

2-5-2007

Hilltopics: Volume 3, Issue 14

Hilltopics Staff

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics>

Recommended Citation

Hilltopics Staff, "Hilltopics: Volume 3, Issue 14" (2007). *Hilltopics*. 60.
<https://scholar.smu.edu/hilltopics/60>

This document is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at SMU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hilltopics by an authorized administrator of SMU Scholar. For more information, please visit <http://digitalrepository.smu.edu>.

HILLTOPICS

always 100% smu-written
www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics

volume three, issue fourteen
week of february 05, 2007

INSIDE this issue

Culture: Everyone knows SMU has style, but a new exhibit at the Meadows Museum proves it. Read about all the high fashion at the bottom of Bishop Blvd, page 3.

Campus: Want to know what the faculty members themselves are saying about the Bush Institute? Read what Dr. Newman has to say on page 2.

Back Page: Parcels is out as Cowboys head coach. The question remains as to who will fill his shoes. Douglas Hill suggests Jerry Jones look to someone besides frontrunner Norv Turner, page 4.

Be Heard: *Hilltopics* is always looking for good submissions on virtually any topic. Email your ideas, feedback, or articles to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

Hershel Chapin offers a letter to the Hilltopics staff about the library

by Hershel Chapin

This article was inspired by Todd Baty's "Faculty Uprisingover the Bush Presidential Library and Bush Institute: Too Little Too Late" *Hilltopics*, 29 January 2007. It can be found at www.smu.edu/honors/hilltopics

Dear Hilltopics staff
Here is the answer to the question: "Why [are]... individuals that are... passionately opposed to the Bush complex just now voicing their concerns?"

The question Todd Baty asks in "Faculty Uprising... Too little too late" deals with our **changed faculty's goals.**

Many professors will admit that they welcomed the presidential library when it was an idea in the abstract. The general principle at work is distance distorts appearances. Try it on your friends, go ahead—the further you are, the more attractive somebody (or something) seems. Hence, the operating logic back then was, "Surely SMU should be more deserving of such an honor than any other university."

The debate has shifted. It has gone from, "Which school is better?" to, "Now that SMU is top banana and our insecurities have been put to rest, should we really commit to this important decision?" Many believe the answer to the latter was fixed by the resounding answer to the former.

The temporal scope has also shifted—the library decision will affect our university immediately instead of just sometime down the road. That means previous supporters of the plan would be suddenly accountable for the neo-conservative institute proposed—a painful proposition for many. If you recall, SMU Faculty Senate is a democracy, and we

all know that democracies don't get anything done until they're pushed over the edge by some kind of massive pain-trigger. A large portion of the faculty reacted to this stimulus by getting as far away from the proposal as possible, ideologically—hence, the mysterious and sudden news making opposition.

As far as "deadlines" are concerned, faculty culture is very much like student culture in that it encourages over-committing to many activities, and forces individuals to procrastinate on tasks that appear distant. Simply put, they didn't see it coming, nor could they have seen it coming.

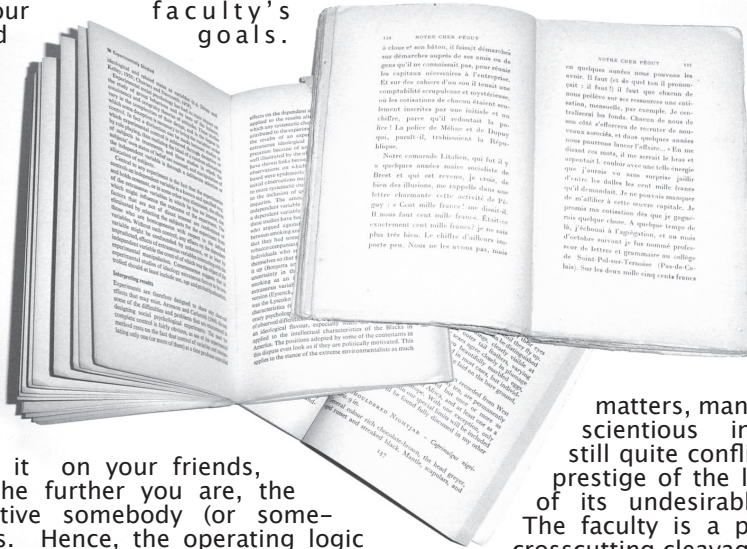
Owning up to this fact, many of the faculty members are kicking themselves for being so easily trapped in the classic bait-and-switch marketing scheme. To further complicate

