

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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Aggie's day out

Students seeking freedom from Bryan-College Station find alternatives for a day

By Robert Saucedo
THE BATTALION

John Petry sits at a table in Sbsa Dining Center. On his right is a tray of half-finished food, already growing cold. Textbooks and papers surround him. Petry, a senior mechanical engineering major, is in for a long day of homework and studying.

He is able to make it through, by reflecting on a trip he and friends took earlier in the month. Petry and his roommate took a trip to Houston to see a concert they had been planning to attend for a long time.

Brand New, MXPX and Dashboard Confessional played at Verizon Wireless Theater earlier this month and offered a show that Petry knew he could not pass up.

With math problems reflecting off his glasses, Petry explains that it was well worth it.

"Brand New is one of my favorite bands. I've never seen them in concert, so I knew I would go, whatever happened," Petry said.

Petry and his roommate took the hour-and-a-half trip to Houston to attend the show — putting up with screaming teenage girls for a chance to put aside scholastic obligations for the night.

Road trips have become a staple of the American college experience. For some students, nothing is more fun than piling into a car and taking a trip to some far-off location with their buddies.

With rising gas prices, many college students are finding it harder to take that trip to the distant locales that once permeated the older college graduates' stories. But with the demise of the long-distance road trip, many students on campus are finding solace in the road trip's younger sibling: the day trip.

While the hectic schedules of most college students prevent them from taking time off from their studies during the day, the night is a different story.

A night away from campus to take a short ride throughout the surrounding county has always been an important part of the college experience at A&M from back in the days of Old Army, but today's concert-savvy college student often finds comfort in the fact that College Station is a hop, skip and a jump from many Texas cities.

Aaron Davidson, a freshman business major, enjoys concerts, but for him a weekend trip offers a different source of comfort: home sweet home.

"It's nice to go somewhere without people and relax for a while," Davidson said. "I also enjoy the free meals and home cooking."

One student, a sophomore business major, has a different agenda all together when he goes out for the night. This student, who



TONY PIEDRA • THE BATTALION

asked that his name not be printed, has been stealing highway signs for two years now.

"I have 14 signs now," he said.

The 14 signs line his residence hall room walls like trophy heads of fallen prey. Although he has signs of every shape and color, there is still one that escapes his grasp.

"I'm absolutely after a FM 2006 sign," he said.

But for others considering taking up the illegal search and seizure of highway signs, he warns:

"Don't do it. It's a felony offense. Don't take anything crucial to other people's driving. If it's going to mess people up or cause an accident, that's bad bull."

According to TxDot.com, in 2002, \$1,500 worth of signs were stolen from roads, including Farm to Market road 2002. Before venturing out to steal their favorite signs, students should realize that each memento is valued at approximately \$60, making each theft a Class B misdemeanor. Penalties can range from a \$1,000 fine to six months in jail.

Aside from theft, there are different ways to get a thrill out of a quiet campus night such as Night Rallies, a popular event put on by the Texas A&M Sports Car Club. During a Night Rallye event, members of the Sports Car Club navigate public streets at legal speeds in a timed-speed-distance completion designed to try to come as close as possible to the optimal travel time between checkpoints hidden along the rallye route.

Adam Ray, a sophomore civil engineering major said during the last rallye, they headed west.

"It's a 130 mile loop. It took us two-and-a-half hours. You have to follow directions and follow the signs closely," he said.

Petry said the only way to take a successful day trip is planning. "If you plan in advance, it won't hurt you," Petry said. "Do your homework as early as possible. Write it on your calendar and don't plan anything else that day."

Sticking to the plan is another important factor when it comes to a nocturnal expedition.

"I came home at midnight and went to bed. If I had gone out drinking, that would have been a different story," Petry said.

Students often need a little time to take the easy way out. They find themselves with good reasons such as food, fun and some great music.

Rest and relaxation are essential to keeping good grades. A great way to find this R&R is through a day trip. The secret lies therein with preparation and planning.

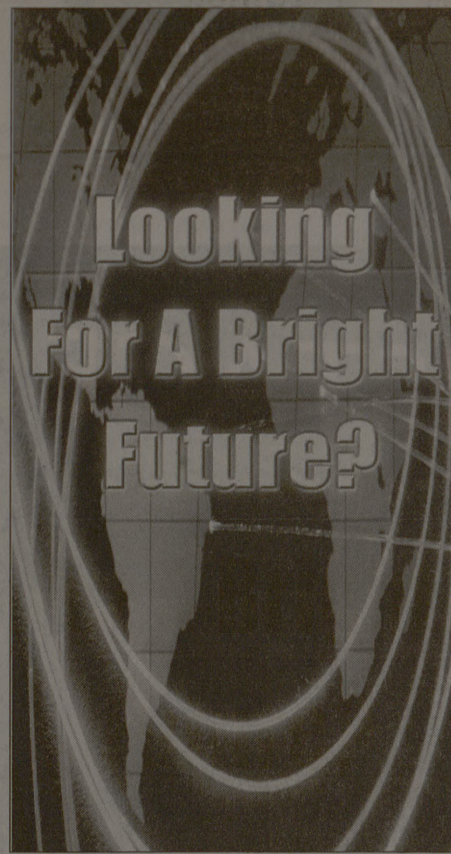
A successful day trip will not only refresh your mind and spirit, it may also serve as the basis for a great time to bond between friends and a source of stories to tell your great-grandchildren.



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