



Hilltopics

University Honors Program

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It's Not Christmas Without

133,000 White Lights

by Jacquelyn Elias

While the prospect of a real white Christmas has slightly increased due to the bitterly-cold, rainy weather that has inconveniently plagued Dallas, there is the definite prospect White Christmas at SMU against the slim odds of real snow. SMU's 41st Celebration of Lights will bring the reality of a white Christmas to campus, taking place on December 1st at 7 p.m. The event features the lighting of Dallas Hall and the University Christmas Tree, performances and the treat of listening to President Turner read The Christmas Story. Preparation for this highly anticipated event has occupied the minds of many for months.

Perhaps the group most involved in the planning, the 2014 Celebration of Lights Committee, have dedicated over 4 months of their time to ensure the success of the event. Following the completion of last year's Perunapalooza, the committee began preparations.

In order to differentiate this year's ceremony, the committee implemented several changes. To better represent the atmosphere of the event, Student Foundation Graphic Designer Sarah Campbell assisted the committee in revamping the logo. "The hand-lettered logo speaks to the classic, traditional quality of Celebration of Lights, while touches of gold and pine green evoke the magic of the holiday season," said Sarah. While adopting a more traditional logo, the committee also has gone digital in typical 21st century fashion. The SMU website will stream a live video of the event ceremony to include a broader SMU community.

See the full story on page 2

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Maddie Wallace, Marketing Coordinator of Celebration of Lights, said, “It was hard trying to think of ideas for a holiday event in the middle of July! But, I’m really excited to see how all of our changes and ideas are executed and hopefully installed for years to come.”

The committee, however, were not the only people diligently working to prepare for the event. One cannot overlook the dedication of the facilities department for spending a month to set up the 133,000 white Christmas lights as well as the massive university tree.

As December 1st rolls around, the efforts of these groups of people will not go unappreciated. SMU students, faculty and alumni as well as

residents from the Dallas area will enjoy the festivities. Marisa Rosa said, “The Celebration of Lights was quite literally a light in the impending darkness of stress and finals...It made me feel at home.”

Honors Hot Chocolate Study Break and More

by Camille Aucoin, UHP Office Coordinator

On Friday, December 5th, the UHP will be hosting a study break and celebration of our December graduates! We will have delicious hot chocolate and other refreshments. Be sure to drop by starting at 4 PM!

Also at the study break, we will be giving away a limited number of copies of *Wolf Hall*, a novel by Hilary Mantel. Interested UHP students can pick up a copy of the book at the study break, read it over Winter Break, and join us for a discussion at the beginning of the spring semester. If we run out of free copies but you would still like to participate in the reading and discussion, feel free to purchase your own copy. Keep an eye out for announcements about the book discussion in January!

If you have read any thought-provoking novels lately, let Dr. Doyle know! He has been selected to choose the common reading book for the 2015-2016 school year. Email him with your suggestions.

Be on the lookout for an Honors welcome-back event at the start of the spring semester! Make sure to check out our website and like us on Facebook to stay up to date on all the happenings in the UHP!



How to Stay Healthy as Finals Approach

by A.J. Jeffries

While finals are still a little ways away, the time leading up to them tends to be as academically stressful as the terrifying week itself. This can leave people without the time to spare even a thought on the fact that proper academic success is not only the knowledge you put into your mind, but also the food you put into your body. Fortunately for you, I am here to give a declassified college survival guide to eat properly in this intense time of academic madness.

First, and most importantly, you must recognize that your mental health is infinitely more important than your physical health. With that in mind, throw away everything you think you know about “eating properly”. Second, I will try to explain a concept in a philosophy called executive control. Everyone has a certain amount of executive control at any given time, which is used for any mentally strenuous activity. It is exhaustible, so wasting it needlessly could limit your capacity to study, write, or test effectively. The greatest waste of executive control possible is controlling your whims and desires, so if you are walking through Umph and hear the cookie bell, don’t tell yourself “no, I shouldn’t have two more cookies”. Walk over there, grab those cookies, and devour them! It’s an investment towards better grades.

