

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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A fair plan for everyone

Students and faculty must give Transportation Services parking plan a chance



DAVID SHOEMAKER

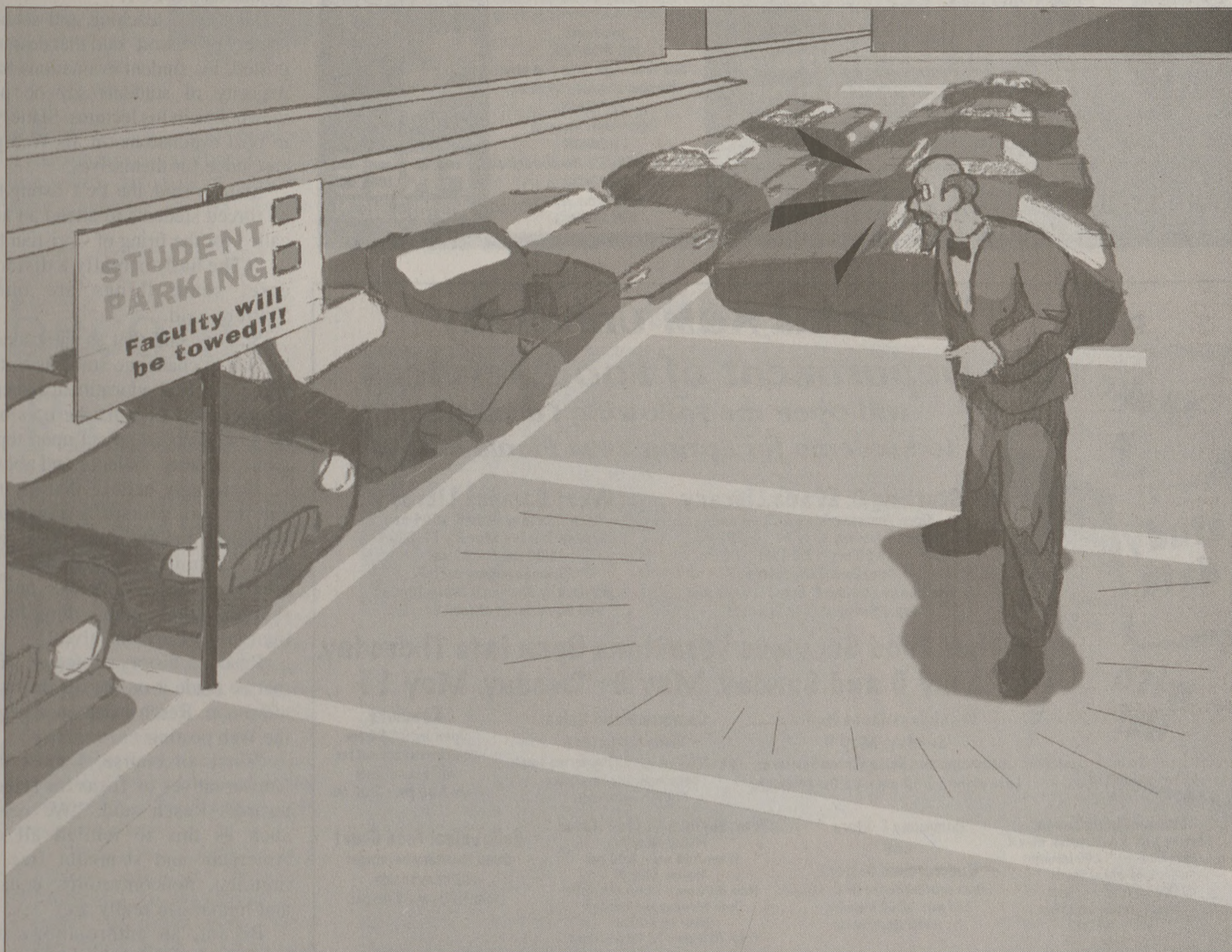
After much discussion and several false starts, the new student parking plan has been approved. Faculty, however, have yet to be fully incorporated into the new parking scheme. Despite what some students might think, faculty leaders and Transportation Services are working to develop a process to adequately meet the needs of both the faculty and student body. Students should not think that faculty will get a park-anywhere pass while students serve as guinea pigs, and faculty members should not fear that a poorly-conceived plan will simply be thrown at them. TS Director Rodney Weis' plan looks to be fair to all parties, and as such, everyone should be willing to give it a chance.

