

Traffic and Tribulations

The unofficial guide to parking in the campus's most aggravating and congested blue lot

By BROOKE HODGES

The Battalion

For the first week of school, the Parking, Traffic and Transportation Services (PTTS) allowed those not willing to fight for spaces in University-sanctioned lots to park illegally without penalty.

But that time is over, and blue-tag commuter lots have once again been declared war zones where Aggies battle Aggies for that brief moment of glory and legal parking.

Among commuter parking lots, few are valued more highly than the parking area behind the H. P. Zachry Engineering Complex (deemed "Zachry Lot" by avid commuter students) due to its proximity to Northside classes. Parking in this jungle of concrete and steel can be a taxing experience for even the most rugged parker.

For those who are virgins to this experience, this is a first lesson in finding a parking spot in Zachry Lot.

When entering this parking zone, a commuter is basically entering a casino, minus the \$4.99 steak buffet. The first task as a high-stakes parking gambler is to pick a row to try one's luck. Sometimes, a commuter has Lady Luck on his side and locates a spot for which he must compete with only one other driver.

David Bogatiuk, a junior economics major, said even this prime opportunity can be a challenge.

"We both gunned it for the same spot, and I got it," he said. "He just drove away, but we were really close to hitting each other."

For those Aggies who are not as lucky as Bogatiuk, picking a line to enter into is just like picking a water-fountain line in elementary school: get in a line, wait and wait some more. Then promise the person in front of the line that if they get out of the way quickly they will have a new best friend.

Once a commuter has picked what he believes to be the fastest-moving row in the whole lot, the waiting begins. As the

commuter pulls into his row of choice, harboring the idea that he is only three people away from parking ecstasy, he inevitably sees three more cars waiting for spots at the other end of the row.

This now means that he is not the third person to get a spot, but the sixth. If the math is done properly, one will find that Mr. Commuter is in for anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour wait for a spot.

What does he do with the time now on his hands? Here are some suggestions: read a newspaper, cram for a test, enjoy a beverage of choice or jam to one's favorite radio station or CD (be sure all windows are rolled up if a decision

fusion sets in. This is when the rotation rule comes into effect. Instructions on claiming parking spots are as follows: Commuters take turns claiming parking spaces based upon their position in line. The first person on side A goes first. Then, the first person on side B goes second.

partake in some bubble-gum boy band is reached, just for dignity's sake).

The next 30 or so minutes is when the con-

Thirty minutes have passed, our commuter has enjoyed his morning dose of caffeine, he has 15 minutes until his class starts, and he can hear the faint call of nature. The two cars in front of him and the three cars on the other end of the row have all gotten parking spots. He is finally the first person in line.

The commuter must now look for an unsuspecting pedestrian who will soon enter his or her vehicle and leave a parking void which he can fill.

Once a target is spotted walking toward a vehicle in the row, the commuter must watch for the usual signs of entering a car: looking for keys, backpack re-

moval or clicking a remote control to unlock the door.

Once these symptoms are observed, he slowly moves his vehicle up as close as he can to the person's vehicle, being sure to allow him or her enough room to remove his or her car from the spot.

The most frequently committed crime in Zachry Lot is not car theft or vandalism, but stealing a spot from someone who has been waiting for an extended period of time.

Ashley Caton, a junior elementary education major, made the mistake of not moving up and became a victim of spot theft.

"I was waiting for a spot in Zachry [Lot] for 30 minutes and a guy walked out and got in a truck," Caton said. "The girl behind me in line whipped around me and took the spot. I was 20 minutes late for class because I had to wait for the next spot."

Caton said after she was robbed of her spot she rolled down her window and yelled at the girl as she walked by.

"I was screaming, 'Don't you know? It's a rule! You just don't take a spot from someone!'"

