

On the Road Again

When the going gets tough, the Aggies get going — The classic school road trip

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One might say life is a series of roads traveled. If that is the case, then college students live many lives.

College students and road trips are synonymous. It seems it is a dominant cliché of college life to take a weekend excursion in a car packed with several friends.

Whether they take road trips occasionally or every weekend, students and professors at Texas A&M are finding that road trips are a great way to get away from the stress of college life.

Kathy Bailey, a senior psychology major, said that she likes to take an occasional road trip to get out of town.

"We went to Galveston last weekend to go on a mini-vacation," she said. "It was nice to get out of College Station for a while."

Bryan Odom, a junior industrial distribution major, said road trips help relieve stress brought on by tests and classes.

"I love to go somewhere on the weekends after I have been in school all week," Odom said. "After a week of tests or classes, my friends and I are ready to get into the car and go somewhere interesting for the night or for the weekend."

Some students often take road trips with no destination in mind.

Caleb Martin, an agricultural economics graduate student, said he takes road trips quite often and finds lots of interesting places to visit just by driving around.

"We end up driving somewhere at night and we will have no particular place we want to visit," Martin said. "We just keep driving until we find somewhere interesting to stop. We will stay there for a while and then just drive back to College Station."

Martin said that he and his friends have done some crazy things on their road trips.

"We ended up in Molton, Texas, one night and sang karaoke at a honky tonk with a bunch of people we didn't even know," he said.

Kasey McGraw, an agricultural economics graduate student, said meeting new people is one of the best parts about taking road trips.

"We meet lots of interesting people on our road trips," McGraw said.

"The best part of the trips are coming home with lots of new friends."

Although some students prefer to take a spontaneous road trip with no particular place in mind, others demand exact planning for the ultimate destination.

Jennifer Presley, a junior English major, said she is planning to take a road trip to the Winedale Shakespeare Festival soon.

"I am going to the Shakespeare Festival in Winedale, Texas, on August 9," Presley said. "Winedale is not too far from College Station, so it is easy to take a road trip there on the weekend. We are also going to take a road trip to Dallas to go to Six Flags one weekend."

Student road trips often are considered an essential part of the college experience.

Sean Koehler, a junior construction science major, said that his best memories of college so far have been made during road trips.

"Road trips are the best weekend activities, and are my best memories of college," Koehler said. "You're able to jump in the car, take off and just drive until you find something interesting to see."

Koehler said road trips are an inexpensive way to get out of town, and that is why so many college students enjoy the trips.

"Road trips usually don't cost very much money, and they still enable you to get out of College Station for a few days," he said.

Being a student at A&M is not the only qualification for taking road trips, however.

Dr. Dudley Smith, an associate professor in soil and crop sciences, said that he and his wife take road trip vacations almost every month.

"Last week I returned from a 4,300 mile road trip to the Mid-Atlantic states and to the barrier islands off the coast of Florida — it was an awesome trip," Smith said. "The good thing about a summer road trip is that the cities help put the country back into the Aggies."

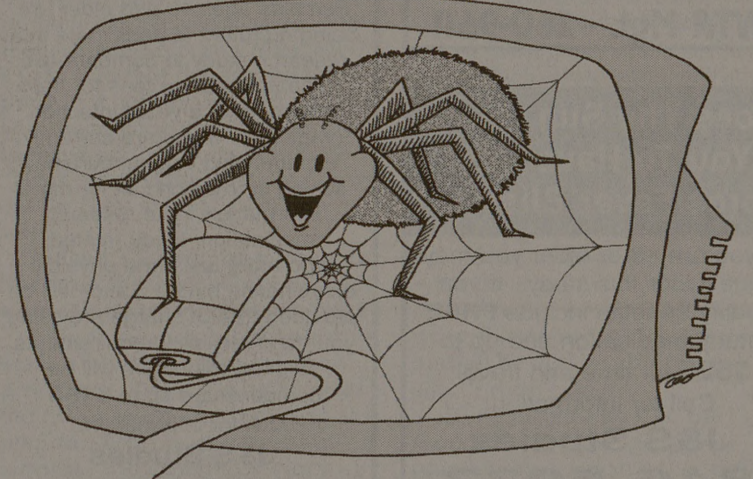
Whether they travel around the state or journey across America, students and professors at A&M say that road trips are an interesting way to get out of town for the weekend.