The faculty had two main problems with the original plan, according to Joseph Newton, dean of the College of Science. The first was that faculty felt that they had not been consulted sufficiently during the initial process, and the second was that the process outlined by TS would not be flexible enough to accommodate special cases for faculty parking. Both of these are legitimate concerns that the deans must address to accurately represent the needs of their departments and employees.

The first problem can be solved relatively easily by increasing communication. TS' predecessor, PTTS, was not renowned for communicating policies to students and faculty. Although TS has been proactive on the communication front, it needs to remember that it will have to go the "extra mile" to make sure the students' and faculty's opinions are heard. TS still suffers the poor service of its predecessor, which was trusted by no one on campus. However, Weis has shown a willingness to listen to and try to address problems brought to his attention.

This willingness to work with others will be key in resolving the issues the deans have had with the flexibility of the faculty parking plan. The system would be the same as the one for students, where one enters his NetID, and then selects his top six lot choices. What worries deans such as Newton is that in special circumstances, there will be no way to override the automated system and provide parking. A newly-hired professor of high status could be at the bottom of the list, or staff with unusual working hours or access needs would be unable to get parking to meet those needs.

There are many possible solutions to this problem that TS could do well to consider. One way could be that a dean could submit a list of his staff with special parking needs to put near the top of the list. Or perhaps faculty could be given a pool of spaces in nearby lots, allocate the ones they need and return the rest to the general pool for the lot. Regardless of the method to be selected, the result will be the best that the deans and TS can do, as both



groups are committed to finding an acceptable solution.

That solution, much like the changes for students, may require a leap of faith in TS on the part of students and faculty. Many are distrustful of TS, but they should let TS earn or lose their trust on its own. Change can be hard to deal with, especially when it goes against an ingrained way of doing things, but the parking situation at Texas A&M became untenable. With luck, the new plan will alleviate many problems.

However, with any new plan, it is not perfect for every person. Not everyone will get to park exactly where they want and may have to get used to walking a bit. But even in the outside world,

parking is an issue with imperfect solutions. Ask anyone who has tried to park in the downtown of a major city recently. But regardless of their feeling on the matter, people should give TS the benefit of the doubt that it is trying to improve the parking situation at A&M.

David Shoemaker is a junior management major.
Graphic by Chris Griffin

MAIL CALL

Column an example of liberal propaganda'

In response to John David Blakley's April 29 column:

Blakley's column on April 29 was an excellent example of liberal propaganda. I am sorry to hear that a student at our school was at a march to support the killing of unborn children.

By his own statement, he is a man, and men have no understanding or say in the subject of abortion. Therefore, he should have kept quiet about it. Apparently, the statement that men don't understand abortion only applies to those who disagree with him.

There is a concept that apparently Mr. Blakley and the rest of the marchers need to learn, that of "personal responsibility."

If you are past the age of 7 or 8, you should be aware of the fact that babies are a result of sexual relations. Knowing that, if a person makes the decision to have sexual relations, then they have to accept the possible consequences, one of which is pregnancy. If that person refuses to accept these consequences, then they have no right to engage in the activity.

I understand that there were not a lot of pro-life supporters at the march. That is because most pro-lifers actually work for a living and cannot take the time away from family and jobs.

Timothy Cook
graduate student

Elective abortion isn't a reproductive right

Mr. Blakley and the near million others who marched two Sundays ago deserve a big thanks for their defense of women's reproductive rights. This is a very important right to protect. A woman ought to be able to decide when to become a mother. A woman must be trusted with her own body.

But to my chagrin, I found that Mr. Blakley and the other marchers vehemently defend elective abortion, which is not an issue of reproductive rights.

Freedom from rape is a matter of reproductive rights. Freedom from incest and sexual abuse are matters of reproductive rights. Our nation is responsible to pro-

tect women and men from and adequately punish sexual criminals.

But abortion isn't a reproductive right. It can't be, simply because abortions are performed after reproduction is complete (the moment of conception being its completion). Since it is scientific fact that a new, unique human life begins at conception, abortion is murder: the immoral termination of an innocent human life.

If we are truly concerned about women, shouldn't we see to it that they are fully informed of the realities of abortion? How are we protecting women's rights when we mislead mothers into blindly murdering their own children (and the life-long guilt and anguish that choice may cause), all under the guise of reproductive freedom?

