

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

H I L L T  P I C S

**FALL 2019
EDITION**



NEWS + OP-ED + CAMPUS LIFE

What is Hilltopics?

Hilltopics is the University Honors Program's opinion paper, founded by Honors students over a decade ago. Written and designed entirely by students, *Hilltopics* is committed to providing a public platform for all voices.

Hilltopics pieces range from the high literary to the traditionally journalistic, from the satirical to the personal. We welcome contributions from all viewpoints, political persuasions, and backgrounds—the most important thing is that all voices are free to contribute, in order to foster a flourishing of free speech at SMU. The paper is not limited to the Honors community; anyone at SMU can write for *Hilltopics*, and we seek to gain readership from all students.

The number one goal of *Hilltopics* is to publish good writing and let it speak for itself. Exclusive online *Hilltopics* content can be found on our website, hilltopicssmu.wordpress.com.

How to contribute:

Though *Hilltopics* is published by the SMU Honors Program, any student is free to contribute. We encourage discussion and creativity in our publication, so if you disagree with one of our articles, we urge you to write a rebuttal. If you have a strong opinion, a literary masterpiece, a cute cartoon, or anything else you've created and want to share, please contact one of our editors-in-chief for instructions on how to contribute:

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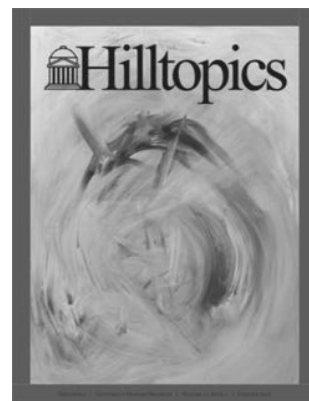
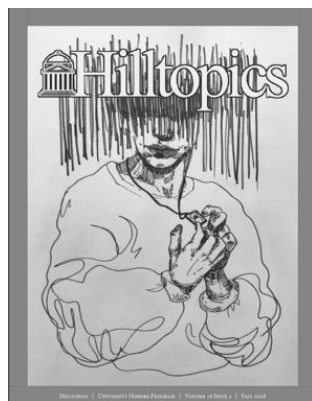
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 **Hilltopics**

STUDY



ROME



PARIS



OXFORD

New York Art Colloquim: ASAG 3350/5350

Travel to NYC with Professor Phillip Van Keuren during Jan term! Students will stay in the city for two weeks and visit museums, libraries, art galleries, and more to study the philosophical and practical elements of art. Contact Professor Van Keuren at pvankeur@smu.edu for more information!

Costa Rica - SOCI 3340: Global Society

Travel to Costa Rica over spring break by enrolling in this spring semester course! Students will study the phenomenon of "globalization," the interconnectedness between societies around the globe, and then travel to study how this phenomenon has affected Costa Rican culture. Space is limited, so contact Dr. Nany Campbell at nacampbell@smu.edu for more information!



ABROAD

With the Honors Program

SMU-in-Rome-Paris

HIST 3361: Roman History, Roman Mind

HIST 3335: One King, One Law

These history courses will travel to Rome and Paris during May and June term! The ten to twelve Honors students in these classes will complete both common readings and individualized readings in their area of interest before departing. While students tour historical sites in Rome and Paris, they will research one particular aspect of civilization, and upon their return, they will complete a short research paper on each of the cities. Space is limited, so students must interview with Professor Kathleen Wellman to obtain a spot. She can be reached at kwellman@smu.edu.

