

Parking problems not particularly bad

Students should find own remedies

A couple of weeks ago, two friends of mine who go to school in the Northeast paid me a visit. I wanted them to leave with a positive impression and to take the Spirit of Aggieland back to Harvard with them, so I made sure they took in the significant landmarks requisite for a visit here including Kyle Field, the Chicken, etc.

JIM PAWLIKOWSKI
COLUMNIST



of the bus service at your stop are the important variables which determine which method of transportation is best for you.

No matter whether you drive or ride the bus, you probably need to allow yourself 30-45 minutes to get to class. This is a fact that we simply must deal with. We cannot reasonably expect to park right next to the building where we need to be five minutes before class starts. But this is often what we demand.

While the above estimates do not apply to everybody, they are a good general example of the typical Aggie commute. The times compare with the average commute of someone working in a large metropolitan area.

Yet, we persist in condemning parking on campus as no less evil than death and taxes. We blame the University for not providing a space for every car and make villains of PTTS officers for enforcing parking regulations.

Parking is one of those situations where the institutions that govern us have done everything they can do. It is time for us to quit complaining and deal with the problem ourselves.

At this point, I modestly offer several proposals for your consideration to alleviate the parking shortage that plagues our campus.

Ride the bus. Every concentrated metropolitan area must turn to public transportation when too many people need to go to too small an area at the same time. While parking garages allow more cars per area, an unintended consequence of too much parking is tremendous traffic jams. While University Drive does not compare to Houston freeways during rush hour, it will if even more parking is added to campus.

Carpool. Get together with roommates to drive to school. Hook-up with class mates to give or receive a ride home. If your ride falls through, the bus is always available.

Get to school early. There are still entire rows of spaces left near Zachry until 7:50 a.m. Good parking is available at Kyle Field until past 9:00. Like the old saying goes — the early bird gets the worm.

Yes, parking is a problem. But it's a problem everywhere else there are people. By comparison, we still have it pretty good.

Jim Pawlikowski is a junior chemical engineering major

They expressed appropriate awe at the football stadium and consumed their fill at the most storied of College Station bars. I thought I had impressed them with these things, but something unexpected impressed them just as much — the amount of on-campus parking.

"Wow, so you guys can drive to class," one of them said. That statement put into perspective the parking woes about which we constantly complain.

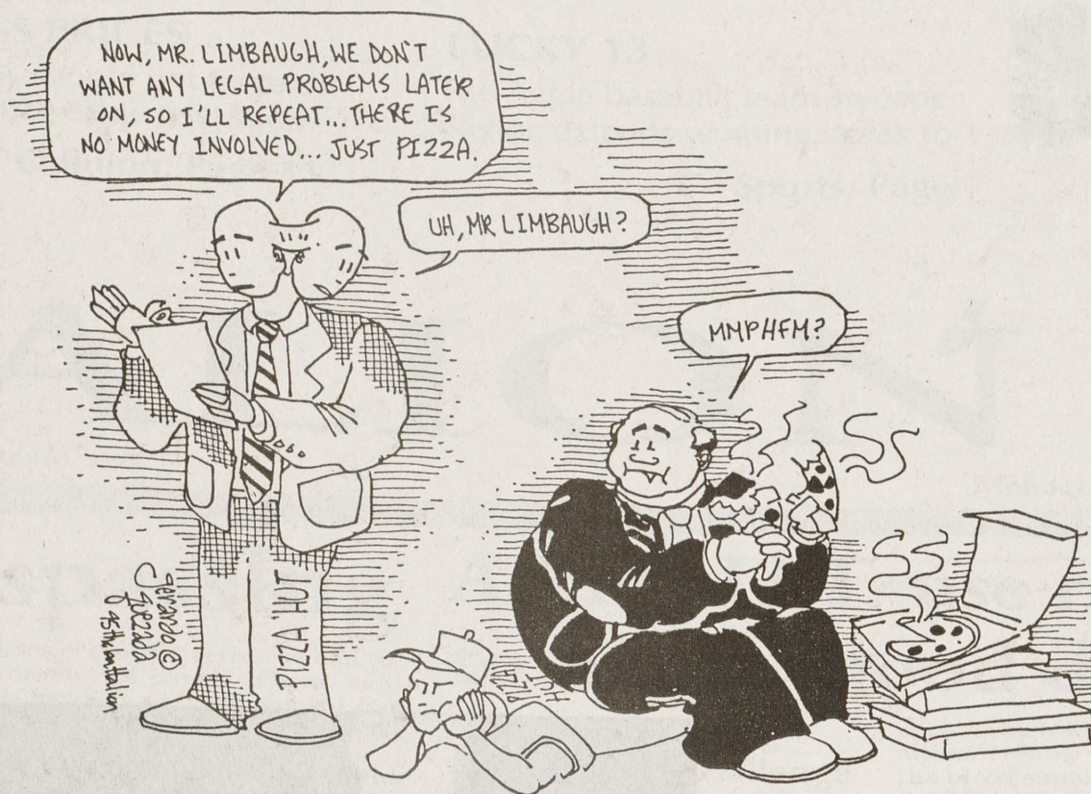
We complain that there is not enough parking on campus. But at least we have parking on campus. Many schools have no parking at all for off-campus students, and some do not allow freshman to park, — even if they live on campus.

