



Hilltopics

University Honors Program

Volume 10 | Edition 2 | March 18, 2014

Moody Madness

SMU students abuzz over recent success of men's basketball team

by Kate Moody

Despite my absolute lack of knowledge about or enthusiasm towards sports, I found my Floridian self willingly standing in a line at six in the morning in thirty-degree weather. The objective: Student tickets to the Men's Basketball Memphis and Cincinnati games. I found the early wake up time and brutally cold weather to be worth it though as I stood in section 100 for the Memphis game. A week later, I returned to section 100 for the Cincinnati game and two hours later was rushing the court with my fellow Mustangs. Without a second thought, I woke up once more to stand in the cold weather in an attempt to snag tickets. Walking away with tickets and a photo of Larry Brown and I in my hand I knew I had caught "Moody Madness".

After its \$21.5 million renovation, the Moody Colliseum welcomed the Men's Basketball team back in January. Since then, the Men's team has yet to lose a home game. Most notably, they beat the then number seven team Cincinnati by twenty-one points. As a result, the men's basketball team landed at number 23 on the AP rankings, the first time the program had been ranked in twenty-nine years. Surely, this victory was the result of some Moody Magic.

The enthusiasm of the student body has been outstanding. Students have begun camping out for tickets and at every game the Moody Colliseum is packed. With very few home games around the corner, the campus buzzes with excitement for what the future might hold, hoping they may get to see their very own Mustangs play in Arlington for the March Madness Final Four.

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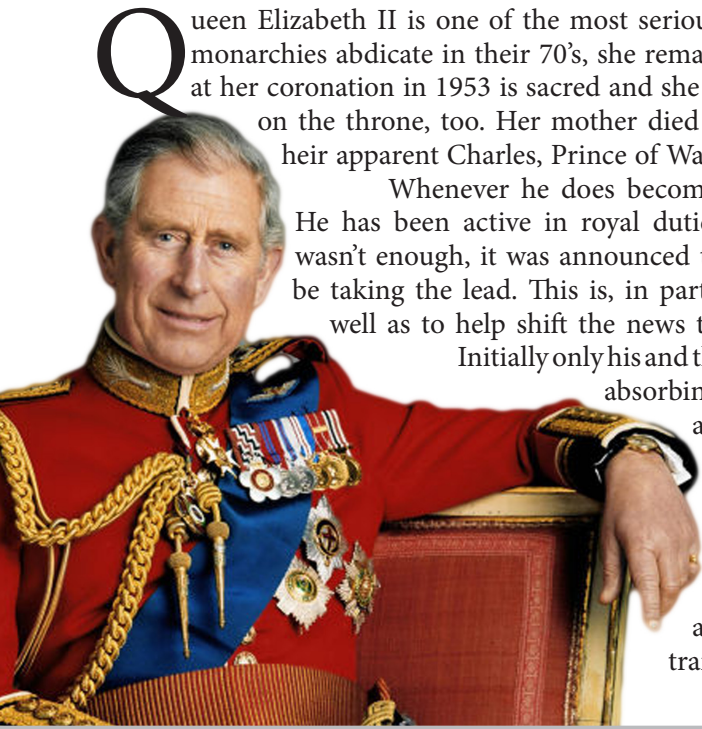
Charles is Taking the Reigns

by Cole Chandler

Queen Elizabeth II is one of the most serious monarchs of our time. When the heads of state of other European monarchies abdicate in their 70's, she remains on the throne as her 88th birthday nears. To her, the oath she took at her coronation in 1953 is sacred and she will only abandon her post upon death. She may have a lot more time on the throne, too. Her mother died just ten days shy of her 102nd birthday. Some wonder if her son and heir apparent Charles, Prince of Wales will ever make it to the throne or, if he does, will it be a brief stint?

Whenever he does become king, he will have had plenty of practice performing royal duties. He has been active in royal duties for years now, and attends hundreds of events each year. If that wasn't enough, it was announced that his and the queen's press offices will be merged, and his staff will be taking the lead. This is, in part, to consolidate the messages the Royal Family gives to the press, as well as to help shift the news to more environmental issues that Charles' will promote in his reign.

