

Take a ride with me ...

CARPOOL drivers share stories of driving Aggies home safely

By BETHANY BROWN
THE BATTALION

Caring Aggies are protecting over our lives (CARPOOL) provided thousands of rides to students who feel unsafe driving themselves home after a night out. But few know exactly what goes on for members of CARPOOL and how much work goes into each night of operation.

Stephanie Huebel, a junior English major, is in her third semester of volunteering for CARPOOL. Huebel said the night begins for members long before they start taking phone calls for rides.

"We go to the [CARPOOL] apartment at about 9:30 p.m., and we have a short meeting where we just review CARPOOL procedures, like what we'll be doing if we are herscheling (walking around bars and clubs), what we'll be doing if we're driving, basic signs of alcohol poisoning and things like that," Huebel said.

CARPOOL takes calls from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., and Huebel said that calls start coming in at exactly 10 p.m. "Usually there are about two or three calls that come in at 10 p.m. from the people who have been waiting all night to call. After that, it usually slows down until about 11:30 p.m. or 12 a.m.," Huebel said.

CARPOOL members find ways to entertain themselves when waiting for calls.

"We usually have food at the apartment, usually pizza, and people just eat and sit around and talk," Huebel said. "We have a TV and a VCR there ... and if there's a sporting event or an awards show, we watch that. It's just CARPOOL bonding time."

When the calls begin, a long night of hard work follows. Jessica Arnold, a junior economics major, said the executives determine who will be doing what job for the night.

"Our evening can consist of three different things," Arnold said. "We could be driving, herscheling or taking calls. The execs assign jobs at the apartment, and the process is pretty random."

Brettnie Vitek, a junior business major, explained that the members who "herschel" — as in Herschel Walker — are the members seen walking around clubs and bars passing out cards.

"We basically walk around Northgate, or wherever there will be a lot of people, and pass out business cards," Vitek said. "If people need a ride and don't necessarily want to call CARPOOL them-



STUART VILLANUEVA • THE BATTALION

selves, we can put the call through to the apartment for them."

Vitek said herschels stay with students who are waiting to be picked up, especially at places where the wait might be long, to prevent people from giving up and driving home themselves.

Members of CARPOOL get a great deal of attention at the clubs and bars they go to, Vitek said.

"Sometimes when we're herscheling, we hear a lot of funny pick-up lines, like 'Is that your number on the card?'" Vitek said. "It's like the CARPOOL shirt means 'come and hit on me.'"

For those who drive, there is a process that they must follow to ensure the safety of passengers and themselves. When the CARPOOL apartment receives a call, they take information from the caller, such as where to send the ride, who will be picked up and where they will need to be taken. A call is then placed to one of the cars, each of which has a cell phone, and the car is dispatched to the

pick-up location.

"When we pick someone up, we read them their 'Miranda Rights,' which basically tell them what they can and can't do in the car, like no drinking or smoking in cars, and they can't be physically or verbally violent to people in the car," Huebel said. "If they do, the ride can be terminated at any time."

Huebel said some people call CARPOOL frequently to get them home safely and have memorized the 'Miranda Rights.'

"It's really funny because some people know them by heart and will recite them with us," Huebel said.

Arnold also said CARPOOL has a very strict seatbelt policy and will not let more people in the car than there are seat belts. Riders should be aware that CARPOOL will not take them from one party to another.

"If we drive up somewhere and it looks like a party, we can't refuse to let someone out of the car," Arnold said. "But we try to report that to the apartment so we're not just shutting people between parties."

Vitek said rides can get pretty interesting at times. If the drivers of the car feel that person may have alcohol poisoning, they will take that person to the hospital immediately. Drivers also have to deal with drunk passengers and the side effects.

"We do sometimes have a 'taxi cab confessions' situation where people are so drunk that they tell us their whole life story, like the fight they had with their boyfriend and things like that," Vitek said. "We really have to stay open-minded."

Members of CARPOOL also must deal with another side-effect of drunkenness: vomiting.

"We have trash bags in cars, and usually, we can tell if people are about to vomit, so we just hope they make it into the bag," Vitek said. "If not, the execs get to clean it up."

Huebel said that the hard work definitely is worth the feeling she gets from working with CARPOOL.

"I feel like I am making an impact on the campus because I see that I am part of an organization that is really doing something to help the community as a whole," Huebel said. "We touch people's lives by helping them specifically or protecting them by helping others."

www.texasHallofFame.net

The Texas Hall of Fame

18 October **thursday**

College Night

\$1.00 long necks and
\$1.00 U-call-its til' 11 pm
**\$2.50 chuggers and
\$3.50 pitchers all night!**

Ladies 18 & up **FREE** til 10 pm
Ladies 21 & up **FREE** all night
Guys with *College ID* \$1.00 til 10 pm

saturday 20 October

The Texas Hall of Fame proudly presents...

The King of the Texas Honky Tonk

GARY STEWART

"Empty Glass" and
"Whiskey Trip"

Get your tickets in advance for only \$10.00 at the Hall of Fame, Cavenders, Catalena Hatters, and the Harvey Road Rothers. (\$12.00 at the door)

\$2.50 chuggers and \$3.50 pitchers!

Call 822-2222 for more information on all events

Texas Outlaw Music Festival

HELP BRING BACK THE PRISON RODEO

When: Saturday, October 27, 2001
Beginning @ 5 p.m. till ????

Where: Walker County Fairgrounds
Hwy 30 West, Huntsville, TX 77340

Tickets available at:
Toll Free charge-by-phone 1-866-468-3399
or on-line at www.ticketweb.com

R.V. parking available
• w/ hook-ups \$30
• w/out hook-ups \$15

\$15 pre-sale

Entertainment:

Roger Creager
Gary P. Nunn
Cross Canadian Ragweed
Dub Miller
Eleven Hundred Springs
River West
Davin James
Magee Payne

BYOB!!!
NO GLASS CONTAINERS

BYOB!!!
NO GLASS CONTAINERS

And special entertainment by
Doug Moreland

For more information, visit www.huntsvilleprorodeo.com