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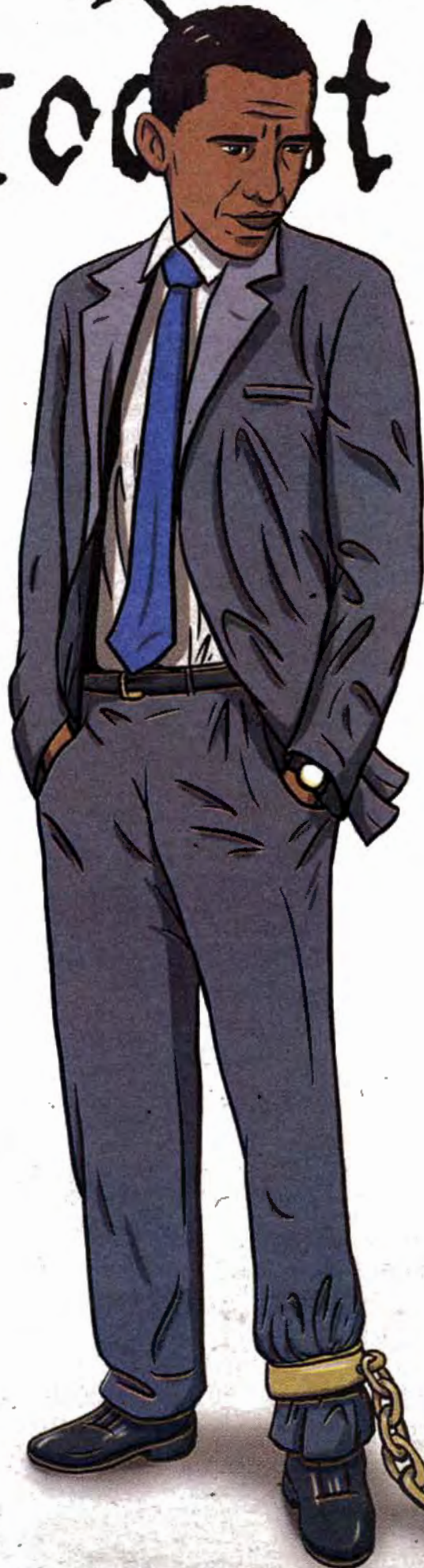
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A Modest Proposal, vol. 6, no. 3

Jonathan Coker, *et al.*

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A Modest Proposal



A Nobel Sacrifice

*Has Obama changed the world
or chained America's foreign policy?*

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plucks all the wrong strings
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From our Website

amp.utdallas.edu

If you pay for the food, you should be able to do whatever the hell you want with it (of course excluding criminal acts or damages to the facilities). I personally would've picked a system where you see what food is being served (if any) before you pay. There are no vegan/vegetarian options most of the day and the fact that they don't give the hours when they are available is thoughtless. I'm not even a vegetarian and I can understand that no one should pay for a meal then enter to find they can eat nothing served.

Also, the customer service is unsatisfactory. If Chartwells had any meaningful competition on campus they would find themselves serving food to no one. For example, one of my friends asked an employee in the Dining Hall a question only to have a back turned on her. That correctly made my friend unhappy, but then another employee walked by and stated that customers shouldn't expect the employees to speak English. I was speechless that this is what freshman pay \$1000+ to "enjoy."

We need something with more hours, consistent options, and respectful service. The PUB, Comet Cafe, and Dining Hall offer NONE of those.

This isn't even that big of a practical concern to me as I am not a freshman and can leave campus to get good food and good service for a better price. However, UTD too often has contractors doing a terrible job with no consequences.

Leonardo, "Dining Hall Discrimination" post No. 3

Corrections

In last month's issue, Senator Hutchison's name is misspelled in the sub-head of the article *Gubernatorial Grapple* on page 5.

We included an erroneous paragraph in Stuart McAfee's music review on page 17.

Drop by our office this production weekend if you would like to copy-edit and help AMP prevent future mistakes. See below for details.

Most of the "unhealthy" behavior can be attributed to a response to discrimination. If gay couples are not allowed to marry, why have a committed relationship at all? If they are going to be treated as deviant, why not go all the way and be theatrical about it? And if you're told from a young age that what you are feeling is unnatural - that your sexual urges are not in line with God's will - depending on how this is phrased to you, wouldn't that make you a bit crazy?

Melissa K, "A Merry Affair" post No. 6

If the "entire point" of the article was to make a legal argument, why discuss subjective, non-legal defenses? Here's a legal argument. In America, people do not have the constitutional right to specifically marry, drive a car, smoke cigarettes, own a home, etc... These privileges (or legislated rights if you prefer) are all subject to laws approved by the people/government. Our privileges/liberties are restricted almost everywhere we turn. Polygamists, smokers, all of us, have our liberties restricted by the judgment of others.

Tim, "A Merry Affair" post No. 8

According to the United States Department of State website:

"The country is overwhelmingly Roman Catholic. According to official government statistics collected during the 2002 census, the religious affiliation of the population is 88.4 percent Roman Catholic, 2.9 percent Church of Ireland (Anglican), 0.52 percent Presbyterian, 0.25 percent Methodist, 0.49 percent Muslim"

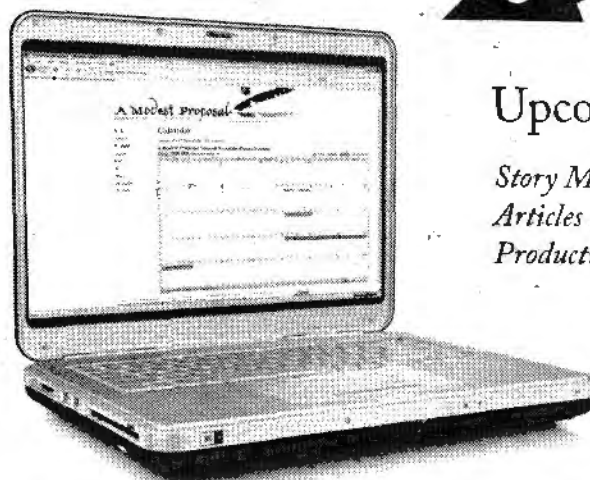
This means that over 92% of the Irish are believers. Moral of the story, if you're not religious, maybe you shouldn't live in Ireland. Personally I don't think that it's morally wrong for a Catholic country to value catholicism more than atheism or even other religions. If being a malcontent is your thing, than consider yourself blessed you live in America.

Ilikethepopethepopeisdope, "95 Blasphemes" post No. 2

Want to get involved?

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

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



GO HERE!

Upcoming AMP dates:

Story Meeting — Nov. 5, 8 p.m. MC 3.612

Articles Due — Nov. 12, midnight.

Production Weekend — Nov. 19-22. MC 3.612

Calendar of all events available at amp.utdallas.edu/calendar

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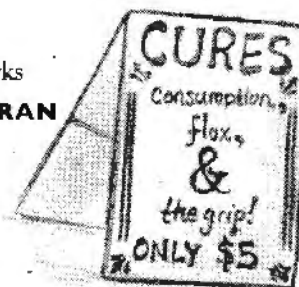
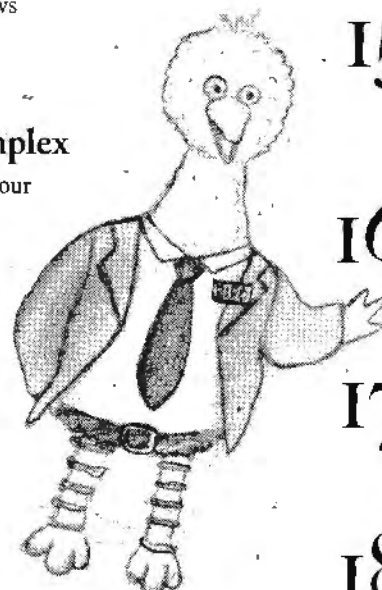
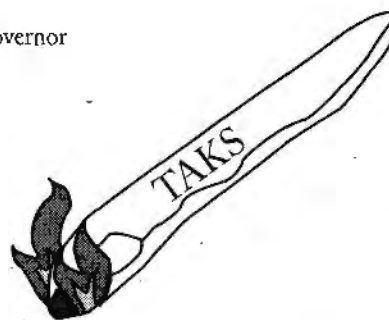
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Cover design by luke mckenzie. Uranus cover design by alex garcia topete and jonathan coker. Contents images by lewis chang and mac hird

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Friedman of Choice

Kinky Friedman is gunning for governor



by tyler ratliff
eric.t.ratliff@gmail.com

If you weren't keeping up with the last Texas gubernatorial race, aren't interested in this one, or just happen not to know who Kinky Friedman is, then you're in luck. From the name alone, Kinky sounds to be some sort of clownish character from an antiquated children's show, but in reality he is a returning gubernatorial candidate with a distinctive background, a progressive outlook, and a fresh take on the political and social landscape of our state.

Kinky's first bid for the governorship was in 2006, and to many it seemed to be more a joke than an actual bid because of the colorful nature of his campaign and his character. However,

Kinky's unique approach to politics, particularly that of the office of governor, struck a chord with many Texans, garnering "The Original Jewish Cowboy" 546,000 votes. That might not seem like much (Kinky came in 4th in the 2006 election), but that election also had another popular independent candidate as well as a somewhat popular Democratic nominee splitting up the vote across numerous ideological spectra.

This year, Kinky came back onto the scene by officially announcing his candidacy for the 2010 Texas gubernatorial election, this time under the blue banner of the Dems. Although the Democratic candidate has yet to be determined, Kinky has by far the most popular recognition as well as the most strongly established base of supporters compared to the other two candidates seeking the position (Hank Gilbert and Tom Schieffer).

Now, onto the real question: Why should anyone care? The election is still a year away, and, unlike the Republican nomination, there aren't any other

big contenders for the Democratic spot. It's important to understand what a Kinky governorship could mean for Texas.

Anyone who has attended a Texas public school can attest that the entire experience can be a frustrating, unrewarding, less than educational venture. That isn't news, and it hasn't changed in quite some time. Unfortunately, our current governor seems to have no real ambition to improve the system, aside from taxing strip clubs to better fund our K-12 education (really!).

As proof of the policy's efficacy, Texas has the highest drop-out rate of any state in the union. With a system set up with no goal other than to get kids to select the proper A-D choice on the TAKS test and teachers given no other incentive but to teach Texas's youngsters which choice to circle, it comes as no surprise. Texas's schools have little educational promise. Without some real meaning behind what we teach school children, we can't really expect them to care. Kinky wants to fix all that.

One of his biggest issues with education (that teachers only teach to the TAKS test) will be directly addressed by his first main goal: He simply wants to abolish the TAKS. That way, teachers will not be restricted to spending all of their time preparing students for an exam that offers them little real educational value.

Also, Kinky wants to bring back some of the state spending that has been disappearing from our public schools over the past several years in the form of a \$3,000 a year increase in teachers' salaries. That will incentivize more highly educated individuals to step up to the task of teaching Texas's youth.

Two of Kinky's other major issues fall into the category of crime: marijuana and murder. First off, he recognizes that all of the numerous individuals in Texas's prison system due to marijuana possession or other pot-related crimes are doing little more than eating up taxpayer dollars for a crime that no more deserves jail time than smoking a couple cigarettes.

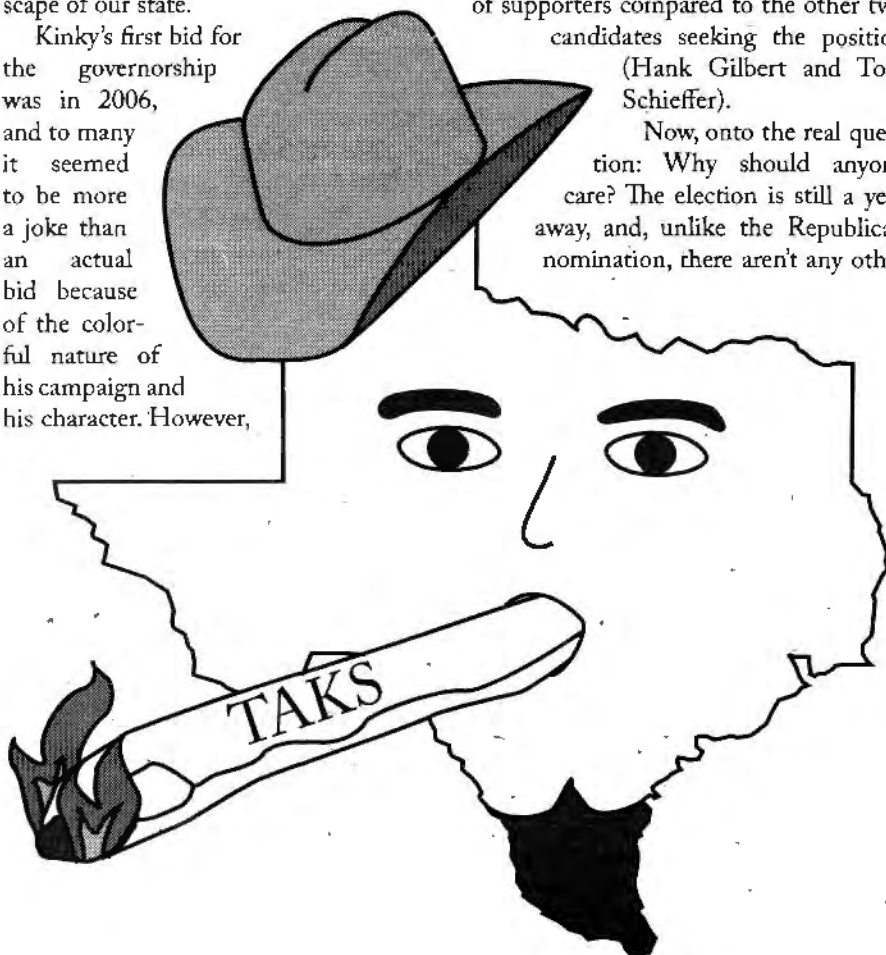
While Kinky has not expressed any support for full-out legalization of marijuana, he does support its decriminalization, if for no other reason than to ease the strain on Texas's full prisons and jail and clear out space for the people he sees as the real crooks — "like the pedophiles and the politicians."

