

## THE BATTALION Editorial Board

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## Parking officers deserve cooperation PTTS employees endure verbal abuse, vehicular assault

**"T**hey are the enemy. Trick them when you can." You learn the rules from day one. "Do everything possible to undermine their authority. They live to get you."

They circle like sharks waiting to attack... pum, pum.... And don't you dare let them know you're scared... pum, PUM.... They only attack when they smell fear.

Or blood. Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the parking lot — PUM, PUM, PUM, PUM —

PTTS!!! They're baaack! For as long as there have been parking violations, there have been parking tickets.

Walking to my car from class one day, I noticed one of them lurking in the parking lot where my poor little vehicle lie helpless, unaware of the menacing danger that threatened to snuff out its imported existence with the slap of a computer-generated ticket.

"Run!" was my first instinct. Call 911! Alert the authorities! Wait a minute, I thought. They are the authorities.

And what was I afraid of? I wasn't doing anything wrong. My car was parked in the right parking lot. I had a valid parking permit hung so that the expiration date showed clearly through my regulation-tinted windshield. They couldn't touch me.

Too many students feel the same way I did when they see those blue uniforms patrolling the parking lots.

"They look at us like we're the enemy," says Belender Wells, a PTTS officer who is also studying to earn her degree in nutrition. "Most students just don't understand that we're here to provide a service that really helps them."

Any of the 40,000 students who have tried to park on this campus — which, at last count, had a total of, oh, 22 parking spaces — know that such spaces are a rare and precious commodity around here. And, very often, students who have not paid for a parking permit are more than happy to take the last parking space when the other 21 are full. Now, where does that leave you — one who presumably has paid the \$2,500 parking fee?

One PTTS officer remembers walking onto a parking lot when a member of the Corps of Cadets ran up to her saying, "Get him! Get him!"

"I'm so glad you're here," the cadet told her. "Give this man a ticket. I've been driving around for thirty minutes looking for a parking space, and this idiot doesn't even have a parking permit."

That person realized what most students don't: If it weren't for the fear that most people feel for PTTS, parking on this campus would be total chaos.

Instead of recognizing the service that PTTS provides, students blindly resent them for doing their job. And many students are all too quick to display their displeasure, as if it were the officer's job to console the offender.

Some students simply refuse to accept the ticket. One officer was pushed and then hit by a car door as a student scrambled to get into her car and drive away — while the woman was placing the ticket on the windshield.

Now, given that this IS college, and most of the salmon who make it this far up the academic stream are presumed to employ a

modicum of rational thought and behavior, one must ask: Who is the idiot? Who is being unreasonable? The officer was merely doing her job.

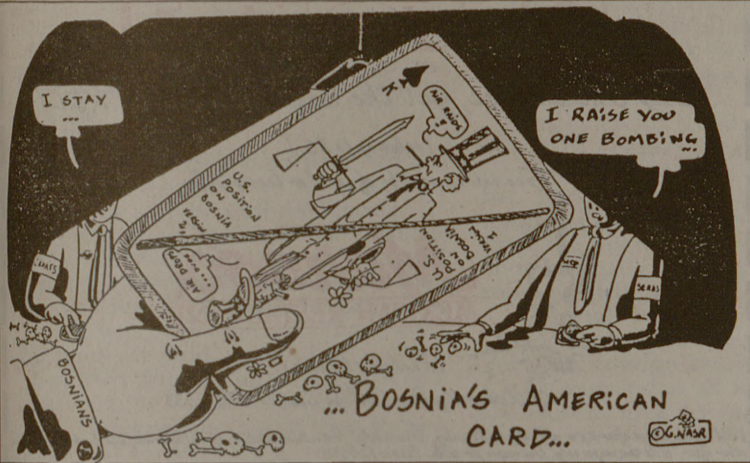
Too many students park where they know they shouldn't. In case you're not sure, you should look carefully. Any sign or large slab of asphalt with big, yellow or white letters stating such ambiguous messages as "NO PARKING" or "24 HOUR TOW AWAY ZONE" are usually a good indication that, well, you probably just shouldn't park there.

Granted, they may not all have the demeanor of a mama patrol officer or a girl scout leader, but many of these people are, well, people. Some are nice, some are not. Some are grouchy, or just plain hot. Most officers are amazingly friendly, despite their working conditions. The fact that they don't lose it and blow everyone to oblivion — in grand disgruntled U.S. Postal employee tradition — is a testament to their patience.

By the way, the lady who was hit by the car door has not been able to return to work. The student didn't escape unscathed, either. Students who show too much zeal in voicing their displeasure can be suspended from school and arrested, depending upon their actions. If you ever have a question or complaint about parking or PTTS, call 862-PARK. There, you can talk to someone who can help you with your problem. And you have the added bonus of not being able to incriminate yourself by physically assaulting someone.

The people who work for PTTS aren't evil. They don't deserve your wrath. They're just doing their job. Give them a break. Give them a chance. Give 'em a little respect. They don't want your blood. They just want you to park where you're supposed to.

