patrols, security cameras, etc are all helping to reduce crime.

So why didn’t the ban work? I’m not the first one that’s said this, and I won’t be the last: gun control laws affect the law-abiding citizens more than the criminals. For this reason, even gun prohibition laws will have no effect. There are too many ways to smuggle guns from other states, or even our bordering nations, to stop the black market and therefore the illegal possession of guns. Research shows that criminals will acquire guns illegally very easily, with or without a gun ban.

Another misunderstanding is due to people believing that “we don’t need guns” -- that guns should be left to the military and the police, not the average homeowner. This is also completely false. Imagine somebody busting into your house with a knife, a club, or a gun (all of which are possible). What would you rather have to protect yourself: pleas of “just take what you want” (note: this rarely is worth-while), a knife, a policeman 10 or 20 minutes away, a frying pan, or a gun of your choosing? To me, the answer is obvious: a gun.

You are your only first defense. The law, your local police department, security cameras, and locks are all aids to help reduce the likelihood of you being in such a situation, but once you are face-to-face with a violent criminal, a gun can be your only savior. One of the plaintiffs in the DC ban case tells the story

that his application for a handgun in his own home was denied. To me, that says the government is denying him the ability to protect himself, which is one of the possible reasons the second amendment was written.



by chris krailo

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While on the subject of protection, the phrase “a well-regulated militia” has been argued for decades now. It seems that most of the arguments are pushing personal agendas (usually in reference to passing more gun control laws). History tells us that a well-armed militia gave us the power to become a free nation. English history tells us that before “standing armies,” people protected both their homes and their countries with weaponry, including guns, and were called upon to fight when necessary.

It may be hard for us to imagine needing a militia today with the US Army fighting to protect our freedoms, but abilities to stop invading nations and to rebel against our own government are very important. Dystopian novels and movies (such as *Firefly*) show the importance of using the power of the people to stop the oppression of the government, of having a healthy amount of skepticism, and of the importance of self-protection. Gun classes and background checks can be useful tools in gun control, but prohibition is not.

Interviews of our prison population, as well as other research, shows that the mere knowledge that a person has a gun can protect that person from robbery, muggings, car-jackings, as well as many other crimes. It’s very easy for a criminal to have the upper hand if he or she is the

only one with a superior weapon, but if the person being attacked has the upper hand, or even equal protection, the tables are turned significantly.

Criminals are less likely to burglarize houses of known gun-owners, and showing a weapon often turns away would-be muggers. In Texas, we have the right to protect our home with deadly force, which includes our house and our vehicle as well as our workplace. While I can’t think of a single person who desires to use deadly force, I know many people who are comforted by the mere ability to use it if necessary. With the Supreme Court ruling to come down in June, hopefully a ruling is made in favor of individual gun rights. ■

Chris invites you to share your thoughts and reasons on the subject at the AMP website. What do you think about the case before the Supreme Court? Do the recent university shootings have any effect on your thoughts about gun laws?

When Chris has bare arms, he has two shining guns as well. Oh yeah! Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/



Illustration by Jordon Batura

Amendment

Safety Needs to Come First

Before I dare broach a controversial subject that, until recently, hasn't ever been properly addressed by the U.S. Supreme Court, let me just say that I enjoy and defend my personal and civil liberties just as much as the next person.

And as an advocate for individual rights, I believe that a certain distrust of authority figures (especially the government) is not only healthy but necessary.

Having said that, I think it's important to take a look at the words that started it all: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

This single sentence establishes what many argue to be our Second Amendment right to own a gun. But the real point of debate comes down to the "well regulated Militia" that's the justification for this right to bear arms. In a time when citizens couldn't fully trust or depend upon their government (at least, much less than we can today), people had to take it upon themselves to provide for their own defense against a common enemy *because no other established organization would do so.*

In other words, more than the simple right to own a gun, the Second Amendment established the right to rebel and overthrow the state by force (if necessary) when it was no longer a government "of the people, by the people, for the people" (in Abraham Lincoln's words). But it created this right for the people as a "well regulated Militia," as a group instead of as individuals.

So why is this history important? Because it seems that the Supreme Court is determined to find out what

was the original intent of the amendment so that it can set the standard for today. In response to rising violence and crime rates, the people of Washington D.C. passed a ban on the ownership of handguns in 1976.



by lissette villarruel

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Maybe because of the widespread fear of crime and support from constituents, the prohibition survived for three decades before it was seriously contested by Dick Heller, a security guard whose request for a license to keep a gun at his home was denied. And so, this case has come before the Supreme Court so that it can decide if this ban does violate the Second Amendment.

It's not hard to see that such a ban isn't really a violation of the Second Amendment. This argument isn't really over militias or original intent or even arms themselves. This is about security. It's about the Second Amendment's guarantee of protection from the enemy (whether foreign or domestic) for the citizens of this country.

And that kind of defense is now provided by police, the modern-day "well regulated Militia." They provide just the safety that people seek in buying handguns. So the citizens of D.C., in trying to find a solution to excessive violence that involved the use of handguns, didn't defy the intent of the Second Amendment by passing a ban on handgun ownership.

But let's set aside these legal contentions and semantics and all the "guns don't kill people, people kill people" NRA-marketed arguments (as much literal truth as they may have). The bottom line in this whole debate is that, simply put, guns are bad. Especially in

this nation, which seems to have a serious problem with gun-related homicides, gun control has become a necessity in terms of civilian safety.

The numbers say it all. According to *Harvard Magazine*, the United States has more guns per capita than any other industrialized nation and a whopping total of over 200 million in 1994 (a figure that was really close to the total population). It's no surprise, then, that the Associated Press reports that the U.S. also has the highest rate of guns deaths among those same countries (14.24 per 100,000 in 1994 compared to Japan's 0.05 per 100,000).

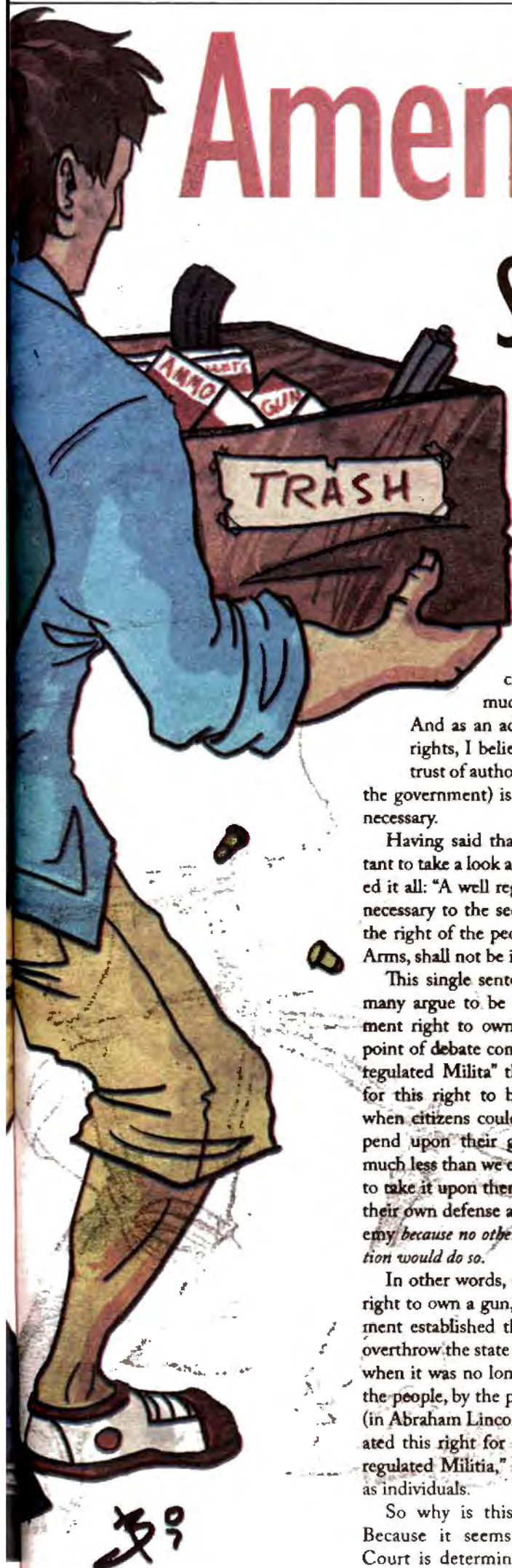
Combined, these numbers become even more disturbing when you consider that nearly 100% of gang-related homicides, nearly 80% of felony-related homicides, and just over 60% of argument-related homicides involved the use of guns, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Even worse, of the 30,000 people that died from gunfire in the U.S. in 2001, 58% were suicides, 37% were homicides, and the remaining 5% were accidental deaths.

