

Opinion

Co-ed residence halls good idea

Next fall, sophomores, juniors and seniors at Texas A&M University will have the opportunity to live in co-ed residence halls. Studies have shown that co-ed residence halls are safer and experience fewer cases of vandalism than single-sex residence halls. In addition, co-ed residence halls will foster increased social interaction between male and female students at A&M.

Co-ed residence halls will put A&M more in line with other universities, and they will make on-campus housing more efficient by decreasing the number of rooms that go unused. We endorse the construction of these co-ed halls, and we appreciate the efforts of those who are working to make co-ed housing a reality at A&M.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Miami riots indicate social unrest

During the past week, residents of the predominantly-black Miami neighborhoods of Overtown and Liberty City have been burning buildings, looting stores and shooting at police and at each other.

Although this reaction of violence to the shooting of a black motorcyclist by a policeman is deplorable, every person in this nation should take a close look at what brought about this act of rebellion. These people aren't destroying their own community because of an isolated police shooting. They are doing so because they believe their social and economic conditions to be unbearable.

This is not Detroit or Watts in the 1960s; it is Miami in the 1980s. These riots show that no matter how often or how loudly people say racial discrimination went out with the Civil Rights Act, conditions for inner-city blacks actually haven't changed much in the past 20 years.

While we sincerely hope a lasting and peaceful solution to these riots will be found, we also hope all Americans will take a close look at the reasons why a large group of people in a modern U.S. city felt so alienated from our society that they resorted to waging war on their own community.

The Battalion Editorial Board

Mail Call

Apathy is not racism

EDITOR:
I believe that J. Frank Hernandez, in his Nov. 18th column, overstated the level of racism at Texas A&M University.

Mr. Hernandez asks, among other things, why a wider representation of races wasn't in attendance at a ceremony honoring Martin Luther King Jr. He also wants to know why there aren't more black and Hispanic staff members of *The Battalion*, and why KANM doesn't program black and Hispanic tunes.

The answer to these questions is not, as Mr. Hernandez says, racism on the part of Texas A&M or the student body (which are, after all, one and the same). The real reason is apathy on the part of everyone in general.

The simple fact is that your average person (A&M students included) is willing to take action, great or small, only when the issue at hand directly concerns him or her.

People at A&M are not just a bunch of racists as Mr. Hernandez says. Neither is the student body — for the student body and A&M are the same thing, not two separate entities as he implies. I'm not saying apathy is good, but I am saying that apathy is not racism.

Steven R. Rikli '90

A&M not overflowing with racism

EDITOR:
I'm wondering if Mr. Hernandez was having trouble thinking of arguments to support his column on Jan. 18. Apparently, he feels that Texas A&M University is just overflowing with racism.

First of all, one of the main reasons that black or Hispanic bands don't perform at A&M is because the bands want to make money, not because A&M is full of racism. I also don't see how the number of black or Hispanic janitorial workers determines how much racism is at our University. Do you think that the University goes around town rounding up black and Hispanic people, forcing them to become janitors? Is the University racist just because it hires the people who apply for the jobs?

Also, if we are racists and failures for not supporting Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, then I guess we are communists and anarchists for not having parades and rallies for Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays. And if we are failures for not supporting Cinco de Mayo (which is a national holiday in Mexico, not the United States), then I guess we are failures for not supporting the holidays of other countries.

Some of what Mr. Hernandez said toward the end of his article was good. But using arguments that just sound good does not help his cause. A&M just isn't overflowing with the racism Mr. Hernandez depicted in his article.