SMU-in-Oxford

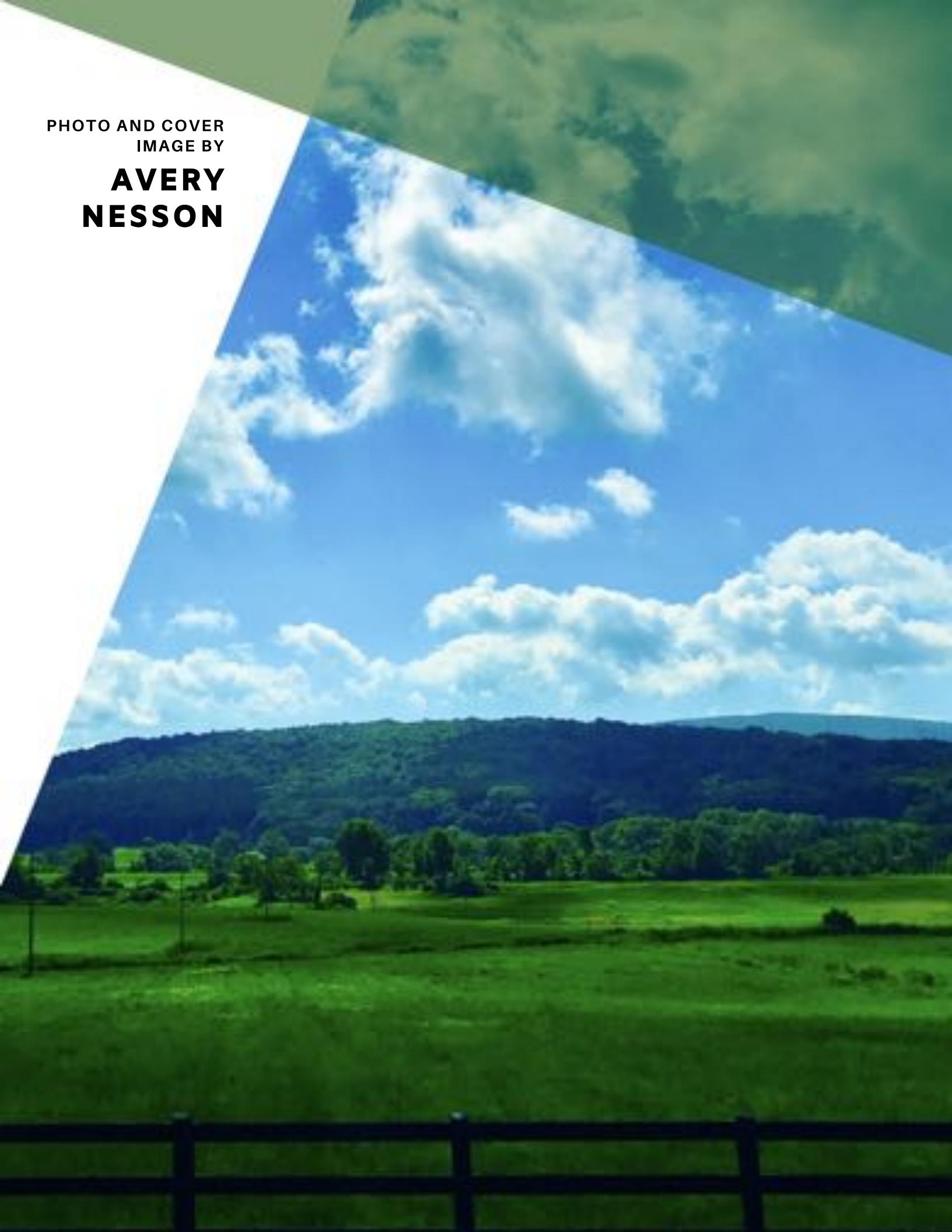
This five-week summer program takes place at University College, Oxford, where students will take two courses for a total of six semester hours credit. A complete course list can be found on the SMU Abroad website. Honors courses offered are:

- KNW 2001: The Oxford Experience
- HIST 3374: Diplomacy in Europe from Napoleon to the EU
- HIST 4388: Georgian & Victorian England
- HIST 3390: Civilization of India
- DISC/ENGL 2306: Honors Humanities Seminar II



PHOTO AND COVER
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**AVERY
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CLEMENTS HALL : A Window into the Past

Thomas Park

Until recently, most students around campus took little notice of Clements Hall. Despite being directly on the main quad, it has remained secluded behind old trees and a rather plain facade. This would have probably remained the case had the windows been measured properly over the summer. Instead, however, Clements has been thrust into the limelight, or rather, the construction lights. In reality, though, Clements has a far more colorful past than its current façade lets on. Back in its heyday, it was actually known as the social center of campus! So, while Clements is getting its windows together, let's take a moment to see why the university is going to all this effort to restore it.

Back in 1912, when the blueprints for Clements Hall were being written up, and even Dallas Hall had yet to grace the hilltop, there were actually plans for the yet unnamed Clements to have a sister building.

