

## Parking, Parking Everywhere

Students find new parking regulations are an albatross around their necks

BY MELISSA PANTANO  
The Battalion

A student sits patiently in his car. After fighting through traffic, he rests in the Parking Area near the Zachry Engineering Center. As he moves up in line, a blue sign reads "Parking, Traffic and Transportation (PTTS) officer informs him that he must move his car." At first glance, Texas A&M seems like a peaceful place. But there is a secret battle of wits going on between the student body and the esteemed Department of Parking and Public Transportation.

One of the most recent sources of conflict coming from the PTTS office in Koldus Student Services building is the new rule that commuters who wish to park in PA 50 must find a new place to wait for spots to become available, since the lane past the parking rows now restricts people from topping their cars and waiting.

David Griffin, a sophomore mechanical engineering major, said the new rule puts off-campus students at a disadvantage.

"What are you supposed to do?" Griffin said. "Drive around campus until a spot is available? I don't think it's very necessary at all."

Griffin said the new parking rule accomplishes little beyond annoying commuters.

"People are courteous anyway, and I don't think the rule will be effective," Griffin said. "Waiting in the actual parking row isn't much better than waiting on the strip."

Doug Williams, associate director of parking services, said the regulation in PA 50 is justified.

The parking in Zachry (PA 50)

has been a problem for years," Williams said. "Traffic parked on access roadways only leaves one lane for two-way traffic."

Williams said the new rule is in the interest of student safety.

"During lunch and in between classes, people get into a hurry," he said. "It's safer if that traffic isn't on the access road."

Some students see the method behind PTTS's madness, but are still annoyed by the results.

Brandon Meyers, a senior construction science major, said he is frustrated by the current regulations.

"On Monday and Wednesday, my classes don't start until 10 a.m., but I have to get here at 7:15



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a.m. in order to get a parking spot," Meyers said. "I understand that there is a safety issue involved with only one lane being open, but I shouldn't have to get here that early to find a spot."

Meyers said policies on staff parking need an overhaul.

"They should let people park in staff [spaces] after 4 p.m.," Meyers said. "Professors are leaving for the day by then, anyway, and no one new is going to show up. There are always empty spots in yellow lot."

Williams said PTTS has plans to cut down on long lines of cars in the parking lots.

"We will be expanding Zachry (PA 50) lot by 500-600 spaces,"

Williams said. "The project should begin right after Bonfire. In the meantime, we are trying to get people to ride the buses to school."

Griffin said that for him, riding the bus is not an option.

"I live in a new subdivision named Steeplechase out on F.M. 2818," Griffin said. "I have to walk four blocks to catch a bus that comes to campus, and even then it takes an hour to get to school."

Students are always finding new ways to skirt parking regulations and take advantage of traffic patterns on campus.

Gregg Johnson, a freshman mechanical engineering major, said that in three weeks at A&M he has learned how to beat the system.

"They only have those two little red lots on Southside," Johnson said. "I've found that the easiest way to get into those lots is to move your car on Friday afternoon after everyone has left for the weekend or during the day when people go to run errands."

Even the most placid drivers have problems, and every student has a story to tell about a run-in with the men and women in blue.

Trent Varvel, a sophomore mechanical engineering major, said he does not understand why student parking on campus is so scarce.

"During move-in week, on Northside I parked in a yellow [staff parking] lot because all of the other spots were taken," Varvel said. "I left it there overnight, and they called me at 6:50 in the morning to move my car."

Varvel said sometimes students must surrender to futility.

"I went out there, and there were spots everywhere," Varvel said. "My car wasn't hurting anyone, but I still had to pay the ticket."

GUY ROGERS/THE BATTALION

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