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THE BATTALION

TUESDAY April 2, 1996

OPINION The Smoking Gun

Texas is justified in Tobacco industry should face the truth ar Lake Presiden aples said the succe structure will depen the person select or/president can b tobacco lawsuit nterests of both th us and the satellites

states will sure-

ly follow. Each

can people suf-

\$100 billion in

losses because of

fer more than

rising health

care expenses.

higher insur-

ance premiums and premature

The tobacco industry por-

matter of choice. However, the

industry systematically targets

evidence now shows that the

children with advertisements

and promotions to addict them

to cigarettes before they are old

It is no accident that Joe Camel

is as widely known to most kids

Eighty-two percent of adult

make adult choices, it was literal-

ly too late. The companies satu-

rate stores near public schools

with cigarette promotions, and

ban vending machine sales be-

most kids purchase cigarettes.

The tobacco industry will

deny, as it has for decades, that it

markets its products to children.

cause they know that is how

they continue to resist efforts to

smokers began as children, and

by the time they were able to

enough to make adult choices.

as Mickey Mouse.

trays use of its products as a

deaths caused by smoking.

year, the Ameri

Tost Texans know Lthat using tobacco is a dan erous practice But not all Texans know about the dangerous and illegal prac

gislature establishe o industry ystem in 1977, er UH was found ars after it became ol. Growing deman in campus led to the of satellites in the fall, the four universion ore than 1,200 facult nd 47,000 students.

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and-a-half years ag sments, he said, b lete, so we really do at's why the Corps

ed within a structu y will not know if are released. He sa is not severe enor

to Riverside Campu s and staff need to ta hey stay behind area pment operations.

nediate dangers tot

the contamination. orkshops T retreat

moke, that's their business. But when the tobacco industry blatantly violates Texas laws, that's MOSAIC deals with our business attitudes, progres

On March 28, Texas filed suit against the tobacco industry to y new program doe recover more than \$4 billion in all, (the facilitators Medicaid costs used since 1980 ill grow as people at to treat tobacco-related illnesses workshops and set in Texas. Six states have already putting blame on peo filed similar suits, and more allowing them to tal

DAN MORALES GUEST COLUMNIST

tices of the tobac The truth is tobacco compa-

nies have violated state and federal laws for so many years that hese violations have become their standard operating proce dures. The truth is the tobacco industry has deliberately marketed its products to our children. The truth is that for 40 years, the

ndustry has consistently and deliberately lied to its customers and to the general public. In the eyes of the law, those ies are no different than the ies necessary to conduct any ilegal activity. The state of

exas has amassed evidence that the tobacco industry has engaged in racketeering and nspiracy for decades soil on the Riversi These illegal activities have reated serious consequences for Texans, whether they smoke or not. Each year, more than

25,000 Texans die from tobaccoelated causes. And each year nose results and to d lexas taxpayers spend hundreds of millions of dollars to care for friends and relatives who are sick and dying because they use tobacco.

overwhelming majority of these

new customers are our children.

try has denied responsibility for

the harm its products cause.

They point out that some con-

sumers freely choose to use to-

bacco. But freedom of choice is

that no individual, no company

and no industry is above the law.

not at issue. The real issue is

If Texas adults choose to

For decades the tobacco indus-

The companies will deny they conspired to defraud. But these denials are no longer credible. The purveyors of smoking death Each year, the tobacco indusnow hold a smoking gun. Literal try must find 25,000 new Texans ly thousands of pages of previous to replace those who died from ly concealed industry information have been made public. using their products, and the

Those documents are powerful evidence. The evidence shows that tobacco companies suppressed research to make safer cigarettes. They suppressed knowledge that nicotine is highly addictive. And they publicly denied that nicotine is addictive when their own records show they know differently.

Tobacco executives swore under oath to Congress that they never manipulated nicotine levels. But we know that one company developed strains of tobac co with double the nicotine yield

The evidence will show that the time has come for these big tobacco companies to pay us back for their ill-gotten gains.