Clements was supposed to be the men's dormitory, with a matching women's dorm across the quad (where Umphrey-Lee stands today). However, Clements went ever-so-slightly extraordinarily over budget, so it was made into the women's dorm, and three smaller men's dorms were built farther afield for a combined quarter of the cost. (In case you're wondering why you haven't seen them on your campus maps, they made it a whole 11 years before spontaneously combusting. Nobody was hurt, but the photos sure made the yearbook exciting!) Back then Clements was known only as the Women's Dorm, and boasted such amenities as bathtubs, a dining hall, and President Hyer's apartment. Dinner with the President and his family was mandatory each night, and if any girl wanted to visit the city, she had to get express permission from him. Imagine if you had to ask President Turner any time you wanted to leave campus!

Offences that could get girls confined to campus included chewing gum in public, riding in a "horseless carriage" on a Sunday, and having dinner with a boy in a booth. Remember that next time you have lunch with some friends at Umph!

Despite the restrictions, the Women's Building was as close to a social hub as the campus had. Those two first-floor classrooms were once a classy lounge bookended by fireplaces. This space hosted both social events and the music school's piano practices. Students relaxed in the fields around campus that were home to wild rabbits, wildflowers, and Professor Hyer's pig pen. These events weren't all that happened on campus. Despite the strict regulations, or perhaps because of them, pranks in those days were far wilder than we see today. A few pranksters even set off a stick of dynamite out front of the Women's Building, scaring off President Hyer's horse.

After a couple of years, Virginia and Snider Halls were built, and the Women's building became a men's dorm. A name change was obviously needed, so the building became Atkins Hall in honor of the Methodist Bishop who was a driving force in the creation of SMU. During its nearly 40-year tenure as Atkins, the building was home not only to students, but to many departments, ranging from Chemistry and Engineering to Journalism and the School of Music. The coexistence wasn't always ideal, as the basement labs tended to stink up the dorm above. It was during this dynamic period as the men's dorm that Atkins Hall experienced some of the wildest pranks in the university's history. These range from a food fight among the football players which caught the president in its crossfire to a night raid to cut down some beautiful but foul-smelling trees by Dallas Hall. However, the wildest prank began with a very strange call to an Engineering professor. At that time, the dorm's House Mother Mrs. Gardner did her best to take care of her students and to keep them out of as much trouble as she could. Around 11pm, Professor Flath received a frantic call from her about his freshmen engineers on the fourth floor. They had ended up in a fight with some of the other students in the dorm.



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They were holding their own using the built-in fire hoses. Unfortunately, this also sent water pouring down the stairs. All of that chaos Mrs. Gardner could handle. What she couldn't deal with was the fact that many of the students had stripped down for the fight.

Not all the rebellious acts were so frivolous. In the late thirties, a student attempted to organize a national speaker to talk to an interracial audience of students from the Dallas area. He asked Mrs. Gardner if she could provide refreshments in Atkins' dining area, but she turned him down for fear that the school's administration would send an investigation if word got out that students of different colors were eating together.

Not so easily defeated, he bought some sandwiches and set up a picnic outside. SMU is far from perfect today, but we've come a long way since those days through the efforts of students like these.

By the 50s, the wear on Atkins was showing. Tour guides reported that prospective students were scared off by its run-down look, so it was decided that the building would be renovated to become exclusively classroom and office space. Funding was generously put forth by William P. Clements, who would later go on to be both governor of Texas and a major player in SMU's football scandal.

**"the wildest pranks in
the university's history"**

Despite the resulting protests in the 70s, the name has stuck, and the building by and large became the Clements Hall we know today.

So if you are wondering why SMU hasn't just bulldozed the old, run-down hall in such a prime spot on campus, remember that Clements has hosted many of the major developments in the university's history, from its earliest days through its highs and its lows. Clements may not yet have all of its glass in place right now, but it can still give us a window into the early days here at SMU.



The Frantic Efforts of Frat Men and Firemen to Save the Hantes on Fraternity Row



South Hall Collapsing



S. M. U.'s Dismal Fire—The Three Dormitories Destroyed in Less Than One Hour



The accounts used in this article are courtesy of the DeGolyer Archives Recollections collection.

Photo Citation: Photo of Clements Hall in the 1920s courtesy of Southern Methodist University Campus Memories collection at DeGolyer Library.

Yearbook Photos from SMU yearbook 1926, Southern Methodist University Rotunda Yearbooks Collection at DeGolyer Library.



