

# Citadel Shannon shouldn't hang head

**ERIN HILL**

COLUMNIST



Charleston built a large fortification in 1780 to protect the town. By the 1800s, it had been turned into a state arsenal. A college was then established there in 1842. There are approximately 1,900 cadets currently enrolled at the institution. It's like A&M, but completely different as well. The Citadel has two goals. "One is to graduate young men with alert minds and sound bodies who have been taught the high ideals of honor, integrity, loyalty and patriotism; who accept the responsibilities that accompany leadership and who have sufficient professional knowledge to take their places in a competitive world."

The second goal is to the service the citizens of... the state of South Carolina. And the third, it might be added, is to maintain the status quo, to keep this armed fraternity strong. To keep women out.

The Citadel isn't alone in the pursuit of these goals. Just as this institution supports the local community, the community supports and seemed to agree that these goals are the ones The Citadel ought to be pursuing, and showed this support by wearing black ribbons in the face of danger. The danger apparently includes women at The Institution.

No one was surprised, then, by the hostility that greeted Shannon Faulkner some two years ago when she got herself written into the state's history books, by grabbing at the ring that shines brightest in South Carolina.

We know the story of this dark-haired woman with a solemn face. She was accepted at this bastion of masculinity because her name and application didn't reveal her gender. After acceptance, she fought to be admitted to the cadet corps.

Twice they almost succeeded in keeping her

out, but the Supreme Court would have no more of The Citadel's gender-exclusive admittance policy; Faulkner won admittance, but few friends. She started her career as a Citadel cadet late this summer, and already she is back at home. The Citadel will just be a name listed on some other university's application form under the category of "institutions of higher learning attended." The dates she will list, of course, are closer together than we expected, than she expected. Everyone thought she was in for the long haul, but she wasn't.

"Shannon Calls It Quits!" shouted the headlines. Newsweek said "Shannon Faulkner, the first woman to enter The Citadel, quickly washes out."

An unflattering photograph of the woman was pasted beneath the bold black letters. Additional photographs of Citadel cadets cheering her departure only added to the packages that newspapers printed after Shannon Faulkner announced that she would not continue as a student at The Citadel.

I suppose the first reaction is to judge her decisions; I know that I did. After all, she made herself a very public figure in her fight to gain acceptance at the formerly all-male institution. Her arrival was allowed because of a Supreme Court decision, and it didn't make her popular.

Local folks, with black ribbons, symbolized the disapproval that many felt, and students at The Citadel gave Faulkner the silent treatment with the tacit approval of advisers. She wasn't welcome, that's for sure. But to judge her, harshly or no, is unfair.

We want to, of course. The urge to 'make a statement' is powerful, and every little thing is public nowadays.

"So, what do you think about that woman at The Citadel?" "What's your opinion of Shannon Faulkner, huh?"

It's something to talk about, sure, but right now, it is none of our business.

We really must ask ourselves if our private lives and actions would stand up to such public scrutiny.

Doubtful, huh?

As Faulkner said, this is her time to heal, to mend.

She accepted a struggle when she took on such a formidable opponent as The Citadel, but she didn't ask to have her health ruined. She didn't ask to be lonely, but she accepted it, knowing that someone would have to be the first. She dealt with the hardship for more than two years.

Think of what you've done for the past two years. Now replace all of those activities with courtroom battles, meetings with lawyers, press conferences and Supreme Court decisions.

Replace your calm, or even not-so-calm life, with the one Shannon Faulkner was living and then decide whether or not she should have quit. Even then, it is none of our business, but it might make her situation more understandable.

She was the first, a brave woman who fought hard. She shouldn't be shrouded in a cloak of defeat when her only crime is being human.

She did what she did. Let her live with it.

*Erin Hill is a graduate pursuing a teaching certificate*



## THE BATTALION

Established in 1893

Editorials appearing in The Battalion reflect the views of the editorials board. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of other Battalion staff members, the Texas A&M student body, regents, administration, faculty or staff. Columns, guest columns, cartoons and letters express the opinions of the authors. Contact the opinion editor for information on submitting guest columns.

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# EDITORIAL STUDENT LEADER

## Toby Boenig works hard for the students of Texas A&M University.

After the highly successful term of Brooke Leslie, Student Body President Toby Boenig has a tough act to follow.

However, his achievements throughout the summer and the early part of the Fall semester indicate that he is on the right track.

Over the summer, he worked with President Ray Bowen to lower the proposed general use fee increase. This will save most Texas A&M students a lot of money on their fee statements.

This dedication parallels the high priority he has given to opposing financial aid cuts. His plan to work with other Big 12 schools and the Aggie Mothers' promises to make his own crusade against federal cuts more effective.

