

# Welcome to Hicktown, U.S.A.

## Hick-o-phobia displays insensitivity toward diversified cultures, belief systems



**JOHN LEMONS**  
columnist

After Scholastic Proba-  
tion, Cultur-  
ing to be g  
Insensitivity is  
easily the last  
out of it."  
phrase many Ag-  
gies want to hear.  
Many Texas A&M  
freshman students are sim-  
ly fed up with the  
ng the Red  
subject. Yet, try as  
7. Williams  
st 100-year  
cannot go on ig-  
through wh  
oring the cultural  
yhawks de  
ensions that persist on campus.  
no relation  
Williams) is  
biggest cultural insensitivity prob-  
in the Big  
carries, a  
gnized problem. Amazingly, Aggies  
fail to recognize the persistent prob-  
em of hick-o-phobia at Texas A&M.  
For those readers who may be unfa-  
miliar with the term hick-o-phobia, it  
e (4-1, 1-  
s fear, prejudice or insensitivity per-  
aining to hicks.

To better understand the problem  
of hick-o-phobia, however, it will be  
useful to examine the perspective of a  
hick-o-phobe.

And Michael  
Consider Mitch, a typical Aggie.  
Mitch attends classes, makes good  
grades and does not consider himself  
ernoon.  
nsensitive. Mitch does not dislike  
chicks, but sometimes he is uncomfort-  
in a thriller  
able around them. After all, he might  
ing K-State  
mistakenly say something offensive  
ad, the Aggie  
round a hick. For example, Mitch  
ted second  
might say something disparaging  
nt of 64.15  
about professional wrestling or breech  
M trailing  
a hick stereotype, like the myth that all  
hicks can drive a combine.

One day, Mitch is reading The Bat-  
ndon Ste  
ation before class. Mitch reads a Mail-  
cross the m  
Call letter from a student who is com-  
-yard line.  
plaining about insensitive remarks he  
break free  
heard about hicks around campus.  
Mitch thinks to himself, "Oh, get  
over it. Why do hicks have to be so  
ouchy about every little comment  
made about them. You can't even tell a  
oke about hicks anymore."

Mitch does know a couple of funny

hick jokes, but he would never say  
them in front of an actual hick. Mitch  
sits and thinks about the letter, and it  
annoys him.

He wonders why hicks can't be  
more like normal students, which  
Mitch considers himself to be. Hicks  
always seem to be wearing cowboy  
hats and boots. Sometimes the glare  
from their oversized belt-buckles is so  
bright, Mitch has trouble telling one  
hick from another.

Mitch does not stop to think what  
it might be like for hicks who often find  
themselves being the only hick in a  
class. He fails to consider that it might  
be alienating for a hick to be the only  
person in a lecture who raises chickens  
and chews tobacco.

