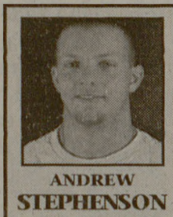


## Personal safety a must

College students live in a dangerous world, should be allowed to carry guns

The goal of colleges and universities across America is to attract the top students in the country. For this reason, they try to present themselves in the best possible light, so that any student would seem foolish not to attend. Many schools tout its quality education, nice facilities, friendly people, and a clean and safe campus. However, many schools are not as safe as they seem, and most offer courses in self-defense.



ANDREW STEPHENSON

Yet one of the most effective self-defense options is ruled out: carrying a licensed concealed weapon. This discrepancy is especially noticeable in states like Texas, which allows concealed handgun permits for citizens 21 and older and take the required courses, but do not allow students to take these weapons on campus, where they spend most of their time.

Under current Texas law, it is illegal to carry a firearm on any government property, including public universities. Students should be allowed to carry weapons to help prevent robberies and violent crime on campus. Many colleges are in essence self-contained cities, and therefore their citizens should be allowed the same rights.

According to the Campus Crime Website, violent crimes are committed 12 times a day on campuses across the country. For every 1,000 students on campus, 26 violent crimes will be committed annually.

University students are concerned about this, as shown in a Harvard School of Public Health College study.

Six percent of students attending colleges in the South have guns, excluding hunting weapons, compared with 4 percent in the West and 1 percent in the Northeast. A number of these students were women. The survey also found that two-thirds of student gun owners live off-campus.

Most institutions prohibit guns on campus, but researchers estimate students keep at least 100,000 guns in the nation's dormitories. While some students may have less pure motives, many are willing to risk legal trouble so they can defend themselves, should the need arise.

The Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 and later amend-

ments to the act require colleges and universities to publish statistics in 10 different crime categories.

In the last three years at Texas A&M eight forcible sex offenses and 176 burglaries were reported. A burglary is unlawful entry into a building or other structure with the intent to commit a felony or a theft.

**Students should be allowed weapons to help prevent robberies and violent crime on campus. Many colleges are in essence self-contained cities, and therefore their citizens should be allowed the same rights.**

From 1997-1998, Texas Tech University reported three forcible sex offenses, four robberies, five aggravated assaults and 17 burglaries.

In the same period, the University of Texas reported one forced sexual assault, seven robberies, four aggravated assaults and 45 burglaries. All of these crimes occurred on the campuses of universities that have campus police departments.

The crimes that often cause the most concern are those against persons, especially the forcible sex offenses. Mary Zeiss Stange, author of *Arms and the Woman: A Feminist Reappraisal*, reported in 1995 that, of the approximately 65 million to 80 million American gun owners, an estimated 17 million are women. Half of the people who own guns for self-defense are women.

The crime-fighting effect of armed women was demonstrated in Orlando, Fla., where a long-standing rape problem existed. As reported in the *Washington Times*, the police in Orlando offered a gun-training program for women that resulted in a 76 percent decrease in rapes.

According to Professor John Lott in his book *More Guns, Less Crime*, violent crime rates are much lower in right-to-carry states than in states that severely restrict concealed weapons permits. He found that rape and sexual assault rates

plummet in areas where a greater number of women have concealed-carry permits.

"The differences in specific crime rates among states that allow and those that forbid concealed handguns are dramatic."

Additionally, many may fear that an increase in gun carriers would result in more shootings, but Lott found that "98 percent of the time that people use guns defensively, they merely have to brandish a weapon to break off an attack."

Many recent events have triggered this concern with gun laws, and caused some to call for stronger restrictions on legal weapons. Weapons restrictions are the opposite response that should be taken. Criminals, who do not buy guns legally, fear the possibility that their victims may be armed.

The Department of Justice survey of incarcerated felons reported that 93 percent of handgun offenders had obtained their most recent guns illegally. According to James D. Wright and Peter Rossi in *Armed and Considered Dangerous: a Survey of Felons and their Firearms*, convicted felons are more worried about armed victims than the police.