Also in that vein, Kinky wants to completely revisit the way Texas handles capital punishment. It's no secret that, as a state, Texas executes more people than just about anywhere else with fair public elections, and this has been viewed with more and more scrutiny over the past few years.

Most notable and recent is the case of a man convicted of burning his house down and thereby murdering his 3 young daughters in 1991. The case has caused considerable noise in the media, since nine fire experts have come forward proclaiming that no real evidence of arson ever actually existed and that the man was convicted unjustly.

While that case has been brought up again in Texas courts, even though the convicted was executed, it raises serious questions about whether a system of capital punishment that may be murdering innocent individuals is viable. Kinky proposes that, unless we have a system that can perfectly declare guilt with no room for error, then we sure as hell shouldn't support "the wrong guy getting executed" system. A change of that magnitude could effectively reshape the way Texas handles high-profile criminal cases in the future.

Hopefully, this article has turned you on to Kinky. If it has, find out more about him, see if he's what you're all about. If he is, then give him your vote in the primary. Texas and Kinky could use it. If not, then support whoever loses the Republican primary and inevitably runs on an independent platform. Texas and Kinky could use that too. ■



What are we going to do with all the TAKS tests once it's abolished? Illustration by mac hird

Tyler Ratliff just made a very important proposal
and it wasn't modest!

Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/

Declaration of Independents



by taylor brigance
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When in the Course of national events it becomes necessary for people of moderate and independent perspectives to dissolve the political parties which have created an era of extremism, intolerance, and dichotomous control, and to assume among the national consciousness the separate and equal nature which clear and reasoned thought will conclude they deserve, a decent (though seemingly unrequited) respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to reject the partisan viewpoint.

These truths are self-evident, that all men are created equal and distinct, that they possess certain and unalienable universal Rights, that among these are Reasonable Thought, Independent Opinion, and the right to reevaluate and reassess their conclusions with true and unbiased Facts. — That Political Parties are instituted among Men, deriving their power from the ability to gather like minded individuals and grant them significant voice and political power, — That whenever any party becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to find a different perspective more suited to their ideals. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that political opinion in the modern world is ephemeral and mercurial in speed and nature, and that while Government should remain largely resistant to such light and transient causes, the Political Parties that claim to be direct representatives of the people's Opinion should not. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations by these parties,

pursuing invariably the same Objectives of a small but rabid Extreme and enabled by largely docile moderate members, it is not only the right, it is the duty of all free-thinking supporters to resist the coercion, derision, and hollow promises of their past allegiance and discard their previous party label. Crimes and Wrongs against the American populace have been committed by both the Democratic and Republican parties:

They have committed the most blatant and flagrant Acts of Hypocrisy by deploring the actions and tactics of the opposition while instituting identical strategies.

They have co-opted the National Press and rendered it nothing more than thinly disguised propaganda wings spewing nothing but the party line, selective and edited facts, and opinion-as-fact interpretations of current events.

They have reduced Political Discourse and Reasoned Debate into spurious accusations, ad hominem attacks, fear-mongering, and conspiracy theory.

They have poisoned the minds of their supporters against the opposition until labels such as 'conservative' and 'liberal' are frequently used not as descriptions of perspective but as vituperations and insults.

They have given greater value to the threats and demands of a fanatic and vocal minority than to the opinions of a quieter majority.

They have directly equated the success or failure of the opposition with the defeat or victory of their own party, regardless of the consequences of that outcome for the country.

They have never admitted to fault or mistake or acknowledged the correct action of the adverse party.

They have forcibly joined separate and distinct issues of no relation to each other, thereby creating a false and unfair correlation which leaves voters

“ The Voters of the United States of America are, and of Right ought to be, free and independent Political Actors...”

with no full satisfaction as to the platforms of their representatives.

They have deflected, ignored, and trivialized honest and pertinent criticism, which more rightly should be used to improve legislation and policy instead of disregarded as being politically motivated.

They have treated the American public as childish and facile and, through that treatment, begun to render them so.

For these reasons and more, of which both organizations are Guilty and in which both are Complicit, it is begged of all intelligent, sensible, and motivated people to reconsider their Support of these two Political Machines. It is only through a mass rejection of this historical encumbrance, now rendered obsolete by modern technology and education, that the Democratic Process can reach a new horizon of responsiveness, political customization, and objectivity. The Voters of the United States of America are, and of Right ought to be, free and independent Political Actors, absolved from all allegiance to party, and that all political connection between them and the Republican or Democratic parties ought to be totally dissolved. ■

*Taylor Brigance is so independent that
you can see him from space.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/*

Close Encounters

Debate about illegal aliens overshadows real immigration reform



by saskia versteeg

saskia.versteeg@student.utdallas.edu

November 4, 2008, was declared a historic turn in American politics and government as Barack Hussein Obama rode his campaign promise of “change we can believe in” into the White House. Obama’s platform was essentially based on reversing eight years of Bush Administration policy and leading America in a new direction.

In some ways, he has succeeded greatly in his first nine months in office — he was recognized as this year’s Nobel Peace Prize laureate for creating “a new climate in international politics.” The Nobel committee also recognized his ability to give “people hope for a better future.” However, to us soon-to-be Americans, Obama is echoing the same tired, destructive policies we have had to live with for years — and I think it’s time for some change on that front.

For starters, remember that border fence that the Bush administration proposed, the butt of late-night talk show jokes? If you thought that such dishearteningly unreasonable political plots were behind us, think again. A recent Washington Post article called Obama out on this issue, stating that he has “embraced several Bush administration initiatives”, including continuing the construction of the \$8 billion virtual border fence (cameras) along parts of the U.S.-Mexico border.

It’s politically flashy, headline grabbing schemes like this that keep Americans from focusing on the real issue: comprehensive legal reform for all immigrants. Politicians keep telling us horror stories about indefinite numbers of illegal immigrants hiding among us, but there are more than 10 million legal immigrants in the United States right now, living in the shadows of this controversy, just look-

ing for help to get through the process to rightful citizenship.

Those legal immigrants have to fight through a process that is unfair and unjust. For instance, two years ago, the U.S. government voted to double mandatory fees on all immigration paperwork. Thus, immigrants’ welcoming gift into these United States includes a grand old heaping of taxation without representation — oh, the irony.

In case you’re curious, the price tag on naturalized U.S. citizenship now reads \$675. A substantial, but worthy, amount, you might say — until you factor in the fact that many immigrants arrive as families. They have already had to pay for a long journey to the border, and most of them are only at the beginning of that American dream.

Furthermore, the system is so backed up that physical forms can expire before one’s application is reached, forcing immigrants to redo their applications and be put back at the bottom of the stack. The wait to get a green card can drag on so long that immigrants have to fly back to their home countries for new visas — in some cases multiple times.

Is this what the greatest superpower on Earth aspires to? A system that suppresses the hopes of millions of legal immigrants trying to walk the right path but crushed under financial burden and voiceless to change the bureaucracy? In the meantime, the American government is too busy manipulating its citizenry with horror stories about the supposed millions of illegal immigrants that waltz across the border every day, turning the people’s minds away from the real issue.

It was originally encouraging when Obama announced his plans to make it a first year priority to introduce “comprehensive immigration legislation” — I found out that his plan would, according to The New York Times, “make legal status possible for an estimated 12 million

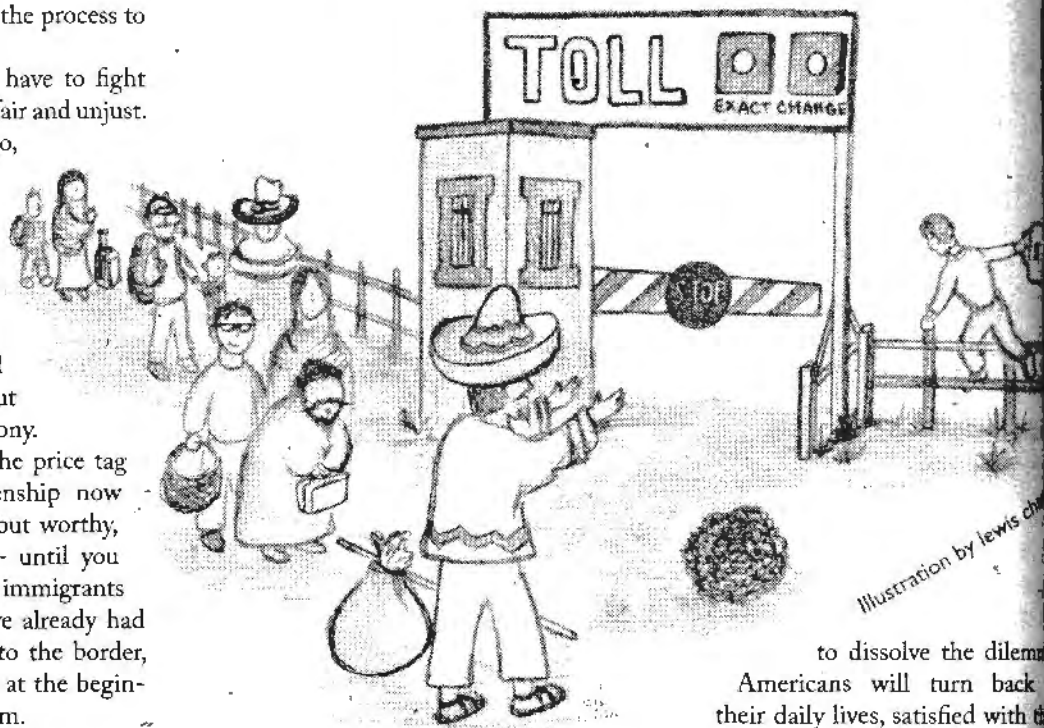


Illustration by Lewis Ch...

illegal immigrants.” Wow.

Way to slap 10 million people in the face, Mr. President. You would think that a president who lived abroad for much of his childhood and whose father was an immigrant would have a little more sensitivity towards immigrants of all origins.

However, under his new plan, the federal government would simply recognize that illegal immigrants violated the law, and then impose fines and other penalties to fit the offense — essentially the same immigration fees that legal immigrants paid willingly.

Can you imagine how that makes legal immigrants feel? I’ll tell you that I certainly can, because I’m one of them — have been since I moved here from the Netherlands 10 years ago. Obama is just playing the big-daddy, faux Nobel high-road card: giving these lawbreakers a stern shake of the finger, asking for a few bribery dollars, and then handing them a green card. Suddenly, the political “issue” of millions of immigrants “hiding amongst us” disappears, because Obama has found a convenient bureaucratic way

to dissolve the dilemma. Americans will turn back to their daily lives, satisfied with the resolution to the “great immigration debate”, none the wiser that there are still millions of legal immigrants in the shadows watching powerlessly as others are simply handed the tickets to America that they have to earn.

So Mr. Obama, I am not convinced by your shallow message of “comprehensive immigration reform”. You simply perpetuate the same unjust, un-American policies with which legal immigrants have been struggling for years. Even worse, you mask the policy behind a “solution” to the immigration problem that screams bureaucratic wheeling and dealing and continues to narrow Americans’ political exposure to the need for real reform of the entire immigration system, for legal and illegal.

You claimed to bring “change we can believe in” — but right now, I don’t see any change, and I am fast losing my belief that it will ever come. ■

Saskia Versteeg may not own a pair of clogs but she is a windmill enthusiast.

Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/

Military Homosexual Complex

Why 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' undermines our military and our Constitution



by braeden mayer
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The U.S. has a shortage of translators for what the government calls critical languages: languages such as Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Farsi, which are important in helping the U.S. fight wars in the Middle East. However, the military has discharged 58 Arabic and Farsi translators since 1994. Why you ask? Simply because they were gay: Under the U.S. military policy known as Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT), homosexuals aren't allowed to serve openly in the military. That policy is outdated and should be reversed by the Obama administration.