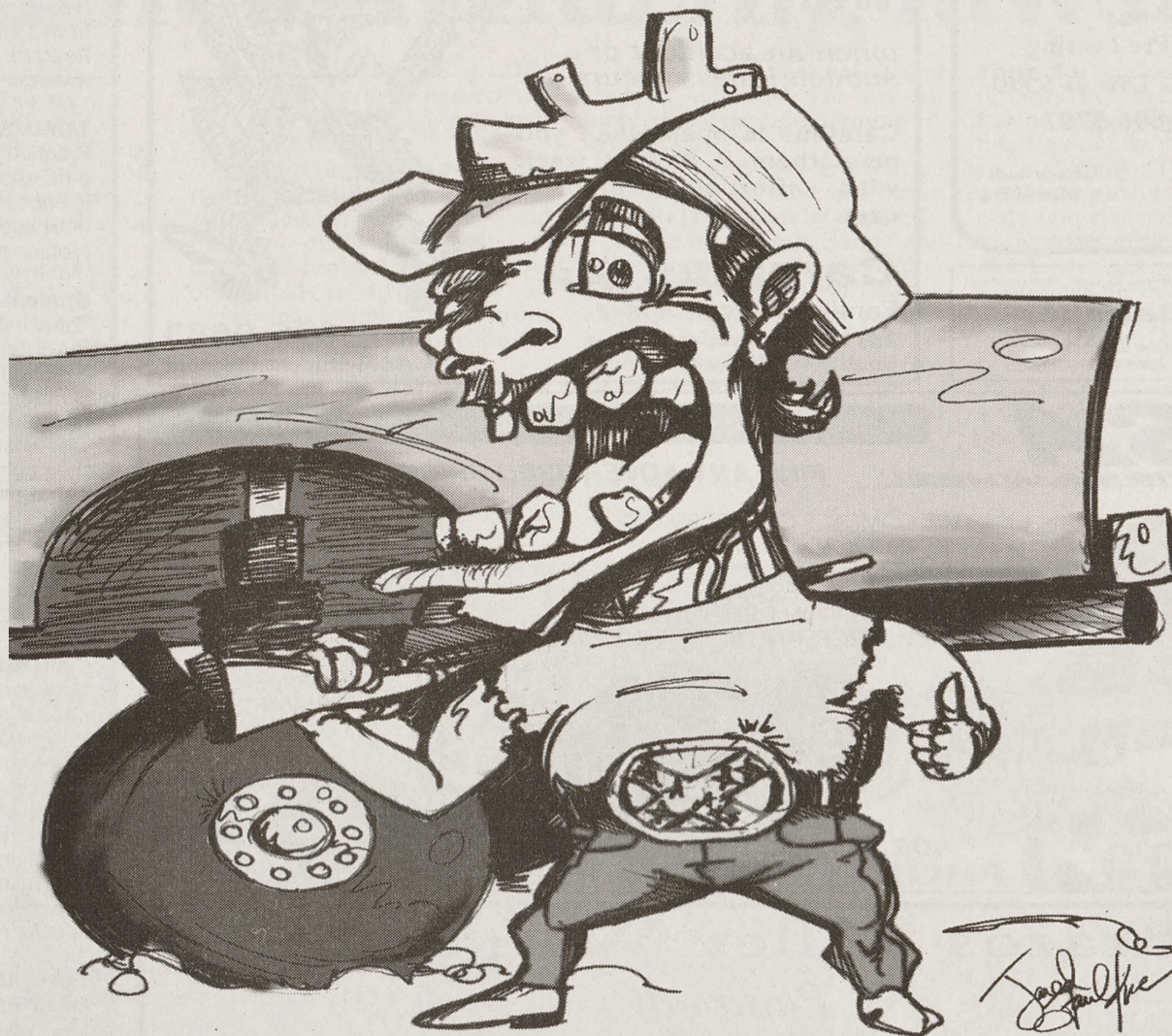
While he is on the subject, Mitch  
wonders why so many hicks insist on  
being called Country-Americans.  
Mitch thinks everyone should consider  
themselves Americans, first and fore-  
most — anything else is unpatriotic.  
He refuses to understand the fact that  
some people believe their heritage is  
as important as their nationality.

In his mind, though, Mitch justifies  
his annoyance with hicks by convinc-  
ing himself he isn't prejudiced. After  
all, Mitch has a hick friend, Jethro.  
Well, Jethro is actually more of an ac-  
quaintance, but Mitch went over to his  
house once.

Mitch saw the rusting car mounted  
on cinder-blocks in Jethro's front yard.  
He even played fetch with Flash,  
Jethro's three-legged hound dog. Later,  
Mitch rode home in Jethro's John Deer  
Green pick-up truck complete with  
gun rack and National Rifle Associa-  
tion bumper sticker.

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tion bumper sticker.

Mitch does feel a little guilty, be-  
cause he does not know more hicks.  
Nonetheless, he thinks it is under-  
standable because he has little in com-  
mon with hicks. Hicks seem to love  
their infernal country music, and  
Mitch can't fathom the idea of enjoying  
line dancing. Moreover, Mitch has  
never lived on a farm, milked a cow or



artificially inseminated a bull.  
Besides, Mitch already believes he  
knows what most hicks are like, as he  
has seen them on TV. Mitch watches  
his fair share of "The Dukes of Haz-  
ard," and knows that like Cooter,  
most hicks are friendly and pretty  
good car mechanics.