Now that those two concepts are firmly fixed in your minds, here it is: how to stay healthy during finals week.

Chocolate is the cure to any point of stress. See a cupcake? Eat it. Chocolate contains acids that burn away unhappiness and leave only joy and intellect.

Never forget to eat. There will be days when it doesn’t seem an efficient use of your time to get out of bed and go to the cafeteria, but I promise professors do not give you a better grade just because you waste away and pass out during your exam or as you try to hand in a paper.

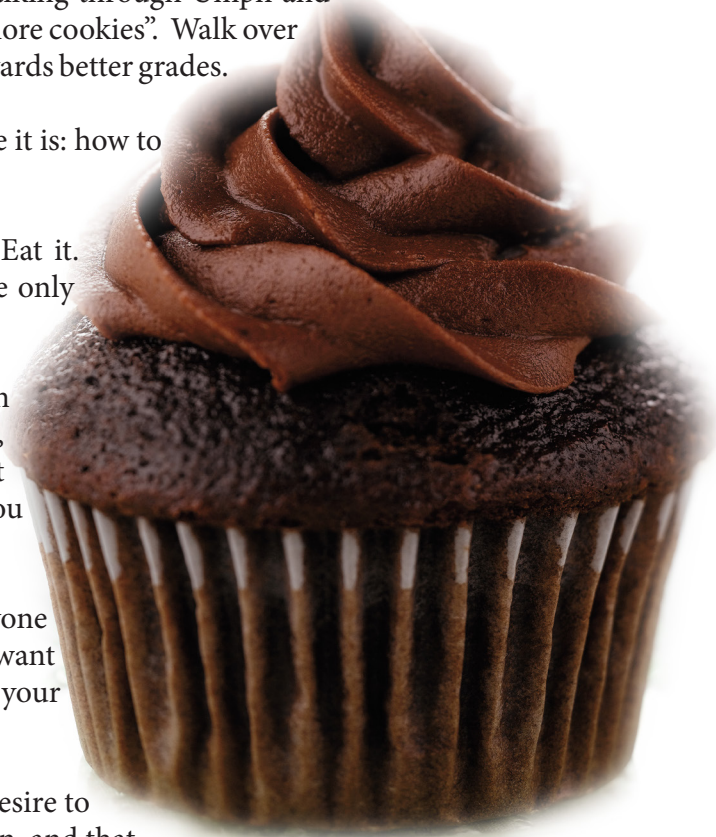
Give in to your whimsical eating habits. Finals stress gives everyone the capacity to eat as if they were a pregnant woman, so if you want to eat pickles and yogurt or chocolate covered crab legs that is your prerogative.

In slight defiance of all my previous advice, don’t give in to the desire to pound coffee and red bull. This is a bad time to start an addiction, and that stuff corrodes your innards.

Apple juice is an effective way to stay awake. Science says so! I don’t know why, but people who science far more effectively than I do said so.

For those night-before cram sessions, maintain adrenaline. A strategy I have used is having a timer go off every twenty minutes to signal time for some form of exercise (pushups, sit-ups, jumping jacks). It will keep blood flowing to your poor, exhausted brain.

Hopefully these tips help everyone out a little bit. For you poor first years who have never been here before, I have one more. Seek out someone who has survived their first few bouts with their finals and get their advice! We all have our own special tricks, and who knows which will work for you.



Tips for a Successful No Shave November

by Camille Aucoin

As the awkward stubble begins to emerge again. As No Shave November sets in, here are a few tips to make sure your luscious beard reaches its full potential by December:

1. Know the Origins

Did you know No Shave November is actually a movement to raise awareness for cancer? Because many cancer patients lose their hair, No Shave November asks participants to embrace their hair and raise awareness for those who have lost it to cancer.