Road trips providing a chance to clear their heads, relieve stress and make many great memories along the way.

PHOTO BY MIKE FUENTES / THE BATTALION

The Hit List

Hundreds of student homepages — Billions of bytes of information — Who's getting the hits and why do they keep coming back for more?



Texas A&M's Most Popular Web Sites

Brian Finch

<http://people.tamu.edu/~bkf3938>

Alpha Phi Alpha

<http://people.tamu.edu/~pio1906>

China Club

<http://people.tamu.edu/~chinacb>

Joey's Superman Page

<http://people.tamu.edu/~jro4574>

UNDERDARK

<http://people.tamu.edu/~mjn021>

BY GRAY WHITTEN
Staff Writer

Student-created web pages often are considered a chore, a burden and the worst part of required computer classes at Texas A&M, but some students take the time to make their pages truly stand out.

Cheryl Cato, team leader for the Unix Systems Support Group, said the idea of having the most popular page at the University can be very tempting, and some students become very competitive.

"We tend to see the same people on the list," Cato said. "It pretty much goes back and forth between a few names."

"There are some very talented students out there. Some of the graphics work is very impressive" she said.

The University does not monitor content, and students are free to establish pages of whatever subject matter they wish.

Among the top subjects are personal pages with résumés or credentials, pages for student organizations such as the China Club and Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity and hobbies such as comic books or video games.

Brian Finch, a senior aerospace engineering student, was sur-

prised to learn that his page often is at the top of the list of high-traffic sites at A&M.

"I didn't know I was #1," Finch said. "It's been 2 years since I added anything to my pages, so I don't look at the stuff much."

Finch said he guesses the music sections of his page and the areas offering help to those making a page of their own are the main reasons for its popularity.

"I have animated GIFs and guitar music from the Grateful Dead, Allman Bros, CCR and Bob Dylan on there, so I get lots of e-mails from people who want to add to my collection and thank me," he said.

While working at Lockheed Martin in Dallas this summer, Finch said he is unable to update his page as much as he would like to, but is glad that his efforts are noticed.

Among the top organizational pages is that of the Pi Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity at A&M.

The page features a history of the fraternity and informational links for members of the fraternity.

Gerome Bonner, a senior industrial distribution major and the Webmaster for Alpha Phi Alpha, said the page was mainly meant as a tribute to all the brothers of the chapter from previous years.

"We really wanted to get the page

up as a dedication to the older brothers who came through before," he said. "We have a list of all the brothers who have ever been through the chapter, and group pictures."

Bonner said the page was meant as a source of information, but also as a form of communication.

"We have a chat room that allows brothers from all around the nation to log on and communicate at any time," he said. "The page also gives our fraternity brothers a chance to visit and sign the guestbook, as well as people who are not involved in the frat. We really do appreciate that most of all."

Bonner said the page still is new and the brothers plan to update it on a regular basis to keep information up-to-date.

"There is an events page. We have a section for our community service activities. We do Adopt-A-School and Adopt-A-Highway," Bonner said. "What most people see us doing are the step routines, but that is maybe only five percent of what we do. We are a community service organization."

Also ranking high on most days is the China Club page.

The club, an organization serving Chinese students, visiting scholars and their families at A&M, is one of the largest and most active international student

organizations at A&M.

The China Club page features lists of upcoming events that club members may be interested in, a phone directory of members, as well as new student information and recognition of those who have donated to the organization.

The elegant layout of the China Club page along with its simple tasteful graphics make it obvious why it is a popular page among students.

Not all popular pages are serious in nature. Many are created purely for recreational reasons.

"Joey's Superman Page: The Green Glow of Kryptonite," a tribute to Superman and all of his forms in comic books of past and present, features information in sections according to the various phases of the hero's career.

For the gamers of the world, UNDERDARK features strategies and add-ons for the popular PC strategy game, Warcraft II. The popularity of the game has boosted the rankings of this page on a consistent basis.

Like so much of the information and sites on the Internet, many homepages still fall into the ranks of mediocrity. But a little bit of searching will reveal the talent, artistry and innovation that exists in the student body of A&M.