

The fate of Northgate

Northgate's social scene should diversify establishments instead of adding more trendy bars

Northgate used to be a vital area near campus. Students could grab a cup of coffee, buy a few cheap CDs from any one of three record stores and then grab a few condoms from Condomation before heading back to the dorms.



AARON MEIER

Nowadays, all students can do get really drunk and maybe grab burrito if the line at Freebird's isn't going out the door.

What used to be the social mecca for the entire campus has turned into a place strictly for weekend partiers and Sunday church goers.

While the slow death of Northgate began when the City of College Station decided to turn it into a tourist destination, the pace has picked up considerably in the past year.

Last summer, one of the few truly unique places in College Station closed its doors for the last time.

The Copasetic Cafe, which originally opened up its door as Dead Lazlo's, a vague, but innovative homage to "Laverne and Shirley," offered a late-night alternative to people who didn't want to trade tequila shots on a weeknight.

At that time, the coffee bar/social romper room even sported a glass-covered coffin pulling duty as a coffee table and a nice looking motorcycle that would have my Harley-riding dad grinning from ear to ear.

Eventually, the owners of Lazlo's, who also own sweet Eugene's House of Java, ditched its morbid image and turned into Copasetic, a place that still was a lone standout in the rapidly dimming lights of Northgate.

Then, one day, everything wasn't copasetic anymore. The owners decided to expand and with the drastic drop in business during the summer and winter breaks, closed Copasetic Cafe.

While this decision was reached economically, it

is just another example in a long process of homogenization in Northgate.

People not interested in getting blitzed were left without an option along Northgate, unless they want to hang out at the copy center and make Xerox copies of their faces, which management isn't likely to appreciate.

In place of Copasetic, a bar is scheduled to open.

What an original idea.

Maybe it could have wooden tables that people could carve their names or their fraternity letters in.

Maybe it could have two drunk girls who are single-handedly keeping AquaNet in business dancing, even though there is no dance floor in sight.

Maybe they could wear Rocky Mountains that are two sizes too small.

Now that would really be something College Station needs.

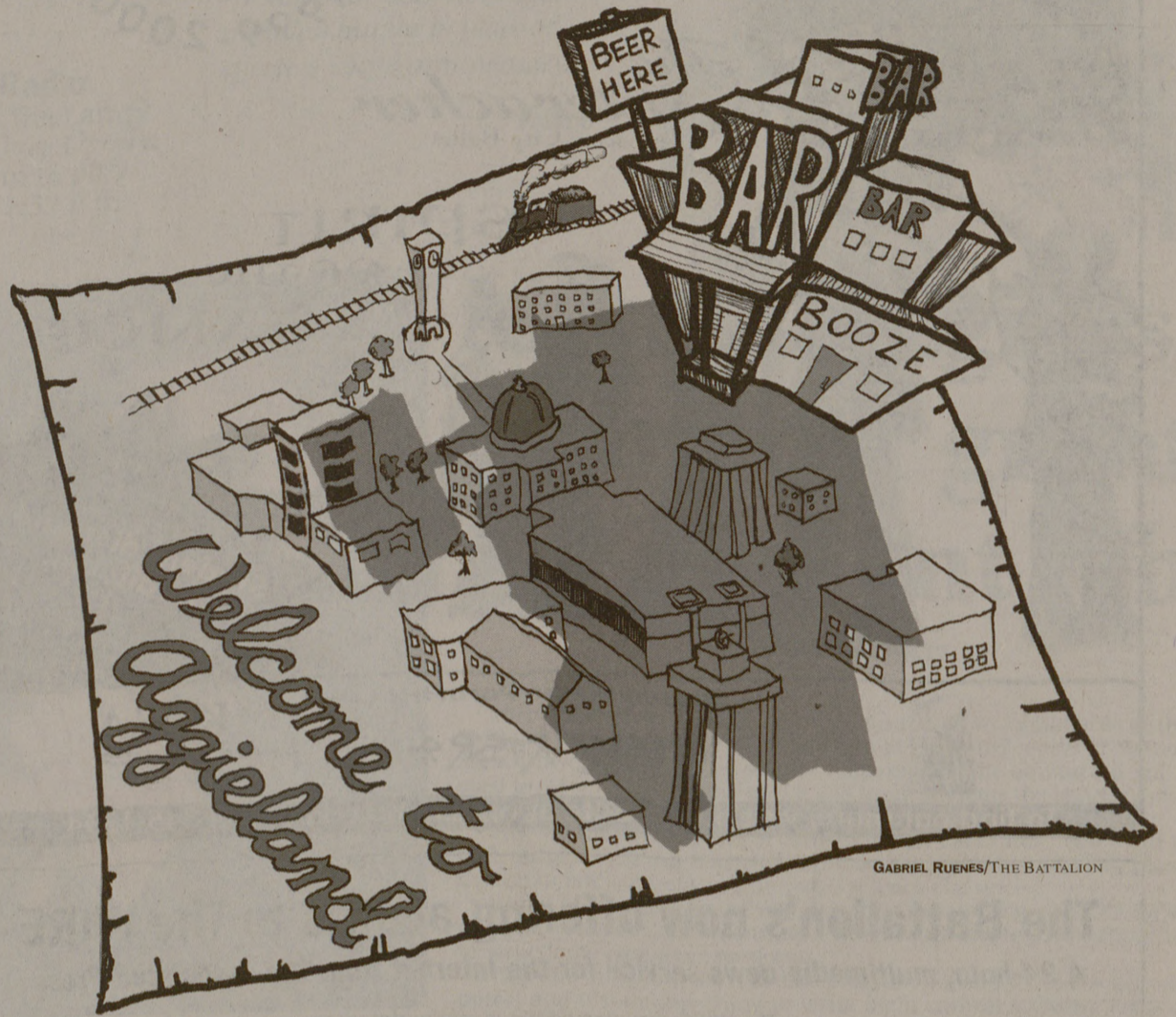
And for those of us who do occasionally partake of alcohol, the options are limited. Places such as Club Ozone and The Cue have been closed for — you guessed it — another bar where shelling peanuts is considered live entertainment.