Well, it is time for class to start, and  
Mitch does not have the luxury of

thinking about hicks all day long. Any-  
way, he has already made up his mind  
on the subject. Although, Mitch wishes  
that relations between hicks and other  
students could be better, he believes  
there is nothing he can do about it.

Tragically, hick-o-phobia persists  
because like Mitch, many students  
have made up their minds, and refuse  
to consider any perspective other than

their own. When students begin to sin-  
cerely make attempts to understand  
cultures that are different than their  
own, only then will the ugly problem of  
hick-o-phobia will be defeated.

After all, nobody is born a hick-o-  
phobe.

*John Lemons is an electrical  
engineering graduate student.*

# Medicinal marijuana proves bad political manipulations



**DONNY FERGUSON**  
columnist

America has become a  
nation which feels,  
rather than thinks, and  
compassion is now the driving  
force behind society. With vot-  
ers dumbed down by daytime  
talk shows, amoral pop cul-  
ture and an intellectually hol-  
low media more concerned  
about Cher's new boyfriend  
than life-affecting legislation,  
fact and logic are swept aside  
when emotion and sensation-  
alism are injected into debate.

While the Democratic Party's 1996 "MediScare"  
campaign is a good example of emotion being put  
ahead of fact, California's Proposition 215, the "med-  
icinal marijuana" initiative, may be the consum-  
mate example of bitter legislation sugar-coated with  
manufactured compassion.

After weeks of bombardment by TV images of  
teary-eyed cancer patients and weeping senior citi-  
zens and accusations by stoners that opponents  
wanted to "throw sick and dying people in prison,"  
California voters reacted to the \$1 million pro-pot  
campaign (funded, not by concerned citizens, but  
by sympathetic tycoons on the advice of "spiritual  
leader" Baba Ram Dass) by passing Proposition 215.

Fortunately, the Clinton Administration, in a rare  
display of decisiveness and action, blocked the im-  
plementation of Proposition 215 and a similar Ari-

zona initiative. The House of Representative's Judi-  
ciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitu-  
tion recently hear testimony on medicinal mariju-  
ana and government action is expected soon.

Were California voters convinced by mountains  
of scientific evidence proving pot's positive medici-  
nal effects? Were they swayed by endorsement from  
doctor's groups and health organizations? Hardly.

Marijuana's positive health effects, if any, have yet  
to be proven by a major health organization and the  
legalization of pot for medicinal purposes is op-  
posed by every major doctor's organization, law en-  
forcement association and drug education group.

When asked why he supported Proposition 215,  
San Francisco District Attorney Terence Hallinan's  
response mirrored that of California voters, emo-  
tionally-provoked and intellectually empty. "I don't  
want to send cancer patients to jail for using mari-  
juana." Despite the hype, sensationalism and phony  
compassion generated by pro-pot advocates, legal-  
ized marijuana is bad medicine.

Marijuana's active ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol  
or THC, is already legally available in a synthetic pill  
form. Marinol alleviates the pain of a crippling ill-  
ness and helps the seriously ill deal with disease.  
"For some people, it makes them feel better. It re-  
lieves some of the effects of the disease or  
chemotherapy," cancer specialist Rex Greene said. If  
Marinol is not effective enough, doctors can pre-  
scribe, other, more powerful, drugs such as codeine  
or morphine.

The National Institute of Health conducted an ex-  
tensive 1992 study into marijuana's medicinal use  
and concluded that smoking pot is not a safe or  
more effective treatment than Marinol or other  
FDA-approved drugs.

With THC and other drugs already legally avail-  
able, the legalization of pot for "medicinal" use is  
unnecessary and dangerous. The American Cancer  
Society firmly states, "(We) see no reason to support  
the legalization of marijuana for medical use," and it  
"does not believe that the results of clinical investi-  
gation warrant legislation decontrolling marijuana."  
According to the National Cancer Institute, "inhaling  
marijuana smoke is a health hazard," due to "more  
than 400 cancer causing agents."