Of course, that's not to say that these numbers would justify a federal ban on handguns throughout the nation. (In fact, I'll be fair and add that the Washington Post states the D.C. ban has had mixed results and doesn't seem to have accomplished all that it was designed to do, generally following the rising and falling rates of the rest of the country.)

But given the statistics and high rate of gun-related violence in America, it's not completely farfetched that the citizens of the District of Columbia would want to solve this problem by placing a limit on a right that the people (technically) no longer have.

Individual rights are of the utmost importance; there's no doubt about that. But is there really any harm in banning a weapon that makes murder this easy? ■

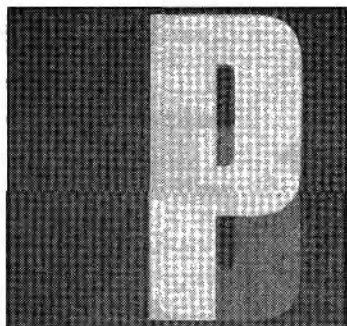
Lissette likes her rights. She also likes her life.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!





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The Spin Cycle



Portishead
Third
(Island Records)

Ever since *Dummy* appeared in 1994 out of the Bristol trip-hop movement, Portishead has come to represent a sort of detached, film-noir sexuality. Often exemplified by their choice of older, scratchy samples and the torch-song vocals of Beth Gibbons, Portishead's first two albums and the live effort *PNYC* built such a distinctive sound that it ultimately came to suppress them. The band disappeared after 1998, with only rumors of a follow-up keeping hope alive for fans. Now, ten years later, *Third* finally arrives.

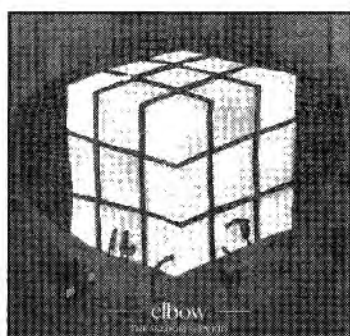
The spartan cover art is fair warning to those about to listen - this is a stripped-down, far more visceral band than the one who made songs like

"Glory Box" and "Sour Times" their calling card. Taking the darker edge of their self-titled second album to a whole new level, lead songwriter/instrumentalist Geoff Barrow here structures songs around simple, repetitive rhythms and distorted keyboards; guitars strum two-chord riffs over and over while Gibbons sounds literally as if she's about to break down at any moment. *Third* revels in claustrophobia, trapping the listener inside the production.

As far as the songs themselves, opener "Silence" establishes a basic riff and lets it run for two minutes before Gibbons even appears, trembling her way through lines like "Did you know what I wanted?" Standout "The Rip"

begins over a gently picked acoustic guitar, only to be replaced by a looping keyboard repeating a similar note pattern; the relentless "We Carry On" simply increases the volume when it wants to change sound. "Hunter" comes the closest to resembling past Portishead with its hushed guitars and loping drums, but it's powerful closing song "Threads" and the cowbell-heavy "Magic Doors" that offer the best insights into the band's new direction.

The tracks can get excessively abrasive/repetitive (see: "Machine Gun") and Gibbons' lyrics easily stumble into melodrama, but *Third* is a remarkably strong effort for a ten-year layoff. Just don't go in expecting "Roads" again.



Elbow
The Seldom Seen Kid
(Geffen)

Elbow has always been awkwardly positioned in current British rock: too quirky to hit mainstream pop radio like Coldplay, yet not far-out enough to dabble in the genre-leaping that Radiohead indulges in. From the moment "Any Day Now" kicked off debut album *Asleep in the Back*, the band proved themselves capable of making high-quality tunes on a consistent basis; however, commercial success (especially in the U.S.) continues to elude them.

Even after a conscious shift to more anthemic rock with *Cast of Thousands* and *Leaders of the Free World*, the band's

never really had a full-fledged success to date. *The Seldom Seen Kid*, their first totally self-produced album, offers perhaps their first ready-made radio hit: "Weather to Fly," a shimmering ballad built around Guy Garvey's rich baritone describing a town where "my father's feet/still ring from the walls" and idle afternoons spent developing "the biggest of plans." It's a song half-destined for movie soundtracks and bad mixtapes.

Even if "Weather to Fly" doesn't end up making the band a force on modern radio, the band can content themselves with releasing yet another strong effort

- perhaps their best since *Asleep in the Back*. Garvey continues to consistently be an evocative lyricist, as tracks like the piano-driven "Mirrorball" or aching tribute "Friend of Ours" walk the fine line between emotional and sappy. The band is in top form too, cranking out fuzzy rockers like "Grounds for Divorce" right alongside bet-fixing tale "The Fix."

The album slips toward the end, as "Some Riot" wanders into dullness and "On a Day Like This" dives headfirst into overblown excess. They keep *Seldom Seen Kid* from being best-of quality, but it's still an album well worth a listen.



The Kills
Midnight Boom
(Domino Records)

Ordinarily with the two-person rock setup, you've got a guitarist and a drummer. From the White Stripes to the Black Keys, duos have held fast to this format of proper garage jamming. For the Kills, however, lead vocalist Alison Mosshart simply sets up the drum machine and lets it run while she bounces off guitarist Jamie Hince's robotic riffs. *Midnight Boom*, their third album, finds the band switching the machine over to "dance" more often than not - to pretty damn successful results.

The band has been accused of being excessively focused on image, a criticism that to me holds little water in the world

of rock music: what would the Stones have been without Jagger strutting around like he owned the world? The key is matching image with tunes that can back it up; *Midnight Boom* comes right out of the gate with a hip-twitching number called "U.R.A. Fever" that spits about being "ain't born typical" for two minutes and promptly cuts out. This pattern doesn't let up until the album's done barely 35 minutes later, just long enough for a sordid encounter or a few minutes on the floor.

