

SOFTLY CALL

"When I got on the bus this morning it was totally somber. Everybody was quiet and listening to the radio."

MELISSA FREEMAN
SOPHOMORE BUSINESS MAJOR

"I think that even though everybody doesn't know everybody else, they'll still support one another. It's like a family."

DANA SCHMIDT
SENIOR COMMUNITY HEALTH MAJOR

"This is a busy time for the University. Hopefully it will also be a time for people to come together. I think in the end this will strengthen us."

JAMIE CASTLE
JUNIOR KINESIOLOGY MAJOR

"It's a tragedy of course. We just have to keep in our hearts those who were injured and those who are dead."

BRIAN GESSLEY
JUNIOR FINANCE MAJOR

"I just cried all morning and I didn't even know anyone hurt, it's terrible."

MARY KATE LAWSON
SPANISH AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES MAJOR

"You don't know what to say when you just talked to someone an hour ago and you find out they didn't make it."

CLOVIS MITCHELL
JUNIOR CONSTRUCTION SCIENCE MAJOR

"I don't think I have ever seen the student body so sad."

CHRISTINA CORONACION
JUNIOR CHEMICAL ENGINEERING MAJOR

"This is my first Bonfire, so I don't know what to feel."

CARLOS SANTANO
JUNIOR COMPUTER ENGINEERING MAJOR

"It's unbelievable that we've been working on it for so many years and this has never happened. Now all of a sudden it happened and everything we've worked for during the semester is past."

KATHERINE EVANS
SENIOR SOCIOLOGY MAJOR

"The response is very giving. The whole nation is concerned."

LYNN LOWELL
SOPHOMORE BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

EDITORIAL

The feeling was not unlike waking up to news that the sun had failed to rise. A mid-November morning without the stack was only slightly less surreal than a dawn without a daybreak.

Unfortunately, the tragic facts — at least 11 dead, dozens injured — are only too real, and the weight of sadness on campus is almost tangible.

Such a heavy burden cannot be lifted by mere words, and little can be said about this 90-year-old tradition that will be remembered in another 90 years.

But to say nothing would do a disservice to the memories of our friends.

To those who knew them, we know you are hurting, but we can never know how much. The families and friends of all those affected deserve and have our sober thoughts and prayers.

To those who did not know them, we know you are hurting too. Long after we know how it happened, we will still be wondering why.

In the meantime, it is important to remember that

this is a time for condolences, not quarrels.

Much will be said in the coming weeks that would be better left unsaid. For this is not the time to point fingers of blame or speculate about the future of Bonfire.

What is appropriate instead is silence.

It would be wrong to turn this tragedy into an opportunity for loud debate. The lives lost are worth much more than angry arguments, and respectful reflection should not give place to wrangling over traditions.

