

Hand-held ticket writers help PTTS help you

By Claudia Zavaleta
The Battalion

Try to imagine a machine that allows the user to access information about thousands of people just by punching a few buttons. Is it some sort of high-tech spy gadget? No — it's PTTS' hand-held ticket writer, a device all too familiar to some students.

Tom Williams, director of Parking, Traffic and Transit, said in 1989, PTTS switched from entering individual tickets manually to the hand-held ticket writer to increase efficiency and reliability.

"We are all asked by the governor, by the state of Texas and our administration to make our departments as efficient as we can," Williams said.

"One of the first things we did when parking was established was to try to get the parking system computerized."

The ticket writers are hand-held Epson EHP20 computers, he said. When an officer enters the information into the computer, the machine stores it and prints out a hard copy that is left on the car.

"It's really not any faster to write a ticket with the ticket writer as opposed to using a paper ticket," Williams said. "The savings come when you have to put that ticket into the computer system. Now we don't have to have data entry people entering the tickets manually. It has allowed us to reduce our cost."

"We are in the computer age," he said, "and if you try to stay manual, you are behind the curve on an efficiency standpoint. Technology is rapidly changing and we are waiting for the next level of on-line hand-held computers."

Officer Rodrick Cashaw has worked at PTTS for six years, since the days of handwritten tickets. He said the hand-held ticket writers have made it better for the student because less errors occur using a computer.

Before, a ticket was entered in a booklet which was basically a receipt and a carbon copy, Cashaw said. Depending on the day and time of the year, officers would use three or four booklets a day, and sometimes they were misplaced.

"The information from the ticket writers," he said, "is three times more effective than using the booklets. Sometimes when people would come in to try to find out about their citations there would be no record on file."

Williams said with the ticket writers, the information is stored in the machine and automatically downloaded into the system at the end of the day. When it was done manually, there was a two- or three-month backlog. But the computer now gives the PTTS the ability to manage the paperwork on a day-to-day basis.

Cashaw said for PTTS officers, the ticket writer allows them more freedom to decide whether to issue a citation or just a warning.

"One thing that I found was more effective," Cashaw said, "is that the computer gives us information on the vehicle which enables us to choose between writing a citation or a warning. When we wrote them by hand it was basically a done deal."

Appealing a ticket, Cashaw said, is also easier for students to do. The computer records the exact location of the citation and if there was a problem with the markings or the parking signs in the area, the ticket can be appealed.

Williams said that contrary to popular belief, the goal of PTTS officers is not to write as many tickets as possible, but rather to protect the spaces for the people who pay to park in them.

Cashaw said giving out citations is a tough job for the officers to do, but most times tickets can be avoided.

"We get a lot of negative feedback because of what we do — as expected," he said. "But the process to upgrade parking is in effect. The department is working toward trying to take care of everyone's needs, but it's hard when a lot of students don't know what the parking regulations are."

"Parking is an important part of a student's life, especially from a financial standpoint. If they would take the time to know the regulations and familiarize themselves with the areas, it would be a lot easier to get to class and to park in the proper places."

Williams said the PTTS appears to be strict because there are a lot of students who don't try to comply with the regulations; but the number of tickets being written is decreasing.

"It's a good trend, he said, and it shows the parking system is improving."

"The majority of students are trying to follow the rules," Williams said. "I would be completely happy if we didn't write any citations."



The hand-held Epson EHP20 has helped PTTS process tickets more efficiently since 1989.

The Flying Tigers

Film society to host documentary viewing

By Paul Neale
The Battalion

"Winston Churchill said we were the most effective technical, military outfit in the history of warfare," said Gen. Charles Bond, Class of '49 and former flying ace of the Flying Tiger Squadron.

The MSC Film Society of Texas A&M will present the Texas premiere tonight of a 90-minute documentary "Fei Hu, The Story of the Flying Tigers" in Rudder Auditorium. "Fei Hu" is the name the Chinese gave to the U.S. airplanes with shark teeth painted on them.

Bond and Gen. "Tex" Hill, Class of '36 and also a former pilot, and the documentary's producers will speak before the film.