Initially only his and the queen's offices were to be merged, however it is rumored his office is also absorbing the newly formed Kensington Palace Press Office. This handles the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry's affairs, making it appear that Charles is trying to keep the popular William, Kate, and George from overshadowing him. Although the office performed excellently during the countdown to George's birth, they will have to go through Charles' people to reach the press. Is this a power move? Taking over his mother's office is not out of place, but controlling his children's affairs is a clear assertion of dominance. We are in for a very different royal story once the transition is complete, but this may suit William and Kate's privacy concerns.



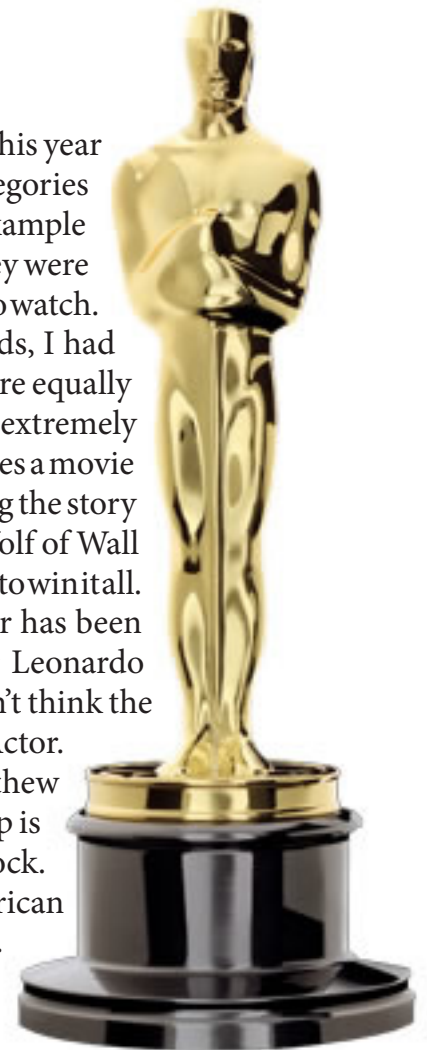
The 86th Academy Awards

by Graham Lumley

On March 2nd, Ellen Degeneres hosted the Oscars for her second time. This year was pretty exciting considering the competition inside the major categories like Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Actress. In other years, for example 2011, it was a clear victory for *The King's Speech* and *Black Swan* as soon as they were nominated. Take the competition out of the Oscars and there really is no reason to watch.

In my opinion and from the results of this year's Golden Globe Awards, I had narrowed down some of the categories to a couple contenders whom I think are equally deserving of the award. In Best Picture category, all of the films nominated are extremely well made films, but not all of them excel in all of the characteristics of what makes a movie great like character development, acting, and just how interesting or enthralling the story and plot are. Because of this I have ruled out *Her*, *Gravity*, *Philomena*, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, and *Nebraska*. *American Hustle* and *Dallas Buyers Club* were my favorites to win it all.

In Best Actor and Actress, I believe that the number of times an actor has been nominated does play a role in whether or not they win. Unfortunately for Leonardo DiCaprio, he has been nominated many many times and never won. But I didn't think the character he portrays in *The Wolf of Wall Street* earned him the title of Best Actor. I think as a result of the physical changes on top of his acting ability, Matthew McConaughey deserved to win. Best Actress was a toss up for me. Meryl Streep is always amazing, but she has won multiple times already. Same with Sandra Bullock. Amy Adams has recently jumped into the spotlight with her role in *American Hustle* and I thought that she may have been leaving the awards with an Oscar.



Greek Spring Happenings

by Abigail Foster

Chances are (unless you have literally been holing up in your room this semester) you have noticed some changes going on around campus. Grey quarter-zip jackets and a litter of pins are seen on the regular at Umph. Girls and guys alike seem to be sporting Greek letters more frequently than ever, and Instagram is constantly blowing up with pictures of giant bins of sorority gear. All these are tell-tale signs that recruitment has commenced, and the new member period has begun. This means that all SMU men and women who

accepted invitations to fraternities and sororities are now experiencing an initiation period before they can become full-fledged members (or “actives”) of their Greek organization. The new member process is different in each organization and usually involves studying the chapter’s history, values and rituals. There are, of course, other fun activities associated with the new member period, one of them being “serenading”

Serenading is a tradition among Greek organizations in which new members of fraternities prepare a brief “mash-up” of songs (usually with romantic themes) to perform for each sorority during their weekly chapter meetings. Serenades are usually over the top and a really fun way for the fraternities to express their congratulations and appreciation for the new pledge class of each sorority chapter.