> Dan Morales is the Texas Attorney General

f desperate people do des-perate things, don't be surprised by anything the tobacco industry may do in the near future. If its recent actions are representative of their desperation, we should all be watching our backs (and our lungs).

The war between the tobacco industry and anti-smoking proponents has been heating up in recent weeks. Mounting evidence against the industry has prompted a federal lawsuit by six states (and more the way).

neral Dan Morales is Texas A ney nost recent Tobacco Instithe target of tute (the lobbying firm of the major tobacco companies) sault. Last Thursday, on behalf of the state of Texas, Morales filed a federal lawsuit against the tobacco industry.

Morales hopes to recover the \$4 billion that Texas taxpayers have spent on Medic aid for persons with tobacco-related illness-es. Morales has said there is sufficient evidence to prove that the tobacco industry has been lying to citizens since the 1950s about the harmful effects of abusing tobacco.

Commissioned by the tobacco industry, Public Opinion Strategies of Alexandria, Va., conducted a survey of 800 Texans. The purpose of the poll was to determine how certain unsubstantiated claims about Morales would affect a possible re-election bid. The results were delivered to Morales in an attempt to remind him of the industry's political clout and to try and convince him that a well-funded candidate could pose a serious threat to a re-election bid. Despite the threat, Morales went ahead with the lawsuit.

According to Morales, "Thousands of pages of previously concealed industry information have been made public." Contained in these documents is evidence suggesting that tobacco companies have kept quiet about knowledge they have proving that nicotine is ex-

tremely addictive. Also, tobacco companies



South America, and shipped the product back to the United States for processing. Most startling of all, companies suppressed their own research that would have en-

Tobacco industry representatives have always claimed publicly that nicotine is not addictive and that tobacco companies have not deliberately manipulated the amount of nicotine in their cigarettes. America is not convinced. Perhaps it is the 400,000 people who die from smoking every year that causes us to mistrust the testimony of industry executives. According to Morales, 25,000 of those who die are Texans.

enough, three former employees of the largest tobacco company, Phillip Morris, have submitted testimony and affidavits to the FDA contradicting industry representatives' sworn testimony. According to the Wall Street Journal, the former employees say that Phillip Morris "not only believes it is in the nicotine-delivery business, but deliberately controls nicotine levels in its brands." The new

FDA testimony confirms the

genetically engineered strains of tobacco with unnaturally high nicotine levels, then smuggled the seeds to

As if the number of deaths was not

dar.

document evidence being used by Texas and the six other states suing the industry on behalf of their citizens.

The FDA is set to pass a rule restricting the tobacco industry's advertising aimed at children. Because it is considering the testimonies in its decision, it is required to postpone the rule to hear comments on them. This could push the passage of the rule back until this fall, possibly even after the November elections. President Clinton plans to use the issue in the campaign regardless. The Republican nominee, Bob Dole, opposes the rule.

It is human nature to believe that people are inherently good — that they are innocent until proven guilty." Enough evidence has been mounted, however, to quit giving tobacco companies the benefit of the doubt. They are not in the taste-pleasing cigarette business; they are in the nicotine-

delivery business and they know it. Although smokers are not devoid of all responsibility for their own addictions, they have been victimized by a group of powerful citizens intent on getting rich and staying rich regardless of who suffers.

It is time for Americans to turn the tide against these victimizing companies Smokers should join the fight as well, because they have the most to gain from cigarettes with less nicotine and

the most to lose if they continue not to have the choice.

> Elaine Mejia is a senior political science major

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abled them to manufacture safer cigarettes.

d express their opin tiago said. izations and depart n request general wor workshops on speci

reas. einhart, a MOSAIC r from the Engineer ent Programs Office in order for the pr be successful, peo rceive the need n and take advanta portunity.

is a definite need ograms because A& ires discussion ab s in the student (bod ilty and administrati e," Reinhart said.

