

Friday • October 4, 1996

Page 9

Friday • October 4, 1996

...and on what grounds are you seeking to enter the U.S.?

WELCOME BACK SHANNON LUCID 188 DAYS IN OUTER SPACE!

INS

IMMIGRATION BILL

Editorial Roundup

(AP) — The following is a sampling of editorial opinion from various newspapers:

The El Paso Herald-Post on the lack of progress in the Republican Congress:

When President Clinton said in January that the era of big government was over, it looked like many like he had abandoned the Democrats and adopted Republican philosophy.

Take a close look today, though, and what you see is Republicans jumping the GOP ship and swimming from all they're worth to Democratic shores.

The Republican Congress — politically embattled today — is edging away from ambitious programs and indulging in more conservative rhetoric — recently passed any number of feel-good measures advocated by Democrats, but without effort to taxes.

Instead, Congress is imposing their multimillion-dollar costs on businesses ....

This regulatory burden — which translates into fewer jobs and less wealth for Americans — is the sort of thing Republi-

icans were planning to attack not so long ago.

Don't look for their help today, at least not until after the November election. Now they're part of the problem.

The Amarillo Globe-News on right to speak at sentencing:

Some acts simply defy description. They go so far beyond the pale, beyond decency, as to render their witnesses mute with rage.

One such act occurred in a San Jose, Calif., courtroom Thursday. Richard Allen Davis, convicted of the 1993 kidnap and murder of Polly Klaas, was about to receive his sentence from Judge Thomas Hastings.

After hearing from Polly's father, Marc Klaas, Allen struck once more at a family whose heart he shattered into a million pieces.

He said Polly's last words to him were pleas not to molest her the way her father had done.

The response drew the understandable cries of anguish from the crowd. Marc Klaas lunged at his daughter's killer, only to be escorted from the courtroom.

Now the Big Question: Should a convicted killer be denied his constitutional right to speak at his own sentencing hearing?

Tempting as it is to bind and gag such an animal as Richard Allen Davis, it is better to defer to the Constitution, which the courts say gives killers the right to a final statement before a judge or jury pronounces sentence.

No judge presiding over a capital crime ever can predict with absolute certainty what a defendant will say when granted the right to speak.

There are simply no guarantees that the convicted criminal will show remorse or regret — or at the end of the emotional scale — contempt or loathing.

Suffering through the blathering of a heartless killer like Davis is the admittedly awful price we pay for the imperfect system of laws that governs us.

One actually can find a silver lining in this hideous final act in the Polly Klaas tragedy. In its perverted way, giving Davis the opportunity to lash out once more only confirms the decision of the jury to convict him and sentence him to death.

Jason D. Scott  
Class of '92

Aggies have choice to follow tradition

I'm not really sure if Smiley was trying to convince the campus he is the next Chris Stidvert, but he did.

Ben Braly  
Class of '99

University is for the use of the students

Once again, the University's administration has dealt a blow to students.

The University Concessions

# THE BATTALION OPINION

## 'City on a hill' does a disappearing act Meal deals a loss

Columnist  
Jeremy Valdez  
Senior chemical engineering major

When it comes to eating on campus, most of us find ourselves in a vicious no-win situation: Either endure the tedium of the dining hall system, or fork over our beloved Aggie Bucks for overpriced food at other on-campus eateries.

It would be great if the dining hall chefs could invent new fare, or if the private fast food companies in the Underground would make their prices competitive out of the goodness of their hearts.

But while we wait for hell to freeze over, Food Services has us where they want us. Oddly enough, the official Food Services motto is "Dining on campus is fun."

It's true that Food Services personnel are hard-working men and women who deserve respect for working to feed thousands of young adults and bonfire pots every week. But unfortunately, their menu is about as imaginative as their slogan writer.

A very informal study of the Food Services menu suggests that about two-thirds of the dinner entrees served in dining halls fit a time-tested, boring recipe: a small slab of meat, served on a bed of rice or pasta and doused in a sauce of some sort.

