

# THE BATTALION OPINION

## Popularity of cigars smokin' competition

Bill Clinton said he didn't inhale. He must have been smoking a cigar — like the rest of society.

Despite the recent anti-tobacco industry movement, those tobacco-wrapped, tobacco-stuffed phallic symbols have somehow remained cool.

People think cigars can't hurt anyone since the smoke isn't inhaled. Of course, puffing still causes throat and tongue and lip gum cancer, but it is considered safe because it doesn't cause lung cancer.

Inhaling cigarettes causes lung cancer. Cigarettes are the enemy. They create those ruddy-looking lungs that nurse show in middle school.

Nobody seems to realize that a cigarette is just a little cigar. Just look at the word. Our society is quick to condemn the cigarette because it doesn't have the historical legacy of the cigar.

The cigar phenomenon began when Shakespeare's contemporary, Sir Francis Drake, first brought them from the Americas. Drake introduced the smoky fad to court, and soon everybody was smoking it. Even Queen Elizabeth checked down a stogie through lips with an inch of makeup.

With the Queen's approval, the cigar became an institution.

Two centuries later, Sigmund Freud explored the sexual connotations of the long, cylindrical cigar. Cigars were an overcompensation for a man's castration anxiety. "It is all about sex," he would say between puffs on his sex organ.

Throughout history rich and powerful men have smoked cigars. President Roosevelt did it. FDR did it. Winston Churchill smoked an estimated 600,000 cigars in his lifetime,



and Kennedy purchased 1,000 Cuban cigars the day before slapping the small Caribbean island with a trade embargo.

Even God smoked cigars — or at least George Burns did when he played God.

Cigars have had a strong presence in American heritage, but they are far from obsolete.

Today, the average Joe can indulge in an occasional cigar.

Humidors (elaborate cigar rooms that maintain optimum tobacco preservation) are popping up all over in College Station liquor stores. The Burton Creek Pub, a bona fide sports bar, just installed a humidor.

James Dietrich, a manager at Burton Creek, explained that "cigars are getting more popular. They are definitely an 'in' thing."

And they are popular with a wide range of people — from college freshmen to retirees.

Most of the fancy stogies aren't cheap, yet even middle-class people are spending the extra five to six dollars for a more satisfying smoke.

Wait a minute! Hello! Who said anything about smoking? Smoking is what Joe Camel and the Marlboro Man do. It's what silenced the silent generation.

People don't smoke cigars. If a person isn't inhaling, then it isn't smoking. With all the pro-cigar media, such assumptions seem only natural.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor and fitness guru at the White House, smokes cigars with zeal. Jack Nicholson chews on the tubes of tobacco in massively popular

movies like *A Few Good Men*. Even the Material Girl has been seen with a long, smoldering cigar grasped firmly in her fingers.

This summer's blockbuster, *Independence Day*, showed the camaraderie of a good cigar. It's patriotic. It's something an African-American fighter pilot can share with a Jewish genius.

One would think cigars are bringing the world together as they cut across social barriers.

But cigars don't seem to do anything bad. Just look at George Burns. He didn't inhale, and he almost lived forever. Bill Clinton didn't inhale, and he will probably be re-elected president.

The whole country might not be inhaling, but cigar puffing is lending new life to a questionable tobacco industry.

## Lack of scholarships keeps minorities away

We pride ourselves on attending a world-class university, yet the naive attitude on this campus reveals that we are far from that.

A couple of weeks ago, I was saddened — but not surprised — by the fact that a mere half of the accepted minorities enrolled this year. I heard comments from students expressing surprise at these statistics.



**Aja Henderson**  
Senior political science major

My answer to their puzzlement can be summed up in one word: Hopwood! We are starting to see the effects of this horrible ruling, and it is time to wake up and realize that if minorities are not given scholarships to Texas A&M, they probably won't come.

If you are an Aggie for whom coming to Texas A&M was both expected and traditional, it would be hard for you to fathom why anyone accepted to this university would not break his neck to enroll.

But the choice is not obvious for minorities. They cannot possibly come from a long line of Aggies because the school didn't allow people of color in the door (or even on the porch) for most of history. They haven't been taken to football games since they were knee high, and probably haven't set foot on the campus.

Now, consider a top African-American high school senior who applies to Texas A&M, a few Ivy Leagues and the like. The student likes Texas A&M, but has read and heard about the ultra-conservative atmosphere and is concerned about feeling out of place here. The person receives scholarship letters in the mail. Good schools offer to waive his out-of-state tuition and give him \$20,000. Texas A&M offers a friendly howdy and no money.

Would that student even give our school a chance? Don't think too hard on that one. The money-

incentive is not there to help persuade the student to give it a try.

If this appears crude, think back to your senior year. Scholarships were king, and they played a large role in school considerations.

Money is indeed an object, especially when you don't have an Aggie family legacy to uphold.

Sure, top minority candidates are able to get some scholarship assistance. However, when I learned that Texas A&M was offering me an award for minority candidates, it played a large role in my decision to come to Texas A&M. Doubts I had about the University were lessened because I thought that it was positive that the A&M was backing up its commitment to diversity with greenbacks.

I didn't sit and cry, "I only got this scholarship because I am black!" My credentials were so tight that I could have competed with anyone, and I did receive another scholarship from this school that was not just restricted to minorities.

Instead, when I sat down and narrowed my college choices, A&M persevered. I came here, got involved and feel I could not have made a better choice for my education.

But I can honestly say I don't know if I would have given it a chance if not for those scholarships. Think about it. Why would a top minority candidate come to this environment when he or she is receiving lucrative scholarships from similarly or better-ranked schools?

