

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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MAIL CALL

The new parking plan is a mistake

TS might have made the biggest bonehead move I've ever seen. Last year I could park wherever I wanted. I never had a problem unless I tried to get the closest possible lot and then I have to wait 10 minutes for a spot. Now, parking at the farthest spot possible is a challenge, and then I walk past the closer lots only to find them less than half full.

Last year, I would park at Reed Arena and not complain one bit. However, I was parking on the West Campus side of Reed Arena and not out by the intramural fields fighting through traffic to find a spot. Reed Arena was like a circus today. TS has it gated off for reasons I cannot explain. These gates have people turning U-turns, not just a couple, I am talking a line of 10, 15 or 20 cars pulling U-turns which only adds to the traffic jam that is Reed Arena parking.

I realize it's too late for TS to fix its colossal mistake now, but this is going to be a long year in terms of parking.

Byron Geeslin
Class of 2006

Changes were approved by students

In response to an Aug. 31 mail call:

As of today, no lot has been oversold. No residency lot will be oversold this year and only after occupancy counts of the other lots will they be oversold or brought up to capacity. The decision not to over sell lots came at the request of students and TS honored the request.

For example, currently the Zachry lot at peak occupancy times has between 300 and 400 empty spaces. After the count in the next few weeks the approximately 250 seniors, who have never previously purchased a parking permit, waiting on the list to park in Zachary Lot will be able to park there. This will be a trend occur in all the lots on campus in the same manner.

Future increases in permit prices will come at the expense of faculty and staff who refused to accept the new plan and relinquish their numbered reserved spaces. Since the majority of students and majority of their representatives in SGA chose to endorse the plan they will not see a future rise in their permit prices.

This plan was devised by the best transportation professionals in the nation and only after hours of input by students and SGA representatives it was put into place. It's time for 6th year students and other naysayers to stop being part of the problem they created with their inability to work with others and start being part of a solution.

Jeff Graham
Class of 2005

TS is trying to improve old practices

As a senior, maybe Ms. Wilson should realize that every year something new occurs at BusOps/Transit and that they never inform or advertise.

If she and everybody else took a proactive role in their transport to school, there would not be half as many problems. Should Transit attempt to notify the students about changes? Yes. Was that done this semester? Not enough. How can that effectively be done?

Transit has gone through a change in management less than a week before school started and our new managers are very promising and face an uphill battle to turn our image and our practices around.

Daryl Pratho
Class of 2003
Student Bus Driver

There are always two sides to issues

In response to Joshua Dwyer's Aug. 31 column:

Why does America insist on maintaining that we are doing nothing wrong? Yes, this is an amazing country, and yes we have innumerable positive aspects, but for some reason it has become taboo and "unpatriotic" to say that there is something wrong with our country.

Mr. Dwyer is content to amble along in his column and pretend that we live in a magical kingdom overseen by a benevolent ruler who can come to no fault. Yes, his point is valid, people do come to America for freedom, but if he is naive enough to believe that the people who come to this country agree with the way it is run, I truly feel sorry for him.

A fight always has two sides, and both harbor some blame for starting or continuing the fight. Condemning diplomacy and negotiation is absolute gun-hugging, apocalyptic, ridiculousness and does nothing but reanimate the once dead monster that was MAD (mutually assured destruction).

It's time for people like Mr. Dwyer and others who so reverently hold America free from all blame to realize that if we want to change the world, we have to allow the world to change us as well.

Daniel Nammour
Class of 2007

Hazardous to your business

Jim Foreman fumes over Ireland's ban on smoking cigarettes in the workplace



JIM FOREMAN



Earlier this year, Ireland's government implemented a ban on smoking in any enclosed workplace. This includes not only offices and shops, but restaurants and bars as well. This blanket ban is intended to dissuade people from picking up the habit and to protect from the effects of second-hand smoke.

Since the ban was put in place, there have been numerous complaints about decreases in business. According to the Sunday Times Ireland, many Irish smokers spend their weekends in Scotland where they can smoke freely. Pub owners, or Publicans, have suffered as much as a 60 percent drop in business. While some fight the ban through lawsuits or rebellion, and others close their pubs altogether, almost all have reported a decline in sales.

Another problem is while Ireland's smoking ban may keep smoke out of public places, it is not deterring the act. Cigarette and beer companies have not reported losses since the ban was implemented. Cantrell & Cochrane, an Irish food and drink company, reported it actually expects a small rise in sales in the next month. The Irish are still smoking and drinking; they're just not doing it

in pubs.