Before I delve into why DADT is wrong, I want to look at the circumstances surrounding its initial implementation. It all goes back to Bill Clinton. On the campaign trail for the 1992 election, Clinton promised to lift the ban preventing homosexuals and bisexuals from serving in the military. But, as we all know, politicians never keep their promises.

In 1993, a pair of reports was released which claimed that allowing homosexuals to serve in the military would erode unit morale and cohesion and that homosexuals were pedophiles and would engage in illicit behavior during their tour of duty. Consequently, Clinton was forced to compromise and institute DADT allowing homosexuals to serve in the military as long as they didn't tell anyone that they were gay.

It's ludicrous to claim that homosexuals would destroy unit morale and cohesion. Think back to the civil rights movement in the mid-twentieth century. While *Brown v. Board of Education* wasn't decided until 1954, and most schools weren't integrated until long after that, President Truman signed an executive order that began the integration of military units in 1948. When African-Americans were first integrated with the rest of the military, there were very few race-based crimes during service, and the military adapted quickly to the change. Integration not only reduced race-based crimes but also significantly increased the pool of potential recruits for the U.S. Army.

Because of the structure and hierarchy of the

“Nathaniel Frank estimates that the military has dismissed ‘11,000 capable service members under the policy ...’”

military, a simple executive order to allow homosexuals to serve openly would be implemented immediately.

The military is in dire need of personnel, so rejecting ‘outed’ or openly gay soldiers doesn't make sense. In *Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America*, Nathaniel Frank estimates that the military has dismissed “11,000 capable service members under the policy, including over 300 linguists, 49 nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare specialists, 90 nuclear power engineers, 52 missile guidance and control operators, 150 rocket, missile and other artillery specialists, and 340 infantrymen.” We need as many specialists as

we can get. In case you have

been living under a rock, WE ARE IN A FREAK-

ING WAR! Last time I checked, it wasn't smart to discharge vital assets to your war effort, especially when you are fighting groups that speak a different language, possess nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons, and are no strangers to using rockets.

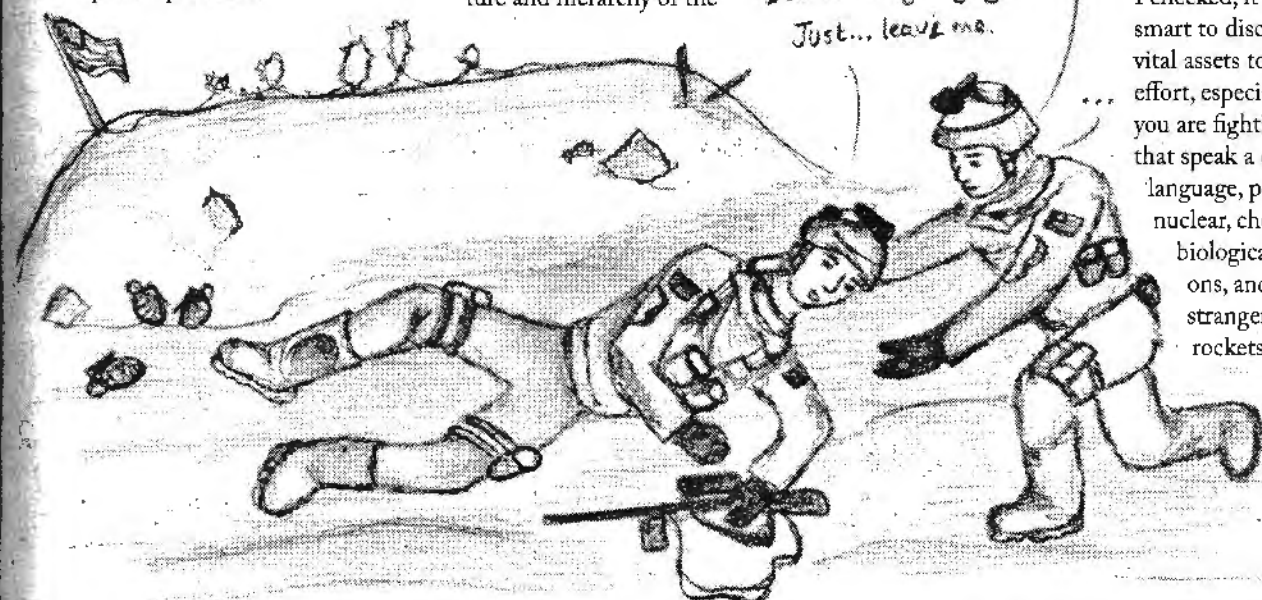
DADT should also be repealed because of its discriminatory nature. Recently, the gay rights movement has grown stronger across the United States. More states are legalizing gay marriage (Maine and New Hampshire in 2009) and increasing homosexual rights. Homosexuals are people just like everyone else. They are not inferior beings and should not be treated as such. It is time for the U.S. to join the rest of the world and expand the rights of gays by allowing them to serve openly in the military. Gays are allowed to serve openly in Israel, Italy, Ireland, and a host of other developed countries and even developing countries, such as Romania. It is time that the U.S. stop hatred of gays and let them be honest about themselves while serving their country.

Last, but certainly not least, it costs the military money to keep homosexuals out of the armed forces. A 2005 estimate put the cost of the DADT policy at 365 million dollars to date. That money could be used much more effectively to do something productive in Iraq or Afghanistan instead of to keep willing volunteers out of the armed forces.

Don't Ask, Don't Tell is simply stupid. Homosexuals can serve our country just like anyone else without causing any disruptions in unit morale or cohesion. We need them more than we know. They are vital tools to fighting America's wars abroad, and it's a waste for us to be spending money to keep them out of the military. So Obama, be a good politician, hold true to your promise, and end the ridiculousness that is DADT. ■

I love you, man! I'm not leaving you behind!

Dude... are you gay? Just... leave me.



A totally realistic portrayal of destroyed unit cohesion Illustration by lewis chang

Braeden Mayer's Bologna has a first name.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/

Afghanistan Votes

BECAUSE WE SAID SO



by billy easley II
billyeasley2@gmail.com

Do you remember when we knew what our country was fighting for in Afghanistan? When we first invaded, the sense of purpose that fueled the occupation was clear and focused — the security of our nation was at stake, the Taliban was in league with Al Qaeda, and the horror of 9/11 demanded righteous retribution.

President Bush attempted to make the invasion of both Afghanistan and Iraq appear altruistic by proclaiming that those countries would be shining examples of democracy in the Middle East, but it's as clear now as it was then that his declaration was nothing more than a thin veil designed to obscure the obvious truth of the matter: The American public never cared about the Afghani people.

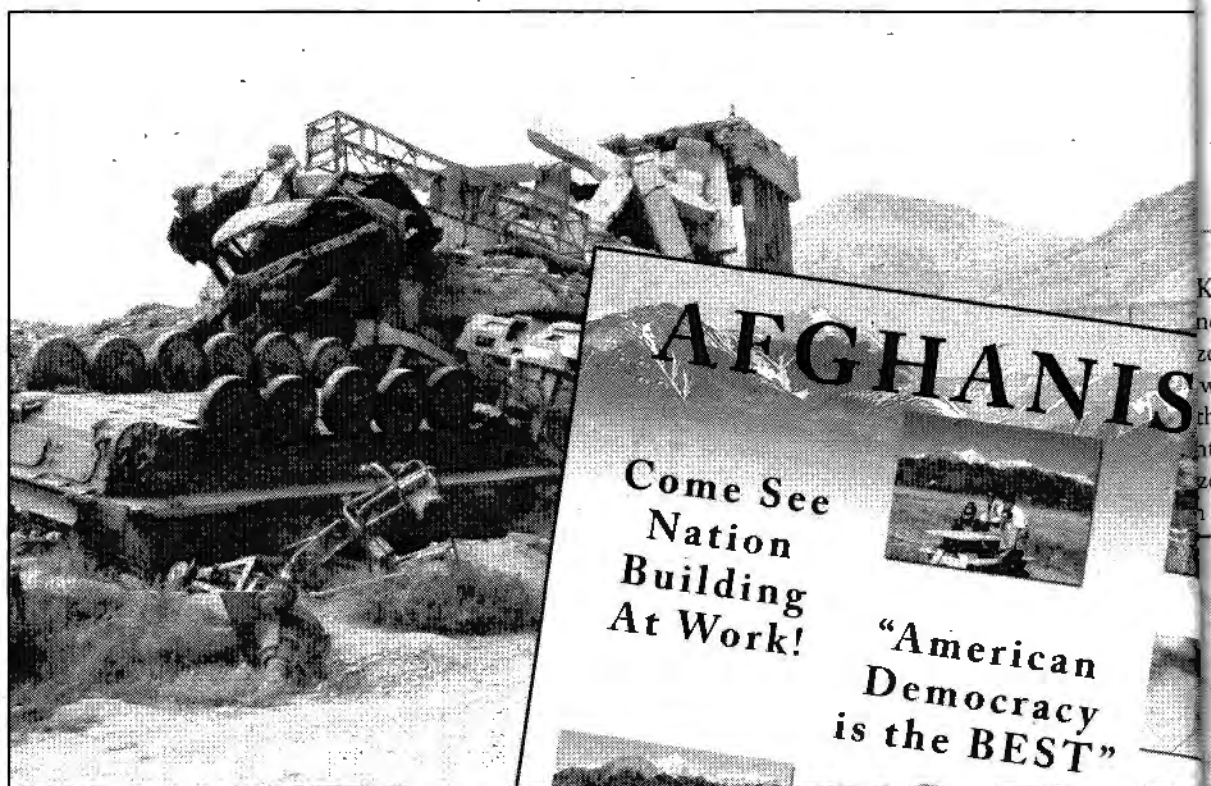
The invasion was premised on the same asinine assumption that cripples adventures in nation-building: We had the audacity to believe we could invade a country for our own self-interest, force their society to adhere to our principles of government, and expect everything to work out fine.

The Afghanis, and unfortunately the most ambitious and malevolent powers in Afghanistan, can sense our apathy. After our initial invasion, we poured money and resources into Afghanistan. As with Iraq, our nation's involvement was seen as a cause for hope. However, as with Iraq, we find ourselves at a precipice years after the initial hope has worn off. We've finally realized how awkward an export democracy is.

Democracy is not a system that can be traded — let alone forced — across cultural and societal lines. It requires commitment from the people; trust must be forged and routinely strengthened between the nation's people and its government. Our system of government is a structure that must be built by the very hands of the people who will abide by it — or else the house will never obtain the legitimacy of being called a home.

Afghanistan is the perfect example of what happens when the process of democratization is violated and forced by outside powers; the vacuum of power is filled not by representatives who feel beholden to the will of the people but by ambitious rulers who cater to the whims of occupying forces. The recent elections in Afghanistan have demonstrated the kind of government that results — one with rampant election fraud and officials trying to line their pockets.

The 1,500 formal complaints filed to Afghanistan's Election Complaints Commission regarding the legiti-



You too can visit scenic Afghanistan and witness democracy at work! Photoillustration by richard badgett

macy of the vote (complete with accusations of bribing election officials) attests the political limbo that ensnared Afghanistan's government in the weeks following the August 20th elections.

But Afghanistan's government has always been more of a house of cards than a sturdy structure built on the principles of democracy — and the corruption cannot be blamed solely on President Hamid Karzai. He makes a compelling scapegoat, and the media has done its part to make him a figure of disrepute during the tumult of the election.

Granted, President Karzai hasn't done himself any favors, but the larger problem is that Karzai's actions are acceptable to a culture steeped in fraud — it's not as though Abdullah Abdullah or any of the other candidates for the Presidency could be considered torchbearers for democracy or incapable of engaging in the same kind of corruption.

Government corruption is symptomatic of structural deficiency — it thrives in a system where government officials are not held accountable. The growing credibility gap between the Afghan people and their government needs to be dealt with. That problem wounds our reconstructive efforts more than a resurgent Taliban ever will.

The exasperating truth is that it's out of our hands; it depends entirely on the whims of the leadership in Afghanistan. President Karzai recently stated his support for

a runoff election against his rival and former Finance Minister Abdullah Abdullah.

That is a positive sign that we're starting to see the kind of leadership Afghanistan needs — but it needs context. The United Nations caused the change: It's final audit of the Afghani election declaring that President Karzai had not won enough votes to avoid a runoff election seems to have been the straw that broke the camel's back. However, no matter who wins, the situation will be the same — American and NATO troops will have to remain on the ground building trust for an Afghan government that the Afghani people views as corrupt.