The only remaining options are bars where dominoes outnumber the cumulative IQ of the clientele or bars where your history professor is likely to ask about your lecture attendance.

It's a basic theory of economics that if the market is flooded with the same type of business, then sooner or later some of these businesses are going to fail. The community's entrepreneurs need to take note and attempt to diversify the existing social scene in Bryan-College Station.

And while carving the name of a loved one will always be a time-honored tradition, those two drunk girls really need a break from running from bar to bar.

Aaron Meier is a senior political science major.



GABRIEL RUENES/THE BATTALION

MAIL CALL

Nike defends its labor practices

In response to Caleb McDaniel's June 7 column.

I have read some cynical articles, but this column really did leave me speechless.

I was disappointed that the column questioned the sincerity of a company who has made some pretty big moves to improve working conditions for the more than 500,000 people that make its products.

We were making moves before the spotlight was on us and continue to do so now.

I can assure you that Nike shares students' commitments to protecting the rights of workers overseas, and there is nothing clandestine about our recent labor practice reforms or our efforts to communicate these policies.

In fact, we welcome constructive dialogue on this issue, as this will move us more quickly toward our common goal.

Simply put, Nike has nothing to hide. That is why we've committed to all public disclosure of factory locations where licensed university products are made for universities who acquire this of all their licensees.

As for our improved air quality, that is a direct result of Nike's conversion to water-based adhesives in 5 percent of footwear production and raising the company's indoor air quality standards to OSHA permissible exposure limits in all our footwear factories.

Nike is fully committed to providing its workers a fair wage, which, in some cases, includes extra benefits such as food, housing, health care and cash bonuses.

We understand that U.S. wages and expenses are only the frame of reference many of us know, but when discussing compensation, we express workers' wage packages in their local currency because that is how they are paid — Vietnamese workers earn Vietnamese Dong, not dollars — and characterizing these wage packages in U.S. dollars is simply inappropriate.

Admittedly, we have not asked any minimum wage workers in our Indonesian footwear factories if the 3 wage increases they have received in the last 13 months are sneaky. Maybe we should.

Simon Pestridge
Nike, Inc.

uct of 32 nations. But gross domestic product does not reflect the standard of living or the level of poverty in a region.

Most importantly, Grether completely ignores all of the non-food related evils which come with an unchecked population growth.

Pollution is a major concern due to increased population.

Resources other than food become scarce as the planet mobilizes to provide housing, roads, oil, water and jobs to more and more people.

Technology is a wonderful thing. But every time a field delivers a crop, it has lost a little more of its fertility and used a few more resources.

We are all lucky to have resources to sustain us.

