

I don't think; therefore, I tan

Students take pleasure soaking up cancerous rays of summer sun

On any given Saturday afternoon in Bryan-College Station this summer, legions of college students will be laying by the pool, soaking up every bit of the sun's warm, cancer-causing rays. Sunscreen is hard to come by among this group. In fact, any semblance of sun protection is probably nonexistent.



MEREDITH HIGHT
columnist

More likely to be found are tanning oils, intended to magnify the sun's rays. Nothing could be worse for a person's skin. Nothing else so obviously leads to skin cancer and premature aging. But nothing is better than basking in the hot sun with a good book and a cold glass of lemonade.

It is not just the golden-brown tan that comes after a good two hours of laying out that is satisfying. In this case, the means justify the end. It could be a lounge chair strategically located directly underneath the sun or a floating raft in the center of a swimming pool. Either way, the enjoyment of being able to just lay and feel the sun pounding down is one of the best things about summer. That is why self-tanning lotions are not nearly as appealing, and why

tanning beds do not cut it, either. The problem is, we do not heed warnings of the American Cancer Society and the American Academy of Dermatology. Typically, their warnings become our tanning tips. The sun is strongest between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., so it is advised that people stay out of the sun during those hours. Those are prime laying-out hours for many college students.

The experts also advise people to always wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 15 that shields both ultra-violet alpha and ultra-violet beta rays.

Although some try to at least protect their faces with sunscreen, knowing that neglecting to do so will lead to a lifetime dependency on wrinkle cream, most slather tanning oil with a Sun Protection Factor of 4 on every inch of bare skin.

Indeed, their warnings are worth listening to. Approximately one million new skin cancers are diagnosed every year. Half of all new cancers diagnosed are skin cancers. This is alarming not only because of the large number of cases, but because of the apathy, especially among young people, toward the potential for developing this disease.

In the United States, someone dies from skin cancer every hour. These numbers aren't likely to decrease considering how flagrantly tanners expose themselves to the sun without consid-

ering the potentially cancerous effects. This is all despite of the fact that skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer.

The solution is fairly simple: Stay out of the sun, and skin cancer probably will not be a concern. It is not as if we are not aware how damaging the sun can be. We have been adequately educated on the dangers of skin cancer.

So why is it that we continue to worship the sun? It is merely symptomatic of college students' tendency to live for today. College students have never been known for their good health habits, or realizing how their choices today can affect their futures.

Three square meals a day is nearly unheard of. Studies continue to come out screaming about how binge drinking among 18-to-24-year olds is practically an epidemic. The majority of smokers begin when they are young. Tanning is just another bad habit we know we should give up.

It is truly a hallmark of college students' lack of foresight, rather than being indicative of our ignorance. We simply do not think of tomorrow, much less 20 years from now. Perhaps the remedy for this lack of foresight is not continued education on any of these issues but actual recognition of the long-term consequences of choices made in youth.

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Europe suffers from American invasion

Americans have traditionally looked abroad for the latest trends to follow. However, after over 200 years of living with a culture largely borrowed, the United States is finally getting its revenge. Visit any foreign locale nowadays and it is painfully obvious the worst of America is everywhere, and I am not merely referring to the teeming hordes (the "Let's Go Travel Guide" worshipping backpackers).

Each year, various magazines devote multi-page spreads to the latest designs originating from the famed fashion houses of Europe. This gives Americans, many of whom read these articles while wearing jogging pants, the mistaken view that the streets of Europe are filled with people wearing Versace's line of clothing designed for the masses.

Instead, locals from Ireland to Italy uniformly wear jeans and Nikes, topped off by cheap, counterfeit Hard Rock Cafe T-shirts. Luckily, the world has not plunged to the ultimate depths of American fashion, as the wit of "Big Johnson" T-shirts have yet to be translated into other cultures.

While foreign restaurants and fusion cooking are the rage here, back in Europe continental cuisine is rapidly being buried under a mountain of Whoppers and Frostees. It was one thing to pity those living in former Communist countries as they lined up hours to taste capitalism at a newly-opened McDonald's. It is quite another to watch as a bakery is razed to make way for a Dunkin' Donuts. The problem is so widespread that even Dairy



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Queen is making in-roads across the globe. Regrettably, this means the phrase "Three-Piece chicken finger basket with Texas toast" will soon be uttered worldwide.

