

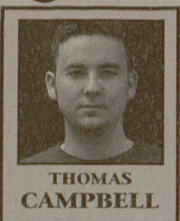
OPINION

THE BATTALION

Bad Gets Worse

Parking changes are detrimental to the majority of Texas A&M students

Before Fall 2000, the Parking, Transportation and Traffic Services (PTTS) changed some red and blue parking areas to make room for the impending West Campus garage, much to the dismay of many students. Plans have begun for a West Campus parking garage, which will be situated on the land now occupied by PA 56 in front of the Student Recreation Center, affectionately known as "Fish Lot." The garage will be built in conjunction with an underground



THOMAS CAMPBELL

pedestrian passageway beneath Wellborn Road between West Campus and main campus. These projects do not address student concerns and will not be helpful to the majority of Aggies.

When the parking areas were reconfigured before Fall 2000, PTTS chose to move 3,600 resident students closer to their residence halls, forcing the 19,000 commuter students to park farther away from main campus.

Parking, waiting for the bus and then walking to class can now take 45 minutes or more for off-campus students.

This is a severe hardship for working students, who do not have that time to waste while trying to attend classes and work many hours each week to support themselves.

Hundreds of students are forced every day to use the quick fix of Mud Lot, pay parking garages and residential streets in order to park remotely in the areas of their classes, without breaking the PTTS law of not "stalking" PA 50 parking spaces near Zachry.

Although the changes have been a hardship for many off-campus students, many resident students are relishing their closer parking areas. Since residents of the halls no

longer have to cross Wellborn, they can walk shorter distances, making it safer to park late at night.

But while changing some parking lots such as PAs 48 and 62 near Kyle Field have been greatly beneficial to southside residents, it has done little to improve walking distances for northside students. PA 62, on the Wellborn side of Kyle Field is little, if at all closer to Northside residence halls than PA 61 across from Kleberg.

The West Campus parking garage and underground pedestrian passageway is a joint project, costing an estimated \$43 million, which will not benefit the majority of Aggies.

The garage is taking 900 parking spaces from commuter students. Although it will add an estimated 4,000 parking spaces, the spaces will be used for reserved, but not assigned, parking, and for pay visitor parking. This will net PTTS more money by allowing it to sell more highly priced garage parking spaces, as well as an estimated dollar-per-hour pay parking.

The 900 parking spaces have been replaced by adding PA 101 near Reed Arena and expanding parking at PA 50 near Zachry, but these lots are already filled by off-campus students.