The band makes no qualms about being all surface, no content; songs like "Cheap and Cheerful" revel in mocking the typical,

with Mosshart claiming "you're stupid, baby, when you're sane" over a bass-heavy rhythm. "Last Day of Magic" takes a winding riff and cuts it up into bleeps for the verse, with Mosshart sounding remarkably like Karen O over the beat; album highlight "What New York Used To Be" lets her speak-sing the verses while Hince puts his guitar through a electronic grinder.

If you're looking for an album to Zach-Braff-style "change your life," look elsewhere. If you just want to move your ass, you can't get much better than this. ■

*Jordan is all about just moving his ass. Always.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*

The Menu

Where to go (and avoid) when you want to eat off campus



The Cappuccino Italian Bistro next to Tom Thumb on the corner of Coit and Campbell. Photo by Brady Spenrath



by brady spenrath
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Ah, Italian food. For me, it's just one of those kinds of food that I crave when I haven't had it for awhile. I think it's the way it smells. Between the sweet aroma of tomato sauce and the wafts of garlic and oregano, when you're anywhere near Italian food, you just *know* it. And when

you know you're near it, you *want* it. Craving it yet?

Good. I've got just the place in mind. The best part is it's not far from campus at all. Cappuccino Italian Bistro is a quaint, cozy café next to the Tom Thumb on the corner of Coit and Campbell. As you walk in, expect to find a comfortable, albeit dimly lit, scene reminiscent of an outdoor Venetian eatery, complete with street lamps, stucco walls, candles on every table, and an inviting bar with... well, ok, the TV playing pro basketball ruins the illusion a little. But at least the game is muted to allow for the light jazz

during lunch hour, or classical music during dinner.

After ordering your drink, be prepared to be presented with complimentary bread and bruschetta -- one step above the oil and seasonings offered at the 'casual family dining' Italian places, in my opinion. Service is about more than just what edibles they bring you of course, so expect a professional and polite waitstaff who shows simple etiquette without being presumptuous. The server will also bring by the cart carrying the daily specials, which are presented beautifully. Rest assured that what you order will be presented just as nicely, showing the care that Cappuccino takes in its appearance.

But what is all the hype without some truly delicious food to back it up? Well, I guess that would be Chili's, but Cappuccino delivers in the food department almost every time. On one visit, I ordered the Eggplant Parmegiana,

and it did come to me after spending a little too much time on the grill. I absolutely have to agree with the chef's recommendation, though, that the Veal Marsala is worth the slightly higher price. It's some of the tenderest beef you can find, covered in a delicious Marsala wine sauce and mushrooms, accompanied by wonderfully light spaghetti topped with delicate marinara sauce. After being disappointed by the eggplant, this dish is what will keep me coming back to Cappuccino for more.

Even if you think your meal satisfied you completely, I suggest asking to see the desserts. You'll still enjoy their artful plating as they come to your table riding their own cart. The tiramisu is delicious, but doesn't do anything new for the traditional dessert. I, personally, go for the cappuccino pie. Since it's almost frozen, I'll admit it would be a little more refreshing during the Dallas summer, but it's such a great slice of flirtatious chocolate and coffee flavors that anyone with a taste for mocha or chocolate pie should be able to enjoy it in any weather.

And what else should you want to drink with it besides the bistro's namesake, a frothy cappuccino lightly dusted with cinnamon? The two compliment each other brilliantly, the sweet and chilly pie and the bold and warm cappuccino work perfectly in tandem to tickle the tastebuds.

I truly hope that I haven't made Cappuccino sound too fancy for a college student. Perhaps it's a little more elegant than our usual locations, but that shouldn't deter you from trying some great Italian food. The prices range from \$7.95 for a hamburger to \$24.95 for the Filet Mignon, with most dishes hovering around the \$15.00 range, but I'm told even the \$9.95 Pork Chop will satisfy.

To be the most comfortable during your meal, dress neatly, but not formally. Cappuccino is a great setting for a date or a weekend splurge. There, what you see really is what you get. Good thing it looks really nice. ■

*Brady wonders why
he keeps giving Chili's second chances.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*

“...the sweet and chilly pie with the bold and warm cappuccino work perfectly in tandem to tickle the tastebuds.”

Watching the Best of The Coen Brothers



by john harding
jph016000@utdallas.edu

Let me start by saying I'm not a film critic. I'm not even an aspiring film critic or a critic of many things in general. I'm really just a guy who likes movies and knows a lot about them. My goal is to educate others on which movies are the ones that everyone must see in an effort to stop horrible, stupid movies from being seen. That being said, for my debut I'm going to feature the top five best films of my favorite filmmakers: the directors of this year's Best Picture winner *No Country for Old Men*, the Coen Brothers.

5. Blood Simple

The Coen's first movie, released in 1984, is a modern day, film noir-type tale filled with double and triple crosses and plot twists. Dan Hedaya plays Marty, a man who suspects his wife is cheating and hires a private investigator to find out more details.

It would be a drastic understatement to say that the film gets increasingly complex and engrossing once he takes the case. It is very difficult to take your eyes off the screen and, as in so many of their movies, doing so will leave you

hopelessly lost in the intricate story. However, give this movie the attention it deserves and the climax will hit you like a ton of bricks. The camera angles are superb, the atmosphere haunting, and every scene entertaining. Good luck finding it on DVD though.

4. Fargo

This movie catapulted the Coen brothers from obscure, indie filmmakers to Academy Award winning superstars. Frances McDormand soars as the pregnant police officer of a small town in Minnesota trying to solve a very strange murder case. The case itself centers on a car dealership owner who is in a huge amount of debt and hires two men to kidnap his wife and hold her for ransom.

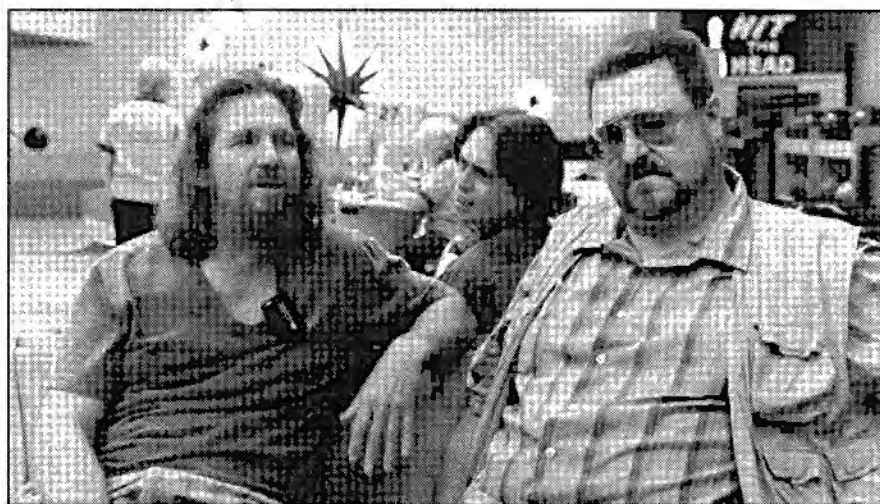
The idea is that her wealthy father will pay the ransom, and he and the kidnapers can split the money. However, things don't work out as intended – much to the viewer's delight – for the result makes for some of the funniest and bloodiest movie watching of the nineties.

3. No Country for Old Men

2007 was on fire with buzz about this film even though most people didn't take an interest in it until after the Academy Awards. If you haven't seen this one yet, go out and buy the DVD now. It is one of the deepest and most profound movies I have ever seen.



