

O, our Tannenbaum plant

Finals stress, pressure can humbug anyone's holiday spirit

I blinked my eyes. Surely he had not said what I thought he had said. Surely my ears must be deceiving me.

Could he... did he? "I like y'all's new plant." Hmmm. Our "new plant?" I shot my friend a dirty look and quickly explained that our "new plant" was a Christmas tree. Naked, small, and potted it might be - it is still a CHRISTMAS TREE.

My roommate paid the whopping sum of \$18 for it, and we are very proud of it and defensive over comments on the little guy. She made a trip to Wal-Mart and bought all the microscopic decorations she could find, and we merrily decked it with beads, lights and even a teenie topper. My warm fuzzy pre-Christmas feelings did not last for long.

By the beginning of this week, I did not want to hear, see, or smell anything dealing with Christmas, good feelings or any of that razmatazz. I was busy gathering my study materials together for finals and feeling downright Scroogey. After getting a few "Bah, humbugs" out of my system, I decided to take the least frustrating way out and treat myself to a nap. That's when it happened...

Wind. Blow, blow, snow, snow. Then a frazzled looking ghost entered. (Well, what did I expect? Ghost pay isn't great, you know).

COME WITH ME - I AM THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST.

Mist. Suddenly, I was walking in the corridors of my old elementary school, passing tikes of all sizes. A feeling of excitement and anticipation hung in the air. The ghost grabbed my arm with his clammy, gray hands and led me into the school auditorium.

It was time for the annual Christmas program. I watched in amusement as the wrinkled choir director's arms jiggled up and down as she led the choir through a rousing Christmas medley.

Then, after several poetry readings and speeches, the ghost whisked me to another destination - my old high school. Oh, glorious days of high school. I wore one of those annoying Christmas bells around my neck and a fur-trimmed Santa hat. During lunch, I studied for my "finals." Then, at the end of the day, I exchanged gifts with my friends (as if I

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Columnist



was not going to see them over the Christmas break). Several hugs later, I headed out to my car.

Wind. Blow, blow, snow, snow. Another frazzled looking ghost entered.

COME WITH ME - I AM THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE.

Mist. Suddenly, I saw myself crying over my meal of Kibbles and Bits as my kids begged me for more toaster crumbs. My ugly, shapeless spouse grinned at me, and our donated eight track player droned out scratchy Christmas tunes.

A yellowed Scantron sheet hung on the wall. Under closer inspection, I saw that it was a certain exam from my sophomore year in college. Had I scored an extra tenth of a point, I would have gotten into that certain grad school and not have been eating dog food and toaster crumbs. But, no! I watched myself bite into another handful of my Kibbles and Bits.

Wind. Blow, blow, snow, snow. The last frazzled looking ghost entered.

COME WITH ME. I AM THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

Mist. Suddenly, I saw myself now. I was gathering my finals survival pack: Maalox for the queasy moments of finals anxiety, coffee and other caffeine-laden beverages, a box of Kleenex for stressful moments, and most importantly - a Bible for those late night prayer sessions. My head was buried in a book, and I suddenly shouted, "Bah, humbug!" and ripped out the Christmas lights. I was not a pretty sight.

Mist. This was my experience. Who knows ... maybe this story is familiar to you, too. Maybe you were feeling warm fuzzies, let the finals frenzy get to you, and turned a little Scroogey, as well.

