

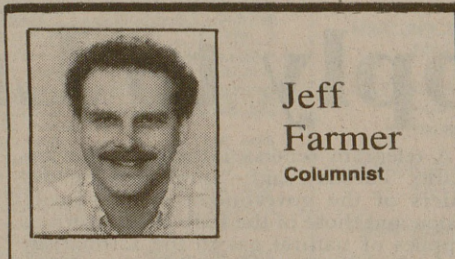
Charging for parking bikes: A Modest Proposal

Last week the Faculty Senate approved a proposal that would require students to purchase permits to ride bicycles on campus. Congratulations are in order for this bold and courageous move.

There are many possible justifications. First of all, bicycles are a menace to normal students who walk or drive on campus. Bicycles provide no profit for either oil companies or automobile manufacturers and are therefore subversively opposed to traditional capitalist values. Finally, bicycles allow a large number of students to avoid paying their fair share to the Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services; these people pay neither parking tickets nor parking fees. The new proposal would remedy this serious injustice.

There are those who might claim that enforcement of this regulation will be difficult; it should be pointed out that enough money will be made from sales of permits and auctions of impounded bicycles to pay the salary of the army of bicycle officers that will be required.

One problem I see with the proposal, however, is that it simply does not go far enough. There are still large numbers of students who will be able to sneak onto campus without



Jeff Farmer
Columnist

paying anything more than regular tuition and fees. I refer, of course, to those on foot. Something needs to be done about these people; several possibilities come to mind.

Perhaps the most effective way to regulate and control walking on campus would be to require all students, faculty and staff to purchase permits for their shoes. Shoes cause damage to plants and grass; the University spends money every year to repair it. Many students would undoubtedly consider the maroon stamp on their Nike's a badge to be worn proudly; for the more fashion conscious (and those who might own more than one pair) shoe "hangtags" could be sold. While this would be guaranteed to raise significant revenue, enforcement would be expensive and difficult; impounding unregistered shoes would undoubtedly cause a big stink.

I believe there is a better solution to the problem of uncontrolled walking on campus. Almost everyone who has any serious business on campus will be carrying either a briefcase, backpack, shoulder bag or purse. These bags potentially conceal drugs, weapons, pornography, handbills announcing meetings of Students Against Apartheid, Medicine Tribe, Pro-Choice Aggies, Gay and Lesbian Student Services (or other organizations inimical to traditional values), alcohol, tobacco, condoms or atheist literature. The

importance of regulating these items (and others) far outweighs any bleeding heart concern for civil rights or privacy. If bag-and-backpack permits are sold, and all possible "carry-in" items are registered, it will be much simpler for the University Police to examine them — purchase of a permit could be considered "implied consent" to such a search.

Of course, there must be some modification of the fees for students who drive or ride a bike (otherwise they

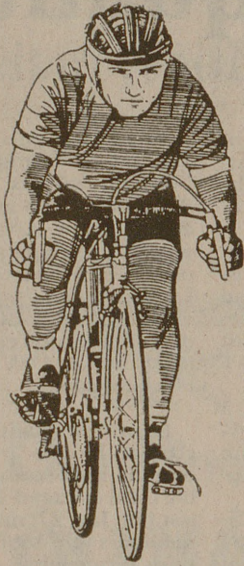
will be forced to carry an unfair portion of the burden). The University could sell combination "car-and-backpack," "bike-and-briefcase," or "skateboard-and-purse" permits. Each possible combination should have a slightly different price, in order to maximize

confusion about the rules and minimize the possibility of successful appeal. The Department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services has already achieved this in the arena of parking regulations; there should be no problem extending

the program to bag regulations.

This proposal has much to recommend it: Its revenue-generating ability, its undeniable fairness and its potential to greatly increase administration control over unruly students, uncooperative faculty and slothful staff. In short, its attractions are irresistible. I suggest the Faculty Senate consider it without delay.

Jeff Farmer is a graduate student in mathematics.



Bicycle permits just money makers

Lynn A. Hanson
Reader's Opinion

It seems it may have been decided without warning or debate that the University Parking, Transit and Traffic Services could extract even more money from us that we do not have, come next fall semester. And for what? Parking our bicycles on campus? Yes!

I wish I could be humored by this, but it is too scary to laugh about. I don't know where this idea originated or the rationale for it, but I would be very interested in hearing an explanation. Slipped into the Battalion front-page article on proposed revisions for parking citations Tuesday, April 10 was a statement that the Faculty Senate passed a revision that will make parking permits mandatory for bicycles beginning in the fall. (The price for these permits, however, has not been announced — even scarier!)