Sarah Howard

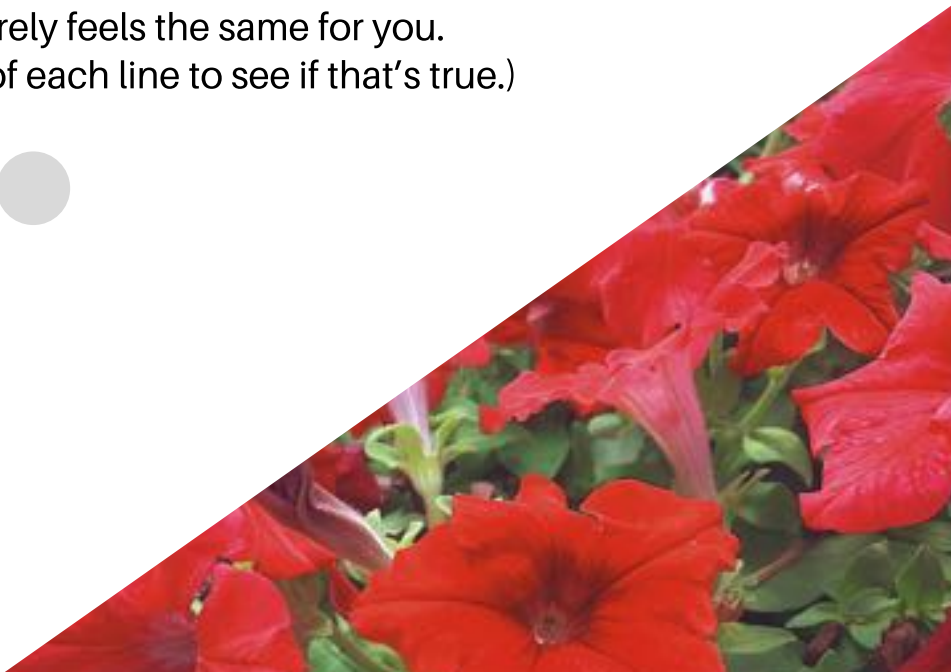
Dusk falls; I come over without expectation
Of anything more than one-sided conversation.

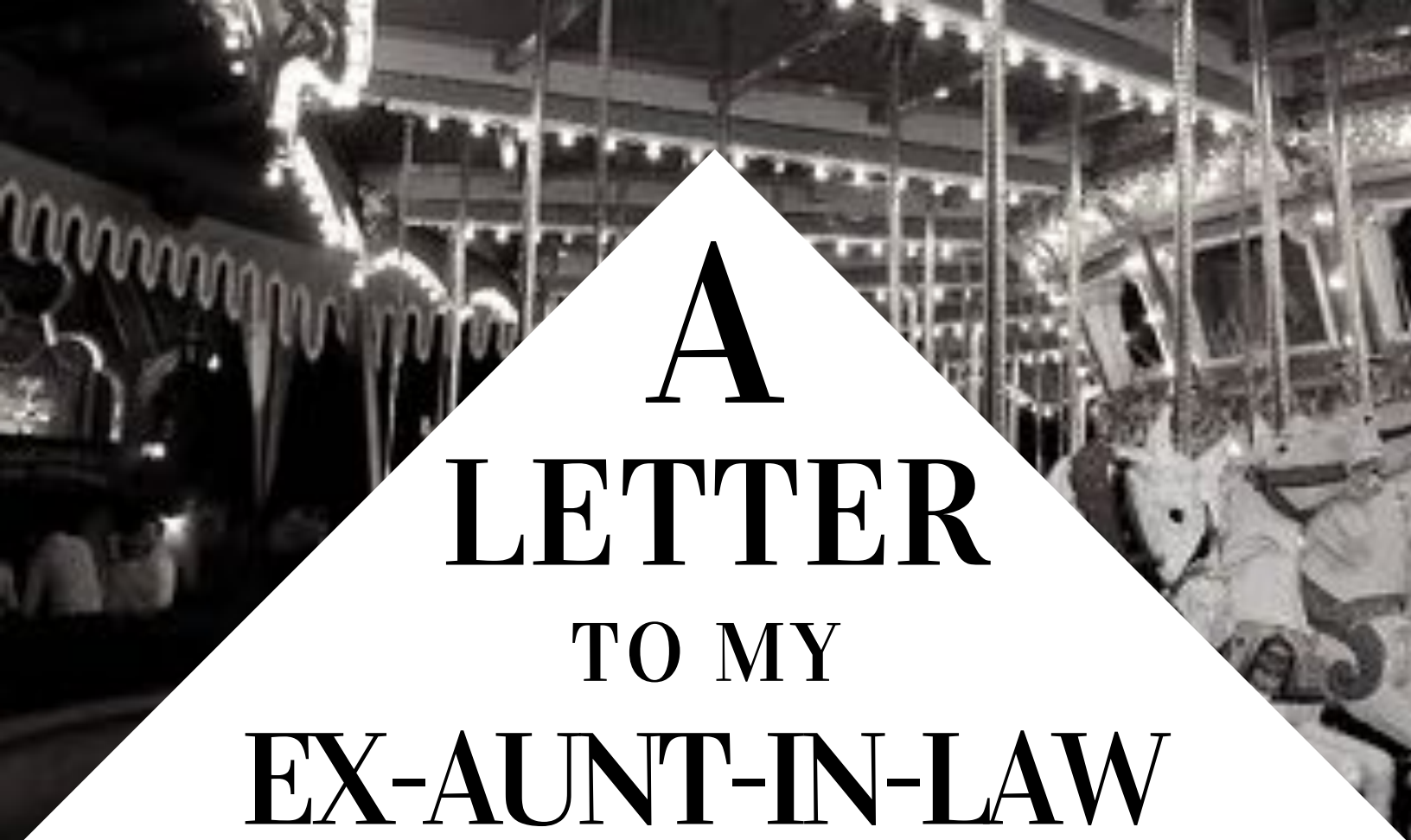
And I pass and I wave, but it always kills
Knowing you never waved back (and you never will).