Though fun perks like serenading and getting spoiled to death by a “Big Sister” are certainly enriching to the overall sorority experience, “serenading season” is just the tip of the iceberg when

it comes to joining a Greek organization. SMU Panhellenic is unique compared to many other universities with regards to its tradition of “deferred recruitment.” In other words, sororities and fraternities at SMU must wait until January to recruit first-year students. Though this certainly can be a stressful process for potential new members, after finishing my recruitment process I have been able to reflect more clearly on the benefits of waiting to join a Greek organization.

Though I was initially apprehensive about the process of joining a sorority, I can confidently say my decision to go Greek has been one the best decisions of my life. Because SMU upholds a tradition of deferred rush, I was able to meet friends organically based on common interests, and now have great relations with women in a wide variety of chapters. I had the opportunity to get heavily involved on campus, pursuing my own personal goals before they were shaped by sorority events and happenings. Now that I am in the process of joining a Greek organization,

I can say confidently that I have never felt more loved, accepted and supported in my life. Joining a sorority, contrary to the stereotype, is not about partying or conforming to a specific stereotype. It is about surrounding yourself with a team of women who want to see you succeed in whatever you are passionate about. It is about girls who love you and love to have fun. Most of all, it is about friendships that will remain for the rest of your life. No serenading can compare to that reward.



Netflix: My life

by Abbey Norton

Binge-watch” was a runner-up to “selfie” in Oxford Dictionaries’ 2013 word of the year. Most probably hear this word, and understand completely. View next episode? Yes, why do they even ask? Binge-viewing has become a trend since Netflix’s inception six years ago. In a recent study, over 70 percent of people enjoyed bingeing on multiple episodes (2-6 a sitting) or even entire seasons of shows instead of traditionally watching one episode a week. It is hard to think of anything better than sitting



in front of the television with one’s food and one purpose – to finish the series.

The euphoria comes with the territory, as multiple people have strayed from the usual gluttonous outlook of TV and edible delights, in the past garnering the label of

couch potato, to one of productivity and purpose in accomplishing the six or more episode feat. It seems more and more people see the attraction that I myself succumb to every weekend. Instead of people’s opposition to TV show marathons due to the expected sloth that ensues, binge-watching has become a beacon of relaxation, as people described returning to their string of episodes of a series after a hectic week as a welcome refuge. Netflix enlisted cultural anthropologist, Grant McCracken, to observe how television viewers are now interacting through this medium and supports the idea that binge-watching shows is a much more contemplative way to watch shows. With Netflix, we now can watch hour after hour of great shows in comparison to past generations who flipped mindlessly at night through trash TV without satisfaction. It seems that we are more enlightened and efficient in this new TV watching habit, so we should all carry on to a new day, a new series, and the next episode as we participate in the binge-watching trend.

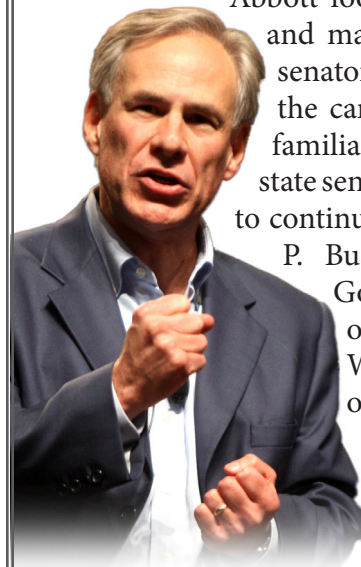
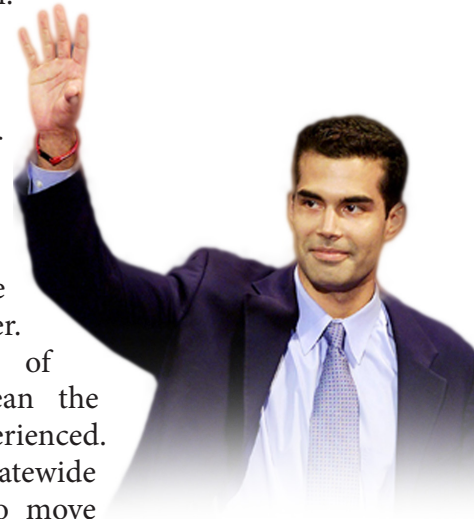
Up for Grabs?