But an unchecked population growth means our descendants won't be so lucky.

Barry Teague
Class of '92

Population perils must be considered

In response to Marc Grether's June 15 column.

Modern famines are indeed caused by logistical inefficiencies in food distribution. But the need for food would not be so desperate in a region if the local population growth was in check.

Also, Grether asserts that global poverty is declining despite the increase in population.

His evidence is the impressive growth of the gross domestic prod-

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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Banning pornography course does not violate free speech

And you thought underwater basket weaving was a silly course.

Wesleyan University in Connecticut is enduring one of the most insane firestorms in history over one of the courses offered there this past year.

The seminar, "Pornography: Writing of Prostitutes," covered a whole variety of areas in the adult entertainment industry. There was even a final project, of which the course's instructor, Professor Hope Weissman said in the *Hartford Courant*, "It's supposed to be: 'Just create your own work of pornography.'"

At least Wesleyan is not offering courses in the "How-to's of Terrorism" yet.

A final project in that class might wipe out half of Connecticut.

After an article on the class ran on the front page of a local newspaper on May 8, University President Douglas Bennet wrote a memo in which he stated he felt that the class probably should not be in the school's curriculum. After this memo was made public, students at the school began to protest that the removal of the class would be censorship.

There are two questions that should be asked. No, one of them is not "How much for bootleg copies of the final projects?"

First, what was this class doing in the curriculum to begin with?

And secondly, would removal of this class actually constitute censorship?

The general reason for taking a college course is to learn something. It may not be enjoyable, but it supposedly will help make the students that take the class more marketable to prospective employers.

Unless these students intend to change their names to "Sensual Vanilla" or "Johnny Long" and perform sex acts in front of a camera for a living, this course will be of minimal help. Wall Street brokerages and consulting firms do not put gold stars next to the names of students who create projects such as short films of a man masturbating or a woman performing oral sex on her ex-boyfriend.

On top of that, how difficult is it to figure out how to do something for this class?

Outside of setting a camera on a tripod and perhaps getting your significant other in the mood, this is a task that does not take much thought. If this class can be considered as progress toward a degree, then someone ought to inform Tommy Lee and Pamela Anderson that they are three credits closer to their Wesleyan diploma.

This course is cross-listed in the areas of women's studies and the interdisciplinary college of letters at Wesleyan, which means that at least two departments were asleep at the wheel when this course was originally proposed. A course syllabus which includes in-



MARK PASSWATERS

depth discussion on the Marquis De Sade and "academic takes on Hustler Magazine" should have set off alarm bells.

Considering that pornography has long been considered degrading to women, it is especially interesting that the women's studies department did not object. Maybe it would have if the class had met at a cathouse.

The fact that this course was even offered shows that the administration at Wesleyan has to be considered incompetent.

Almost as dense, it would seem, as the students claiming that the removal of this course would be censorship. Wesleyan is a private school, which people — or, more likely, their parents — pay \$30,000 a year to attend.

The key word in that last sentence was private, which means the administration has a lot more leeway to do what they deem to be prudent.

"A course syllabus which includes in-depth discussion on the Marquis De Sade and 'academic takes on Hustler Magazine' should have set off alarm bells."

One student who took the class said "porn films are very chic right now."

But it is unlikely that a class where 30 percent of a student's grade comes from setting up a camera and sexually gratifying oneself while listening to an Ella Fitzgerald record — which was actually done by a student this past semester — will do wonders for Wesleyan's national reputation.

Censorship is a real issue in places like China, Iran and Serbia, where people can be shot for speaking their mind.

The removal of this class from Wesleyan's curriculum by the administration is not only their prerogative but would be a dose of long-overdue common sense.

Students who think the removal of "Smut 101" is censorship should be sent to one of those countries to see how their whining goes over there. Suggestion: invest in bulletproof vests or get a clue.

Some people have gone so far as to say Professor Weismann is "a very brave woman." It sounds more like she is interested in shaking someone's tree in order to get attention.

Hopefully, the powers that be at Wesleyan University will cut off her branch and take this absurd course away from her.

Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student.

HILLARY, SOME CLAIM I PURPOSELY DON'T MENTION BILL'S NAME WHEN CAMPAIGNING, BECAUSE I DON'T WANT TO REMIND VOTERS OF MY CONNECTION TO HIM...

HILLARY 2000 *****

BILL WHO?

MIKE LUCKEVAICH
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