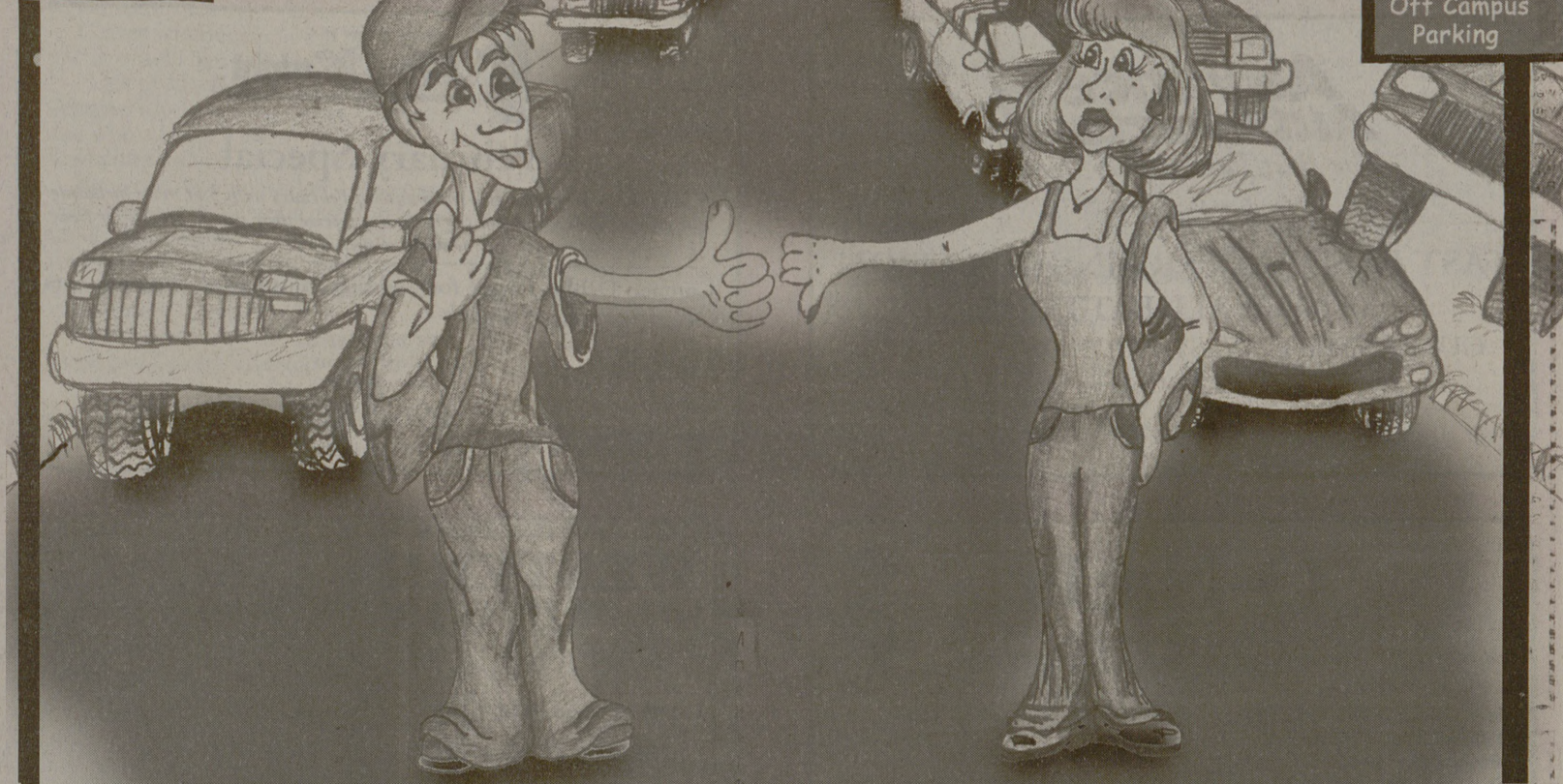
If the new garage were to be open for all students with blue commuter passes to park, then it would better serve the students' needs. But the garage will just be generating revenue for PTTS and forcing commuter students to park farther away.

The pedestrian passageway that will be built underneath Wellborn, connecting West Campus with main campus, is less beneficial for students than the West Campus garage.

While it may be nice for alumni to walk through, it does nothing to serve student needs. Students have few problems walking across Wellborn between classes when the sign says walk.

The pedestrian walkway that passes over Wellborn is now used mainly by Corps of Cadets company runs and kinesiology classes and does not need to be replaced. For an underground passageway to be feasible to meet student needs, it would be more appropriately

On Campus Parking



ANGELIQUE FORD/THE BATTALION

placed at the intersection of Wellborn and Old Main, closer to the Albritton Tower.

According to PTTS, there will probably be an underground passageway closer to Albritton Tower someday, but the current tunnel will be built as planned in conjunction with the West Campus parking garage.

Yellow lots are another source of problem for many students. While it is definitely necessary for graduate students and professors doing research to hold 24-hour re-

served spaces, it is less necessary for administrative assistants who are rarely on campus more than the normal nine-to-five hours to also have 24-hour reserved spaces.

Many people who do not need 24-hour reserved spaces have them, which is detrimental to students who work late at night and need close parking to avoid walking across campus.

For staff members who feel the need to have an assigned space, there should be 12-hour reserved spaces and assigned numbered

spaces that are free parking to anyone between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.

This would open up more parking for student workers and cut down on unnecessary 24-hour reserved parking spaces, while keeping the 24-hour reserved spaces for the people who need them — the people doing research late at night.

