

# Bidi boom: flavored cigarettes catching on

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CHICAGO (TMS) — Ernest Castle, Jr. said he was smoking marijuana with some friends five years ago, when someone decided to pull out a strawberry-flavored bidi. The thin, brown cigarette, imported from India, resembled a joint, so Castle said he decided to try it.

"I was curious," Castle, a 22-year-old senior at Columbia College in Chicago said. "It made me mildly high for five minutes; it helped me unwind."

Castle said he was hooked on bidis from that moment on. He even credits his first puff on a bidi with helping kick his marijuana-smoking habit.

He isn't the only one loving bidis these days. Figures on bidi use in the United States are still in their infancy — but are slowly trickling in as bidis' popularity rises. Researchers consider the preliminary results disturbing. A study published last year in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* showed that in a survey of 642 youth in Massachusetts, 40 percent said they had smoked a bidi in their lifetime, while 16 percent said they had lit one up at least once in the previous 30 days. Of those surveyed, 23 percent said they smoked bidis primarily because of

their taste.

The flavorful tastes of bidis are seductive, but pack a mean punch, according to researchers at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC reports that bidis contain less tobacco than traditional cigarettes but still have three to five more times the amount of nicotine and tar. CDC researchers say bidis — which are unfiltered — also release more deadly chemicals, such as ammonia and carbon monoxide.

In India, where bidis are manufactured, it is estimated that 500 billion of the cigarettes are produced and consumed each year. Bidis consist of tobacco, which is hand rolled in tendu leaves giving the cigarette a brown, herbal-like appearance — but a low combustibility, which causes a smoker to inhale more deeply. The smokes' seemingly harmless facade and shredded tobacco has earned bidi packs a spot on shelves in both tobacco shops and health food stores. Critics of bidis say consumers are being duped by manufacturers' claims that bidis are a "more natural" smoking alternative.

Smokers — particularly young ones — are lured by bidis' cheap cost, too. They sell for \$2.20 for a pack of 25 compared to \$2.50 to \$3 for 20 cigarettes. And they come in a variety of flavors — everything from chocolate and vanilla, to more exotic flavors such as mango and lemon. The United States is the only

country that adds flavor to the cigarettes.

"They are something new and different, and they've gotten recent attention from the media," said A. Jenny Foreit, an associate in research for the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. "They're slightly forbidden, and they are flavored so they're easier to smoke."

Bidis started out big on the West Coast, in particular California. However, they are now creeping across the country and into major cities, such as Chicago, which last month became the first city in the nation to ban the sale of bidis.

"Teens are influenced by a lot of things," says Jonathan Swaine, chief of staff for Chicago Alderman Terry Peterson, who introduced the bidi-ban bill. "This type of cigarette is more powerful, and in addition to that, is flavored, which markets it towards children. What was done in Chicago was a preemptive strike."

The state of Illinois is following suit. A bill to ban the sale of bidis statewide recently passed in the state house and is currently pending before the state senate.

Bidis have been imported into the United States for at least 20 years, but only recently have found widespread popularity. Between 1995 and 1998, the value of cigarettes imported from India increased by 400 percent.

Amanda Serafin, 20, also has wit-

nessed the popularity of the bidi. Last year, she worked a part-time job as a telemarketer. There was a room set aside for smokers to take a break. It had only one small air vent, Serafin said.

"The fan wouldn't suck up the bidi smoke," Serafin recalled. "I'd come out of the room smelling like a bidi. The smell just lingered." Though she was turned off by the smell, curiosity did get the best of her, and she said she did try bidis. However, she says they made her feel horrible.

Castle is aware of the health risks, but he said he's addicted to bidis. "I quit a couple of times, and I never smoke more than 3 a day," he says.

"It just becomes very addictive."

After nearly two years of smoking bidis, he started experiencing respiratory problems and headaches, ailments that he links to his bidi-smoking habit. So, Castle switched to clove cigarettes, which are dipped in honey and rum and are typically bigger than a bidi, but still pack a punch.