Why were you crafted with such chiseled features?
A crime when they're paired with your stolid demeanor.

Looking into your eyes, I can't help but see a
Kindness I wish was reserved just for me, but

Everyone reading surely feels the same for you.
(Read the first letter of each line to see if that's true.)





A LETTER TO MY EX-AUNT-IN-LAW

Lorien Melnick

Y'know, nostalgia's one hell of a hallucinogen.
I still remember that ugly beehive hairdo you got done
For half-off at Uncle Bailey's barbershop.
When I smell Xtreme hairspray or shoe polish, I remember that hair.
Remember after you married into the family when the cops busted us
For breaking into the control booth of that carousel
They tore down when they bulldozed the seasonal fireworks store?
We smelled pavement paint and the 2001 Scholastic Book Fair that night,
And you understood my urge to set that carousel in motion again.
Remember after my divorce, when we bought those candles,
Vanilla-birthday-cake and cinnamon-apple-pie,
And they smelled like the most exciting days of childhood?
Guess that's borrowed happiness but it's the best we've got.
Y'know, we're more similar than you think, now that Uncle Bailey's gone.
Nostalgic for wedding cake that tastes like food coloring and baking paper,
Still eating off the same china like we're nothing without our presents.

The Secret Ingredient

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Cassie's Fried Apples

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Sydney Sagehorn

The thing about working at the customer service desk at a dying retail chain is that I can generally pull the words right out of people's mouths. I live by a routine of snap judgements. The white woman with the chubby toddler is about to make her kid return his Hot Wheels because he threw a fit in the drive-through line. The boomer with the bug-eye glasses is about to ask for my manager because he can't return his Super Bowl XLV t-shirt in the year 2019. The teen with curtain bangs and his hands in his pockets is about to shoplift something.

I work 12 hours then go home and watch the news, which informs me how my job will no longer exist in five years.

This is why, when I saw Cassidy Caspian walk up to the counter, I decided to regard her with the same unbridled cynicism that I did the rest of my job.

She wore a lace dress, the kind that I've naively admired in boutiques before I flipped the tag over to witness a three-digit number that cruelly demanded that I shuffle out of the store and claim that it didn't fit right.

"I need you to make an announcement," she said. It was a demand, not a question, but it felt as compelling as the song of a sweet

southern siren. "I have a table for two at Lilly's Diner across the street. They only seat complete parties and my plus one just cancelled. Tell them that I'll pay, and that I'm not a serial killer."

Perhaps it was the asphyxiating possibility of me having to either make that cutesy Hallmark movie announcement on College Football Saturday or tell this woman no, but I blurted out, "I'm literally clocking out right now. I'll go." (I wasn't).

As I followed her out of the store, she introduced herself. She swore up and down that Cassidy Caspian was her real name, but I didn't believe her. It fit too well.