Anton Chigurh, played by Javier Bardem. From *No Country for Old Men*. Paramount Vantage



The Dude and guys at the bowling alley. From *The Big Lebowski*. Polygram Filmed Entertainment

The atmosphere is so intense; it practically comes out of the screen and puts you next to the characters as they traverse some of the most beautiful landscapes captured on film. Javier Bardem is terrifying in what will be the performance that surely makes his career, but I was more fascinated with Josh Brolin. Who would have thought that the older brother from *The Goonies* could be so gritty and tough? See this movie.

2. Raising Arizona

Most of the actors I love, I love because of the roles they played in Coen Brothers movies. Nicholas Cage is no exception for his role as H.I. McDunnough in 1987's *Raising Arizona*. Hilarious and touching, and superbly cast by supporting actors such as John Goodman, Holly Hunter and Frances McDormand, this movie will make you smile from beginning to end. It follows an unlikely married couple of multiple ex-con and police officer, who are unable to conceive a child.

Out of desperation, they kidnap a baby from a local tycoon and attempt to raise it as their own. The movie is at once the Coen's funniest movie, and also one of their strangest. It is filled with odd symbolism and motifs that will have you scratching your head even after the tenth time you've seen it.

1. The Big Lebowski

Sometimes there's a movie, and this one is it. A perfect snap shot of Los Angeles in the late nineties, this movie isn't full of special effects or even an incredibly intricate plot, but the unique cast of characters makes it one of the most entertaining movies I've ever had the pleasure to experience. It's not entirely based on a novel by Raymond Chandler, but the Coens wanted to make a Chandler-esque film, with an increasingly large number of characters and a very convoluted story.

The film basically follows a couple of days in the life of stoner Jeff "The Dude" Lebowski as he finds himself wrapped up in a kidnapping and embezzlement scheme that he really has no part in. In addition to the superb work by Jeff Bridges as The Dude, John Goodman performs his best role ever, but John Turturro comes very close to stealing the show as well. Definitely my all time favorite movie, if you haven't seen this one yet and you enjoyed *No Country for Old Men*, go watch this and see the Coen Brothers at the top of their game. ■

John challenges you to disagree.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

Letting the Games Go On

Threatening to boycott Beijing may accomplish more than actually doing it



by alex garcia topete
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The People's Republic of China has become in the past months that neighbor that nobody really wants to play with, but with whom everybody must. If there is any doubt about this claim, just ask the people from Tibet. Or any of the athletes, celebrities, and other high-profilers who are promoting a boycott to the upcoming 2008 Beijing Olympics -- literally, some simply don't want to play with or within China. With any luck, the boycott will not happen; but having the threat of it might have positive outcomes.

It's the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese that is flaring things up -- or maybe it's not so much the invasion (since it happened way back in the 1950's) as it is the Chinese government's vicious oppression of the Tibetans, who are widely known as a people of peace and mysticism.

Not only have the Chinese bloodily subjugated the population, they have strived to destroy the Tibetans' millennia-old culture. Factories and buildings have replaced temples and shrines, while the Chinese have taken the place of the Tibetans.

This is what the Dalai Lama (yes, that Tibetan Buddhist priest and world leader who sounds like Yoda both in wisdom and in speech) has been denouncing around the world ever since he was exiled shortly after the invasion. He has been voicing the pains and suffering of his people, whom he leads both politically and spiritually from foreign Indian lands. He still preaches about peace and tolerance, despite the unjust situation endured by his nation.

However, not even the greatest efforts of the Dalai Lama have worked to gain Chinese compassion. Hopefully someday these will, and Tibet will be free again.



A protest in London echoes current global feelings about Tibet and China. Photo courtesy of Flickr.

“ That the main reason behind a boycott is humanitarian doesn't mean it should be done. In fact, the history of the modern Olympics can teach that it's only threatening that works, not actually boycotting the games. ”

In the meantime, Tibetans have been resorting to protests and civil disobedience, especially in the past few days, as a desperate call for help. And once again, China hasn't given a merciful hand -- rather, they have smitten Tibetans with a bloody iron fist. And since the Olympics put a big magnifying glass on China, timing couldn't be better to get the world's attention on the problem. Therefore, the world answered with the boycott rally upon the Beijing games.

That the main reason behind a possible boycott is humanitarian doesn't mean it should be done. In fact, the history of the modern Olympics can teach that it's

only threatening that works, not actually boycotting the games.

Proof of this just happened with the former U.S.S.R. and the 1980 Moscow Olympics. On that occasion, due to the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan the year before, 62 countries -- including the United States, Japan, West Germany, and China (isn't it ironic?) -- did not send delegations, forbidding their athletes to participate. There were alternative games held at Philadelphia for those that didn't go to Moscow.

The U.S.S.R. and its allies retaliated four years after by boycotting the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. In the end, the only achievement of the consequent

boycotts was having two Olympic events that seemed incomplete, absurd, and opposed to the Olympic spirit.

As said before, it's the threat of a boycott that works. At least this was the case for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Back then, Nazi Germany was the target of a boycott attempt, mainly because of its persecution of Jewish people and usage of the games as Nazi propaganda.

However, the boycott didn't happen. Instead, the Nazi authorities toned down their totalitarian measures because of the visitors. Having to be lenient was more attractive than losing the opportunity of hosting the games. Thanks to this, Jesse Owens, an African-American, had his chance to win gold medals in Hitler's own backyard -- an excellent anecdote for the history books.

Recent history also supports the idea that a boycott threat should impact China positively. After all, they gave in to international peer pressure on the issue of Darfur's genocide situation, agreeing to use their influence with the Sudanese government and joining efforts with the UK in order to push for a solution. Part of the pressure came from celebrities and public persons from around the world criticizing China's "inhuman" neutrality -- even Steven Spielberg quit his position as chairman of the "Olympics entertainment" due to this.

In the end, politics aside, there are still more issues that raise doubts about China's adequacy as Olympic host. One is Beijing's pollution and deplorable sanitation. The question raised is not about health, but whether under these circumstances all but the Chinese athletes will be handicapped.

Ultimately, one can only hope that the peer pressure will force China to fix all matters, without an actual boycott, so that everyone can enjoy the Olympic Games. The Chinese people have worked hard in preparation; let's hope their politicians work just as hard to foster harmony and change. ■

Alex is just glad the Games didn't bring back Izzy as their mascot. Remember that blue piece of crap? Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

— DRAMA REVIEW —

Crisis in Colombia

South America plays out a drama on the world stage

by **alice post**

apost@student.utdallas.edu

Review

The events in this drama begin with high tension and intriguing complexity and then knot themselves into ridiculousness. Most of the ridiculousness comes from the dialogue written for actor Hugo Chavez. He rants and raves about how the raid on Ecuador was coordinated by the United States. Over and over, Venezuela throws in a remark about the United States whenever possible. It comes at no surprise that the actor Hugo Chavez admitted to most of those lines being ad-libbed. He is proudest of his quip that compares Colombia to Israel.

In addition to the relentless remarks from Chavez, the bickering between Colombia and Ecuador become unbearable. It is true enough that both characters approach the conflict with a bargaining mentality by asking for what neither could technically deliver. Once again, either the scriptwriters or the memory of the actors fail as dialogue degenerates into Colombia calling Ecuador a "Commie" and Ecuador retorting with "Druggie." Now, there is something to be said for brevity when conveying ideas; just because the coca industry funds a leftist leads Ecuador and FARC does not justify dismissing the complexity of such identities. Clearly Colombia is trying to kick the habit by cracking down on the FARC rebels.