Pasta with chicken, sliced cheese and marinara sauce makes Chicken Parmesan. And you, too, can combine rice, chicken, and cream gravy to form the Chicken Cutlet dinner. Similar ensembles employ beef instead of chicken. It doesn't take Martha Stewart to recognize there's a pattern evolving here.

But the campus dining experience can offer a sense of mystery that can make even an ordinary meal truly worthwhile. There are several unanswered questions that burn in the hearts and minds of on-campus diners.

For instance, where does all the strawberry Blue Bell ice cream go? Chocolate is always the first to be eaten, followed by vanilla. But the strawberry ice cream lies dormant, like a cancer in the deep freeze, until one day, when it suddenly disappears.

Also, why are the plastic glasses in the dining halls so small? Several hypotheses exist to explain this phenomenon.

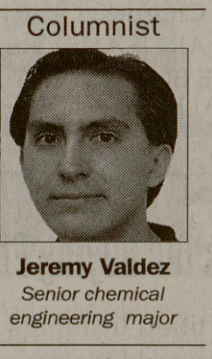
One is that back in ol' army days, when the glasses were purchased, people didn't drink as much. After all, the Big Gulp had not yet been invented, and archaeological evidence from the 1970s suggests that the average human bladder was smaller back then. Another supposition is that the glasses are small for safety's sake. If the glasses were larger, juice drinkers could, in theory, suffer alcohol poisoning. Even with today's smaller "safety glasses" you can still catch a wicked week-long buzz from just two glasses of the vintage Sbsa juice. 1993 was a very good year.

As I see the fresh faces of the Class of '00 venture forth into their college experience, I find myself reminiscing about my own freshman year. On-campus dining was an important part of my new culture. Food Services kindly obliged by introducing a strange concoction called Frito Pie, apparently as a nod to my Mexican heritage.

Whether you eat in the dining halls or with Aggie Bucks, whether you eat alone or with friends, or whether you use whole milk or skim milk, I feel your pain.

Despite all its faults, Food Services somehow manages to meet the needs of one of the largest colleges in the world. So if you're reading this in a campus dining establishment, I grudgingly propose a toast to Food Services.

"Excuse me, sir. Yes, you in the hairnet: How about breaking out the big glasses?"



Columnist  
Michael Heinroth  
Teaching certification student

People say history repeats itself. And I have to agree because the "national malaise" President Jimmy Carter lamented in 1979 has eased its way back into the heart and soul of the American electorate. Of course, in the late '70s America was struggling with terrorism and an energy crisis at a time when the economy was booming. And the shocking demise of a nation was a not-so-distant memory.

The nation was left questioning the pillars of American society: government, churches, families and schools.

But the current malaise, after a decade of prosperity, has bred a more frightening cynicism. That not only questions but threatens to topple our faith in these sacred pillars — and in the cornerstone we call "progress."

It was 17 years ago that a humble Georgia farmer addressed the nation from the Oval Office and spoke of a cynical electorate suffering from a "crisis of confidence." He decried the "growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and ... the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation."

But nobody likes a whiner. Carter's diagnosis of America's ills was rewarded with an overwhelming defeat in the following general election.

And the Glorious Age of Reason was ushered in. Productivity and consumption levels tickled the charts, giving us the Reagan boom. Inflation no longer mattered as wages continued to increase. And the Dow Jones was flying high.

Best-World War II prosperity was back, baby!

Of course, the Japanese were

bankrolling our trillion-dollar budget deficits. And if they tried to collect any payments from us, we could just nuke 'em again because we were the mightiest military power the world had ever known.

Besides, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were making some damn fine automobiles.

Being a Republican (or a swing-Democrat) in America never felt better.

"Another term for Reagan, and then give us George Bush!" the brimming-with-confidence electorate declared.

But as Saddam and Co. surrendered on the shores of the Persian Gulf in 1991, Carter's national malaise resurfaced. And as it ruthlessly destroyed Reagan's plaster temple under President Bush's watch, the illusion of national confidence began to crumble.

Five years later, our churches, synagogues and mosques are empty, faith in God is attacked, and religion is viewed with contempt.

Almost half of newly married couples will divorce, leaving the children to cope with a broken home. And our schools have become bloody battlefields for youth gangs.