Until the big boys at this University start backing up their recruiting efforts, task forces, workshops and talk forums with additional scholarship dollars to woo top candidates, the number of enrolled minorities will continue to take a nosedive.

**Notice how Kemp and Gore give detailed explanations of their positions...**

**Without even a trace of hostility or name calling...**

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**LET'S SEE WHAT ELSE IS ON!...**

## MAIL CALL

**Midnight Mania an incredible success**

After the incredible success of Aggie Basketball Midnight Mania on Monday night, no one can ever convince us that there are not thousands of great basketball fans at Texas A&M.

As we move into the new Big 12 Conference, the support of the student body, band, yell leaders, Aggie Angels, Aggie Gents and dance team will provide us with one of the top home court advantages anywhere. Your enthusiasm at Midnight Mania proved that you can and will support Aggie basketball.

Our players join us in offering our sincere thanks for making the event a success and giving us a tremendous boost as we begin fall practice. We hope to see you at all our home games this season.

*Tony Barone*  
Men's Basketball Coach

*Candi Harvey*  
Women's Basketball Coach

has consistently perpetuated disasters in human history. During the Spanish Inquisition, if you were not a Christian, you were killed because you were immoral.

Early this century, if a woman was allowed in the workplace, it was considered immoral. And even today, if someone chooses to expose his or her body to a drug, he or she is considered immoral.

But just like the other cases in human history, decisions such as these should be left to that own person's decision... isn't that what freedom is — the right to choose?

*Justin Vincent*  
Class of '98

we "Christians" are, Christ in good conscience, knowing how hypocritical we "Christians" are, because all of the above events (except Masada) were or are instances of Christians killing or abusing either non-Christians or "inadequate" Christians. Choose to conform to our way or suffer the consequences.

By carrying out our own judgement on those who don't fit our definitions, we even deny God the right to his Day of Judgement.

*Eric W. Trekell*  
Class of '91

**Beutel focuses on blocking, not aiding**

I went to Beutel when my thumb was in excruciating pain. After a nurse took my vital signs and asked me about my thumb, everything began to fall apart. After sifting through my file, a nurse came back in and ask me about certain shots. I told her that I had received those shots in last two years. The nurse told me that I needed to get those records (copies of them) to them by the end of the semester. I told that it would be difficult because I am married with a family and that the records are in different locations, but she did not care at all. Before she left, she told me I could be blocked after she learned I was graduating in May. The only other time that I will go back now is to turn in those records. So that they will allow me to graduate.

*Anthony Semien*  
Class of '95

**Christian hypocrisy hurts homosexuals**

Regarding David Boldt's Oct. 16 column, "Homosexual cadets should stay in closet":

Boldt is absolutely correct on one issue; in reference to gay bashing is happening all over America, he says "It's not right, but it happens."

The point prompts me to ask why then, he also tells us that gays in the Corps "have the right to be gay if they so choose."

Who, in their right mind, would choose to be homosexual? Who would choose to be beaten, hated, vilified, and terrorized, the way homosexuals are in "Christian America"? Africans could have chosen to be white, and avoided being enslaved. Muslim Bosnians could have chosen to become Christian Serbs and avoided the resulting blood bath.

Homosexuals (who, despite homophobes' insistence to the contrary, are born homosexual), can choose to be "normal" and end the gay bashing. I sometimes wonder how I can still claim to be a member of the Church of Christ in good conscience, knowing how hypocritical

## Remember friends from the past

It happens all the time. It happens to almost everyone. It's probably happening to you even now: As you read this, you are growing farther apart from someone you love.

Before it's too late, we should all take time to say hello and keep old friendships alive.

Trust to it: You've known some people all your life. There is no real explanation as to the ebb and flow of who hang out with, since some of the people have always been around. You just grow apart.

Now you've gone and moved into the bigtime world of college. You're leaving them behind.

For some people, this is a good thing. Perhaps they never found their niche in high school. Perhaps they only moved somewhere for their junior or senior year, and have been biding their time until they could get a fresh, even start in college. If so, that's great.

They can be whoever they want now and handpick their friends.

For some people, this is a bad thing. Some people love just who they wanted to keep company with in high school, and coming to college really shook their world up. This was me.

If I may trouble you with a personal example, I had some great friends in high school. I found my niche in drama department, and we were like a family. I love all those people. I still hang out with a lot of them whenever I can.

Unfortunately, Texas A&M doesn't exactly draw the same crowd as drama.

I was the only person from my class to come here. When I arrived three years ago, I basically



**Bryan Goodwin**  
Junior English major

had to start fresh.

Looking for the same kind of close-knit group I'd been a part of in high school, I joined the Corps.

This was a good move, though I still miss the people from high school from time to time, and never see most of them. And this is universal: As the years go by, people's interests change.

Some of those whom you considered to be your former brothers and sisters got involved in things you don't care for, or made some really bad decisions and became people you'd rather not associate with.

Some just move far away and e-mail becomes the only link (and it's a great way to keep in touch with those people).

Some are right around the corner, and you don't know just what's happening to your relationship. And that's a shame, because the connection you once had with them is still there, you've just forgotten.

Whether it be they've found some new friend or (more likely) significant other that monopolizes their time or they (or you) are just terribly busy these days, there's some perceived reason for your distance. Perceived only. Is half an hour really more time than you can spare to call someone you've known for years? Is your schedule really so busy you can't fit in a movie or a meal with someone you once regarded as closer than family? Of course not.

And now that you're in college, it's especially important to do. After all, people are graduating every semester. Stop, look around at what's happening in your life, and get in touch. You'll be glad you did.

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For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.