While many news stories involving guns are stories of thugs attacking helpless victims, various experts have estimated that civilians use guns in self-defense as many as 2 million to 3 million times per year. In fact, www.pulpless.com sponsors a Website with a "gun defense clock" that reports that 111,122 criminal attacks have been stopped by guns since Jan. 1.

The recent prison break of seven inmates from the Connally Unit in Kenedy, Texas has law enforcement on alert. In a *Battalion* article earlier this week, Bob Wiatt, director of University Police Department, encouraged members of the A&M community be on the lookout for any suspicious individuals or incidents. However, the only defense option for any student who sees these fugitives, or gets caught in a dangerous situation, is to call for help.

College students, whether they live on campus or simply attend class on campus, should be allowed the same level of protection as any other citizen. Allowing students to exercise their Second Amendment rights would only help to combat on-campus crime.

Andrew Stephenson is a sophomore environmental design major.



ADRIAN CALCANEI/THE BATTALION

## Unfinished business

Although Clinton leaves White House his legacy is unknown

With much of the nation's focus centered on the inauguration of George W. Bush as America's 43rd president Saturday, it is easy to overlook today's significance as the final day of the Clinton administration. As Saturday will herald the dawn of a new era in Washington, today is the last plank in a bridge that has been built for the past eight years, spanning the divide between the 20th and 21st centuries.



NICHOLAS ROZNOVSKY

Like all presidents before him, Bill Clinton is no longer accountable to the political forces of Washington, the watchful eye of the press and the votes of the national electorate. Now, history will assume the role of evaluating Clinton.

Surely, as countless columnists and pundits have said the past few weeks, the Clinton administration will be scorned by future historians as a corrupt and harrowing eight years from which Americans were lucky to survive intact. In the end, the "comeback kid" who bounced back on the eve of the 1992 New Hampshire primary, escaped investigation after investigation and shrugged off an impeachment may have one comeback left.

Presidential legacies are hard to solidify. With the exception of Washington and Lincoln, who led the country through times of great peril, every president has had his historical advocates and detractors. More often than not, the pointed dagger of public opinion was softened by the passage of time.

There is no better example of

this phenomenon than Richard Nixon. After he was forced to resign in 1974 because of the fallout surrounding the Watergate scandal and the prospect of impeachment, most modern historians saved him a place of shame in the annals of American history. Surely, they said, the black mark of being the only president to resign from the office would haunt Nixon forever.

There can be no debate that even today, more than a quarter of a century later, Nixon is still remembered as the one man who stepped away from the Oval Office. However, recent historians have begun to delve into other parts of his career. Now parts of Nixon's life in addition to Watergate are making their way into books, such as his role in the Alger Hiss spy case, his job as America's foil to former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev during his tenure as vice president, and his historic diplomatic contact with communist China.

On the other side of the coin, presidents such as Calvin Coolidge and Ronald Reagan left office under good terms, hailed as economic saviors of the nation. By the conclusion of their successors' terms, both men's economic policies had sent America into an economic landslide. Even though both Coolidge and Reagan were fortunate enough to escape the scorn of public opinion while in office, the success of their administrations has been debated by historians.

Today, the black eyes on the Clinton presidency — Whitewater, the failure of nationalized health care, Travelgate, the Lewinsky affair and his impeachment — are visible scars that Clinton will carry into history. Although such scars never go away completely, some

will fade over time. In the year 2001, no one really has much of an opinion on Andrew Jackson, the nation's seventh president. Most know him simply as the guy on the \$20 bill. When he ended his tenure as president, he was one of the most vilified men in America for his policies concerning the Bank of the United States and his awarding of executive posts to political supporters.

**Today will be the last day of the Clinton era and Saturday will be his first day on trial in the eternal court of history.**

Today, Andrew Johnson is one of two men with an asterisk next to his name in history books denoting his impeachment by the House of Representatives, but no one points to his administration as a gaping hole in the American moral tapestry.

Warren Harding, a man whose administration had more scandals than it did days, is just a stuffy old name to most of America's schoolchildren.

