

THE BATTALION OPINION

No parking, except for me PTTS continues to turn a blind eye to parking quagmire

Columnist



Steve May
economics
graduate student

ate to school. Nowhere to park. Have to get to Zachary by 9:10. The clock ticks 9 o'clock. In the back of my mind I think, "Should have gotten up an hour earlier to get a spot." Anyone who has ever had a class on East Campus knows the feeling. Realistically, this is a problem thousands of students face daily. With only the one Zachary lot with its predicted future expansion of 575 spots to the east, parking has become a dire problem for East Campuserians. Parking, Traffic and Transportation Service is responsible for allocating adequate space for student needs. The problem is the majority of these spaces are popping up on West Campus, which as we well know is a thirty to forty-minute walk or bus ride away. At present, PTTS does not have any future plans for expansion on East Campus. Tom Williams, Director of PTTS, said the parking situation is being handled adequately. He believes once the expansion to Zachary lot is complete and the new lots on West Campus are opened, most parking problems will be solved. As for the time required to traverse from West to East campus, Williams said it is not a big concern. "When you get out in the real world, some students need to get accustomed to getting up earlier." When the possibility of additional parking was raised, he said, "The vacant lots to the north of Albertson's had been

considered, but the cost was too high because the slabs (foundations and utilities) had to be removed."

To make parking matters worse, there are currently plans to turn the so-called "mud lot" into a hotel. This would displace even more student parkers.

Here are a few statistics to better explain the problem. On Tuesday morning for the 9:35 class, there were 376 cars parked in the Northgate area (not including the Mud Lot).

These vehicles were parked in legal spaces and not in front of residences. Of these, over 100 vehicles sported A&M Blue parking permits. These were the students who paid for a service they are not presently receiving. This highly unscientific census does not even begin to consider all those who parked illegally or in business lots.

William Lartigue Jr., a senior chemical engineering major, decided not to purchase a permit this year.

"I felt it would be better to park out here (north of Albertson's) and ride my bike," he said.

"Plus the hassle of trying to park up there (Zachary lot)...it takes 45 minutes to get a spot."

"The bus routes (to and from West Campus) don't guarantee you will make it to class on time, and it's just as hard to get a spot over there," he said.

"They (PTTS) sell more blue tags than there are spots."

Officer David Benedict, parking officer for the Northgate area, routinely gives out 10 to 12 tickets daily.

He agreed there were parking problems, not just a lack of effort on the students' part.

"The students probably try hard (to find a legal parking spot), but I know it's difficult with timed parking and a seri-

ous lack of spaces on campus," he said. "I try to give them leeway; it just depends on their attitude," he said.

The completion of Zachary lot would help alleviate the problem, but the proposal has been shown on parking maps for several years now. Currently, the area slated to become the expansion lot is being used by club sports. Club sports will occupy the area until adequate funding is raised to complete their new area in West Campus.

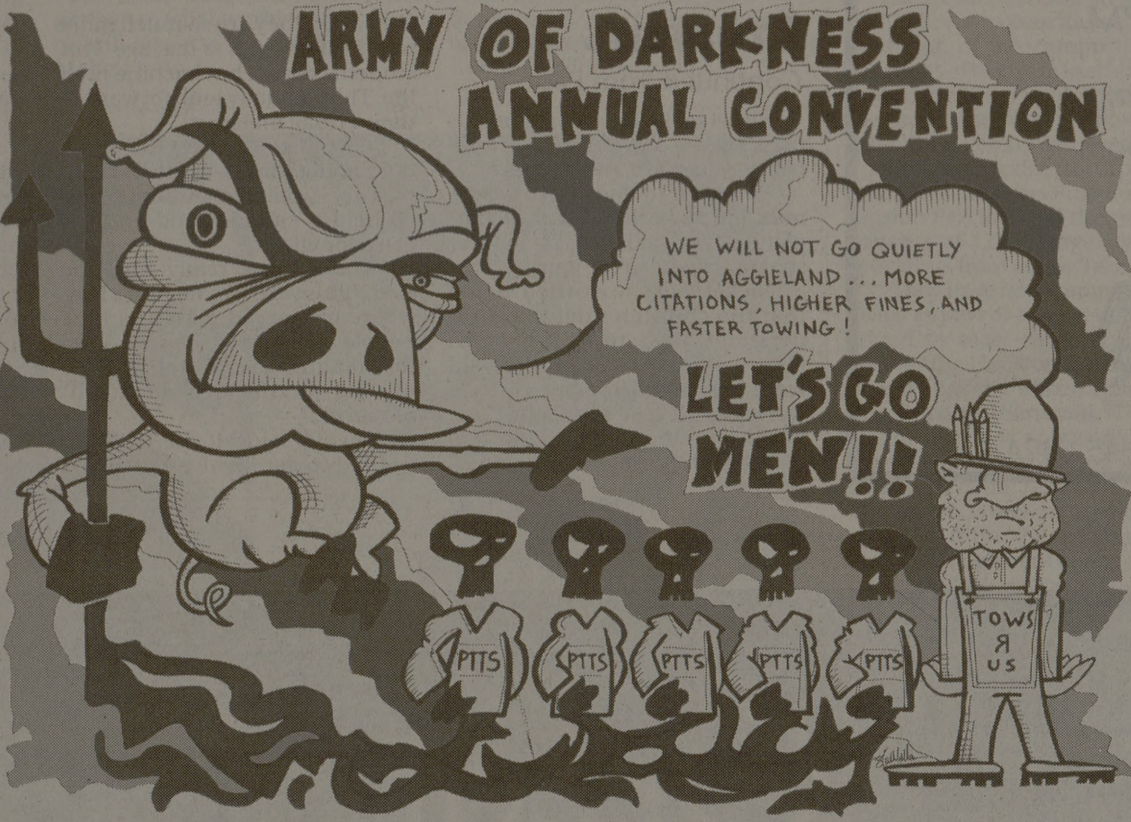
PTTS's solution is for students to ride the bus. However, the solution most advantageous to students is building a new lot.

