

MARGULIES
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Mail Call

Relive students' nightmare

EDITOR:

I was a student in France. I was a student in Ireland. And now, I am eventually a student at Texas A&M. My little experience has shown me that the bigger the distance, the lesser people feel concern. For the summer semester, 1,500 students were registered. However, how many people showed up to the candle lighting for the students killed on the other side of Earth?

We should all be aware that these people had guts. I wonder if I would have had such courage in such circumstances. People probably still haven't realized the magnitude of the horror on Tiananmen Square on the day of the massacre. Photographs weren't taken and, in a sense, it attenuated the horror of the massacre in our minds. The number killed in China is just another number, whereas photographs of the Matamoros farm are still engraved in our subconscious. Except for the Chinese community, who probably had some friends over there, we really didn't feel the pain.

In my youth, I was impressed by antinuclear rallies where the protesters lay downlike dead people simulating what could be the World "The day after". Here is what I am going to do: at 12:15 p.m. WEDNESDAY JUNE 21, I am going to lie down on the field between the meteorological tower and the architecture building. Take a guess. I expect others to do the same with me. The picture we are going to get from this will be sent to the press. This won't be some sort of spectacle, because by lying down we will all feel what they felt — betrayal. Moreover, we will prove to the Chinese government that forbidding the media to show us what it did, did not erase its crimes. Do you think I am crazy? Maybe I am, but I do really feel that these Could-Have-Been-Friends were crazier than me because they

were peacefully resisting one of the most powerful armies in the world. I hope *The Battalion* is going to publish this letter once or several times because I won't do much advertising on the subject. I am an average student. I am an average student working days and nights, but for sure I'll do this for them. Remember, they were like us . . . Sunday, Bloody, Sunday . . .

Igor Carron
Graduate Student

Rights shouldn't be ragged on

EDITOR:

In response to the many letters of recent days criticizing *The Battalion's* advertising of a local memorial service for Khomeini, I would like to point out the opposing view, namely, that the Battalion should be congratulated for acting objectively and in accordance with the right of free speech guaranteed by this nation's constitution. I am neither Islamic nor a supporter of Khomeini; however, it is the right of such persons, all persons in fact, to assemble peaceably and to advertise assembly when necessary. It is this very right, as well as the right to criticize such an assembly, which separates this nation from one like revolutionary Iran. I hope those who write future letters to the editor will consider this fact before openly urging the censorship of any group.

Robert R. Ray '91

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer. Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words.

Dismal rooms or happy halls

Dorm sweet dorm. Pardon me. Hall sweet hall.

The word hall, in reference to on-campus living arrangements, is being substituted for the word dormitory by the Residence Hall Association and the Department of Student Affairs.

Yes, whether we like the way it sounds or not, those of us living on campus are residence hall residents. Why? Because they said so and who am I to disagree. I just live there.

Actually, I think the phrase residence hall resident sounds kind of repetitive, but I figure I better keep repeating it to myself, considering the fact that I am going to remain a resident hall resident until I graduate next May (or until I complete the decade plan I've got myself on). The rest of you better start getting used to saying the phrase also.

The Residence Hall Association has requested that the word dormitory be omitted from the vocabulary of students because the word dorm has limited meaning. They proclaim that the letters in the word stand for "Dismal Ordinary Room of Mine." Hall, on the contrary, "Houses an Abundance of Life and Love."

According to the Journal of College and University Student Housing, the word dormitory is outdated. Dormitory staffs are concerned with providing the necessities of shelter and security. Residence hall staffs, on the other hand, extend their duties to provide more than just a secure building to live in. Hall staffs foster a sense of belonging and community through implementing hall programming that appeals to one's social needs.

As a hall resident, I agree with the basic philosophy behind what the residence halls have to offer, but I don't feel that the word dormitory is so archaic that it should be erased from our vocabularies. Is this change in terminology really necessary or does it just sound more advanced?

