

# A&M evolves: Liberalism sets stage for change

My best friend "Lisa" is a black, bisexual Mormon living and working in Salt Lake City.

**H. L. BAXTER**  
 COLUMNIST



However, I did have some things going in my favor. Lisa complained constantly about her roommate.

The stench her roommate created by only showering once a week was unbearable and disgusting, she groaned.

My roommate situation went quite well, however. My roommate, a senior, gave me invaluable study tips and listened to a lot of my problems. Perhaps the only problem I encountered with him was whether or not to tell him I was gay.

Both Lisa and I could not be open to others about ourselves because of our immediate environments.

Since we didn't feel complete, we both knew change (in some form or another) was inevitable for the sake of our personal happiness.

We realized we had to choose one of two options: Change our environments or wait for our environments to change.

Lisa attempted the former. After in-

tense arguments with her family and friends, she discontinued practicing Mormonism, came to her senses and stopped voting Republican, severed many ties with her family, and has thoroughly accepted her bisexuality.

And me? One could say I'm doing a combination of both. In some ways, I've changed my immediate environment. After my roommate told me he too was gay, I met a lot of other gay people and developed strong friendships.

Yet, I have also observed a subtle change in my environment.

Texas A&M continues to be a University with an overwhelming conservative student body. However, flashes of liberalism occasionally enlighten our fair campus.

Since I began studying at Texas A&M in the fall of 1993, I've noticed the University recruits minorities intensely. I suspect there are a host of reasons as to why A&M chooses to do this, but its efforts, coupled with students attending from different socioeconomic backgrounds, encourage a more liberal environment.

This change in demographics is becoming noticeable in the diversified market around town.

New radio stations, art and clothing stores and the ever-changing downtown Bryan all bear witness to this slow-paced evolution.

This is what I mean when I say the campus is evolving.

Homogeneity usually cultivates a conservative attitude. Out of this homogeneity, certain traditions develop and are upheld.

As the population becomes more heterogeneous, traditions are challenged and the virtue of tolerance proliferates. The scope of cultural and recreational activities in the area reflects that change.

Of course, there is some resistance to change.

The traditionalists sternly object to any encroachment on their territory, for any loss of tradition is viewed as a loss of self-worth.

This is occurring currently at Texas A&M University.

One can only speculate what the

cultural future holds for the University. But with each passing year, conservatives steadily retreat to their corner to preserve what makes Texas A&M unique and liberals press tenaciously for change.

This observation may seem quite obvious to some, but others (liberals in particular) cannot see the change.

Quite a few of my friends reject the idea that this place is becoming more liberal. Since the blanket of conservatism so overwhelms A&M, liberalism is thought invisible.

But one does not have to squint to know it is there.

Even though Bryan-College Station may not offer the book signings, art museums or dance clubs of the caliber that a Salt Lake City, New Orleans, Houston or any other major city may offer, they do exist.

And — to an extent — we have the increasing presence of liberalism to thank for it.

*H.L. Baxter is a junior geography and political science major*

## Citadel wants best education

All-male policy provides unique environment, not sexist schooling

I would like to stand up on behalf of the hits the Citadel, South Carolina's all-male military university, has taken regarding Shannon Faulkner.

First, let me qualify myself as an authority by saying I have visited the Citadel during this controversy, and one of my extremely close friends was the Citadel regimental commander (equivalent to our corps commander) last year. We discussed and prayed over the matter laboriously.

The Citadel's efforts to keep the school all-male, contrary to what you may have heard, does not result from a male-chauvinistic or a "good-ole boy" mentality.

This issue has nothing to do with a so-called antiquated, chauvinistic Southern military school that needs to be pushed into the 21st century, but rather has everything to do with a sincere belief in the benefits of single-sex education.

The Citadel simply says this: Men and women are different. They do not claim anything more or less; they just maintain the two sexes are different.

Following this assumption (one which most logical and rational Americans believe to be true), the next sensible step is to say that since we are different, then we learn, develop and mature differently.

**MATT SEGREST**  
 GUEST COLUMNIST



Neither sex is better than the other — by any means — but simply different. The Citadel believes this, and their educational system has been proven successful during 153 years of instruction at the Citadel.

Harvard sociologist David Riesman said the benefits of such an education are clear. Not only is it an optimal means of character development, but it also eliminates the distraction of the "mating-dating" game so prevalent in our society.

Instead, it allows institutions to focus on values and academics. "In short," writes Lt. Gen. Watts, president of the Citadel, "the value of separate education is, simply, the fact that it is separate."

A common argument is that since the Citadel is a tax-supported school, it cannot restrict itself to a single gender.

This argument, taken to its logical conclusion, would prohibit all tax support for single-sex schools, 83 of which are female and three of which are male.

Given the fact that these schools — public and private — rely heavily on tax dollars just to keep their doors open, all

single-gendered institutions would unjustly have to fall on the sword.

When one takes a look at the merits of single-sex education, a grave injustice would occur with their elimination.

All-female colleges produce only 4.5 percent of all female graduates, but produce one-fourth of all women board members of Fortune 500 companies, and one-half of the women in Congress.

The benefits of men's colleges are equally apparent. Obviously, whether you personally agree with it or not, there is something to the single-sex educational philosophy.

Do not believe Faulkner's rhetoric of the "evil, chauvinistic military men" of the Citadel keeping out a young woman yearning to be a cadet.

The Citadel is not concerned with the invasion of women into their "man's world," but they are concerned with the protection of their proven system of single-gender education.

All the Citadel claims is that men and women are inherently different, and this being the case, different sexes learn, develop and mature more effectively in different environments. There is no anti-women sentiment involved, just devotion to a proven educational principle.