History will move past the outrage that many now feel over Clinton's actions and the effects of his administration. Likewise, the fervent support that he continues to enjoy from a large portion of the population will subside.

Historians of the future may look at his eight-year span as a period of unparalleled economic growth, dominance in world affairs, and the birth of a true Information Age. They may recognize

him as the first Democratic president to be re-elected since Franklin Roosevelt and one who faced some of the most vehement opposition in Congress during his administration. It is difficult to name another president in modern history who accomplished so much in the face of unrelenting opposition.

Others may look at the growth of terrorism, the lack of any sweeping reforms and the seemingly endless train of scandals and find him to be among America's most lacking presidents. In any case, it is too soon to attempt to summarize and evaluate what Clinton has done for and to America.

The final chapter in the Clinton legacy may not be shaped for many years to come. As one of the youngest presidents in history, he faces a long post-presidency life. He could spend his retirement in privacy as Nixon and Reagan chose to do. Alternatively, he could follow the path of Jimmy Carter, a president who has arguably been more effective in making the world a better place as a private citizen than as chief executive. Either way, it is unlikely that Clinton will disappear completely from the public eye.

Today is the last day of the Clinton era and Saturday will be his first day on trial in the eternal court of history. Never unanimous and always subject to revision, history's opinion may be as split as public opinion is today.

In the end, Clinton will join the likes of Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, and even George W. Bush — just another stuffy old name in a textbook.

Nicholas Roznovsky is a senior political science major.

### Mail Call

#### Student should cover A&M issues

In response to Kyle Whitacre's Jan. 18 column

What has *The Battalion* come to? We all know *The Battalion* has not been a journalistic masterpiece, but it has sunken to new lows. What is up with the killer shrimp opinion article?

It is too ridiculous to be real and not funny enough to be sarcasm. I think *The Battalion* needs to do more investigative pieces on the University. *The Battalion* hardly ever criticizes the University — is it that much a puppet of the University?

For example, in today's article about the bookstore and the added security, you just briefly mentioned that A&M is paying for that security. The bookstore is a private company, so why are we the students and Texas taxpayers paying for the security? The bookstore needs to hire a private security firm or reimburse A&M for the A&M officers.

This is one example, but there are tons of similar matters each semester that *The Battalion* fails to report or elaborate on. Please abandon ridiculous articles like the shrimp article and publish something worth reading.

Ryan Burkhalter  
Class of '02

#### Players should take advantage of NFL draft

In response to Doug Fuentes' Jan. 16 column

Hey, Toombs and Ferguson, did you read Tuesday's *Battalion*? Some journalism student, who probably never even touched a football field, said you should play another year at A&M.

Never mind that at any point next season you guys both can have ca-

reer-ending injuries and never make it to the pros, or the fact that you are fulfilling lifelong dreams. I know that you could both easily do something like tear a ligament in your knee, promising you to never make a cent playing ball, but Doug Fuentes says you'll be just fine if you stay.

He says some other guys left like you and they sucked in the pros. This, for some reason, is supposed to mean you guys will suck.

I say you should go. Blow this one-horse town and make what the public is willing to pay you. Just remember to give A&M props when you're interviewed after the game.

Casey Friesenhahn  
Class of '03

#### Students display poor manners

I had the opportunity to attend the men's basketball game Wednesday night for the first time since I attended Texas A&M in the early '80s. Things sure have changed from the old days in the Holler House on the Brazos, G. Rollie White.

The game was very enjoyable except for the final score and an incident by a student group called the Reed Rowdies. For the most part these students displayed great enthusiasm and demonstrated good sportsmanship — until late in the second half when they began taunting a Longhorn player with a chant of "SAT" and "Stupid" over and over again.

The chant was neither clever or in good taste. We hold ourselves to a higher standard as sports fans. ESPN and fans from around the Big 12 regularly compliment us on our spirit and sportsmanship.

The chant by the Reed Rowdies was not an example of that spirit and not an example of good sportsmanship.

As an Aggie I was embarrassed by the Reed Rowdies second half chant.

Mark C. Tuschak  
Class of '84