

Editorial

Parking a problem

Have you got \$25 to throw away? Try parking on almost any off-campus parking lot and then going to class. When you get back, your car will most likely have been towed away and the charge will be at least that much, if not more.

For months now, many of the businesses near the University have had a problem with people using only their parking spaces and not their stores. One of the largest shopping centers near the campus now has a person, usually a College Station policeman, watching the parking lot. When he sees someone leave his car and go to the campus, he calls a towing service and the automobile is removed.

One woman, who supports herself and her four children while attending college, had her car towed away recently when she went to class. When she returned to find her car gone, she was unable to find anyone who knew what happened to it.

In every store she went into, she was told that that place had nothing to do with towaways. No one was willing to take the responsibility for having her car removed.

She finally went to the police and they told her what had happened. She threatened to go the towing yard and take her car and they told her that if she did that, she would be charged with felony theft.

The woman told the man at the towing company that, with four kids and college bills, she simply could not afford to pay the full \$25. He laughed and took the money.

Another student whose car had been towed off was told that the charge was \$30. He said that he did not have the money then but that he would return with it in a few days.

After informing the student that the towing company charges three dollars per day for "storage," the man had the gall to say, "Now look, son, I am only trying to help you."

One student, upon returning to the parking lot, found his car being hoisted by the tow truck. The operator refused to lower the car and told the student that he would have to go to the wrecking yard to recover his automobile.

College Station does not require a license to operate a towing company. Any fly-by-night operator with a pickup and towbar can set up a service and make a living off other people.

One of the busiest towing services

is located about one mile from the parking lot from which it receives a large portion of its business. It probably takes no more than five minutes to drive to the lot, another five minutes to hook up the car and five more for the return trip. At \$25 per tow, that is \$100 per hour.

Obviously, a business cannot be expected to furnish free parking for students. When the problem has reached the proportions that it has here, the businesses must do something about it.

However, towing away every car they can is not the answer. In the first place, the fault lies not entirely with the student, Texas A&M, as a matter of policy, issues more parking permits than it has spaces.

The rationale for this policy is that there will rarely be all the permit-holders for any given parking lot on campus at the same time. When there is, however, the unfortunate odd-man-out will very likely end up paying as much for towing as he did for his parking permit (\$27 per academic year).

Too many students have parked illegally for too long and created an intolerable situation for the businesses. Many cars probably needed to be removed.

However, in a situation where a parking lot is only partially full any time during the day, there is no real reason for a tow truck to be called. Sometimes there really isn't any other place close to park and a student, who is usually on a very stringent budget to begin with, should not be forced to pay such ridiculous fees.

—Richard Chamberlain

Readers' Forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Listen Up letters, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Aggie Forum should be:

- Typed triple space
- Limited to 60 characters per line
- Limited to 100 lines

Submit articles to Reed McDonald 217, College Station, Texas, 77843. Author's phone number must accompany all submissions.



"IT'S STILL HUNGRY, MELVIN! QUICK, FEED IT MORE ROCKS—BEFORE IT HEADS FOR THE HENHOUSE!"

Carter-Mondale ticket heavenly?



David S. Broder

WASHINGTON — To reread, in the light of his altered circumstances, Sen. Walter F. Mondale's 1975 book on the presidency is an intriguing experience. Titled "The Accountability of Power: Toward a Responsible Presidency," it was written after Watergate and after an abandoned presidential bid of his own by a senator who was preoccupied by the need to prevent another power-usurper from reaching the White House.

In today's perspective, parts of it read like an advertisement for Mondale's running mate Jimmy Carter. And parts of it read like a message of caution to — and about — Carter.

In the latter category, for example, Mondale wrote at one point, "I am quite convinced that we must look very closely into a candidate's sense of humor and sense of proportion."

That sounds like a man who, with total purposefulness and little laughter, spent four years running for governor of Georgia and — two years after he became governor — launched with similar singlemindedness into a four-year campaign for the presidency.

But the Democratic vice-presidential candidate said some other things that would like he was searching the horizon for Carter — a man he barely knew at the time.

"The American people," Mondale wrote, "have seen that the presidency is far too important an office to be occupied by individuals who view vengeance, rather than compassion, and retribution, rather than restoration, as their paths to political glory. We do not need messiahs pitting North against South or black against white, but rather leaders who will bring forth the qualities of compassion and justice which the American people have always possessed."

"Compassion" is one of Carter's favorite words; Mondale uses it twice in that single paragraph. And the idea of restoring national unity by re-emphasizing traditional values

is the dominant theme of the Carter basic speech.

Both Carter and Mondale put strong influence on open government as a safeguard against an abuse of power. Both were heavily influenced, they say, by the view of James David Barber on the kind of balanced, optimistic and secure personality that can survive the pressures of the presidency.

In fact, to read Mondale's book in close conjunction with Carter's autobiography, "Why Not The Best?," is to conclude that the partnership was made not in Madison Square Garden but in Heaven.

