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# American Barbershop



On a slow Saturday afternoon at the Northgate Barbershop, Jim Perkins watches television while Cecil Perkins tends to a customer.

## Simple formula keeps two shops alive in Aggieland

By Jennifer Gressett

THE BATTALION

With the help of a few local barbers and the linger of town talk in the air, the vanishing American barbershop has managed to stay alive in Aggieland.



Cecil Krueger (left), who has been cutting hair at Northgate Barbershop for seven years, cracks a smile after putting on the final touches of Brandon Lo Porto's haircut. Lo Porto is a freshman aerospace engineering major from Fairtype, Ala.

"There was a time when being a barber was a respected profession," said Ray Thomas, owner of both Southgate and Northgate barbershops. Although they primarily cut hair, Thomas said they were often dentists and doctors as well.

In fact, the barber's pole originated when bloodletting was a duty in barbershops. While the red and blue stripes stood for the blood and veins, the white stood for the bandages which bound them afterward, Thomas said.

Thomas, a junior industrial distribution major, took over the business two years ago when his grandfather Troy Causey retired from 50 years of being a barber.

While barbershops were big business 50 years ago, Thomas said that they're "not real high tech" today. That seems to be just fine with Southgate barber Chuy Espinoza, who formerly styled hair in beauty salons.

"Barbershops are more interesting," Espinoza said. "They're quicker, I meet more people and I have more fun."

Among the most frequent customers seem to be members of the Aggie Corps of Cadets, who



Jim Perkins, who has been cutting hair at Northgate Barbershop for a little more than a year, runs the razor across the top of a patron's head.

make up 90 percent of their business. In fact, most of the Aggies get a new trim every two weeks, Espinoza said.

During a recent trim on his "skunk stripe," freshman cadet Michael Voinis said he goes to the local barbers because the beauty salons "don't do it right."

Besides that, barbershops seem to have an atmosphere all their own. Once crowded with low characters telling tales of scandal and revenge, Espinoza said in today's barbershops most of the talk is of sports.

But whether you're up for a trim or you're simply looking for a new friend, barbers all over town are ready to give you a taste of the "good old days."

Of course, the bleeding and bandages are long gone, but the spirit of the American barbershop is still alive in the heart of Aggieland.

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