We constantly clamor for the University to "do something" about parking. We demand more parking spaces and more garages.

We must face up to the fact that only so many spaces can be constructed. Every day, over 50,000 students, faculty and staff converge on a couple of square miles. Unless we want to cut down every tree, pave Simpson Drill field and demolish old buildings to make way for parking garages, alternative means of transportation must be established.

We already have an effective means of mass transit in the bus system. There is probably not any point in College Station more than a five-minute walk from a bus stop. Add that to a five- to 10-minute wait, 15-minute bus ride and a 15- minute walk from the bus stop to class, and you have your standard 40- to 45-minute commute.

Compare that to driving yourself. You get from your apartment to school in 10 minutes, wait anywhere from five to 30 minutes for a parking space — depending on what lot and the time of day — and make a 10- to 20-minute trek across campus. Depending on your personal situation, it can take anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour to drive to class. Therefore, the location of your classes and the regularity



Our diverse generation doesn't need labels

You are known. Yes, everything about you has already been qualified, quantified, organized, or-dained, ordered, defined and designated. So it's good news for all of us.

We no longer have to spend all that useless time trying to figure out who we are and what we are going to do tomorrow — not that we would actually exert ourselves.

What, you may ask, brought this happy day upon us? Simple — we are Generation X.

Yep, no more fashion choices for us. Just give us a flannel outfit, and watch us go.

Don't worry about a job because there aren't any. If you doubt it, just watch the latest MTV special and then go rent Reality Bites. That pretty much represents the extent of our daylight activities anyway.

Of course, we only watch MTV after we get up around noon. Our nights are spent in the mosh pits, throwing ourselves into oblivion.

Our music is simple, too. All the artists have to do is put in tonz o' distortion and scream into the microphone — or be from Seattle — the great slacker/ Generation X Mecca.

Politically, we are all budding members of Greenpeace, Amnesty International, The Psychic Friends, General Foods International Coffee of the Month Club, N.O.W., the Kurt Cobain Fan Club — he, of course, being our spokesman — I-read-Spin-more-than-the-Bible Anonymous and the Time/Life Beavis and Butt-Head Compilation Association.

Don't bother wasting your breath protesting any of this. It won't matter, because you are Generation X, and you don't believe in anything anyway.

How, you ask, did all this happen right under our very noses? Brief history lesson, our parents' generation could probably be called "The Label Dudes" if it weren't for the fact that they have pretty much used up every other label on themselves.

Let's see, they are the Me Generation, the hippies. Later they were the yuppies. They were also the flower children, not to mention the free-love generation. It only follows that we have to have a label.

