

# THE BATTALION

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## Phony handicap placards plague campus lots

### UPD cracks down on students misusing handicap parking tags

By Sommer Bunce  
THE BATTALION

The University Police Department (UPD) has cited 37 students in the past month who were using handicap hang-tags under false pretenses while parking on campus, especially in the Zachry parking area.

After hearing enough complaints about spry-looking 18-year-olds parking in handicap spots and then jumping out of their vehicles to get to class, UPD Director Bob Wiatt said his officers began comparing the driver's license list-

ed on the placards to the individual who parked the cars.

Since Oct. 16, nearly 40 of the placards UPD officers examined contained the license numbers of elderly men and women, sometimes members of the offender's family, some from as far away as Montana. In a few cases, the placards belonged to the students but were expired.

In one instance, Wiatt said a student told the officer questioning him that the placard was his mother's, and that he kept it in his car to drive her. When the student admitted his mother lived in San

Antonio, the officer confiscated the placard and issued the student a citation, Wiatt said.

"There was always speculation — maybe they look like they're healthy, but they've got a broken leg. You never know," Wiatt said. "But when it's just a matter of 'my time is so precious, I can't waste time looking for a parking spot,' then it's a total and flagrant misuse of handicap spots."

The minimum fine for each citation issued is \$250 for a first offense. For a second and third offense, the numbers climb: \$500 and \$1,000, respectively,

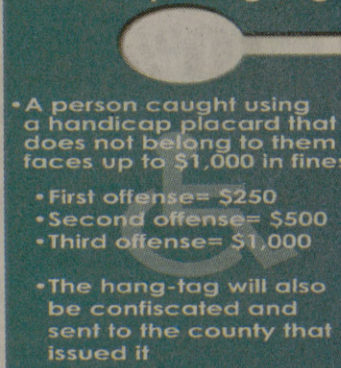
money that all flows into Brazos County coffers.

So far, every offender has paid \$250 in Judge George Boyett's Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace court, Wiatt said. Boyett was unavailable for comment Thursday.

But the message is clear, Wiatt said: Don't park where people with real disabilities need to park.

"We are not going to tolerate misuse of handicap placards," he said. "We're going to crack down from here and forever more. There are people who are handicapped, and they have no place to park. We're not going to stand for it anymore."

#### Handicap hang-tags



Source: University Police Department  
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## Student Senate wants more evaluations

By Eric Ambroso  
THE BATTALION

Students may be evaluating their professors at mid-semester if a bill ratified by the Student Senate is met with equal approval from the Faculty Senate next semester.

The bill, intended to allow students to critique their professors before the current end-of-semester evaluation time, will make its way to the Faculty Senate and then to Texas A&M's administration before it can become a reality. Students need to be able to evaluate their professors' performance at mid-term before grades are finalized, said Natasha Eubanks, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee.

The new bill encourages all A&M instructors to design their own evaluations and distribute them between the 20th and 30th class day of each semester.

University President Dr. Robert M. Gates addressed the Student Senate Wednesday night, giving a report on his current projects and outlining aspects of the University that need to be improved.

"We need to focus on key issues that will bring us ahead," Gates said.

Gates said his concerns are about diversity, an area which the University has notoriously had a bad reputation. While it is the administration's responsibility to attract minority faculty members and students, Gates said it is the student body's responsibility to make minorities feel comfortable on campus.

"This means not only accepting minorities, but making them feel welcome," Gates said. "The University is challenged in this area."

In sending students into a diverse world, Gates said it is important to create an equally diverse atmosphere on campus. Practical politics also play a role in creating diversity at A&M, he said. If the University is unable

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## Dishin' it up



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Junior industrial engineering major **Trey Cushman** tees off on the last hole of disc golf at Research Park Thursday afternoon. **Cushman** and his roommate have become frequent players in the last year and enjoy taking advantage of nice weather on the disc golf course.

## NATO leaders promise to disarm Iraq

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (AP) — Heeding President Bush's call, NATO leaders pledged Thursday to help the United Nations "fully and immediately" disarm Iraq. They also redrew the political map of Europe, reaching behind the former Iron Curtain for seven new members.

Barely a decade after winning independence from Moscow, the Baltic nations of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania joined former communist states Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia as the next wave of NATO states.

"Events have moved faster than we could possibly have imagined," said Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas.

On the summit sidelines, Bush and his foreign policy team lobbied feverishly for an anti-Iraq NATO statement while urging individual allies to ante up troops and other military assistance for possible war against Saddam Hussein.

