

24/7 DORM VISITATION

Proposal promotes co-habitation



JOHN LEMONS
columnist

watches and say, "Oh my, it's 2 o'clock, guess I better start studying for that test tomorrow."

A&M's mission is to educate students. The residence hall's mission is to support A&M's mission, provide a place to live and help students in their personal development.

Extending visitation hours in no way furthers these goals. Twenty-four hour visitation does, however, accomplish several things, none of them good.

First, 24-hour visitation invites co-habitation. Co-habitation occurs when someone who is not paying rent for a room moves into that room under the premise they are visiting. You may know it by its less eloquent name — 'shacking up.'

Generally, what occurs, is one roommate's boyfriend or girlfriend spends all of their time in the room, even sleeping there. This creates an uncomfortable situation for the other roommate, who finds himself unwelcome in his own room. As the old saying goes, three's a crowd.

Co-habitation is a problem in co-ed halls that have 24-hour visitation. It is a nuisance for hall staff who not only have to keep an eye out for it, but also have to confront it. Thus, allowing 24-hour visitation in all residence halls creates problems for roommates and staff members, alike.

Frankly, students who want to shack up with their significant others already have an option. It is called an apartment. In these mystical places, students can have opposite-sex visitors at all hours of the night. They can even have 2 a.m. study groups, if they so desire.

Something else 24-hour visita-

tion accomplishes, is it destroys the sense of privacy within a residence hall. Residence halls are the home away from home for college students. Students need to feel secure within their residence hall. Twenty-four hour visitation undermines this feeling of security.

Consider, for example, Davis-Gary hall. You may have noticed it has curtains placed over its entrance door windows. Those curtains are drawn at night, so that the women in Davis-Gary can walk from the bathroom to their room in a robe or a towel without being ogled by all of campus. Obviously, those curtains exist to provide privacy.

Twenty-four hour visitation means a member of the opposite sex may be in the hallways of a residence hall at any given time. That means students can never feel safe to walk through a hallway in a robe, in a towel or in their skivvies. In this situation, residence halls start to feel a lot less like home.

A&M is not in the business of giving students an opportunity to shack up with their significant others. It is in the business of providing educations.

Allowing 24-hour visitation in single-sex residence halls does nothing to further students' educations. It does do something toward disrupting their education.

These residence halls are called single-sex because only males or females live in them. RHA should be working to make sure that remains true at least between the hours of 2 a.m. and 10 a.m.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.

Extension benefits residents



ERIC WILLIAMS
guest columnist

Why should visitation hours be extended? Who really cares?

These are probably a couple of questions many students are asking.

Well, there are approximately 8,500 people who will be affected by a change in the visitation schedule. That means about 22 percent of the students at this university. And, one can be sure each of those 8,500 people have some opinion about what goes on in an on-campus residence hall.

One of the hot topics currently of concern to the Residence Hall Association (RHA) involves extending the visitation hours of on-campus residence halls. The resolution that was proposed last night at the RHA General Assembly was to extend the visitation hours from the current 10 a.m. to 2 a.m. schedule to a new schedule of 9 a.m. to 2 a.m.

Additionally, it would give all halls the right to vote for 24-hour visitation either on weekends or all the time.

Many students are probably wondering why RHA proposed to add only one hour to the current visitation hours. One reason is many residents have complained that after their first class of the day, they were unable to go back to their rooms to study with classmates.

However, allowing visitors any earlier than 9 a.m. would infringe upon other residents trying to get ready for the day.

Also, making visitation last any longer than 2 a.m. would be similar to granting 24-hour visitation. In results from RHA surveys, most people supported moving the visitation hours to 9 a.m., but not many people liked the idea of extending visiting hours to 4 a.m.

The requirements for the 24-hour visitation options will rashly be imposed. The feat is not as easy as having a simple majority vote. In order to ensure overwhelming support for either option, it must be approved by at least 90 percent of the respective hall's residents.

A system of checks and balances allows residents who oppose the extension to rally support and vote it down. In small halls, like Hotard, only 12 residents out of 111 would be needed to deny the 24-hour extension. In large halls, like Mosher, 68 residents out of the 670 would be needed for denial.

