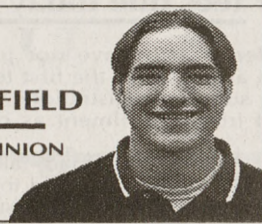




Inconveniences worth future benefits

It just goes to show that things do actually change in Aggieland. Northgate, an area known for its historic stores and bars, is undergoing a face lift, which has owners and customers alike in a sort of stupor.

KYLE LITTLEFIELD
ASST. OPINION EDITOR



The first stage of revitalization, which is a project of the City of College Station Development Services Department, has a portion of College Main, from University Drive to the Church Street intersection closed to traffic until approximately August 1.

The closing of the street has left about four feet of sidewalk on each side of the street allowing pedestrian access to the businesses that line the street.

The inconvenience of not being able to park on the street and the fact that the construction is an eyesore to the area, has meant slow days for businesses along the street.

Many are wondering if these inconveniences, which could be fatal to small-business owners, will be worth it in the long run. Will the revitalized Northgate, mean more business? And if it does, will the same shops be around to see it?

The first weeks of summer have business owners speculating what's to come. Many can not conclude if the construction has hurt their business, because the street was blocked off during A&M's interim, a usual slow time for businesses.

Some stores are disappointed because the city has added insult to injury; Baker Hart of Software Exchange claims that his store did not know about the project until a week before the construction began. However, to the city's credit, he did say that three contractors

associated with the project have offered their assistance.

But really, what could they do?

"Well, for one thing," owner of Trade Winds Bead Co. Carol White said, "I am upset that they hit us at the slowest time — the summer."

White wishes the city would establish the businesses over when the project was done.

Todd Traylor, manager of Marooned Records has a different sentiment. "It's really easy to get mad about it, but I'm glad they are doing this in the summer, and not in the fall." Traylor explains that many of the businesses establish their clientele right before the fall semester when students are returning to College Station or arriving for the first time.

If businesses such as the Aggie Cleaners, Sarge's and the Northgate Barbershop set up this repeat clientele, then it can make for a financially successful year. If they don't — which Traylor fears would have happened if the construction occurred in the fall — it could be bad news.

In other words, the nature of the business determines how they are affected. Whereas Northgate Barbershop may not be affected because it has already established relationships with repeat customers, the relatively new businesses may experience a decrease in business.

The main gripe of the businesses affected by the construction is that the city of College Station has not done an adequate job of communicating to potential customers that, yes, they are still open for business.

"The way the construction has blocked off the streets, it looks like we're not open," says Michael Gessner of Aggie Cleaners.

Traylor says that the city did print up some fliers that let the customers know the businesses would be open. The only problem is that in large, bold type it reads, "College Main Closes for Reconstruction," and then further down in the notice, in smaller type, it says that the businesses will remain open.

Bernie Gessner the owner of Aggie Cleaners took the matter into his own hands and printed his own notice, which lists all of the stores lining the closed street and reads in large type, "WE WILL BE OPEN DURING THIS TIME."

However, in the midst of the inconvenience, the stores are trying to remain positive. "As long as they get it done quickly, it won't hurt ... besides, they are re-doing the sidewalks, which will make business better," Hart says.

Even White of Trade Winds Bead Co., could find something positive.

"Having the street closed has forced people to walk by all of the stores, whereas when parking was available, they had the option of parking in front of the store of their choice. Now people walking by will notice all of the business' signs and windows which may help business," she said.

It is important to remember that the city should not be perceived as the "bad guy" in this ordeal. Revitalization, while it may inconvenience customers and business owners for a while, will most likely increase business and beautify the area.

The positive attitudes of the businesses should be commended. Hopefully, when Northgate's revitalization is complete, business will be better, and all of the same businesses will be there to see it.

Kyle Littlefield is a senior journalism major.

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EDITORIAL

IT'S ABOUT TIME

Historic Northgate receives a much-needed face lift.

Last night the City of College Station presented the conclusions of a study concerning the first step for revitalizing the Northgate area. The city currently is taking serious steps to give this historic area of College Station a series of much-needed face lifts. Regardless of the need for such renovations, officials should ensure that enacting the project does not prove to be too detrimental to area businesses.

Currently, reconstruction is under way on the strip of College Main extending from University Drive to Church Street. The project has closed the road to all automotive traffic and has eliminated all parallel parking in front of College Main businesses. This loss of traffic and adequate parking has created problems for many Northgate establishments.

Although College Main must be closed in order to replace the gas and water lines, the construction obviously is affecting business. The city should ensure the project is completed on or before the Aug. 1 deadline, for many of the

businesses depend heavily on the traffic of returning students.