The only solace I can gain from this state of affairs is that our torrid engagement in the Middle East will hopefully teach our generation that nation-building is a fool errand. You can't build a nation, let alone a democratic one, for a people — *they* must build it *themselves*. They must dedicate themselves to the process. They must fight for it, die for it. Their blood alone must be the mortar that holds the house of democracy together — American blood for American liberty and for no other. ■

Billy Easley II: Electric Boogaloo
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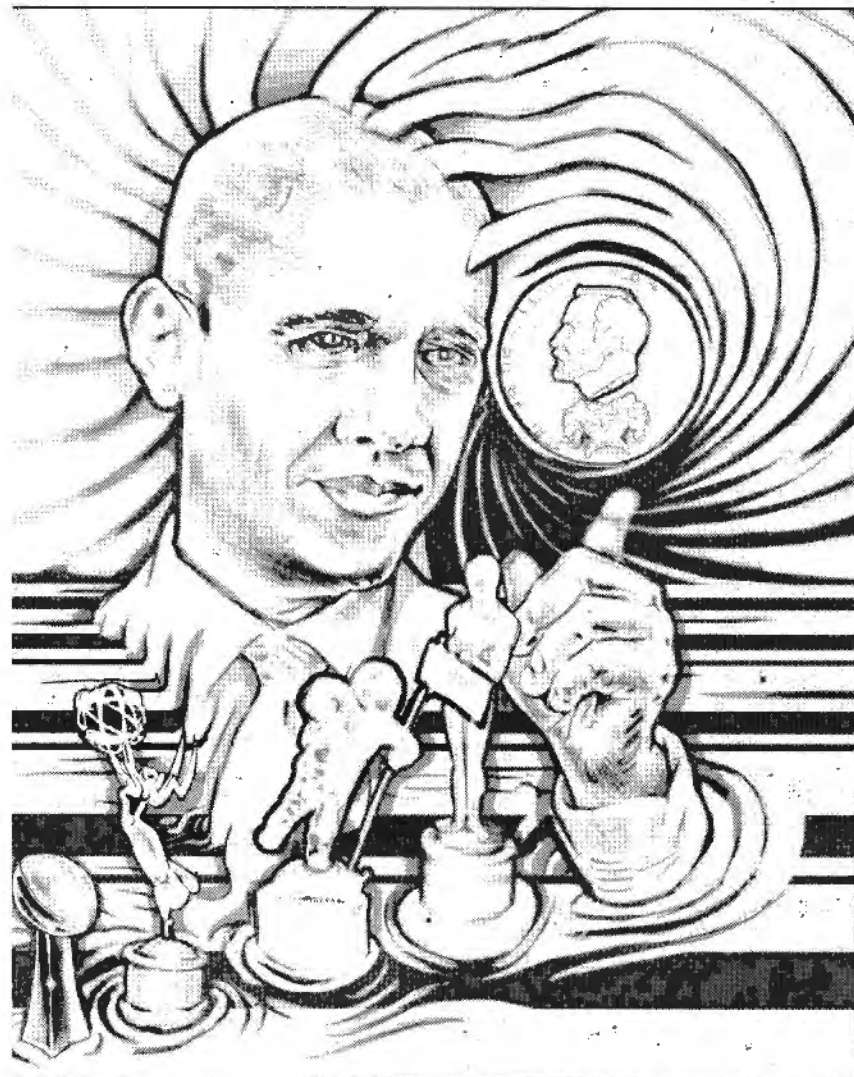
Nobel, No Way

Why Obama should refuse the prize



by andrew previc
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of Annon, fantastic U.N. Secretary General — worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. Mother Theresa, savior of the poor — worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. Martin Luther King, Jr., powerful leader in the civil rights movement — worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. What has President Obama done to deserve such illustrious individuals?



no Country Music Association Female Vocalist of the Year? Illustration by jeffrey miranda

Practically nothing. President Obama ought to have declined the Nobel Peace Prize because the basis for his nomination violated Alfred Nobel's intent and because he will be allowing foreign influence to interfere in the decision-making realm of U.S. Middle-Eastern policy by accepting it.

Alfred Nobel, the founder of the award, planned for the prize to be given to individuals in recognition of actions *already* completed to promote peace. It is difficult to understand, then, what Obama did in his limited time in office that made him more deserving of the award than other possible choices, such as Hu Jia, the Chinese rights activist imprisoned for his protestation

“ [Accepting the prize] ... puts him in conflict with his duties as Commander in Chief. ”

against unfair government practices, and Greg Mortenson, whose relentless efforts to improve female education in Pakistan and Afghanistan resulted in the creation of eighty-eight different schools.

The submission deadline for nominations for the award in February was twelve days after Obama was inaugurated as President. What did he do in that short time to promote peace?

During his first week in office, Obama dispatched George Mitchell as a special envoy for Middle East Peace and Richard Holbrooke as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. He issued an executive order to close Guantanamo Bay within a year and another order formally banning torture for terrorism interrogations in the United States.

Although noble, those actions are not on par with the lifelong efforts of previous winners, such as Nelson Mandela, who spent years of his life aiding the South African movement to end apartheid and many more years behind bars as a result of said efforts.

The committee's decision makes sense only if the prize was given, as the committee later announced, as a symbol to motivate President Obama to work to maintain peace in the Middle-East. That raises problems because it is contrary to Alfred Nobel's intent. More importantly, though, it forces Obama to risk violating his obligation to defend the U.S.

By accepting the award, Obama has consented to the council's view that he will promote peace in the Middle East. Such consent makes him tacitly beholden to the ideal of the award and thus puts him in conflict with his duties as Commander in Chief. If more troops in Afghanistan or Iraq are needed, how can the winner of a Nobel Prize for promoting peace make that decision?

I am no jingoist and do not support the current American wars; however, it irritates

me to know that President Obama, who swore to protect the country from threats domestic or foreign, might feel bound by a council of foreigners to maintain a level of peace consistent with their award standards.

What's worse is that the committee's decision to award the prize to President Obama was not only an attempt to influence future U.S. foreign policy but also a means to express its disapproval of Bush policy. The mere act of nominating Obama right after his inauguration was a slap in the face of the Bush Administration.

I neither approved of nor voted for Bush, but it can be said that his administration accomplished more tangible acts of peacemaking throughout his eight years in office than Obama could have in twelve days.

Consider, for instance, his work with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish Prime Minister Bettie Ahern to broker peace in Northern Ireland or the fact that U.S. aid to Africa increased three-fold during his time in office and trade with the continent nearly doubled. The importance of promoting sustainable growth in third-world countries in order to prevent hostilities cannot be stressed enough.

While the Bush Administration should be blamed for much of what is wrong with American foreign policy in the Middle-East, one should not blatantly disregard the major efforts the Bush Administration took to broker peace in the world.

The Nobel Peace Prize Committee overstepped its bounds by attempting both to comment on past U.S. foreign practices and influence future U.S. foreign policy. Obama should have declined the award and pursued further peacemaking efforts solely on U.S. terms. ■

In sixth grade, Andrew Previc turned down his perfect attendance award.

Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/



Mature Muppets

PBS takes on adult themes, and it works



by prashant raghavendran
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For the past three decades, children have enjoyed watching multicolored felt characters roam the streets of New York City searching for lessons on *Sesame Street*. After a long-standing reputation for inventive and attentive programming for children, the show has been directed by the media market towards more mature teaching methods. Because younglings are now exposed to adult shows and movies at earlier ages, Big Bird and friends are broadcasting watered-down versions of such cutting-edge series as *Mad Men* and *Desperate Housewives*.

Some think such adaptation is an abomination, believing that a children's show should remain true to its moral ground and not tailor its content to the growing immorality in media. However, if executed with prudence, those parodies will be a revolutionary positive step in integrating children into society.

By building a bridge between kids and adults with adapted portrayals of mature media, *Sesame Street* can teach the complexities of the emotions evident in the angst of primetime dramas and the social complexities of the situations in comedies in a gradual manner that eases children into adolescence.

To understand the educational possibilities, consider the history of the show. *Sesame Street*, at its roots, was always an outrageous idea. Before the late 1960s, using television to teach children basic knowledge and values seemed inherently contradictory. Yet the components of the show meshed together so well that the show received high ratings and

“Sesame Street, at its roots, was always an outrageous idea.”



strong parental approval. The unique mix of humans and animal-like characters and the melting pot of races among the actors on the show represented the diversity that all children would encounter in the real world.

Beyond that, basic school knowledge (especially grammar, math, and languages) were thrown into the mix of a vivid, G-rated neighborhood lifestyle. The framework of *Sesame Street* came to be regarded as one of the most brilliant ideas in television. The characters followed specific plotlines but never failed to teach the kids watching at home as many lessons as possible within the span of a half-hour.

However, despite solid ratings and heavy merchandising (remember the Tickle Me Elmo craze in the early 1990s?) *Sesame Street* has been forced to change its direction. When shows such as *Family Guy* openly broadcast the theory that Bert and Ernie are gay, one knows that social norms and the reputation of the children's show are changing. Confronted with that pressure to adapt,

the show has adopted very creative versions of some of the most watched, overtly provocative programs on the air.

Take, for example, the interpretation of *Mad Men*. We see Muppets interacting in the meeting room of a newspaper, though the misogyny and poor workplace etiquette of the adult show are absent. Rather, the show serves as a setting for discussing the differences between feelings of anger, sadness, and happiness. What a wonderful parallel — a show that adults watch as an escape from the blue or white collar serves as the textbook for childhood behavior.

The possibilities for this practice are vast. A version of *How I Met Your Mother* can explain the process of making friends, and an episode of *30 Rock* can expound wisdom about teamwork. In different world regions, the show has taken on various costumes to teach lessons relevant to regional situations.

In Africa, for example, characters with AIDS teach children how to cope with the

realities of the disease. Because of *Sesame Street*'s more mature programming, wealth of knowledge already accessible to adults is now open for children to learn.

Though it could be argued that *Sesame Street*'s straying away from its traditional methods hurts the educational value of the show and introduces situations too complex for children, it must be noted that moral values are still upheld and learning is still of utmost importance. *Sesame Street* has exercised tact in its parodies, mixing them with traditional elements to a perfect degree.

We should not consider the movement of children's programming towards the current quo of media as a defeat, but rather a compromise — as a result we have new, relevant ways to help our kids understand the world around them. ■

Prashant still watches *Sesame Street* in his Muppet footie pajamas.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu

Homeopathology

Water, water everywhere, and none of it is medicine



by richard badgett
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Just over 7 years ago, Thomas and Janju Sam, an Australian couple with a newborn daughter suffering from a severe case of eczema, made the fateful decision to discontinue her medical treatment and put her on a program of homeopathic "remedies". Gloria, their daughter, spent her final two weeks of her short life in ceaseless, shrieking agony as the skin slowly peeled off her body. Two months later, in an Australian court, the couple was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to ten years in prison.

We can look at that case and decry the parents' terrible neglect, place the blame squarely on their shoulders, and feel a sense of righteous justice at their sentence. Our anger at them would not be misplaced. But we shouldn't confine our sympathy to the Sams alone. What killed Gloria was a combination of ignorance and a culture of quackery, so-called "alternative medicine", which has steadily

gained exposure and acceptance, despite the complete lack of evidence that the so-called "medicine" is anything more than wishful thinking.

Homeopathy kills people. It is not some harmless superstition or some zany new-age fad that rich people use on their pets. It is a massive, systemic attempt to undermine legitimate science, and the consequences of allowing it to go unchallenged are lethal.

In case you're unfamiliar with the term, homeopathy is a belief first expounded in the early 19th century by Samuel Hahnemann, who observed (incorrectly) that cinchona bark, a cure for malaria, created malarial symptoms when given to non-malarial patients. He had practically no methodology, and even by the lax standards of the day his conclusions could hardly be considered scientific.

However, his observations led him to the conclusion that "like cures like" — that is, to cure an illness, give the patient something that presents similar pathologies.

If curing poison with poison sounds crazy to you, you're not alone. It even sounded crazy to Hahnemann, which is why he expanded his theory. You don't just

treat arsenic with arsenic — that would kill someone. Instead you must first dilute the arsenic treatment in water, and the more diluted the treatment, the more effective it becomes.

That's really it. Homeopaths believe that putting poison in water and rendering it so dilute that it no longer contains anything but water cures illness. It's one of the craziest, most unscientific quack treatments ever devised. It's like selling snake oil without having the decency to squeeze a good snake. Water. That's it. Water will cure whatever ails you — according to homeopaths.

That in itself wouldn't be so awful, except homeopaths also believe that in order for their "alternative treatments" to work, people must *discontinue* standard medical treatment. If you have strep throat, you mustn't take antibiotics. Instead, just drink some water with boric acid in it. That's why homeopathic "medicine" is so insidious. While drinking magic water is pretty harmless, drinking magic water at the exclusion of real medicine is dangerous.

Homeopathy is crazy, not even remotely scientific, and not really medicine, but there are fringe elements everywhere — so what? You should care because all over the Western world homeopathy is given special treatment, as though it were a scientific approach to curing disease.

Abroad and at home, people such as Senator Tom Harkin are actively working to force doctors and government research institutions to treat homeopathy as a valid alternative to medicine.

Years ago, Harkin began a campaign to undermine real science: he forced the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to create an Office of Alternative Medicine

(OAM). The goal of that office was to study the efficacy of so-called alternative treatments. After several years, the OAM found no evidence that homeopathy can treat any known disease and in fact proved that it does *nothing*. Fearing that his beloved center for quackery would be shut down, Harkin elevated the Office to its own independent center within the NIH, the NCCAM (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine).