Obviously, these numbers show that a supermajority of residents are required for approval. If the hall voted for extending the visitation hours, the hall staff (primarily RAs) would not be handing out as many incident reports for violating visitation hours, which account for the majority of all incident reports in many halls.

These incident reports only serve to create more paperwork for the RAs and the Department of Residence Life. The time and energy required for writing these incident reports at 2 a.m. could be better put to use on activities such as sleeping.

Furthermore, the residents would have a little more respect for the RAs, since they and their friends would not be punished for breaking visitation hours in the resident's home.

These residence halls are students' homes, and they should be allowed to have people over when they want.

Some people are worried having 24-hour visitation would create keggers in the middle of the night and destroy nocturnal studying. This is not true. In fact, the halls that do have 24-hour visitation have the least incidents of any kind. They do not have all-night keggers, and in fact, many people go to those halls to study after the library closes.

If anything, this resolution is very conservative. It allows only a slight change in the current visitation hours. It does allow for 24-hour visitation on the weekends or all the time, but it requires such a large number of people for approval that it could easily be turned down.

If students are interested in more information, please visit the RHA website at <http://rha.tamu.edu/>.

Eric Williams is president of the Residence Hall Association and a senior biomedical science major.

CAMPUS CONNECTION

Promoting unity cannot be achieved through discrimination

As I arrived at work earlier this week and began to return phone calls and e-mail messages, I was forwarded a disturbing e-mail that rings to the surface some facts about racism.

The ideals of racial hatred, bigotry and segregation are all very much alive in every race and in every university in our nation. "Racism" practiced in any form, in any capacity, by any group is deplorable and quite simply foolish.

The e-mail I received was attributed to a man named Troy Nkrumah who claims to be the West-past Coordinator of the "Million Youth March." The name Nkrumah is interesting because in the early 1950s and 1960s, Ghana was led by a militant radical nationalist named Kwame Nkrumah who eventually became Prime Minister and was later ousted in a military coup. Based on the content of the message the author has chosen to identify with Nkrumah's tactics and ideals.

Among the many hateful and discriminatory statements I found was the following:

"We are encouraging all youth of African descent and our allies the brothas and sisters of Latino decent and indigenous descent to come together to demand justice as we come into the 21st century."

The mail went on to ask "If you are not of African/Latino/Native American Descent please re-



LEN CALLAWAY
columnist

ply and let me know so that I will take you off the list. Or if you are just a sellout to your people I will take you off our list as well. For the rest of you, stay strong while in the hells of this beast we call Amerikkka!!!"

(Typos and misspellings were left as is to preserve the integrity of the quote).

My initial reaction was probably much the same as yours is now. Outrage, confusion, shock and indignation.

I was on the verge of dismissing the hate mail as a poor joke until I decided to take a look at the Web sites to which the mail directs its readers. Make no mistake — this is real and the Web sites contain much more offensive material and rhetoric than the mail itself.

These sites include exclusivist and elitist messages aimed at excluding anyone and everyone other than African Americans from the "Million Youth March" and the quest for African-American improvement and advancement.

These sites did host some healthy, positive ideals such as the desire to boost self esteem and the economic position of African-American people. However, my objection is that the site is dedicated only to African-American people and excludes all others. This is discriminatory and racist.

Being the recipient of some totally ridiculous mail in the past, I was willing to let this one go and simply recognize the propaganda for what it is — segregationist, elitist, racist and discriminatory. However, as I printed the message, I could not help but notice it was preceded by six completely full, single-spaced pages of e-mail addresses to which it had also been sent.

Seventy-eight addresses pertained to faculty and students here at Texas A&M. The rest were sent to students all over the country. It is a shame some of the people charged with our education subscribe to the beliefs represented in this document.

Hopefully, we can all recognize the sheer ignorance with which this propaganda was written, however, the real point should be to realize that no group of people may excel in the modern world without an open and cooperative nature, not just cooperation amongst one's own people, but unilateral cooperation amongst all people.