Boenig has already caught the attention of U.S. Rep. Jack Fields through his columns in the Dallas Morning News and The Battalion.

Also, Boenig has been committed to opening communication between groups on campus to discuss traditionally contentious issues.

His idea to hold round table discussions, if successful, could do a lot to reduce tensions resulting from cultural differences. However, he does need to be careful that these round tables do not exacerbate tensions.

Boenig still has a long way to go to complete his platform. Many of his ideas, such as installing more automated teller machines around campus and expanding the number of emergency phones and self-defense courses, deserve attention.

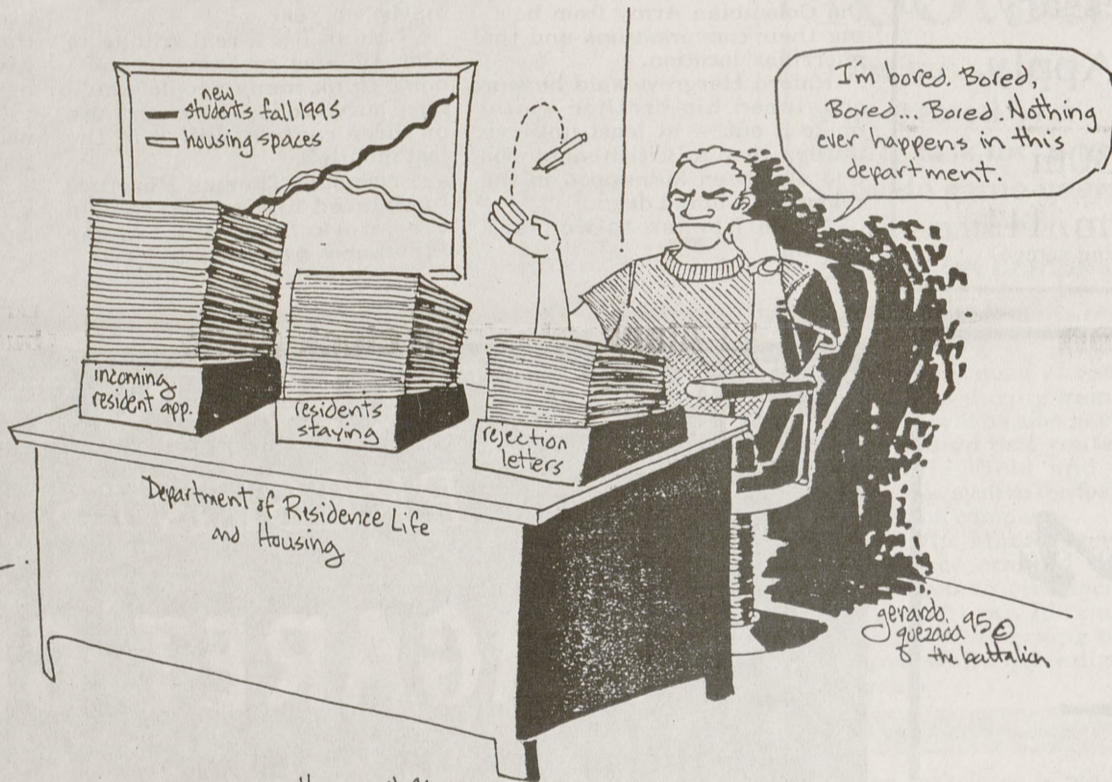
He should continue to work hard on local issues, and avoid dedicating too much attention to national issues. Because his impact on issues such as congressional financial aid cuts is probably minimal, he should devote his energy toward campus issues that he can affect.

Nevertheless, a lot of time remains in Boenig's term, and his record has been solid.

If he is as effective this school year as he has been over the summer, he should have no trouble fulfilling his goals as student body president.



**Boenig**



*theory #96: A disgruntled worker decides to make Residence Life interesting.*



## MAIL CALL

### Stidvent mistaken about Fish Camp

As a proud member of the Fish Camp organization, Chris Stidvent's Aug. 28 column caught my attention.

I was disappointed by the negative picture of Texas A&M painted by Stidvent. My disappointment turned to shock when he ended his column with an intended "welcome" to the Class of '99!

This attempt at critical humor is no way to welcome freshmen, and I am offended by his associating Fish Camp with these negative views by insinuating that Fish Camp shows only a rose-colored view of Texas A&M.

While some of what Stidvent rants about may be true, why does he dwell on the negative? Fish Camp stresses the positives and tries to fix the negatives along the way.

