

## Clearing the air

Recent study underscores need to prohibit smoking in Texas' public buildings

Is going places that reek of smoke the least harmful effect of the bar scene? A study recently published in the British Medical Journal confirms what people have really known all along: secondhand smoke has immediate and significantly detrimental effects on health. In simpler terms, smoking should be banned in public buildings in Texas.

Going out may leave the hundreds of students at Northgate, the Tap or Hurricane Harry's on any given weekend with a condition much worse than a hangover.

Within five minutes of walking into a smoky bar or restaurant, a person begins to be affected by secondhand smoke. The aorta begins to stiffen after only five minutes of exposure and, in a mere 30 minutes, the blood becomes more clotted, causing damage to artery linings, according to CanWest News Service.

After only two hours around smoke, less blood is able to reach the heart as blood vessels constrict enough to disturb the heart's rhythm, according to Dr. Stanley Glantz, a cardiologist at the University of California-San Francisco and lead investigator of a team of doctors who studied the effects of a smoking ban in public places and workplaces in Helena, Mont.

This particular study focused on secondhand smoke as a risk factor for heart attacks, and the findings present staggering evidence for a ban. As Glantz told CanWest News Service, a ban "not only makes life more pleasant; it immediately starts saving lives."

In fact, a ban may reduce heart attacks by as much as 40 percent. Of the 65,000 people in the Helena region, an average of 40 people a month consistently suffered heart attacks during the six-month period studied in the four years before and one year after the ban. However, for the six months the ban was implemented, the number of heart attacks per month dropped to 24. No correspon-



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ding drop was seen for that period in the surrounding area, where there was no ban, as reported by The New York Times.

The conclusion: Bans on smoking in public places save lives.

One of the main opponents to public smoking bans is the coalition of restaurant and bar owners; ironic, as restaurant and bar employees are probably among the most harmed by secondhand smoke.

In New York City, many vehemently protested the decision last year to ban public smoking, fearing negative effects on business. However, a report issued in late March disclosed that in the 10 months since the ban, tax receipts from bars and restaurants had actually jumped 8.7 percent, according to The Associated Press. "The city's bar and restaurant industry is thriving and its workers are breathing cleaner, safer air," the Economic Development Corporation and the Departments of Finance, Health and Mental Hygiene and Small Business Services reported to the AP.

While courts in Helena continue to debate whether the smoking ban should be re-enacted, all study results seem to answer with a resounding "yes!" New York and California have been leaders among states in banning public smoking, and it is clear that the benefits of doing so are tremendous and should be extended to Texans. If

a statewide ban is unlikely, the city of College Station should seriously consider one of its own. How about a smoke-free Northgate?

**“Going out may leave the hundreds of students at Northgate, the Tap or Hurricane Harry's on any given weekend with a condition worse than a hangover.”**

Lindsay Orman is a senior English major.  
Graphic by Ivan Flores



### MAIL CALL

#### YCT 'Hall of Dishonor' hurts academic freedom

In response to a May 4 news article:

In the guise of trying to promote academic freedom, the YCT has demonstrated that it may be the biggest enemy to academic freedom on campus. With their new "Hall of Dishonor," the YCT is trying to intimidate professors into not exercising their right to academic freedom and not providing their students with a comprehensive education (not just the white-washed version of history that the YCT promotes). One professor made the list for teaching about racism. I imagine the YCT would not want a professor teaching about racism, since they still do not acknowledge its existence.

Another was scapegoated for displaying his personal artwork on his Web site, which has nothing to do with teaching a class. Another made the list for teaching the history of black Americans, rather than just slipping over their history. The YCT also complained that this professor once remarked that "President Bush has failed to promote racial equality." The truth hurts.

We are lucky that A&M students and professors are not taking this list seriously. If they did, we would attend a school where free speech is punished, professors are censored, students are only taught one perspective and our educations are incomplete.

Nick Anthis  
president, Texas Aggie Democrats

#### Criticism of President Bush is unwarranted

The opinions that demean our nation's leaders are greatly unfounded. Do people think that President Bush makes every decision for our nation alone?

Better yet, how did these people get accepted into this University? Obviously, they would've had to satisfy a certain number of credits for government/economics classes prior to admittance. That knowledge must've flown right out the window, along with tax dollars spent paying the salary of a former Democratic president who chose to commit immoral, sexual perjury while in office.