Also, the appearance of the area is in much need of improvement. In fact, when former President George Bush visits College Station, his hosts avoid Northgate because it is such an eyesore. Businesses continue to survive in this dynamic area, despite its run-down appearance. However, Northgate could withstand many improvements, and the city should continue to promote its renovation.

Almost as old as the University itself, Northgate has played host to a variety of businesses, from a theater to a pornography store to a coffee house. Despite all of the changes that Northgate has witnessed, however, the condition and appearance of the area have steadily declined over the years.

It is now time to give Northgate a face-lift — to give the area even more character and appeal. In the process, though, the city should be careful not to damage what is already there.



Spectacle reflects on University

I was dining with my husband and our two sons last week in a local restaurant when I had the displeasure of running into one of our A&M former students. We were sitting at a table next to a recently-graduated Aggie who was an embarrassment to himself and our University.

This individual obviously felt that it was necessary to fill his vocabulary with every vulgar word in our language to prove that he was a real man.

In order to not make a scene, our family asked the waitress to move us to another table so that our children would not be subjected to this Aggie's form of air pollution.

MAIL CALL

After we moved, the waitress told us that he had sworn at her earlier.

As Aggies, we are visible bunch. As we wear our A&M embossed T-shirts, baseball hats and shorts, we are walking advertisements for our University. With that in mind, we should represent our University and ourselves in a respectable manner.

I know that the Aggie Code does not say, "... Lie, Cheat or Curse," but in a manner of speaking it does.

I am not standing on a pulpit condemning everyone who uses a few embellishing words on occasion.

Lord knows I do it, too. However, there is a time and place for everything, and using foul language in a public setting — or even worse, around children — is inexcusable.

The way we present ourselves does reflect on us all. I was embarrassed for us all as I had to explain to my sons that although this person wore the A&M insignia, he really had no idea what being an Aggie is all about.

Think about it. When you are in a public place where there are little Aggies present, please think about how they see you.

What we do and say will lead them by example. Let's make it the right example.

*Pamela McCown
Class of '93*

New gun law will help, not hinder

I am writing to express my concern about Elizabeth Preston's May 29 column. I resent her implication that any law-abiding person who wishes to defend himself or herself against crime is an "irate gun-carrier" who poses a threat to society.

Preston states that "the people who want to carry a gun badly enough to go through the application process ... are the

people who need guns the least."

I plan to get a permit as soon as possible. Does that make me a crazed, slobbering fool who will seek out innocent victims for target practice?

With the passage of the law, citizens will be able to carry their firearms for protection without being made to feel like criminals themselves. Real criminals will be deterred by the possibility that any person they approach may be trained and willing to defend himself or herself.

As for the possibility of a "Wild West" atmosphere in which people shoot each other over parking spaces, consider this: the kinds of people who are unstable enough to do such a thing will not be able to pass the extensive training and psychological examination that will be required to have a permit. Such people would likely have criminal records and would be denied permits anyway.

In her column, Preston states that she is concerned "that one or two people will lose their lives prematurely." What about the hundreds of defenseless

people who lose their lives prematurely every day at the hands of criminals?

The concealed weapon law gives citizens a chance to balance the odds and fight back. Gun-control lobbyists have rallied around the slogan, "If gun control saves one life, it will be worth it." But if my gun saves my life, isn't that worth it also?

*Erika Prater
Class of '95*

Holiday should be given coverage

I would like to commend The Battalion on another well-done job.

On one of our nation's most important holidays, The Battalion chose to honor those people who have spilled their blood and given their lives so that Americans can be free, with a two-inch by two-inch paragraph in the News Brief section in the corner of page two. No front-page glitz and no bold-faced headlines.

I am referring to the lack of coverage of any type of Memorial Day services in the May 29 Bat-

talion. On page seven of this same issue, The Battalion editorial column stated that, "The Battalion's mission is to serve its readership by providing the most accurate, relevant, and timely information as possible."

I believe a school such as Texas A&M, one that is so rich in a tradition and history of serving its country in both peace and times of war, does indeed find the observance of Memorial Day relevant.

It is the Battalion's responsibility to see that it prints those subjects and issues that are relevant to Aggies.

The Battalion should not let a leftist stance or what is considered politically correct, stand in the way of printing what is important.

Millions of people, both military and civilian, gave the ultimate sacrifice during World War II. Because of their valiant service, many brave people did not come home to their families and friends.

I firmly believe and sincerely hope that these sacrifices will never be forgotten or taken for granted.

*Bryan A. Hill
Class of '95*

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