

small talk

Happy Thanksgiving! from all of us at smalltalk

The history of Thanksgiving

By Alisha Hunt
Contributing writer

We remember quite fondly the thoughts and teachings we received in our kindergarten classes when we first learned about our beloved holiday. Thanksgiving, pilgrims, and Native Americans, all add up to our modern definition of Thanksgiving Day. How much do we really know, and understand, about this holiday? Is it only a day where family and friends get together every year and eat turkey and apple pie, or is there more to it?

There were many things we were taught as children, for example, the first Thanksgiving was held in 1621 by the Pilgrims and Native Americans. However this was not an annual occurrence as we were raised to believe. New England was the only area in the United States that actually celebrated Thanksgiving once a year.

Thanksgiving didn't become an anniversary event until the early nineteenth century when it was declared a national holiday, on October 3, 1863 by President Lincoln, during the American Civil War. He

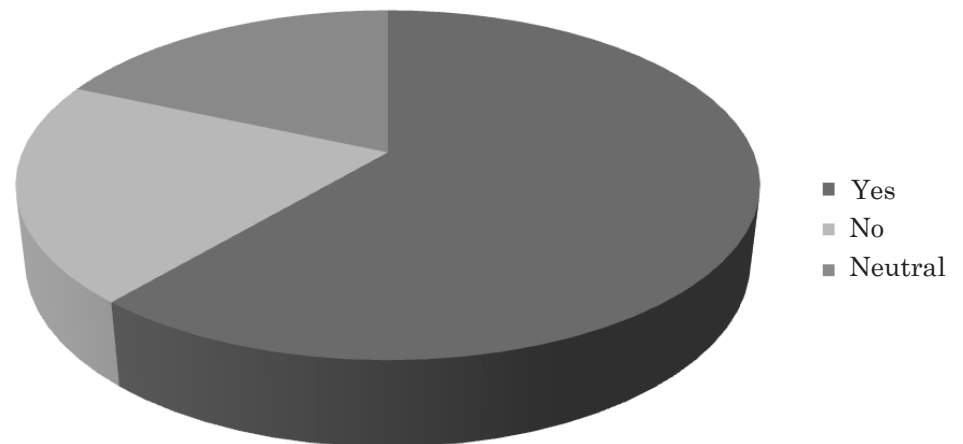
asked that the nation give thanks for the Union on the last Thursday of November, thus making the first Thanksgiving Day on November 26, 1863, recognizing the long-standing New England tradition.

President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving again for November 23, 1864. However, in 1865, his successor, Andrew Johnson, declared a Thanksgiving for December 7, 1865. Presidents traditionally declared a Thanksgiving for every autumn since, but Andrew Johnson was the first to give government employees the day off, making it a legal holiday.

It wasn't until 1941 when Congress passed a bill which President Roosevelt signed, that fixed the date as the fourth Thursday in November. President Roosevelt attempted to move the holiday to the third Thursday in November, but Congress enacted a law to fix the date at the fourth Thursday in November, thus making it an "official" holiday. The bill was signed by the President on November 26, 1941 making Thanksgiving an official holiday.

Security Poll

Do You Feel Safe At Methodist University?



By Gabbie isaac
Staff Writer

*"Security lets too many unknown people on campus."
-Anonymous Methodist Student*

According to elaboration from those who took the poll:

Those that said yes:

Most of these students were unaware of the recent security breach. Even some that knew of it still feel that Methodist University is a safe environment.

Those that said no:

Most of these students knew exactly what had happened with the security breach and believe security needs to be tightened on campus.

Those that were neutral:

These students either knew or did not know about the breach, but have not decided if it will affect their view of security.

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smalltalk welcomes Letters to the Editor. All letters should be delivered to the Student Media office located in Chris's House or sent via e-mail to smalltalkmu@yahoo.com. Story suggestions should be sent to the same address.

Students can join smalltalk at any point in the school year. Meetings are every Tuesday at 5 p.m. in Chris's house.

Initial copies of smalltalk are free. Additional copies are 50 cents each.

When pigs fly

By Emory Jacobs and Jorge Rivera



Alpha Chi accepts new memebrrs

By Daquan Major
Contributing writer

The Methodist University chapter of Alpha Chi, the National Honor Scholarship Society, inducted 17 new members in a ceremony October 31.