Where to build this lot seems to be a problem for the administration. As an individual, though, one can see several possible areas. The lots to the north of Albertson's should be cleared. Even better, students could benefit from Candy Hill (the vacant lot east of Albertson's.)

Ben Fortner, a graduate marketing student, summed it up well when he compared PTTS to America Online which was recently forced to refund payments to its customers.

"It's like the America Online situation. PTTS has promised a service, as did AOL. However, both have been unable to perform their promised duties. AOL was unable to provide Internet access at reasonable times. PTTS is unable to provide parking within a reasonable proximity of our classes. When we as students step out of line, we are immediately reprimanded by PTTS, but who reprimands them when they get out of line?" he said.

The bottom line is that there are solutions, but no action is being taken.



Math, science labs waste student's time

Columnist



Kate Shropshire
Freshman
meteorology major

Laboratory math and science labs are more trouble than they are worth, especially hour wise. Labs should be worth two hour's credit. Instead the student gets cheated with a one hour credit consolation prize. Labs also fail to deliver the surplus of employable education necessary to college. An explanation for such an injustice is demanded by students. This is not unusual considering the circumstances surrounding the weekly tribulation. College classes are supposed to fill a student's brain cavity with knowledge which will bring enlightenment, lore and wisdom. Instead, labs bring listless hours of nothing. For certain math students a fun little lab by the name of Maple is the form of torment. The lab is usually 50 minutes long, consisting of computer-instructed exercises which must be practiced and used in pointless homework assignments. The intention of Maple lab is to solve various calculus equations via computer which could be easily solved on paper. The methods used in Maple remain unworkable when the test arrives since students are not provided with a computer during the exam. Professors who take the time to divulge into the wonderful world of Maple are wasting students' time, as well as their own. Students' time could be better spent by learning how to do mathematics themselves rather than how a computer works problems. Several students are aware of the impracticality of Maple. Mike Trachta, a freshman computer engineering major, said Maple does not enhance

the study of mathematics. "Your graphing calculator can do a lot of the things Maple can do," he said. "We're never going to use Maple in real life unless we teach it. I think it should be optional."

If labs in math aren't enough, they are also running rampant in the science field. A student must set aside about three hours straight for the most tedious and agonizing aspect of a science course ever invented (besides the lecture itself.)

With this one credit hour, all the student has to show for it are goggle lines embedded in their forehead, a faintly green facial tint from being cooped up in a closed area with chemicals for an extended period of time, an overload of equations to execute, and a profound look of confusion at what little they have accomplished during this joke of a course.

To add to the frustration, students have to adhere to the stagnant way of experimentation. It is senseless to do titrations by hand when they are done by machines in the real world. Luckily some professors see some justification in the complaints.

Dr. John Hogg, a university chemistry professor for undergraduate teaching excellence and an undergraduate advisor for the chemistry department, said in some cases he can see the va-

lidity in the students' criticisms. "The amount of credit received from labs has always been a concern. Some students are constantly complaining about how they feel like they should deserve more credit. I can look at it from both sides of the argument," he said.

In order to better assist the student in this lab dilemma and bridge the gap in communications, labs will not be counted as a separate course starting fall semester '97. Chemistry 101, 111 and Chemistry 102, 112 will be combined into a four hour course with lab included in the grade.

"We are trying to improve the overall pedagogy by combining lectures and labs," said Dr. Hogg.

Of course this could help or hurt a student's grade, but it is a considerable improvement in student-faculty relations and problem solving. Unfortunately labs may never be totally discarded, and students will have to face the unpleasantness of a one-hour gyp.

Labs will forever accompany the required lectures regardless of the petty measure of worth found in them.

Unless a student is lucky enough to be graced with an entertaining teaching assistant who makes lab seem less like a boundless eternity, one is forever lost in the abyss of monotony and nonessentially.

Although it is affirming and consoling that student concerns are being heard, the fun and carefree feature of labs of high school days has been abandoned.

"The amount of credit received from labs has always been a concern."