*Matt Segrest is a senior management major*



### THE BATTALION

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## EDITORIAL

### A PROMISE KEPT

Clinton honors pledge to support federally funded student loans.

Yesterday, while speaking at an Illinois campus, President Clinton once again attacked Republicans and the banking industry for attempting to eliminate federally backed student loans. Clinton's vow to protect the student loan program should be commended.

Far too many students in this nation depend on low-interest federal loans to attend colleges and universities. Through these federally backed loans, students are able to borrow money for tuition and other school expenses at lower interest rates.

If this program were eliminated by Congress, the consequences would be devastating for a countless number of students.

Attempting to balance the federal budget by cutting unnecessary programs is a noble cause; however, Clinton's college loan program should be taken off of the table.

Congress should recognize that education is one area where funding should be increased, not decreased.

These federally backed student loans now are even more important to many Texas students.

Because the Texas Legislature neglected to adequately fund state colleges and universities, many of these institutions were forced to drastically increase fees; thus placing even more of a financial burden on the students.

Supporting education should not be a party-line issue. Republicans and Democrats alike should all place education as one of the nation's top priorities.

The Republican bill that awaits the approval of the Senate threatens to slice the college loan program and cut education funding by \$36 billion over seven years. Clinton has already threatened to veto the bill if necessary and increase education funding by \$40 billion.

Our elected officials should recognize that if the funding for our nation's education is destroyed, our future could be next.



## MAIL CALL

### Assigning dorms difficult job

This is in response to Chris Stidvent's column in the Sept. 11 Battalion.

I sympathize with the many students that are overassigned. I know some of them and I see how hard this situation is. However, managing the housing at this University is not an easy task.

Dr. Southerland is a highly intelligent and level-headed man who has served this University as an administrator for years. I guarantee that Southerland and Director of the Department of Residence Life and Housing Ron Sasse know what they are doing and are trying to solve this problem as quickly as possible.

If you want to camp out on the lawn of these two fine gentlemen's homes like a beatnik nose-ringed freak from Austin, then go ahead.

There is another solution. There's an easy way to get guaranteed housing on this campus: Join the Corps.

*David Boldt*  
 Class of '97

### More football ticket problems

The A&M ticket office has figured out another way to drain

money from football fans.

I read last week that a couple was forced to buy a ticket for their baby to sit in its mother's lap for the game. Well, I found out another non-publicized rule change for this year.

The new rule is students that do not have season passes cannot buy a ticket or have a ticket bought for them until Friday, after everybody (including their friends) has pulled their tickets. However, guest passes are still available whenever you want them.

The reason given for this new policy was they want to ensure that all season ticket holders have a ticket.

In other words, they don't want to sell student tickets to students, because they are afraid of running out of student tickets and the best way to prevent this is to sell student tickets to non-students.

They could just be honest and say they realized that students would want to go with their friends, and thus be forced to fork over money for a guest label.

*Jeff Maca*  
 Graduate Student

### Columnist does not speak for Catholics

I am writing to inform Jim Pawlikowski that I do not appreciate him acting as

"spokesman" for the Catholic Students at TAMU regarding the movie *Priest*.

As a fellow Catholic, I feel that no Catholic with a sense of decency and judgement would promote the viewing of a film that attacks the very core of the Catholic Church — the priesthood. This film is an insult to the countless holy and devout priests who have given their entire lives in service to the Church.

I suggest that people who support the showing of *Priest* find a copy of the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and read Chapter 3, Article 6.

Lastly, research the life of priest and martyr of Auschwitz, St. Maximillion Kolbe, if you truly want to "... grow spiritually."

*Ann M. Miksch*  
 Class of '86

### Concealed guns: asking for trouble

This is a response to Lydia Percival's column concerning concealed weapons.

My brother worked in the emergency room during his stay at Texas A&M's School of Medicine. An overwhelming majority of the gunshot wounds that he witnessed were from the victim's own gun, turned against him in the heat of battle. Some things are easier said than done.

Most honest, law-abiding citizens have something inside them that prevents them from killing another human being. It is easy to say you could kill a criminal if you were endangered. But in the time that one hesitates with a gun, a criminal has enough time to take the gun and use it. Murderous criminals don't usually have a conscience that stops them.

Maybe the new handgun law will make some criminals think twice. However, the ones that

have nothing to lose (like the looney at Luby's) are going to make Texans pay big for defending themselves with a handgun.

*Randall Smith*  
 Class of '96

This letter is in reference to Lydia Percival's article on concealed weapons, and to address the prolific negative use of the word liberal in the Opinion Page. Has the Opinion staff undergone some sort of anti-liberal electroshock treatment?

Many recent articles have used the word "liberal" negatively, from the one on the women's conference in Beijing to the concealed handgun piece.

When Percival cites instances of violence in her article, she uses the same technique anti-gun control groups use: fear.

Carrying a handgun is not a must for stopping a criminal. The individual that stopped the man who opened fire on the White House was unarmed.

Instances of mass violence like at the Luby's in Killeen are horrific and terrible, but they are not as common as robbery, carjacking, rape and assault.

It is in these situations that everyday people, feeling empowered by their handgun end up having their gun used on them.

A two-week training course is not sufficient enough to prepare people for the intense stress of using a handgun. The military and police are trained for months before they are expected to use a gun properly.

There is always a chance that a person having problems at home and work, uses a shiny new handgun he is carrying to express anger.

Arguments once settled with fists may now be settled with guns. Welcome to the old west.

*Jeff Lisle*  
 Class of '97