Known for their heroism and flare, the Flying Tigers worked with the Chinese to defend their nation against Japan during World War II. Although the Flying Tigers' rich history was brief — lasting from July 4, 1941 to July 4, 1942 — its war record remains unmatched.

"The main thing they (the Flying Tigers) did was stop the Japanese from slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Chinese people," said Frank Boring, co-producer of the documentary.

Boring said "Fei Hu" is markedly different from traditional WWII documentaries.

"Our intention was to have them (the pilots) tell their story. And we were very fortunate to get a lot of film footage no one's even seen before."

Boring's father worked with the founder of the Flying Tigers, Claire Chennault, in China and Taiwan. His own experiences provided insight into the making of the documentary.

"I grew up hearing these stories of who these guys were, but it wasn't until much later in my life that I really caught on to the story," Boring said. "It was the people themselves that got me interested in them."

From the idea stage to its completion, Boring said the doc-

umentary took four years. He admits, however, that the documentary wouldn't have flown without the guidance and experience of Frank Christopher, who has been producing documentaries for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) for more than 10 years.

"I have had an incredible oral history," Boring said, "but I wouldn't have a film."

Frank Christopher wrote the script and produced the story of the Flying Tigers. An Academy Award-nominated filmmaker and three-time Emmy winner, Christopher explained that he felt challenged to set apart this version from other Flying Tiger documentaries.

"They kind of rehash the same story with the same people, and we took that as a challenge to go beyond that," Christopher said. "We interviewed the nurse, the doctor, the clerks, the mechanics. . . . We wanted to broaden it to the entire outfit, not just the aces."

Christopher said information and interviews from Chinese sources enhanced the documentary, produced for United States public television and worldwide distribution.

"We were fortunate to have the cooperation of the Chinese because we're able to bring back facets of the story which really aren't told," Christopher said.

He attributed the documentary's success in part to Boring's rapport with the pilots. He said the film — "driven by interviews" — requires such a bond.

The first Flying Tiger pilot to draw the trademark shark teeth on the plane, Bond said the spirit behind the squadron is "sometimes even more important than ammunition."

"Shark teeth on the P-40 means an awful lot to the young kids of this country," Bond said. "They know what the Flying Tigers were."

"Fei Hu, The Story of the Flying Tigers," will be shown tonight at 7:30 in Rudder Auditorium. Admission is \$1.



Photo Courtesy of Gen. Charles Bond

Gen. Charles Bond, shown here in a self-portrait taken while flying with the Flying Tigers in February 1942, will speak tonight in Rudder before the showing of the documentary "Fei Hu, The Story of the Flying Tigers."

