

ROAD RAGE

Tom Green movie showcases worst of college student life

The much-anticipated movie *Road Trip* hit the theaters in mid-May. Many college students thought, "Finally — a movie that's supposed to be as funny as *American Pie* and about college."



JILL RILEY

While *Road Trip* is funny, proving that college students can laugh at themselves, the characters in the flick are portrayed as degenerates. *Road Trip* makes the other classic college movie, *Animal House*, look virginal.

Movie makers have crossed the line in their pursuit of maximum gross-out comedy in films, and the consequences will affect moviegoers as well as movie makers.

Movies like *Road Trip* create the stigma that all college students do wild and crazy things like those shown in the movie. Not only are some of these scenes realistic, but they could also create problems for young, impressionable viewers.

Not too many years ago, a scene in *The Program* caused unnecessary tragedy. Kids lay in the middle of the highway after watching characters do it in the movie without being harmed. A vehicle ran over them, and they died. Producers of *The Program* took the scene out of the film soon after.

Road Trip includes several scenes that could be copied, some with deadlier consequences than others.

Probably the scariest scene is the road trippers' attempt to jump a collapsed bridge in a Ford Taurus. Granted, the car made it over the gap. But then it exploded.

The road trippers were in the middle of a deserted country road somewhere in Maryland. Yet, as is normal in the movie world, they happened to find a somewhat rundown, but still decent, motel to stay in.

In the real world, people might try to jump a bridge and die. Or they could get stuck in the middle of a country road with no handy motel to greet them. On a country road like the one in the movie, they would be more likely to be greeted with the receiving end of a shotgun.

The movie contains other activities that could be

copied with negative consequences, like having sex with someone on the first date — which was technically not even a first date since the two lovebirds in the movie just hooked up at a party.

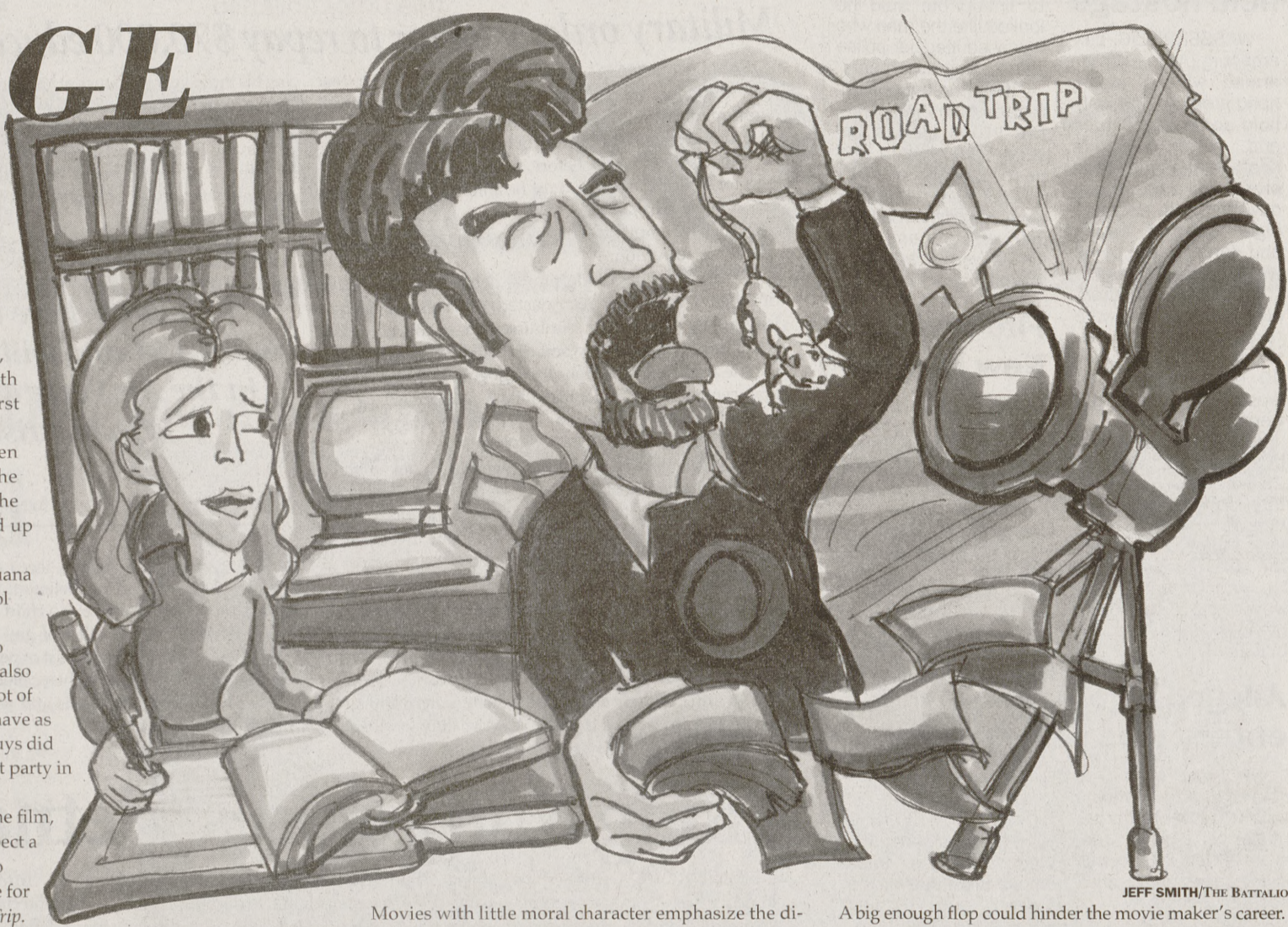
Smoking marijuana is portrayed as cool and normal in the movie. People who copy the film may also drink shot after shot of liquor in order to have as much fun as the guys did the night of the frat party in the movie.

