



Shelby Knowles — THE BATTALION

Keep College Station weird

Aggieland ranked No. 5 on hipster city poll, which isn't as surprising as you'd think

Katie Canales
@KatieCanales1

College Station is known for AggieLand, its country atmosphere and especially its conservative culture. It's not known for being in any way associated with the vintage-wearing, non-conforming hipster subculture much more identifiable with places like New York City or Austin.

However, these were two of the hipster-invaded places that failed to make the Top U.S. Cities for Hipsters list constructed by a FindYourHome.com analysis. Instead, the list consisted of places like Iowa City at No. 17, Hoboken, New Jersey, at No. 1 and, wait for it — our beloved College Station was ranked No. 5 for the top hipster cities in the nation.

It shocked me, too, at first. But taking into account the characteristics FindYourHome.com analyzed in each area of the country, it makes pretty good sense that College Station, a small Texas town, is high on the list.

First, a little background on the hipster subculture. Urban Dictionary defines "hipster" as follows: A subculture of men and women typically in their 20s and 30s that value independent thinking, counter-culture, progressive politics, an appreciation of art and indie-rock, creativity, intelligence and witty banter. From my own experience (I grew up outside of Austin and passed through adolescence very much absorbed in the hipster sphere), I can verify that definition. Hipsters are also easily identified by long mountain-man beards, flannels, androgynous characteristics, thrifted retro clothing, shoes and accessories, and are seen passing their time in coffee shops, among other locations. Which brings me to how AggieLand has been dubbed a hipster hub.

FindYourHome.com focused on these four demographics in its analysis: Age, level of education and number of coffeeshops and yoga studios. The website found that the common denominators with all the "hip" cities on the list were the high concentration of the 20-22 age group, the people in that group pursuing a higher level of education and the number of coffeeshops and yoga studios in the area.

College Station consists mostly of college students, ages 18-23, give or take, and is home to approximately 20 coffeeshops, excluding major chains such as Starbucks, and about five yoga studios.

To give some comparison, these numbers are multiplied in places like Austin and New York. The reason, I would guess, why College Station ranked ahead of these places is there are more hipsters per coffee shop and yoga studio here than there are in the Texas Capitol City and the Big Apple.

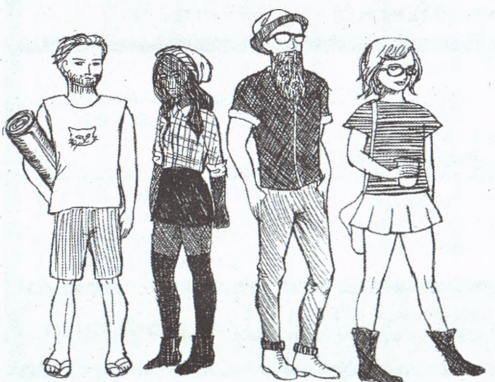
This most likely applies to the other places on the list that people were shocked to see called hipster sanctuaries, particularly small college towns consisting of a large population of young people.

I've seen mixed reactions among Aggies to the study done, mainly incredulity. But I assure you, once you enter the hipster's natural habitat, you'll find that College Station is more hipster-ridden than you previously thought.

It's next to impossible to walk into Sweet Eugene's or Mugwalls or the Village Cafe and not spot one studying in the corner, wearing thick-rimmed glasses that may or may not be fake, sipping a cup of coffee and jamming out to Arctic Monkeys or Bon Iver.

College Station making this list may just be because of the hipster-to-coffeeshop ratio, but I see it as another sign of the art scene growing out of this long-time conservative region. If you've never stepped foot in one of the cafes around town, I encourage you to try it out and see what you find — unless you're too cool for that.

Katie Canales is a journalism sophomore and life & arts editor for The Battalion.



Frederica Shih — THE BATTALION

Swipe right for revelation

Tinder is more than its stereotype

Jennifer Reiley
@jreiley1

Dating is not my forte. My first kiss was a botched Midnight Yell attempt. We went to Midnight Yell, the lights went out — and nothing. Later I found out he had gotten nervous because it was my first kiss. Adorable. So we met up a few nights later and walked around campus. And we kissed. And like any good first kiss, it was extremely awkward. Then he walked me back to my dorm and I never saw him again.

So ... I am flirting inept. And I didn't understand it. How did people flirt so effortlessly? I wanted to perform a type of social study, and when thinking of places where people go to meet and flirt, one app came to mind — Tinder.

Yes, Tinder. The place where hookups and just all-around nonsense takes place. I made the decision to join Tinder at 2 a.m., thinking I should have followed the advice from "How I Met Your Mother" in the process. I didn't sign on to find someone. That was the furthest thing from my mind. It started as a social experiment — I was curious to see just how true the stereotypes surrounding Tinder were.

The results were mixed. While the app met some of my expectations in terms of dating conversation, it broke some stereotypes I had regarding Tinder as a communication tool.