I'm not overly fond of labels as a source of identification for anyone else, but when one is applied to me, I become even

more wary. We are the most diverse group in history. For most of us, we just couldn't care less if our boss is a man or a woman or what color his or her face appears. Sure, we aren't perfect. But try saying something like that about our parents' generation. This diversity is paradoxical, meaning that the only real generalization that can be made about us is that no real generalization can be made about us.

Our generation has many problems. Probably the biggest problem is that many just don't think anything they do can make a difference. In a way, it makes perfect sense. Those idealists from the '60s came to power and did the same types of things they railed against for all those years. They just did it to us while using cooler words and listening to cooler music.

The result — our age group has the lowest average voting turnout in every election. This means that, instead of deciding what we want to do, things are decided for us and then done to us. For example, that cool budget deficit that Congress has run for years will be paid off by our generation. Remember how some Democrats in the Senate thought it necessary to vote down the proposed Balanced Budget Amendment? Gee, it sure is neat how the Senate played political games with our future by mortgaging it.

Am I the only person who has noticed that every new show on TV looks like Melrose Place? Or that every commercial looks like MTV Sports? The advertising executives have us pegged. I can't really blame them for trying to sell to us — it's a free market. I just resent being categorized as just one of "them."

Now comes the "so what are we supposed to do about it?" part. Here's a thought — vote. It takes about 10 seconds. As soon as we are recognized as someone's constituency, we can stop taking it and start making it.

Here's the "but I just don't care about politics" part. Like I said, the fact that so many of us don't care makes sense in light of what is going on. The problem is that it won't stop until we take the time to care. It really doesn't take long to find out what someone believes on an issue or how that issue relates to you.

Until we put a little thought into our votes — the few we make — we will just keep on electing people because they put on sunglasses and play the sax on TV.

Until then, I'll see ya'll in the mosh pit at the Dixie Chick on this Friday.

David Taylor is a senior management major

MAIL CALL

Christians should live as Christ did, not judge

In response to Elizabeth Preston's article about Christianity, I would like to make mention about exactly what a Christian is.

I feel a Christian is a person who loves Christ and is grateful for the sacrificed he made. Out of this love and respect, true Christians strive to follow his example and teachings.

Christ taught us to love God and love our neighbors unconditionally. I consider myself to be a true Christian and the best way I can show Christ my love is quietly following his example by accepting others, helping the needy and living his commandments.

Even though I am not perfect, this is how I can best show my gratitude. Therefore, I don't need to wear a t-shirt, point my finger or try to make a show for others about my belief in Christ once a year.

While many involved with Resurrection Week have the best of intentions, I hope that all Christians can analyze their beliefs and live as Christ would.

*Tim Matis
Class of '97*

Many questions around A&M need answering

Well it's about 2:45 a.m. as I sit and reflect on my five-year tenure at A&M, and I've got tons of homework I should be doing, but I think we all know how that goes.

So I figure I'd make the procrastination worth it just this once by writing to Mail Call, which is something

I've wanted to do for quite some time anyway.

I've spent much time waiting for off campus shuttles, and while choking to death on my fair share of bus exhaust (many can sympathize with this torture), I've wondered about things. Here's a small slice of the "wonder pie" that I built up all these years:

1.) Why is the most sacred grass at A&M, the MSC lawn, usually the most brown and lifeless.

You'd think if anyone could fertilize a lawn, A&M could.

2.) Does the use of toilets go under the Student Use Fee or General Use Fee?

Either way, I think someone owes me several rolls of that one-ply 1000 yard, "easy tear" tissue on campus. Kind of an unused compensation.

3.) This should get me a statue next to the 12th man.

I notice most people doing a balancing / sardine act while standing on the benches at Kyle Field during games.

If everyone would stand on the concrete floor directly in front of their seats (as they do for the Aggie War Hymn anyway), then they could spend more time standing and less time trying to.

I know we're Aggies but come on! 4.) Does anyone ever sign up for the Urinary Tract or Yeast Infection studies advertised in The Batt?

5.) Do women really talk to each other like they do in the Massengill commercials?

6.) Will this letter actually end without complaint?

7.) How many students are really sick when they miss a test?

8.) Am I the only one who has a stack of those little green Bibles that they give out on campus every semester?