According to the film, no one should expect a hangover, since no one seemed worse for the wear in *Road Trip*. These unrealistic portrayals of college life could entice young people to act like the degenerate characters do in the movie, which could create disaster on several levels.

Not only could gross-out comedies create tragedy, but they make American culture look sick — even more sick than Tom Green's dead-mouse scene.

Some scenes in *Road Trip* show people at the bottom of the moral ladder. For instance, the road trippers ruin their original car. What do they do? They steal a bus from a school for the blind. Not a single character, not even the pimply dork character, questions this move, which makes American college students look dishonest and cruel.

The moviegoer never finds out whether the characters return the bus, which could leave some viewers to believe that stealing has no consequence.



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

Movies with little moral character emphasize the diminishing values of the nation, as well as its apathy toward the outward appearances of its behavior.

Finally, gross-out comedic movie makers will eventually run out of nasty ideas. Yes, there is a point where shoving things where the sun does not shine ceases to be possible, let alone funny.

For example, the next Tom Green flick would not be as funny if he licks a mouse again, since he does that in *Road Trip*. To get the desired shocked, grossed-out laugh from the audience, Tom would have to do something more disgusting, like hump a dead moose. Oh, wait — he has already done that, too.

This kind of comedy, when taken too far, also loses its humor, and movies like these usually flop in the box office.

A big enough flop could hinder the movie maker's career.

Plus, unsuccessful comedies may cause producers to avoid the genre altogether, leaving moviegoers with nothing to see but *Kill Everyone Psychotically* and *Sappy Romance 3*, or create only silly, slapstick films like *Ernest Goes to Jail*.

The movie *Road Trip* is hilarious if one does not think of the consequences to the characters' actions while watching it. Since the movie has already been made, it will probably become a classic college flick.

In the future, however, college students should send the message to Hollywood that they DO have half a brain that helps them make better decisions than the characters in *Road Trip*.

Jill Riley is a senior journalism major.

Finding a new way home

CARPOOL's absence teaches Aggies responsibility

Over the past school year, CARPOOL (Caring Aggies R Protecting Over Our Lives) became a re-sounding success and a welcome sight at many Texas A&M bars and keg parties. The program, which gave safe, no-questions-asked rides home to 6,343 drunk or stranded students this year, has made an impact on many lives.



ERIC DICKENS

However, it is summertime, and those "Caring Aggies" are going on vacation. The CARPOOL gang will take off the entire summer due to a lack of volunteers. Those neon-green shirts that have become as regular a fashion statement on Northgate as dirty white caps will be missing in action until Fall 2000. Have no fear, though, the dirty white caps will still be around.

While CARPOOL will definitely be missed on the Northgate summer fashion scene, the greatest pain from its absence will be felt by those Aggies standing outside broken phone booths with money in their hands and a serious buzz in their heads. CARPOOL's summer vacation will hurt Aggies without a ride home by forcing them to call the cab service phone number on CARPOOL's answering machine.

Although the program is forsaking its would-be summer patrons, CARPOOL's truancy will actually benefit A&M. With CARPOOL on hiatus, students should take the opportunity to learn to be more responsible while drinking and partying.

Not only can students reap rewards from the lack of CARPOOL's services, but the program will benefit as well. The word from Jeff Schiefelbein, CARPOOL's

founder, is that the program directors will take this time to evaluate CARPOOL's freshman year. With any luck, when CARPOOL returns in the fall, it will be even more prominent and active for the Aggie who has had one too many.

Also, one group that took a serious hit in the wallet when CARPOOL began — local cab services — will certainly benefit from the program's absence. It always seemed harsh for CARPOOL to offer, for free, a service that other Bryan-College

summer scene at Dudley's will continue as it always has, even if CARPOOL is not up and running." Unfortunately, that scene will include students stumbling drunkenly out of Dudley's doors and looking for their cars. In the absence of those "Caring Aggies," students should take this opportunity to protect over their own lives and be more responsible for their own actions. CARPOOL has been a very successful and rewarding program, but it is not an excuse to get hammered and it should never be taken for granted.