Everyone who has a 24-hour reserved space should be reevaluated to see if he or she needs such a benefit.

While the current parking arrangements may have been an im-

provement to some, they have been harmful to many.

Now more students have to increase their allotted travel time, taking away from their sleep, work and study time.

Although it is now safer for resident students to park late at night, and there will soon be enough garage parking spaces to fill much of the parking need on campus, the \$43 could be better spent elsewhere.

Thomas Campbell is a junior agricultural journalism major.

Pride or Treason?

Georgia should not fly the confederate flag

The controversy regarding the placement of the Confederate battle emblem on the state flag of Georgia has been debated for years, but the dispute finally may be drawing to a close because of the efforts of an unlikely organization: the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).



RICHARD BRAY

Last week, NCAA officials said they were beginning to make plans for moving the 2002 men's and the 2003 women's Final Four Basketball Tournaments out of Atlanta unless Georgia resolves the controversy regarding the "Stars and Bars" on its flag. The NCAA expects to make a definite decision regarding the tournament's location in April. If the tournaments are moved, the Atlanta area would lose an estimated \$75 million in revenue.

As a result, the Georgia Legislature, which has a bill pending to remove the Confederate symbol from the flag, is being forced to make a decision it should have made a long time ago. If the bill is not passed in time, the NCAA will probably move the tournaments to St. Louis, but, if the Legislature decides to change the flag, the voters in Georgia who believe the Confederate flag is a symbol of Southern pride will be angered — and they are not a small minority.

The problem is that the reasoning used to support both sides is wrong — the Confederate flag is not truly a symbol of Southern pride, slavery or racism. It is a symbol of treason.

It is the symbol of those who chose to break away from the United States during the Civil War and then went to war against the Union — crimes that could not be called anything but treason.

Although these crimes were pardoned following the war to help the nation heal, the Stars and Bars remains a symbol of the crimes committed by those who separated from the Union.

By allowing the flag to fly outside Georgia's Capi-

tol, state officials are publicly embracing a symbol of rebellion against the United States' legitimate national authority. Such a symbol does not belong on any U.S. state flag.

Some want the Confederate symbol to remain on the Georgia flag because their ancestors served beneath that banner, believing they were defending their homeland. Such statements reflect blind ancestor worship, and do not justify the continued use of the Confederate battle symbol. Simply because one's ancestors did something does not mean those actions must be revered. Southerners should not be ashamed of their ancestors' actions during a tumultuous period in American history, but there is no reason for misplaced pride and loyalty.

Even Gen. Robert E. Lee spoke against the use of the Confederate flag after the war when he said, "I

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believe it to be the duty of everyone to unite in the restoration of the country and the establishment of peace and harmony."

While issues such as race relations and Southern pride should not be quickly dismissed, it is important to realize that wounds from the Civil War still exist. The NCAA is taking a bold stand that should have been made a long time ago. If it requires the threat of economic repercussions for Georgia to remove the Confederate symbol from its flag, then so be it. It is time for a symbol of treason and rebellion to be removed from Georgia's official banner.

Richard Bray is a sophomore journalism major.

Mail Call

Task force not needed, just a money-making scheme

It appears to me that the CSPD/UPD party task force is just another revenue-generating scheme for the city and an opportunity for the victimization of students. Last semester, I saw a group of students served with citations at 6 p.m. in the evening of a football game. I had not witnessed any disturbance whatsoever. Two nights earlier, Robert Earl Keen was playing at the (city-owned) Wolf Pen Creek, and I could hear the event two miles away. As far as I am aware, Robert E. Keen was not served a citation.

What is worse is that while the UPD are helping the "real" police collect funds from the general public, A&M students appear to face assault and robbery on their own campus.

I have visited more than 30 countries and lived in

seven, including several African dictatorships. The CSPD is the most intrusive I have ever witnessed.

I notice the Bryan Police Department is not involved with the task force. Is this because they have real police work to do?

K. Jones
Graduate Student

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less 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 014 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:
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CARTOON OF THE DAY



LET'S PLAY THE SAME GAME

THE UN-CARTOONIST