



Hilltopics

University Honors Program

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Falling for Fall? *or* Can't Wait 'til Spring?

UHP students Abigail Foster and Alec Petsche debate whether fall really is the best season

Fall: A Season of Confusion

by Abigail Foster

In the midst of Pumpkin Spice Lattes and thick sweaters it seems students have somehow developed the idea that fall is the best season. I would like to address the rumors and the myths surrounding the season and its tendency to be overhyped. Fall, I know the first day the temperature drops below eighty in Texas you relish in the overly-excited tweets about your arrival. I know every time someone Instagrams a picture of their freshly carved pumpkin, you shed a little tear of joy. I know whenever you see a girl in leggings and a scarf you feel satisfied that you have cemented your role as a time-honored season. But

Fall: The Best Season

by Alec Petsche

Fall. I'll admit, it has its faults. Allergies catch up with you, the days start to shorten, baseball season ends. But, there is one glorious factor that makes fall worth every conceivable side effect from itchy noses to not being able to watch the Rangers: IT GETS COLDER. Face it, ninety percent of your beloved childhood memories depend on the drop in temperature that fall brings. Hot chocolate, roasting marshmallows outdoors, snow (granted, not as much of a thing if you're from in state) are all things we yearn for. "But Alec, those are all winter activities too, don't you have something that's exclusive to fall?" I hear you, and I have a simple

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Is Fall the Best Season?

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here's the truth about you, fall: you are not a real season.

Yeah, that's right, I said it. Fall is an "in-between" season - one without distinctive traits. Though it supposedly has traditions of its own, all fall brings is confusion and disappointment. Sure, fall can claim Halloween, pumpkin-flavored things, and even a few good movies; I'll give it that satisfaction. But let's be honest; Christmas, gingerbread and Elf, all belonging to winter, are just bigger and better versions of fall's silly traditions. Sure, it's fun the first week of below-sixties weather. Even I celebrate the arrival of autumn, dawning riding boots and a thick coat and snapping selfies with my Starbucks cup. But in a week when the temperature rises back to eighty-five and I scramble to replace my sweaters with t-shirts, I'll admit, I'm a tad bit miffed. Yes, fall, you are like winter's unreliable little brother. Nearly everything you can offer us, winter has too and with more consistency. So you can keep your spot in late September to October, and even early November, but in the meantime, I'll be looking out for December when winter has finally replaced you.

response: without fall there would be no sweaters.

Yes, sweaters – the greatest of all non-essential clothing. Sweaters are the perfect compromise between the warmth of a winter coat and the arm-based freedom of a shirt. It keeps out the cold but allows you to move your arms freely. Without fall, we would skip directly from skimpy short sleeves to bulky, constricting coats. After a long day of jumping in leaves and sipping various pumpkin themed beverages you can put on your favorite sweater (everybody has one) and cozy up by the fire with that special someone (unless you manage to stay single forever by reading my other article). This versatile, lovable, and generally snuggly object is only in our lives because of fall. Why would you deny us sweaters? Why would you deny anyone sweaters? In the immortal words of SpongeBob Squarepants, "The best time to wear a striped sweater...is all the time!"

But, due to wide ranging temperatures throughout the year, the actual best time is fall. So join me in this glorious autumn my friends, and wear your sweaters proudly.



David Nasaw to Visit Campus

by Tess Griesedieck

It is no secret that Dallas, and the United States as a whole, has been taken with a sort of JFK fever this year. Since the 50th anniversary of his assassination is quickly approaching, there have been many events in and around Dallas to commemorate the event that took America by storm 50 years ago.

SMU has been no different. From articles in *The Daily Campus*, to panels with famed journalists who were reporting during that time, to field trips to Dallas's own Sixth Floor Museum, we have taken advantage of almost every opportunity there is to further our knowledge about JFK.

This spring, though, we will explore a different aspect of the Kennedy family. David Nasaw, the famed author of *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst*, will be coming to our campus to speak about his new biography on Joseph Kennedy, the patriarch of the nationally recognized family.

Prior to the talk, the Honors Program will be handing out copies of the book for students to win. This way, students who are interested can read the book for free before coming to see the fascinating lecture by a man who has been privy to inside information on one of America's most famous families.