I am amazed that he could be a senior at Texas A&M when there is obviously nothing he likes about this school.

Stidvent ends his column by talking about becoming a true Aggie. While I know that the Class of '99 will all become "true Aggs," I do not believe Stidvent has figured it out yet.

As Aggie Spirit is described:

"From the outside looking in, you can't understand it. From the inside looking out, you can't explain it." From what his column shows, I believe Stidvent is still looking in.

*Justin Mitchell  
Class of '95*

### A&M departments aid in emergency

I would like to inform you of the dedication which several departments of Texas A&M University displayed yesterday to the A&M students and to thank them for their assistance.

When several students near the Pavilion asked for water to be placed outside the building for those waiting to register, University EMS contacted the University Police who in turn, contacted Food Services Catering who quickly made arrangements to provide the cold water.

University Emergency Medical Services would like to extend a special thank you to these people and departments in preventing other heat related emergencies from occurring.

*Eric Scott  
Chief of TAMU EMS*

# America needs a new set of values

With the election year quickly approaching, it makes sense to reflect upon an important issue in American society — the importance of a limited set of common values.



**BRIAN BECKCOM**  
COLUMNIST

Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* is a fundamental work detailing the underlying problems in the recent shift from solid educational truths towards an ambiguous and empty set of interchangeable values.

The values of today are becoming valueless, Bloom believes, and offers a convincing argument for a return to time-honored democratic values. The current crop of presidential candidates would do well to listen.

For the majority of American history, there was a big difference between right and wrong. The glorious '60s, however, emphasized individual choice and personal freedom.

While neither is a bad notion, when taken to the extreme, total freedom and complete choice become an unreliable moral code and an immersion in self-interest.

In the meantime, academic denial of the existence of a greater truth and educational beliefs that judgement of events or people is relative have made concerted efforts to embed their system of "valueless values" into our curriculum, and are intent on taking hold of the primary purpose of higher education.

What does Bloom mean by all this? To our teddy bear of a president, it means that embracing all of the values of all Americans leads to dangerous consequences.

At one time, students who disagreed on a topic would debate the opposing sides

armed with fact, intellect, and a desire to uncover which side was more beneficial. Nowadays, differences of opinion are decided by shouting, appeal to base emotions, and attacks on individuals.

The Democrats are saying, in essence, that condemning a certain practice is akin to condemning that person. On the contrary, the Pat Buchanans of the political world, while certainly wrong in some aspects, are practicing the kind of politics that have made America great. Buchanan is trying to get at the truth, whereas the liberals go on preaching about hazy "values."

As the president and his kind would have us believe, it is more important to avoid offending the individual's set of values than to rationally critique those values.

President Clinton stands on the bully pulpit and embraces the emotional masses, playing to class animosity and prejudice.

Alan Keyes, on the other hand, stands on his moral pulpit and says, "this is what I believe, and I'm going to tell you exactly why I believe this." Keyes stands up and critiques homosexuality, but not the people who practice such behavior.

It is very important to realize that Keyes is not attacking people.

He is attacking practices. The liberals, on the other hand, are going straight for the throat of the people. I would not deny that respect of another person's humanity is a good thing.

If all values are equally respectable (as some would have us believe), how do we condemn Nazi atrocities?

The fact is, most right-minded people have criticized the Nazis for decades.

The reason that we believe the Nazis to be wrong is because we realized in our moral hearts that some values are wrong.

When we simply accept the notion that an individual in our democracy can practice whatever beliefs they want, we run the risk of losing our American identity. We run the

risk of losing the American soul. The problem with the value-laden debate in our public forums is that it places certain topics off-limits.

Affirmative action is a good example. Is affirmative action a positive step in ending racism, or is it discrimination to stop discrimination?

Politicians have had trouble in the past arguing such a question, because any affirmation of the latter draws out accusations of bigotry.

The American public forum is rapidly becoming transformed from a place where ideas are exchanged without fear of ostracism into an Orwellian arena where certain ideas and questions are off-limits.

### If we accept the notion that an individual can practice any beliefs they want, we run the risk of losing our American identity.

Ask yourself this question: If values are more important than the search for truth, what purpose does a liberal education serve?

While the Democrats shy from this question and spew rhetorical flatulence over the American people, patriotic Republicans and liberals with common sense realize that our country is rapidly losing its moral foundation.

The presidential candidates who address this issue will bring votes to their cause, whereas the candidates who fail to offer a solution for the crumbling moral cement in America stand no chance of success.

Consider the whole "values" debate just a diversion by liberals who fear they are wrong, and consider the waffling and inane Bill Clinton a one-term president.

*Brian Beckcom is a senior computer science major*