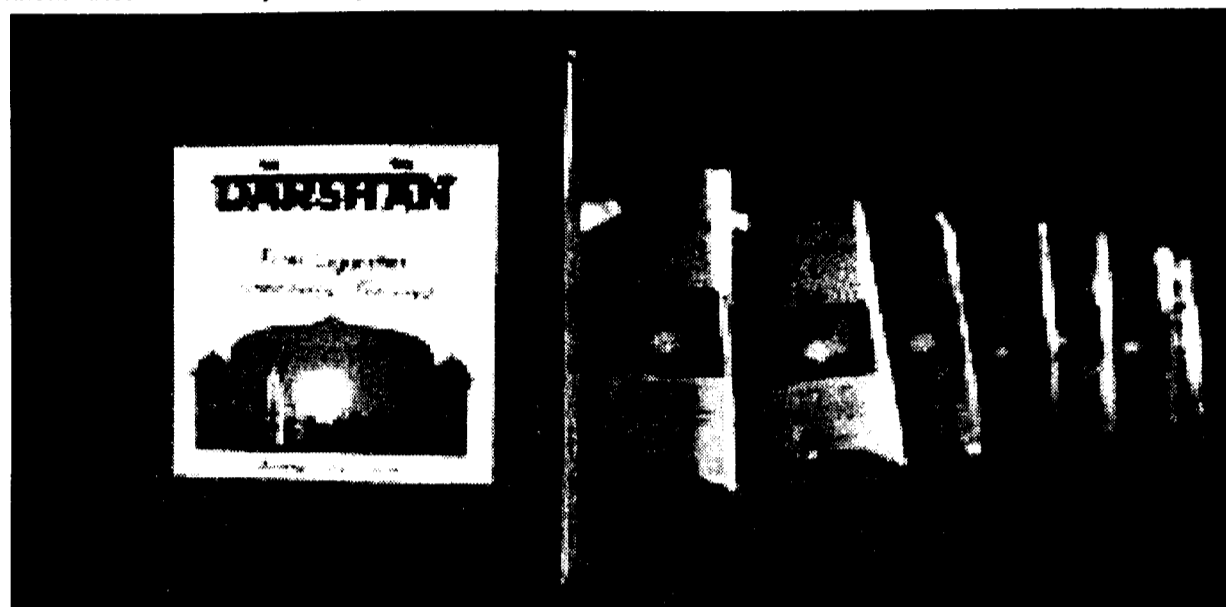
"It just gives me a slight, sensual little lift," Castle says. "You have to be careful not to inhale too deeply. There's no buzz if it's not inhaled properly."

"When you do it right, your toes should tingle," he added. "It's a nice little buzz." Clove cigarettes are not a part of the ban in Chicago. How-

ever, Foreit said the clove cigarettes can be just as harmful as bidis and more traditional smokes.

"The clove releases chemicals that act like an anesthetic," Foreit said. "It makes it easier to hold [the toxins] in the lungs for a longer time."

It is still too early to tell whether the ban in Chicago will have an effect on the growing popularity of bidis or even if other cities will follow. But ban or no ban, people often find what they want no matter what, and bidis are no exception. The Internet holds several Web sites for bidi vendors. With a credit card, it's easy to get a pack.



KRT PHOTO BY RICH SUGG

Bidi cigarettes from India, shown here at Tobacco Road Smoke Shop in Kansas City, Kansas.

## Gloria Steinem tells students feminism worthless unless used outside classroom

by Meredith Goldstein  
Knight-Ridder Tribune  
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NORTON, Mass. — Apryl Berney remembers the 1998 *Time Magazine* cover that featured the floating heads of Susan B. Anthony, Gloria Steinem, and Betty Friedan, next to the emaciated face of lonely, confused thirty-something Ally McBeal.

The headline asked: "Is feminism dead?"

"No. Of course not," answered Berney, 21.

It's not that feminism is dead, it's just that its message is expanding and there are different women leading the movement, she said. Young feminists now address issues of race and class and all of the inequities that make it more difficult for those on the bottom rung of the ladder to move to the top.

*"The third wave is about responsibility. We aren't all middle-class white ladies anymore."*

—Kathryn Baxter, women's studies major, Wheaton College

ations, she told a group of about 60 students and teachers — mostly women — who attended a panel discussion on the future of feminism.

"The third wave of feminism cannot be defined by *Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire?*" she said. "Young women have a lot to accomplish and are doing some great work."