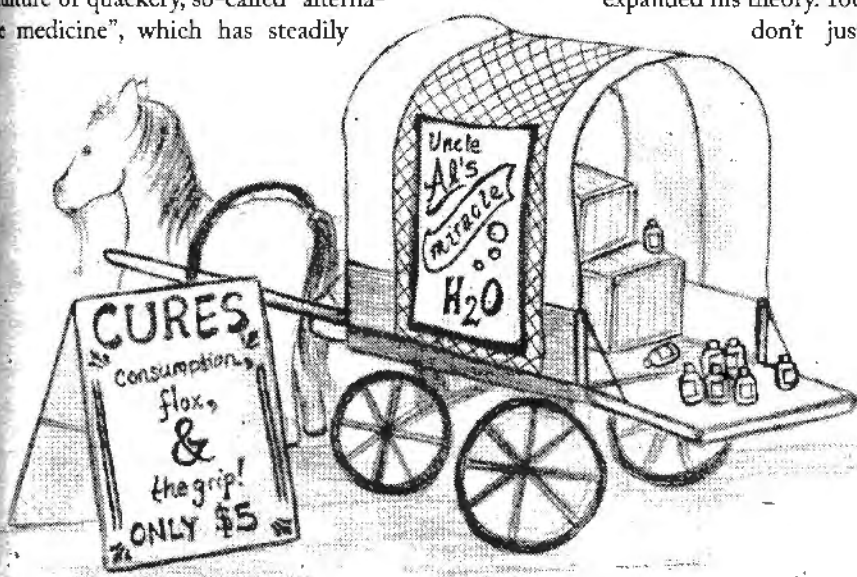
Harkin, and people like him, have worked tirelessly to create a culture of acceptance and "open-mindedness" regarding alternative "medicine". They want you to think of traditional (that is to say, effective) medicine as bound by prejudice, as set in its ways. Alternative theories, he would have you believe, are new and bold and should be given encouragement.

For proof of what happens when we treat homeopathy as medicine, look no further than Zicam, an "over-the-counter cold remedy." Zicam is just water with zinc diluted in it, and while it won't cure a cold, it should at least have been pretty harmless.

Because of the efforts of people like Harkin, homeopathic "medicines" like Zicam aren't regulated by the FDA. Since it had no regulation, some batches of Zicam were shipped that were not just ineffective — they actually caused hundreds of people to lose their sense of smell permanently.

Homeopathy is dangerous, and should be treated as such. It deserves no protection. Homeopaths aren't daring medical practitioners willing to take bold risks. They are charlatans preying on the gullible.

Because of homeopathy, a newborn girl, oozing pus from every surface of her tiny body, screamed herself to death in unending pain. The only thing homeopaths dilute in their magical water is the efficacy of science and the value of human life. ■



Wait a minute. Consumption, flux, and the grip? What a deal! Illustration by Lewis Chang

Richard Badgett is angry at water.
Seriously, Richard, chill out.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

Austin City Limits



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Sweat. Smoke. Slightly less legal smoke. Rain. Poo? Despite the vivid olfactory assault at Austin City Limits Festival 2009, more than fifty thousand people gathered to focus on one unifying passion: music. With acts ranging from French pop rock to bluegrass folk to hip hop, the festival was a smorgasbord of musical genres that succeeded in whetting the melodic appetites of all its attendees, no matter how selective their tastes. Headlined by Pearl Jam, Kings of Leon, and Dave Matthews Band, ACL drew crowds in record numbers. By the time Pearl Jam hit the stage late on Sunday night, the entirety of Zilker Park was parked in front of the Livestrong Stage. Of course, there were plenty of bands besides the headliners at the festival, including some terrific and some terrible performances.

Here's a taste of the good, the bad, and the strange of this year's ACL.

Girl Talk

ACL was book ended by two great dance bands — Phoenix on Friday and Girl Talk on Sunday. Girl Talk consists of one DJ, Gregg Gillis, who does mash-ups: He mixes dozens of songs into one coherent track. Watching him do his work live and on the fly makes it even more impressive, as his improvisation is masterful. Performing a show that was definitely fan oriented, he scrawled text messages to the crowd across the giant viewing screen and was joined on stage by hundreds of fans dancing their hearts out. A genre unto itself, his mash-ups of hip-hop, rap, and hard rock had thousands of people on their feet and jumping.



Rock royalty: John Paul Jones, Dave Grohl, and John Homme. Photo courtesy of Sidehike @ flickr

The Decemberists

The Decemberists has the ignominious title of most disappointing act at the festival — and nobody else came close to challenging it. Despite the virtuosity of its performance and its distinctive command of the stage, the Decemberists played its latest concept album, *Hazards of Love*, straight through and almost note-for-note for the hour-long set. That is an experience easily duplicated in any apartment — not necessarily one for which fans would want to pay. Concerts are venues for improvisation, new renditions, and stage presence, and The Decemberists did not add anything to the concert that was not already on its album. While *Hazards of Love* is a rock opera with a set storyline, there was still room to add new aspects and riffs to the instrumental theme, and those possibilities were not taken advantage of.

Them Crooked Vultures

Them Crooked Vultures is the best band you aren't listening to. How do we know? It hasn't released its album yet, but rest assured that once it has, that album will go all eleven. The band consists of Josh Homme on guitar and vocals, the lead singer/songwriter of Queens of the Stone Age, Dave Grohl on drums, who drummed for Nirvana, front man for the Foo Fighters, and finally, John Paul Jones, the bassist and keyboard great Led Zeppelin. Despite being over 60, John Paul Jones had no difficulty keeping his younger bandmates at bringing the rock. After teasing the crowd about covering (which we maintain would have been awesome) Them Crooked Vultures shredded a set list of brand new songs from its debut self titled album, due out November 11.

Lonely beachball is lonely, mostly because of the poo dirt. Photo courtesy of sarah shen



The Dead Weather

One thing you can always count on from ACL is an appearance and performance from the great Jack White, and you can always count on Jack White to show up with an entirely different band from the year before. Not content with just two great bands (The White Stripes and The Raconteurs) Jack White plays drums in his latest group as he teams up with rock veterans Alison Mosshart of The Kills on vocals, Dean Fertita of Queens of the Stone Age on guitar, and Jack Lawrence of The Raconteurs on bass. Once again, our expectations of hearing a cover song were dashed, but the band gave a black and bluesy snarl much closer to "Icky Thump" than "Steady as She Goes". Its new album *Horehound* is angry, dark, and raucous, and that was exactly the music it brought to the Livestrong stage on Sunday afternoon.

The coolest balloon ever. Photo courtesy of tibbygirl @ flickr



Phoenix

Phoenix played with the exact amount of flair you'd expect from a pop-rock band from Paris. Unfortunately, it did not play some favorites, such as "Napoleon Says", but it definitely rocked a collection of songs from its new album *Wolfgang Amadeus Phoenix*, including "Lisztomania" and "1901". Featuring a pseudo-electronic feel, the show turned into more of a dance party than a concert, a tribute to the infectious nature of Phoenix's music.



Flogging Molly's Dave King and Bridget Regan rock through the rain. Photo courtesy of Chronotourage @ flickr

Flogging Molly

Flogging Molly played on the AMD stage on Saturday and faced a challenge uniquely suited to an Irish rock band: torrential rain. Flogging Molly, a punk rock band from Dublin, played during heavy showers and still managed to whip the 5000 attendees into a frenzy. A veteran band of four albums (the latest being a darker endeavor called *Float*), Flogging Molly opened the show with enough energy to get people jumping amid the cold and the mud. "Devil's Dance Floor", "Rebels of the Sacred Heart", and "Drunken Lullabies", perennial fan favorites, drew tremendous reaction from a rowdy crowd. With toasts of Guinness, one-fingered salutes, and even some Irish jigs, the band brought a performance that was punk rock at its best.

Final Thoughts

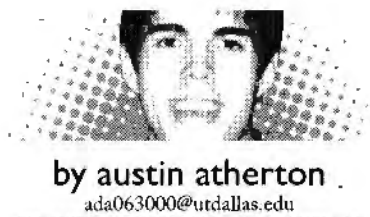
ACL 2009 was awesome. Despite the smell, the rain, the crowds, the heat, and the presence of more hippies than you could shake a stick at, it didn't disappoint. With attendees already speculating on next year's lineup, and the PBS show upon which the festival is based finally receiving a nod from the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the Austin City Limits Music Festival has permanently established itself amongst the great music festivals of our day. Both mainstream and independent rock fans can find something to appreciate at Austin City Limits, so be sure to get your early bird 3-day passes soon, and have fun next year. ■

Poo Dirt

ACL 2009 was smelly. Every year ACL has been defined by some feature or other (dust storms, extreme heat, etc.), and this year was no different. The huge crowds and the downpour on Saturday quickly turned the nice grassy landscape into a treacherous sinkhole of slime and mud. The grounds had been marinated with "Dillo Dirt™" — a compost of dirt, recycled yard trimmings, and, yes, treated human sewage sludge. While the composting process made it sanitary, the scent was still unmistakable, leading to our personal phrase of the year, "poo dirt".

Arts Alive!

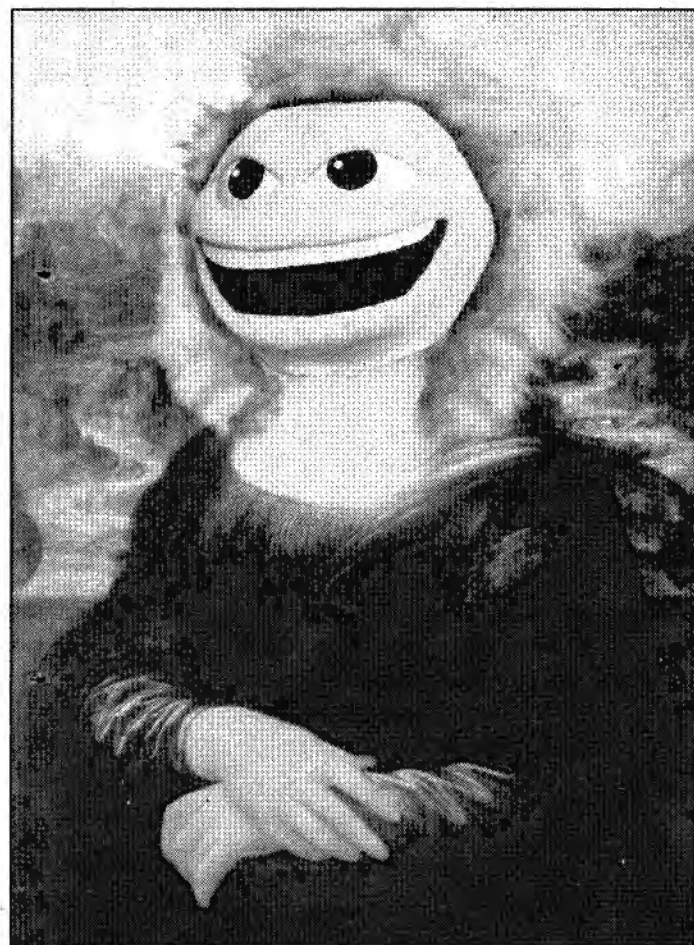
Absence of attention for arts arouses alarm



by austin atherton

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They're not on campus maps, but the new Arts and Humanities (A&H) buildings could very well be the heart of this campus. If you had taken a stroll down the A&H halls this past Saturday, you would have encountered Novis, a student-started cappella group harmonizing in the rehearsal room, guitarists plucking out melodies in the practice halls, and an artist in the art studio wrapping up a conceptual series of paintings. Although UT Dallas has long been known for computer science, engineering, and business administration, it's impossible to ignore the warning signs of a burgeoning artistic culture.



A smile to captivate the ages. Photoillustration by jonathan coker

The Arts and Humanities department is often overlooked in the pursuit of new programs. Shiny, new buildings and cutting-edge technology for science have served to cover up the university's lack of arts offerings. Only recently have the artists on campus been paid long overdue attention by the administration. That delay was probably due more to failure of past programs than to a skewed administrative agenda. A huge segment of the budget has been allocated to bring in performers to encourage the student body to explore the fine arts, and yet the seats remain empty unless attendance is required by Rhet 1101.

The UT Dallas campus is growing extremely quickly. Students have unique opportunities to impact their college environment through applying for funds from the Alumni Student Grant Fund or starting a new club. In that regard, college life at UTD greatly reflects the values of the students themselves. So instead of isolating yourself from campus, seeking outside venues, or griping about the tragically small number of theatrical productions on campus, do something about it.

Students have bemoaned the distinct lack of school spirit at this university, citing distressingly low attendance at athletic events as well as larger events such as the homecoming dance. Often, however, the complainers are the ones skipping activities. School pride is about not only allegiance but also actively supporting your classmates. Interactions between classmate and classmate, performer and audience, and athlete and fan form the social situations from which school spirit stems.