Robert Vasquez is a senior journalism major



ROBERT VASQUEZ  
Columnist

## EDITORIAL

### Nuclear benefits

#### Reactor fee exemption needed

Congress recently imposed a new \$62,100 licensing fee upon all university-run nuclear reactors effective Nov. 17. As a result, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is in the process of rewriting the licensing guidelines under which commercial and non-profit organizations would operate. These guidelines would also include any exemptions.

While the final pieces are not yet in place, many in the academic community fear that these annually-assessed fees would ultimately affect the de-commissioning of many of these all-important educational facilities, including the two that Texas A&M operate.

These fees must not be allowed to pass. Many educational institutions exist on a shoestring budget as it is, and these fees would simply render most nuclear engineering programs financially non-viable, resulting in program downsizing or complete cancellation.

The government must not lose sight of the fact that these facilities are not for profit, but for education and technological advancement.

Time and again our elected representatives preach on the virtue and necessity of education. It is only natural then that they rethink this new

mandate, for it is clearly inconsistent with the supposed lofty, invaluable role of education.

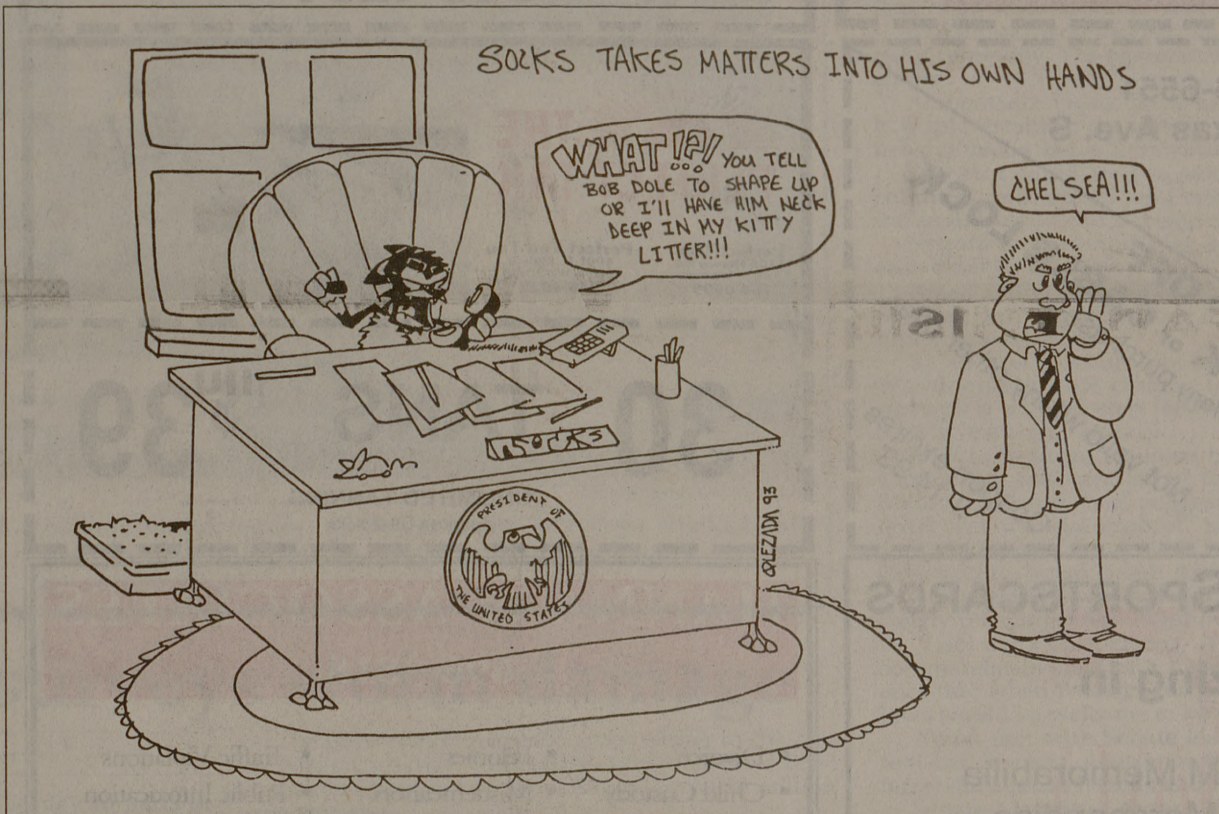
The educational import of these precious few facilities cannot be overstated. These reactors afford the opportunity for study in not only nuclear engineering, but also in medicine, oceanography, anthropology, and many other applications.

The University of Texas has shut down its nuclear facility. This void now leaves Texas A&M in the position of having to host an ever-growing number of students and educators from other schools who depend to a great degree upon visits to our facility.

Currently, the A&M reactors serve as many as 13 other institutions throughout this part of the country. As such, ours is a nuclear engineering department ranked nationally in the top ten.

Faculty members agree, however, that without our two reactors, A&M's standing will drop significantly. University-run nuclear facilities provide an extremely necessary technological asset to academia and society alike.

Congress must rethink this policy of predatory, destructive operating fees for research reactors. These are fees which truly are much too expensive to justify.