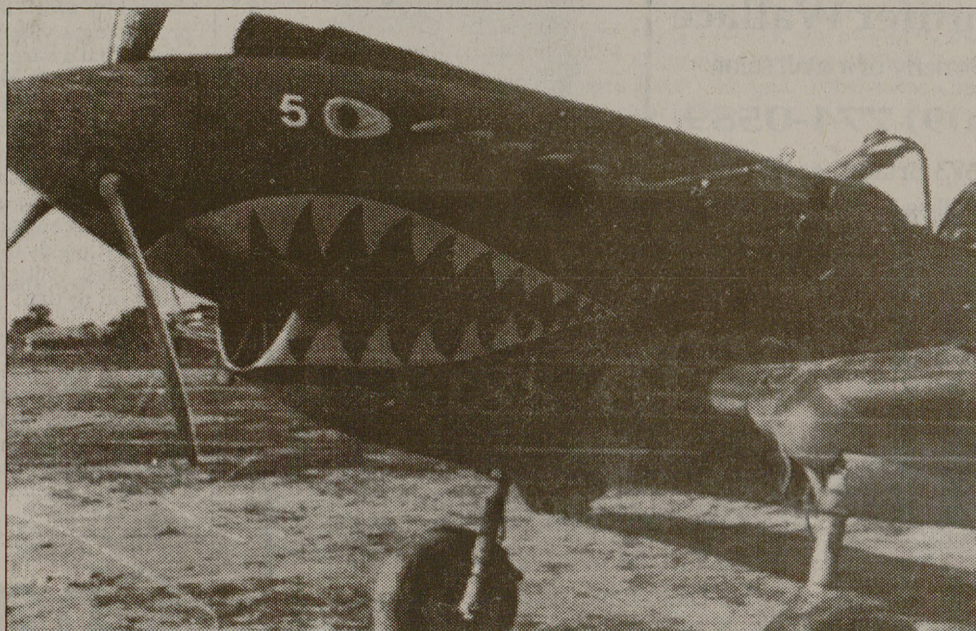


Photo Courtesy of Gen. Charles Bond

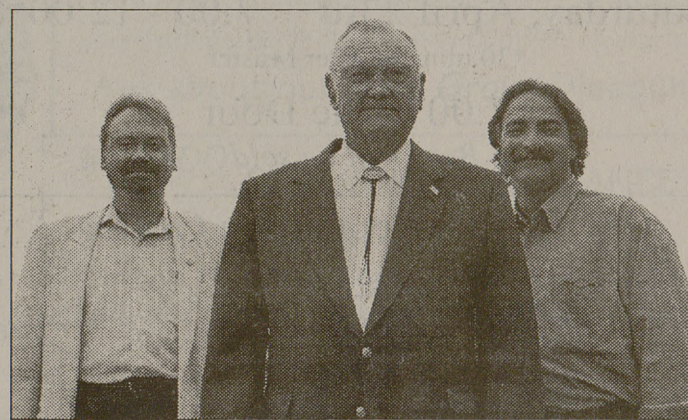
(Above) Gen. Charles Bond's No. 5 P-40 plane was destroyed in April 1942 when the Japanese raided Loiwing, China.

(Right) Gen. Charles Bond is pictured here in his official U.S. Army Air Corps picture taken in April 1938.



Photo Courtesy of Gen. Charles Bond

Frank Boring (left), and co-producer Frank Christopher (right), stand with Gen. Charles Bond, Class of '49. All three men will be speaking at tonight's Texas premiere of "Fei Hu, The Story of the Flying Tigers."



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Late Night with the Class of '97

Students gather every weekend to clean area around Northgate churches

By Traci Travis
The Battalion



Kyle Burnett/The Battalion

Jesse Czelusta (front left), Shannon Habgood (front right) and other members of the Class of '97 meet every Sunday morning at 1:30 to clean the area around the churches on Northgate.

Ahhh Northgate. To some collegians, it is the ultimate late-night partying scene — a veritable beer-guzzling paradise.

But after the bars close and the patrons stumble home in a drunken stupor, the streets lie empty except for a few discarded beer bottles. . . and, oh yeah, 10 trash-collecting freshmen.

Members of the Class of '97 dedicate themselves to cleaning up Northgate every Sunday morning at exactly 1:30. It is a class project they like to call the "Bottoms-Up Clean-Up."

Shannon Habgood, service chair for the Class of '97, said the idea came from a representative from the service organization Habitat for Humanity.

"We wanted to do something different to help out the community," Habgood said. "And this is definitely different."

Barton Bailey, secretary for A&M United Methodist Church at Northgate, said Habgood contacted him at the beginning of the semester to ask if the Class of '97 could help the church.

Bailey said he told Habgood he really needed help cleaning up trash around the church on weekends before Sunday worship services. But he said he never thought they would be willing to sacrifice their late-night fun to pick up other students' trash.

"I was really surprised when Shannon agreed to my suggestion," Bailey said. "They've been a great help to me. If it wasn't them out there cleaning up, it would have been me."

The clean-up crew, ranging from eight to 10 people, fills approximately three to four garbage bags each week they clean, Habgood said.

"Together, we can clean around five buildings and four parking lots in only 20 minutes," she said.

Despite the late hours, odoriferous atmosphere, and odd looks from passersby, the group still finds ways of making the most out of the situation.

"Sometimes we make up a point system for the trash," Habgood said. "For example, you get five points if you pick up a beer can."

Jesse Czelusta, a freshman animal science major and organizer of the project, said the clean-up is good bull for the Class of '97.

Since the fall, the Class of '97 has participated in numerous service projects, but the Bottoms-Up Clean-Up is the only project the class claims as its own.

"We'd like to see the clean-up turn into a many class thing," she said. "Anyone is welcome to come and participate."

Czelusta said as far as support goes, there are plenty of freshmen willing to help.

See Class of '97/Page 6