by Cole Chandler

Texas is still considered a member of the “Solid South,” but democrats hope to change that in the coming statewide elections in November. Under normal circumstances their goals would be deemed far-fetched as they haven’t held a statewide office since the millennium. However this year is unique in that depending on how current Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst fairs in the primary, there could be no or only one incumbent on the ballot come November.

The lack of incumbents doesn’t mean the candidates are inexperienced. Current holders of statewide offices are attempting to move up in the executive branch, with Attorney General Greg Abbott looking to succeed Rick Perry and many state representatives and senators entering the race. Most of the candidates for both parties are familiar, including Wendy Davis, a state senator from Ft. Worth. Looking to continue the family dynasty, George P. Bush, son of former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and nephew of former President George W. bush, hopes to take the office of Land Commissioner.

These upcoming elections will be difficult on both sides, the democrats will need to try and sway largely conservative voters and the republicans will have to hold on and grow their strong voting base. Whatever the outcome, it will be a year of transition for Texas.



Sochi Problems or Our Problems?

by Camille Aucoin

Every Olympics has a defining moment or a series of events that make it stand out, but this year, the Sochi Winter Olympics seem to be defined not by the games themselves, but by the conditions of Sochi. Located on the shores of the Black Sea and quite close to Russia's border with war-torn Georgia, Sochi isn't exactly the first place I would expect to find stunning 5-star hotels. Yes, Sochi has had seven years to construct amenities for Olympic visitors, but in a country whose main export is cold, maybe they've had some other priorities since they were approved for the 2014 Olympics back in 2007.

Since reporters started arriving in Sochi, pictures and stories of staircases that lead nowhere, dual toilets, stray dogs, and odd bits of construction have emerged all over social media. While some of these problems are legitimate and threaten the safety of Olympic guests, such as doors that won't open, a large portion of grievances have involved petty issues. American reporters seem to have forgotten that almost every non-first-world country has a problem with stray dogs. As for the construction, Sochi has invested around \$50 billion for these Olympics, mostly in infrastructure and other amenities for visitors. The Sochi Olympics did not have the luxury of being held in an already-developed metropolis like London, Vancouver, or Beijing. The 2014 Olympics have completely transformed Sochi in just seven years. Reporters would have had more than just a lack of shower curtains or shared bathrooms to worry about in 2007. Instead of recognizing Sochi's progress, however, social media has placed the focus of these Olympics on Sochi's faults just to bring up our favorite jokes about Russia. The Internet seems to find it more admirable that a reporter receives a functioning hotel room than an athlete working hard to earn a gold medal.

Sochi obviously has its faults, some of which do disagree with our cushioned lifestyle, but the focus of the Olympics should be on the games themselves rather than their location. The 2014 Olympics have given Russia the chance to put the positive attributes of their culture on the world stage, and the world has responded by pointing out its faults instead. Russia had a lot more than one job, and contrary to the opinion of most of the Internet, they pulled off the majority of the Olympics quite nicely.