## Some people wander through life with no sense of direction

**H**i, my name is Jenny Magee, and I... have no sense of direction. There, it's out.

I have decided to face the fact that at any given time I am almost certain to have absolutely no idea where I am, how I got there or how to get back to where I am supposed to be.

No, I am not a blonde. My problem is rooted more deeply than hair follicles. But I know I am not alone. I know that there are millions of others who live the silent embarrassing life of the directionally impaired. I, of course, have no idea how to find you.

Inspired by this era of common causes and group support, I have decided to come forth — no holds barred — and tell

my story. I was going to check some specifics with my inner child, but I have forgotten the way to her house.

It all began in elementary school, surrounded by plastic globes and colorful maps, where I was introduced to the very basic concept of right and left. With a keenly sadistic smile, my teacher instructed us to hold up our hands, point our index fingers upward and our thumbs inward. "Now children (hee-hee), the one that makes the L is left, and the other is right."

Is it me? Am I crazy? What is going on here? They both make Ls.

In the 13 years of my life that have passed since this experience, I can vouch for the fact that at least one other person was thrown asunder by this right/left instructional demonstration.

And as if that were not enough to ensure a life of misery, they slapped us with the Never Wear Sweaty Earmuffs theory. Otherwise known as the concept of north, west, south and east.

This is a very handy little idea if you are the type of person who is inclined to strap a compass to the front of your face.

But to the directionally challenged — not to mention normal people — it is not exactly the most efficient navigational tool for everyday life.

Okay, so there are probably a good amount of people out there who could find the sun and tell me which way is

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north. But, "turn right, then left, then left again and right one more time" in the middle of the night.... Now how many people can tell me which way you're going?

Backed by this extremely shaky foundation of directional ability, I managed to flounder through life and eventually make it from point A to point B.

Then I turned 16, and I found myself driving straight into fiery hell — located somewhere between my house and 30 minutes in the opposite direction of my best friend's house.

When I took my driving test, they forgot to test for a very important driving skill — a sense of direction. Forget the fact that I knew how to stop for a full-blown three seconds at a stop sign; somebody should have figured out that after three seconds I had no idea where I was going.

I really shutter to think of the many cars I have almost made postcards out of when I discovered in mid-intersection that I had turned right instead of left. The Texas State Highway Department has tried in all their sympathy to make life a little easier for the directionally impaired by installing WRONG WAY signs periodically on state roads. However, by the time you read a sign that indicates that you're driving on the wrong side of the road, there is not much a 12" by 15" red sign can do for you.

Now, for those of you feeling smug in your great sense of directional ability, al-

low me to explain. Just as a color blind person does not intentionally mean to wear a red-check shirt and purple pants, the directionally impaired are not lost because they are stupid.

Quite honestly, we are most often far too preoccupied with absorbing atmosphere than with connecting it to all the other familiar dots in the pattern of our lives. We see the world as a great impressionistic painting — time, space and locale are abstract.

I have learned that there is a way to find good in every one of life's hardships. Had I been blessed with a sense of direction, I probably would not be at A&M right now. The first time I came to A&M as a high school senior, I was wandering around campus with a friend with no clue where I was. All of a sudden, a guy appeared out of nowhere. "Howdy! Are you lost? Do you need some help finding your way?" That's all it took; I knew this was the school for me.

Jenny Magee is a sophomore English and journalism major

COLLEGE STATION, TX  
SEPT 14  
MAIL CALL  
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### Clearing up some myths about rabies

In response to the Sept. 1, Mail Call letter entitled "Reader bit by dog worried

about rabies," we would like to clear up misunderstandings about the transmission of rabies to humans through animal bites and inform the public about the risks of contracting rabies and the importance of vaccinating your pets.

Despite what the Sept. 1 letter stated, rabies is not always fatal. In every case in which a bite victim has received the complete post-exposure treatment from a physician before symptoms of rabies appeared, the patient has survived.

In order to protect yourself, if you do receive a scratch or bite wound from an unfamiliar animal, wash the area thoroughly with soap and water immediately.

If the animal is a dog or a cat, find out if it has received its annual rabies vaccine, keep the animal isolated, and notify your physician and your local veterinarian. The animal may need to be quarantined or euthanized in order to determine if the animal was indeed infected.

If you are bitten by a wild animal and it is possible to catch the offender without further harm to yourself, do so, and immediately contact animal control officers in your area.

In the United States rabies probably poses more of a threat to peace of mind than to human life; however, it is important to know the proper procedures to take in the case of an animal bite.

Animals do not always show symptoms of rabies, so it is better to be safe than sorry. In places where rabies has been carefully managed by laws requiring animals to receive a yearly rabies vaccination by a licensed veterinarian, the prevalence of the rabies virus in do-

mesticated animals is extremely low.

Therefore, as a responsible pet owner, it is extremely important that you keep your pets current on their rabies vaccinations. Let us work together to keep our animals and our loved ones safe from this virus.

Loren Reynolds  
Second year veterinary student

Dara Fariss  
Third year veterinary student

On behalf of the members of the Omega Tau Sigma veterinary school service fraternity