I don't know about most students, but I ride my bike because I cannot afford to park my car on campus. Even if I could swing it, it wouldn't pay because I would have to park when I got to campus. I could just as well park at my apartment and walk. I know that many

can charge us for anything and everything that strikes their fancy? I don't know the answer, but what I do know is that students should not take this sitting down — whether on their bikes or off!

In addition, has it been addressed exactly how this plan will be enforced? Must the University now hire additional personnel to monitor bike racks to be sure that all bikes locked there have an appropriate sticker? How much is this going to cost? Is this really an enforceable policy? Is this really fair to students (those who are already at the bottom of the economic totem pole, so to speak) to bear such a ludicrous fee when we already dish out quite enough? What is it really costing Texas A&M University for me to park my bike in a bike rack on campus?

I don't know what to think except that maybe permit stickers on our shoes will be next! Come on, Aggies — what do you have to say about this?

Lynn A. Hanson is a graduate student in plant pathology and microbiology.

Mail Call

Participate in Earth Day

EDITOR:

Earth Day is April 22. Over 100 countries are participating in the 20th anniversary of Earth Day, a celebration of environmental awareness. You can join in the fun and make a difference. Texas A&M's Earth Day Fair is Sunday, April 22, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Research Park. And guess what? It's free!

The fun includes live music, speakers, games, food, drink and an Aggie Players production of Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax." Also, start saving all your newspapers, computer paper, glass, aluminum cans, rigid plastic and old clothing: There's going to be on-site recycling. So come on out, join the fun and help the environment!

David Leftwich '90

Snack bar practices wasteful

EDITOR:

I am writing this in protest of the Texas A&M food service's practice of rewrapping their burritos, specifically at the Bus Stop Snack Bar, and probably at others also.

The burritos come pre-packaged, singly, and in beautiful plastic wrappers. The food preparers unwrap them and re-wrap them in cellophane and then cover that up with tissue. I ask why? Why should they waste paper and produce more trash?

The purpose of Earth Day, April 22, is to make people aware of what they can do to protect our environment. One way is to eliminate waste. I strongly urge the Texas A&M Food Services Department to consider their wasteful practice of rewrapping burritos, and to make changes that will eliminate this waste.

Bingo Barnes '90

University needs to recycle

EDITOR:

I am writing in reference to a problem that I believe deserves immediate attention ... one that has been ignored or set aside for too long.

In the past few years it has become increasingly evident that the state of our environment is quickly deteriorating. This problem is one that threatens our very existence, and certainly the existence of generations to come. It's time we join together and begin taking care of the Earth, Ags.

The choices we have for action are many, but the most obvious and simple one, as I see it, is recycling. Keeping in mind the sobering fact that 80 percent of our landfills will be closed in three years, I do not see that we should hesitate for even a moment to instigate an intensive recycling program on our campus ... one supported by the Texas A&M University System.

What are we waiting for? The amount of waste generated by this University is phenomenal, even shameful, when most of what is dumped is recycleable.

The benefits of a University recycling program would far outweigh any initial inconveniences that might be involved with setting up the program.

Recycling is a profitable endeavor. Not only would money flow back into the University from the recycling of such materials as aluminum, paper and glass, but we would also help conserve our natural resources while setting a positive example for the surrounding community and other institutions within our state.

It's no longer acceptable for us to turn our heads and ignore what's going on in our own backyards. Ags. Earth Day 1990 will be celebrated on Sunday, April 22. Let's all make an Earth Day pledge today to begin recycling! And it may be up to us to find out more about how our University could adopt a University-wide recycling program.

For more information about Earth Day and recycling,

come to the Earth Day Fair on Sunday in the Research Park. The future of the earth is in our hands. Recycling is only a first step, but it's one that will make a world of difference.

Lynette Clark '91

Letter on 'perversity' misleading

EDITOR:

As Mr. Gaither pointed out in the April 17 issue of the Battalion, one should read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" since those who fail to learn from the past are doomed to repeat it. From this book, one would learn that the truly perverse emperors occurred in the first century, and that Christianity had been the official religion of Rome for over a century before its fall in 476.

To quote Gibbon, "As the happiness of a future life is the great object of religion, we may hear, without sin or scandal, that the introduction, or at least the abuse of Christianity, had some influence on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire."

Jim Lenoir
Graduate Student

Have an opinion? Express it!

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. There is no guarantee that letters submitted will be printed. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. All letters may be brought to 216 Reed McDonald, or sent to Campus Mail Stop 1111.

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Adventures In Cartooning

by Don Atkinson Jr.



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