David Dunton
president, Aggies for Life

Palestinian side of Israel issue is often ignored

In response to Nicholas Davis' April 30 column:

After reading your opinion column entitled "A policy worth backing," I was very angered to see that you neglected to show both sides of this issue and presented a clear bias. I will admit that, being a Palestinian myself, I also possess a strong bias. However, I will present you with a few facts.

First, you mentioned that nary a day goes by without bloodshed and death of "innocent Israeli citizens." I am not an advocate of terrorism, but I think that both sides should be shown, which is not the case on American television. Between 1993 and 2002, 615 Israeli citizens were murdered. How many Palestinians? During those years, 1,671 Palestinians were murdered, but of course this is rarely shown in the American media. Since Ariel Sharon took office, the per annum death count of Palestinian citizens has doubled. Furthermore, you portrayed the 1948 occupation of Palestine to be a peaceful and simple takeover. This is far from the truth. More than 10,000 Palestinians were murdered, and all males over the age of 18 were placed in concentration and work camps (including both of my grandfathers).

It's ironic that the Jews would do this to

a group of people, when the reason they took Palestine was to escape the same persecution in Europe.

Although you say that the Palestinians have been offered portions of land (quasi-independent, I might add), think about it like this. If somebody invaded the United States, and took over, then offered us Texas back as a compromise, I do not think it would go over very well. Throughout history, people have used the Palestinians as a scape goat, and Zionism has been the popular belief. I wish you and people like you would take the time to research the facts and not just what they see on the evening news. I think you will find it to be very enlightening.

George Akra
Class of 2007

Assassination of world leaders isn't justified

In response to a May 3 mail call:

If I understand Mr. Sewell correctly, he seems to think that there is a moral justification for murder carried out with the ultimate wisdom and discretion of George W. Bush. When you say America acts with the interest of establishing law and order, you forget that by participating in any way in the assassination of any international leader, the president is in violation of Executive Order 12333, which forbids involvement in any such activity. What a great example we are setting.

In likening "Islamic militants" to convicted killers and the United States or Israel to the all-knowing Judge, he has erroneously assumed that we are the virtuous and innocent motherland, acting in the best interest of everyone involved. In reality, our hands are just as dirty as theirs.

During major combat in Iraq, reportedly as many as 6,000 innocent civilians were killed. These were not even "enemy combatants," who themselves have no rights to fair or humane treatment. They were merely citizens of Iraq, perhaps Islamic, and thus fell victim to the "swift hand of American justice."

Assassinating world leaders is murder. America must respect international law and condemn anyone who partakes in

such enterprises. We cannot expect to achieve peace if we don't practice it.

Brad Ray
Class of 2007

President Bush has been acting as a 'tyrant'

Our government is acting as a tyrant now, especially the commander in chief President Bush.

I would consider myself more conservative than liberal in most cases, but the acts of President Bush are going unnoticed by Congress because they are also Republicans.

I hate it when people in the current administration blame 9-11 on Clinton and his administration. Excluding the fact that Clinton left Bush a surplus of \$540 billion, which now is gone, the economy was good and America was not invading any countries for false pretenses.

Yet when Clinton fouled up in the oval office and received special benefits from his intern he gets impeached by the Republicans for lying.

But when Bush lies to America and has laid over 600 American soldiers to rest because he lied, where is our great democracy and justice? The Republicans are not going to do anything. I will be voting for Kerry in the election because Bush

will take us nowhere but lower with his "gaining respect by striking fear into others" plan.

Jordan Chambers
Class of 2003

Battalion fosters debate on academic dishonesty

Thanks to The Battalion for its clear and accurate coverage ("Week aimed at academic dishonesty, plagiarism," April 15) of Academic and Professional Integrity Week. The Battalion played an important role in this university-wide conversation.

I greatly appreciate your help in informing the A&M community not only about this event, but about its key message: Integrity is the foundation from which a university derives its authority. Yet, integrity doesn't just happen. That's why the week's events looked beyond detecting and punishing academic dishonesty to focus on creating a community that fosters integrity at all levels. Teaching, modeling, and affirming inquiry, intellectual freedom and responsible scholarship will move us forward toward meeting the goals of Vision 2020.

Dr. Michelle Hall Kells
associate director,
University Writing Center