After being seated by a waitress that was working a five-minute shift between hour-long smoke breaks, we stared at each other with the challenging spirit of two people in a public restroom daring the other to shit first.

"Okay, I'll bite. Why are you here?" I said. "Did you know that the mall you work at has the last Granny Mac's in the country?" I did. Or I didn't. Maybe I heard it once.

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Total Time: Prep: 15 min, Cook: 30 min.
 Makes: 8 servings
 ☆☆☆☆☆ No reviews



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Granny Mac's is (was?) a novelty ice cream shop that always gave kids an extra scoop if they came in with their parents or grandparents. I guess it was their way of encouraging family values before the nuclear family fell apart and killed American society. The place was packed every Sunday afternoon. Also, everything was covered in gingham and sticky ice cream residue from the hands of a million children.

"See, I used to go there with my mom. We would go to the public library downtown and there was one right by it, halfway underground, stamped into the pavement by a 75-story investment firm. My mom said she liked to take me there because even if the sugar from the extra scoop made me hyper, she liked to spend time with me.

My mom would fall asleep on the couch rewatching old episodes of Seinfeld. Every night, she'd just microwave a meal, sit in the dark, and watch Seinfeld. I didn't hate her, but I hated the idea of being her, so as soon as I could, I left.

I hopped around a couple degree plans. I don't know what it was, but I could never settle. In my neverending crusade for identity. I ended up dating this guy, Jeremy. A real study abroad type. There was one night when I realized everything was wrong and I wanted to go home.

He told me 'I don't want to watch Seinfeld,' and I was like, "Why not?" and he was like 'I refuse to watch Seinfeld,' and I asked, 'Can we just watch it tonight? Please?' and he answered 'Sorry, it would be abandoning my principles,' and I was like, 'What are you talking about?' and he was like, 'See, it's a show about nothing, right?' and said 'Yes,' and he said 'If I watch it, it becomes about something. Right now, Seinfeld exists in my head as an infinitely large number of concepts. The very second one of those concepts becomes defined, I lose the possibility of the impossible,' and I was like, 'Jesus Christ, Jeremy, can you go one calendar day without spewing out some philosophy-film double major bullshit?'

So I'm on my way to visit my mom. I realized that if I drive four hours out of my way, I would be able to see the last Granny Mac's ever before it closed. And I could tell her. I could be like 'Hey! I remember it all!'

Every aspect of Cassidy's personality felt so abrasive against my own— the way she commanded attention and talked as if everything was rehearsed, yet completely spontaneous, but she had the unshakable magnetism of a preacher. I wanted to chase her around the globe if nothing else than for posterity. We talked for hours more, and at the end of our meal, I vowed to summon her at the nearest Walmart if she was ever 4 hours out of my way.

That night I watched the news like I always did, with a microwave meal. It began by relaying the latest national tragedy, and only by the bottom ticker did I learn of the death of a *Cassiopeia* Caspian, a 21-year-old travelling north from Rogersdale. I looked up her obituary. Her friend said she always made her own clothes.

I spent the rest of that evening trying to derive some sort of meaning from the weirdest lunch break of my life. Maybe if I had finished my degree, I'd be smart enough to ascertain some spiritual significance that would compel me to dramatically throw my name tag at my manager's feet and travel the world instead of performing the same daily rituals of snap judgements.

I feel like I took someone's spot at that table. Someone who would actually be able to do something with what Cassiopeia talked about over fried apples.

See, the cool part about Lilly's is that at the end of the meal, they bring out a plate of fried apples for everyone at the table to share. You don't have to ask or anything. They just show up. I tried my best to recreate that recipe, but I can't shake this feeling of inadequacy. Maybe I'll die with the same lack of resolution as Cassie. Seems that's how it is these days, with all you hear in the news. You just die. Here's your recipe.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter, cubed
- 6 medium unpeeled red apples, sliced
- 3/4 cup sugar



PHONE USAGE: IS IT TIME FOR A CHANGE?

David Hu

As social creatures we value deep interactions, but do we really cherish an empathetic conversation more than our phones? Since Steve Jobs first introduced the iPhone a decade ago, phones have become increasingly integral to our lives. They have transformed the way we interact with others and entertain ourselves. With a press of the screen, our desires are instantly fulfilled. But accompanying this digital revolution is a growing camp of academics and researchers that are pointing out the detrimental consequences of our phone addiction. They highlight declining empathy and decreased productivity as serious issues caused by our digital devices. Although these claims may seem radical or

exaggerated, they begin to show merit when we reflect on the number of times we check our phones. Whether it is a news flash interrupting a personal conversation or a text message disrupting our attention in class, it is clear that our phones are affecting our lives, potentially for the worse.