The 35th coronation service honoring 17 accomplished students highlighted Alpha Chi's dedication to scholarship and truth, citing the New Testament's John 8:32: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," as its motto.

Each Alpha Chi member pledges to uphold the purpose of the society, adopting its views toward scholarship and service. Its colors are sapphire blue, signifying truth, and emerald green, signifying victory. The Greek letters Alpha Chi, symbolize truth and character.

Admission to Alpha Chi is limited to the top ten percent of an institution's juniors, seniors and graduate students. Alpha Chi launched in 1922. The North Carolina Methodist University chapter began in 1976.



2011 Alpha Chi Inductees

Heather R. Anderson
Bryan W. Beiersdorfer
Celena Renae Brock
Angie M. Carter
Kevin M. Collins
Alexandra Festisova
Jasmina Gobeljic
Jaclyn Horn
Kevin L. Hyde
Maranda L. Keeney
Jonathan Kocmich
Kaitlyn Leger
Stephanie M. Ongley
Nolan L. Outlaw
Anastasiya Saakova
Laziz Tursunov
Jenny Wayland

The Elder Scrolls: Skyrim- Here There Be Dragons

Aaron Bressler
Opinions Editor

Visuals 9/10

Of all the games this year, Skyrim is by far the most beautiful. While games like Battlefield 3 may have had more graphical definition, none of the other games looked quite this good. Each city has a unique visual look, while still keeping the overall Norse/Viking theme. Grand sweeping scenes and landscapes are masterfully crafted everywhere you go. There isn't a single corner of the game that doesn't look absolutely amazing. The characters look much better as well. In the previous game, Oblivion, the characters mostly looked the same regardless of race, species or gender and had set up permanent residence in the uncanny valley. The game also added more actions for the characters to do besides fighting, other than standing and walking.

The biggest visual changes were in the elves. In Oblivion they had mushed faces and hair that looked like something from another planet was trying to eat their head. Now they look a good deal more impressive, and not at all human. While their angular faces and otherworldly eyes seem strange at first, they do a good job of making the elves distinct and separate from the humans. The biggest disappointment was the Khajiit, who looked more like overgrown housecats than fierce lion-people.

The foliage is still a little pixilated, and two dimensional. The game has a lot of different weather effects ranging from fog and rain to raging blizzards. Just don't be surprised to find that snow is going through a tent instead of around it. The game also suffers from a few graphical bugs on all platforms. I noticed that characters chopping and carrying wood tend to get the wood stuck in their arms and axes fairly often. However, the developers have promised an update to fix these issues soon.

The character animations are much smoother now. While they still occasionally get stuck on weird rocks or moved chairs the characters usually get themselves out on their own. They also changed the dialogue menu. In

Oblivion, talking to someone paused the game and zoomed in on their plastic face as they hungrily stared into your soul. Now the game continues around your conversation and the character will do normal things while they talk to you. Unlike in Oblivion they also have more than two facial expressions.

Gameplay 9/10

Part of what makes Skyrim such a great game is how it plays. The first thing you'll notice is an overhaul on the skills and stats. First, they removed the attributes. Instead you simply increase your health, stamina and magicka directly and emphasized skills. They also removed some of the less useful or more redundant skills such as athletics, acrobatics and mysticism. You are also no longer required to make a class. All skills increase equally and count towards your total level. The game also added perks similar to Fallout 3, but arraigned in a skill tree. They no longer scale the enemies with your level, which means you actually become more powerful than your opponents. You'll also unlock more powerful enemies as well.

Skyrim also evened out some of the weaker points of Oblivion. Two-handed fighting is now a feasible option and magic users can dual-wield spells, making for some interesting combos. Blocking is more active now than it was in the past, and you no longer have to maintain your equipment. Instead you get to upgrade it, both in a physical sense (reinforcing armor and sharpening weapons) and by magical enchantment. All of this is available from the very beginning of the game. As you progress, you can even begin to make your own equipment that's better than the stuff you find in the game, as well as make a lot of money.

You can also find many companions to join you. They are actually very helpful and are surprisingly intelligent. They follow you through complicated paths and try to go exactly where you went, meaning they don't set off traps too often. While they are hard to kill, they are not quite immortal, so use caution especially if you like to toss spells around. The traps were reworked and improved. Repurposed areas like camps and converted caves tend to have jury-rigged bear traps and falling rocks, while carefully constructed tombs have concealed pressure plates and poisoned spikes.