2. Keep it Neat

Nobody likes an unruly, wild beard. Make sure to keep it in check. If the neck-beard starts to emerge, try to resist the urge to grab your fedora and then shave that demon off.

3. Don't Be Afraid to Add Style

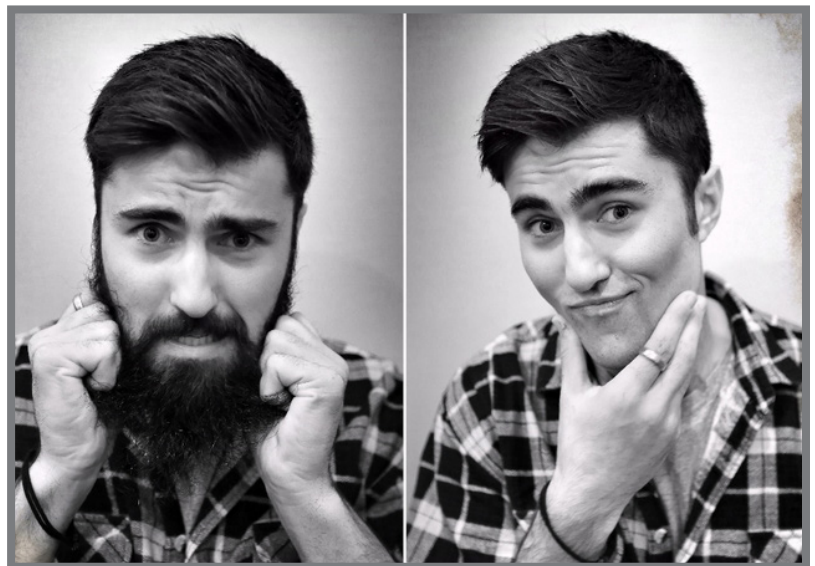
You are raising awareness, aren't you? Don't be afraid to show off your luscious face locks with unique style. If you have a mustache, consider styling it into something crazy, like an intense handlebar, even just for a day.

4. ...Ladies?

Let's face it, how many of us girls actually shave our legs during the winter anyway? Feel free to join the movement as well!