Stuck Between a Rock and a Hard Place

by Margaret Fegan

It's that time of year when the green of chlorophyll is replaced everywhere by carotenoids and anthocyanins... everywhere except Dallas. And with finals in the not-so-distant future, we can take advantage of the unpredictable weather and rainy gray homeliness of the city. Here's a nugget of wisdom from someone in her golden years of undergrad: find an attractive rock, take it to dinner, exchange witty banter, and make it your new best more-than-friend. It's important to find one you really like since you'll be living under it for a good portion of the days to come. But make your claim early, since good rocks are hard to find. Put a ring on it, if you like... If you're one of those intolerable drama-queens who need an irrational tragedy to distract yourself from school, think about how you'll be away from your beloved rock-friend for all of winter break. Pick the rock, not the new flavor of boy/girl of the month, as your distraction. Take a break and let go of the toxic relationships that will surely do a number on your GPA. Just as overextending metaphors can kill, beating a moot subject will not increase the likelihood that your rock will change its mind about you. During finals time, the rock is a better bet.

Also important is a good friend who will drag your lifeless self out from under the rock at least once a week. As cozy and study-conducive as it is, your study rock can get a little stuffy, and before you know it, you'll be suffocating from your own nihilistic exhalations. When you and said friend take your red paint to the town, you might stop by one of the Deep Ellum live performances that features juggling. A crucial ball is about to come into play: creating your spring schedule. It's time-consuming and important and potentially threatening to your ability to graduate in four years. Regardless, take the time now, not in your senior year, to take classes you think sound interesting but "don't have time for." You do. Fight against the urge to finish your prematurely determined major in three years or be the president of everything. It is perfectly acceptable to not be the best of the best. Don't take learning or life so seriously - you're sucking the joy out of it. Have a laugh and go do something different, like throwing your study rock out the window and reconstructing the glass in mosaic form. Or finding a new hole-in-the-wall fro-yo parlor. Or making that hole in the wall by throwing your study rock into it.

The Faculty In Residence Speaks Out

by Graham Lumley

Tucked into an extremely nice apartment on the corner first floor Snider lives Dr. Ann Batenburg, the Faculty in Residence. Every Sunday night she hosts a dessert party for the entire Virginia-Snider dorm, and every Sunday night students flock to her apartment for a cookies, a break from homework, and most importantly to get to know Dr. Batenburg.

I was convinced that living in a building full of college students must occasionally be a nuisance for her, but she was truly more concerned that she could bother the students who live around her by breaking quiet hours. She loves living in the dorm because she gets to know students in a way she never could through the classroom. Just like everyone else living at SMU, Dr. Batenburg enjoys the opportunity to live on such a beautiful campus surrounded by a great neighborhood, and she no longer has a commute to work. But that

doesn't always work to her advantage: if she does happen to arrive late to a meeting she can no longer blame the traffic!



With the changes to on campus living for next year lurking in the backs of our minds, Dr. Batenburg is completely confident that the changes will only lead to positive outcomes. In fact, she looks forward to next year. She says, "Everyone here is an honors student. SMU keeps asking for better and better students. Nobody at SMU is a slouch." And she is completely right, everyone should be able to rest assured that the next years will be even better than the last. With sophomores and freshmen living in the same buildings, we will get to know students outside our graduating class, and that can only be a good thing.

If you live in Virginia-Snider, make sure to stop by Dr. Batenburg's apartment next Sunday, introduce yourself, enjoy a cookie, and have a good time.

How to Stay Single Until You Die

by Alec Petsche

Are you tired of sweetly embracing someone for hours on end and quietly whispering how much you love them? I know I am. But unless you're really lucky and your significant other is a psychopath that was born without the emotional capacity to feel love then this horrible scene may very well happen to you.

But fear not my friends, there is help. I, being an expert in the field of not having relationships, am here to arm you with knowledge to fight off the monster that is love. The key thing to remember is that if you want to drive people away you don't need to do anything fancy, just be yourself! Nothing you can make up about yourself is more unsettling to a potential romantic

partner than who you really are!