matters, many of these conscientious individuals are still quite conflicted about the prestige of the library, in spite of its undesirable component. The faculty is a population with crosscutting cleavages.

Nevertheless, one thing can be said of all the faculty members: they believe the old business model is still functional—the Presidential Library preyed on the buyers' insecurities, then peddled something they would never dream of wanting. The reality of the situation is the faculty members' institutional competitiveness (or collective pride/jealousy, however you look at it) may have gotten the best of them.

Regards,
Hershel

Hershel Chapin is a senior finance and French major; he also acts as the Coordinator of the University Honors Program.



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

Professor defends faculty objections and responds to Baty on Bush Institute controversy

by Dr. Beth Newman

First the *Daily Campus* castigated the faculty for its slow response to the proposed Bush Library package; now Todd Baty of *Hilltopics* has joined in the cry. Meanwhile, the Student Senate has passed a resolution supporting the Bush Library, having rushed to judgment without a real understanding of the issues involved. But in a way I can't blame the Senate for not having a clearer understanding of many of the issues, since there are still so many unanswered questions about the shape that the library-museum-institute complex will take.

And that is why faculty who oppose the Bush Library proposal waited until December of 2006 to begin voicing our concerns: we could not object knowledgeably and judiciously to something whose details were kept tightly under wraps for the better part of six years, unless we were objecting, reflexively, to the presence of the Bush Library under any circumstances.

It should be clear by now that faculty opposition has addressed itself primarily to the accompanying Bush Institute, which was not part of SMU's original proposal. (In fairness, I should point out that the faculty is not united in its opposition, but that opposition is a great deal stronger than the administration has acknowledged.) Faculty members understand the value of an archive and a library. Even those of us who oppose President Bush's policies have understood, either viscerally, intellectually, or both, that partisan opposition to George W. Bush should not stand in the way of a major acquisition for SMU that could eventually provide for the production and dissemination of important knowledge—though probably not in the lifetime of anyone currently teaching or studying at SMU, thanks to Bush's Executive Order #13233. (This order gives a President, his family, or any "series or group of alternative representatives," almost unlimited power to withhold documents relevant to his term in office as long as they choose to do so.) Nevertheless, I am persuaded that the library would be good for SMU in the long run.

An institute, however, is another thing entirely, as many of my colleagues have been arguing in the *Daily Campus*, the *Dallas Morning News*, and elsewhere. (See Professor Ben Johnson's Bush Library Blog:

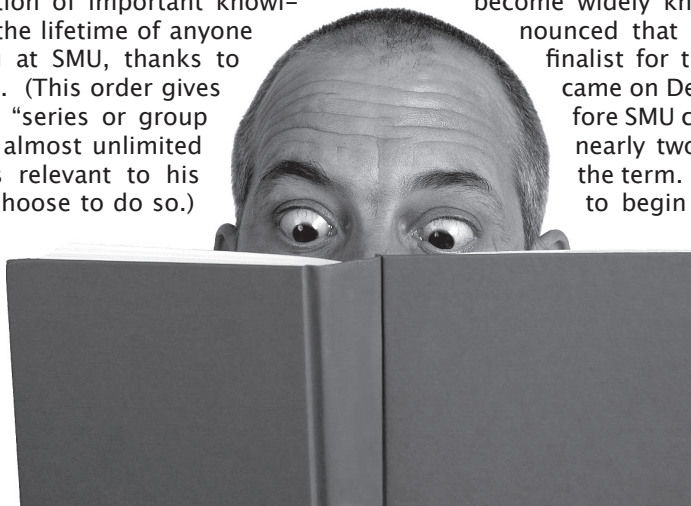
<http://bushlibraryblog.wordpress.com/>). Briefly, the fellows appointed to institutes—"think tanks" as they are popularly known—are selected because they subscribe to a particular ideological perspective. Academic inquiry at a university is not necessarily disinterested—indeed, my training in the humanities makes me skeptical about whether the institutionalized pursuit of knowledge can ever be utterly free of bias; but members of a university faculty are not pre-selected to serve an explicit agenda. This contrast was articulated with chilling candor by a Bush associate who told the *New York Times Magazine* in October, 2004: "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality

—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."

The original proposal SMU made to the Bush administration did not mention an institute. But the White House rejected SMU's proposal of a Bush *school* (similar to Cox, Law, Dedman, Meadows, Engineering, and the new School of Education and Human Development), whose faculty would be hired and retained according to normal academic protocols. They proposed the institute in its place. This was not until July, 2005, and even then, only a few insiders very close to the process knew anything about it. President Turner first mentioned the proposed institute at an open meeting of the

Faculty Senate on December 6, 2006. The plan did not become widely known until President Turner announced that SMU had been named the sole finalist for the library. That announcement came on December 21, 2006—two days before SMU closed down for winter break, and nearly two weeks after the official end of the term. Why did we wait until December to begin expressing our concerns? Because it wasn't until then that the objectionable aspects of the proposal, from an academic perspective, came to light.

Dr. Newman is a professor of English.



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

we're listening at hilltopics@hotmail.com

Tired of Juicy, Uggs, and Chanel? Balenciaga exhibit offers respite from dull SMU fashion

by Sterling Morriss

Here at SMU, fashion takes center stage. Everyone knows that we are supposedly one of the most “fashion-forward” campuses and that just by walking across the quad you can always see brand name upon brand name confronting you on the way to class. When someone outside the bubble, like a hometown friend or family member, asks me about this phenomenon, my usual sarcastic reply is that SMU students receive honorary minors in fashion just by attending this university. While all this is great and good, sometimes I wonder about the quality of the garments on the co-eds around me. And I’m not talking about whether or not that Juicy velour suit will fade in the wash. What I mean is that yes, SMU is a place chock-full of expensive brands. But expensive trendy clothes don’t always equal good fashion.

I know the trends have been scrutinized a million times before in DC Op Eds and even in articles in this humble publication. I remember in particular an ode to popped collars by Hilltopics alum Gaines Greer in its first year of publication. And I’m not here to continue down this weary vein of thought, but to offer some much-needed relief. For those of us who appreciate high fashion but don’t enjoy Ugg boots and mini-skirts, there is an answer on this campus.

Yesterday at SMU’s own Meadows Museum a new exhibit opened entitled “Balenciaga and His Legacy: Haute Couture from the Texas Fashion Collection.” It’s an exhibit featuring the work of fashion god Cristobal Balenciaga, one of the foremost designers stationed in Paris after World War II. More than 70 pieces of Balenciaga wear are showcased, all from the personal collections of Texas women—thanks to the Texas Fashion Collection at the University of North Texas. Balenciaga, a native Spaniard, worked in Paris until the late 60s creating his line of sculpturally beautiful gowns that inspired the likes of Oscar de la Renta and Hubert de Givenchy. He is still remembered today as one of the most inventive and inspiring designers in the history of haute couture. Christian Dior is even quoted as referring to him as “master of us all.” Famous Balenciaga clients include Sophia Loren, Princess Grace of Monaco, and the Duchess of Windsor. A Balenciaga dress is heralded for moving with a woman’s body and thereby focusing attention on the woman and not the dress. At the time of their conception, Balenciaga’s garments were often criticized for being too conceptual or too modern. Yet as history has given him a context and time has passed, he is now lauded as the master of 20th century fashion.