The same companies that prospered in the '80s (and continue to post record profits in the '90s) are now arbitrarily passing out pink slips to the employees — our parents — who have given 20 and 30 years of faithful service. Fat-cat CEOs jokingly refer to this as "downsizing" or "payroll reduction plans."

NAFTA and other sellouts have left countless blue-collar workers to watch their jobs immigrate south of the border and overseas.

Those damn fine automobiles that were rolling off assembly lines in Detroit are now being built in Mexican factories.

And we, as students, are faced with a future that may not offer us the opportunities to enjoy a better life — so much for progress.

It's no wonder that less than 25

percent of Americans trust the integrity of their government.

As a result, the increasingly cynical electorate turned to an equally cynical man armed with pie charts and a chicken claw fastened to a rod.

He contemptuously slapped this voodoo economics stick against his colored graphs as he touted obscure statistics. We were enamored, and many (including myself) embraced this mystic shaman.

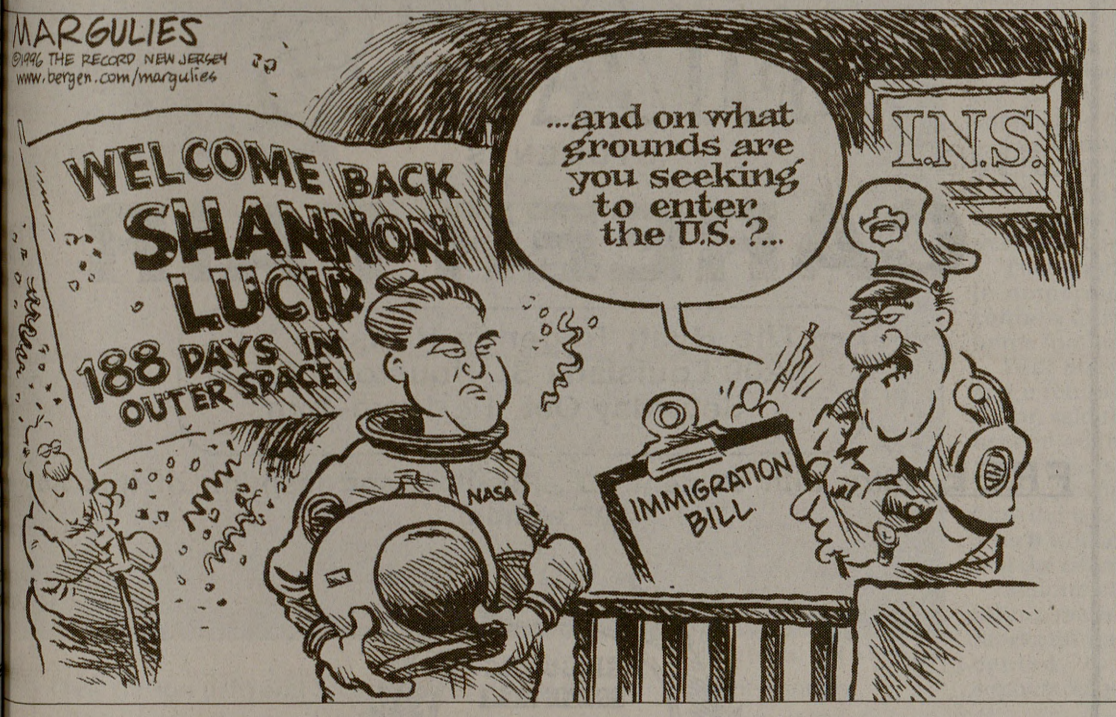
But he was not the answer to

our troubles in 1992 — or 1996.

My friends, history has repeated itself once again as Carter's malaise — or "funk" as President Clinton termed it — takes root. The cynicism it is breeding among the electorate has cracked the cornerstone of progress.

And I'm left asking a single but frightening question: Was Jimmy Carter like a prophet standing at the gates of that "shining city on a hill" lamenting the impending death of a nation?

I wonder, sometimes.