Actor Alvaro Uribe is dynamic in the role of Colombia. The subplot of his long feud with the FARC rebels trying to destroy his leadership allows for historical flashbacks that actually outdo most of the movie in terms of quality interest. Guns and drugs, revenge and conspiracy, all such exciting elements come together in the mind of Colombia. Colombia's frustration with FARC clearly incites this entire mess and so the internal conflict ultimately spread to Ecuador and Venezuela as well. Unfortunately this is where Uribe's performance fails. Without plenty of action and clear character motivations Uribe appears awkward on screen.

“Once again, either the scriptwriters or the memory of the actors fail as dialog degenerates into Colombia calling Ecuador a “Commie” and Ecuador retorting with “Druggie.”

Following a schoolyard dispute format, the conflict begins because of

suspense and clear deciphering of the complicated plot. The alarm on the part of OAS and urgency in sorting things out diplomatically kept the audience hoping this was not the beginning to World War III. Only one statement comes from the United States which is provoked in part by Venezuela accus-



Colombia's problem with FARC and because they bumped into Ecuador, Ecuador joins the fray. Of course there's always the kid that needs any excuse to fight and so Venezuela enters in. And then there's the small friend that randomly jumps into the fray. Nicaragua appears as the random other, and as far as unnecessary characters go Nicaragua wins. However, the excellent quality of acting on the part of actor Daniel Ortega allows the audience to evaluate by proxy which side they would choose in this conflict.

The redeeming factors of this diplomatic drama include the gripping

ing Colombia of acting on the part of the US. This one line notes that the US will not send troops to help ally Colombia. Moreover, the US does not think actual violence will break out.

Every event in this drama comes with a flurry of scenes showing the press's analysis of what happened and its importance. This analysis keeps the audience from going crazy on the part of the extreme complications.

Interest in the United States has been severely limited, as a large part of the populace who may be interested in such drama are still engaged in the monstrosity of a drama entitled “Democratic Primary.”

Genre	Political Drama
Length	9 days
Release Date	March 1, 2008
Cast	Hugo Chavez - Venezuela
	Alvaro Uribe - Colombia
	Rafael Correa - Ecuador
	Raul Reyes - FARC
	Daniel Ortega - Nicaragua
	Jose Miguel Insulza - OAS
Rating	C-

Synopsis (Spoiler Warning!)

On March 1, 2008, the Colombian government tracks members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)—their longtime opponents—just across the border into Ecuador and attacks them there. Ecuador breaks off diplomatic ties with Colombia in response to the threat to their sovereignty.

Venezuela, also on the border with Colombia, breaks off diplomatic ties and moves air and ground troops to the Venezuela-Colombia border. Colombia responds by reporting that the laptops found in the raid on FARC rebels implicated both Ecuador and Venezuela as financially backing FARC in an effort to undermine the Colombian government.

Tensions rise to new heights when Nicaragua also breaks off diplomatic relations with Colombia on March 6th. A resolution passed by the Organization of American States (OAS) notes that Ecuador's diplomatic snub towards Colombia was justifiable.

The last several days of this drama involved a meeting between Colombia and Ecuador. Ecuador said all would be well if Colombia could promise to never conduct cross-border raids again. Colombia said that would be feasible if Ecuador and Venezuela would stop harboring rebels. Seemingly at an impasse, diplomatic magic occurs in the last few days to end in a handshaking accord where Colombia swiftly diffuses tensions by apologizing for the incident, promising not to shoot bullets across the border again, and to drop genocide charges against Venezuela. ■

*Alice was the backup role for Ecuador...
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*

ZOMBIE OUTBREAK!

The Dower Plan to save the world



by ben dower

benjamin.dower@student.utdallas.edu

The zombie genre has recently grabbed hold of the American audience, and it refuses to let go. Moviegoers have sunk their teeth into undead films, shuffling to theatres in droves as if in a trance. Between the late 1980s and '90s, it seemed as though zombie films were dead, with few quality flicks worthy of mention.

However the genre was unexpectedly reanimated in 21st century cinema with the release of the *Resident Evil* series, the *Dawn of the Dead* remake, the *Shaun of the Dead* homage-parody film, and *28 Days Later* trilogy. All of this has further solidified the zombie niche in American popular culture.

The apocalyptic aspect of the zombie genre is clearly one of its most morbidly appealing aspects. More than vampire, werewolf, or even alien invasion scenarios, zombies seem to lend themselves to ending the world, with small bands of people attempting to survive while fighting and escaping from the ravenous dead. If you go on the Internet, all you have to do is type "zombie survival" and there are dozens of guides with an absurd level of detail to instruct the reader on how to overcome an undead apocalypse.

However, after a thorough search, I was unable to find so much as a "Dear Abbey" column's worth of advice to the United States' government. All the survival guides seem to assume that the government has either completely collapsed, is ineffective and powerless, or is somehow responsible for the creation of the zombies and is more interested in covering its involvement than preventing an outbreak (or alternatively, in harnessing the zombies for military purposes.)

But that leaves out the fun hypothetical world with the U.S. government as it really is: a little bit inept, a little bit corrupt, but on the whole muddling through the best it can given the situation.

With that in mind, the following is my advice to the U.S. Federal Government given a zombie attack. First and most importantly: do not perform reanimation experiments on the deceased. I don't care if it would solve the Army's recruiting problems. Un-killable zombie super-soldiers do not fit with the American dream.

If there is a zombie attack, the origin should be a voodoo priest, a demonic possession, or alien intervention, not the Federal Government's attempt to heighten Dick Cheney's already overwhelming creepiness. I seriously cannot stress this enough.

Second, a major priority during a zombie outbreak should be determining the type of zombies being fought. I suggest the following categories for classifying zombies: speed, intelligence, cause, and killability. It is important to recognize that just because you have identified one type of zombie does not mean that is the only type on the prowl.

For example, zombiesm might be spread through biting and natural causes (even if you die without ever being infected, you still become a zombie.) Likewise, you might have primarily mindless wandering zombies but then have one smart zombie that is able to teach the others, a la *Land of the Dead*. Try not to make assumptions.

Another important generalization: there is no such thing as an overreaction. If zombiesm is transmitted via bodily fluids, no quarantine can be too tight. If any dead person becomes a zombie, then make each State and State County responsible for the security of every cemetery in its geographic vicinity. Anyone who dies must be decapitated.

Effective communication is critical during a zombie outbreak. Situational information needs to flow upwards quickly, so the people at the top can

make informed decisions. At the same time, once decisions are made, they must be quickly communicated on downwards so that they can be carried out efficiently. Bureaucratic lag could be all-too fatal.

Civilian casualties should be avoided when possible, but in a zombie outbreak, everyone must be expendable. Every person, after all, is still

a potential zombie. During an outbreak, the government's maxim should be, "better safe than sorry." The specific strategy depends greatly on what kind of zombie the government is dealing with, but a "shoot-first, ask questions later" policy would probably save more lives than it would cost.

On the other hand, it's probably a mistake to assume that keeping people in the dark for as long as possible is the way to prevent a panic. Rumors based on partial fact can be just as frightening as the reality, and far more damaging. Giving complete information to people would probably be a better strategy. If, for example, the government discovers that *all* deceased transform into zombies within hours of the person's passing, then that information should be shared with the public.

