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Drinking: Students turn to alcohol

Continued from Page 3

on drunk driving. He said many residents are afraid to drive at night due to the risks.

"You watch people leaving a party or a club, and within four drivers, one has consumed an alcoholic beverage," he said.

And even if people who drive drunk escape injury or death due to an accident, the issue of dependency remains. Many students do develop drinking problems, which can lead to trouble now or later in life, Reardon said.

"More Aggies will die an early death because of alcohol than will achieve graduate degrees," he said. "The abuse of alcohol is what we're concerned about. What we look at with students is how it affects their goals, their grades, their relationships."

Reardon said indications of alcoholism include falling grades, legal trouble, rocky friendships and memory loss.

"It gets to where their life revolves around alcohol," he said.

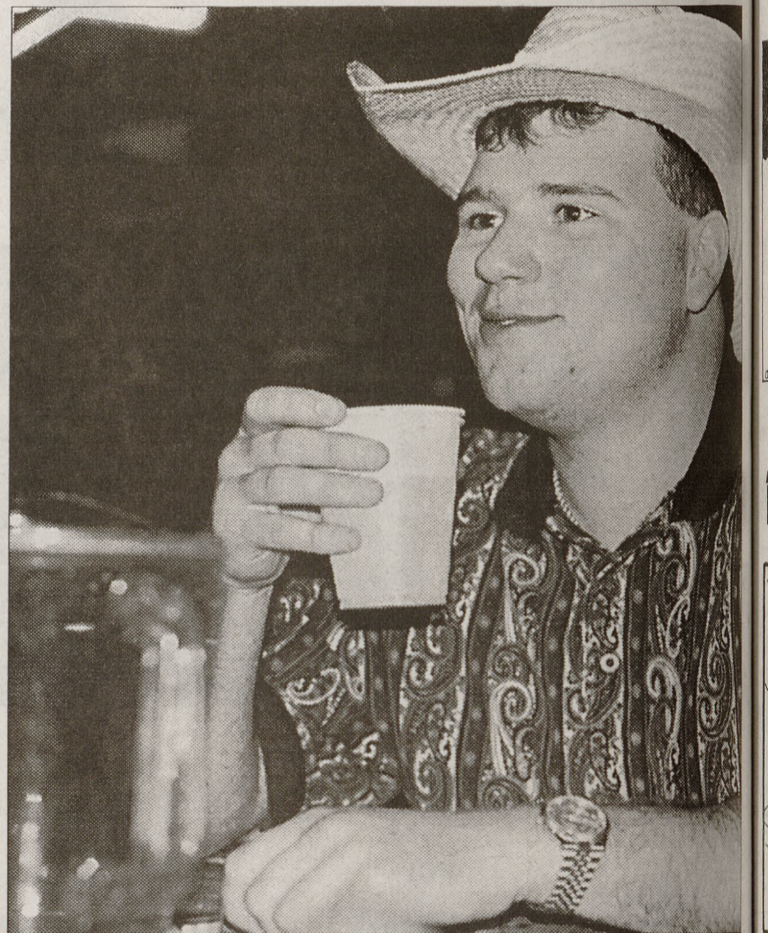
Gallagher said she has friends that drink too much, and she has lost relatives to alcoholism.

She said knowing this, she can consciously control her drinking.

"When you get drunk every day, I seriously think you have a problem," she said. "I don't let drinking control me; I control my drinking."

Reardon said students should keep control in mind when evaluating how alcohol fits into their lives.

"Examine how alcohol enhances your life," he said. "I don't



Evan Zimmerman, The Battalion

Steve Barton, a junior range science major, downs a brew at The Chicken.

know of any long-term gains, but there are long-term losses."

He said with as many great memories as A&M offers stu-

dents, alcohol need not wipe out these memories.

"If we need a drug, what's wrong with what we are?" he said.

Believe it or not, PTTS is here to help

Most good of Ags will agree that there is a plethora of reasons to be proud of this University. Well, fair enough, but how many of those good Ags would agree that the department of Parking, Transit and Traffic Services (PTTS) is one of the jewels in that hypothetical crown?

I'd guess three, maybe four. As for myself, I've had days when I've hunted parking officers with flame-throwers because, like most everyone else, I don't like to pay tickets.

That's why I wanted to write this column. During the last weekly Battalion staff meeting, the parking officer alarm went off in the news-room, and the staff quickly evacuated to move their cars. It didn't matter in the long run, because we all got tickets for parking in the University Business lot around the corner of Reed McDonald.

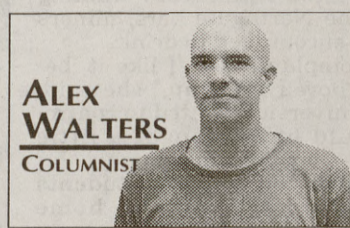
That was the last straw. I imagined myself writing a scathing column exposing the PTTS for what it was — an army of Keystone cops bent on ruining other people's lives. I saw myself marching into the office of the director and having him on his knees begging me not to print "the real truth."

But, as is often the case in my life, what I imagined and reality were quite different. Tom Williams, the director of the PTTS, sat down with me and answered my questions and proved to me that the parking organization on this campus is one of the best in the nation.

Williams said PTTS was formed in the fall of 1988 "to bring some order and manage parking improvement programs the University was implementing."

OK, that's nice, but where does the money for this organization come from? My impression was, besides supporting the financial needs of the PTTS from what must be a collective \$3 trillion ticket bill, the student body is also paying for the organization with those massive tuition and general use fees.

Reality is, the PTTS is a self-supported organization. The cash for building those parking garages, new parking



ALEX WALTERS
COLUMNIST

lots, etc., etc. comes from permit sales, garage use and, of course, tickets.

Then I thought, there isn't nearly enough parking, right?

Wrong again.

For the 14,000 commuter tags sold, there are 9,000 available spaces. That sounds like a problem, unless one takes into consideration that those parking lots turn over at least two, sometimes three times a day; and the PTTS got this information from an outside survey, so it's not just the organization playing fast and loose, hoping that bet would turn one space into two.

So the organization is well run, but what about the renegade officers who act like retired Green Berets? Those people do exist. From my own experience, I know that anytime a person puts on a uniform of authority, it seems to short-circuit their brain. But, those people are the exception rather than the rule.

To get the facts about parking enforcement-

ment, I spoke to Bert Opara, Parking Service Officer (PSO) and night shift leader. Opara told me how students turn into animals — hitting, kicking, spitting, swearing and even running over Parking Officers — when they're given a ticket.

My advice to these people is grow the hell up. No one enjoys shelling out \$10, \$25 or even \$50 for a parking ticket, but is that worth hurting someone? To my knowledge, no one has ever had to pay a ticket for parking legally, so each time a student has a confrontation with a PSO, the student is in the wrong, in at least the most basic sense.

PTTS does have problems, but they are working hard to provide parking for those who need it. For a University this size, they do an excellent job. Opara told me PTTS can never satisfy everyone "unless (they) assign (students) a mobile parking space that goes where (they) go."

Opara also beseeched me to be a reasonable voice to represent the PSOs to the students. "Please tell them we love them, we care about them, and we don't want to give them citations — and we are just trying to earn a living and provide a service," he said. "We are human beings too."

Alex Walters is a junior journalism and theater arts major.



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