Let me qualify that. You shouldn't be yourself as much as the version of yourself that is most likely to drive people away. The goal is not to over or under do it. If you tell your person something too weak (eg. Sometimes I say

thank you to elevators because I'm afraid that no one else will) then they might be touched that you are willing to share something odd about yourself and that will only bring you closer together. On the other hand, if you over do it (eg. I like fire and knives and blood and the shape of your toes) then you're more likely to get detained for psych evaluation than dumped. On a weirdness scale of one to ten you want to aim for a seven and a half. Tell them about your collection of other people's hair. Maybe mention that you're an avid reader and writer of My Little Pony fan fiction. Perhaps share that you've always been curious about what puppies taste like.

Reveal your quirks to the people that care about you and you too can die alone in a puddle of your drool surrounded by cats.



Christmas: The Reason for the Season

by Sara Jendrusch

Christmas has long been a favorite holiday of many people across the world. It's a time of gifts, snow (unless you live in Texas), family, and tradition. It's a time when, surrounded by the hustle and bustle of shopping and holiday parties, the "Scrooges" of our world suddenly transform, overcome with the need to do something kind for others. In fact, Christmas has fostered an enormous amount of holiday spirit, which seems to have only increased over the years.

Traditions like lighting the tree, going to church, or giving gifts are general favorites when thinking of the holiday season. Personally, I love to attend midnight mass with my family; it's not Christmas without the smell of the incense and the traditional holiday hymns. But Christmas has also become somewhat of a battle between two forces: commercialism and religion. For every Santa hat, there is a sign somewhere that screams, "Put the Christ in Christmas!" And each nativity scene is countered with a troop of elves and reindeer. The holiday is celebrated as a religious tradition, but over the years, it has become more of a time to bond with family or remember the meaning of kindness towards others. Does this mean that we have lost the true meaning of Christmas?

Absolutely not. There are some that would argue that commercialism has destroyed the reason for the Christmas season. But that same commercialism inspires even the smallest acts of kindness. Last Christmas, I watched a teenage girl fumble in her wallet for a few extra dollars to buy a gift for someone. Instead of waiting grumpily, the cashier punched a few buttons to bring the price down for the girl, telling her, "Have a happy Christmas, dear." This act wasn't done in the name of religion; the cashier—a very obvious soldier of commercial Christmas army—acted kindly out of holiday spirit.

The commercialized side of Christmas, such as Santa, Rudolph, and their companions, has allowed people of all faiths to celebrate the holiday with a cheerful heart, and instead of destroying the religious basis, it has helped to bring out the best in people. Perhaps that is what is so wonderful about Christmas. Aside from providing Christians with a holy day of remembrance, the holiday inspires benevolence in everyone, religious or not, and the commercialism surrounding it has only enhanced that spirit. So this year, whether you're fighting the Black Friday crowds or cringing as a screaming toddler refuses to sit on Santa's lap, remember your holiday spirit, and embrace it. After all, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year.

Why Marx would wag his finger at Internal Revenue Code 409A—And why you should too!

by Preston Ash

On a typical Saturday morning, I often discuss with family and friends the current events that are happening in the world. Almost every week the subject starts with how good the breakfast we are having is and ends with: GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT, and more GOVERNMENT. Let's overlook the fact that the NSA is most likely reading this post, the fact that politicians can be purchased at the correct price through lobbying, and that my ability to buy a Big Gulp might soon be infringed upon, and let's talk about a subject that came up two weeks ago at one of my Saturday breakfast meetings—Internal Revenue Code 409A.

This particular tax code is a small sub-paragraph under Section 885 of the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004. What this particular code deals with is a crack down on private firms' use of discounted stock options for employees. The reason why this is so important is because this code has serious implications on the further alienation of workers in the workplace. It also gives an example of just another area where the government has regulated business practices.

Marx's theory of alienation basically rests on the idea that as workers were divorced from the output of their labor, their sense of self-determination greatly decreased, thus alienating them from a sense of purpose and fulfillment in their jobs. It has long been understood that a person is more likely to really invest and enjoy something that they actually own. If every single employee who has stock in a company really invests in their individual jobs, then this will create even more productivity for the company, thus increasing the worth of their individual stock. This entire process actually creates a level of self-determination based off of the collective, individual investments of labor in the company itself.

