

Up in smoke: candy cigs and Generation Y

BY CHEYENNE CARMACK

All of those "You're an 80's child if..." lists have undoubtedly disregarded one popular icon of our youth -- candy cigarettes.

These confectionary puffs were both more commonly seen and more widely accepted in the youth of Generation Y.

Though they still grace the shelves of convenient stores and major candy chains, stiff controversy has tried repeatedly to shove the sugary sticks into oblivion.

But no amount of pro/con debate could diminish the memory of a childhood favorite.

This generation will continue to cherish the vanishing flames of candy smokes despite legal issues, just as children today will continue to adore Telle- Tubbie's despite innuendos involving Tinky Winky's sexuality.

Another pressing issue that faces the candy could be the fact that kids are different these days.

They don't play house or dress-up like we used to. Other past times occupy their minds. Therefore, the need for toys or props that mock

"grown-ups" is not there.

And for some reason, they don't even appreciate the dull, and somehow sweet, taste of the powdery puffs.

Five year old Allison Burdette, upon biting into a Round-Up brand cig, said "Yuck...I don't like that. It's gross."

Our generation must be keeping the candy alive, because the steady income still makes up a small percentage of the overall world candy sales.

But what was the attraction for those of us who so faithfully spilled our piggy banks for another box of candy smokes?

"I guess I was just doing it to be like an adult," admitted Gretchen Phelps, an RCHS junior who ate candy cigarettes as a child.

Another junior, Emily Wright just wanted to be like her grandfather.

"My papaw used to buy a pack of cigarettes, and then buy me a pack of fake ones," Wright said.

One source stated, "Candy cigarettes are to smoking-as training



Assorted types and brands of candy mock the looks of real tobacco products. Above are some of the favorite confections from childhood.

wheels are to a bicycle."

Could these silly sweets eventually lead to unhealthy habits in future years? The fact is, no one really knows. There hasn't been enough formal research to show a correlation between candy and real tobacco.

Does it really matter? Not to us, if the truth be known.

Candy cigarettes are just a small, delicious part of our childhoods. The mention or sight of them bring to mind Care Bears and Transformers, Big Wheels, and My Buddy.

The next time you're scanning

candy shelves, look toward the bottom of the rack. Amid forgotten gummi, bears and Big-League Chew, you'll find those chalky white sticks with the red dot ends and know that now, finally, you're all grown up.

photo by Mindy Bullock

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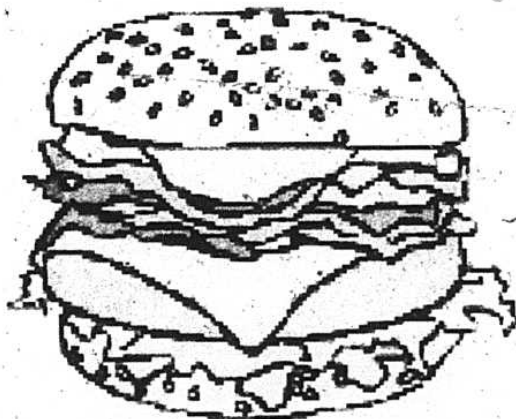
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