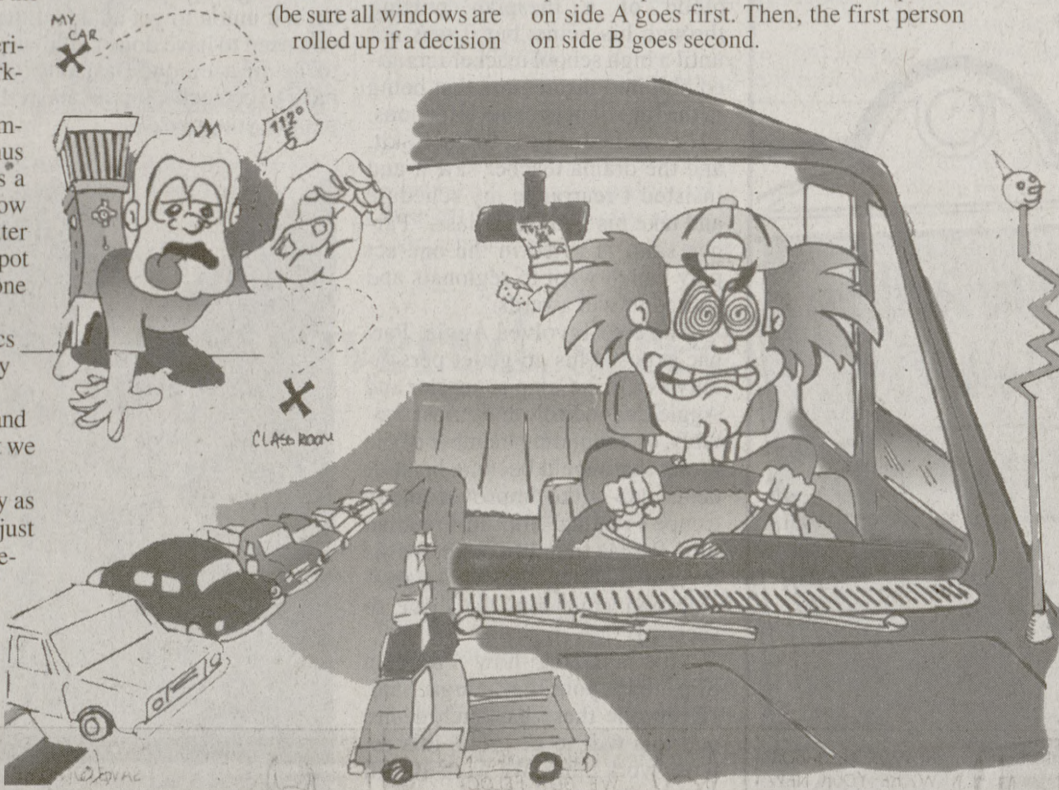
Will Short, a senior English major, said he was waiting when another driver attempted to steal a recently vacated spot. Short took a proactive approach to saving his spot.

"I stuck [the nose of my truck] into the spot so he couldn't pull his car in," he said. "The guy would not move, so I sat there and honked at him forever."

Short said he finally got out of his vehicle and informed the other student, through a rolled-up window, that he had been waiting for 30 minutes and was not moving his vehicle.

"The guy finally moved and let me park," he said. "It was my spot; I had waited forever, and probably the only reason I actually did that was because my truck was bigger than his."

If everyone who is trying to park in Zachry Lot will respect each other and realize that everyone is trying to get to class, then the established system of waiting one's turn will work.



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the fall and spring semesters and
the summer session (except University
ids) at Texas A&M University, Post-
ge Station, TX 77840. POSTMASTER:
Battalion, Texas A&M University, 1111
43-1111.

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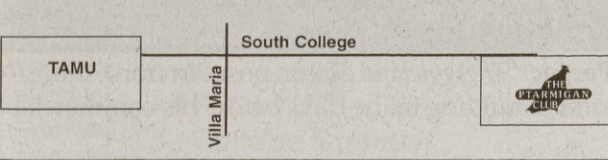
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