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A&M cuts number of buses for remainder of semester

By Richard Williams
Senior Staff Writer

Students who ride shuttle buses may be in for a wait — Texas A&M Bus Operations is cutting the number of buses running on some routes for the rest of the semester.

Bus Operations employees were told of the changes in a newsletter they received Friday. That newsletter attributed the cut in the number of buses to a drop in ridership and budget cuts.

The following is a list of bus routes that are losing one or more buses on the morning routes, followed by the number of buses being lost: Lincoln, one; 2818, one; Anderson, two; Parkway, two; Scarlett, one; Munson, one; Marion Pugh, one; Dartmouth, one.

"We are just changing the time in between that the buses run, so that there will be a little bit of a variation," Kathryn Mathis, assistant manager of bus operations, said.

But drivers interviewed by *The Battalion* said the buses will not run

as often, meaning passengers will have to wait longer in order to catch a bus.

Another driver said students living on the ends of routes will have more trouble finding a bus to ride because the buses could be full before they reach the stops later on their route.

Mathis said most passengers should already know about the changes because bus drivers have been instructed to tell the passengers about the changes.

But no signs were posted in the buses on Friday, and drivers interviewed said they were told not to offer any information to riders.

They would talk to *The Battalion* only on the condition of anonymity.

The newsletter article, written by Mathis, said, "Doug and I both ask that you handle this very positively with your customers. . . . If your passengers ask questions please be very positive and assure them that the service will remain consistent with their needs."

That was followed by a sentence in capital letters saying, "THE LESS SAID THE BETTER."

Mathis refused to comment on that statement, and Doug Williams could not be reached for comment.

Mathis said drivers were asked "to do a lot of public relations-type things so that we will not have a lot of rumors and things."

But one driver said he was told drivers were not to offer any information unless passengers asked about the changes.

He wasn't asked about the changes, he said, "because no one knew to ask."

And another driver said that although he wasn't told not to tell passengers, that was the general understanding all the drivers had.

One driver, however, said he told passengers anyway because he felt they should know about them.

Although the newsletter article attributed the changes in part to budget problems, Mathis denies that Bus

Operations is facing financial problems.

She said changes were made because of a drop in riders, not because of budget problems.

One driver, however, said he had been told that if changes were not made bus operations would "be in serious money trouble by the first half of April."

The newsletter article also said that budget problems are affecting almost every A&M department and that Bus Operations is not immune to the problems.

"Beginning Monday, March 28th," the article said, "we will begin cutting service to weigh the effects on our operation."

Mathis said she did not find out about the change until Thursday, and several bus drivers said they had not heard of the change until they picked up their checks on Friday.

Two bus drivers whose buses are no longer running said they did not know about the change until informed by *The Battalion*.

Bus Route Changes

Route	Time affected	Change in number of buses
Lincoln	7a.m.-10:30a.m.	3 to 2
2818	7a.m.-3p.m.	3 to 2
Anderson	7a.m.-10:30a.m.	4 to 3
Anderson	10:30a.m.-3p.m.	5 to 4
Parkway	7a.m.-10:30a.m.	3 to 2
Parkway	10:30a.m.-3p.m.	4 to 3
Scarlett	7a.m.-10:30a.m.	4 to 3
Munson	7a.m.-10:30a.m.	4 to 3
Marion Pugh	7a.m.-10:30a.m.	3 to 2
Dartmouth	7a.m.-6p.m.	3 to 2



Photo by Jay Janner

Take me to the river

Company E-2, along with Reveille V, runs down Joe Routh Street at the beginning of the annual March to the Brazos. The event raises money for the March of Dimes through pledges and dona-

tions. During the march, outfit competitions took place and the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders made an appearance. Corps staff positions for 1988-89 were announced and the new staff took over.

Wright's adviser tried to sell arms to Contra rebels

WASHINGTON (AP) — An "eyes-and-ears" adviser to House Speaker Jim Wright tried to sell weapons to the Contras through Lt. Col. Oliver North's private network three months before the Iran-Contra disclosures ended the North operation.

Richard M. Pena, a former House Foreign Affairs Committee staff member, contacted North associate Richard Miller in 1986 offering materiel from two South American companies. One would sell grenades, bombs and mines, and the other had boots at \$33 a pair, according to a letter proposing the sale.

Such activity would appear at odds with the objectives of Wright, who has opposed military aid to the Contras and has taken an active role in efforts to get a negotiated peace agreement between Nicaragua's warring factions.

Pena has been one of Wright's advisers on Central America over the past few years. As recently as January, he was Wright's paid emissary

to the region while jockeying toward peace talks was under way, said Wright aide Marshall Lynam. He said Pena was on the speaker's payroll for a few days on each of three occasions, in August and November last year, and in January.

Pena's Aug. 15, 1986, letter was addressed to a Cayman Islands front company, World Affairs Counselors, set up by Miller and his partner Frank Gomez to handle their Contra transactions for North.

Through Lynam, Wright denied any knowledge of "anything he (Pena) might have had to do with arms sales or anything like that."

"Jim Wright was not aware of any of these activities," Lynam said. "He knew Richard Pena as a Texan, a man who had extensive connections and acquaintances in Central America, a person who was acquainted with the Contra people in Central America."

Wright, he said, "had confidence in his advice . . . and had no reason to think there was any reason why he should not use him in an eyes-and-ears capacity."

Sandinistas free prisoners under pact

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — The Sandinista government freed 100 political prisoners Sunday under an amnesty program, fulfilling the first part of a cease-fire pact with Nicaraguan rebels.

Interior Minister Tomas Borge called the gesture "possibly the beginning of the end of the war."