## MAIL CALL

### Battalion remains loyal to its tradition

Regarding Patrick Smiley's Oct. 2 column, "Traditions traditionally perpetuate stupidity":

I can see not much has changed at The Battalion. Sure, it has color pictures, a web site address, a few more pages, etc., etc., but it still insists on employing the same kind of columnists it always has.

Why is there always some writer who feels it is his or her holy cause to criticize Texas A&M and its traditions? Both my father and grandfather say The Batt has always been like this.

Smiley's column on traditions was way out of line. Comparing Aggie Bonfire to fibulation is ridiculous. Yes, some traditions taken to the extreme can be harmful. Yet, it is tradition that binds us as a people, as a society. Whether it is birthday cake, Aggie yell practice, Christmas trees, or even how we dance, dress, eat or say "howdy," traditions make up the majority of our lives.

Smiley needs to rethink his subject. I realize he is only a sophomore, but he doesn't have to worry — with age comes knowledge that will teach him which fights to fight.

Here is a good one: Why not fight the tradition of The Batt's hiring writers of such limited scope and experience?

However, I'll concede a few points about his column.

First, he is correct about fish being pounded with a hatred for L.U. Second ... no wait, that's it. If freshmen aren't introduced to the Aggie spirit, they may never find out what it is all about. Some choose to ignore it anyway, but at least they had the option.

As for Bonfire, though, a love for Bonfire isn't taught. It is something you learn after spending three months working on it to see it burn.

Furthermore, Smiley's comments about Sbsa yell just go to show that he has never been to one. Sbsa yell is for motivation and fun. We don't throw napkins or food. No fights are picked, and all the yells are in fun. You know — fun — something I feel Smiley's life has been sadly devoid of.

As far as ring dunking goes, I feel drinking the equivalent of five beers at one time once in your life in no way makes you an alcoholic.

Thanks for that image of women from Sudan having their vaginas sewn up. Where does Smiley get these stupid tidbits?

He should do himself a favor and go to Sbsa yell this Friday and cut on Sunday. He may have a good time and earn a few friends in the process.

Or he can sit on his butt and think of new things to make up about Aggie traditions.

Committee, with its recent decision to restrict sales by student organizations, has joined an infamous list of other University officials that seem to be doing their best to ruin what should be an exciting college experience.

The committee along with the regents, our friends at the Pavilion and PITS and other administration officials seem to have forgotten that their job is to run a university that serves the students.

Far too often these committees and officials take the attitude that we, as students, should be happy with whatever regulations they hand down.

In fact, many act as if we should feel privileged to be using "their" buildings, "their" computers and "their" parking lots.

What these officials seem to so conveniently ignore is the fact that the students, their parents, and other taxpaying citizens of this state are the reason they get paychecks and have offices in which to formulate policies seemingly meant to antagonize the students.

I commend The Batt for its challenge to the committee, and I speculate that similar challenges could be issued to almost every agency and department on this campus for many of their questionable policies.

It is time University officials realize that this is our campus — they are here to serve us because, after all, we are the ones paying the bills.

Brian Bolstad  
Class of '96

### Editorial Roundup

(AP) — The following is a sampling of editorial opinion from various newspapers:

The El Paso Herald-Post on the lack of progress in the Republican Congress:

When President Clinton said in January that the era of big government was over, it looked like many like he had abandoned the Democrats and adopted Republican philosophy.

Take a close look today, though, and what you see is Republicans jumping the GOP ship and swimming from all they're worth to Democratic shores.

The Republican Congress — politically embattled today — is edging away from ambitious programs and indulging in more conservative rhetoric — recently passed any number of feel-good measures advocated by Democrats, but without effort to taxes.

Instead, Congress is imposing their multimillion-dollar costs on businesses ....

This regulatory burden — which translates into fewer jobs and less wealth for Americans — is the sort of thing Republi-

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or fewer and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

**The Battalion - Mail Call**  
013 Reed McDonald  
Texas A&M University  
College Station, TX  
77843-1111

**Campus Mail: 1111**  
**Fax: (409) 845-2647**  
**E-mail: Batt@tamvm1.tamu.edu**

For more details on letter policy, please call 845-3313 and direct your question to the opinion editor.