

HILLTOPICS

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Secession...again?

by Amanda Oldham

Texans have a lot to be proud of. The Alamo, the best Mexican food in the country, and weather conditions that change hourly, rather than daily, to name a few. The fact we were once our own nation happens to bring an overall sense of pleasure in most of those Texas-born, Texas-bred. However, a certain governor seems to have gotten wrapped up in the grand tide of Texas nationalism.

On April 15th, the dreaded Tax Day, Texas Governor Rick Perry claimed that, in the coming future, the state might secede from the Union. After all, the economy in Texas has been much better off compared to other states due to its variety of businesses. So why should we suffer along with those worse off than us? Secede! Secede! Secede!

I can sum up my personal sentiments into seven words: you have got to be kidding me.

Secession failed rather miserably the last time anyone tried it, seeing as it pulled the country into a brutal civil war that killed over 600,000 and destroyed the economy of the Southern states. Some people may feel up to a Round Two, but I have a strange feeling that this will not be well met by a

majority of Texans, let alone the entire United States.

Granted, Perry is correct in assuming that Texas is one of the most well-off states in the midst of this recession, and it would not be too much of a stretch to think that Texas would be able to survive if the situation came down to a sink-or-swim moment. The variety of the landscape along with the large population and the businesses that headquarter within our borders could benefit us if we so chose to secede. But the thing is, we would not choose this path.

Yes, some people are calling for secession. Their numbers, however, are few and mostly made up of extremists spurred on by John McCain's failure to obtain the presidential office. Before Barack Obama even finished his acceptance speech, my Facebook inbox was

full of requests to join groups such as "Texans for Secession!" and "1,000,000 Strong for Texas Secession", to name a few. I understand that people were furious and upset about the election results, but as I browsed through who actually sent me these requests, I discovered only two people had flooded

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We welcome submissions from all members of the SMU community. Letters to the editor should be up to 300 words in response to a previously published article. Contributions should be articles of up to 300-600 words on any topic or in response to another article. Please email your submission to hilltopics@gmail.com by Wednesday at 7:00 PM to be included in the following week's publication. Special deadlines will be observed for breaking campus events. The opinions expressed in *Hilltopics* are those of the authors solely and do not reflect the beliefs of *Hilltopics* or any other entity. As such, *Hilltopics* does not publish anonymous articles.

Digital Distribution: A Glimpse into the Future

by Josh Wood

By now I feel that we are all aware of the bleak outlook that media outlets (mainly newspapers) have to deal with concerning the advancement of technology. The civilized world is going in a paperless direction, with advancements in internet technology leading the charge. This is an obvious example of what technology does to business in general; either adapt to the new advancements—in this case, high speed internet—or fall by the wayside. Other less obvious businesses within the media industry are currently being forced to reconsider their manufacturing and distribution models also, and I feel as though this trend is only going to pick up speed in the coming years.

You may be asking yourself why the world might abandon physical media—newspapers, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and video games we've grown to love over the past century or so—so quickly? It just so happens that the advantages of digital distribution are that dramatic. For instance, there is no manufacturing involved; no physical CD is made (not to mention the booklet inside or the jewel case which encapsulates it all). For papers and magazines, there is less need for paper and ink, not to mention the transportation costs involved. Digital distribution also means no overhead. When

your product can be compressed down to megabytes of data, there are a considerable amount of things you have no need for: retail locations, employee wages, taxes, utilities and the like. No inventory, no deforestation, no accounts receivable, no problem!

Such a dramatic change in purchasing practice might seem decades away, but consider this. Go back 5 years or so; wouldn't it sound a bit odd if I revealed to you that you might not ever buy a music CD ever again? Now remember how easy it is to purchase any music almost instantly via the wonderful technological advancement known as iTunes. I know I prefer to shop for tunes in my pajamas at 2:30 in the morning instead of making the effort to shop at a retail music store (get dressed, fit it in my schedule, actually put gas in my car to make the trip, etc). The overwhelming success of the iTunes media distribution model has many businesses shaking in their boots. Netflix, Amazon.com, and others are scrambling to promote their video streaming and download capabilities. Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo all offer game download services. Concurrently, some companies such as Blockbuster Media and CD World are probably watching some huge countdown timer which displays their numbered



days of market viability. If this continues, the world is going to be a much different place in a few years.