Wow, slap a man on the wrists for committing a crime against the American people, but slander those soldiers (and the pride of their families) who fight and honor a decision enforced to protect our nation.

The current president spends a major percentage of his time "cleaning up" the former office holder's mess — that's a fact evident throughout economic history. Stop blaming Bush for your lack of knowledge. Let's see you successfully make decisions that accommodate billions of people. Sadly, the 2 percent of those who ill-represent the turnaround of intelligence at TAMU never fail to lower the standard of excellence. The human brain generates information much faster than the mouth ... perhaps there's a reason for that.

Kellie Scamardo  
production editor,  
Integrated Ocean Drilling Program

## Assassination of Arafat not a peaceful solution

If killed, Arafat would be viewed as a martyr

Palestinian terrorist leaders better watch out.

Recent comments made by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon suggest that he is no longer bound to the promise he made to President Bush three years ago that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat would not be physically harmed. Is it possible that Israel is polishing up yet another missile for an assassination? Perhaps, or maybe Sharon was just spewing out threats to quiet Arafat's vocal condemnation of the evacuation plan, claiming that the Road Map to peace would fail if Sharon tried to keep "key" sections of the West Bank.

The question remains, however: Would assassinating Arafat mark a positive step toward securing Israel's safety and fighting the War on Terror? Yes, it would. But even though this sounds contradictory, Israel should hold off.

Any attack on Arafat would cause such an uproar in the Palestinian population that it is doubtful any peaceful settlement could ever be obtained. It's doubtful now even while Arafat is alive. Killing him would only make matters worse, in the short-run at least.

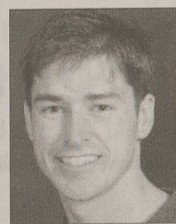
Arafat began his career in terror in 1956, founding the underground terrorist organization Al Fatah. At first, he wielded little clout in the international community, but by 1968 he received a bit of a promotion, no doubt for his "good work," and became the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Thereafter, according to ABC News, "for two decades, the PLO launched bloody attacks on Israel, and Arafat gained a reputation as a ruthless terrorist."

Perhaps Arafat's biggest claims to fame or debauchery were the ordering of the Black September faction of Al Fatah to murder 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics and the 1973 attack on the Saudi embassy in the Sudan.

Surely some are curious as to why this murder has received a pass to engage in terror with impunity. The answer revolves around the controversial conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Arafat has emerged as a hero to the Palestinians, while being regarded as a terrorist to the western world. Thus he has been allowed to live simply because western leaders desire to keep the Palestinians "sedated" in a sense.

Israel, on the other hand, has dreamt of annihilating Arafat for some time now, but the biggest ally to Israel is also one of the biggest protectorates of Arafat: the United



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States. With all that this man has done and all the horrific deeds he still promotes, the United States still remains complacent in letting him live. Even after Sharon's threatening statements, the White House remained unwavering in opposition.

Thus far, such White House opposition may be enough to keep Israel from acting. Israeli Ceremonial President Moshe Katsav stated, "If the U.S. asks us not to liquidate Yasser Arafat, I assume that the government will honor that request."

In the end, this is a wise move for several reasons. First, Israel has already received strenuous opposition regarding the assassinations of two Hamas leaders and the killing of another will only turn more international leaders off to supporting subsequent Israeli policies. Secondly,

eliminating Arafat will most likely solicit a fire storm of unprecedented terrorist attacks. Though in the long run the terrorist leader would no longer be able to support terrorism or voice descent in the Peace Plan, Israel citizens, however, may not be ready to withstand the retaliatory attacks that will come.

In truth, assassinating Arafat would only do him a favor. He would achieve his ultimate goal: martyrdom. Consider the words he spoke to supporters gathered outside of his headquarters, "Our destiny is to be martyrs in this holy land." This is the only reason these fanatics engage in terror in the first place. Well, correction, perhaps the belief of obtaining lots of virgins in the afterlife provides some incentive: "Work hard, play harder."

Some voice the argument that assassinating world leaders is wrong, immoral and so on. They make a fair point. It's terrible to even consider such an option, but if assassinating a rogue world leader means countries can avoid war or further bloodshed, it's well worth it. The main problem in this case is that the Israelis waited far too long to do it.

The cost of making this man a martyr and inspiring more Palestinians to engage in suicide-bombings, or their favorite terrorist/jihad method of choice, will be too devastating. The best move is to leave the man where he has been for two years: confined to his headquarters.

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