

Casual corner

Americans have progressed in every aspect of society except outward appearances



CHRIS MARTIN
Aggielife editor

In spite of what Devo and *Back to the Future 2* have predicted, surely the future of fashion does not lie in synthetic metallic jumpsuits. Like everything else, taste comes in cycles, and the world is currently stuck in the lowest oscillation.

Somewhere along the line, the world went from the pearls and spats to belly chains and flip flops. The blame for this rests squarely on the shoulders of two men, Henry Ford and Richard Simmons.

Society's obsession for exercise is one of the big reasons for the great casualness. Before the automobile, people stayed in shape by working and walking. But walking now is seen as "exercise," and not as a basic method of human propulsion.

It is fascinating to see this in action in the school's busy parking lots, where students late to class will park themselves in the front row of a lot waiting for someone to leave a space while empty spots lie just a few rows down. "You can't make me walk any further than I absolutely have to," seems to be the creed.

Because of this, fashion has made the transition from looking good to feeling good. People

must be ready at all times, no matter what time of day or night, to be able to exercise. Thus came the plague of matching purple and green jogging suits, and not surprisingly, the fanny pack.

Think about the person who should embody the most class and grace in society, the president.

A quick stroll through the pages of history reveals riding coats, suits, hats and gloves.

Then picture the president today. Four words: itty-bitty running shorts. This is what history will record.

Can anyone imagine Lincoln jogging up and down the White House lawn in his top hat and some Adidas soccer shorts? Or Grover Cleveland frolicking in the rose garden wearing only a smile and a pair of red Speedos?

Layers may be hot and obtuse these days, but they sure look good.

Besides, being a rebel today is not about a skateboard, baggy shorts and a tube-striped tee. It's about wing-tips, a pocket watch and a fedora.

Chris Martin is a senior journalism major.



2000 bug causes personal problems



JOHN LEMONS
columnist

The year 2000 is coming. Well, of course it is. But with it comes a big problem. No, not the end of humanity. As "Planet of the Apes" fans know, that happens around the year 2500 when the intelligent monkeys take over the earth. What the year 2000 will bring is the year 2000 bug.

In anticipation of the year 2000, the United States government and the major corporations have been working diligently on fixing it (i.e., writing legions of programmers to code old programs). In anticipation of the year 2000, students, too, have been working diligently on their computers (i.e. playing hour upon hour of computer solitaire).

But with the year 2000 a scant year-and-a-half away, something must be done to stop the year 2000 bug from disrupting students' personal lives. After all, the 21st century will be worthless if they can't spend a significant portion of it playing solitaire on the computer. Unfortunately, most don't have a fleet of nerds to fix the bug in their personal lives. But fear not, there is a solution. What follows, are some suggestions for beating the year 2000 bug at Texas A&M.

By now, the bug has received considerable attention in the media. Various doomsday prophets have warned the bug may do all kinds of nefarious things from wrecking the world's economy to wrecking the Internet. It even has a melodramatic name — the Y2K bug. Y2K sounds an awful lot like the title of a *Terminator* movie ten years back. If this Y2K bug is somehow connected to cyborg killing machines from the future, then it really deserves all the attention it has been getting.

Imagine this terrible scene. It is the morning of Jan. 1, the mold Schwarzenegger, dressed in black leather and armed to the teeth, busts down someone's front door. He peers at the homeowner through his dark sun glasses and says in his thick, Austrian accent, "I'm looking for Sarah Connor," after which he proceeds to pull out his sawed-off shotgun and target the family. Wow, that is a scary

thought.

Anyway, onto solving the year 2000 bug problem in students' lives. My first thought was that the perfect solution to the bug is time travel. If one can transport him or herself and their electronics back in time, they can avoid the year 2000. Upon contacting the physics department to ask how one might travel backward in time, one will find department employees will laugh and inform the caller time travel is impractical unless one has access to Michael J. Fox, a Delorian and 1.21 gigawatts of power.

Since most students probably don't have access to these things, they should make their most important possessions year 2000 compliant. For example, one definitely want one's refrigerator to be safe from the bug. If a refrigerator fails on the morning Jan. 1, 2000 and all of the food spoils, people will not be able to cook breakfast. Starting the new millennium out on an empty stomach is not a good idea.

Fortunately, some refrigerator manufacturers say their refrigerators are year 2000 compliant.

Lastly, students should protect their VCRs. Since many students never figured out how to program the clock, it stays at 12 a.m., continually blinking. Students should briefly un-plug their VCRs and then fail to set the clock. This way, the VCR will never reach Jan. 1, 2000, keeping it safe from the bug. One will also get the added benefit of never being able to set the timer to record "The Jerry Springer Show."

Hopefully these suggestions will help students protect themselves from the year 2000 bug.

Oh yeah, if a student comes across one of those computer nerd types that got Americans into this mess, give him or her what he or she deserves — a swift kick to the rear. After that, just say, "That's for those cyborg killer robot terminators, you geek."