Pick up a calendar and see why the financial support the university has given to the arts department is worth it. Whether it is a play, an art exhibition, or an underground poetry circus, each of those events is an opportunity to meet some of the artists that sit alongside you in the Pub doing homework. Brittany Sharkey is one such individual, a performer for the underground poetry circus and a shining example of how to express oneself in a collegiate atmosphere.

The underground poetry circus is like something out of a movie. Performers volunteer to step on stage and share their gifts with the public. The only things missing from the dimly lit and somewhat smoky atmosphere are stereotypical black turtle necks, bongo drums, and snapping.

Sharkey, a spunky red-head, takes the stage, and everyone goes silent. For a moment the

“You aren't just a seat-warmer, taking notes for a humanities paper — you're the very reason for the performance.”

whole room waits together. As if in some cheesy war movie, all of these random people are united by a single cause. In this performance, she addresses the close relationship between artist and audience:

“Albeit an audience of one, I am an audience nonetheless. I give his words meaning, breathe life and realization into her performance; provide the proverbial stage for their pacing minds. I am the target, the vessel, the beginning, middle, end, the poet's defining antithesis. I don't even have to be his biggest fan, and yet somehow that almost gives me more power. For it is those least eager to listen we must seek most to touch.”

The codependent nature of man is never more evident than in the relationship between artist and audience. To elaborate on the proverb “beauty is in the eye of the beholder”, art is the social perception of individual expression, so don't underestimate your role as an observer. You aren't just a seat-warmer, taking notes for a humanities paper — you're the very reason for the performance.

Walk the streets of Austin in the general vicinity of UT, and you will find a variety of activities available on Friday and Saturday nights. There are street performers, parties, study groups, and even random costumed characters strutting about. It is not some anomaly, but rather the fruition of many individual dreams. This can be achieved at UTD, too.

So next time the weekend rolls around and you're looking for something to do, don't discredit your fellow classmates and leave campus. Look around and you'll see there is life on campus. There is life outside of your apartment — just go out and explore. The fine arts department at UTD, and campus life in general, needs your support. Attend soccer games, chess matches, SUAAB events and RHA Monster Mashers. Instead of complaining about campus life, become a part of it. ■

Austin thinks your foray into the arts should include contributing to AMP. All the cool kids are doing it.

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Capitalism: A Sob Story

Michael Moore fails to capitalize on opportunity



by art zachary
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Capitalism: A Love Story, the latest offering from oft controversial, baseball-cap-wearing documentarian Michael Moore, opens with a new modern vignette: the hard-working, middle-American, blue-collar Joe who has fallen upon hard times. He has fallen prey to predatory lending practices, and as a result his home is currently under foreclosure. It is a sad tale, to be sure, and Moore's capitalization on pathos — which has become a hallmark of his filmmaking — does not disappoint. In fact, the first hour of the film is little more than a continuous battery on the sympathies of the audience.

Excessive emotional appeal is not the culmination of Moore's abuse of documentary integrity. Throughout the film, correlation is used to imply causation with a complete disregard for rationale that approaches recklessness. For example, President Ronald Reagan's rise to power and the increase in bankruptcy, credit card debt, and the volume of anti-depressant prescriptions are presented in parallel, as if the former implied the latter.

Without any attempt to support his results quantitatively, aside from a snappy time graph with Reagan's mug in the corner, Moore manages to attribute what he asserts to be the perversion of capitalism to rising corporate greed and tax cuts since Reagan came into power.

Moore also attempts to argue that democracy is a viable alternative to capitalism. Effectively, Moore provides an irrelevant solution for a problem whose existence is never quite proven.

That is partially the fault of the director's adherence to a practically indefensible thesis and partially because the defense of his thesis is weak and filled with logical connections that don't fit. Moore's

whole argument is based on presnming that corporations are evil and interested solely in conducting evil policies to cultivate wealth through out-of-control greed.

The unfortunate fact is that those faults, tricks, and huckster's compromises serve to detract from the later, more important points that Moore makes, which he actually makes well. For whatever reason, as is symptomatic of most of his previous works, Moore always falls back upon old standards of cheap debate.

Ideologues on either political side pandering to the lowest common denominator in order to attract support from those with opinions on the fringe. It is necessary to state, outright, that Michael Moore's fire-brand filmmaking is no different.

If one is able to suffer through the saccharine sympathy that composes the first half of the film and can look past the leaps of logic and radical claims, a reward awaits. A surprisingly robust and well-made thirty or forty-five minutes of the film focus on the 2008 federal bailout of the financial industry.

On that foundation a better film could have, and should have, been built. Moore presents the facts in a straightforward way and provides an interesting look into the frantic course of events. He highlights how major players from investment banks helped shape the legislation to suit *their* needs and realize *their* desired outcomes.

The speeches from members of Congress highlight a frustration, often overlooked by the news media, that resonates with the public at large.

What is most notable is that, instead of trying to dumb things down, Moore gives his audience access to as much of the story as is required to form their own opinions. Moreover, the facts are interesting and engaging and present information that many may have missed in the mess surrounding the economy's collapse.

Americans need to have an opinion on this issue, and Moore provides a way for people to develop informed opinions.



Tiny violins play sad, sad songs for the people in Moore's new film. Illustration by richard badgett

It is tragic to imagine what the film could have been. Had Moore been able to shelve the sensationalism and realize that the situation demanded directorial restraint, the final product would have been far more relevant.

Buried under the relentless pathos is a great film about one of the most important and divisive issues in recent history, an issue that has yet to receive sufficient investigative treatment. Moore had the opportunity to provide that treatment and failed.

Essentially, Moore's intent, as is generally true of his larger body of work, is to reduce complex issues to simple moral evaluations in an effort to make his thesis more palatable at the bnx office.

Moore ends the movie with a plea to the like-minded to join him in his fight against the injustices he attributes to capitalism. He seems sincere in this request, but ultimately it does not resolute.

So much has been sacrificed to force a moral imperative on the issue that little integrity remains for such a high minded appeal. The fact is that Michael Moore will never make an important film unless he realizes that doing so will require more respect for the intelligence of the audience. ■

Art Zachary has two settings: "flannel" and "off."
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No Middle Ground

New programming either trash or treasure



by alex garcia topete
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Among the many outcomes of the economic crisis, one has not come to light until recently: Average TV is coming to an end. The money-earning orientation of the networks' parent companies and sponsors, along with increased production costs, have set the stage for a media environment in which medium-quality TV shows cannot survive, for they do not guarantee enough earnings cover their costs — they are a high-stakes gamble that troubled companies' will not take.

In other words, if time equals money, TV airtime equals diamonds these days, and that mindset has paralyzed TV so that every show falls into one of two extremes: masterpiece or plain trash (or at least, a cheap, low-quality show). The danger now lies with the parent corporations' greed and their willingness to sacrifice anything for the sake of quick profit instead of shooting for bigger earnings in the future. As the season progresses, unwise executive choices

seem to be dooming quality television — precisely what TV professionals have dreaded and are fighting.

Here are the five major network decision errors that are driving decent TV out of existence.

Killing primetime programming diversity

The CW, which was once a family-oriented channel, started the trend when it shut down its comedy department last spring in order to focus on teen shows such as *Gossip Girl*, *Melrose Place*, and *Supernatural*. After The CW's move, all of the networks started specializing: ABC cancelled *Pushing Daisies* and other worthy shows to open up airtime for more reality shows; CBS confirmed its position as a bastion for crime-procedurals and sitcoms (a new *NCIS* spinoff, *CSI*: wherever, *The Big Bang Theory*, *How I Met Your Mother*, and more); FOX retouched its tendency toward the action genre while revamping its animation department, basically handing everything over for Seth McFarland to run; and NBC decided to surrender and become (for the most part) the Tina Fey, *The Office* Spoofs, and talk show channel. Such corporate decisions mean the downfall of fall programming.

Extreme risk avoidance

Since corporations are not willing to take risks with new series, they allow (or force) the existing good shows to run for too long — causing those series to flounder. How many recent series that were a hit in their first season have continued to air while getting nowhere (*cough* *Lost* *cough* *Heroes* *cough*) or having a repetitive premise that got boring after three or four seasons? How many times have the *Prison Break* guys gotten in and out of jail, or how many sociopaths have lived in *Desperate Housewives*' Wysteria Lane? Plainly speaking, the networks have fallen into the practice of milking their cash-cow shows, even those that were designed to work only for a single season.

Reality-show abuse

Sure, reality shows easily tap into people's desire to pry into other people's lives and mishaps — such shows are cheap to produce, garner huge audiences, and attract sponsors. However, most reality shows nowadays shouldn't exist, and those few with production or social value require revision. For instance, *Dancing with the Stars* should have actual stars participating in it again (Tom Delay — really?); *The Biggest Loser* should be less demeaning if its purpose is to deliver a "healthy" message; *Big Brother*, *America's Next Top Model*, and *American Idol* should be suspended for a while (to allow a generation to forget about them) or cancelled entirely; and the ridiculous shows *Wipeout* and *Wife-Swap* never should have been conceived. It's tiresome to engage in so much people-watching.

The plague of talk-shows

An American TV tradition since the times of Johnny Carson, talk shows have re-emerged as one of the network's big money-makers. They are the cheapest and fastest shows to produce, requiring only a few writers, minimal crew, a host, guest celebrities, and a live audience. But how can talk-shows be a mistake? They take up airtime that could be invested in something better and more creative. The new *Jay Leno Show* epitomizes the problem: Running five days a week in the 9/10 PM slot, it occupies the spot that used to belong to award-winning dramas such

“As the season progresses, unwise executive choices seem to be dooming quality television — precisely what TV professionals have dreaded and are fighting.”

as *The West Wing*, *E.R.*, and *Law & Order*, pushing said shows either to earlier spots or off the air (as was the case with *Southland*, created by John Wells' Production, the studio behind *E.R.* and *The West Wing*). Both talk-shows and reality shows simply replace dramas and comedies unrightfully.

Business short-sightedness

This is the worst of the network's errors. Reality shows and talk-shows are inexpensive and rake in millions of dollars really fast when they air — but so does a good (though expensive) series. A series, however, can be sold to several ancillary markets, including DVD, syndication, and foreign markets (to give you an idea, a 10-season series like *Friends* is worth around 1 billion dollars), whereas nobody buys Jay Leno or *Survivor* after they've aired — those are one-time hits.

Ultimately, it's up to the TV industry people to make sure that the natural selection imposed by the recession doesn't wipe out or hurt all good shows, but rather that the lower end of programming will expire. Even if worse comes to worst, and the broadcast networks produce crap only, at least cable networks (with *Dexter*, *True Blood*, and the like) can still creatively entertain those audiences who refuse to watch the programming of the "idiot box." ■

Alex Garcia Topete wears a viking hat and clock.

Yeaaaahh Boyeeeee.

Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu/



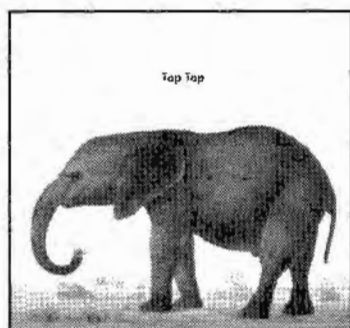
That's what you get for always breaking character on SNL. Photoillustration by mac hird



The Spin Cycle



by stuart mcafee
stuartmcafee@gmail.com



Tap Tap
Lanzafame
(Catbird; 2006)

The reason you're reading about *this* record and not another, more recent one is worth mentioning up front: I've got the heads-up on a band that has not yet released an album but will no doubt generate buzz in the near future (a difficult thing to do these days). This band is Pete and the Pirates and stars the mastermind behind solo act Tap Tap along with several additional members. In a way, I'm reviewing two bands via one album.

Lanzafame ("Lan-zuh-fam-ay," pronounced with a firm British accent) is a wonderful and tragically overlooked indie rock album from what many students my age consider the genre's most exciting era. The album sounds as though a brilliant young man recorded it in his bedroom seeking to shake up the common ground between the welcoming sounds of old art-

ists — think the Kinks, the Clean and the Beach Boys — and the sometimes more abrasive sounds of its generation — think the Arcade Fire and Clap Your Hands Say Yeah.



Pete and the Pirates's material is very similar to that of Tap Tap but employs enhanced electric guitars, pop riffs, and high-end distortion. The biggest distinction I can identify between the two is that Pete and the Pirates have adopted a more modern British guitar-pop mentality,

which results in more guitar solos, more full-bodied embellishments, and more well-rounded songs. However, it's a mixed blessing that the newer band has a vision as singular as the former had; they are consistent songwriters, but extended listening may provide diminishing returns. As a result, Pete and the Pirates' work suffers from the same problem that Tap Tap's *Lanzafame* has: the truly delicious morsels of music must be picked out from amongst the tasty but homogenous filler.

Looking back at Tap Tap's 2006 release, though it's not all that recent, will ultimately help you appreciate Pete and the Pirates' forthcoming album. So if you're trying to keep up with the direction of modern pop and rock, it will benefit you this time to take a step back and revisit *Lanzafame*. ■



Atlas Sound
Logos
(Kranky; 2009)

If you read modern music blogs regularly, you're probably aware of and enamored with the Atlas Sound, Deerhunter, Lotus Plaza family tree that has been shaping the American rock scene recently. If you aren't, don't sweat it. You don't need any previous knowledge of them to fall head over heels for this album.