But only time will tell, as the TV commentators say. Meantime, one can only hope that soulmate Mondale is persuasive with Carter on one point to which he gives great emphasis in his book: the need for televised debates in a presidential campaign.

"Congress," Mondale wrote, "should take the lead in reclaiming television as a tool to be used by the people to expand their ability to judge the character, personality and policies of the people they elect to the presidency."

"Legislation is needed to establish each major party's right to request up to five one-hour, simultaneous prime time broadcasts on the three major television networks for the purposes of debates among the candidates," he said. "The series of de-

bates could begin shortly after the parties' nominating convention and could extend throughout the ten-week campaign from late August to early November.

"The value of televised debates," Mondale wrote, "is to open to public scrutiny candidates who can otherwise isolate themselves through the controlled use of campaign television."

Mondale was right on that subject, and the legislation he recommended would still be useful. But even without new law, debates between the presidential candidates can only be held if the candidates accept any of the several invitations that are pending.

The obligation to do so is increased this year. Thanks to public financing, Jimmy Carter will spend about \$10 million of our tax money to buy ads to influence our votes — and his Republican opponent will do the same. It would be utterly unconscionable for those candidates who take our money to buy TV spots, to then deny their obligation to appear on the public air in unrehearsed debates.

But only Ronald Reagan is so far committed to such debates. Both Carter and President Ford are hanging back from such a pledge.

Mondale has an opportunity to demonstrate the independence of judgment Carter says he wants in his running mate by reiterating what he publicly said 18 months ago: that debates provide a vital opportunity for voters to "know more about the Presidents they choose — before it is too late."

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Represented nationally by National Educational Advertising Services, Inc., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Mail subscriptions are \$16.75 per semester; \$33.25 per school year; \$35.00 per full year. All subscriptions subject to 5% sales tax. Advertising rates furnished on request. Address: The Battalion, Room 217, Services Building, College Station, Texas 77843.

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Editor Jerry Needham
Managing Editor Richard Chamberlain
Sports Editor Paul McGrath
Campus Editor Lisa Junod
Photographers Steve Goble, Kevin Verner
Production LeAnn Roby, Susan Brown

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Readers' forum

CS officials biased

By ROBERT HARVEY

On April 3, 1976, the citizens of College Station approved the implementation of a six ward system of representation. Since that time virtually nothing has been done to implement such a system.

To understand what has happened to the ward system, one has only to go back to the charter revision committee which had it placed on the ballot. The committee considered two alternatives to the at-large system of representation which the city operated under at that time. One was a six ward system, with each ward electing its own councilman, and the other was a three ward system in which three councilmen would be elected by wards and three elected at-large.

The three and three system was considered as the more moderate of the two and was supported by Jeff Dunn, 75-76 Student Body President. State requirements for charter revisions, however, made it difficult to offer both alternatives to the people. This gave the anti-ward members of the committee the opportunity to strike what they considered a death blow to the ward system. By combining with the six-ward supporters, they were able to put the alternative on the ballot they thought less likely to win. Therefore, on April 3, the College Station voters found themselves considering the merits of two extremes, without the opportunity to consider the system which was most likely to gain a clear majority of their support. The Student Senate passed a resolution in support of the ward system, not so much because the six ward system was the best possible system, but because the charter revision idea would probably die if the present system won the referendum.

The result of the referendum came as a surprise to everyone — the ward system won. What followed the election came as a surprise to no one. The supporters of the at-large system screamed that they had been tricked. They began calling the mayor and councilmen, telling them how they had been confused by the wording of the ballot. A number of individuals appeared before the council to remind it that in a college community you have to assume that the people can read. Despite that

fact, the mayor concluded that the city needed a second vote matter. This second vote informed the council of what had meant to say in April the straw vote would be the majority of the student vote. Both these staunch defenders of the illiterate.

In the straw vote the ward system received 67 percent of the vote. This prompted the mayor to put out in support of a suit which has been filed by a group of citizens contesting the election. The ward system effect, contests its own election is putting the city into a state where it might not be able to implement the ward system prior to April's general election. The Department is sure to win the plan when it is named in order to see that it is not criminate against any individual. The fact the city has already made inquiries from them about the method the city plans to use to draw the boundaries. The city has been able to reply that it has not yet.

The students at A&M of the citizens of College Station should keep a close eye on the committee which is being established up the ward boundaries. The efforts of Councilman Ringer, the council consist of local citizens. The ward system, however, is another week.

College Station residents also listen for the outcome of that was filed contesting the April referendum. The program would appear to be a rather Bravenee's interest, as the city's, to have the three ward system on the ballot instead of the present system. It would be a likely to gain a clear majority of the people's support.

In any event, the time for the College Station City to begin to show less respect for the will of the College Station students.

Editor's note: Harvey is the Student Government City chairman.

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