Imagine if you will that we achieve 100% high speed internet access across the population. Print media will be no more, as everything we read or viewed will be on a computer screen—even the term ‘thumb through’ will be replaced by ‘scrolled down’. Internet access will probably become a standard utility (such as electricity), with the cost being a function of your internet usage, much like electricity meters. The level of connectivity will be unfathomable, instant contact with anyone on the planet would be achievable, and the flow of information will turn into a deluge. This paperless world will mean less litter on the streets, more trees to oxygenate the air, less real estate dedicated to filing, and fewer annoying paper cuts. Sure, we may never get to physically fill out a crossword, and all of those beautiful libraries might become obsolete, but think of the trees!

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Secession

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my inbox so thoroughly, not the fifty I originally expected.

I have two major issues with these extremist claims that Texas has a Constitutional right to, and should, secede because of government oppression. One, Texas no longer has a real right to secede from the Union thanks to the results of the Civil War. Texas can, however, still choose to divide itself into four separate states, which would only add stars to the American flag, rather than take one away.

My second issue is its rather childish claim that the government oppresses us so thoroughly that we must secede in order to free ourselves. Texas, a haven for the religious and the Republicans, faired quite well under a Texan and Republican president no less than a year ago. In fact, one could say that Texas was spoiled during the latest Bush era, much as one spoils a child with his favorite sweets, and now that he will lose influence and power, the child’s cries of fury can be heard all over.

To be honest, Texas is not that special anymore. Don’t get me wrong, I love Texas. My family has lived in this state for at least a few generations on both sides, including a grandfather who was one of the Texas Rangers (not the baseball team). But when I stop to really think about it, what has Texas done recently? Yes, we won a war and survived as our own nation for a few years before joining the United States but since then, what have we done, really? Not much more than any other state, if we were completely honest with ourselves.

Yet our pride borderlines nationalism, which conflicts with our pride for our country. My suggestion for those wanting to secede is to set aside your dislike for the party in power and try working with them instead of voting against them simply out of spite. Maybe then you would not feel oppressed, since instead of both sides failing to get their way, we could achieve a compromise.

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

we’re listening at hilltopics@gmail.com

We Deserve an Apology for the Apology Tour

by Beth Anderson

Recently, President Obama has been traveling the globe, meeting world leaders and hoping to build good foreign relations. Undeniably, the United States is not at the height of popularity right now. The Iraq war, our country's contribution to the global recession, and former President Bush's maverick attitude have hurt us in the eyes of our adversaries and our allies alike. As the President, Obama represents our country and presents an image of the United States to the rest of the world – and his behavior on this tour has been controversial at best. His actions have led me to question his attitude, his motives, and even the legitimacy of his presidency.

My parents always taught me that if you've done something wrong, you should apologize for it. I do not believe, however, that the boundaries of this moral rule extend to include apologizing on behalf of other people. I find that condescending and elitist. When President Obama went on this tour, he took it upon himself to apologize for his predecessor and for the country to which he has pledged his loyalty. This so-called "man of the people" went to France and said that America has been "arrogant and ridiculed [our European allies]". He went to Saudi Arabia and bowed to a king. He went to Venezuela and shook hands with a man who publicly referred to former President Bush as the devil.

Let me point out here that I was no big proponent of Bush's foreign policy. I think there are many things that he could have done differently, and I do think he caused some damage to the United States' foreign relations. President Obama's attitude, however, is simply the other extreme. Bush may have swaggered around and made people angry, but Obama traveled the world acting like a scared puppy. He allowed other world leaders to bully him and insult his own country to his face, and even insulted his own country. He did not represent the United States for what it is – a powerful, great country. We may not have always done everything perfectly, but who does?

Arrogance is a mistake, but you can hold your head up

high without being arrogant. The President, when visiting other countries, should be strong and confident. He should convey that we are amiable but also that we are a force to be reckoned with. President Obama behaved like a naïve, weak amateur, and I cannot help but be concerned with the image he has presented.

Yet again, we face an example of President Obama reneging on his campaign promises. He spoke with enthusiasm about wanting to have a spirit of bi-partisanship in Washington. How bi-partisan is it to go around apologizing for the actions of your predecessor and shaking hands with his detractors?

I wanted to give President Obama a chance, but I find it increasingly difficult to believe that he accepted the role of the presidency for the right reasons. Instead of wanting to lead and support a country for the good of its citizens, he wants to push his own agenda. I read somewhere that Obama is simply continuing a campaign rather than acting like a president, and I tend to agree with that.