Fighting large creatures like dragons and giants can be frantic and highly challenging, but highly rewarding. The new dragon shouts are words of power in the dragon language. In Skyrim, dragons don't breath fire, they just say the word fire and it appears. These dragon shouts are a very cool way to add variety as well as some abilities to characters that did not focus on magic. Some of the abilities are not as useful as others, and higher level enemies will often ignore them entirely. Other shouts seem overly powerful, such as the ones that freeze enemies solid or summon storms and friendly dragons.

The physics are better, but still have some issues. Carrying and moving objects is still difficult, and dead bodies not only ragdoll

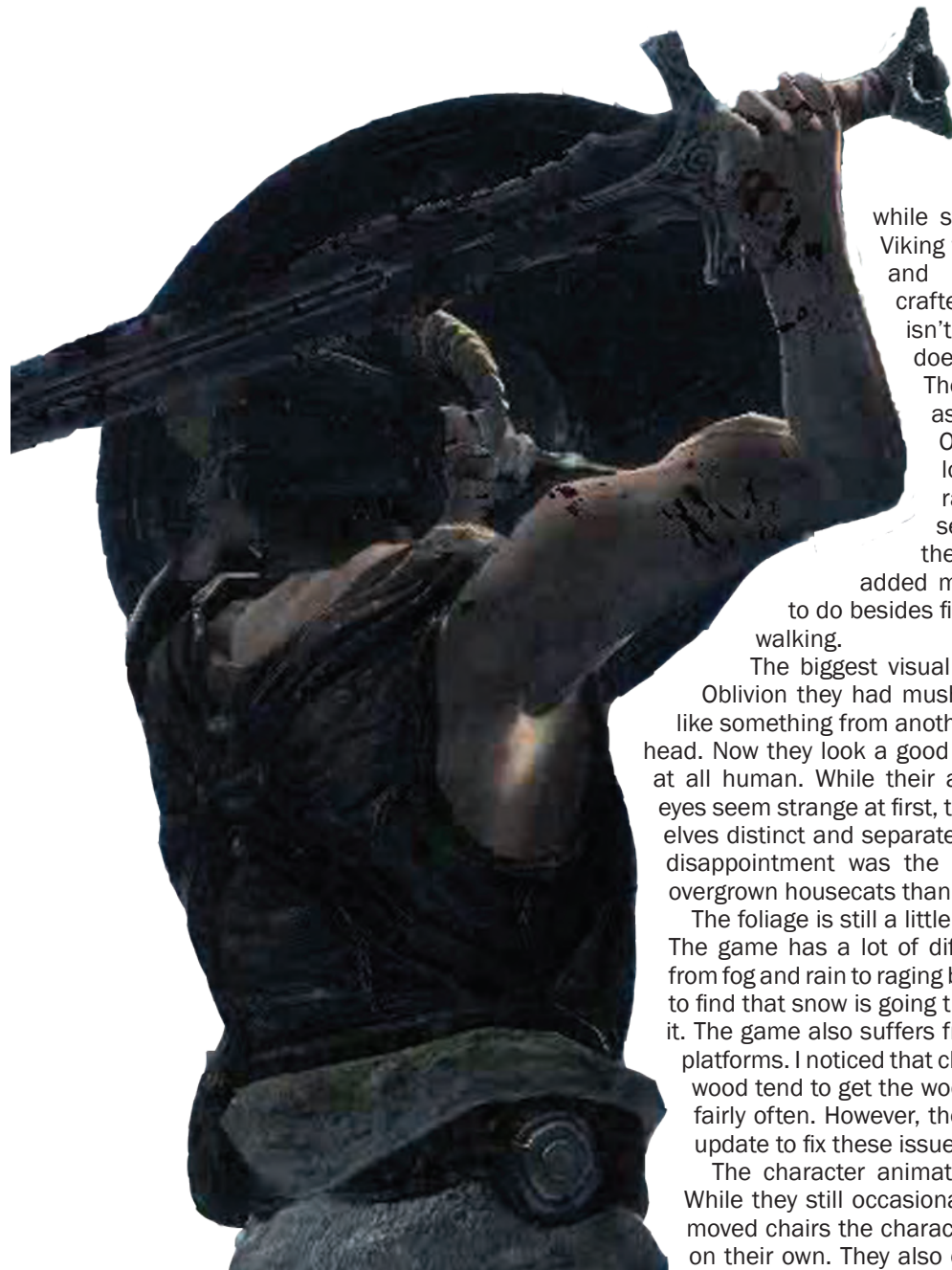
but become weightless, meaning if they get hit by an arrow or spell they will go flying across the room. You can also put buckets on people's heads with some practice. In theory, this makes it so they can't see you taking their things.