Steinem, who dressed in black with her hair tied neatly in red rubber bands, sat a few seats away from purple-haired Kathryn Baxter, 21, a women's studies major who spoke on the panel about the next generation of feminists.

"There is this notion that we are done, but we are not finished," Baxter said, as Steinem offered an approving glance.

Young feminists, she said, must focus on ending domestic violence and rape. They must fight for the rights not only of white women, but also of people of different races and ethnicities, homosexuals and transgendered people (transsexuals and transvestites).

"The third wave is about responsibility," she said. "We aren't all middle-class white ladies anymore."

Many women of Baxter's generation consider themselves "third-wave" feminists. First-wave feminists are said to be the pioneers of the movement, the women who won the right to vote and took the first steps toward independence. The second-wavers, like Steinem and Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique*, brought women out of the kitchen and fought for abortion rights and birth control.

The young "third-wave" feminists say they're fighting not only for true equality, but also for the identity of a movement that many think was left behind in the 1970s.

Many of these young women are studying feminism in university women's studies programs. They read the work of authors and theorists such as Angela Davis, bell hooks, Andrea Dworkin, and Linda Alcoff.

Steinem said it's inspiring to watch the movement grow and become a respected part of academic institutions. But feminism is worthless, she said, unless it can be used as a tool outside of the classroom. When she speaks at universities, she is often asked what kind of feminist she is. Liberal? Radical? Separatist?

"I mean please, what does this mean?" she asked. "I'm not much into labels. Feminism is about what you do."

Berney, who became a women's studies student after working during the summer for the Feminist Majority Foundation in Los Angeles, said Steinem's concern that feminism has become too academic is a genuine problem for young women who study the movement.

"It's the struggle between theory and practice," Berney said. "We know the theory, but it's up to us to put it into practice. That's where the third wave has come from."

Sharon Lauricella, a Wheaton graduate who just finished her doctorate in women's history at the University of Cambridge in England, came back to the college with her father to hear Steinem speak. She admitted that they were somewhat starstruck to see her in person.

"It's really great that Wheaton asked her to come. She is amazing," she said. "She really had a lot to say."

Lauricella, 28, said it is important for young feminists to know their history. Seeing Steinem reminds them that they have mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers who fought for the same freedoms.

It's especially important on a campus with a history of female solidarity. Lauricella said she realized the importance of a women-centered environment after attending Cambridge's Corpus Christi College, which began admitting women in 1988, the same year Wheaton began admitting men.

"Sometimes I worry that students don't remember that this was once a women's college," she said. "I think it's important that they understand the importance of that history."

Lauricella said that women, young and old, define feminism differently. It has many faces, many names. It stands for different causes and beliefs.

She remembers that in Whitman, Mass., where she grew up, the word feminism was used infrequently. Most people were white, and most made a decent living. Residents were educated and sexism was often disguised.

But she does remember a public school teacher who would refer to the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, as the "idiot amendment."

Lauricella remembers getting angry and wanting desperately to defend her freedom, even though she was just a young student who knew little about the women's movement.

"I realized when I got to school that that something had a name," she said. "It was being a feminist."

## Pirating music off Web prompts U. of Texas to block site

by John W. Gonzalez  
Knight-Ridder Tribune  
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AUSTIN, Texas — Joining scores of colleges around the nation, the University of Texas is cracking down on students who use the campus computer network to download songs from the Internet.

Such a practice often violates federal copyright laws that are designed to protect entertainers. However, university officials' primary interest is in ensuring that the computer network, which serves 75,000 students, faculty, and administrators, is available for higher-priority academic uses.

Though UT hasn't disclosed how much of its network capacity, or bandwidth, was being usurped by those accessing music, counterparts around the nation have estimated that 40 percent or more of their bandwidth is monopolized by music downloads, sometimes driving up costs.

Much of the commotion centers on the Web site [www.napster.com](http://www.napster.com), where music can be downloaded. The Web site has been rendered inaccessible on several university computer systems, including UT's. While some students defended the move to make [napster.com](http://www.napster.com) off limits, others said it is futile to try to eliminate the activity by targeting a Web site.