Bradford Cox, the backbone of the aforementioned groups, typically builds songs from slow, billowy, electronic soundscapes and reverb-burdened vocals when doing solo work as Atlas Sound. The result is a numbing swirl of bells and swells, which are consistently pleasant yet not engaging enough to keep the average listener's attention. This time around, Cox attempts to keep the audience interested, primarily by switching his focus to pop

hooks instead of subtle production flourishes.

The new emphasis on pop is most obvious in his collaborative efforts on *Logos*. The tracks featuring Noah Lennox (a.k.a. Panda Bear) of avant-pop group Animal



Collective and Laetitia Sadier of British electronic group Stereolab give the impression that while Cox is in the driver's seat, his new friends are navigating. Al-

though those songs bear Cox's signature style, they sound like their respective guests wrote them. Such collaborations are a winning strategy that adds a lot of charm to his readily apparent talent.

I've been spinning this immediately infectious album whenever I can. It contains nuances to be discovered and embraced in each subsequent listen. Not only is this Cox's best work, but it will also undoubtedly be one of my favorite albums this year. ■

*Stu sent his reviews from on location in New York.
Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!*

The Menu

This month: Russo's New York Coal-Fired Italian Kitchen



by brady spenrath
bds062000@utdallas.edu

Good atmosphere, quality ingredients, homemade-style pizza and pasta, a convenient location, and free delivery — what more could one want from Russo's New York Coal-fired Italian Kitchen & Wine Bar? Well, for one, a shorter name would be great. After all, I am working with a word limit here. For college students, lower prices would be nice. But, overall, with some of the freshest flavors so close to campus, it's a great value.

Russo's is a small chain that, despite its name, started in Houston. Its Richardson location opened earlier this year at the southeast corner of I-75 and Campbell in

my new favorite shopping center, the one with Boudreaux's Cajun, Panera Bread, Jimmy John's Sandwiches, and Twisted Root Burger Co.

Russo's provides a mixed atmosphere. It's nice, but not too fancy; casual, but not quite "come as you are"; fast, but not fast-food. If you go for lunch, someone will usually ask where you would like to sit and deliver your menus, but you order at the front counter when you're ready, and your service is limited to drink refills and bussing.

In the evenings, they switch to waiter-style service and take your order at your table. At least, I think that's how it works — it feels a little undecided, but it works either way, so I'm not complaining. What I can definitely tell you is that it is clean and attractive inside, with the coal oven in view and plenty of indoor and outdoor seating. You can dress as casually or as nicely as you'd like; jeans or shorts are fine,

but you may feel out of place in sweats or workout clothes.

Of course, with so many Italian restaurants out there, the real measure of the restaurant is its food and its value. Russo's does a great job with the food and decently with the value. For both, you can't go wrong with a calzone or pasta. The calzones are huge and loaded with vegetables, meats, and mozzarella. You can order a custom one for \$10.95 with two toppings of your choice, but for a dollar less, you can just go with the Stromboli Calzone which has delicious pepperoni and sausage, mushrooms, black olives, bell peppers, and mozzarella stuffed inside and marinara sauce on the side.

The pasta is tender and homemade-looking and can come as familiar or unique as you'd like it, from traditional spaghetti with meatballs to Linguini Nero (squid ink pasta with king crab meat, shrimp, calamari, and reggiano cream sauce). The Gemelli Carbonara, for example, comes with prosciutto, chicken, and onions on a bed of twisted pasta complete with a creamy romano sauce.

It's a well-balanced combination of meat, pasta, and sauce served in a portion that's large for \$9.95 — it could easily make two meals for most appetites. It's such a great dish that I can't wait to go back and try more of Russo's pastas. The other pasta dishes are a little more expensive — around \$10 or \$15 — but they also have soups, salads, and fire-roasted flatbread sandwiches for less.

I recommend that you go between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. for the lunch specials. Those items are either cheaper than their menu counterparts or unique specials that you can't order any other time. Either way, you're getting a full-sized meal for a better price, plus a generous amount of salad to start things off.

Russo's Caesar salad has a thicker, creamier dressing than any I've had before (which I say as a big fan of Caesar salads) and has become one of my favorites. I've tried the Veal Parmesan and the Stuffed Peppers from the lunch special menu. Both were tasty, filling, and only about \$10.

The veal was a quality cut served fork-tender on a bed of spaghetti and meat sauce. The stuffed peppers were unique and tasty enough on their own, stuffed with sausage and topped with tomato sauce, but also came with a side of pesto pasta.

As highly as I recommend the rest of Russo's food, I hesitate to recommend the pizza. Don't get me wrong — it's some of the best-tasting pizza I've had in the Dal-Rich area, and Russo's has some unusual combinations (prosciutto and egg, anyone?) with top-notch ingredients, and excellent New York or Neapolitan style crusts, all cooked to perfection in their brick oven, but it's a little expensive for the amount.

They have both small and large pizzas (though the Neapolitan style only comes in small), which are supposed to serve 1-2 or 2-4 people, respectively. The prices depend on the toppings you get, but most of their combinations are around \$16 for a small and around \$20 for a large. I tried a small and easily ate it by myself. Yes, they are excellent pizzas with the finest ingredients, but there are simply better values around.

All in all, Russo's is a perfect setting for those days you're craving something nicer than McDonald's but don't want to pay ridiculous prices. I recommend the lunch specials or Happy Hour from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. for a slightly better deal.

It's a good place for a date, with quality food for a fair price, but it also offers free delivery to a three mile radius (which includes UTD!) for any order over \$10, which makes it the highest quality delivery place I've found around (and believe me, I've looked). Sure, it's not perfect for a college budget, but with large portions, fresh ingredients, and unique recipes, it's not unfairly expensive either. ■



Russo's is located at the Southeast corner of 75 and Campbell. Photo courtesy of brady spenrath

Brady looked into living in the apartments at that restaurant-filled shopping center. Rent: \$850/month. Projected living expenses: \$3,000/month (food, medical bills) ... He's still undecided. Discuss this article at amp.utdallas.edu!

Caption Contest



Photoillustration by richard badgett

Sample Caption:

Jesus: "I'm going as Glenn Beck for Halloween."

Velociraptor: "Purrrrrr."

Jesus: "Yes."

October Caption Contest



Photo by mac hird

Winning caption by Liz Schmiedel:

Kanye: Look, imma let you finish, but your waffles ain't got nothin' on IHOP.

Dr. Daniel: Don't make me go all Tier-One on your ass, bitch!

TATTLE



Cartoon by caitlin like

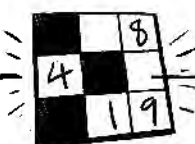
Caption Contest Rules

Post your captions as comments on the website **AND** email them with your name to amodestproposal@gmail.com. The editors will select the best one at the end of the month to be the winning caption. The winning caption and some runners up will be published in next month's issue of AMP! The writer of the winning caption shall receive a free AMP T-shirt — editors' treat!

Anyone may submit a caption, but only a current student of the University of Texas at Dallas will win. Captions **MUST** have been submitted to amodestproposal@gmail.com. No caption that hasn't been emailed to AMP will be considered for the contest. So what are you waiting for? Get those creative juices flowing, and get to work!

Questions, comments, and concerns should be sent to amodestproposal@gmail.com.

You don't want to anger velociraptor snuggling Jesus do you?
Then submit your stories and artwork to amodestproposal@gmail.com
Learn from Glenn Beck. He did not submit to AMP. That is his actual face.



by jonathan coker
jcockerutd@gmail.com

Yowzer!

Roman Construction

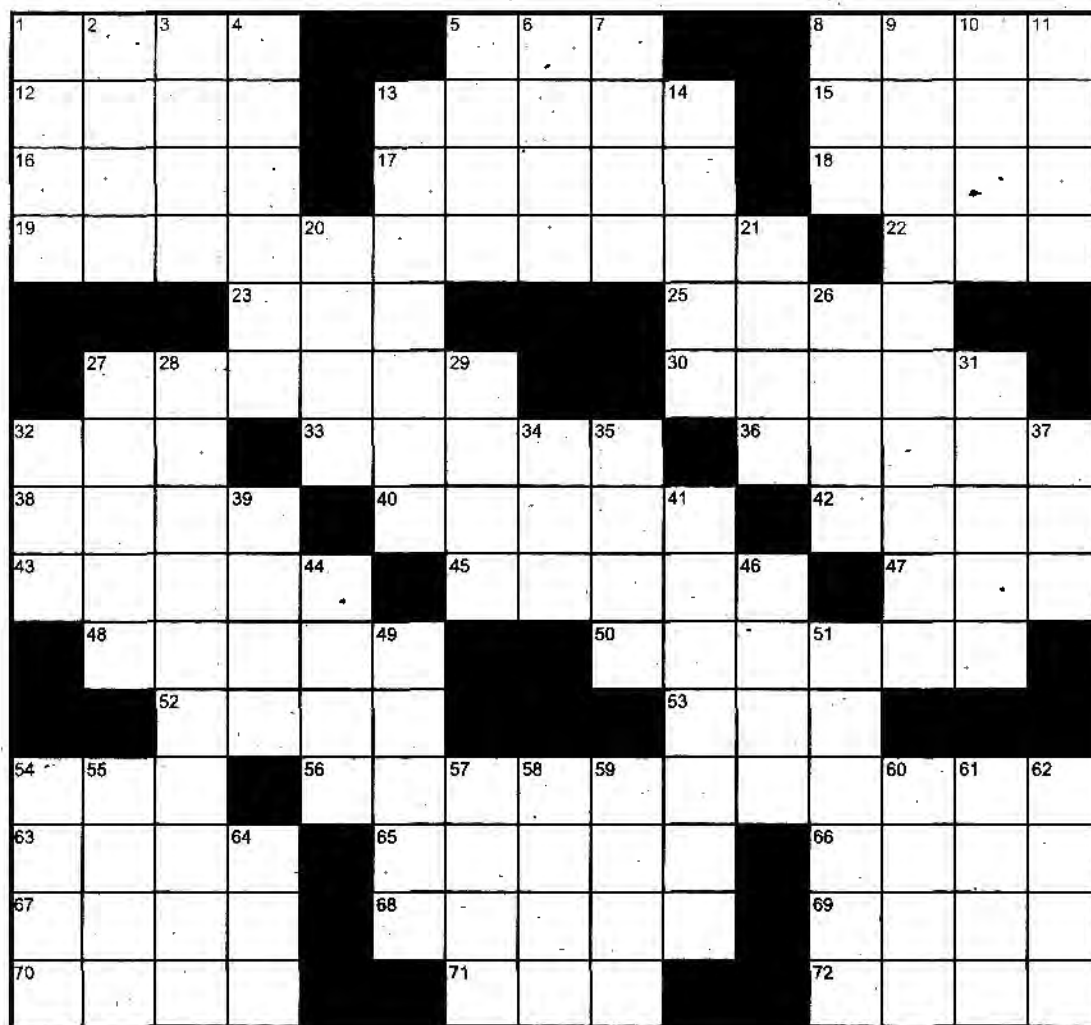
Across:

1. Special Shindig
5. Between Ar And Tee
8. Still
12. Roman Sex Position
13. Feigned
15. Even
16. Fencing Sword
17. Subject
18. Catch
19. College Housing
22. Extreme Anger
23. Before Word Part
25. Curse
27. Photog, Painter, Or Poet
30. Sausage fests
32. Wide Road (abbr.)
33. Save For Later
36. Average Joe
38. Pilots
40. Spirits
42. Ship Sheet
43. Religious
45. Clown Fish To Toddlers
47. In Short Supply (abbr.)
48. 58 To Julius
50. Luxuriously Soft
52. Global Energy Stock
53. Defunct Electronics Co. (abbr.)
54. Play Part
56. Terrain Changing
63. Superman Beau
65. Eagle's Nest
66. At All Times
67. Distinct Scent
68. Past Can
69. Red In The Middle
70. XXX
71. Red Cross or UNICEF (abbr.)
72. Fluffy Ice

Down:

1. Ran Away
2. Showing (abbr.)
3. Level
4. Excused
5. Sound Again

6. Derogatory Suffix
7. Big Truck
8. Vague Possessive
9. Campus Eatery
10. Tragic Shakespeare King
11. U2 Guitarist
13. Officially Affirms
14. Ownership Documents
20. Purple Flower
21. College Entrance Exams
26. Conceited Computers
27. Use Or Benefit
28. Restoring Project
29. Illustrated Character
31. Strike Like God
32. UTD Publication (abbr.)
34. Deeply Regret
35. Common Shades
37. Advanced In Time
39. Dapper Male Wear
41. Taken From
44. Window Edge
46. Anti Animal Cruelty Org. (abbr.)
49. Abe's Kid
51. Documents
54. Cast Object In Jesus Era (2 wds.)
55. Computer Rules
57. Dayglo
58. Pill Or Syrup
59. Farm Cylinder
60. Famous Terrible
61. Roman Pyro
62. Sized Up
64. Old Folk (abbr.)



