

Where there's smoke, there's bigots

CONAL
PIERSE

Smoking is something that's always seemed inherently badass to me—much like jump-kicking someone off of a motorcycle, *while smoking*. However, despite the undeniable coolness that they radiate, I'm not envious of my dark-lunged peers. Because though I sometimes get blinding drunk on a Monday night and throw up in SUB bathrooms, make rash and inappropriate statements in public places, and have no qualms about strangling a cow with my bare hands just to get a steak, I will never be as universally disliked as a smoker.

These days, it's completely fine to discriminate against another person simply because they happen to be a resident of flavour country. I know people who have refused to become involved with otherwise perfectly normal individuals solely because that person smoked, citing it as a critical character flaw that they just can't get past.

To think that it's simply an issue of the poor smell or taste of a smoker's mouth is silly because plenty of people have bad breath that we forgive them for—it's just a matter of mouthwash or powering through those first few minutes until your tongue becomes

numb to the taste of beer and peanuts. It's more of a mental revulsion to some warped concept of what a smoker is, as if putting tobacco between your lips suddenly makes you some kind of cross-eyed hunchback with a hook hand and peg-leg, rather than someone who has a problem that a little perfume and a stick of gum can fix.

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People simply refuse to cut smokers any slack. Many times I've witnessed someone light up, only to be berated for the act and forced to justify their choice of habit, yet I've never gotten more than a smile or an eye-roll for cracking a beer mid-day—hell, I've been encouraged and even threatened to partake in such behaviour. But were someone to offer a smoke, they'd receive a look of disgust similar to if they'd offered a bite of fresh placenta sandwich (which I hear are a rich source of iron).

The current smoking bans already force them to venture outside in the harsh Alberta winters to satisfy their cravings, and still some people don't think this is enough.

They're furious about their poor, pink little lungs being exposed to the harsh kill-you-dead carcinogens in second-hand smoke in the short moments they're required to walk past a smoker who's hunched up near the doorway, shivering like the little match girl, and wonder why these lepers can't take their cancer-sticks elsewhere. But truthfully, these people are threatening your health about as much as the guy who can't hold his chili-cheese burrito fart in over the course of a ten-second elevator ride—those bastards should be stoned.

Everybody has bad habits, but whether it's a tendency to spit when they talk or an inability to whisper, we by-and-large ignore their foibles—at least until they're no longer within earshot. Yet somehow, we can't just accept the fact that somebody smokes, outside, on their own time, and at their own risk—hell, they're only shortening their own sad smelly lives anyhow, so just live and let die.

If you want to continue to berate and badger your smoker friends—or even complete strangers—under the guise that you only “care about their health and the health of others,” that's all well and good, but don't be surprised when Johnny Cancer-Stick shoots back about your grating harpy voice or lopsided walk.

Then again, a cigarette started the fire in the Black Dog, so maybe we should just drag them all out behind the shed and solve this problem once and for all.

I've got places to go and can't just 'take it easy,' so quit slow-riding the hallways

DAVID
JOHNSTON

Ever get that weird self-conscious feeling when you're sprinting down a campus hallway like you shouldn't be going 45 km per hour? I do all the time. No matter why I'm running, I always feel like I ought not to be. It's times like these that I have the most in common with a bad SU candidate.

Sprinting on campus always feels vaguely wrong and unpopular, so it's a good thing that I can't do it very often due to all the slow-moving lollygaggers that seem to clog every bloody hallway like the cholesterol-encrusted arteries of Fat Albert—and no, I'm not bitter at all.

I didn't initially have anything against people who walk slowly; however, it's become a factor for me over the course of this semester due to my amazing talent of making class schedules that are physically impossible to keep.

For example, last year I somehow wound up taking a European history class on the sixth floor of Dent/Pharm—wrap your head around that one. And this term is no better: due to a predominance of arts courses, I find myself sprinting down HUB every hour to get from Humanities to FAB to Tory to Rutherford and back again just to make it to my classes on time.

“I can't be the only person in a hurry on campus—after all, we all have places to go, people to see, classes to skip—so why can't everyone, if not full-tilt sprinting, at least move through the hallways at a light jog? We'd all get to our classes, meetings, or quilting bees a little faster, and everybody would win.”

Again, normally this wouldn't be an issue, as I could just slip outside and do it. But with the snow runoff freezing the ground into an icy walkway giving it all the traction of Teflon-coated ball bearings, I have no choice but to travel indoors.

I turn down into the main corridor, and it's “woop, woop! All hands to deck; we have an Amber Alert here.” I can't be the only person in a hurry on campus—after all, we all have places to go, people to see, classes to skip—so why can't everyone, if not full-tilt sprint, at least move through the hallways at a light jog? We'd all get to our classes, meetings, or quilting bees a little faster, and everybody would win. But that's not going to happen because everyone else on campus is seemingly cursed with sloth-like apathy—or perhaps they all just know how to plan a walkable course-load. In any case, I have some ideas on how the world can be made a better place for those of us who are required to travel four miles in ten minutes with two stops like some terrible algebra word-problem come to life.

My first idea involves the installation of “slidewalks” in all hallways. Even if you're going too slow, once you step onto them, you're suddenly hitting speeds in the triple digits

while screaming for dear life before coming to an abrupt halt and getting launched through the wall by the terminal velocity you were flying along at.

I think this one's got real potential, but it might not suit the weak-hearted, so I came up with an alternative, which involves giving those of us in a hurry keys to miniature bulldozers—a plan that pretty much explains itself.

Barring that, perhaps the slower walkers could just stay to the side. You're not getting down HUB, SUB, or wherever else any faster or slower if you're going in a clump or single file, and this way, those of us who need to hit the afterburners won't feel like unsafe pariahs for weaving through a crowd of people at speeds that could break multiple bones if someone were to step out immediately.

This may come off a bit harsh, but it seems like common courtesy to make room for those of us in need. So buck up, stay to the right, and there'll be less high-speed collisions in no time. Alternately, one of you can just reorganize my schedule so my classrooms are all ten feet from each other. Then everyone can walk like turtles all you want, I won't care—scouts honour.



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