From the beginning, the app did not function the way I expected it to. For those of you without a Tinder account, I'll give you a summary. Essentially, a picture of someone of the opposite sex (or same, depending on your indication) along with their age and first name. If you want to learn more, you click on their profile and there's an About Me section, followed by a shared likes based on Facebook profiles. If you want to match with the person, you swipe to the right. If you don't, swipe to the left. The mechanics are simple. If you get a match, the site alerts you and prompts you to message the person.

At first, I messaged no one. I wanted to see how long it would take them to message me first. After I had gotten a few matches, and no messages, I was beginning to feel confused. After the match, wasn't the person supposed to message you saying some cheesy line or just bluntly stating they wanted to have sex? I asked my friend, who has been on Tinder for about a year longer than I have, and she said that's not the case.

Instead, the match acts as an ego boost. The thought process is, "Hey, that person thinks I'm cute-interesting-likeable enough that they want to match with me. That's cool." Cue going on with going through



Jennifer, 21 5 miles away active 1 day ago

About Jennifer
When life gives you lemons, keep them. Hey, free lemons.

Kelly Burroughs — THE BATTALION

a list of potentials. So I tried messaging a few people. Some were the typical "Hiya," while others were a bit more creative. I asked questions such as, "If you could see into the future, what would you not want to see?" And people responded. I think I actually got more responses when I asked questions than when I just said hi.

And yes, there were people who asked to have sex with me. There were people who Tindered while drunk, or used terrible, and sometimes offensive, lines. But there were also people who, like me, were there for conversation. Some may say I was Tindering wrong, and while according to marketing I probably was, I found something that I had actually been looking for — a way to connect with people.

This needs some background. I do not friend strangers on Facebook. I do not friend people unless I actually know them personally. However, I had a thought at the beginning of the semester about how it would be cool to have somewhere online to talk to people I didn't know, and just talk. And in a way that I did not see coming, Tinder provided that. I've even been on a few real life dates that have gone well.

Right now, I'm still not sure how I feel about my experience on Tinder. While the site itself has a less-than-preferable marketing strategy which could lead to dangerous situations if people aren't careful, the people on the site are just that, people. They have opinions and voices and sometimes just need someone to talk to. Maybe they're not comfortable talking in social situations in real life.

Will I keep an account forever? Not likely. I'm definitely not on it as much as I was when I first started my account. But I will say this — Tinder surprised me.

Jennifer Reiley is a communication senior and assistant managing editor for The Battalion.

GUEST COLUMN

If A&M can renovate Kyle Field, why can't it handle parking without disrupting youth soccer?

As a faculty member and U8 soccer coach, I was appalled to hear that Texas A&M University officials are negotiating with City of College Station officials to use Veterans Park and Athletic Complex (VPAC) as a parking lot for "Get to the Grid" in Fall 2015. Local media have already reported on the position of the Brazos Valley Youth Soccer Association (BVYSA), which I and many other soccer moms and dads (and their kids) strongly endorse. It is obvious that the use of VPAC as a parking lot would displace several Saturday youth soccer games. According to BVYSA, College Station officials told University officials that VPAC had low or no use on Saturdays — a claim entirely untrue. I urge Battalion staff to investigate how College Station officials portrayed the Saturday use of VPAC to University officials.

The use of VPAC for "Get to the Grid" is bad policy and bad politics. It's bad policy because the University should resolve its parking issues for football game day within facilities that it controls, rather than shift the parking burden on others. In previous years, Post Oak Mall partly met the parking need. But Post Oak Mall is an entity that serves the retail and restaurant business. It is entirely

unlike VPAC in every way: taxpayers support VPAC and they use VPAC every day, for walking, picnics, softball and soccer. I'm not sure why College Station officials seem so eager to sell out youth soccer for parking, but that's another matter.

It's also bad politics for the University, because if this deal is confirmed, then local youth soccer will be held hostage to the kickoff times that the SEC, TV and cable determine. The University will be seen as a hapless and uninformed intermediary that somehow ignored its considerable negative impact on local youth recreational activities.

I hope the idea to turn VPAC into a football game-day parking lot finds its appropriate resolution: University officials should abandon the VPAC parking option. They should walk away from a potentially damaging political saga and think more creatively about how to get fans to football game without seriously disrupting Saturday youth soccer games. If this University can renovate Kyle Field, then why can't we figure out where to park cars without disrupting kids playing soccer games?

Christian Brannstrom, professor and director of Environmental Programs, College of Geosciences

BATTASKS: What did you think about the Game of Thrones premiere Sunday?



"The episode last night was kind of uneventful. I guess it was just like a welcome back to the series. I liked it though. It's hard to think about the first episode when I saw the other two leaked episodes — I didn't like that Sansa has to marry that guy who betrayed their family. I liked the part about Cersei's past being, I guess, the ugly duckling and showing the reason she wanted to protect her previous king."

Ashley Justynski
anthropology freshman



"I thought it was amazing. I really enjoyed the Cersei flashbacks, because they had never done that in the show before, it showed Cersei and how she's kind of the queen behind the scenes, and showed her as a little girl going to a fortune teller, and them telling her how her children are going to die and all that stuff. That was surprising. I've kind of read some of the books, so nothing was too surprising."

Brailey Strain
biomedical sciences sophomore

Lenae Allen — THE BATTALION