Although the ban is of noble intent, it would have several negative effects if the United States were to follow suit. A smoking ban would especially harm cities such as College Station, where bars make up a hefty portion of the economy. Many bars, such as those on Northgate, make profits from drink sales. Since many bar-hoppers choose to smoke when they drink, such a ban would make them turn to drinking at home.

When it comes to preventing people from picking up the habit, a ban on smoking in public places would do little good. Most people do not start smoking from hanging out in bars. Many, in fact, start doing it because their parents or friends introduce them to it. Either way, a ban on smoking in public does not do much good.

However, there are exceptions to Ireland's smoking ban. Prisons, police station detention areas and psychiatric wards are not required to enforce the ban. So a smoker may not be able light up at his favorite pub, but he can still get his fix if he is arrested or committed.

Over the past decade, the United States has seen a significant decrease in the number of people who smoke. Anti-smoking

campaigns and lawsuits against the tobacco industry have been successful as they continue to discourage people from beginning smoking. Hitting the issue at its root is more effective than simply passing a law that only affects those who already smoke.

Even Irish citizens do not approve of the ban.

Des Johnston wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper in Dublin, Ireland, saying, "The smoking ban has been in force now for some three months, and as exercises in social engineering go, this one has been an unmitigated disaster."

Smoking is an unhealthy habit, but those who smoke should not be punished for doing so. Offices, restaurants and bars should have the option of banning smoking on their own accord if they feel it is necessary. In fact, many places already provide facilities for smokers. The government should not step in and tell people what is not good for them.

Jim Foreman is a junior mechanical engineering major.

Lindsye Forson sings praises of high school AP involvement



LINDSYE FORSON

Over the past 50 years, the Advanced Placement Program has come a long way. The program was originally designed to cater to top students in select schools, but AP classes are now taken by nearly 1.1 million students, compared to the 1,000 original, and are offered by two-thirds of public schools today, as opposed to the charter few hundred, according to CNN.

However, students haven't been the only ones to notice and take advantage of the program's growth. Universities are noticing and taking advantage of the program's growth as well. A 2003 survey found that college admissions boards consider a student's performance in AP classes more important than SAT score, class rank, grade point average and a student's essays, according to CNN.

However, many people contend that the program has become too large and has outlived its usefulness to students. There is irony in the fact that a class intended to give students an edge in college may prevent their acceptance to college but, this notwithstanding, the classes have great enough benefits that both students and universities would be negligent to abstain from what they offer.

AP classes and tests are a tremendous bargain for students. Students who take AP classes their junior and senior years of high school can potentially place out of a num-

ber of credit hours roughly equivalent to an entire year of college, all this for the nominal cost of about \$80 per test. Each test can exempt a student from three to 10 credit hours, depending on the subject matter and the university that one attends.

"This issue is not another high school test question. Those who prefer to remain on the sidelines of this issue cannot afford to."

"The old philosophy was that only the very best students were sent to AP courses. We've changed that. We're going to be more inclusive. We're going for the greater good," said Erick Hueck, head of the AP program and teacher of AP chemistry at Miami Senior High, according to The Associated Press.

For many, eliminating a fourth of college costs can be the difference between whether one can afford to attend school. So while students may be under additional pressure to perform well in these classes due to the increasing amount of attention given to them by university selection committees, AP classes are unquestionably worth their while for those eligible to take them.

Similarly, it would be ridiculous for universities to ignore AP classes. For years, the SAT has been assailed with criticism for allegedly posing questions that are racist, sexist or otherwise biased, but the SAT has remained a sort of necessary evil due to universities' desire to predict college performance.

The relationship between SAT score and success in freshman-level classes is tenuous

at best. A 1992 study by the University of Pennsylvania found that SAT I scores were a poor predictor of future academic success, explaining only 4 percent of variation in college grades. In this respect, the AP program may be somewhat of a godsend. After all, what could be a better predictor of success in first-year courses than the grades a student earns in these very classes, transplanted onto a high school campus?

This logical connection seems to be confirmed by research; students who have taken at least two AP exams are more likely to complete bachelor's degrees than their counterparts who lacked as much involvement in the program, according to CNN.

This issue is not another high school test question. Those who prefer to remain on the sidelines of the issue cannot afford to; President Bush aims to double federal spending on AP classes to \$51.5 million (this amount is in addition to state spending on the program), according to CNN.

Symbiosis makes as much sense in the animal kingdom as it does on a university campus, because both involved parties stand to benefit. Such is the case with the AP Program and universities; it saves students a significant amount of time and money and offers university admissions boards non-hypothetical evidence of how a student will perform in a college-level class. When the program's advantages are weighed against any detriment it may cause to a college applicant, the choice for students and universities alike is a no-brainer.

Lindsye Forson is a senior journalism major.

