

## Kicking the habit

### Aggies share their struggles with smoking

By Lindsay Fielder  
THE BATTALION

People do it in the car, on the back porch, on a break at work and even on campus. Lately it seems like everybody is smoking.

But some Aggies are not. John Portwood, a graduate student in education, quit smoking more than a year ago. He smoked at least one pack a day when he smoked his heaviest.

"I quit because of my girlfriend at the time, now my fiancée," he said. "She hated it and is allergic to smoke, so I had to quit."

Portwood tried smoking when he was 14 and started smoking on a regular basis when he was 17.

"I started [smoking] because I wanted

to look cool," he said. "I started partying, and I thought it made me look cool."

Quitting was not easy for Portwood. He used "the patch" the first time he tried to quit, but instead of helping his nicotine addiction, it increased it.

"I used the patch and smoked cigarettes at the same time," he said. "Then I was addicted even more, and I had to wean myself off the patch before I could even quit smoking."

When he quit for good, Portwood went "cold turkey." To deal with the cravings, he chewed gum and ate Jolly Ranchers. When that was not enough to keep him from wanting to smoke, he got a prescription from the doctor.

"Wellbutrin is an antidepressant that helps people stop smoking. I took one in

the morning, and I didn't want a cigarette," he said.

He said he misses having something to look forward to.

"I was always looking forward to smoking a cigarette," he said.

Portwood said he feels much better now that he has quit smoking. Even though the cravings still haunt him, the benefits of quitting keep him from going back to cigarettes.

"There are lots of nasty things about smoking," he said. "It's a very dirty habit." Portwood is much happier about his health now that he has quit smoking, and so is his family.

"My dad was in his 20s when he quit [smoking]. He is 52 now and he says he still craves a cigarette every once in a while," he said. "That helps me get over it when I'm at a party and I want a cigarette so bad."

Cody Hampshire, a junior computer engineering major, quit smoking in December.

He started smoking during his freshman year of high school on a trip to the beach in Louisiana.

"The guys I was with told me that if you wanted to stay at the beach cabin, it was a rule that you had to smoke," he said.

After his first time, Hampshire said he did not start regularly smoking until his junior year in high school. After he began smoking more, it progressed into a full-fledged addiction.

The cost of cigarettes drained his bank account.

"I was paying too much for cigarettes, and I was tired of smelling like smoke all the time," he said.

Now that Hampshire is smoke-free, he said he feels the positive

effects of not smoking.

"I don't wake up in the morning with a sore throat. I'm not tired all the time," he said.

Hampshire said he used nicotine gum to help him quit. When the cravings hit, he tried to pacify them by eating a piece of gum.

"I only used about 10 pieces of the gum, because I still wanted to smoke afterwards," he said.

Hampshire said he misses the seven minute break from the stress.

"I miss taking time out of every hour to sit and be still. I could think things over, and if I didn't solve my problems, I lit another cigarette and thought about them some more," he said.

Although he misses the physical act of smoking, he said he does not miss the smell.

"It's nice to wear a shirt all day and when I take it off at night, it still smells good," he said.

Adam Bailey, a senior wildlife and fisheries sciences major, said he tried to quit smoking four or five times, but always ended up smoking again after a month. He tried to quit because girls did not like it.

"When I started dating someone new, I would try to cut back, and I wouldn't smoke around them," he said.

A year and a half ago, Bailey decided to quit smoking for good.

"It's only hard [not to smoke] when there are other people around smoking," he said.

Bailey started smoking at work when he was 16 and progressed to smoking two packs a week.

Bailey said the best thing about quitting smoking is the health aspect.

"I just like knowing that I'm a healthier person now," he said.

## Singer Schulz balances his music and his age

By Matt Patin  
THE BATTALION

Judging by the A&M posters that adorn his bedroom walls and the collegiate paraphernalia that splashes his room maroon, it is not hard to deduce that John Wayne Schulz wants to be an Aggie, like his siblings before him. But at only 14 years old, Schulz has several years before he needs to worry about application deadlines and the anxious anticipation that ensues. In the meantime, he devotes his energy to a hobby that few his age could ever imagine—a country music career.

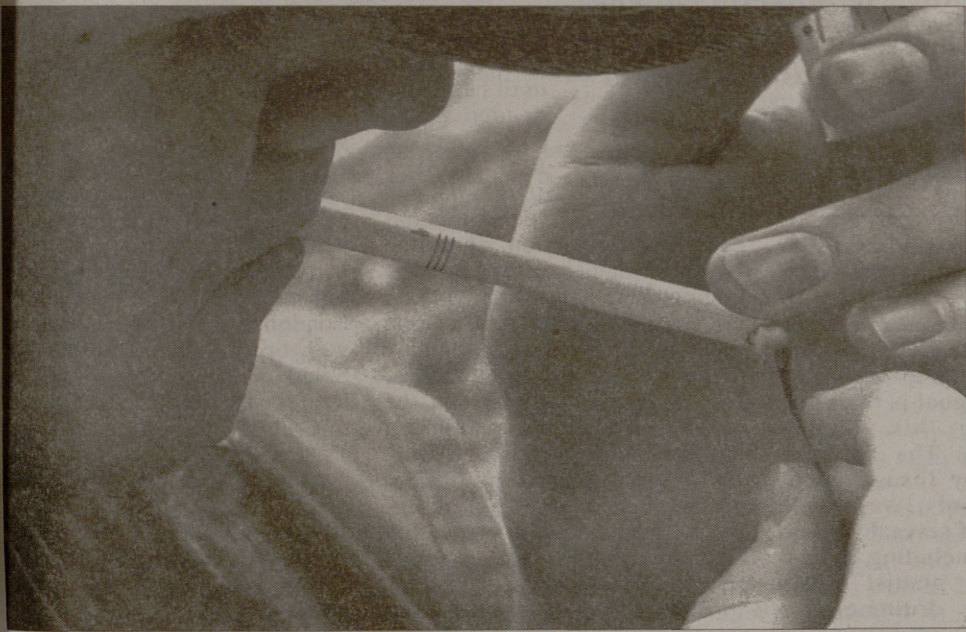
Schulz's debut album *Ropin' Dreams* plays in only a modest amount of stores, mostly those of friends, family and fans made on the road. But with a calendar full of gigs, it is bound to gain momentum.

Schulz has seven Grammy nominations, including Best Country Album of the Year and Best New Country Artist, but Schulz's talent was acknowledged long before the prospect of owning a golden gramophone.

"My first public appearance was at a talent show in the second grade," Schulz said. "After that, I was asked to perform at banquets, county fairs and pageants. I did a talent show for 4-H in Three Rivers, Texas, and ended up winning. I then realized that [singing] was what I really wanted to do."

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See John Wayne on page 4



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