Felix Pierdolla '91
David Ortiz '91

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The Battalion

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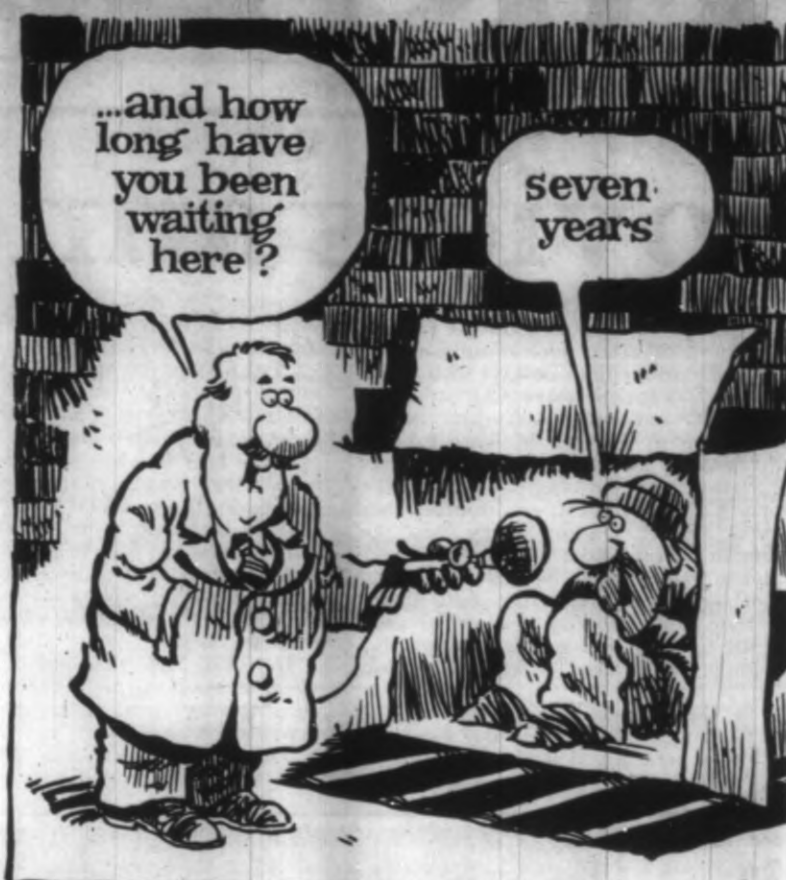
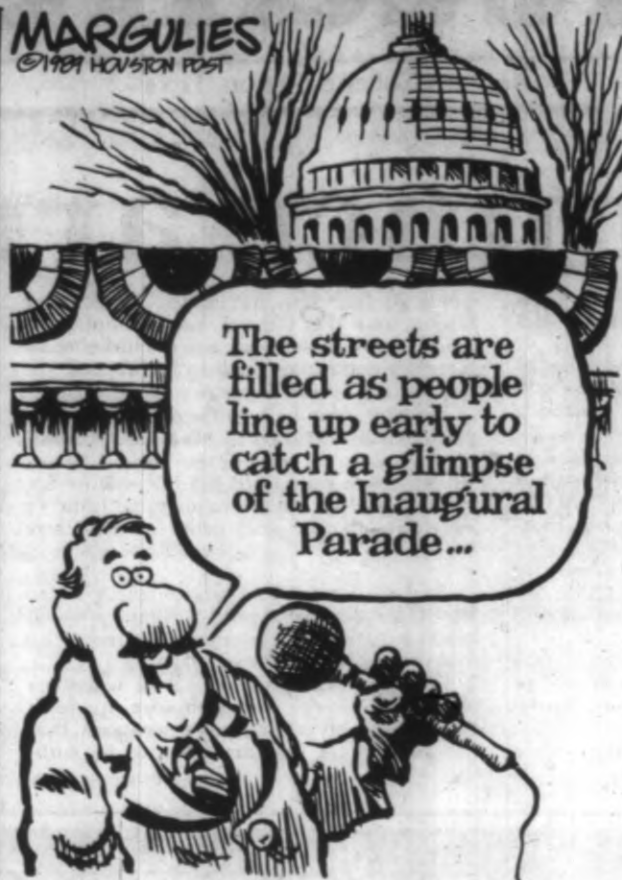
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Disabled people aren't helpless

This past week, we celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, and honored his efforts toward a racially harmonious nation. His fight helped raise social consciousness about racial prejudice, but there are many types of prejudice that need to be addressed.

Last semester, I attended a conference addressing the problems encountered by people who are disabled and the news media's treatment of them. No one was allowed to address the conference who was not disabled or did not have a child who was disabled. I learned a lot, especially about society's prejudice and lackadaisical attitude toward the disabled community.

The first thing I learned at the conference was that these people were not to be referred to as crippled or handicapped — handicapped comes from "cap in hand," when disabled people had to beg for money to live. The labels are demeaning and insulting to many disabled people. They are disabled, not helpless.

The main thing to learn, although it seems so simple, is that disabled people are not to be pitied, hated or put on a pedestal for their "courage." They are human beings, with the same thoughts, dreams, moods and goals as anyone else. They want the same opportunities as anyone else, but society keeps getting in their way.