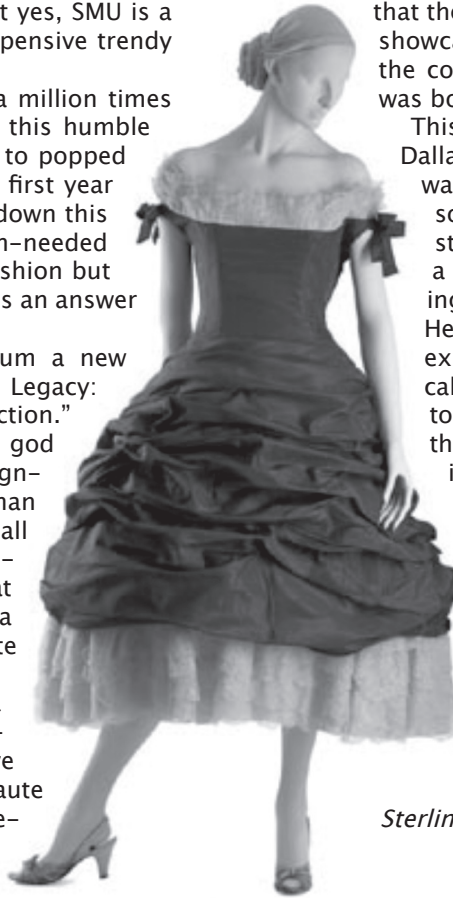
“Balenciaga and His Legacy” is the first US exhibition in over 20 years showcasing this designer. The exhibit explores the designer’s legacy from the perspective of the women he dressed and the designers he inspired. The exhibition includes works by Balenciaga himself, as well as 20 or so other pieces by designers that were directly inspired by the Spaniard, such as Givenchy and Oscar de la Renta. Of these non-Balenciaga pieces, included in this exhibit are the likes of a Givenchy-designed black silk damask ensemble worn by Au-

drey Hepburn in the 1963 movie *Charade* and First Lady Laura Bush’s Oscar de la Renta Inaugural Ball gown. The Meadows Museum has been transformed by Stage Designer Winn Morton into a dramatic scenery of mirrored walls and architectural elements resembling those at the original House of Balenciaga in Paris. The Meadows Museums originally decided to pursue this exhibit after touring UNT’s Texas Fashion Collection and seeing their extensive holdings of Balenciaga. The Meadows is the largest holder of Spanish art outside of Spain, and is therefore devoted to promoting the awareness of Spanish art here in Dallas. It makes sense then that the Museum brass saw the opportunity to showcase a Spanish haute couture designer, the concept for “Balenciaga and His Legacy” was born.

This exhibit’s arrival has been the talk of Dallas, and its opening this past weekend was one of the bigger events of the busy social season. How exciting for us SMU students, to be able to experience such a gem of an exhibit without even driving somewhere and paying admission. Here on campus, we will be able to see expensive fashion that is worthy to be called haute couture. I highly recommend to everyone at SMU taking a look down at the Meadows Museum because this truly is a unique opportunity that we’ve been afforded. Plus, maybe you’ll even learn something about fashion outside of the classroom—besides, that is, how to wear a Louis Vuitton bag and complement it with oversized Chanel sunglasses. Perhaps then we’ll deserve that honorary minor in fashion.

For more information on the exhibit go to www.meadowsmuseum-dallas.org.

Sterling Morriss is a senior art history major.



Want to be heard?

Our advertisements are affordable, attractive, and effective.

contact hilltopics@hotmail.com for more info

Jones has a chance to do something great for the Cowboys. Will he let the chance pass him by?

by Douglas Hill

Jerry Jones is going to make Cowboys history this week; the choice left to him is whether that history is going to be good or bad for his legacy as one of the most productive owners in NFL history.