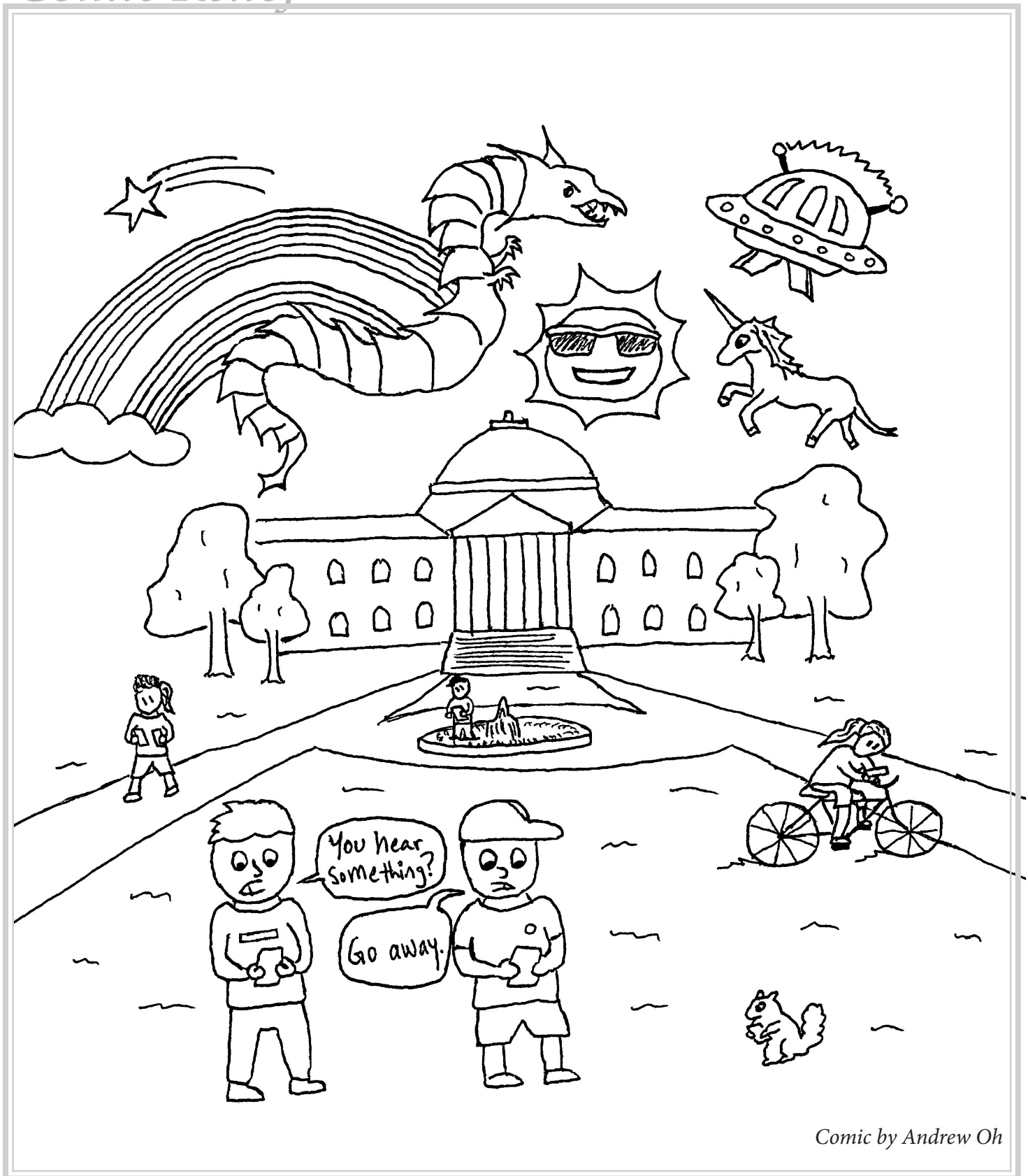
5. Don't forget the cause!

Growing extraneous body hair for a month is fun, but don't forget the cause! Be sure to focus on raising awareness and if you have the resources, donate to an organization supporting cancer research or treatment of cancer patients.



For those of you that are lacking in the facial hair department, you can still raise awareness, too! Take to social media or donate if you have the resources! And overall, enjoy the hairy ride that is No Shave November.

Comic Relief



Comic by Andrew Oh

Mouthwatering Mug Magic

by Tess Griesedieck and Camille Aucoin

Your favorite inexperienced bakers are back with another delicious mug recipe. This time, it's even easier. 5 ingredients. 1 mug. Delicious cake. If you've been studying for hours on end this December, why not take a break and give into those finals time chocolate cravings? Nothing warms the social-interaction-deprived soul like a warm chocolate cake. Check out the recipe below; making it is a piece of cake. Again: do not abandon your cake in the microwave! We will not be held responsible if you set off your fire alarm!

Once again, we personally experimented to guarantee that this recipe is top quality. Unfortunately, we ate the delicious results before we could obtain photo evidence.



Tess eagerly awaits the results

Chocolate Nutella Mug Cake

(credit: *The Comfort of Cooking*)

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup Nutella
- 3 Tablespoons milk
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- Half handful of chocolate chips

Instructions:

Combine all ingredients in an oversized mug or heatproof bowl. Whisk with a fork until smooth (batter will be thick). Microwave on high for 1 to 1-1/2 minutes (Start with 1 minute, then check for doneness and cook for more time, if necessary). A toothpick inserted into cake center should come out clean. Let cool slightly before eating.