9.) Ever write a check for less than \$1.00?

10.) Did anyone else think the picture showing a guy artificially fertilizing a cow in the (92? or 93?) Aggieland was a bit much? Ouch!

11.) Does anyone still own a Vanilla Ice or Yoko Ono CD or cassette?

12.) Remember when ten-zipper parachute pants were cool?

13.) Have you ever seen a baby squirrel? Where do squirrels hang out when it rains?

14.) Phantasmagoric: no real reason. I just wanted to use my thesaurus for once in 5 years and this was the coolest word next to logorrhea which sounds much like the feeling after a bad Calculus test.

15.) I recently went to a Chinese food buffet that offered tater tots, fried chicken and German chocolate cake in the selection. Interestingly funny, yet scary.

16.) Will O.J. get the juice? Who cares anymore. I say call in Judge Wapner and he'll have it wrapped up within the half-hour.

17.) Think of how you feel after leaving the bookstores every semester or paying TCA cable \$60 to do that tricky "installation."

You feel like that cow mentioned in #10. We must unite!

Demand change! Well, at least cooler freebies from the bookstores and an adult movie channel from TCA so that people may have the option of trying to view it through the wavy lines. You know who you are.

So why did I spend so much time writing this?

"What's his point?" you ask.

To help my fellow Ags?

To have some feeling of accomplishment? To impress with my savvy, thought-provoking philosophy?

Hmmm ... I hope so.

*John A. Guzman
Class of '94*

Column on religion has flaws in logic

In the course of her column on Christianity and Resurrection Week, Elizabeth Preston says, "If you believe Christianity is The Truth, that's fine — maybe it is."

She closes, however, by stating that "Christianity is only a shade" among "many religious hues."

This is analogous to saying, "If you

believe two plus two equals four, that's fine, but it could just as well be eight, 95 or 600."

Finding the right answer to both of these questions is important, and not all possible answer are valid. Knowing the answer to the math problem can affect you academically, but knowing what the true religion is could have far greater consequences.

I challenge everyone not to be satisfied with a "maybe it is, maybe it isn't" answer to the claims of Jesus, but to investigate this question earnestly for yourself.

*John Murdock
Class of '95
accompanied by nine signatures*

Christ claimed divinity, not just moral teacher

In response to Elizabeth Preston's April 12 column, Jesus taught more than simply to love thy neighbor and not judge others.

In John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."

Note that this is a direct quotation of Jesus, not made up by man.

Here Jesus sums up his two most important claims.

His first is that he is God in the flesh. Jesus doesn't claim to know truth. He claims to be truth.

This claim only holds water if indeed he is God, the ultimate source of truth. This leaves three possibilities: he was lying and knew it, thus, history's greatest fraud.

He was lying and didn't know it, thus crazy; he was telling the truth, making him God in the flesh.

Simply a good moral teacher is not an option he left open to us, as C.S. Lewis observes.

His second claim is that the only way to get to heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ. You may not believe that claim, but that doesn't make it any less true, if indeed it is true.

That may be "exclusive" or "close-

minded." So be it. I'd rather believe rightly.

*Ryan R. Winter
Class of '95
accompanied by 10 signatures*

Marijuana usage not equal to violent crime

I know that Greg Williams is a graduate student, which allows me to deduce that in his lifetime he has written many compare and contrast essays. I feel for him the grades he must have gotten on those papers.

How can he compare marijuana users — more specifically, "drug dealers," which, by the way, aren't even the topic of this debate — to rapists and murderers?

Rape and murder require a level of violence and disrespect for others which I have never seen among people who were stoned.

The fact is that drug use and abuse is against the law.

The fact is that marijuana smoking is the least of our problems, and it is the least harmful of drugs — including alcohol. By the way, it is also legal in some countries.

If this country legalized it, would he still be crying out?

So, he should get a grip and relay his opinions to the drunken, obnoxious people at Hurricane Harry's and leave the lethargic, hungry and "I'm about to go to bed" marijuana users alone.

*Dawn Kaiser
Class of '98*

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