

DDS

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have the necessary certification to drive the 15-person vans, so there is never any bickering about who gets to drive. I join up with driver Jeremy Wayne and navigator Nora Aaron in the aforementioned van #4, and we hit the streets.

10:30 p.m. — We pick up our first passengers, bound for Walton Hall, at the University Commons apartments. When one of the women sees my notepad, she asks what I'm doing. I explain to her that I work for the Emerald and I'm

writing a story. She scowls at me. For the remainder of her ride she complains to me about how much she hates journalism majors because of their pretentiousness and egotism. She discounts any of my attempts to justify my profession. As it turns out, she is a journalism major too.

11 p.m. — We make a stop at fraternity house south of campus where we pick up four women (one holding fuzzy, pink bunny ears) and a guy in a bathrobe. By happenstance, one of the passengers went to high school with Jeremy, our driver, and reminisces at a high volume about their student

council days. Another less satisfied new passenger spends the ride hugging "the bucket," but the drive back to the dorms remains spew-free. Upon the departure of the passengers, Jeremy notes that the more drunk people are, the faster they want to get home, but you have to drive slower so they don't puke. How paradoxical.

Just before midnight, we pick up yet another residence hall-bound passenger who thinks that now would be the best time to call her best friend in Montana on her cell phone. Go figure.

Midnight — "Old Nick," a for-

mer DDS employee, has called in and we go for the pick up. The name apparently comes from the fact that he is older than 22, which in college terms is ancient. He spends the ride petting Nora's hair and talking about getting all of us drinks. Instead, he leaves us the first tip of the night: \$2. Not long after, one of the DDS "regulars" gives us our second tip because we were playing Pink Floyd. It was the "Pulse" album.

1 a.m. — We drop off a group of people celebrating Libby's 19th birthday. One of them pointed out that "a tip" is "pita" spelled backward and they accused us of trying

to subconsciously sell pitas. Dispatch checks in. The radio banter has been surprisingly dull tonight, but that is coming from a guy who would fill the airwaves with "breaker breaker one-niner blah blah blah." Our two new passengers take it upon themselves to liven up the radio conversation by mimicking all the jargon. They give us a tip.

1:30 a.m. — The van pulls in front of another anonymous fraternity for the third pick-up this evening. They make a short trip that they easily could have walked. After they leave, Jeremy comments that "these people are just cold, not drunk."

2 a.m. — Things start to pick up after Jeremy and Nora make a quick pit stop at 7-11 for some Big Gulps. The van goes over to High Street to make a pick-up and get a transfer passenger who is going out to Willagillespie Road, our greatest distance of the evening. We drop off a passenger and go get three more from Max's Tavern. The third stumbles out still holding his drink and the bartender rushes out to retrieve the glass. He determines that he likes me as soon as he gets in the van but asserts, "I'm not gay or nothing."

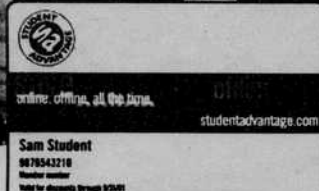
He is wearing a red ball cap with the bill flipped up and has curly, blonde hair shooting out from underneath. His name, he tells us, is Casey, but everybody calls him "Cheese." He inquires if we can "rock Taco Bell" so he can get some bean burritos with green sauce. He discounts his friend's suggestion of Jack in the Box as being "too hepital" and "mad-cow." Speaking of bad food, Van #3 gets the first vomit award at 2:16 a.m.; it was also the only one of the evening. When we get to the drive through at 2:20 a.m., Cheese is generous enough to purchase food for me and some of the other passengers, which is a good thing because I was getting really hungry.

3 a.m. — To my disappointment, Cheese has left us. We are up near Hendricks Park for the second time picking up some stragglers from a party. Since the last calls of the evening are coming in, we drive around for a while picking everyone up before dropping anybody off. This creates the longest passenger waits of the evening, but they aren't more than 15 to 20 minutes. I guess that is a small price to pay for not having to walk home drunk and cold at three in the morning.

3:30 a.m. — The last passenger is dropped off, the car is parked and we head back to the ASUO office to clock out. Jeremy and Nora walk away with an extra \$4 apiece from the tip jar.

While the night was by no means boring, it was a little slow by DDS standards. The actual experience went by surprisingly fast, considering that in the same amount of time I could have driven to Seattle. I give my thanks and my appreciation to the students who make this service possible. While riding along once was fun, it would drive most people mad in a month. So for heaven's sake, give them a tip the next time you ride DDS — or at least take them to Taco Bell.

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