Typically, stock options in private firms were offered to employees at a discounted rate because firms saw the benefits of workers being joint-owners in the company. Now, Internal Revenue Code 409A states that if a company offers stock options to its employees at a discounted rate, then the employee will be taxed initially and will be charged interest from the vesting date. Not only that, but once the employee decides to actually sell the stock on the market, then the government will tax them again for their earnings there as well—because everyone likes a good story of double taxation. Based off of supply and demand, it makes sense that once the price of stock options that were offered went up, the quantity demanded plummeted. Thus, making it much harder for an employee to be a joint-owner in a company—further alienating the worker and infringing further on logical business practices.

#PSL: The Pumpkin Spice Craze

by Camille Aucoin

I'll admit it; I was a *little* excited when I saw the Starbucks ads on my Facebook newsfeed declaring the return of the beloved Pumpkin Spice Latte in early September. Who could possibly resist the warm and toasty goodness of a latte paired with a blend of spices that leave traces of leaves, cozy sweaters, and Thanksgiving dinners flowing through your soul? As indicated by the 200 million pumpkin spice lattes sold by Starbucks since the drink's debut 10 years ago, not many can resist. The phenomenon doesn't stop at Starbucks, though.

McDonalds even has its own version of the pumpkin spice latte. Why the obsession with pumpkin and the products that simply contain "pumpkin spice"? Pumpkin spice is nothing more than a blend of cinnamon, nutmeg, and clove. Walk down the aisles of any grocery store and you will find that all three of these spices are in stock all year long. The pumpkin spice craze results from a combination of these perfectly harmonious spices with the cozy sweaters that have made their way out of storage and into our closets once again and the slight nip in the air that we haven't experienced for what feels like a lifetime. We love the pumpkin spice latte for the nostalgia of endless pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving tables and the memories of long autumn days spent outside surrounded by falling leaves and wrapped in woolen scarves. Pumpkin spice is a representation of all of the wonderful things about fall. It gives us a taste of fall, literally, before the leaves change color and the days get shorter, and for these reasons, we can't get enough of those three spices. Next time you're looking for a bit of nostalgia with some whipped cream on top, grab a sweater and head over to Starbucks.



Is Turkey

Essential to Thanksgiving?

Thanks, But No Thanks

by Graham Lumley

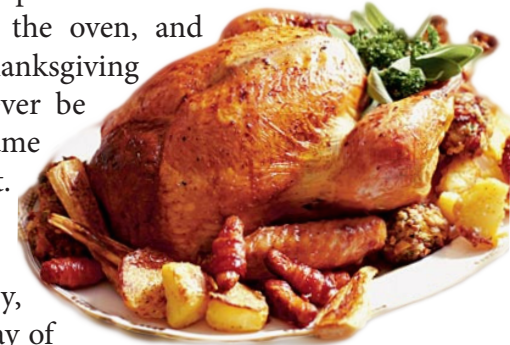
As a vegetarian, Thanksgiving is a very stressful time full of questions like “What do you eat if you can’t have turkey?” and “What, do you HATE Thanksgiving or something?” and I’m here to tell you that turkey is not required to celebrate Thanksgiving. It’s almost like I’m so thankful for the turkeys that I’d rather imagine them gobbling happily and frolicking freely through turkey fields or whatever it is that wild turkeys do.

I know it doesn’t seem likely that a vegetarian substitute could ever compare to turkey, but I’m only in my second year as a non-meat eater, and trust me when I say that there is some “tofurky” out there that tastes pretty darn good. I think people who get so riled up about the fake turkey are forgetting about all the other food that makes

Thanksgiving so great. How could you forget about sweet potato casserole, green bean casserole, rolls, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing, and most importantly, pumpkin pie?

I know food seems like the most important part of this holiday. It’s probably because we spend every waking moment stuffing our faces until our buttons pop off our pants, launch across the room, and knock out our grandmothers. But now that I’m in college, and I’ve spent more time away from home than ever before, it’s

obvious that the most important aspect of Thanksgiving is family. I cannot wait to go home for break and spend time with my relatives this holiday season. So how about we all come to an agreement to allow each other to eat what we want, and let’s leave me and all the other vegetarians alone this Thanksgiving. Thank you.