I was under the impression America and A&M may have grown and learned from the mistakes of the past and believed our generation could be the one that finally left all of the nonsense behind and worked toward a more positive end result for our country and our world.

It appears as though my assumption was inaccurate to a degree.

One cannot speak of advancement for their own people without speaking of advancement for all people; to do so is to exhibit elitist and exclusivist attitudes.

Take for example the multitude of multicultural organizations here at A&M. These organizations are healthy and beneficial to the constituency they represent and to A&M as a whole.

Why? Simply because their doors are open to everyone. They do not care about color or creed, they simply want the opportunity to share their culture with anyone who will take the time to be interested.

One would assume the "Million Youth March"

was brought to fruition in hopes of boosting solidarity and unity, however, when one group excludes all others their activities become purely divisive.

There is nothing wrong with an organization working toward a better goal for its members, as long as anyone is permitted to join the organization and work toward the same goal.

That is not the case with the "Million Youth March," as the e-mail clearly states — anyone of Asian or Anglo Saxon lineage is asked to reply so they might be excluded.

It is incumbent upon each of us to recognize that in today's world, the ideals of racism and the elitist mentality of the past must not continue to be proliferated.

The days of slavery are gone, the days of the Holocaust are gone, the days of the mass destruction of the Native American people are gone, the days of the discrimination against Irish and Scottish, Italian, Polish, Czech or any other group are also over. It is now up to us to pick up the pieces and learn to live, work and play together while seeking a better end for everyone.

Decisions of worth in relation to other people are part of our daily lives. We choose who to eat with, who to date, who to work with, what school to attend, what church to attend, who our friends will be etc.

However, the important thing to keep in mind, as Dennis Miller once exclaimed "Why dislike a person because of the color of their skin when there are so many more legitimate reasons."

Len Callaway is a junior journalism major.



MAIL CALL

Recycling stands as public relations play

Tuesday's (March 10) Battalion front page provides an inter-

esting perspective on Aggie environmentalism.

One story overviews a feeble initiative by the "Physical Plant Recycling Center" and a local "environmental conservation specialist" to recycle newspapers on campus to "prevent them from going to landfills."

This bit of public relations 'greenscam' helps cover the simple fact that tons of non-recycled paper pass through Texas A&M copy machines and printers every day.

If concern for natural resources conservation was something other than a public relations farce on this campus, the

local administration would insure that recycled paper is purchased and used by the institution.

The adjacent story on this page, regarding formation of a Bonfire indoctrination team, provides a more realistic view of the local mind set. The mission here, another public relations scam mounted by the local administration, is to convince 'community members' that the annual burning of 8,000 trees on campus is a "very positive event."

Bonfire, is from my point of view, a "very positive" signal of local reality. Its presence, which negates any recycling effort on this campus, provides a real challenge

for 'spin doctors' in the local public relations department, at least in the area of A&M concern for natural resource conservation.

Dr. Hugh D. Wilson
Biology professor

Howdy Week not intended as offensive

Chris Huffines' column on the vigor of Howdy Week raises some very interesting points the officers of Howdy Ags would like to address. We appreciate Huffines' point and we sincerely apologize to any students who have been offended by the ac-

tions taken by our volunteers and Howdy Ags.

We respect the views of all students and in no way want to force the traditions on anyone.

However we feel that this year's Howdy Week demonstrated the true spirit behind the tradition and behind Texas A&M.

Howdy is one tradition that defines the heart of this University and it was amazing to see over 200 incredibly motivated students helping to preserve this tradition. We in no way feel they joined Howdy Ags in order to give their life a purpose; they joined because they have a deep love and passion

for this university and its traditions.

We also believe that the comparisons made to the KKK and the Nazi party were totally out of line. These groups were representing the ideas of hatred and racism. Howdy Ags is not only designed to bring back a word, but to bring back the spirit that is accompanied with the Howdy Tradition.

It is not the word Howdy that is so important, but it is the love that the word allows us to share with our fellow Aggies that is so wonderful.

Pat Moran
Class of '98
Accompanied by 5 signatures