I am writing this column in response to a letter we received at *The Battalion* last week. The letter addressed the fact that the word dormitory was improperly used in place of the word hall in a staff story. I figured that in order for such



Juliette Rizzo
Opinion Page Editor

errors to cease, more people at A&M need to be made aware that the word hall is preferred in reference to on-campus housing. I am now attempting to make everyone aware of this change.

It's going to take me some time to get used to saying I live in a hall, though. To me, a hall is a small, narrow space where you can do everything but live. (Maybe, I feel this way because I practically live at *The Batt* and never in my room anyway). I think that, regardless of what you call it, the place in which you live is what you make it. Whether it be a hall or a dorm, lovely or dismal, my dorm room is still mine and it's going to be hard for me to call it anything but what I was brought up to call it.

I guess what I'm trying to say is I like the word dorm because it's so familiar sounding, so traditional. The word derived from its Latin root *dormire*, which means to sleep. And that's exactly what I do in my dorm room. I use the word dormitory because it's specific. Everybody knows what a dormitory is.

To call my residence a dormitory is a force of habit. I learned it that way. And while hurrying to class, I might call it otherwise is a matter of opinion. It's just like determining the difference between calling your house a house or home.

Until Webster's deletes the word from its pages, I'll probably still slip up and call it a dorm. However, I hope the column will promote awareness of the new word usage on campus. It may take time for "residence hall" to sink in, though. You have to admit, it's hard to erase something that's almost permanently ingrained in your mind, but it can be done. Live and learn.

Juliette Rizzo is a junior journalist, major and opinion page editor for *The Battalion*.

President Bush's lack of eloquence pathetic

Since George Bush has finally done something right in coming up with a strong plan to cut air pollution, it may be time to give him a half-cheer, but even with the much-touted clean-air initiative that the White House publicity machine has been touting and hyping for a week now, you have to watch out for the legal presumption of "unreasonable risk" that would allow polluters to continue their endless delays in doing anything about the 2.7 billion pounds of toxic chemicals they pump into the air every year.

"Political paralysis has plagued further progress against air pollution," he declared. Right. . . what was the name of that president who thought trees caused air pollution?

Don't recall ever expecting much of Bush as president, I ceased placing any credence in his promise of a "kinder, gentler nation" after the campaign he ran, and we see his favorite hatchet man, Lee Atwater, is still up to his usual scurrilous tricks.

That Bush often seems awkward or



Molly Ivins
Syndicated Columnist

even transcendently dorky is just a familiar part of his personality to those who know him, as much amusing as anything else. His notorious inability to express himself clearly is likewise apt to be either endearing or comic. But I cannot ever recall seeing his . . . his inadequacy so clearly demonstrated as in the matter of the slaughter of the democracy movement in China.

For all I know, Bush's policy toward China at this point could be perfectly correct — maybe we don't want to cut off all ties, maybe it would be counterproductive. Prudence and caution

have their place in the most trying times. But a crime and a tragedy as great as the one in Beijing should call from our national leader something more eloquent than the tinny yap of outrage that was all George Bush could manage.