No major doctor's group, law enforcement  
agency and drug education organization backs mari-  
juana's medicinal use and the American Medical  
Association, the American Cancer Society, the Na-  
tional Multiple Sclerosis Society and the American  
Glaucoma Society all oppose smoking weed for  
medical purposes. Clearly, "medicinal marijuana" is  
unnecessary and dangerous.

Under medicinal marijuana legislation like  
Proposition 215, marijuana's medicinal use would  
be unregulated and virtually unchecked. There are  
no regulations as to the quality, purity and strength  
of the drugs, no written prescription is needed, just  
a doctor's "oral recommendation." As Proposition  
215 notes, marijuana could be used for "any other  
illness for which marijuana provides relief," mean-

ing marijuana could be used for a headache, "de-  
pression" caused by boredom, a upset stomach or  
just about anything.

Under this legislation, pot could be smoked in  
public, in the workplace, at church or in schools.  
Even children could legally grow, possess and smoke  
marijuana. Proposition 215's intentionally vague  
wording opens the door for widespread marijuana  
abuse and eventual legalization. As pro-pot groups  
like NORML (National Organization For the Reform  
of Marijuana Laws) proclaims, the passage of medi-  
cinal marijuana is the first step in their campaign to  
legalize illegal and dangerous drugs.

Swayed by emotionally charged, well-funded TV  
ads, California voters approved bad legislation.  
THC is legally available, pot smoking has no posi-  
tive health effects and its legalization for "medic-  
nal" use sends the wrong message to children that  
marijuana is safe.

The pro-marijuana legalization crowd, unable to  
impose their will through our democratic govern-  
ment, have manipulated the initiative-and referen-  
dum system to sneak a stealth pot-legalization plan  
past California voters. The "Legalize It!" fringe  
shamelessly exploited the sick and dying in their  
quest to legalize marijuana. Medicinal marijuana is  
bad medicine and is simply a symptom of a much  
larger drug legalization disease.

*Donny Ferguson is a junior political  
science major.*

MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA (SUBSTITUTION)



### MAIL CALL

#### Election campaigns reflect Aggie spirit

*In response to Eric Dickens' Oct. 8  
Mail Call letter:*  
The campaigns of candidates  
running for freshman class office  
reflect only the motivation and  
enthusiasm that they have for  
leading the Fightin' Texas Aggie  
Class of '01.

The energy, time and financial  
commitment necessary to run for  
class office is tremendous.

Those who made commitment  
to participate as candidates show  
their Aggie spirit in an aspiring  
manner. Guidelines designed to  
keep campaigning fair often limit  
the candidates' methods of in-

forming voters.

Section VI-b of the Election  
Regulations states, "No demon-  
strations, gatherings or other form  
of campaigning which interferes  
with the natural flow of either  
pedestrian or vehicular traffic  
shall be permitted."

Furthermore, door-to-door  
campaigning is limited to only a  
few hours. A candidate can only  
hope that out of the 40 or 50 voters  
he or she speaks to in that time pe-  
riod, 20 will vote and perhaps five  
will remember his or her name.

Organizations are hesitant to  
allow candidates to speak at  
meetings where freshman are  
only a small percentage of their  
memberships.

Even freshman organizations  
do not want their first meetings  
consumed by candidate presen-  
tations. It is not the place nor the  
responsibility of the freshman  
class officers to deal with Univer-  
sity-wide problems. This does not  
leave much of a platform for can-  
didates to stand on.

The two main goals of class  
council are to promote class spirit  
and raise funds. Any platform not  
pertaining to these goals would

only show ignorance on the part of  
the candidates.

These are just a few reasons  
candidates failed to communi-  
cate their platforms and relied  
primarily on name recognition  
during the recent election.

We must congratulate all can-  
didates for their selfless display of  
class spirit and their steps toward  
getting involved on campus, not  
condemn them for circumstances  
they could not control.

Good Bull candidates!

*Liz Hagan  
Class of '01*

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