

# Handicapped

(Continued from page 1)

moved — so I could park and go to class!"

Schoonover said he has had particular problems with the vehicles of the A&M Physical Plant.

"The University Police don't ticket them," he said. "I always use the (handicapped) parking space behind the (A.P. Beutel Health Center), and the Physical Plant trucks constantly park halfway in the handicapped space and halfway in the no-parking zone, or right next to them."

Dunlap said the campus officers aren't always able to catch all violators of handicapped parking restrictions.

"A lot of times we don't have an officer on hand to tow," Dunlap said, "and sometimes by the time we get there — if they were there for just five minutes — they're gone."

Physical Plant Director Joe J. Estill said Physical Plant policy is that the trucks should not park in the handicapped spaces.

"Physical Plant trucks are just like any other illegally parked vehicle," Estill said. "They get fined and towed. Our people have instructions not to park in the handicapped spaces and the drivers have to pay all fines and towing fees. We haven't had a vehicle towed in 18 months."

Estill admits the drivers will act just like the students, though, thinking "I'll only be a minute."

Schoonover said it's a shame when these trucks don't get ticketed, because the University, on the majority of occasions, is excellent at ticketing abusers.

"The police will pull all holds to make sure someone parked illegally in reserved staff will get a ticket, but a Physical Plant truck can stay as long as it wants," he said.

Another handicapped student, David Brashier, doesn't quite agree.

He said the problem is not as much with multiple violators, but with too few handicapped spaces on campus.

"It's not so much the delivery trucks (that fill up the handicapped parking spaces), he said. "They're full all the time with handicapped students and faculty."

Brashier, a senior majoring in secondary education, said he would like to see 20 to 25 more handicapped spaces on campus.

There are now 142, including those on both the main and west campuses.

Brashier would also like the spaces to be wider. Handicapped spaces are usually 12 feet wide, while regular spaces are eight to 10 feet wide.

His biggest problem is with the motorcyclists that park beyond

their areas into the handicapped spaces near Hart Hall, where the campus Handicapped Services Office is housed.

"We're constantly calling to get them (the motorcycles) moved," Brashier said. "Students don't seem to realize when they're blocking a handicapped space, and then it's 'Oh well — I'll only be here five or 10 minutes.'"

Brashier said he doesn't have trouble getting where he wants to go because A&M is so compact, but he doesn't mind waiting to get an illegally parked vehicle towed, either.

Brashier said he thinks the campus is accessible to handicapped people most of the time.

The University and the students are fairly good about following the rules, he said, but there is a problem in front of the MSC.

"People just pull up and park in a

us," he said. "Someone without a sticker was parked in the handicapped space in front of the police station, and there was a security guard standing out front directing traffic."

"I went up and told her 'Look, this person's here and not handicapped.' She said, 'Well, what do you want me to do? There's a football game on.' That's the attitude the University takes toward it."

Brashier agreed that handicapped spaces are hard to come by during big events on campus, but he said they're not necessarily taken by violators.

"Football games, any big function, OPAS, whatever — you can't find any handicapped spaces," he said. "To find one for the games, you have to go an hour early. They're usually taken by the handicapped, though."

Schoonover said he hears people

"Other people see (a person without a wheelchair using the space), and they assume that the person who got out of the car and walked into the store is not handicapped," he said.

Schoonover said he has heard stories about handicapped permits being given to people who obviously don't need them.

"I was even told by one of the members of the University Police that one lady had a handicapped sticker so she could leave class early to go breastfeed her baby," he said. "That lady had hers revoked."

Powell said enforcing the law is a difficult problem. He said in the beginning, A&M charged only a \$10 fine for parking in a handicapped space, just like parking anywhere else on campus without the proper permit.

"We found that 60 percent of the time, 60 percent of the spaces were occupied by non-handicapped people," Powell said. "The Coke Building employees were notorious for this."

"Now that it's a \$50 fine and automatic tow, it's difficult to catch anyone, but they still do it — I'll just be a minute," they say."

Powell said the Handicapped Services Office used to issue the handicapped stickers, but now the state does it.

He said temporary permits are available from the state, but they often are abused.

"You get someone who sprained his ankle skiing, and uses the sticker for two weeks," he said. "They're good for up to six months, and these people just keep them. There's a lot of cheating. All you need is a doctor's signature that one is needed, and doctors will sign anything."

Powell said most of this kind of "cheating" is done by people who just don't have any consideration for the handicapped, and he's bitter about it.

"I got a snotty letter from the attorney general one time telling me there wasn't anything I could do about it," he said. "The typical excuse is 'Well, I'm just gonna be a few minutes.' That's the biggest lie."

Schoonover said the police officers will check with the state if someone should possibly not have a handicapped sticker, but someone has to bring it to their attention.

Schoonover's main complaint is with University Police not making enough of an effort to ticket and tow the Physical Plant and delivery trucks.

He feels that the police need to do something about the delivery trucks that come in for "a few minutes" and don't worry about parking in a handicapped space.

*"During one football game I had to go to the police station on campus. Someone without a sticker was parked in the handicapped space in front of the police station, and there was a security guard standing out front directing traffic. I went up and told her 'Look, this person's here and not handicapped.' She said, 'Well, what do you want me to do? There's a football game on.' That's the attitude the University takes toward it."*

— Charles Schooner, handicapped A&M student

handicapped spot to go get their paper or whatever," he said. "People have just ignored me, and then come back and seen I was in a wheelchair and tried to apologize to me."

"They think 'Well, I'm only gonna be a minute and there's not gonna be any handicapped people needing this.'"