President Obama felt that he needed to go around to the rest of the world and apologize for America. I believe that now he owes an apology to America. He should stand up in front of his constituency and tell them that he referred to them as arrogant and despicable, that he did not support them, and that he did not represent them.

Here's hoping that 2012 gets here quickly.

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Public Transportation

by Sanaz Talaifar

For Texans, driving is a way of life. The state's seemingly endless supply of land combined with haphazard growth in many areas has resulted in suburban sprawl. People have become accustomed to driving ten minutes to the grocery store, twenty minutes to the nearest mall, and an hour to their job. Often destinations are just far enough to be out of reach by walking or bike riding. SMU students who show up to their first year of college sans car quickly learn this fact, much to their dismay. According to one car-less first-year, "Whoever said you don't need a car on campus was lying."

In recent years, Dallas has done much to expand public transportation options. The Trinity Railway Express connected downtown Dallas and downtown Fort Worth. Currently, two lines are being added to the Dart system: the blue line that will come from Rowlette, and the orange line that will run between the DFW airport and downtown Dallas. But the Dart is still less than convenient. Destinations are limited, stations don't have maps so one must find a desired route online beforehand, often multiple buses must be taken in conjunction with Dart use, and the Dart itself can be dirty and unfriendly. Consequently, students without cars usually prefer getting rides from friends to using public transportation. The situation for students at SMU is indicative of the state's problem as a whole. It is almost impossible, and always inconvenient, to live in this state without a car. And if you don't have a car, then it's highly likely that you're trying to get one.

Texans, and Americans in general, embrace the driving culture for many reasons. You can go anywhere at any time in privacy and comfort. But many disadvantages are becoming increasingly apparent. Traffic, parking, and pollution problems, in addition to our dependence on oil, give reason to rethink this affinity for driving. These problems are only exacerbated with more expansive and expedient roadways. They could be solved if only the government would refocus

its efforts and its huge transportation budget from expanding the road and highway system to creating a truly viable public transportation system. This would address the problem at its core, by taking cars off the road and making us less dependent on driving as the only mode of transportation, rather than simply patching the problem up with more roads.

Texans have the opportunity to create an ideal and revolutionary public transportation system from scratch, learning from all the major systems around the world and creating jobs at the same time. So we must ask: Why has it not happened? Do we just like cars and their position as status symbols? A subway system need not completely eliminate cars as a source of transportation, but simply make other means of transport available to the masses. Is it that we are we uncaring about the environment and the amount of foreign oil we use? Obviously not, since we have been investing so much in alternative fuel research, creating clean air guidelines, etc. Perhaps the answer to our lack of action can be found by examining who would lose most from a public transportation system. The answer is the car and oil companies. Removing cars from the road means fewer consumers for their products and smaller profits. Constructing more roads means solidifying their monopoly on people's method of mobility and more miles of highway for people to drive on. I am no conspiracy theorist, but oil companies' influence on politics is no secret. In coming up with a long-term solution for transportation, we should examine what is best for the community as a whole, not what is best for an industry's bottom line.

Sanaz is a freshman and can be reached at stalaifar@smu.edu



What it Means to be Asian-American

by Adrienne Yim

This month, the SMU community had the privilege of encountering the joys of the many cultural events that were a part of CelebrASIAN, the month-long event held in April every year to promote awareness of and unity among the Asian-American community on campus and in the city of Dallas. In honor of CelebrASIAN, I'd like to write about my experiences and thoughts on being Asian-American.

Before I came to SMU, I attended high school in a predominantly affluent Caucasian neighborhood, very similar to the surrounding area around SMU. I had never really thought about my ethnicity very much beyond answering the obvious questions, like this one: "Where are you from?" Of course I was aware of my heritage, culture, and ethnic identity, but I guess when something is so much a part of one's identity, one doesn't consider it as a separate characteristic until it is pointed out by others. A teacher said to me once, "Our perceptions color our reality," and the more that I experience life, the more I find this to be true. Not only do our personal perceptions color our reality, but the perceptions of others influence how we perceive ourselves.

So what does this all have to do with the month of CelebrASIAN and its related events? Well, promoting awareness of and educating others on Asian culture is a big part of CelebrASIAN, so hopefully any misconceptions, preconceived notions, and false assumptions that people may have about Asians and Asian culture will disappear and be replaced by a greater sense of awareness and knowledge. I also really appreciate the emphasis on unity among the Asian-American community; something that I feel does not happen or is stressed often enough.