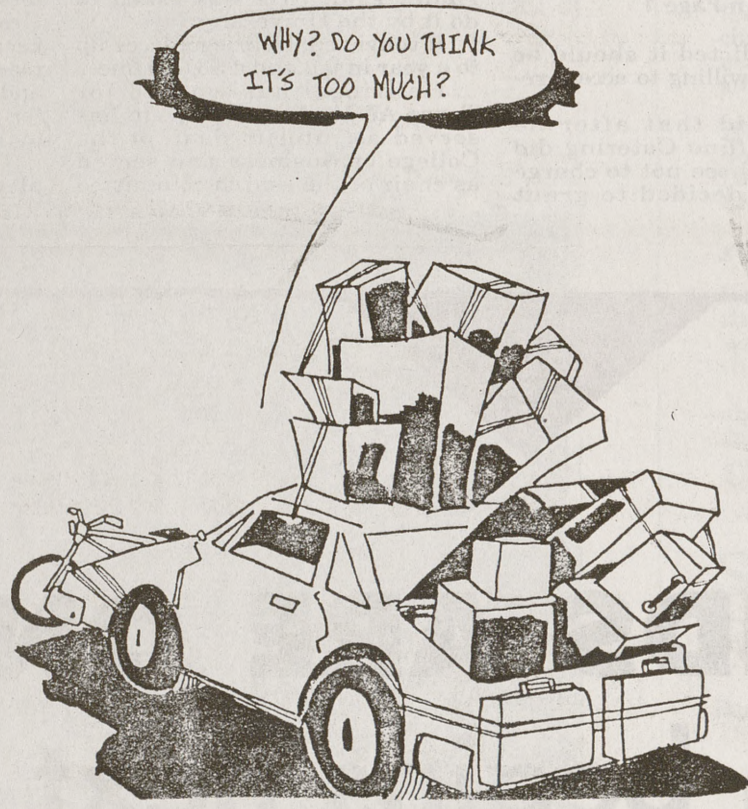
If so, let my experience be an example to you before the frazzled ghosts knock on your door. If you are praying to that Grade-Curve God, get off your knees and dare to crack the book you haven't touched all semester.

If you pass a person who shouts an early Merry Christmas at you, fight your urge to curse them out and give a "Merry Christmas" back.

Who cares if it's fake - the important thing is that you are making progress, Scrooge. Finally, if you see a small, potted, pointy "plant" that wasn't there before - assume that it is a Christmas tree.

"I like y'all's new plant." ... Men!

Aja Henderson is a sophomore finance major



Drinking age limits don't match alcohol responsibility

Prohibition was called a "noble experiment" by President Hoover. Later, when prohibition was repealed, President Roosevelt said the experiment had failed. But that failed experiment still applies to legal adults under the age of 21.

When President Reagan mandated a legal drinking age of 21, underage drinkers grudgingly accepted the fact. Well, except perhaps in Louisiana. Everyone thought it would slow teenage drinking trends and have an impact on crime rates, especially in the area of drinking and driving.

I recently researched the drinking age for an English paper. I expected to find tons of information showing how necessary it was to have the drinking age set at 21.

The studies I found surprised me. Not only do underage drinkers break the law, they actually drink more than they did before the change. They are also drinking more in uncontrolled locations - places where service can't be stopped and rides can't be arranged when someone drinks too much. These trends begin because of something called the Reactance Theory. Put simply, if you tell someone not to

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Columnist



do something, they will do it more often.

This makes sense. I see it all the time in my two young nieces. I see it all the time in friends, too. Dennis J. Reardon, coordinator of the Center for Drug Prevention and Education, said college students have trouble being forbidden to drink when they have just received new freedom.

Reardon said freshmen have the biggest problem with alcohol because they have no one looking after them for the first time. He said a girl is most likely to be raped between the first day of class and Thanksgiving and that most of these instances involve drinking.

Although the law has made underage students drink on fewer days, it has not affected their overall drinking rates. This means that students are drinking more at one time than drinkers over 21.

"That's the very kind of drinking that promotes alcoholism and alcohol problems in young adults," Reardon said.

He also said this kind of drinking leads to liver damage, but points out that the liver is generally not able to filter alcohol efficiently until age 25. He also said the law has saved 7,000 to 10,000 lives from traffic fatalities. But some studies say these statistics are wrong and that DWI rates have increased for underage drinkers.

Even if drunk driving accidents have decreased since the drinking age was changed, the reason for

this is unclear. It could be the influence of increased awareness and education about drinking and driving. It is no longer socially acceptable to drink and drive, and the law had nothing to do with this new social norm.

We have to give credit to MADD (Mothers Against Drunken Driving) and SADD (Students Against Drunken Driving) and other groups that have worked hard and have even influenced beer companies to promote responsible drinking. They need stronger laws against drinking and driving to back them up, but having an age limit does nothing to aid their cause.