SOCHI 2014



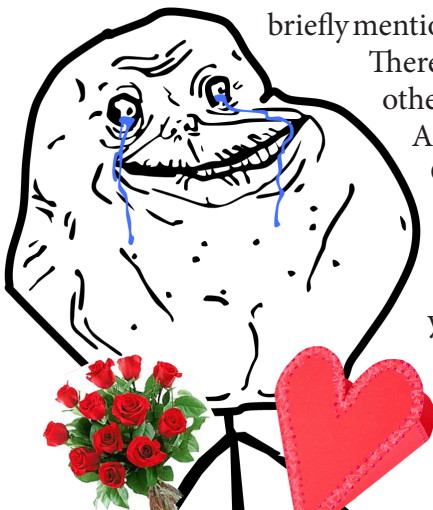
House of Valentine Cards

by Alec Petsche

Congratulations to those reading this article, because it means that you have survived another Valentine's Day without succumbing to the evil of love. I will assume that anyone that now finds themselves in a relationship has better things to do with their time than read the pencil scratchings of an emotionally inaccessible narcissist. Either way, you have dodged the bullet of romance. Sure, the argument could be made that we're actually in this situation because no one wants to be in a romantic relationship with us, but like any good journalist I'm going to briefly mention that well-reasoned argument and pretend that it does not exist for the rest of my article.

There are a lot of horrible things about relationships, like feelings or caring about something other than yourself, but there is one factor that dominates all others. Less time for Netflix.

As most of you are aware, Netflix released the second season of its original series House of Cards on Valentine's Day. If you had been in a relationship, you would have had to wait one, maybe even two days before watching the brilliant performances of Kevin Spacey and Robin Wright. You are lucky that no one loves you, because if someone did, you would only just now be starting to watch the new season of House of Cards. So embrace your singleness! Lock yourself in a dark room with a laptop and some Chinese takeout! And you too can live a bleak, meaningless, solitary existence in your parents' basement.



Super Bust

by A.J. Jeffries

There was no end of hype for Super Bowl XLVIII. Peyton Manning shattered NFL records for passing yards and passing touchdowns all year, driving the most potent offense in the NFL to the top seed in the AFC before guiding them to the Super Bowl. On the other side was the top seed from the NFC, the Seattle Seahawks, the Legion of Boom, the most dominant defense the national football league had seen in many years. It was the first time since 1990 that the league's top defense and top offense would face off for the Lombardi trophy, and only the second time in the past two decades that each conference's number one seed made it to Super Bowl Sunday. Fans even had someone to hate, Seattle's trash talking, supremely talented cornerback Richard Sherman. The stage was set for one of the best Sundays in many football fans' lives. All over America friends gathered to celebrate this unofficial holiday.

The buildup to the game was perfect. There was only one problem. From the first offensive snap, when center Manny Ramirez got off the count and snapped the ball through the end zone for a safety, this game was the most one-sided affair football fans have seen in a long time.

After all the hype the Legion of Boom just walked into the MetLife stadium and annihilated the Broncos. By the end of the first half Peyton had already thrown two picks and the Seahawks were winning 22-0. It did not look good, but Broncos fans continued to trust in the "legend of Peyton" to turn things around. They might have gotten a little more skeptical when Percy Harvin took the opening kick of the second half all the way to make it 29-0. Still, devoted Broncos fans held out hope. It took until Demaryius Thomas fumbled away the Broncos' first good drive of the game with six minutes left in the third quarter before people turned off their televisions, threw the remote across the room, and started to curse the disappointment that was Super Bowl XLVIII.



Slow Change

by Preston Ash

People have asked me many times what my favorite commercial was for the Super Bowl. Strangely enough, even though I did not think they were as good this year, one stood out to me above the rest. The commercial was for the Chevy Traverse and it depicted different types of families—including homosexual couples. My favorite slogan from the commercial was: "and while what it means to be a family has not changed, what a family looks like, has." This slogan brings up the very issue that we see with Michael Sam declaring that he is gay before the NFL draft.

The slogan talks about a concept that is relevant to all of us and has always been around—family. However, it further shows that even though the types of families has changed over the years, the meaning of family remains as relevant and as important as it ever has. The mixture of reactions to Michael Sam declaring that he is gay shows that there are some people who do not like the possibility for football to change. Indeed, this has been one of the main criticisms of an openly gay man entering the NFL—locker room culture and the NFL changing. What people do not seem to grasp is that norms are changing in society whether they like it or not. People who were in the closet before are now starting to get enough confidence to be who they really are and to not be ashamed of it. I applaud Michael Sam because it takes a truly brave man to do what no one else has done before and it is through this act that we will hopefully see other players follow his example in the future. There is no doubt that it will be difficult to adjust to at first; all change is difficult to a degree. However, I have full faith that locker room culture, spectators, commentators, and the NFL at large can change its negative perception of homosexual athletes.