Tearful family members embraced their loved ones who were released from the Zona Franca jail on the outskirts of Managua. But amid the joy was an air of doubt.

"They say I don't have anything to fear," said Feliz Pedro Chavarria Gomez, 32, holding a plastic sack containing his belongings. "I'm happy, but I hope it doesn't fail."

Chavarria said he was arrested in 1980 and charged with being a counter-revolutionary.

Cesar Augusto Flores Mireando, 25, was arrested more than two years ago in Managua. "The majority of the peasants here are innocent," he said.

The release of the prisoners was the first step in an amnesty plan the Sandinistas agreed to Wednesday when they signed a cease-fire accord with leaders of the U.S.-backed rebels known as Contras. The sides declared a truce March 21 and a 60-day cease-fire is to begin April 1.

Apartments want discount again for 'sub-meter' units

By Mark Gee
Staff Writer

The managers of seven College Station apartment complexes are challenging the city council's June decision to revoke a 10 percent discount on electricity that has applied since 1978 to complexes on the "sub-meter" system.

At Thursday's College Station City Council meeting, Mayor Larry Ringer sent the issue to be investigated by a committee and instructed the city manager to prepare a report.

Apartment complexes that report electricity usage to the city with a single master meter were given the 10 percent discount on electricity 10 years ago by the city as an incentive to install individual apartment meters.

The city reasoned that if each apartment was billed for its electricity use — as opposed to operating on an "all-utilities-paid" arrangement — residents would use less electricity to keep bills down, thus conserving energy.

Apartment complexes that converted from a single master meter to individual meters became known as sub-metered complexes.

Managers at these complexes read their apartments' electrical meters, maintain the meters and bill residents.

The seven complexes involved in the issue are Treehouse, Briarwood, Plantation Oaks, Viking,

Taos, Scandia and Doux Chene apartments.

Fiske said the seven complexes make up about 15 percent of the total leaseable units in Brazos County and that about 75 percent of the residents in the complexes are University students.

Deborah Fiske, Bryan-College Station Apartment Association's chairman of the subcommittee for equitable rates for residential customers, requested the 10 percent discount be reinstated because she said the discount offsets the apartments' cost of performing a service the city provides for residents and other apartment complexes that have city-owned electrical meters.

"All the city does," Fiske said, "is read the master meter and give the apartment complex one bill for the entire complex."

"Then we (apartment managers) pay an outside contractor to read the individual apartment meters and produce bills for our residents. The residents are being charged twice (for maintaining, reading and billing), once for an outside contractor and once by the city."

Fiske said the city is charging for something it is not doing and that the extra cost ends up being passed on to the residents.

Paula Jonda, Briarwood manager, said the discount helped to cover the complexes' cost of maintenance and billing.

"(Under the sub-meter system)

the city doesn't have to read the individual meters, and if a transformer explodes, we have to pay for it," Jonda said. "If someone doesn't pay their bill, we have to absorb the loss."

Fiske said representatives of the apartment association have talked with city leaders but the apartment association has yet to get a clear explanation of why the discount was discontinued.

College Station City Manager Ron Ragland said the apartments have a legitimate issue that needs to be investigated.

"They are incurring some cost," Ragland said. "But there is a difference between what they are arguing and what we did."

Fiske argues that the original 1978 ordinance that gave the apartments the 10 percent discount was to offset the cost of installing, maintaining and owning the electrical meters, so the apartments should continue to get the discount.

Ragland said the discount was not originally meant to apply to the costs of maintenance.

"The 10 percent discount was for the specific purpose of helping them for the installation of meters," he said, "and what they are trying to do is apply the discount to the cost of service, because they have a cost of servicing their equipment."

Ragland said 10 years of discount was sufficient time for the apartments to recover the cost of installing the electrical meters.

Students rebuild apartheid shack after destruction

By Richard Tijerina
Reporter

Texas A&M's Students Against Apartheid rebuilt an anti-apartheid shanty for the third time Sunday afternoon, and organization members say they intend to keep it standing this time.

The group obtained a concessions permit to legally place the shack on campus between the Academic and Harrington Tower buildings Friday.

SAA president Susan Vint said the organization might not have decided to rebuild it had it not been destroyed by vandals on March 10.

"We rebuilt it mainly as a direct result of the vandals who tore it down," she said. "We were going to meet and vote on rebuilding it after the break, but we probably wouldn't have decided to put it back up. We had already made our statement."

"We didn't want to overdo it, but the vandals who tore it down made up our minds for us."

The shanty again has anti-apartheid messages painted on it saying "Bothabusters," in reference to South African President Pieter W. Botha. "End Oppression" and "Free South Africa."

Members stressed that they didn't want the messages to sound political, because it was the

issue of the apartheid problem that they wanted to convey.

Earlier attempts at building the shanty during the semester have met with failure.

It was originally built on February 21 and sneaked onto campus late at night, but Director of Traffic and Security Bob Wiatt ordered University Grounds Maintenance crews to dismantle it on Feb. 22 because the group had not obtained a legal concessions permit to place it on campus.

A second shanty was built after the organization obtained A&M's approval.

Built March 6, the group blames vandals for the shack's dismantling two days later.

After rebuilding the second structure, vandals again dismantled the shack during Spring Break, one day before organization members had decided to take it down.

The current permit for the shanty allows it to remain standing until April 4, and SAA members say they feel more secure about the shanty's safety because of increased patrols by campus.

Although they say Wiatt has been especially supportive of the shanty, the group is still not entirely willing to leave its protection in the hands of the police. A group is planning to sleep inside the shanty Monday night.