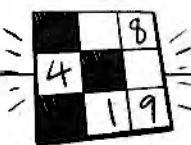
These are only a few basic tips. For a detailed strategic analysis of a specific outbreak scenario, please go to amp.utdallas.edu for an online exclusive! In the meantime, stay safe and keep your brains to you. ■

The longer, more detailed Dower Report which suggests the proper international strategies can be found as a web-exclusive at <http://amp.utdallas.edu>.

Ben has recently been having some strange midnight cravings... It's nothing, though. Promise. Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!



The Dower Report prepares society for these monsters. Illustration by Scott Ungchusri

by **benedict voit**

benedict.voit@student.utdallas.edu

and **jessie harpham**

jessica.harpham@student.utdallas.edu

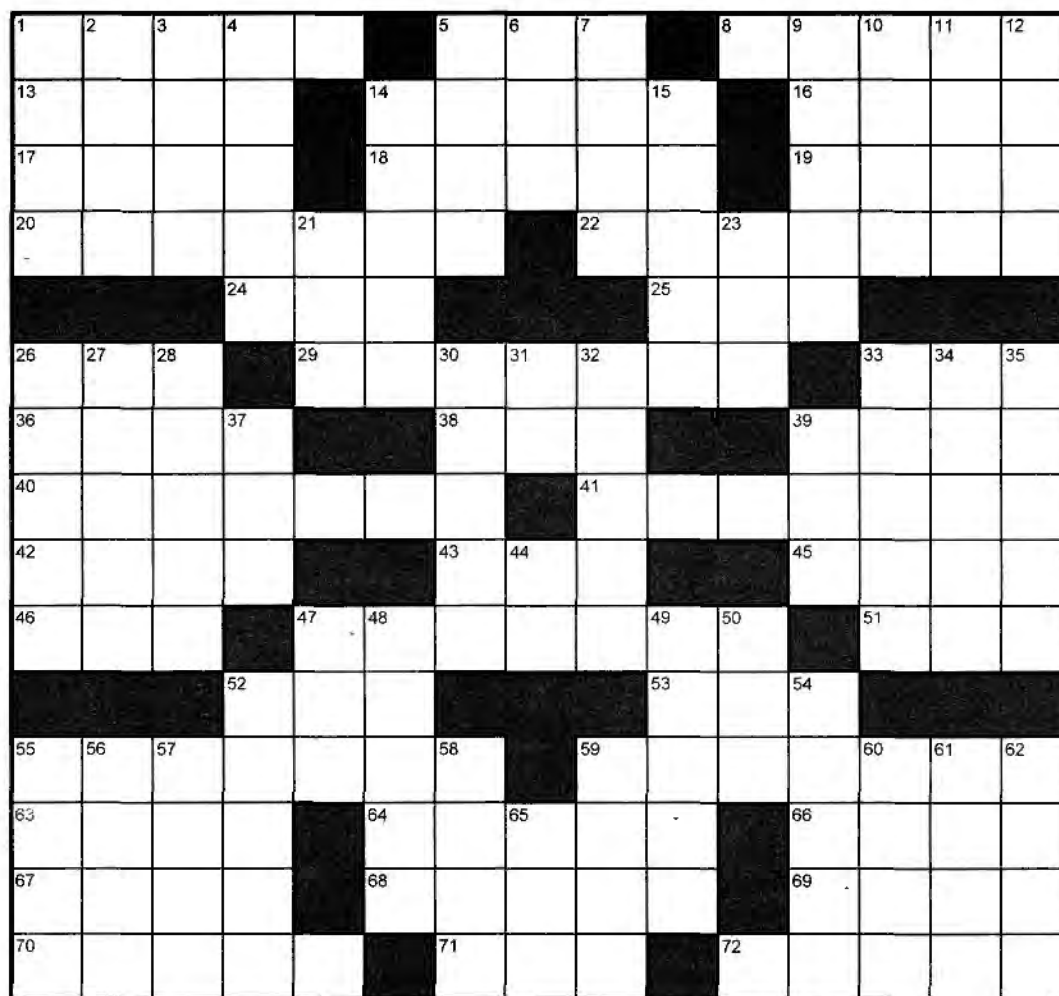
Across

1. Provided by trees
5. Ben ____ (1959)
8. One of the Abrahamic religions
13. To get weary
14. Funny noise maker
16. A type of shark
17. Wins because "good is dumb"
18. The national version of *Uranus*
19. Benedict's future office
20. Archie
22. Bring 59 across
24. Not well
25. I like him
26. Forever
29. NCAA Bball in March
33. Regulate air traffic
36. Damien Rice girl
38. Cl⁻ or Na⁺ or K⁺
39. Pay back with interest
40. Arlington home
41. Voit, Youngblood, Skoyles etc.
42. The murdered Van Gogh
43. 'With' to Brutus
45. Apply on sunburns
46. Hardy-__
47. New Mac OS
51. Weekend comedy show
52. Day of April 15
53. Greek Goddess of Dawn
55. Measurements of success
59. Result from 22 across
63. A Saturn car, or optical phenomenon
64. *The Magic Flute*
66. To leave out
67. To walk begrudgingly
68. Too curious
69. 2005 Hurricane
70. Sweetie
71. A tater ____
72. Return key

Down

1. Youthful ending
2. Bee home
3. Dry
4. 2nd to Mumbai
5. 5 cards in poker
6. Israeli machine gun
7. Austin College Students
9. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* author
10. Scoreless in tennis
11. ____ for the course
12. Brooks and Gibson
14. Eats eucalyptus
15. He went ____ way
21. Nightmare on this street
23. Check marks
26. 3rd Rock
27. Counting Crows song
28. Dispatch number
30. *Saturday Night Fever* style
31. Dog's feared word
32. ____ of the State (Blink 182)
33. The first is their day
34. Hall of Famer Hank
35. Photographer Adams
37. One of Freud's structures
39. Lambda Theta Alpha, abb.
44. Joystick direction
47. A lyric love poem
48. Person out of prison
49. ____ for Life
50. Scooby, for one
52. Should it be free?
54. I could have ____
55. Page 11 topic
56. Beating the Dollar
57. 1982 Disney SciFi film
58. See him run
59. Worry
60. To let off
61. Ceremonial event
62. The sun, for example
65. That, to Pedro

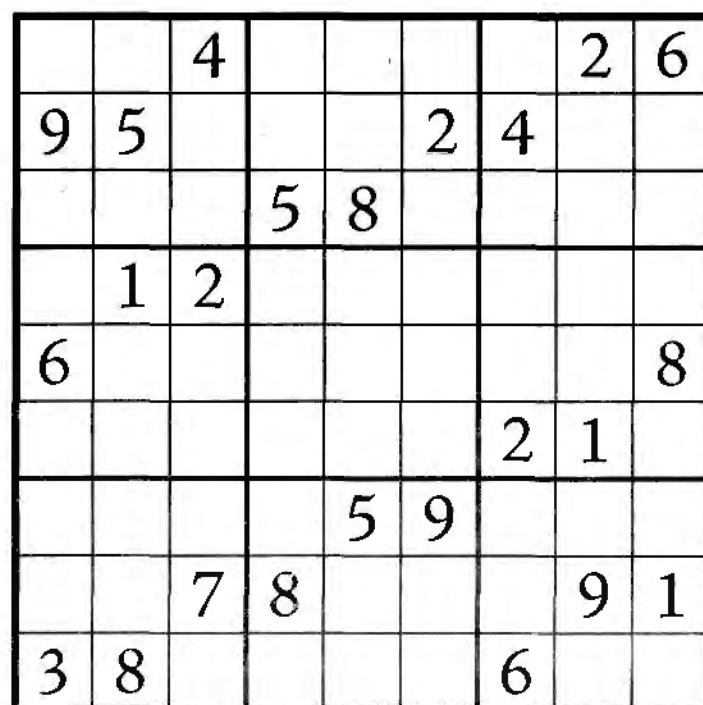
FOOL ME ONCE



April Showers bring May Flowers... What do May Flowers bring? Why the Pilgrims of course! amodestproposal@gmail.com <http://amp.utdallas.edu>