And if the person gives you a puzzled look, don't fall for his or her bluff. Just walk on by, secure in the knowledge that you are prepared to handle the year 2000 bug.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.

Nation's anti-drug campaign could change youth attitudes



MEREDITH HIGHT
columnist

From the wealthy suburb of Plano to the Amish country of Pennsylvania, young people are increasingly being enticed by the allure of illicit drugs. In the latest battle in the war on drugs, the government has invested \$195 million in a year-long ad campaign to discourage teenagers from using illicit drugs.

It could be one of the most effective tools the government has in combating the popularity of illicit drug use among youth in this country.

Some activists and politicians claim the money could be better spent on after-school programs and drug treatment centers. Although these also are viable options in the attempt to dissuade teenage drug use, the power of television should not be underestimated.

One of the main ads features a young woman angrily tearing her kitchen apart with a frying pan while screaming about the ravages of heroin on her body, her family and friends and her job.

The new ad is a twist on the 1980s campaign that featured a frying pan and an egg being fried, with the voice over of "this is your brain, this is your brain on drugs." This time, the frying pan is used as a weapon by the young woman to destroy the kitchen, and the egg is immediately smashed against the kitchen counter as symbolic of heroin's effect on the body.

Before it was a national media blitz, this ad was aired in 12 test cities all over the United States. In those cities, there was a 300 percent increase in calls to a national drug information resource center, according to Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the drug policy director under President Bill Clinton. Although it will take three years to determine if these ads are effective, that is a promising sign.

It seems as if drugs have left no part of the United States unscathed, leading to the need for national attention to this subject matter.

"Nobody in America is free of this — not the president, not any community, any school, any church, any neighborhood," Clinton said at the official announcement of the ad campaign.

The entire community of Plano was reportedly shocked at the heroin overdose deaths of several local high school kids. A family-oriented, wealthy suburb is the last place one would expect to find teenagers addicted to a drug as hard as heroin.

Even more bizarre was the discovery Amish youths were caught using drugs. The Amish may be one of the least assimilated social groups in America, but even it did not manage to escape the influence of drugs.

Television is one of the most powerful mediums in American society, and therefore is one of the most powerful ways to make an

impact, no matter what the audience background.

This correlation between drug use and anti-drug advertisements is most easily seen with the rise in teen drug use when public service announcements were shifted to late-night/early morning slots. Since cable television was creating intense competition, prime time television could no longer afford to air public service announcements against drugs.

During this time, drug use more than doubled among teens.

At Texas A&M, students generally have reached the age when they are not quite so vulnerable to the peer pressures that middle school and high school students are under. In addition, "Campus-wide surveys have shown students are not tolerant of illicit drugs on campus or at parties," according to Helen Gutierrez, coordinator of campus wide alcohol education.

Generally, a very small number of students use illicit drugs.

The new anti-drug ad campaign may not necessarily be targeted at the college age audience, but that does not mean their impact will not be felt.

At the end of the new ad depicting the young woman tearing her kitchen apart, she stares in to the camera and asks, "Any questions?"

If one has any questions regarding drug use, confidential, free counseling is available through the Alcohol and Drug Education Programs office at 845-0280.

Meredith Hight is a junior journalism major.



MAIL CALL

T-shirt proposal promotes unity

In response to Chris Huffines' Thursday, July 16, column:

Chris Huffines not only attacks Aggie pride, but his opinions are based on false assumptions and un-researched facts.

Huffines has somehow come to the ridiculous conclusion "Maroon Out" is the newest project being researched by class councils is somehow turning Texas A&M into "the world's largest cult." His belief is that it constitutes "a large group of students dressing alike and singing in unison." So beware of all choir

members, football players, girl scouts or even janitors, for crying out loud.

Huffines then questions the idea of how Aggies "sweating together could possibly be fun. He states "the last time anyone checked, maroon is a dark color." The last time anyone checked, we are also the same Aggies who stood, soaked to our underwear, at the University of Texas game. What does Huffines think everyone presently wears to football games, thong bikinis?

Huffines talks about former students as if they were rotisserie meat, roasting along, standing in the sun watching a football game in the middle of September in South Texas." The former students sit in the shade and will be doing so in the middle of October in Central Texas.

In closing, Huffines assumes Maroon-Out T-shirts will divide the student body because of all the sponsorships listed on the back of the shirt. The class councils generate their own revenue and do not use sponsorship.

We do disagree with the last point presented in the column when Huffines states, "Maroon Out is a well-meaning idea." Precisely — it is an idea, and it is just an idea. It is not a cult, not a forced tradition and certainly not something developed to

divide student unity.

By raising funds through traditions such as E-Walk and Ring Dance, working with the Association of Former Students and hopefully, Maroon Out, we are able to donate \$90,000 each year to A&M.

We appreciate any kind of feedback, as long as it is based on research facts. We look forward to selling you a T-shirt.

Kendall Kelly
Class of '99 president

Kyle Valentine
Class of '00 president

Kevin Weeks
Class of '01 president

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