As one commentator stated, it is about what happens on the field. Michael Sam is a gifted athlete and even though his draft stock has fallen because of the press he has received, he is a beacon of hope to other talented athletes who are still afraid of showing who they truly are. All of this to say, what it means to be an NFL player has not changed, but Michael Sam has certainly changed our perspective of what an NFL player looks like.



Credit Card Worries

by Sara Jendrusch

Target. Neiman Marcus. Marriott. Each of these corporations has had one striking similarity in the past several months: they have been victims of credit card breaches. And when they are victims, we all are. As college students, we are generally concerned about money and debt, but the last thing a student needs is a violation of a bank account. Nothing could be worse than discovering the disappearance of \$500, which you had planned to use for textbooks—and it only happened because you swiped your card at the right place at the wrong time.

So what happens when an email notifies you of your most recent purchase in Anchorage, Alaska...but you're actually sitting in Dallas Hall, struggling to stay awake through your early morning class? The best advice that can be offered is this: don't follow your first instinct. Whether that instinct is to panic, or to beat up the arrogant moron who had stolen your information, it's generally in your best interest to avoid doing any such thing. Rather, go over your previous purchases, including what you bought, where you bought it, and when you bought it. Armed with that information, call your bank. With the most recent breaches that have happened, the bank will most likely refund your money and help you take measures to protect your card against future breaches.

Credit card fraud has become a rather extended issue over the past few months. Many have expressed their fears that the world is no longer safe, even for buying groceries. It certainly seems like that's the case. If there is a very large chance that your credit card information can be stolen, what is the point of using one? Aside from the fact that the world is moving towards a paperless economy, credit cards are much easier to protect than cash or checks. Using a pin number or placing restrictions on your bank account are only a few ways to stop the fraud before it can strike. Regardless of how you choose to do it, protection is an important part of using your credit card. So feel free to shop—although I'd avoid the above companies for a while—and enjoy yourself without worrying about your textbook funds.



One is Not the Loneliest Number

by Margaret Fegan

Hello again dear little ones. As you can tell by my affectionate poem, I'm not in my characteristic morose mood. And let me assure you, it has nothing to do with everything in my life going as it should. I've had a case of word vomit today that would make Cady Heron and Liz Lemon sound like Maya Angelou, and I've fallen in public at least twice in today's P.M. alone. I have a short-term life plan as tentative as your next dinner date and I have no plans for spring break, but before I start completely bumming myself out I'll get to my point. Five minutes ago I heard that one of my favorite bands would be playing in Austin in two days, and approximately two minutes later my ticket was bought and e-mailed to me. So in case you haven't extrapolated this underlying reason for this good humour: POINT: I am free to do as I please.

Allow me to explain. Yes, we're all in college, and our parents can't tell us what to and what not to do (or even have to know), but this knowledge I'd always taken for granted I didn't get the chance to implement until I was abroad last year.

Is she talking about Spain again? I swear if I hear one more story about how amazing Barcelona is I'm going hit her.

Sorry I'm not sorry, kids. Go abroad for a semester. Sure, we may not be chained to mom and dad as (practically) adults, but many of us are chained to our friends. Too many times have I (in my pre-collegiate life) let others' reticence deter me from a good time. If we decide against going somewhere or doing something because no one else is "feeling it" we miss out on wonderful experiences. Instead of working in my tiny VS dorm room freshman year, I wish, I wish I'd gone out, explored Dallas, and enjoyed a little social solitude. Don't be afraid to go solo. You may not know anyone going, but you can sure as anything walk away with a new friend. Whatever the excursion, there is freedom in just doing what you want. Don't be attached to anyone else's schedule, hesitation, or taste – you will be a stronger individual for it. Doing something alone can be a bit scary – yes, scary, as many new things are – but the feeling of accomplishment and pride that follows can be found in few other things. You might need time and a little experience before you go on your solo vacation to another country (or state), so to build up, do these things by yourself.

1. Go see a movie – at a theater, not in your room
2. Go to dinner – I recommend a new restaurant on such an occasion. It's a prime people watching opportunity.
3. Go to an off-campus library, bookstore, or coffee shop and read – might I suggest Half Price, the HP library, and Buzzbrews (the Deep Ellum location).