Oct. Crossword
Answers



Have a puzzle you want to see? Want to write your own crossword? Want either to be in the next issue?

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

amp.utdallas.edu

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

Difficulty: Green Beans



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

Difficulty: Fruit Cake



More Sudoku

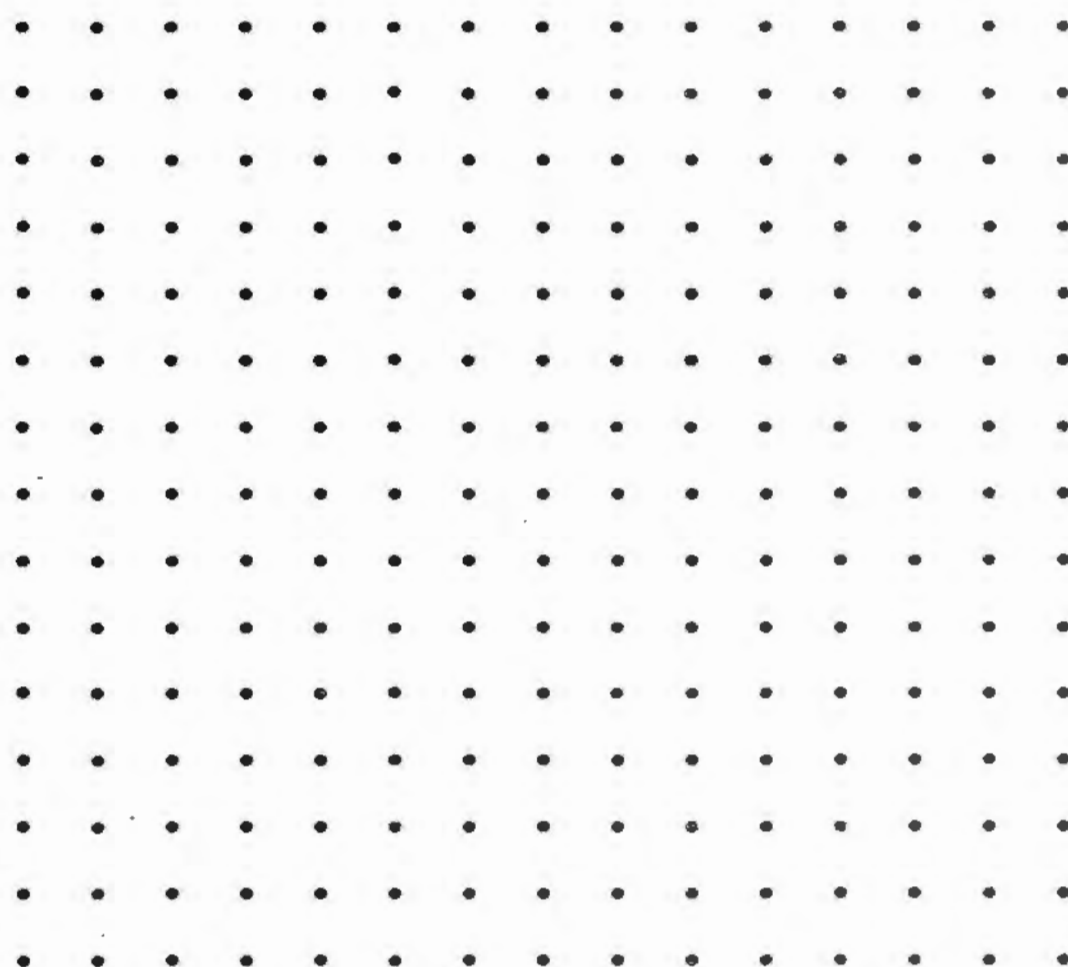
AMP is not responsible for GPA loss due to obsessive puzzle solving; AMP takes credit for increased GPA due to obsessive puzzle solving.

Discuss these puzzles at
amp.utdallas.edu/

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

Capture

Difficulty: Turkey



Capture is a two player game where the players take turns connecting dots that are horizontally or vertically adjacent. If a player completes a square by connecting two dots then they capture that square, putting their initial in the captured square. You must draw another line after making a capture. A player may, thus, make a large number of captures in a single turn. After the last capture they must still connect two dots. The person who captures the most squares wins.

NASA Bombs the Moon!

"Am I stuck, or am I cured?"

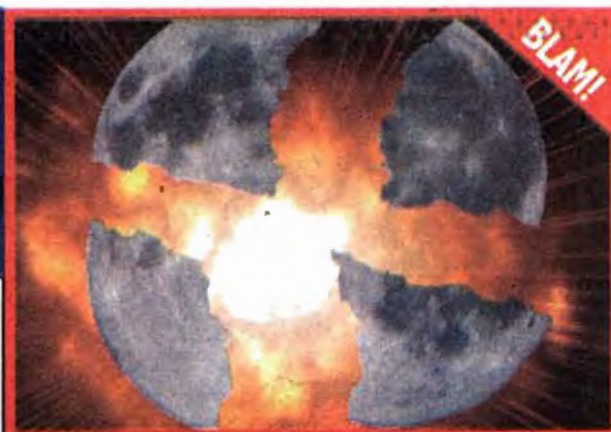


"Waaaaah! Alderaan!"



THE MOST
TRUSTED NEWS ON
THE PLANET

URANUS



BLAM!

- Naughty monster island co-eds bare all!
- King Max invokes right of Prima Nocta
- There's a monster *in* all of us

WILD THINGS GONE WILD!



Tier One, Bitches!



Rascal Scooter = Super Bowl

November 2009

\$0.00 US / ~\$0.01 Canada



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Only in URANUS...

UTD Leaf Count!



LOL

Health Care Bill Contents Revealed: A Mixed Bag

WASHINGTON (AMP) - The Uranus has received an exclusive copy of HB 8675309, the newest incarnation of the health care reform bill.

The vast majority is standard legal jargon: minimum standards, prescription drug plans, and death panels. However, around page 150, things take a turn for the weird.

Pages 252-437 are a massive flipbook depicting a knife battle between President Obama and Rupert Murdoch. Later, nearly 50 pages are a graphic Twilight fan fiction involving House Democratic leadership.

Nestled around page 398 is a lock of Sanjay Gupta's hair, and the final half of the bill is just a Congressional chain letter. ■

Snuggies

A FACTORY (AMP) - Snuggles send everyone in your life away from you.

:(

Unless you're a wizard.

Jay Leno Taps Donkey

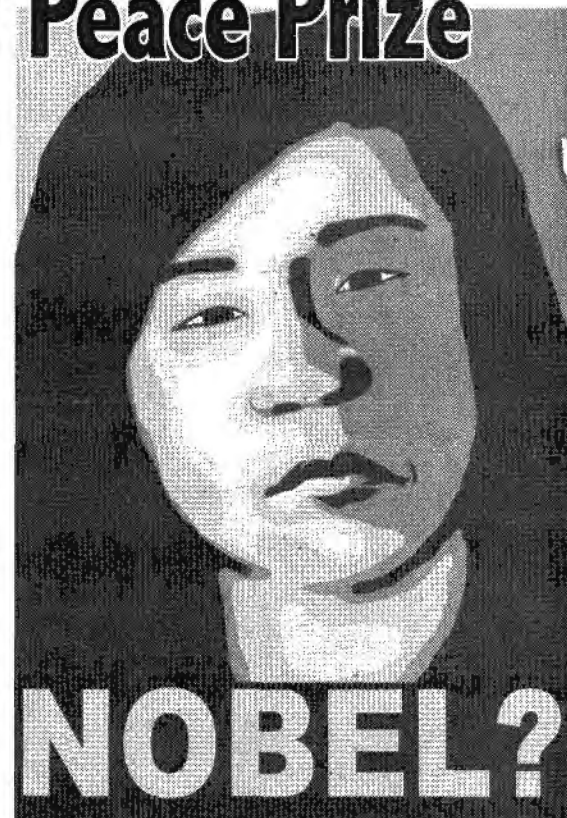
BURBANK (AMP) - Jay Leno has announced plans to engage in sexual intercourse with a donkey live on his primetime show.

The move was prompted partially by Leno's abysmal ratings but also as a way to maintain parity with the philandering of long-time competition David Letterman.

"We figured Letterman is going gangbusters," said NBC chairman Jeff Zucker "and, I don't know if you've seen the ratings, but we are in serious need of something. If a washed-up, car-collecting comedian getting freaky with a jackass pulls us out of this slump, we'll take the hit."

Using bestiality for a ratings boost is not without precedent. When Joey Bishop's numbers started to slide in the late '60s, sidekick Regis Philbin participated in graphic sexual congress with a manatee. ■

Diana Kao First UTD Recipient of Peace Prize



Hope bomb: Obama and Kao.

by D'Brickashaw Cunningham
Fictional Correspondent

RICHARDSON (AMP) - In a shocking move, the Norwegian Nobel Committee issued a surprise Nobel Peace Prize today to UTD's own Diana Kao, Student Government (SG) president for 2009-2010.

When asked to comment, Geir Lundestad, secretary of the Committee, said that the Prize was awarded in honor of her "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples", particularly her handling of the situation between Turkey and Armenia.

The Committee went on to state that it attached special importance to her "vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons" and noted her success in handling North Korean disarmament.

"I'm not sure what Turkey and Armenia have to do with me," Ms. Kao replied. "And I guess nuclear weapons are bad. I really hadn't thought about it all that much, seeing as how SG can't even solve problems on campus. I never thought that not being George Bush would take me this far in life."

In accepting the Prize, Kao joins the ranks of such illustrious individuals as Henry Kissinger, Yasser Arafat, and Mikhail Gorbachev all of whom were clearly deemed more peaceful than Mohandas Gandhi.

Numerous public officials have expressed outrage at this second, seemingly arbitrary dispensation from the Nobel Committee and are demanding arbitrary dispensations of their own.

Mommar Gaddafi has expressed an interest in a shield to protect his shantytown tents from sudden excessive gusts of wind, and Kim Jong Il has demanded a Shetland pony for companionship on those lonely Pyongyang nights.

The win, as was the case with Al Gore, has put her on the radar for other awards. Industry insiders cite Kao as a frontrunner for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Film 2010.

Many have applauded the Nobel Prize Committee for its consistent dedication to something that approximates journalistic integrity and have nominated them for the MTV Pulitzer Oscar Prize. ■

NASA: BECAUSE WE CAN



Laid back, with my mind on the moon and the moon on my mind.

by Rantavious Jackson
Humor Enthusiast

CAPE CANAVERAL (AMP) - In a press conference filled with confused and outraged reporters, NASA spokesman Mortimer Jones admitted that the recent moon bombing was "mostly for the hell of it."

"Look," explained Jones, "I've got two buttons on my desk — Bomb Moon and Don't Bomb Moon. Which one would you push?" Reporters who asked what possible scientific value the test had were met with twenty minutes of farting noises.

Global response to the moon bombing has been varied. Prime Minister Achmanabanafannabad of Iran declared that the moon doesn't actually exist, and France has preemptively surrendered its sovereignty to NASA.

CIA agents recently foiled a North Korean attempt to kidnap the balloon boy and strap dynamite to him in their own ambitious yet ultimately ridiculous plot to bomb the moon.

Recently leaked documents from NASA contain plans for what appears to be the first instance of solar system graffiti — the utilization of high intensity lasers to burn "NASA RULEZ" into the surface of the moon.

NASA has confirmed further plans to bomb, attack, taser, mug, trash, or generally rough up any number of proximal celestial bodies. When pressed for an explanation, NASA spokesmen stated that the process is necessary, both for the scientists' morale and for the earth's security. "It is like prison rules: we have to establish dominance in the galaxy early, or else we'll end up some other planet's bitch."

NASA's expert grasp on prison diplomacy has led it to accelerate its plans to attack Mercury.

Pluto released a statement through its publicist in support of NASA's plans: "Speaking as what has been deemed an insignificant mass of interstellar flotsam, I say to hell with the rest of the solar system."

Pluto then continued its elliptical orbit around the sun, but no one cared. ■

Cards Shock the League; Recruit Oldest Player in NFL History

TEMPE (AMP) - In an eleventh hour trade deal the Arizona Cardinals surprised fans of both the NFL and the gospels of the New Testament by recruiting Jesus Christ into the receiver corps.

Sports fans may remember Kurt Warner's dedication of the NFC championship to his lord and savior, but many would be surprised to learn that Christ runs a not unimpressive 4.35 forty.

Because of that and other qualifications, Christ earned a starting spot but soon encountered some unexpected hurdles in his bid to play pitch and catch with his best friend, Kurt Warner. Head Coach Ken Whisenhunt announced that Jesus had been sent to the second string, behind Larry Fitzgerald, for poor production.

Wide receiver coach John McNulty attributed the move to Christ's inability to catch passes, explaining "It's mostly on account of them holes in his hands." ■

Roller Coaster Stocks Plummeting