Reardon said programs promoting responsible drinking are more effective than the drinking age law. He told a story about a Japanese foreign exchange student who was invited to join her host family in their hot tub. She joined them - naked. The family explained that this was not normal for them,

and she told her hosts about bathing houses in Japan where families go to bathe together. The family thought this was amazing and asked if there ever were problems with incidents of sex at these bathing houses. The girl simply asked, "What does bathing have to do with sex?"

What does a minimum drinking age have to do with drinking responsibly? It is not as if a magic clock ticks midnight on your twenty-first birthday and makes you responsible enough to drink.

All the problems with alcohol can be addressed without a minimum drinking age law. Once you are a legal adult there should be no reason for the law to forbid you from drinking.

The legal drinking ages were reduced during the Vietnam War because 18-year-olds. Since they were old enough to vote, be drafted, fight and die, they should be allowed to drink as well. The government still reserves the right to draft us, but we no longer have the option to drink if we are under 21.

Unfortunately, the idea of lowering the drinking age has no advocate. No politician in their right mind wants to be labeled pro-drunk. So, underage drinkers will continue to drink and the real problems still are not addressed. The noble experiment continues with as little success as ever.

Michael Landauer is a sophomore journalism major



Aggie spirit sacrificed by graduation ticket selling

Hey, Ags. I got a little story for ya. An Ag named Kristi was graduating in

December. She was very excited and told all of her friends and family members. To surprise her, most of her family decided to come to College Station for the ceremony. Well Ags, Kristi knew she would need more than six tickets if all of her family was coming to the ceremony, so she advertised around campus to get extra tickets from other Ags that weren't using all of theirs. She even called a few numbers from advertisements she saw on bulletin boards. Every person she spoke with wanted \$20 or \$30 for their extra graduation tickets, much to her shock and disappointment.

Ags, this story is true. I will be gradu-

ating on Dec. 16 after four wonderful years here at Aggieland. I have come to love A&M, the Aggie spirit and camaraderie. Why are true Ags selling their extra graduation tickets when they didn't pay for them in the first place?

I would think that they would, out of Aggie spirit, help out another Ag in need. I would like to suggest to those Ags who are not planning to walk, give their extra tickets to those of us who need them - not sell them for a profit and take advantage of other Ags.

Alix Rogstad
Class of '94

Two-percenter steals sandwich board sign

Sometime during the week of Nov. 14, the Hispanic Business Student Association's sandwich board was stolen from the entrance of the Blocker Building. This board was used to let our members know when and where upcoming events were taking place. Because some 2-percenter with no sense of integrity stole our board, we are going to invest more time and money into making another board. Our only hope is

that whoever did this leaves Texas A&M soon so that they don't hurt any one else at this world-class University.

Mike Slabic & Xavier Villarreal
Class of '95

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PEARL HARBOR DAY

Remember sacrifices of our predecessors

On December 7, 1941, the world changed forever. American men, mercifully attacked, were drowned in coffins of iron. The Axis powers had declared war on the rest of humanity. America was finally forced to respond to its greatest challenge since the Civil War. She delivered.

Many people attempt to deflate the heroism of the war, saying it was all propaganda, that America was no better than its opponents. Some criticize "how we dropped the bomb unjustifiably," how we were as bloodthirsty as the rest.

The only answers our ancestors leave us is that they were as scared and confused as people have always been and, despite this, they did what they could to make the world right. These truths deserve their due credit - That America did not utterly destroy its opponents in a fit of vengeance, but helped them achieve economic and political stability; that we rarely hold it over our Allies that we came to their aid when needed. I have never had the honor of visiting the water-filled ships at Pearl Har-

bor, but I have been to Arlington Cemetery. When I stared across the greenest field on earth, white stones placed in perfect order, I was forced to think whether all those Americans should have died simply for my freedom. It forced me to evaluate my worth, to make me consider that I had to be more than just a taker, that I have to give back as well.

Fate, so many years ago, made the decision for some that they would no longer be allowed to give to the world whatever they had to donate, that men and women of Asian, African, European and Native American descent died under Old Glory, forfeiting their right to see our country as a place where all people are truly free.

That is what we should all remember today - some people lost their lives to insure a secure and free future for those who survived and followed.

—Josef Elchanan

