

State and Local

Cars don't stop for A&M's buses

Shuttle riders advised to be careful

By Jo Ann Able
Staff Writer

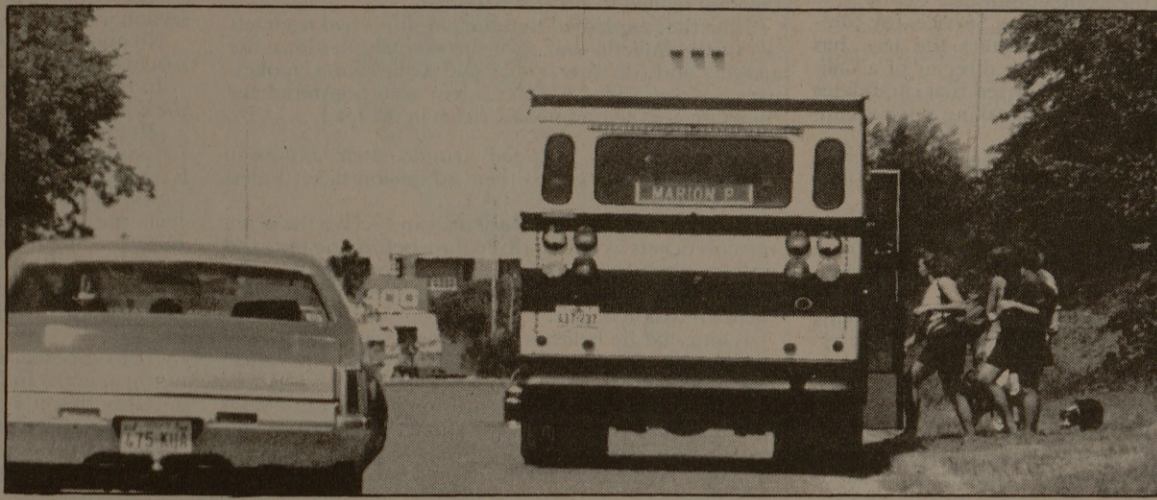
Texas A&M shuttle bus passengers who step off buses into the path of oncoming traffic may be unaware that no law exists requiring motorists to stop for the buses as they must when public school buses are loading and unloading children.

Jerry Cain, associate general counsel in the A&M Office of Legal Affairs, says there is no statutory requirement for motorists to stop for shuttle buses.

"They're treated just like city buses in Dallas, Austin, Houston or San Antonio," Cain says. "The obligation that exists on motorists, of course, is to drive with care and to use caution whenever it's required. The same thing applies to the passengers."

Cain says he thinks the statutes applying to school buses exist because it is presumed that children are less likely to pay attention to dangers when they step off a bus.

"The presumption is that ev-



Traffic passes as students board a bus.

Photo by Greg Bailey

eryone riding the A&M shuttle bus is an adult and will make sure the way is clear before they proceed," Cain says.

Doug Williams, assistant manager of bus operations, says there have been no accidents involving passengers exiting shuttle buses, but there have been a lot of near misses.

He says students often have their minds on tests and such, and don't pay attention.

"They'll be daydreaming miles down the road and they get off

the bus and just start crossing the road," Williams says. "And one of these days one of them is going to get killed because there's nothing we can do to stop traffic."

Williams says drivers sometimes honk the bus horns to warn passengers of oncoming vehicles, but that's the extent of their involvement.

Lou McCoy, a researcher in the Research and Communications Division of the Texas attorney general's office, says it's possible to change the law.

"What you would have to do is get a state representative or senator to support a bill and amend the current law," McCoy says.

Sen. Kent Caperton, D-Bryan, says he doesn't know that this issue has been specifically addressed since he's been a state senator.

"Certainly, if any groups brought it to my attention I'd... try to explore the possibilities of enacting such legislation," Caperton says.

'Attitude change a must for control of cocaine trade'

By Olivier Uyttebrouck
Staff Writer

Governments will be unable to control the cocaine trade by military and legal means unless social attitudes toward drug use change, speakers at a seminar on the international cocaine trade said Thursday.

Carlos Miranda, spokesman for the Bolivian Student Association, said at a seminar sponsored by the International Students' Association that the cocaine trade is so open and widespread there that drug kingpin Roberto Suarez recently offered to pay a \$380 million portion of the Bolivian foreign debt in exchange for a presidential pardon.

"Like it or not, everybody's got a price and cocaine involves unbelievable amounts of money," Miranda said when asked about the involvement of government officials in the cocaine trade.

Rosa Yupari, spokesman for the Peruvian Student Association, said that the Peruvian government has long controlled the trade of raw coca leaves within the country. Coca in unprocessed form has been in popular use in South America since the

days of Spanish rule, especially among Indians, Yupari said.

Miranda said that in raw form, coca is not addictive. Because of its long-standing popular cultivation and use in South America, it would be nearly impossible for the government to destroy the Bolivian coca crop.

"It's like trying to irradiate part of their culture and that's impossible," Miranda said.

But in the past five years, much more potent forms such as crack and cocaine paste — the by-product of Bolivia's thriving trade with the United States — are becoming more prevalent, creating a growing problem of cocaine addiction in that country.

Dr. Henry C. Smith, A&M professor of Latin American studies, said that the United States government's new policy of sending U.S. agents and soldiers into foreign nations constitutes a dramatic departure from past styles of controlling the drug trade.

But he said drug use in Western society is only a symptom of deeper problems such as the quickening pace of life.

Budget cuts may hit programs for handicapped

By Julie Vass
Reporter

State budget cuts could hamper efforts by organizations at Texas A&M that work with handicapped students to improve facilities and services, says Dr. Charles Powell, director of the Handicap and Veterans Services.

Powell says Handicap and Veterans Services, located in Hart Hall, is on a limited budget and that budget may not cover all of the yearly improvements on ramps and curb cuts.

He says accessibility to buildings and

classrooms affects not only handicapped students, but their classmates as well.

Not all buildings are easy to get into or get around in, he says, and if a handicapped student has a class in such a building, the entire class will be moved.

"Mobility and access on this campus are better than most," Powell says, "and every year it is increased and improved."

The lack of money also has discouraged any new plans for the service office even though the office needs to expand testing and repair facilities, he says.

"Mostly we need more people and more

space, and that would mean more services," he says.

Powell says volunteers help ease the burden of the tight budget. He says one constant source of help has been the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega.

Susan Franklin, president of APO, says there should be more projects that promote handicap awareness and educate students about handicapped students.

She says the fraternity supplies volunteers who read for the blind, help handicapped students by writing or reading, lo-

cate and paint curb cuts, and raise money through fund raisers.

The call for more money is repeated not only by Powell, but also by John Greening, senior counselor at the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

Greening says many of the commission's services have weakened since the budget cuts — including cutbacks in non-severe surgery and hospitalization.

"The whole purpose of the TRC is to serve the handicapped... and to have (them) trained in a job they can do after graduation," he says.

The TRC offers several services to eligible students free of charge, including tuition fees, room and board, mobility assistance, attendant care, interpreters, note-takers and tutors.

Another service offered to handicapped students is adaptive physical education with classes in weight training and adaptive aquatics.

Anne McGowan, adaptive physical education teacher, says the classes cater to students and their particular disability. She says she organizes the classes depending on each student's disability and personal goals.

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