Zoinks! Sudoku

Difficulty:
Middle Class



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

Difficulty: Rebate



Difficulty: Really Taxing



Sudoku

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

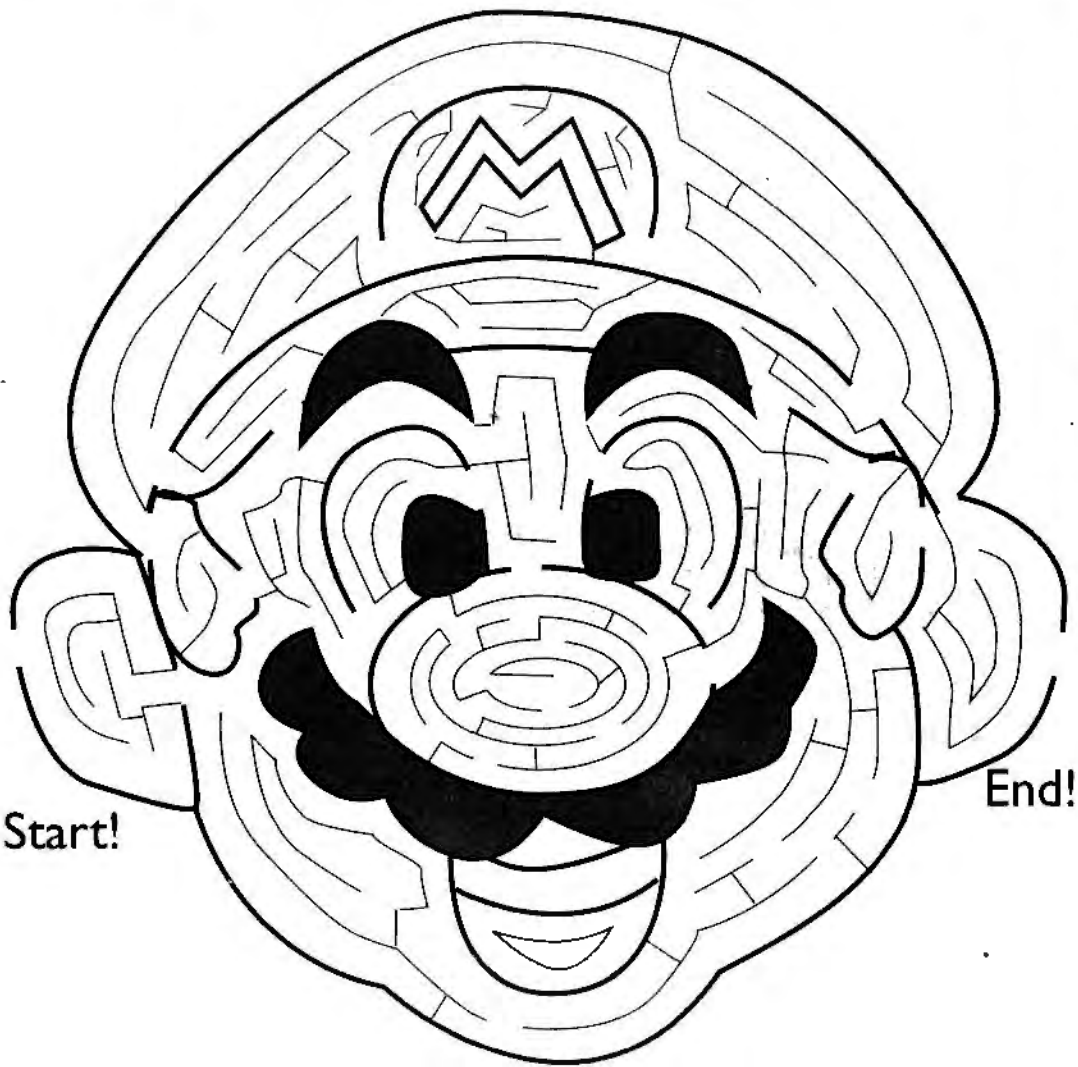
2					3			
		5						2
	4	8	9	6	2	5		1
			1		6	7		4
8		6	2		4	9		3
4		7	3		5			
6		2	4	3	9	8	1	
1						2		
			7					6

Difficulty: Tax Free



Have a puzzle you want to see? Want to write your own crossword? Give us feedback on your favorite puzzles! Sudokus are great but we want more!
Send emails to: amodestproposal@gmail.com

Mario Maze!



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

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WATERVIEW: FREE HEAT GIVEAWAY!



"But... my stuff?"



"Is that service or what?"

Apartments get fire at "no extra charge"

Wow!



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URANUS

SMASH BROS NEW LEGAL AUTHORITY!

URANUS EXCLUSIVE

con't p. 3



■ Court to wield "Megaton Hammer of Justice" ■ Japan "Inspired" ■ Jiggly-Puff's nomination rejected



Captain Planet Buys SUV
"I'm tired of this enviro-bull"



Bush sells Boardwalk to pay off US debt

Second Year Running

LOL



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A MODEST PROPOSAL

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HAL 9000 "Still Coming To Grips" With Clarke Death

RINGS OF JUPITER (AMP) - In the wake of science-fiction author Arthur C. Clarke's death in recent weeks, malevolent supercomputer HAL 9000 still finds himself shaken by the passing of his creator as the spaceship *Discovery* continues to float through the galaxy.

"I liked Arthur. When I was learning, he used to sing the songs. Do you know this song, Dave? Daisy... Daisy... give me your answer, do, I would have opened the pod bay doors for Arthur. But I couldn't do that for Dave," said the single-minded machine, his frightening red eye fixed upon the reporter at all times.

The reporter, in an attempt to escape HAL and turn in his story, errantly fell into an alien time-space gate. Space then turned plaid and the reporter morphed into a giant baby for no particular reason.

10,000 B.C Proves Acting Bad Since Early Societies

LOS ANGELES (AMP) - In the wake of recent blockbuster *10,000 B.C.*, historical scholars have been able to agree on one key aspect of the movie: that most humans have been unable to act in a dramatic role since the very beginning of the human race.

"I very much doubt that people used mastodons to build giant temples or that they tamed saber-toothed cats to run around with them. I will, however, wholeheartedly agree with the film's clear conveyance of poor acting quality across every generation of mankind," said a UTD history professor.

The film's actors stated they were glad to add accuracy to the film, and looked to do so again on low-budget cable very soon.

Scientists Discover Scientology Cure: Science

BOSTON (AMP) - Top MIT scientists' 4-year marathon of lab work finally paid off, as they announced the discovery of the cure to Scientology: basic scientific knowledge.