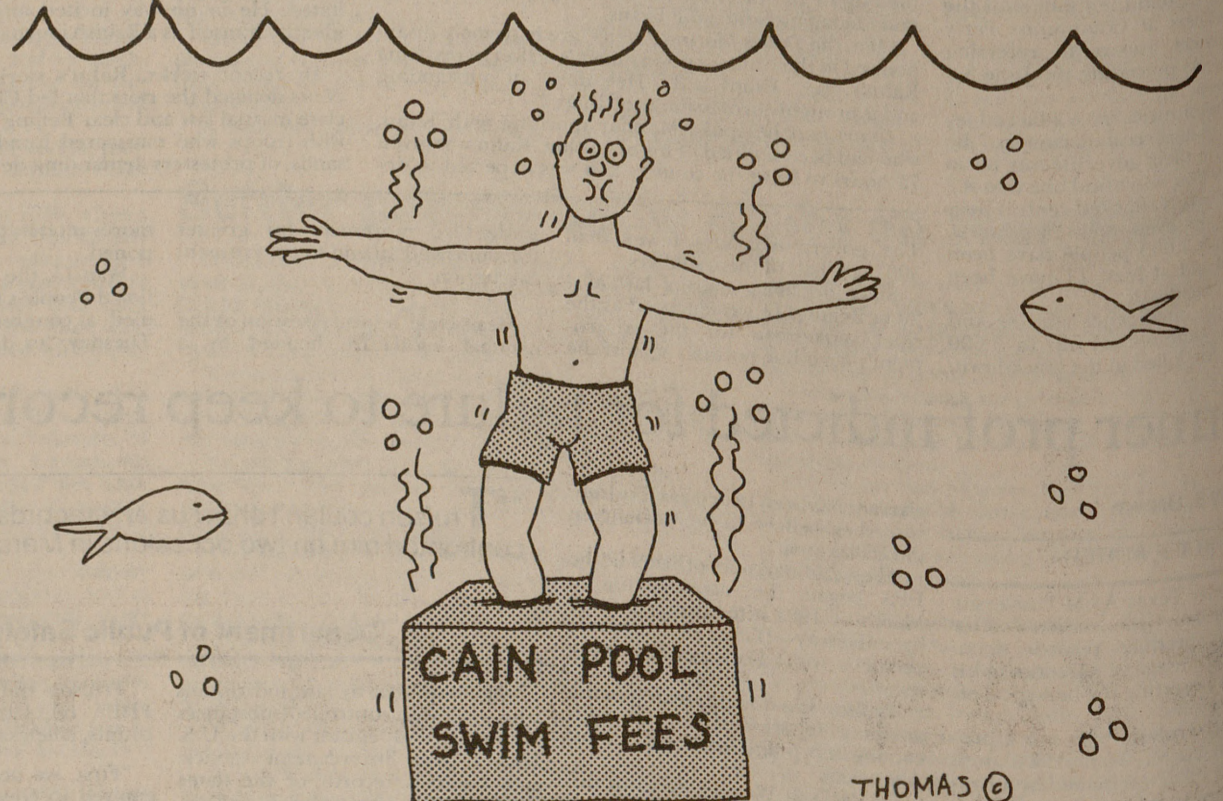
Language has always been the tool of statesmen, and as often as it is used to deceive and to manipulate, it can still be a noble tool as well. In the hands of a Churchill or a Daniel Webster, words

can become a mighty organ, sounding chords that call to the best in all of us — to our honor and our decency, to our justice and our compassion. In times of tragedy, to hear our sorrow well expressed is all we ask from our leaders.

But high eloquence is not a gift given to many nor is it required in a leader. Think of Harry Truman, of Joe Stilwell, of all the blunt, plain-spoken, profane leaders the world has seen. You can say as much in a simple, straightforward

fashion — no fancy words or Reaganesque tremolo are required — as you can in grandiloquent prose. But Bush can only manage this crippled, jargon-ridden bluster. It doesn't matter most of the time, but when the subject is as tragic as the events in Beijing, the sounds so painfully feeble. It's embarrassing. It's pathetic.

It could be worse. It could be Dan Quayle trying to express a coherent thought.



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The Battalion

(USPS 045 360)

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The Battalion is a non-profit, self-supporting newspaper operated as a community service to Texas A&M and Bryan-College Station.

Opinions expressed in *The Battalion* are those of the editorial board or the author, and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Texas A&M administrators, faculty or the Board of Regents.

The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

The Battalion is published Monday through Friday during Texas A&M regular semesters, except for holiday and examination periods.

Mail subscriptions are \$17.44 per semester, \$34.62 per school year and \$36.44 per full year. Advertising rates furnished on request.

Our address: The Battalion, 230 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-1111.

Second class postage paid at College Station, TX 77843.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Battalion*, 216 Reed McDonald, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77843-4111.

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