Schoonover said he has found Coca Cola delivery trucks are violators, too.

Parking in a handicapped place, even "just for a minute," he said, is still against the rules.

"One driver in particular (uses handicapped parking spaces illegally)," Schoonover said. "He always pulls up behind the handicapped spaces by Harrington to unload his Cokes, and if anyone needs to get in or out while he's there, they can just forget about it. I've been blocked in by his truck."

Schoonover said football games and other activities on campus make it difficult to find handicapped parking spaces.

"During one football game I had to go to the police station on camp-

say there are too many handicapped spaces, and admits that the spaces are empty most of the time.

But he said he's also gone places and found the spaces full.

Abuse isn't restricted to people without handicapped stickers, either.

Schoonover thinks that the stickers should be restricted to the mobility-impaired.

"You can get a handicapped parking space for respiratory problems and stuff like that," he said. "Pretty much, I feel if you can walk, you don't need this space."

Coordinator of Handicapped Services Charles Powell said that the people with respiratory problems have a more urgent need for handicapped parking spaces.

"An asthmatic that can't walk a few feet without stopping needs the space more than someone in an electric wheelchair," Powell said.

Schoonover said that when people without wheelchairs use handicapped spaces, they may give others the wrong impression, encouraging people to violate the rules.

# Lack of parking space, unsafe driving heats up controversy about mopeds

By Kathy Crawford  
Reporter

Mopeds run into cars, cars run into mopeds, mopeds run into bicycles, mopeds run into pedestrians and mopeds run into mopeds, Bob Wiatt, director of University Police, says.

As mopeds and scooters have become increasingly popular, they have created various problems on campus. Because there are so many mopeds, accidents are a problem, Wiatt says.

"There are a number of accidents simply because of the number of mopeds around here," Wiatt says. "Many of them are not reported to us insofar as they are not major or of considerable damage other than the moped sliding out from under the person."

Diane Vaughn, a junior industrial engineering major, says the problems are caused by moped operators who don't follow the rules.

"They drive on the sidewalks and pull up beside cars at stop signs," Vaughn says. "I'm afraid that one

*"There are a number of accidents simply because of the number of mopeds around here."*

— Bob Wiatt, director of University Police

day I'll hit a moped and, more than likely, someone will get hurt."

Students who drive their mopeds on the sidewalks are also a source of trouble. Last year, signs were placed on campus stating that no mopeds, motorcycles or other vehicles are allowed in mall areas.

"Quite often," Wiatt says, "they (moped operators) think they have the same license as a bicycle. We do issue a number of justice of the peace citations to moped operators who are violating these signed areas."

"They are a sense of aggravation to the pedestrian traffic. When you merge the moped operators with the bicycle operators, a pedestrian feels like he's a potential skewered shish-kabob."

The large number of mopeds sometimes causes increased parking hassles on campus. Mopeds and

scooters are required to park in areas designated for motorcycles, Wiatt says, but some students find more convenient places to park them.

"Students will put them right up to their dorm rooms, run them into their hallways or chain them to a handicap ramp," he says. "In those instances, we not only cite them, but where they are an obstacle, we will cut the chain and impound the moped."

Moped parking is a relatively new problem for the University because they have become more popular in the last few years.

"Because the parking problem in the last several years has been significant for vehicles," Wiatt says, "people think that to avoid that hassle they will revert to either bicycles or mopeds."

"However, because of their in-

creased number, they are now aggravating the parking problem as well as the traffic congestion problem."

University police records show as of October, 2,125 moped permits were issued — about 25 percent more than the 1,695 issued last year.

But Johnnie Lee, a junior animal science major, thinks the increased use of mopeds and scooters on campus has helped with parking and has not created many problems.

"I think they're an asset," Lee says.

Wiatt says his department has received several complaints and suggestions about the problems with mopeds on campus. A number of people suggest banning all mopeds while others say all cars should be banned and mopeds should be the only permissible vehicle on campus.

"You have your two camps and they're always contesting each other like the chicken and the mongoose," Wiatt says. "And it's going to be that kind of relationship as long as we have this total congestion of people and machines on this campus."

# MEET THE AUTHOR QUENTIN STEITZ

in the Patio Bookshop  
Lower Level MSC  
at 4:30 p.m. THANKSGIVING DAY

When she will be Autographing her book "Grasses, Pods, Vines, Weeds: Decorating with Texas Naturals."



Quentin Steitz harvests the graceful foliage of redbud near her ranch in Colorado County. She shows readers how to use native and naturalized plants like redbud in ornamental arrangements in her new book, *Grasses, Pods, Weeds: Decorating with Texas Naturals*. The book is available for \$24.95 in hardcover in the Patio Bookshop and comes lavishly illustrated with more than 150 full-color photographs.



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## SPRING 1988 BATTALION STAFF

Applications are available in 216 Reed McDonald for the Spring 1988 Battalion staff.

Applications for editors and assistant editors should be returned to the editor's office, 222 Reed McDonald, 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25 Editor and assistant editor positions include:

- managing editor
- opinion page editor
- city editor
- news editor
- sports editor
- photo editor
- At Ease editor
- At Ease assistant editor
- assistant city editor
- assistant news editor
- assistant sports editor

Applications for all other positions are due by 5 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 2. Other positions include:

- staff writers
- photographers
- columnists
- copy editors
- cartoonists
- editorial cartoonist
- graphic artist
- clerks
- reviewer
- sports writers
- At Ease writers
- At Ease photographer

Applications must be able to begin work Sunday, Dec. 6



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