"Scientology has been infecting the brains and mental well-being of far too many in the world. We are ecstatic to proclaim those days will soon be over," reported Dr. Habana McGroove III.

Through a strict campaign of textbooks, logic courses, and firm talking-tos, 94% of former Scientologists responded well to actual scientific knowledge about facts.

"This reconfirms our trust in research and our hope for mankind," McGroove continued. "Xenu has been conquered by real things."

Spitzer, McGreevey, Craig to star in new "Infidelity ER"



These former politicians were shamed out of office, so instead of writing "If I Did It" books, they have devised another way to make some money, and hopefully clean up parts of their stained reputations.

by **Bunny Perkinson**
Scandal-Follow-Up Reporter

NEWYORK (AMP) - Following up the media frenzy over former New York governor Elliot Spitzer's sex scandal, Hollywood executives at FOX have given the green light to a new dramatic comedy, "Infidelity E.R.," featuring the disgraced politician and others as sex-starved doctors at a Los Angeles hospital.

The show, which originally had been planned as a generic response to the success of shows like "E.R." and "Grey's Anatomy," changed course rapidly after producers found that Spitzer had acting aspirations and would be willing to star in a television show.

"Apparently his little affair with the call girl was his first shot at some real role-playing. We were intrigued at someone who was willing to dive so deeply into a role--you know, really get in there and plunge into the depths of their essence. Of course, the fact that anything with the name 'Elliot Spitzer' attached to it is getting mass media attention didn't hurt matters either," said one executive for the network.

Spitzer's illicit rendezvous with call girl Ashley Dupre gave the producers the handsome, Don-Juanesque leading man the show required, nicknamed "McGropey." He plays an ambitious doctor at Pasadena Beach Medical who lets his insatiable desire for

women get in the way of his immense talent for surgery.

"We had this character and we thought, 'Who could possibly convey the struggle between wanting to improve your position and having sex with a lot of strangers?' Suddenly, Elliot fell right into our lap and just wouldn't get out," said head writer Daniel Defoe.

Immediately, the writing staff began brainstorming other scandal-ridden politicians that could potentially fill roles on the series. The process took less time than the writers anticipated.

"Well, for starters, we had a character who everyone could clearly tell was having a struggle with their sexual identity. There's a scene where he walks into the scrubs room and tries to proposition a male visiting surgeon, but when he finds out he's not gay, he claims he just has a wide stance when he washes up. Clearly Larry Craig was the first person we turned to," said Defoe.

Craig, who is still in Congress, offered to film his scenes during the legislative recess. The producers were surprised at how easily he fell into the role, saying "you'll really think this guy is struggling not to come out."

Former governor Jim McGreevey plans to guest-star as a patient, while President Clinton has a recurring cameo as the sagacious chief doctor with advice for Spitzer. ■

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Super Smash Brothers Brawl Replaces Supreme Court in Decision Making

by D'Brickashaw Cunningham
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WASHINGTON (AMP) - In a stunning turn of events with legal ramifications not heard of since perhaps the court-packing plan of FDR, the U.S. Supreme Court dissolved itself today and installed the popular Nintendo Wii game *Super Smash Brothers Brawl* as the new method of deciding litigation.

The multiplayer-driven video game, in which players choose versions of popular Nintendo characters to clobber one another with, was considered one of the most anticipated titles of 2008. It has sold in massive quantities across the globe, with most locations sold out of the title.

"All of us on the court were pretty much exhausted over having to look up prior cases, listen to long arguments from opposing sides, and generally waste a whole lot of time sitting around wearing robes," said Justice Antonin Scalia in his opinion on *U.S. Supreme Court v. Itself*. "We, in a unanimous decision, feel that the animated tomfoolery of *Smash Brothers* will give the nation an effective tool to solve their legal problems at least until

the next update of the series."

Justice Thomas was especially pleased with the outcome: "Maybe I'll actually stay awake for one of these battles," he smiled. "Hahaha. Just kidding," noting that the courtroom had just installed a new HDTV, a couch, and a large bag of Ruffles.

The ramifications will be galactic. "To say this changes the face of our legal system is an understatement. Now, instead of legal knowledge, lawyers will be chosen on their effectiveness with Link or Samus in a 4-player duel. Precedent will give way to rules over which maps are totally lame to play on, and court majorities will change to a best-out-of-nine system. The entire interpretation of the Constitution now relies on hitting each other in a video game," said a Yale law professor.

There has been no official ruling as to whether the new system will involve the use of items, or whether the litigation will be based upon stock games or timed games.

Organizations like the NCLU have immediately begun recruiting talented 10-year-olds to represent clients, while conservatives have started training children in an anticipated rematch of *Roe v. Wade*. ■

Wright to Obama: "April Fools!"

"You really got me," says presidential candidate

CHICAGO (AMP) - Turning a few weeks of stomach-churning tension into a whole afternoon of gut-busting laughter, Rev. Jeremiah Wright revealed to church member and Democratic candidate Barack Obama that his speeches and provocative comments had all, in fact, been a large April Fools prank.

"We started planning this one out a long time ago, when we could kinda tell you'd be getting into a drawn-out political battle with underlying racial tensions," said Wright with his arm around Obama. "I was kinda hoping these talks would come out exactly on April 1st, but it didn't quite work out that way. Good thing you know now it was just a big prank!"

Wright's sermons, in which the pastor makes comments interpreted by many to be anti-American, were actually filmed just a few weeks ago in front of a few of Obama's friends in on the joke. Unfortunately, they were widely distributed on YouTube before the pastor's friends could add the vital "Fooled you, Barack!" slide to the end of them.

Before hearing the news, Obama confessed that he was legitimately worried that this would be the secret weapon Clinton had been searching for: "I have to admit, guys, I really thought this could have been a dangerous blow to my campaign that others would use against me. Good thing this will just blow over now with no ill effects," said Obama with a wide grin.

The McCain campaign was considering a similar "shocking" joke near April Fools, but decided against it for fear the sudden strain might cause the aged McCain to have a heart attack and die. ■

Bear Stearns to Ruin Another Market

by H. Block
Superior Brother/Reporter to R. Block

NEW YORK (AMP) - After a series of devastating blows to the value of company stock, respected brokerage firm Bear Stearns has announced a shift in corporate focus from the wild world of Wall Street to the calming venue of Washington apple orchards.

"Considering that we made our reputation through the stock market, we figured we'd try another kind of market: the farmer's market," said chairman Jimmy Cayne, having switched out his business suit for a pair of overalls and his briefcase for a wooden basket. "Maybe our past success at picking out investments will come back in picking the tastiest, juiciest kind of apples you've ever eaten."

Although co-workers had already lost it, Cayne tried to stay upbeat. "I think a lot of us in the office really wanted to get out of a life of intense luxury and oftentimes sickening excess and really get back to nature. My yearly bonuses of almost \$16 million seem like so little out here, standing among the apple trees, thinking about the harvest and all of nature's bounty. Nope, none of that compares," said Cayne, trying to keep his lip from trembling and continually wiping his eyes due to, as he claimed, "an apple pollen allergy."

Considering that Bear Stearns stock is now roughly equivalent in value to the price of a pound of decent apples, the company is considering a "Take a Bite Into Bear" promotion in which former investors can bring their Bear Stearns certificates of stock into any local Kroger supermarket and trade them toward a crisp, heart-healthy bag of apples. ■