

ay, September 17, 2001

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# AggieLife

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THE BATTALION

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Have questions about Aggieland or trouble with roommates, classes or other on-campus issues? Email: AskAggie@thebatt.com

## A penny saved

Thrift stores give students the opportunity to save money and create their own styles

By LYCIA SHRUM  
THE BATTALION

One thing many college students have in common is their income. For many, it is most non-existent. After spending \$300 on an average \$100 or more on bills, students are left with next to nothing for "luxury" expenses such as food, entertainment and the ever-important wardrobe. When shopping for an outfit, students sometimes can spend too much on name-brand clothing within a short period of time, leaving them with credit card debt to pay off.

But two affordable shopping alternatives have made their way to Northgate. Vintage Northgate and Special Deluxe Vintage have opened upstairs in the Sparks Building located at the corner of University Drive and College Main. These stores not only offer students more affordable clothing but a large variety of clothing that is unique. Vintage Northgate and Special Deluxe Vintage supply students with a variety of vintage clothing that is hard to find at an average thrift store.

Ryan Ewing, owner of Northgate Vintage, began his vintage clothing business at a kiosk

in Post Oak Mall selling different styles of T-shirts. After several transitions, Ewing has moved his store across from campus, offering a larger variety of clothing than just T-shirts. Northgate Vintage has a selection of baseball jerseys, ringer T-shirts, polo-style shirts and other items ranging from \$9 to \$15. He said his store offers students and others a cheap and original alternative to name-brand clothing.

"Students in Bryan-College Station strive for ways to stand out and express themselves, and their clothing is one of the most visual ways students can do this," Ewing said.

Ewing said the clothes he sells may seem expensive for second-hand clothing, but there is a lot of effort put into providing his shoppers with a large selection of clothing and making it a convenient place to shop. He said he spends hours sorting through the clothes his distributors send him from places such as Europe, New York and California.

"There is definitely a convenience to shopping here compared to other thrift stores because you don't have to spend hours digging through clothes just so you can find one shirt worth buying," Ewing said.

Just two doors down from Northgate Vintage is Special Deluxe

Vintage. Special Deluxe Vintage offers pearl snap western shirts, men's vintage tuxedo shirts, terry-cloth shirts, dresses and even various types of costumes. Owner Kerry Simon, Class of 2000, also spends hours sifting through clothes from his distributors to provide his shoppers with top-of-the-line vintage clothing and a selection that with a unique style.

Simon said Special Deluxe Vintage opened Aug. 28 and has had a steady flow of business. Simon and Ewing said although the only form of advertisements for their stores have been signs displayed in the store windows and word of mouth, business has been good.

"I think vintage clothing is growing in popularity because of its uniqueness. When you buy something from a store like mine, you're almost always guaranteed to be the only person to own that exact shirt," Simon said.

Some students have already taken advantage of vintage shopping and what it has to offer. Kayce Fitzpatrick, a senior exercise technology major frequents various vintage stores in Austin.

"I think vintage stores are great for students who don't want to spend too much money on clothes and who don't want to dress in clothes that you're sure to see other people wearing as well. I think the two new stores on Northgate offer great variety," Fitzpatrick said.

Fitzpatrick said that when she did not have time to go to Austin's vintage stores she was limited to resale stores located in Bryan-College Station. Fitzpatrick said although she pays more at vintage stores than she would at resale stores, she is still saving more money than if she was to shop at name-brand clothing stores.

Adam Faught, a freshman general studies major at Blinn College, also has discovered the perks of vintage store shopping. Faught said he has been an avid vintage shopper for the last year and is thrilled to see Bryan-College Station getting quality vintage stores.

"I started thrift store shopping mainly because of the personality it holds. But the prices are a big plus as well," Faught said.

Faught praised Northgate Vintage and Special Deluxe Vintage in the selections they offer their shoppers.

Whether the pocket book is thin, or if trying to make a fashion statement, consider the shopping alternatives. Between individuality and price, vintage stores benefit shoppers.

## Getting personal with PTTS

Officers share the lesser-known side of PTTS

By MATT STELLBAUER  
THE BATTALION

By themselves, the letters "P," "T," "T" and "S" do not add up to much, but put together, they can spell the most terrifying force known to students on this campus: the Department of Parking, Traffic and Transportation Service. Some students think PTTS is employed to issue tickets, tow cars and guard parking lots. While those are some of PTTS' more publicized jobs, students fail to realize there is another side to

low is because we make a good bit of money from the tickets that are issued and from our garages among other things," said Tom Williams, PTTS director.

With all the parking lots and special needs on campus, Guajardo said a day in the life of a PTTS officer can be hectic but enjoyable.

"This is one of the more challenging but at the same time fun jobs on campus. You never meet the same people twice," he said. "It is a 24-hour job, and we always have people on duty guarding the parking garages and parking

"We have found that [students'] perception stems from misinformation, and that if we sit down with students or the person making the complaint and show them why we do things the way we do, they are very understanding."

— Woddy Isenhart,  
manager of customer service for PTTS

the department.

Woddy Isenhart, manager of customer service for PTTS said they receive mostly positive feedback from students and faculty but that there are some complaints.

"There are those who don't feel the same way," Isenhart said. "We get lots of emails from students complaining about lack of parking spots or the way we handle move-in day."

Isenhart said most of the animosity directed toward PTTS is caused by limited knowledge.