Story 10/10

Where Skyrim really shines is in the narrative. The main quest line weaves a long and rich story that intersects many other side-stories. The story is very long, without pulling too many of the "your princess is in another castle" crap. Unlike Oblivion, you won't be chasing the same one or two things as they're stolen, moved and lost every time you turn around. They also seem to try to avoid the "you must prove yourself" tasks; instead the characters start to realize you do actually seem to know what you're doing and move on from there. The story also seems to have a much better sense of perspective. In Oblivion you were dabbling in world politics, repelling demonic invasions and fighting mysterious cults. This never really felt as epic as you thought it would. In Skyrim, you fight resurrected dragons, travel through time and unravel ancient conspiracies. The difference is that in Skyrim this actually feels like the world is in danger, your actions will determine the outcome and when you succeed it feels like a major accomplishment.

The game also put a lot of effort into the major side stories. Not only do you have the major guilds (thieves, mages, and warriors), but you have The Dark Brotherhood and a civil war in which you can take either side. The civil war even includes battles for, and in, large cities complete with siege weapons. However, you don't see as many soldiers as you would expect. Skyrim also intersects a lot of the side quest, leading to different versions of the same quest each time you play. The game uses hundreds of characters, most with distinct names and stories.

If you just do the main story, you may finish in about 30 hours. If you want to join (or destroy) the guilds, join the civil war or hunt for treasure it can be a couple hundred hours before you're finished with all the side stuff. This game provides an excellent value for your money just in the first time you play it. Given all the different possibilities in character design and how you can play you can easily forget you ever wanted to play any other game. You can also pretty much forget about sleeping. Ever.



Dear Ninja,

I'm a freshman and I was really excited about picking my classes on my own. I looked through my checklist and planned out the next few semesters, so I could take it easy. Everything looked great until one of my friends revealed that are some classes that are only offered in the spring or fall, and there are some that are only offered every other year. How can I find out what classes those are?

Confused about Classes

Dear Confused,

Normally, your advisor will warn you when the classes are available and you have met the requirements to take them. My advisor, the shadow demon Namruk, made sure that I knew about the MED341 Advanced Falcon Training class, which is only offered in the fall of the year 1530. If you want to continue in your quest to be an overachiever, you can look up the classes in your Academic Catalogue, which is the book you get during orientation (not the little notebook agenda one. Seriously, who uses those?). You can also find the Academic Catalogue on the MU website. If you have any trouble finding everything, well...you should've got a falcon.



Gab's Gab

Student opinions on campus conflicts.

Should Methodist University Remain a Dry Campus?

Yes

"Methodist should be a dry campus because the school was founded on Christian principles and should remain that way. Applicants know when they apply that this is a dry campus, so if they don't like it, they should not attend. When they submit their applications and come to study on this campus, it should imply that they have accepted this rule, and therefore they should follow it."

-Indya Addison (Freshman)

"College is a learning environment not a place to be partying. There is nothing wrong with having a good time, just not here on campus drinking."

-Joshua McLaurin (Junior)

No

"Students eligible (21 years or older) drink and consume alcohol regularly on the weekends. I don't see what the problem is."

-Andrew Womble (Sophomore)

"We want freedom and we want to be able to party like every other school. They [Staff] know that we drink already. (I don't drink though)."

-Giovanni McClain (Freshman)

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Join Click-til-A Ramsay Street on the campus of Methodist University for Dinner and a Moozic!

Bens Upstairs

Event starts at 8:00 p.m.

September 28 ★ October 30 ★ November 9



Click-til-A Ramsay Street is hosting EXCLUSIVE after hours events for Methodist University this Fall. Only the first 200 are allowed entry.

Click-til-A Ramsay Street

Event starts at 10:00 p.m.

September 30 ★ December 7

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