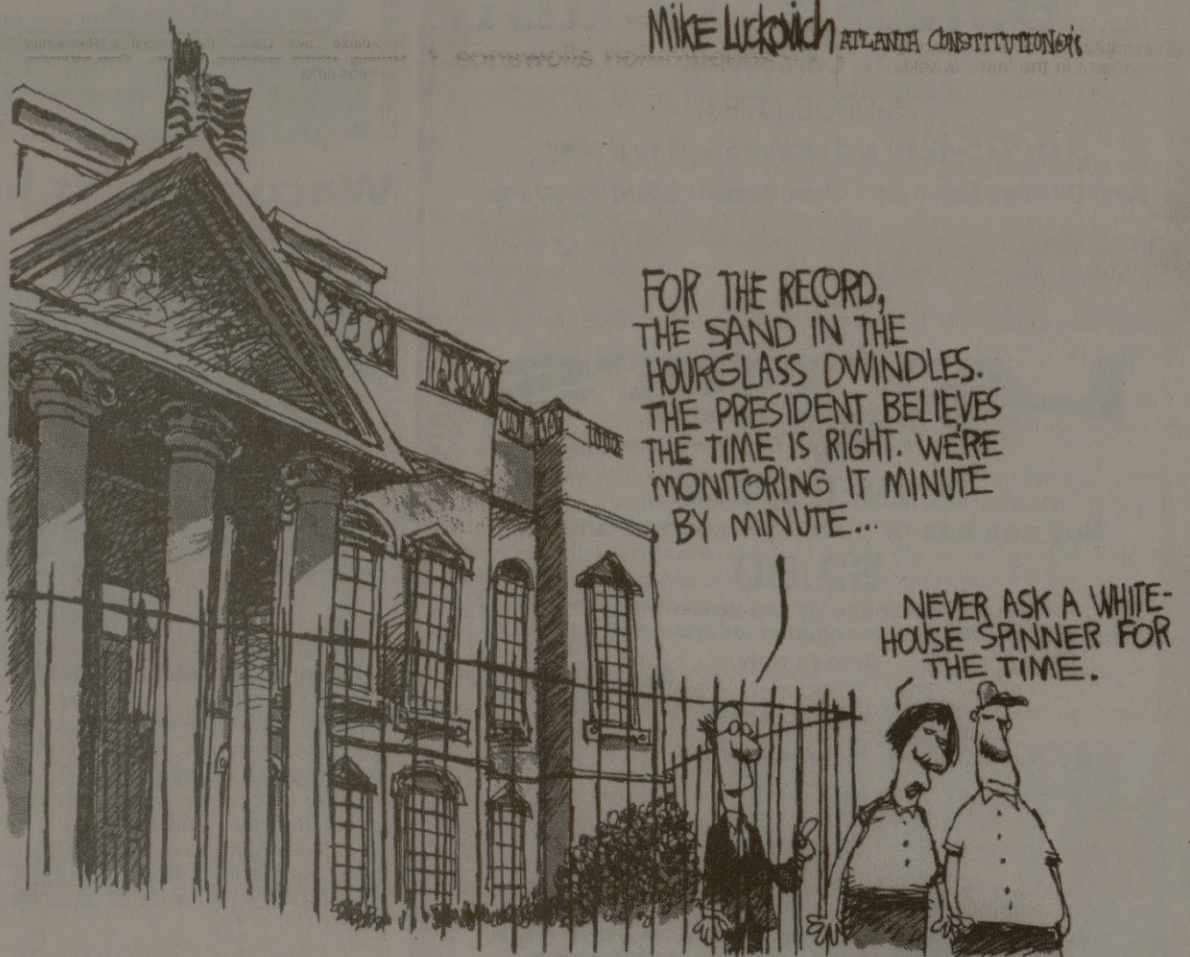
The field of music is no different. America has consistently imported noteworthy music and musicians from abroad. And what do we give back in return? David Hasselhoff's Greatest Hits Album. Concert venues throughout the world are filled with American singing has-beens and never-will-bes who should not be allowed to play at the local V.F.W. hall.

The ultimate indignity is there is rumor of a fall European road show consisting of some of the musical stars currently performing in Branson, Mo. And the saddest part? The Roy Clark-Kenny Rogers duet shows will sell out.

As Americans, we know that our pop culture is equal parts treasure and trash. But we can appreciate both because we are aware of the distinction. Granted, as my encyclopedic knowledge of "Saved by the Bell" can attest, it is the trashier parts that make our culture so entertaining. However, we can enjoy the lows of our own culture, in the privacy of our own country, without having to share them with the rest of the world.

Sadly, foreign emulation of American culture has become a low-brow parody of the worst we have to offer. After all, as a nation, we are more than just the home of professional wrestling and the \$1.99 Grand Slam Breakfast at Denny's. We should certainly be proud that our culture is emulated around the world. The tragedy is realizing exactly what they are trying to imitate.

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Breaking down the barrier

Bryan-College Station should not worry about unification, but matters of inner-development

How would you describe Bryan-College Station? What kind of a place is it? ... Like the name itself, it is a hyphenated construction. — Steven Moore, Cite Magazine

When people hear the name Bryan, they think of a residential community, filled with nuclear families who have no need to deal with the rowdiness of students. When College Station is mentioned, however, phrases such as "let's go to Northgate" or "tonight is 99-cent pitchers night" or "Give me my keys, I'm fine to drive" always seem to come to mind. Could this be the reason these separate entities have never come together in unison? Many people believe this is the only answer.



JAMES FRANCIS
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All one has to do to take a look at the difference in locales is visit. In College Station there is Northgate, almost the alter ego to Alcoholics' Anonymous. It is a place where students can go to unwind after a long day of classes and work. For some, it is a place where they can go and get more alcohol in their systems than an 18-wheeler's full tank of diesel fuel.

In comparison, however, Bryan is a place where an actual downtown exists. Granted, it may not seem like much to some, but with developments in the works, the city has great potential for becoming a rejuvenated area.

Bryan also displays more of an alternative feel than College Station. Where else would you find shops, such as Earthart and

nightlife venues such as The Club for the areas gay and lesbian community (as well as straight)?

College Station is not at a cultural loss or anything like that, but some of its area businesses and places to hang out in are not exactly diverse — The Dixie Chicken, Duddley's Draw and Shadow Canyon should illustrate this point by only mentioning their names.

All pros and cons aside, Bryan-College Station, as a unified compilation of college students, Texas A&M faculty and staff and simple members of both communities, makes a pretty good combination.

So what makes the two locations such a big rivalry, other than the aforementioned

differences? The only people who can answer such a question are the members of the communities themselves.

But from a college student's point of view, hearing the words "Bryan" and "College Station" mentioned without their hyphenated assimilation would seem to separate matters more.

Some people claim Bryan is an old-fashioned area, holding on to the past and pushing the future of its development far away, while College Station seemed to arise out of nowhere and take over its area. If this is the case, make a point to bring Bryan to the forefront of small-town Texas living. Develop its downtown areas and make it a "great place to live."

For College Station, let the symbolic "home of Texas A&M University" keep its traditions while the surrounding campus community develops a personality of its own.

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