Pass the Turkey

by Tess Griesedieck

What do you think of when you think of Thanksgiving? It’s an extremely sensory holiday. It feels cool outside (if you’re from someplace normal that actually has seasons, unlike Dallas) but it’s very warm inside. The home is full of friends and family who are happy to see you, especially if it’s one of your first visits back from college. But, more than anything, Thanksgiving comes with a smell.

That smell, the hot food combined with the warmth of family is rooted in the smell of the cooking turkey. Turkey is the staple food of Thanksgiving. Every other aspect of Thanksgiving food is centered around the turkey. Stuffing goes in the turkey; cranberries go on top. You can’t have a decent

Thanksgiving without having turkey. At my house, my parents make two different types of turkey, one that’s deep-fried and one that’s baked in the oven, and our Thanksgiving would never be the same without it.

Obviously, the holiday of

Thanksgiving is centered around family. Being home and being around those who make you feel at home is the single most important part of the season. On the surface, though, Thanksgiving is a holiday that is made by the meal put on the table. And that meal wouldn’t be the same without the turkey.

UHP Recipes: Chocolate Chip Pecan Cheese Ball

Ingredients:

- 8 ounces cream cheese (softened)
- ½ cup butter (softened, not margarine)
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¾ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- ¾ cup finely chopped pecans (optional)



Directions:

- In a medium bowl, beat together cream cheese and butter until smooth.
- Mix in confectioners' sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla, and stir in chocolate chips.
- Cover and chill in the refrigerator for two hours.
- Shape cheese mixture into a ball, wrap with plastic, and chill in the refrigerator for at least one hour.
- Roll the cheese ball in finely chopped pecans before serving.
- Serve with vanilla wafers or graham cracker sticks.
- Your friends will think you work as a gourmet chef in your free time!

Recipe by Sara Jendrusch

Finals For Dummies

by Alexa Maffei

Ladies and gentlemen - college can be difficult, and finals can be an especially challenging obstacle to overcome. However, by following these tips that are backed up by the most profound scientific research and social acceptance, you too can overcome your seemingly impossible tests and papers.

1. Start panicking. This is worth a huge chunk of your grade. If you don't get at least a 110% on this test, you will indefinitely bomb your class, ruin your lifelong dreams, and then you will be forced to become a hobo. With this great mentality, you'll definitely be motivated to study.
2. Avoid sleep. Sleep is for the weak. Anyone who tells you otherwise is just trying to get ahead of you. Every millisecond of your time should be used to maximize your productivity.
3. Food and personal hygiene should be minimized. Again, more time to study.
4. Feeling stressed? Bang your head against a wall repeatedly. Not only can you let out your bottled up emotions, but it will help shake up your brain cells, drastically improving your memory.
5. If you get the least bit tired, take a plunge in the Dallas Hall fountain. It will awaken your senses.
6. Avoid people as much as possible. They are the enemy. They only exist to distract you. You are Katniss Everdeen. May the odds be ever in your favor.
7. After you take your test, think about it as much as possible. Second guess yourself and question everything you did. The more you think about it, the more you can telepathically channel your grade to a slightly higher percentage.

Just remember, you can get through this! Focus on telling yourself there is no way you will ever be able to get through it. Your attitude is really the key to success here.

(Disclaimer: The author is not responsible for lower grades, health problems, serious injuries or mental breakdowns as a result of reading this article.)

Happenings in the Honors Program

by Tess Griesedieck

Coming up next semester in the Honor Program – watch out for deadlines on research opportunities! They will be fast approaching!

↪ The deadline for the next round of Big iDeas projects is January 24th, so have your proposals ready to go when you get back from Winter Break!

↪ The deadline to apply for Richter Fellowships is February 11th. Go online to the Honors Program website to find out more and what the application entails.

↪ The deadline to apply for Engaged Learning Research grants is February 15th. You can come talk to Engaged Learning representatives in the Scholar's Den for more information!

Approaching Deadlines

Jan 24, 2014

Big iDeas
proposals

Feb 11, 2014

Richter
Fellowship
applications

Feb 14, 2014

Engaged
Learning grant
applications

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