Meadows Offers Plenty to do Before Finals

by *Kenny Martin*

If you're looking for something to do as the semester comes to a close and the holidays approach, the Meadows School of the Arts has several events for you. The Meadows Symphony Orchestra will finish out its fall season with concerts on December 5 and 7, with Carol Leone, renowned pianist and SMU faculty member, at the piano for Mozart's popular Piano Concerto in D minor. You don't want to miss this opportunity to hear one of Meadows's very best. Also, SMU Theatre will present *Look Homeward, Angel* by Ketti Frings December 3-7. The first two shows in the fall season have been spectacular; this one shouldn't disappoint. Finally, there are quite a few visual art shows and events happening in the next month; visit the Meadows website (or better yet, venture into Meadows and check out the posters in person) for details. On an extremely exciting note, Samuel Holland, former Dean ad-interim, has been named permanent Dean of Meadows. Dean Holland has been doing good things for the school and Meadows will no doubt continue to flourish under his leadership.



Recently, Meadows has put on several exciting events—if you missed them, you really missed out. The Fall Dance concert was a huge success and brought the school quite a bit of press. The Emerging Sounds concert, which featured new works from SMU student composers, displayed the great creative force present in Meadows. The composer William Bolcom was here for a series of events culminating in a concert with the Wind Ensemble, which was a great success and a prime example of the spirit of collaboration of the highest caliber which exists at Meadows. The World Music Ensemble, Meadows Jazz Orchestra, and Meadows Choirs all had concerts to wrap up the semester, and Jawole Zollar, Meadows prize winner, was at SMU with her dance company, Urban Bush Women, collaborating with students and sharing new pieces. Retiring SMU organ professor Larry Palmer played a delightful program at the Meadows Museum on the Oldovini Organ, and new organ professor Stefan Engels played his debut SMU recital, featuring a program of French music, in Caruth. SMU Student Theatre (SMUST) also recently presented two wonderful shows, and they have another coming up. Spread the word about SMUST—it's a really exciting project, and it deserves everyone's support, just like Meadows as a whole.

Letter from the Editor

by Tess Griesedieck

As this semester's Hilltopics comes to a close, I find it interesting to look back on what we have accomplished this semester. Currently wrapping up my third semester as Editor-in-Chief of Hilltopics, I have come to know and adore many of the people who are consistently involved in the creation of our issues. Each semester, we find a new group of freshmen and sophomores who are interested in the paper and ready to bring their creativity to it. To all the newcomers this semester, I want to say a huge thank you. Your energy is what moves Hilltopics further along and allows us to develop new and more interesting content each month.

However, I can't forget about our returning members. All of you who returned did the paper a great service because you already knew the direction we wanted to go in and appreciated the efforts that have been made to get it there. Whenever we have students come back semester after semester, it really shows how dedicated they are to Hilltopics and how much they wish to see it succeed.

Now, no thank you for Hilltopics would be complete without giving huge thanks to Dr. Doyle and Ms. Spaniolo. Thank you so much to our wonderful directors of the University Honors Program and overseers of Hilltopics production. I know I speak for myself and the rest of the team when I say we truly appreciate your input and support of each and every issue.

Personally, I know of one person without whom I would never get an issue of Hilltopics finalized. Camille Aucoin, my lovely layout master, has been instrumental in planning, creating, and, most importantly, laying out every issue of Hilltopics since her first semester here at SMU. You all are stuck with me for a bit longer, but once I leave, I'm sure Camille will take over and the paper will be all the better for it!

Finally, I would like to thank every person who has picked up a copy of Hilltopics. That means you, the one reading this right now. Without you, we would have no one to read our stories that the writers worked so hard on or appreciate the cleanliness of the writing thanks to the editors, or enjoy the flawless layout complete with pictures thanks to Camille. This is truly a group effort and we do it all for your enjoyment. So thank you for reading.

That about wraps up this semester! Thank you so much to everyone who's played any role in Hilltopics – big or small. We couldn't do it without you!

Sincerely,

Tess Griesedieck

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