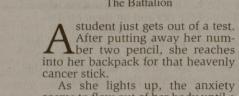
## AGGIELIFE avoid cross he Battalion Page 3 • Wednesday, September 8, 1999 The student act the Office of Flamming the Flames



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As she lights up, the anxiety seems to flow out of her body until a fanatical nonsmoker walks by coughing and hacking while staring at her.

Students at A&M have a problem sharing parking space, let alone air space, but smokers and nonsmokers are still at ends about a common solution, with no solution in sight.

Robin Nester, a senior horticulture major, said smoking is a way of life. "It's a person's right to smoke, Nester said. "People eat unhealthy foods — they can get cancer or heart disease that way too.

Allen Coker, a senior finance ma-jor, said smoking is his prerogative. "If you don't like the smoke, move somewhere else," Coker said. "If I want to kill myself slowly, it's my business.

Greg Simmons, a freshman chemical engineering major, said smokers do not really bother him.

"I don't know what people make such a big deal about," Simmons said. "I'm kind of used to it."

Simmons said he used to smoke when he was younger but later quit. "I didn't really enjoy it and it was a costly habit," he said.

Dr. Ken Phenow, associate medical director of Scott and White Clin-

ic's health plan and director of the Urgent Care Clinic said smoking is a dangerous habit.

"Young people in general think that they are immortal," Phenow H/THE BATTALION

said. "Their health is good, and un-til something comes and knocks you over the head, people aren't going to think differently

People don't understand that smoking will hurt their health," Phenow said. "You hear cancer or heart disease but don't listen. Unless you have seen someone die of emphysema, you can't understand.

"If you don't like the smoke, move somewhere else."

But some smokers think that there

are worse demons than the "Marl-

"People make a lot of choices," Nester said. "Smoking is not the worst one you can make. I'd rather smoke a pack of cigarettes than drink

as to why people start the habit.

There are many different theories

"College-aged kids usually start

smoking because of one of three rea-

sons," Phenow said. "Either because

their parents smoked, secondly be-

cause they have addictive personal-

ities or thirdly new studies show that

there might be a genetic tendency for some people to take more risks

that more college-aged women have

started smoking," Phenow said. "Also,

more women are starting to die from

the smoking related diseases that used

to be seen as only affecting males.

"The trend in recent years has been

boro Man.

and drive.

than others.

- Allen Coker

smoker

because of peer pressure. "It started as a social thing,'

Nester said "I just wanted to see what the big deal was.

The main barrier between smokers and nonsmokers is fear of secondhand smoke.

Phenow said nonsmokers can inhale the same amount smokers do in certain situations.

"If a nonsmoker sits in a bar, from lets say 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. they would have inhaled enough secondhand smoke as if they would have smoked five or six cigarettes themselves. The number and the damage increases if the nonsmoker is sitting around smokers.

Nester said she has had some people overreact when she was smoking in public. "Once, I was smoking outside a

store where I worked with some friends of mine," Nester said.

"A woman walked out of the store, coughing, covering her mouth with her shirt and being really obnoxious about the fact she didn't appreciate that we were smoking around her. Then, she got into her old diesel Mercedes, rolled down the windows and practically blew everyone else away with her exhaust.

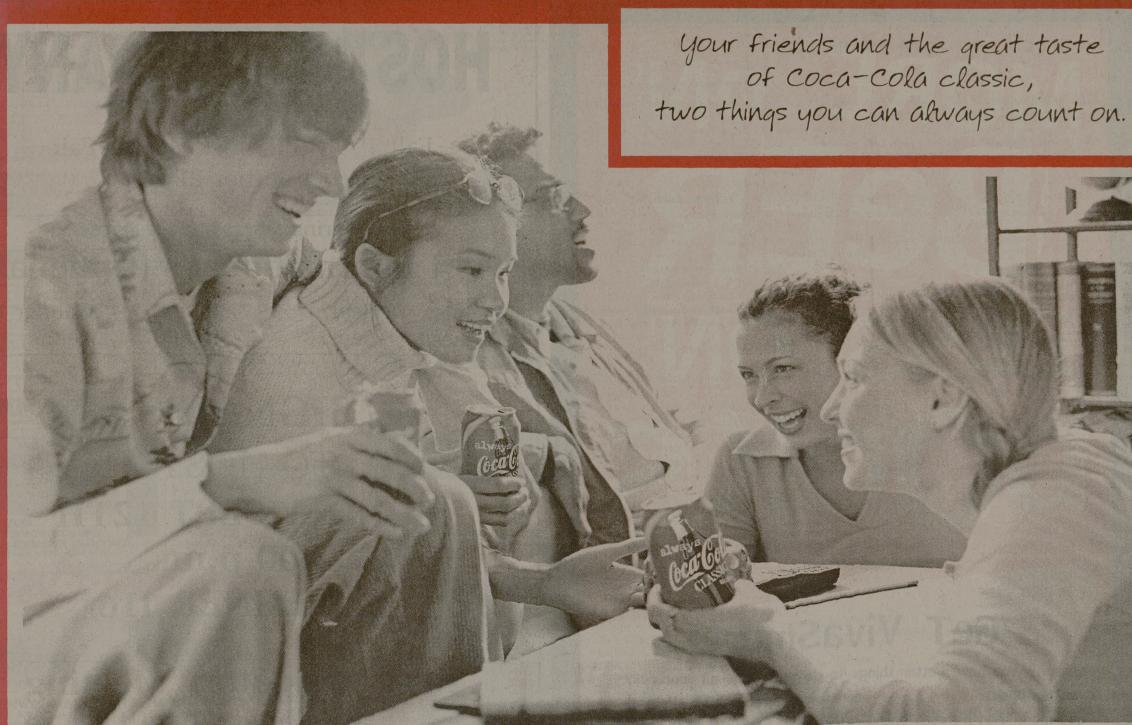
Simmons said recent laws passed in California that ban smoking in-

doors are appropriate. "I don't like getting smoke blown all over me while I'm eating," Simmons said.

Nester said she reserves her right to smoke in public, despite what others might think.

"Forget that," Nester said. "I like to smoke when I drink.





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