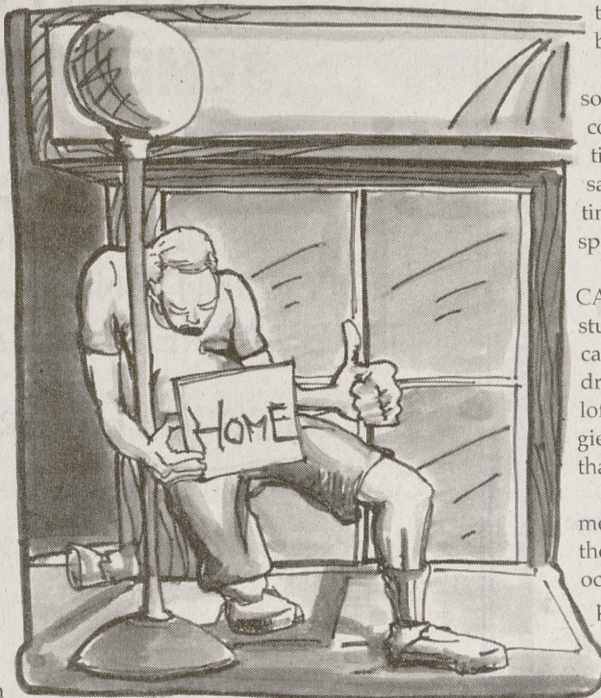
Students who view CARPOOL as a sort of "get out of jail free" card have completely missed the program's intentions and real purpose. CARPOOL is a safety net for A&M students, and it is time Aggies went back to partying responsibly without that net.

The thousands of rides given by CARPOOL shows that a large number of students are literally making the right call once they find themselves about to drive home drunkenly. However, that lofty number also shows that a lot of Aggies are screwing up to put themselves in that situation in the first place.

With CARPOOL gone for the summer, students need to learn to prevent those drunken scenarios before they even occur. Aggies out on the town who have previously enjoyed CARPOOL's services should revert back to those lessons taught by so many high school health teachers. The old virtues of cutting oneself off hours before going home and/or designating a driver reach new levels of importance without CARPOOL.

CARPOOL's summer vacation takes away a certain security blanket from celebrating Aggies, but it also presents students with the perfect chance to work on looking out for themselves. The CARPOOL service may be of great use to students, but learning to drink responsibly is one lesson with a usefulness that never takes a summer off.

Eric Dickens is a junior English major.



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

Station residents were selling to feed their families. Now, without CARPOOL, business will improve for B-CS cabbies. It seems safe to say the owners of University Taxi and other area cab companies will not be lamenting the void left by CARPOOL this summer.

In the end, though, the group most likely to benefit from the temporary loss of CARPOOL is A&M students. While school may be out, the parties will continue, and business at bars will be as usual. Richard Benning, the owner of Dudley's Draw on Northgate, said "The

MAIL CALL

Faculty need not fear peer opinion

In response to Maureen Kane's May 30 column.

I am really glad I had the opportunity to read your article as we students always look to the faculty for guidance. One particular quote by Rob McGeachin stands out to me: "The opinion of this institution in the eyes of our peers is in jeopardy if we let Bonfire continue."

I have been trying to decide for some time now whether I should smoke pot or go on drinking binges. I have been getting harassed by my peers, at this school and other institutions, because I refuse to partake. Now that I know the same people who have always warned me against peer pressure and not falling victim to it are hypocritical on that position, I can now do whatever everyone else is doing, just because of what my peers will think of me.

Seems like facts and reality do not seem to matter any-

more and I am really, really tired of the same old worn-out arguments about a waste of resources. I wonder if these professors would live in a house made of post oak?

Marc Barringer
Class of '92

A&M faculty should be heard

In response to Justin Seal's May 31 Mail Call.

The May 31 Mail Call letter regarding Bonfire is a prime example of what the Bonfire Commission termed "cultural bias," and an important reason why the faculty opinions concerning Bonfire should be acknowledged.

The reason this tradition has existed so long is because dissenting opinions about Bonfire are too often quelled. If the opinion of the Faculty Senate had been pro Bonfire, I suspect I would never have seen such a letter.

The students have had am-

ple opportunity to express their opinions (about 90 years) and, in fact, until this tradition took 12 lives, it seems that the students' opinions were the only ones that counted. Currently, Texas A&M falsely regards itself as a world-class institution.

Without the participation of everyone at this University, including those with opinions differing from the overwhelming majority, A&M will compromise its integrity and never fulfill its potential to be, indeed, world-class.

Caleb Kennedy
Class of '00

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013 Reed McDonald
Texas A&M University
College Station, TX
77843-1111

Campus Mail: 1111
Fax: (409) 845-2647
E-mail: battletters@hotmail.com



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