

Destination: Unknown

Students spend their spring break on the road

By Lyndsey Sage
THE BATTALION

While some students board planes for the beaches of Mexico or the mountains of Colorado this spring break, Emily Vincent, a sophomore animal science and agricultural economics major, will hit the road.

Vincent and four friends will cram into a five-passenger car to drive the backroads from College Station to her home in St. Louis.

"We're going to get on Route 66 in Oklahoma

and go to St. Louis," Vincent said. "It's about a 10 to 11 hour drive. We're going to the University of Missouri in Rolla while we are there because they have a St. Patrick's Day party the whole week. I'm also taking my friends to see the arch and shopping downtown."

Vincent said the group will split up the first few days by making a stop in Dallas for a concert, but they plan to drive back to College Station in one day.

While a major road trip like Vincent's may take planning and an extended amount of time, piling

into a car on Friday afternoon for a weekend road trip is not out of the ordinary for many college students. Sarah Trevino, a junior Spanish major, said she takes road trips to neighboring towns, such as Houston, Austin, Galveston and Dallas, two or three times a semester.

When planning for a road trip, Trevino said she looks up cities she will be passing through to find interesting sights along the way.

"I look up the towns you go through that you never really know much about in this Texas state highways book I have," Trevino said. "It tells you interesting stuff about each place. I've seen things like the world's largest pecan. We usually stop at the courthouses and historic districts, too."

Trevino said road trips add excitement to the monotony of weekends.

"It's a cool way to spend time with friends and not just stay [in College Station] and do the usual. Going during finals is always a good time," Trevino said.

Most students agree that the highlight of road trips is the memories made with friends. Lisa Ramirez, a sophomore biomedical science major, said she took a road trip to visit a friend in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

"I went to Memphis to pick up a friend, then we drove through the night to Myrtle Beach," Ramirez said. "The purpose of the trip was to visit a friend from high school whose parents had moved there after graduation."

About 2 a.m., as Ramirez and her friend were singing along to the tunes of Weezer, they had an interesting encounter with a state trooper.

"In Alabama, we were going through a section where I noticed a lot of state troopers. I saw a cop pull up next to us and look at us. We weren't speeding or doing anything wrong so it really surprised me when he turned his lights on and pulled us over," Ramirez said. "He said we were hugging the line and thought we may have been drinking but when he realized we weren't, he let us go."

Ramirez and her friend keep themselves

entertained for the 16 hour drive by listening to music and playing 20 questions to pass the time.

"We choose to drive because it was not only the cheapest way to go, but it was also the most fun," Ramirez said. "I would definitely go on another road trip."

For others, road trips are more than just having a good time — they are about accomplishing a goal. Lorne Liechty, a freshman electrical engineering major, said he took a 6,300 mile road trip this summer on his motorcycle.

"We started in Minnesota and went to Winnipeg. We went left across Canada and took the Trans-Alaskan Highway into Scagway," Liechty said. "We spent three days there, then turned around. We went through Jasper, through the Rockies, through Colorado, into Amarillo, then into Dallas."

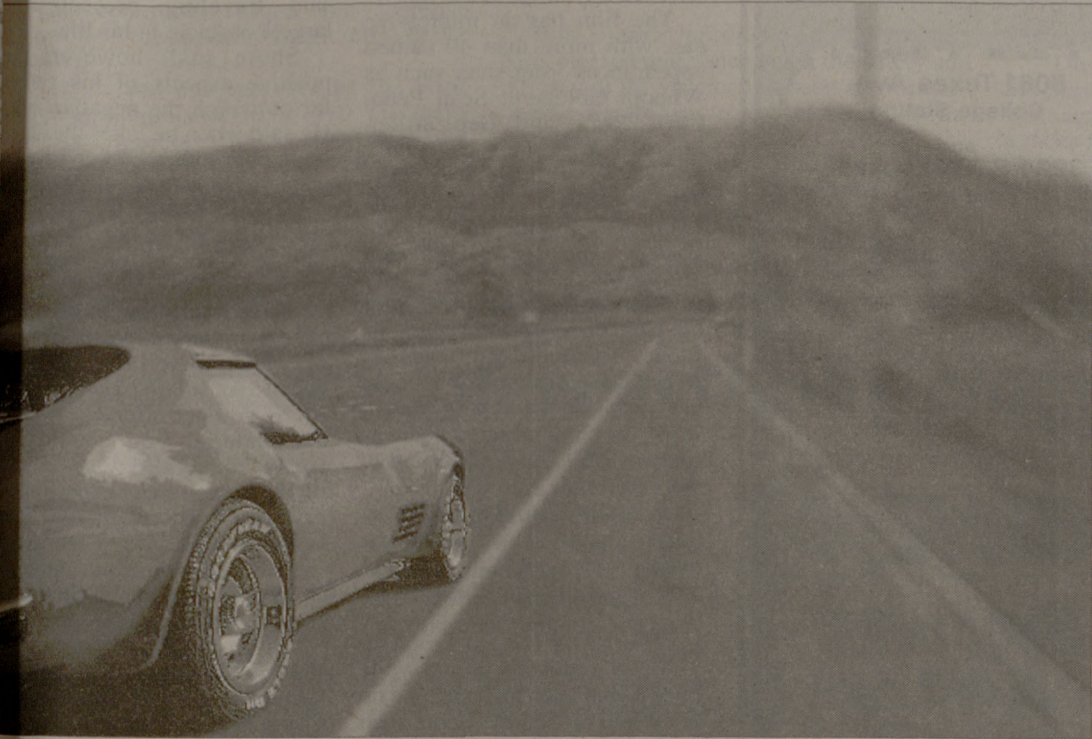
The adventure took Liechty, who was with his father, 12 days. On the last day they drove 22 hours straight to get home.

"We averaged about 750 miles a day," Liechty said. "When we got into Canada, where the days are longer, we would ride for 15 to 16 hours a day. You don't want to ride after dark though, especially in Canada because there are moose and caribou on the road."

The trip for Liechty and his father had been in the planning process since he was eight, the year he received his first motorcycle.

"It wasn't really a look at the scenery kind of thing; it was basically just get it done," Liechty said. "I like to see how far I can go in short amounts of time."

Charlotte Stephenson, a representative from AggieLand Travel, said students should plan ahead by knowing how long they want to stay at each place and arrange hotel accommodations, especially at popular destinations such as Colorado, South Padre Island and Florida. Stephenson said students should divide driving time if they plan to drive for an extended length of time and take advantage of local events.



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