Spearheading the movement to increase awareness of the harmful consequences caused by our phone usage is Sherry Turkle, founding director of the MIT Initiative on Technology and Self. In her New York Times article "Stop Googling, Let's Talk," she says that our devices have allowed us to find "ways around conversation" leading to a "40 percent decline in empathy among college students, with most

of the decline taking place after 2000" (Turkle 2015). Studies have shown that the "mere presence of a phone" leads to shallower and more disconnected conversations (Turkle 2015). Moreover, we have developed the idea that it is fine to use our phones when we are alone. But as Turkle shows, "the capacity for empathetic conversation goes hand in hand with the capacity for solitude" (Turkle 2015). The time we spend alone should be used for self-reflection, which allows us to contemplate relationships and discern our authentic feelings. However, it seems that we have developed an aversion to being alone. A 2014 University of Virginia and Harvard study found that people prefer "administer[ing]



Image courtesy of <https://www.everydayhealth.com/kids-health/tween-teen-smartphone-veruse-can-dangerous-symposium-highlights/>

recognizing forms of nonverbal communication, like body language and facial expressions (Ehmke). This lack of personal communication results in decreased empathy and lead to the development of the imposter syndrome, where children experience "more anxiety and less self-esteem" because they don't fulfill the "impractical ideals" displayed on social media (Ehmke). This problem creates a conflicted image of oneself. Ironically, social media fails to accomplish its goal of connecting the world; rather, it does the opposite by alienating groups and making users feel discontent with their lives

Beyond adverse consequences on mental health, our phones can also greatly decrease both attention span and productivity. According to a study by Microsoft, constant distraction from texts, games, social media, and emails have decreased our average attention span to eight seconds (McSpadden 2015). That's shorter than a goldfish!

Compounding the issue is the common practice among college students to chronically multitask. Texting and snapchatting friends while doing homework is prevalent among students and many boast of their ability to accomplish both tasks efficiently. However, through extensive research, scientists have concluded that multitasking has the opposite of it intended effect. As a matter of fact, it leads to a 40 percent decrease in productivity (APA).

While it would certainly be naive to call for the end of smartphones,

it is clear that something needs to change. If current trends continue, future generations will become increasingly detached from society and themselves. However, considering the severe repercussions of our uncontrolled cell phone use, mitigating the effect is surprisingly easy. Sherry Turkle recommends designating areas, like dining areas, as "device free, sacred spaces" (Turkle 2015) This allows deep, personal conversations to occur and gives us the opportunity to reclaim our lost empathy. In addition, using the built in "do not disturb" feature on our smartphones or leaving our devices in another room can increase productivity and reduce the impulse to check our phones every few minutes. For the more dedicated individual, a wide range of digital detox retreats offers a way to reconnect with our emotions and surroundings. Many come out of these electronics-free camps more "mindful of getting lost in [their] devices" and "learned to reconnect with people" (Sisson 2014). Technology can be incredibly helpful, but a line must be drawn when it begins to wear away the values that make us human. We must see technology as a way to express and reaffirm our unique characteristics rather than something we alter our lives to accommodate. Humans have fought wars and started rebellions to sustain the values we believe in. Is our capacity for focus and empathy not valuable enough to at least put up a stand?

of electric shocks to themselves instead of being left alone with their thoughts" (Wilson et al. 2014). This adverse reaction to self-reflection creates a vicious cycle that creates indifferent conversations and ultimately drops our empathy levels.

Social media may sound like a perfect solution to falling empathy. You can interact with people around the world and experience their sorrows and success through videos, pictures and text. However, research shows the contrary. Dr. Catherine Steiner-Adair, a leading child psychologist, says that since social media is a form of indirect communication, users miss out on the "critical social skills" developed through building relationships and

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Purchase of a permit does not guarantee space. Parking is first come, first serve.
Purchase of a permit does not guarantee space.
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The words echo in your mind as you circle the university,
Looking for parking.