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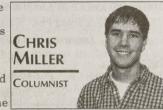
inks and g Necks 10 p.m.



Houston we have a problem — no one cares about the shuttle

Came into The Battalion office to write a column on space Lshuttle apathy. See, I had this theory about how no one cares about the space shuttle program anymore. I sat down with The Dallas Morning News and opened to a story about the recent malunctioning of its cargo doors. The shuttle almost had to make an

emergency landing. But, sadly, as I contemplated my angle and re-viewed the facts of the story, I decided I didn't care at all about what I was writing. It was a labor to press each key on the keyboard as I struggled brough writing a column about the space shuttle Atlantis. I really didn't give a poop about the space shuttle. My theory was if no one died or got hurt in the space shuttle, then who cares at all about what



happened to them in space? And that's when it hit me; I was also a victim of space shuttle apathy.

Think about it. Did anyone even know the space shuttle Atlantis was in space until the cargo doors malfunctioned? That is one clear sign of space shuttle apathy.

I remember the days when my family would huddle around the boob

tube, feeling our American pride well up in our hearts and burst out of our ears in a spectacle of glorious light every time the space shuttle launch was televised. Tears would run down our faces and my dad would declare the day a holiday. I remember the way he would take me aside on those launch days and say: "Son, don't worry about tak ing out the trash today. Today we should revel in the fact that we are Americans and that we can

choose whether we want to take out the trash. And son, the space shuttle is a perfect manifestation of that freedom.

Those glory days are over. Today, space shuttle apathy reigns supreme.

Did anyone even know the space shuttle Atlantis was in space until the cargo doors malfunctioned?

A clear sign of space shuttle apathy is the way the press reports on the shuttle. On the front page of Sunday's Dallas Morning News, a story was run about Russian life expectancy. You see, Russians are dying younger these days and scientists just don't know why. Now that is one issue I really don't care about. But, after perusing

the paper further, I noticed the story about Atlantis and its cargo doors malfunctioning sitting happily unnoticed on page four. Do you want to know the reason why The Dallas Morning News ran Russian life expectancy on page one and the U.S. space shuttle program story on page four? It's because The Dallas Morning News knows all about space shuttle apathy. The press knows that Americans don't care at all about space shuttles anymore.

Dear reader, if you've even made it to this point in the column, I'll bet you care more about space shuttles than I. I have so much space shuttle apathy, I can't even poke a stick at it. I don't even care enough about it to give this column a witty conclusion.

But that's space shuttle apathy for you.

Chris Miller is a sophomore English major

Jimmy Charney Class of '96

Columnists should not bash A&M spirit

I am writing in response to H.L. Baxter's column Tuesday. What is so terrible about having school spirit? What is it about the thousands of people who cheer loudly at football games, mug at Midnight Yell and lose their voic-es at Fish Camp that makes them bad people? Baxter, Aja

Henderson and especially Chris Stidvent seem to have made it their personal mission to bash those who love A&M. Part of their argument may be that they don't feel welcome. Well, if you don't try to incorporate yourself into A&M, you are never going to feel like part of A&M. I also wonder if Stidvent, Baxter or Henderson have ever been enrolled in another university? I have, and as such I can readily justify my enthusiasm for A&M. Remember, all of us came here because we wanted to, and if we wish, we are free to transfer. If one is honestly unhappy here at A&M, then he or she should go somewhere else. Either way you look at it, life is too short or too long to have to deal with a bad situation that can be changed. I am proud to have the opportunity to come here, and I appreciate what this University is giving me — an education and a head start into the real world.

> Christopher D. Scheer Class of '97





about candidates

In the past two weeks, I have heard many people complain about certain student body pres idential candidates, implying that they have proof of severe (even criminal) misconduct. To these and others, I would

like to say the following: If you really believe what you have to say is important, take a stand. Don't just sit around and do nothing. That accomplishes little.

If, on the other hand, you are just blowing hot air, shut up. I

am tired of hearing you complain.

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