The results were mixed: Bush won partial victory on the Iraq statement while the war solicitations received lukewarm responses from allies inside and outside NATO.

In a four-paragraph statement, the 19-member alliance unanimously echoed the U.N. call for "severe consequences" should Iraq insist on retaining weapons of mass destruction.

The phrase is Bush's license to wage war as a last resort, the White House said.

But the statement did not threaten collective military action by the 19-nation alliance nor did it prevent some allies — particularly Germany and France — from distancing themselves from Bush's zero tolerance position and even the document itself.

It did commit the alliance to taking "effective action to assist and support the efforts of the U.N." That pledge was designed to make NATO's logistical and diplomatic assets available to the United Nations, though it could be read as offering the alliance's military support, said a senior Bush administration official.

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## Two U.S. soldiers wounded in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — A Kuwaiti policeman shot and seriously wounded two American soldiers on a desert highway Thursday in the latest violence against U.S. troops who are preparing for a possible showdown with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

The soldiers, in civilian clothes, were shot as they traveled in an unmarked car from the U.S. base at Camp Doha toward a garrison near Oraifijan, about 35 miles south of Kuwait City.

The Kuwaiti Interior Ministry said a junior patrol officer shot the men and fled to neighboring Saudi Arabia, where he

remained at large. The statement did not indicate the assailant's motive.

Anti-American sentiment is on the rise in the Mideast as military action against Iraq looms. The shooting raised concern about the safety of some 10,000 U.S. troops stationed in Kuwait, a country that would serve as a key staging ground in any conflict with Iraq.

U.S. troops drove Saddam's army from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War, and most Kuwaitis now support the U.S. military's role here. But the latest shooting, following an attack last month that killed a U.S.

Marine, could be an indication of rising resentment.

The patrol officer apparently flagged the Americans' car down, possibly for speeding, before the shooting, a Kuwaiti official said. But other reports indicated the attacker fired from his car as the Americans passed.

One of the Americans was shot in the face and the other in the shoulder, the Pentagon said; both were expected to survive. Their names were not released by U.S. officials.

Geraldine Thomas said an Army sergeant told her by phone that her husband, Larry Thomas, 51, had been shot in the upper chest.

#### Soldiers shot

Two U.S. soldiers were shot in Kuwait Thursday while traveling from Camp Doha to Oraifijan.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI AP

## Members of diversity panel come together to share all sides of issues

By Melissa McKeon  
THE BATTALION

Danny Roberts, cast member of MTV's "Real World New Orleans," said he is on both sides of America's societal divisions of majority and minority: he's a white male, but he's also gay.

Speaking at the Texas A&M Diversity Symposium Thursday night, Roberts said seeing the world from both perspectives leaves him caught in the middle.

"In society today, people will tolerate but not accept gays and lesbians," he said.

Pablo Rodriguez, vice president for diversity in the Student

Government Association (SGA), urged the audience that filled Rudder Theatre to be active listeners and launch a dialogue that would present solutions to creating an inclusive environment at A&M.

The panel was moderated by A&M's Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost Karan Watson.

"We're not here to promote a side. We're here to share information and learn from each other," Watson said. "Dialogue involves respect and more than trying to prove your point."

Panel members explained what diversity meant to them, and how that definition should be

applied to race relations and the push for more minorities at A&M.

"For me, diversity relates to addressing issues of systemic inequality," said Dr. Francis Kendall, a consultant on organizational change and communication specializing in issues of diversity. "Racism, sexism (and) heterosexism affect society. And the ways we are different have consequences."

Other issues detailed the possible effects of Vision 2020, the university's plan to push A&M into the top 10 public schools by 2020, including a subgoal that focuses University resources on increasing diversity.

"The A&M community must move away from tolerance and multiculturalism," said Dr. Finnie Coleman, associate director for the office of honors programs and academic scholarships. "It has to be inviting, not just accepting."

One plan for diversity, which involved granting automatic admission to the top 20 percent of qualified students of lower-income, inner-city schools in Texas, surfaced last year in the University System's Board of Regents. The plan was put on hold after further discussion.

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ALISSA HOLLIMON • THE BATTALION

"Real World" cast member **Danny Roberts** and director of work force diversity and development for HEB **Cynthia Rodriguez** listen to work force diversity expert **Dr. Frances E. Kendall** Thursday night.