What does it mean to be Asian-American? That's what I have always tried to figure out ever since I learned there was a label for some ingrained characteristic that I had. As a child, one is only dimly aware of the difference between the outside appearance and the inner personality; one's sense of identity at a young age consists mostly of impressions of being a son or daughter, a friend, a grandchild. The first time that I became aware of the effect of my ethnicity on how others perceived me and on how I perceived myself, I was looking at a mirror in my parents' bedroom and somehow the conver-





sation turned to the subject of our ethnic background. I had asked my mother with some confusion and annoyance why my friends and other kids in my class kept asking me these weird questions: “Where were you born? Where are

you from?” I didn’t understand at the time why the other kids were so fascinated with those details. Then, my mother told me all about my ethnic background and its history in terms I could understand, and I as continued looking into the mirror during the conversation, it seemed as if another lens filter appeared in front of my eyes, sharpening the view of myself in the mirror, bringing into focus some obscure detail that I hadn’t noticed before that day. I now had a new way to define myself, though the questioning of this new label would come later.

What does it mean to be Asian-American? Many different interpretations of this label abound, and the struggle to understand how to strike a balance between those two sides still exists today, even though the current generation of Asian-Americans has it much easier than our predecessors. While the struggle in the past has been how to preserve cultural identity while assimilating into American society, I think the struggle for current young Asian-Americans is how “Asian” they want to be. To be Asian-American or any kind of hyphenated American requires a constant reconciliation between the past and the present; customs and traditions have their place, as do the influences from modern society. The balance, then, has to be struck between how much of Asian culture and identity one takes in while still being a part of American culture. For me, I feel that both sides of my cultural identity are fairly intertwined so that I don’t think of myself as being fully one way or another; I am just another person like anyone else, despite the occasional struggles with my cultural identity.

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Pon tu Granito de Arena

by Ana Lara Carrillo

Hace unos días tuve que escribir un ensayo sobre mis planes de futuro. Para mí es difícil tener una idea clara a esta edad de lo que quiero alcanzar en algunos años pero logré pensar en un tema general: quiero ayudar a los demás. Esto es importante para mí porque sé que el mundo está compuesto por miles de personas y, si cada quien pone su granito de arena, podemos lograr cosas increíbles. ¿Cómo puedes ayudar?

Primero hay que empezar en el nivel más básico. Esto quiere decir que tu primera meta debería ser un cambio interno. No estoy diciendo que haya algo malo dentro de ti pero nadie es perfecto. Tan solo una pequeña mejora es posible. Reflexiona sobre quién eres.

Ahora que eres más consciente, trata de divulgar tus ideas positivas entre las personas más cercanas a ti. Habla con tu familia y amigos, y recuerda que las buenas vibras se contagian.

Después continúa agrandando el círculo del impacto. Busca cómo puedes ayudar a la comunidad y poco a poco irán creciendo tus ambiciones. ¿Por qué no pensar en tu ciudad, estado, o hasta el país? Estoy segura de que hay alguna organización por ahí que pueda facilitar el proceso...o ¿por qué né empezar un proyecto propio?

Hay que creer en la bondad de las personas. Tal vez eso es lo que le falta al mundo. Si creemos que la gente es buena, entonces confiaremos más en nuestro prójimo y evitaremos conflictos. ¿Suena fácil, no?

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From our seniors on Hilltopics:

We would like to thank everyone involved with the Hilltopics organization. This publication has provided a voice for the students for many years now, and we wish the best of luck to the underclassmen who will continue to use this voice.



Thumbs up:

- Early voting for local elections starts NOW
- SMU Kicker Thomas Morstead now a member of the New Orleans Saints, congrats!



Thumbs down:

- Tours of potential students who look at you like you're a zoo animal
- The end of an era for us seniors.

Upcoming Events:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| May 2 | Honors Spring Dance
8:00 pm
HT Ballroom |
| May 5 | Tate Lecture featuring Cokie
Robers
McFarlin Auditorium
8:00-9:30 pm |
| May 16 | Graduation
All Day
All Over Campus |

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SMU Totally Ficticious Fact:

Many of SMU's students like life here so much, they purposefully drop a needed class during the spring of their senior year just so they can be a student for the the next fall (their 9th semester). The spirit of Van Wilder lives on...