Dr. John Hogg
undergraduate advisor
chemistry

Valentine's Day neglects the lonely

Columnist



David Boldt
Senior
marketing major

Valentine's Day, like any other vastly exploited holiday, began with good intentions. A nationally recognized holiday was set aside to celebrate love. But even from its beginning, this holiday, with all its red and pink cheer, has discriminated against the single. Valentine's Day has gotten out of hand. Seasonal aisles of every grocery store are adorned with pink candy, pink cards and other pink crap stores try to entice you to buy. Roses are overstocked and overpriced, and the little guy sporting a diaper and bow is shooting his love arrows all around campus.

For many Texas A&M students, however, Cupid seems to have bad aim. That warm fuzzy feeling has yet to reach their hearts. These students are not homely, pitiful people who despise the opposite sex. Love has simply failed to come their way.

Maybe love isn't a priority for them. Maybe the love of their life has slipped through their fingers. Maybe they're simply going through a dry spell.

Whatever the reason for their dating status, most students in the singles category wouldn't mind being in love. This makes the outrageous commercialization of Valentine's Day annoying.

For these people, the only good use of the color pink is in the form of a tall glass of Pepto taken to relieve nausea caused by all the talk of love. All this silly, pink romantic crap only makes them feel lonely and alienated.

Sure, there are a few stupid "Lonely Hearts" events, but what better way to make students feel worse than by drawing attention to their loneliness? It's like they're being told they have a special place to go because they can't celebrate with their love-struck comrades. This is ludicrous. What would it be like if everyone who was an only child was told they had a "special"

place to go on Christmas Day, with no tree or presents?

Of course, like any other biased event, Valentine's Day is a bundle of joy for the people it favors. But while Aggie lovers of all kinds are dressing up, giving flowers and staring at each other with glazed eyes, single people don't have much to do.

So what can these good Aggies with lonely souls do with their Valentines day? Getting drunk alone while listening to Nine Inch Nail's Pretty Hate Machine might help for a few hours, but hangovers and earaches are hell the next morning.

One group of single girls, in a powerful revolt against this stupid holiday, is dressing up in black, funeral-style dresses and going to The Chicken. What a great idea. Other lonely Aggies should follow suit; dress in black, go to The Chicken and mourn their dating status together over a pitcher of beer. Better yet, head over to the Dry Bean and throw down a Mule Stomper. Make your own "Lonely Hearts" party — on your own terms.

Love is a beautiful thing. The emotions felt when that new and wonderful person comes into your life are unparalleled.

There shouldn't be only one day devoted to celebrating the privilege of having someone

special. It is a gift from God which should never be taken for granted, one reason why Valentine's Day makes single people feel bad. They know how wonderful it would be to have someone, and seeing the world adorned with pink and red roses and cards only reminds them of what they don't have.

To all Aggies who lack someone special: Don't give up on yourself. Appreciate the wonderful things you have to offer the world, and realize that love is something which comes when it is least expected. Who knows? Maybe Cupid will have better aim next year.

What would it be like if everyone who was an only child was told they had a "special" place to go on Christmas Day.



MAIL CALL

Parking intolerance infuriates student

Yesterday, I had a class that was meeting in Teague computer lab instead of its usual location in Blocker.

Since it was close, and I knew I wouldn't be in there for more than an hour, I decided to park at the golf course. It was pretty outside, but I knew play wasn't going to be backed up when it is fifty degrees outside.

So, I attended class and as I made my way back to the golf course parking lot, I realized my car had been towed. I was gone for one hour.

This really was uncalled for. If I had been there two days, that is one thing, but I was gone one hour, give me a break. Lucky a good aggie was nice enough to take me home, and to her I say thank you. I love Texas A&M University with all my heart, but the university really needs to let up on this issue. Students are trying hard to survive here academically, and the last thing they need to worry about is parking. It

has just gotten ridiculous. I wouldn't be surprised if they started installing cameras in trees to monitor where students are parking. I never like to talk bad about the best school in the world, but I believe a little constructive criticism doesn't hurt in this case. To you, Department of Parking and Transportation, I say loosen up on that choke chain and take one for the team.

Grant Hawkins
Class of '98

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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Obtuse students crush ideals of spirit

On February 11th, I did something I thought I'd never do.

I had to question if there is such a thing as Aggie spirit. You see, on this Tuesday my sister was getting ready to board a bus on West Campus when she tripped and fell on the cement. While falling, she put one hand out to try to catch herself, and upon impact she broke her hand. The pain was unbearable and she began to cry and tried to hold her arm because she knew something had broken.

This is where you would expect a fellow Aggie to help out. But no one did. Nope, instead the fellow aggies that were there just stepped around and probably over her. My sister was in disbelief not just because she had broken a bone, but not a single person helped her. So she struggled and finally she was able to get herself, her book bag, and her broken hand on the bus and to the Health Center. So now she is wearing a cast and also she is looking for the answer to whether there is such a thing as Aggie spirit.

Jason Goodman
Class of '00

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