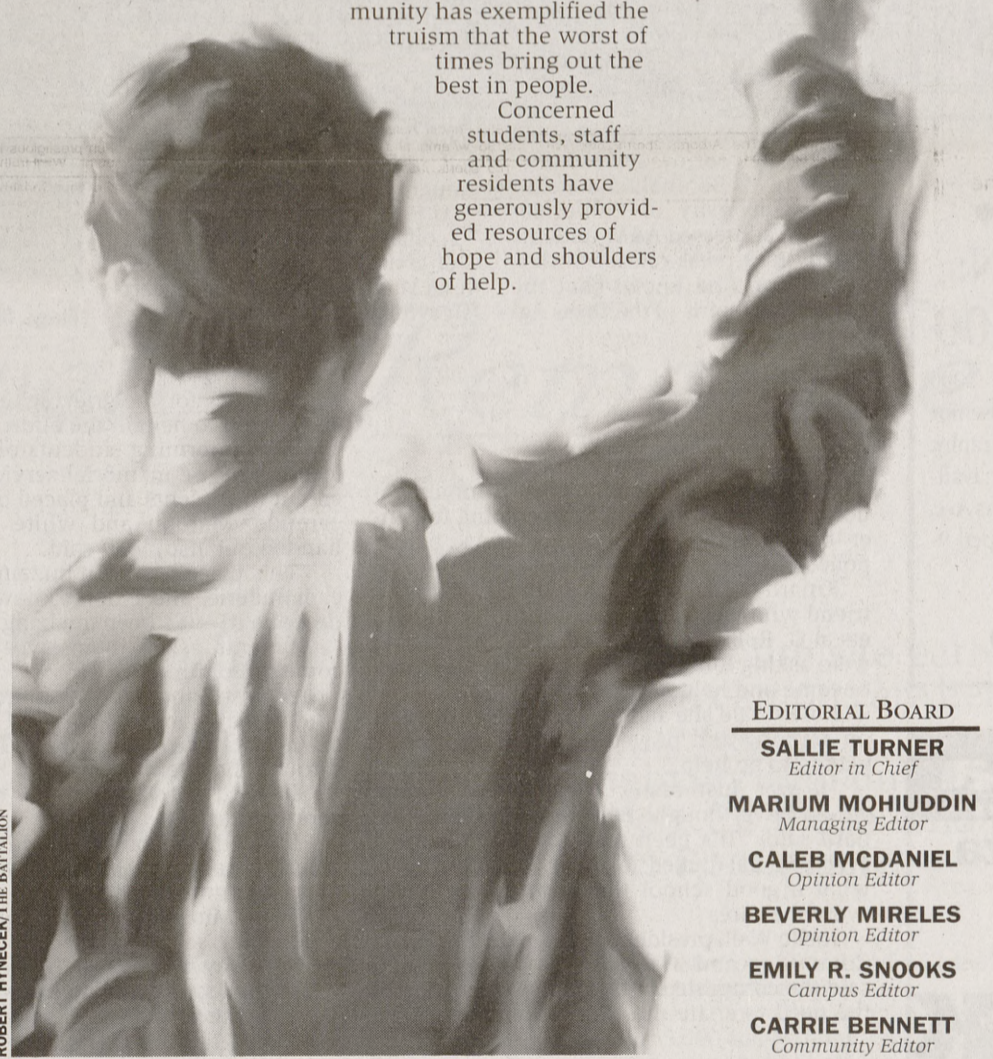
If there is a lesson to be learned from this horrible accident, it will strike at the very heart of who we are as human beings.

It will remind us of the inevitable fragility of life and the enduring stability of friendship. And it will teach us more than we ever knew about the indomitable strength of the Aggie spirit.

What remains, then, is not to despair, but instead to discover our true worth — to do better with the lives we have been given in honor of the lives that have been taken. There is nothing else to do.

Already, the A&M community has exemplified the truism that the worst of times bring out the best in people.

Concerned students, staff and community residents have generously provided resources of hope and shoulders of help.



ROBERT HYNCEK/The Battalion

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"I don't know. It hasn't really hit me yet. When I walk around campus, I can see it in everyone's faces. But as much as it saddens me, I can't comprehend how the families must feel."

JERROD RINEHART
SOPHOMORE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MAJOR

"I didn't know anyone that was there, but you feel helpless. All you can do is just pray, and come together."

CARA COOPER
SENIOR ENGLISH MAJOR

"Right now, I don't care about the future of Bonfire. I would gladly give it up for any one of those people's lives."

CHRISTOPHER SWONKE
SOPHOMORE AEROSPACE ENGINEERING MAJOR

"When we went out there it was unbelievable — surreal. I can't think of anything else to describe it."

KARLEE ANDERSON
SENIOR PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

"These people were out there doing what they love. They weren't out there because they had to be but because they wanted to be. If we keep it going, it can be like a memorial to them."

ANGELA HERZIK
SOPHOMORE GENERAL STUDIES MAJOR

"You wake up and your grandparents and your parents are calling you to make sure you're alright. It's not what you want to wake up to."

MARK MICER
JUNIOR MECHANICAL ENGINEERING MAJOR

"I have never felt so proud of my University as I do at this time. To see the unification of all Aggies, regardless of age, sex, race, religion or sexual orientation, makes my heart swell with pride and my faith in the world strengthened. The friendship that unites us is beyond death and time."

SAMUEL E. MURDOCK
SOPHOMORE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MAJOR

"I hope the families are going to be OK and we keep them in our hearts."

TRACY YOUNGGREN
SENIOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE MAJOR

"Thursday night, Bonfire is not going to be burning, but I am going to be out on the field anyway."

JENNA DORICK
CLASS OF '97

*We are the Aggies,
The Aggies are we.
True to each other
As Aggies can be.*

"THE SPIRIT OF AGGIELAND"