Photo Credit: Tom Rodgers at the
SMU Daily Campus,
[https://www.smudailycampus.com/
news/curb-controversy-over-
parking-on-hillcrest](https://www.smudailycampus.com/news/curb-controversy-over-parking-on-hillcrest)

You arrived over an hour early to your class,
Plenty of time—
One would think.

You curve up Binkley,
Then down again,
Wind your way up Moody
Without success.

Back and forth
Through the rows of the commuter lot,
You see an empty spot and floor it.

Someone squeals into the spot,
Inches from your car.
You contemplate violence,
Wondering if your car could just drive over
Their nice, shiny paint job.

You spiral around Airline,
Determined not to leave without a spot.
Spiraling into despair
As you see your class time
Tick tick tick
Closer, closer, past.

A TELL-TALE PARKING SPOT

A Southern Methodist Gothic

Nicole Kiser



You text someone in your class
that you can't find parking;
they tell you to park in the neighborhood.
You stop at the curb,
an ominous sign hanging above you:

Resident Parking ONLY

MON Thru FRI

8am To 5pm.

You exit the dark omen's forbidding shadow.

As you circle SMU,
you see an empty lot.
It's forbidden to you:
Faculty Only.

You diligently try each parking lot again.
What's that?
An empty space?
You rush toward it.

It's a motorcycle.
Your class started an hour ago;
You're now missing your next class.

You briefly consider
Trying to share the space.

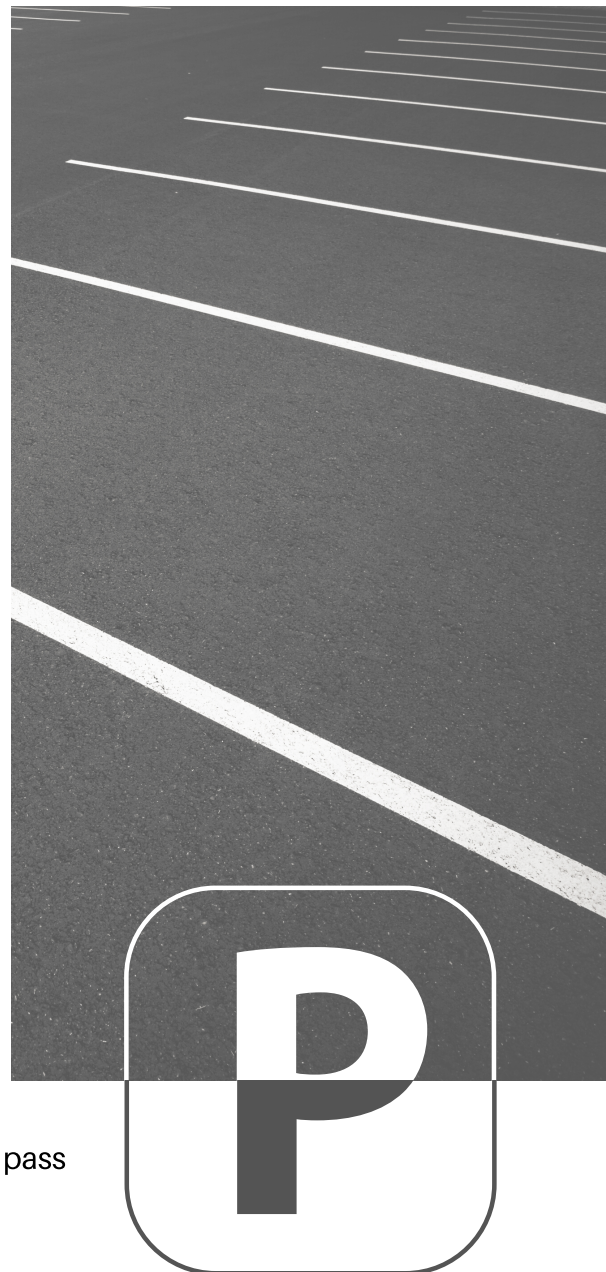
You hurry through the various lots;
you hear a crunch, a crash, a curse—
an accident behind you
in the tight twists of Binkley.
You leave your fallen comrades behind,
hoping for less competition.

Even the paid parking is full.
You contemplate parking on the grass;
RGT can turn your car into a fountain.

You've now spent twice the cost of the parking pass
in gas
looking for a space.

You finally spot
someone with their lights on.
Maybe they're leaving?
You wait. You lurk.
They slowly reverse.
You found a space!

You look out your window;
it's dark outside.
All your classes are over.
You drive home.



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