When Bill Parcells resigned—whoops, retired—as Cowboys head coach, Jones was given a great opportunity. Unfortunately for Cowboys, fans, though, he appears to be wasting that chance. All indications suggest that the organization is leaning heavily towards offering the job this week to San Francisco offensive coordinator Norv Turner.

Norv Turner would be the wrong choice for the Cowboys for several reasons. The first is that Jones has already hired a great offensive mind in Jason Garrett, who is almost certain to be Cowboys offensive coordinator next year. While I personally feel it's always a bad idea to hire coordinators before head coaches, it would especially bad in this case. The main argument in support of Turner is that he has a track record of turning young, talented offenses into dominant units that can win championships. However, if that's what Jones is looking for, why hire Garrett? Two competing philosophies will create confusion, not conformity in an offense that is already struggling to find a solid foundation for young, personality-driven talent like Tony Romo, Julius Jones, and "that player."

The second reason Norv Turner is the wrong choice is that he takes the Cowboys in the wrong direction. Despite losing to the Seahawks in the playoffs due to a dropped snap by Tony Romo, the problem for the Cowboys all year was their mediocre defense, not their offense. The Cowboys lost four of their last five games this year, almost missing the playoffs in the process, and the reason wasn't the offense, which ranked second in touchdowns and fourth in scoring. A coach like Bears defensive coordinator Ron Rivera or 49ers assistant head coach Mike Singletary (who is, of course, a hall of fame caliber player and one of the best defensive minds in recent NFL history) could turn a defensive unit anchored by standout defensive back Roy Williams into the sort of dominant squad the has Chica-

go in the Super Bowl despite Rex Grossman putting up goose eggs in the passer rating category.

Finally, hiring Norv Turner would be a bad idea for the same reason hiring Bill Parcells was a mistake. Just because someone had great success in the NFL in years past does not mean that he will be successful today. Parcells is unquestionably one of the best coaches in NFL history. With the Cowboys, however, he was unable to turn in the same kind of team-transforming performance. Watching Parcells coach, one got the impression that this was no longer the game he loved. It was as if football had, sadly, passed him by. While there's no doubt that Turner is up to date on current offensive and defensive strategies, the fact that he was successful as an assistant with the Cowboys during their glory days does not necessarily mean that he will be successful now. Rather than reaching back to Cowboys history to find a coach, Jones should think about what he wants for the Cowboys future, and I think the answer should be a young defense-oriented coach—someone like Rivera or Singletary.

The Cowboys had a roller coaster of a season this year. They started out trailing a New York Giants team that looked like it could run away with the NFC East. By the midway point, nobody in the NFC looked hotter than the Boys, though, and Dallas media were certain they'd be in Miami covering the Cowboys, not the Bears, in Super Bowl XLI. Then the wheels fell off of the defense, and Parcells decided it wasn't worth another shot. Is

the solution to a defense that just couldn't get the Cowboys over the hump really to hire an offensive coach? This season proves that the Cowboys aren't far from another trip to the Super Bowl—but it also proves that they aren't there yet. There's no question that Jerry Jones has been one of the most successful owners in NFL history. It remains to be seen, however, if he will use this opportunity to cement his legacy or to tarnish it.

Douglas Hill is a senior international studies major.

Hilltopics Staff

Douglas Hill: Editor-in-Chief
Mark McDowell: Managing Editor
Todd Baty: Business Manager
Jenny Simon: Submissions Manager
Sterling Morriss: Distribution Manager
Monica Chavez: Copy Editor
Clare Taylor: Copy Editor
Amanda Wall: Copy Editor
Janet Arnold: Graphics Editor
Carter Twitty: Senior Writer

Hilltopics is published each Monday. It is sponsored by the University Honors Program and the Students' Association.

Are you boring?

(if so, ignore this ad)

We're always looking for interesting submissions.

Send your commentary, proposal, letter, editorial or cartoon to hilltopics@hotmail.com.

All pieces become property of Hilltopics upon submission.