"It's only a matter of time before a thousand mini-napsters are out there on the Net," student Anand Kumar Inala wrote in a letter to the *Daily Texan*, the student newspaper.

The university will not be able to track the new Web sites that inevitably will appear to take [napster.com](http://www.napster.com)'s place, the sophomore predicted. Inala signed a petition to remove the block on [napster.com](http://www.napster.com).

For all the same reasons as UT, Texas A&M University is considering steps to discourage music downloads. So far, no World Wide Web sites for music swapping have been blocked for Aggie computer network users.

Texas Tech, Texas Christian University, Oregon State, University of California-Berkeley, University of

North Dakota, and Boston University also have taken steps to hinder access to [napster.com](http://www.napster.com).

Almost all music shared on the Internet is copyright protected, according to the Recording Industry Association of America. The association is leaning on universities nationwide to curtail unauthorized copying. The Web pages of several students who offered pirated songs already have been knocked off A&M's network at the insistence of the trade group, officials said.

With 100 million computers online worldwide, the association said it was forced to shift most of its anti-piracy resources away from compact discs to the Internet.

But within a college population that often thumbs its nose at the corporate world — including the music industry and its copyright protections — threats of legal consequences for pirating often go unheeded, experts said.

Students called UT's recent decision to block access to [napster.com](http://www.napster.com) "Draconian." [Napster.com](http://www.napster.com) is one of the most popular Web sites for accessing music files in the MP3 format.

"It never ceases to amaze me how people can claim censorship, when what they're doing is breaking federal law by downloading copyrighted material onto their computers," said Thomas Putnam, director of A&M Computing and Information Services.

Student reliance on high-speed campus computer networks to speedily acquire new music has been surging since mid-1999, when software for sharing songs proliferated. The MP3 format enables music to be compressed into relatively small data files. The files can be easily stored and transferred from computer to computer. Though the sound quality isn't always as good as a compact disc, it is usually at least as good as the radio.

The downloaded music is prompting heated debate between the entertainment industry and a handful of Web site operators who enable widespread sharing of songs from music collections stored on personal computers worldwide.

UT's Academic Computing and Instructional Technology Services office said it made [napster.com](http://www.napster.com) off limits after it registered so much traffic that it became "detrimental" to the entire campus network.

"My interest, my responsibility, is making sure that the network infrastructure on the campus operates, and is useful and usable by the 75,000 people that make up this community," said Bill Bard, director of UT's Office of Telecommunications Services and deputy director of the office that monitors computer usage.

While not as problematic at A&M, music downloading is a concern. It is heaviest in Aggie dormitories, where high-speed Internet connections are built into rooms, Putnam said.

Putnam is frequently asked about the university policy on music downloads. His stock answer is the controlling authority is federal law, not campus rules.

"If the FBI shows up at your door, university policy is really irrelevant if you've got a computer full of copyrighted software or copyrighted music," Putnam said.

The Recording Industry Association of America is in contact, seeking to raise awareness about copyright law or to alert the school if a student is detected sharing pirated music via the university's network, Putnam said.

Using search engines, the association can easily find student Web sites that offer pirated songs. When it does, the association notifies the students' universities, citing the new federal Digital Millennium Copyright Act.

"They file [notice] with us officially and we have legal responsibility to take down that site," Putnam said. "We're trying to teach the students that they have liabilities . . . and what they're doing is illegal."

The issue raises perplexing legal questions, Putnam said.

"One of the really untested areas, in terms of legal precedent," he said, "is institutional liability for what a student does with their own computer that happens to be located on the campus."

## Penn State newspaper apologizes for fake quote

TMS Campus  
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UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. (TMS) — Student journalists working for Penn State's *Daily Collegian* apologized for a fake quote attributed to women's basketball coach Rene Portland in the Wednesday,

March 1, edition of the newspaper.

A student on the staff — whom the *Collegian* has declined to identify — slipped the bogus quote into another writer's story, thinking it would be removed before the paper went to press. It wasn't.

The quote implied that Portland has had improper relationships

with students.

"The individual's actions went against training and *Collegian* policy," editor Stacey Confer wrote in a column apologizing for the incident. "That staff member has been disciplined and will no longer be allowed to work for the *Collegian*."