"We have found that [students'] perception stems from misinformation, and that if we sit down with the students or the person making the complaint and show them why we do things the way we do, they are very understanding," he said.

However, if getting tickets and being towed is a common student experience, then a negative attitude is understandable. Yet Rudy Guajardo, a PTTS administrator, said there is much more included in the duties of a parking officer than just the "bad cop" routine people deal with on a daily basis.

"On any given day, we have about 60 officers on duty, of which about 47 are stationed in the garages and about 13 in the field," he said. "We act as hosts to the guests on our campuses, divert traffic when weather or accidents have made travel conditions unsafe, and are the people you see when traffic is thick and you need to cross the street. As you can see, we want to help the student body more than hurt them. If you pay attention, you will see more officers without ticketing machines than with."

While PTTS tries not to do a lot of ticketing and towing, it is still a major source of income for the office.

"The reason we are able to keep our rates for parking so

lots to ensure the safety of [students] and [their] vehicles."

It is rumored that searching for a parking spot is one of the most time-consuming tasks for Aggies, and with a campus this size, finding one should not be a problem.

"Texas A&M is the number one university when it comes to parking spots," Williams said. "Right now we have enough parking spots for every 1.7 bodies on campus, including blue, yellow and garage spaces."

Facilitating staff, visitors and special activities groups on campus often force students to fend for themselves when it comes to snagging a decent parking spot. However, PTTS is always looking for ways to combat that problem without having to pave the campus to create new spots.

"We are in the process of constructing a West Campus parking garage, to be completed in 2003, that will add 3,700-plus parking spots on campus," said Doug Williams, associate director of PTTS. "The idea is that we would like to give every student a parking spot who wants one."

Still, the best advice the PTTS can give students concerning avoiding ticketing and run-ins with parking officers is to find alternate forms of transportation for getting to school. To facilitate those needs, Angela Newman, a PTTS communications specialist, said several other transportation options are available.

"One of the better options for students is to take advantage of the busing system A&M has set up around campus," Newman said. "We try to make this as convenient as possible for the students to use. With our new buses on campus, this is a premier form of transportation for students."



SARA JUDKINS • THE BATTALION

## Away from home

Students often get homesick when busy with school and organizations, there are many ways to cope

By BETH MULDOON  
THE BATTALION

It happens to everyone — the gut-wrenching feeling that something in life is about to change. The feeling that if something could go wrong, it will. Then comes a twinge of helplessness, loneliness and being needy of affection and attention from someone or something familiar. This longing for a comfort zone and security blanket is a common disease known as homesickness.

Kristi Bean, a senior electrical engineering major, said she misses the close relationship she has with her mother.

"The thing I miss the most is the late-night talks with my mom and having her right there to assure me that everything is going to be okay when things get rough," Bean said.

Each semester, at colleges and universities around the world, thousands of students experience homesickness. While each student has individual reasons for yearning for what is familiar and secure, dealing with homesickness is more difficult for some students than for others.

Dr. Andy Smith, associate director of counseling at the Texas A&M Student Counseling Service, said experiencing homesickness is a completely normal experience for college students.

"The first thing students who are homesick need to realize is that everyone, at one time or another, feels homesick," Smith said. "Being homesick may be uncomfortable at first, but students must realize that it will get better with time."

Smith also suggests students can over-

come homesickness by talking to other students who are also homesick.

"Talk to other people and don't isolate yourself," Smith said. "Even if you have the strongest urge to lock yourself up in your room, don't do it. The more you get involved the better off you will be."

Vanessa Diaz Clark, assistant director for the Department of Student Life, said homesickness is non-discriminating and can sneak up on anyone.

"There is no single personality or personal background that is most likely to experience homesickness," Clark said. "It can actually catch the most independent individuals by surprise."

Clark advises homesick students to first recognize that they may be experiencing homesickness or depression. She also encourages those students to give campus life a fair trial before packing their suitcases.

"Homesick students should try to be committed and focused on all aspects of their life here at A&M," Clark said. "They chose to come to A&M to attend college for a reason or reasons, so they should give that a chance."

There are numerous things a homesick student can do to improve their situation and help themselves to ease their homesickness. One of these options is to get involved with an organization on campus that is specifically designed to help students combat homesickness by providing an avenue of involvement.

Monica Espinoza, a sophomore education major, got involved with student organizations to combat her homesickness.

"I tried to meet new people and I got

involved with my dorm," Espinoza said. "Also, I did not go home for the first month of school."

Programs and organizations such as Gig 'Em Week and FACT (First Time Aggie Contact Team) are specifically designed to help welcome new students to the A&M campus.

Clark said FACT is an outreach effort coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs, Student Life Orientation and the Aggie Orientation Leader Program. FACT's main purpose is to call new students and let them know that the University is concerned about their well being.

"These calls are also an opportunity to assist new Aggies by answering their questions and referring them to the appropriate resources," Clark said.

The Student Counseling Service deals with hundreds of different types of problems every day, but, according to Smith, the biggest problem is that most students do not think homesickness is a problem worth talking about.

"Homesickness is just as legit a problem as anything else," Smith said. "We invite students to come if that is their main issue, [but] sometimes that isn't the only thing bothering them."

Homesickness is anything from missing the smell of your room at home to missing the way your mom's home-cooked meals taste. One thing students must remember is that they are not alone in feeling this way. Much like the way Aggies bond together at a football game or during Muster, students should also bond together to help each other feel at home in Aggieland.