These starters are not suggestions. Do them. Learn about you – the only way to truly do that is "one on one" time with yourself.

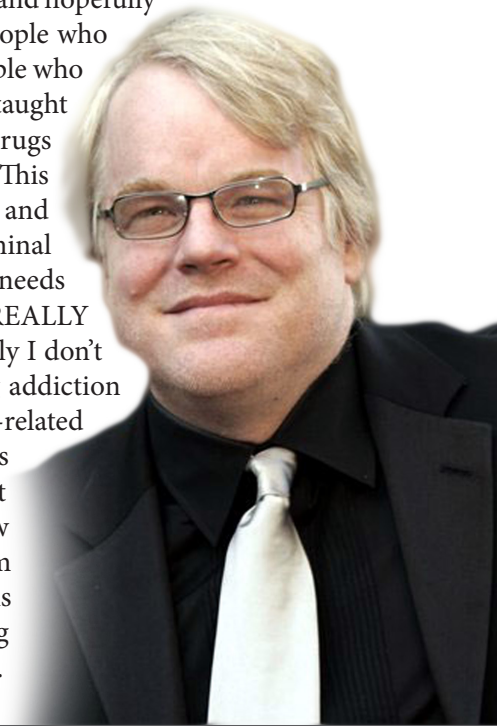
The War on Drugs, Addiction, and Philip Seymour Hoffman

by Anton Nemirovski

2010 was a big year for the War on Drugs. 2010 wasn't a major anniversary of the war (it was a year off, we celebrated 40 years of fighting Nixon's "public enemy #1" in 2011), nor did it include any noteworthy changes in drug policy. 2010 was a special year because it marked the United States finally surpassing the trillion dollar mark in its battle against illicit drugs. After nearly 4 decades of cracking down on crack and co, we've finally reached 1 and 12 zeros spent on stopping the production, distribution, and consumption of illegal chemicals. I guess we should expect a trillion dollars worth of results.

Roughly 40,000 people a year are found in a bed, bathroom, or alleyway by a parent, friend, neighbor, or cop. The victims range from first-time users to lifelong junkies, from young tweakers that don't actually get that addiction is permanent and destructive to famous middle-aged Oscar winners that relapse after 20 years of sobriety. And then there's a huge chunk of prescription-drug overdoses on the side. It's clear that the current approach to the War on Drugs isn't working, and hopefully Philip Seymour Hoffman's overdose actually pushes forward some conversation about how to curb the growing number of deaths and use the money more efficiently. Here's a synopsis of my 2 cents.

Drug addiction will always happen. As long as we have the luxury of being bored, and hopefully we always do, people will experiment with drugs and alcohol. From the wide pool of people who dabble in drinking and lighter drugs, a smaller amount will try harder stuff. From the people who try harder drugs, some will be fine and some will get addicted. If the War on Drugs has taught us one thing, it's that billions of dollars won't stop people from finding a way to get the drugs they want. It's a reality that a privileged country like the United States has to deal with. This should probably be common sense, but because of stubbornness, pride, big Pharma \$\$, and our society's pretty hypocritical view on drug-addiction (a heroin addict is a gross criminal that deserves to go to prison while a prescription Oxycontin addict is a poor soul that needs help), we keep propping up some really stupid and expensive drug laws (I mean, nobody REALLY thinks that marijuana should be classified in the same category as bath salts, right?). Sadly I don't have the space to put too much of an argument in, but here's what I'm getting at: Drug addiction can't be avoided, but the number of addicts can be lessened and the amount of drug-related deaths can be cut down. Proper education on the ACTUAL dangers of different drugs is key in bringing about fewer addicts. And for those that are addicted, society should treat them as people with illnesses instead of criminals while actually educating them on how to use their drugs safely and simultaneously guiding them to clinical detox resources. I'm sure everyone gets that the problem is much more complex than this, but current policy is expensive and inefficient, so why not try a more humane and common-sense way of dealing with drugs and drug-addiction? Maybe then deaths like Hoffman's could be avoided.



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Special thanks to
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