

Student works to extinguish bad habits

by Lawson Reilly

The air at Texas A&M was a little cleaner Nov. 19. That day smokers across the nation, either on their own or with their friends' encouragement, extinguished their cigarettes, cigars and pipes and went cold turkey.

Smokers were asked to stop smoking for a whole day during the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout, but not everyone made it.

One of Debra Doyle's fellow office workers in the Center for Drug Prevention and Education in A.P. Beutel Health Center gave cold turkey a valiant try.

"Actually, he made it till five o'clock and he considered that the end of the day," Doyle says.

Doyle, a graduate student in counseling psychology, helped bring the Great American Smokeout to A&M last year. She came up with the idea working as a graduate assistant at the new drug prevention center in the fall.

"We'd just gotten off the ground and were thinking of new projects to do," she says.

Doyle says the Smokeout's close relation to the center's work was only part of the reason she decided to pursue the project.

"I'm allergic to cigarette smoke, so it's kind of a personal thing," she says.

After the Student Affairs office approved her suggestion, Doyle called the American Cancer Society. The organization gave her the materials she needed to promote the Smokeout on campus.

Working with Alpha Phi Omega members, the drug center passed out smoker survival kits in the MSC the day of the Smokeout. The American Cancer Society also gave the center T-shirts and buttons with the logo, "Kiss me, I don't smoke," to pass out.

Almost all the handouts were gone at the end of the day, Doyle says.

"Certainly not everyone quits that day, but maybe one or two do," she says. "The purpose of it is to show smokers that if they can make it through one day, then maybe they can make it another."

When a smoker quits, Doyle says, that's great. But she believes it's much better to never start in the first place.

Doyle, who came to A&M in August from the University of Texas at San Antonio, says fewer students smoke today than in years past. From elementary school on, younger people have been warned of the hazards of smoking, she says. And they have grown up during the health boom, she says, a time when smoking does not make a teenager more socially acceptable.

"I think once people start smoking it kind of overpowers them," she says.

But, with willpower, people can kick the habit. Doyle knows one person who managed to quit smoking for good, thanks to the Smokeout.

"It was hard for them, very hard," she says.

Next year Doyle hopes to coordinate the center's efforts to promote the Smokeout with those of other campus organizations. She says cooperation could make the Smokeout even more successful.

"The more you know about what you're doing the more effective you are at it," she says.

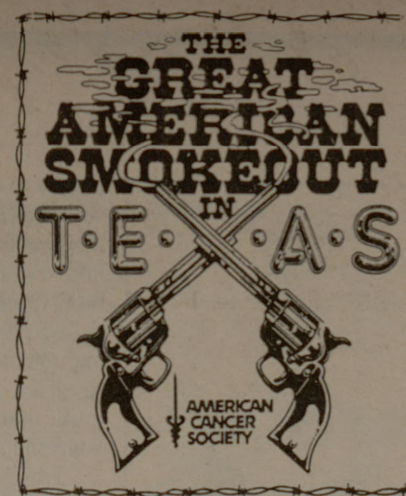
Meanwhile, Doyle concentrates on her classes and her job at the center. Besides giving presentations to schools and organizations, the Center for Drug Prevention and Education offers discipline referral classes to

students who have drug or alcohol related problems, she says.

Doyle's work at the center is in the same line as her field of study, although family and group therapy interests her most. She wants to counsel adult children of alcoholics, after she gets her doctorate degree — she enjoys an academic setting.

As is appropriate for someone who plans on making a career out of helping people with their problems, Doyle is glad her role in the Smokeout gave her a chance to help others.

"It's something constructive," she says, shrugging. "I guess the more productive we are, the more results we see."



aggruenizing answers

Do you think smoking should be banned?

by Lawson Reilly

Next fall, voyeurs may be the only ones needing to bring a cigarette lighter to yell practice. And concertgoers at G. Rollie White Coliseum or DeWare Field House may only need their lighters for a show of silent applause.

The Texas A&M Faculty Senate has passed a resolution and sent it to President Frank E. Vandiver calling for a smoke-free campus. If Vandiver approves the bill, smoking will be banned in all buildings on campus, including dorms, seating areas in Kyle Field and Olsen Field.

The resolution is aimed at, among other things, removing the hazard exhaled smoke poses to non-smokers, students and faculty alike. However, students weren't by asked initially about their feelings on a possible ban.

Several students, obviously non-smokers, reacted violently when confronted with the concept of smoking.

Junior secondary education major Robin Reinarts clutched her neck, thrashed her head and made odd gargling noises to describe her reaction when she walks by a smoker. She is allergic to smoke.

Reinarts supports a campus-wide ban on smoking "since it's banned everywhere else." She says in most places non-smokers can leave if someone nearby is smoking. At A&M, however, she says the situation is different.

"We have no choice," she says. "We have to be here."

Sophomore physical therapy major Belinda Bernal and her friend Andria Goldwire vigorously nodded and laughed when questioned.

"Yes. Definitely. Smoking should be banned," Goldwire, a senior journalism major, says. "I think it should be banned from inside buildings because there's not enough

circulation. Smoke travels, and that stuff is irritating."

Doug Carter, a freshman civil engineering major, agrees with Goldwire. Smoking, he says, should be done outside, "where not everyone is breathing the same air."

Freshman biomedical science major Lisa Pawloski says smokers should consider the rights of other people. She subscribes to the smoking outside plan.

"I don't think it's fair to hurt the lungs of other people," she says. "I think smoking should be banned inside, in the buildings on campus."

Although Mike Becnel, a sophomore pre-veterinary major, expressed no contempt for *them*, he relegates smokers outside as well.

"Because it's just like we're smoking when they're smoking," he says.

Other students seem more sympathetic to smokers' rights.

"I'm not a smoker," freshman business major Jay Reeder says. "I believe there should be certain places for it, but not totally banned."

Terry King, sophomore environmental design major, feels the same way.

"I really don't like it," he says. "But no, I don't think you can ban it altogether," he says.

Junior political science major Edward Williams agreed that a complete ban is not necessary. The former cigarette smoker says smoking should be allowed in designated areas within buildings.

"You can protect the rights of non-smokers, but you can't infringe upon the rights of smokers," he says.

Lynn Lane speaks against a complete smoking ban on campus.

"You should be able to do what you want," the junior landscape architecture major says.

However, Lane says no smoking rules in buildings isn't unreasonable.

Freshman industrial distribution major Tracy Andrews says, as a former smoker, she knows both sides of the issue. Only allowing smoking outside would create a litter problem, she says.

"People don't care where they throw their cigarette butts," she says. "There should be designated areas, definitely, and proper disposal places."

Junior architecture major Elizabeth Shelton smokes, but respects the rights of non-smokers.

"I think people who don't smoke have the right to not be smoked out," she says.

Any bans should be limited to classroom buildings or laboratories, she says, but not public facilities like the MSC.

"I don't see how a campus-wide banning would be feasible anyway," she said.

Bobby Britton, a sophomore aerospace engineering major, says he cannot support a smoking ban.

"I'd have to say no, since it's legal to do it," he says. "Personally, I don't care for it (smoking)."

Freshman psychology major Karen Bell says she opposes a smoking ban because smoking isn't a problem on campus.

"Almost no one ever smokes on campus anyway," she says. "And no one smokes in buildings."

Pawloski also seems to think the smoking hazard on campus is exaggerated.

"Probably more people don't smoke than do," she points out.

Wade Stubblefield, a senior accounting major, suggests a compromise to nip the smoker-non-smoker war at A&M in the butt.

"I think we should trade smoking for alcohol," he says.