For example, most states have what is called Local Option when it comes to supplying public transportation and building access for disabled people. That means that it is up to each city or town to decide whether or not they will provide certain services. Since cities have different budgets, that sounds reasonable. But what happens when towns abuse the system?

Cincinnati cut a deal to purchase buses with wheelchair lifts for less than



Becky Weisenfels
Editor

it would cost to purchase regular buses. The city bought the specially-equipped buses — and then bolted the lifts down so they could not be used.

In another city, groups representing disabled people went to court to ensure the installation of elevators in the Metro stations, making the subways accessible to disabled people. The groups won, and elevators were installed, but not kept in good repair. So the groups went to court again, and lost. The court only said elevators had to be installed — no one ever said they had to work.

Many people argue that making buildings accessible for disabled people is too expensive, but it is usually a matter of priorities. George Covington, an activist for the rights of disabled people, talked at the conference about the president of a college who said the campus could not be made accessible for disabled people without an increased budget and at least five years of construction. Soon after, his wife had a stroke and needed a wheelchair to get around. Without an increased budget, the campus was accessible for disabled people within a year.

I am glad that Texas A&M University's campus is accessible to disabled people. Accessibility, however, should not be an added feature; it should be a standard feature.

Examples such as these should enrage the public, but many times they are overlooked.

Bush prepares to take over

George Bush and certain members of his staff were discussing America's schedule of military opponents for the upcoming Bush administration.

Scheduling opponents is just as important for countries as it is in football.

Hitler, for instance, made the mistake of scheduling too many difficult opponents. As long as his Germans were up against Poland and Czechoslovakia no sweat.

But then Hitler decided to upgrade and schedule the Soviet Union and the United States. He lost both of those, so goodbye to the trip to the Lowenbrau-John Deere World Domination Bowl.

Anyway, back to Bush. "Anybody got any idea who we should open with?" the president-elect asked.

"I'd say let's kick it off with Libya," offered Jack Kemp, the former professional quarterback. "Libya's been the Gipper's favorite opponent, and we can just about count on a win there. We shoot down a couple more of their jets and maybe drop a few bombs close to Gadhafi's house."

"Why don't we also blow up the controversial chemical plant Gadhafi is using to produce poisonous gases?" asked Elizabeth Dole.

"Stay out of this, Elizabeth," said Bush. "This is man-talk."

"It's agreed, then," said Bush. "We open with Libya. Who's next?"

Lewis Grizzard

Columnist

"Are there any more American medical students in Grenada we need to rescue from the Cubans?" asked James Baker.

"If not," said Kemp, "we can plant a few Grenada would be a pushover, too, and we'd be up by 2-0 and on our way." "How 'bout a third opponent?" asked Bush.

"We need at least a fairly tough opponent in order to gain in the polls," suggested John Sununu.

"Iran?" asked Bush. "Perfect," said Sununu. "We'll bomb a few offshore oil rigs and then blow a few armed Iranian patrol boats out of the water."

"Then," said Kemp, "we'll schedule Angola. Then we'll send in some more military advisers to help the Contras kick butt in Nicaragua. And I think we could get away with sending troops into Haiti to restore order."

"What if Haiti doesn't need its order restored?" asked Secretary Dole.

"For the last time, Elizabeth," interrupted Bush, "stay out of things you don't know anything about."

"We need four more opponents," Bush went on. "Any ideas, Danny?"

"What were we talking about again?" asked the vice president-elect.

"Elizabeth," said Bush, "would you and Danny please go get some sandwiches and coffee? We've got a lot of work to do here."

Those remaining in the conference put their heads together and came up with four more opponents for the United States military schedule.

Syria was picked for some offshore naval bombardment, and then it was agreed to send troops to El Salvador to stop the further spread of communist influence in Central America.

It was also agreed to invade Iceland, just for the heck of it, and then end the season with a strong opponent where a win would add credibility to a perfect record.

Kemp suggested fighting Norway over fishing rights, Sununu came up with Mexico to stop dope and illegal immigrants, and Baker got a wild idea and threw in Portugal, but nobody could think of anything to be mad at the Portuguese about.

So Bush finally settled the argument and decided to invade Canada in 1992 during the Democratic convention because all that land should have been ours in the first place.

"The Gipper," beamed Kemp, "would be proud."

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