

There goes the neighborhood Plans for a new luxury residence hall not in the University's best interest



MELISSA BEDSOLE

The biggest problem with this specific project is, what will it cost the students?

The University is still paying for previous residence hall construction projects from 1989 and will continue to pay until approximately 2009.

A&M does not need to spend more money on an expensive apartment-style residence hall. So, the people working on the plans for the new residence hall are suggesting the "toll road method."

In other words, get the students who are living in the residence hall to pay higher fees prices to pick up the tab for its construction, and ideally the new hall would not be costly to those living elsewhere. Although this seems to be a simple plan, there is a definite catch.

To break even with its building fees, the new residence hall would cost its residents a hefty rent. The price to the prospective residents would certainly be more than that of living in one of the modular residence halls — currently the most

expensive on-campus housing.

Because the cost of this residence hall is so lofty, there is also an unmentioned part of the plan that is nearly inevitable. It is not likely that there will be enough students who agree to pay this outrageous rent and the price will have to be lowered to a more reasonable cost.

So, what about the difference that still needs to be paid? Well, to be blunt, all on-campus students might have to pay that bill. The money could be subsidized by a planned increase in the cost of all on-campus residence halls.

Although the cost issue is important, it is not the only reason this plan should not be given the green light. The elaborate layout of this residence hall (which is what would cause outrageously high prices) is not necessary.

Why does a residence hall need to have a kitchen, when it will be located across from the improved Sbis Dining Hall?

Furthermore, having a kitchen for the luxury of cooking what

one wants is nice, but for tenants living in a residence hall not located extremely close to a parking garage or fish lot, getting to the store for cooking supplies may not be an easy task.

Finally, because of the apartment-style layout of the proposed residence hall, it is obvious that it would be exclusively for tenants who can afford more extravagant living. Northside is perceived as being a practical, no-frills community.

Setting up a high-cost luxury residence hall would create a stigma of have's and have-not's. Why would Texas A&M purposely plague Northside with this financial segregation?

Each year many freshmen are put on waiting lists for on-campus housing. It is true that a new residence hall would be in the best interest for the future of a growing student body, but there is really no reason the residence hall could not follow more simplistic ideals and run for a much lower price.

The ideas for the private residence hall are not set in stone, but the project already has an ideal finish date of 2003. If the plan is approved, it will not be long before the cement is laid.

Melissa Bedsole is a sophomore general studies major.



EMILY HARRELL/THE BATTALION

Truth about massacre obscured by both sides



CHRIS HUFFINES

On Dec. 13, 1937, after tearing through half of China like the proverbial bull in a shop, the Imperial Japanese Army captured the city of Nanking and began three months of looting, rape, torture and mass murder. The massacre claimed between 32,000 and 369,000 lives, depending on the agenda of who one talks to.

In a perfect world, someone would be wearing a white hat. However, every side in any discussion of the Nanking Incident, more spectacularly known as the Rape of Nanking, has reached levels of self-delusion matched perhaps only by the pathologically insane. The Japanese government has systematically downplayed all Japanese wartime atrocities, while the Chinese government and people have supported the highest death toll.

Perhaps most disturbing, though, is the insistence of many Japanese right-wingers, including figures as prominent as Shintaro Ishihara, governor of Tokyo, that there was no massacre at Nanking at all.

The lies on both sides must stop before history is doomed to bear the repetition of these crimes.

The efforts of the Chinese to memorialize the dead of Nanking (and more importantly for the Chinese, to blame the Japanese for those deaths) are being undercut by the insistence of otherwise reputable scholars on ludicrously high death tolls as high as 369,366. Figures like this are achieved via methods that can be kindly labeled as "questionable." A better description would be "exaggerated," "biased" or perhaps "dishonest."

The Chinese are relying on, and inflating, the official Allied death toll for Nanking. The Allies counted 300,000 deaths from highly suspect sources.

For example, a Dec. 18 mass killing on the banks of the Yangtze River was tallied by survivor Lu Su at exactly 54,718 people. Su, a local peasant, reported that the victims were bound in pairs, marched to the river, machine-gunned, bayoneted, doused in oil and then set on fire. Su was hit in the leg and hid in a cave, which allowed him to gain his count. The fact that Su could apparently count that well through a cave wall while injured and on the run creates too much doubt to trust his numbers. Every mass killing is plagued by similar problems, yet the Allies and the Chinese have taken the numbers at face value.

A relief organization, the Tsun-shan-tang, said it buried 110,000 bodies over a two month period. In a three-week spurt during this time, they claimed to have buried 105,000 victims. To perform this feat, they would have had to increase their daily rate

from 75 bodies to 5,000 bodies-per-day. Such improvement is simply not credible.

Yet, the Allies and China just took their numbers at face value.

But while Nanking was not nearly as bad as the Chinese claim, it did happen. An American missionary filmed the massacre of civilians and smuggled the movie reels out of the country. Japanese soldiers routinely entered the "safe zone" set up by Europeans under the pretense of looking for Chinese soldiers and gang-raped and murdered Chinese women. Historical records agree that these rape-murders occurred at least 20,000 times in three months, more than 220 rape-murders per day.

And while accounts like Lu Su's are unreliable as to number, they are utterly reliable as to existence. Lu Su did survive a massacre on the banks of the Yangtze. Bodies were left in the street to be buried by societies like the Tsun-shan-tang. Women were raped and then murdered.

And yet at a recent conference at Tokyo's Asia University, historians and retired soldiers did claim there was no massacre at Nanking. Shudo Higashinakan, professor of history at Asia University, said, "There was no massacre of civilians at Nanking."

To claim there was no Rape of Nanking is ludicrous. To claim that more died than really did is equally ludicrous.

Many historical revisionists seem to feel if they say it did not exist loud enough, it might just go away. Many

Japanese feel it would be a loss of face to admit their ancestors committed such atrocities. Post-war historical revisionism has ensured that students grow up in the Japanese public schools ignorant of the existence of this atrocity.

However, many Japanese feel it would be better to own up to the past and learn from their mistakes.

More puzzling is the behavior of the Chinese, who insist on inflating the casualty figures. It is commonly accepted that their motive for the inflation is so that Nanking will have a higher death toll than the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Chinese do not seem to understand that no one cares whose atrocity is bigger. There is no prestige in having been screwed over worse by a victorious invader.

And while the Chinese are using exaggeration to further a political end, the Japanese revisionists are using outright lies to make themselves feel better about the dirty laundry from their country's past.

Each side must stop the agendas, stop the lies and stop the revisionist politics. Otherwise, the continued atrocities that should have been prevented will bring the death toll higher and higher.

Chris Huffines is a senior speech communication major.

Texas lawyers forsake charity work

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."



NICHOLAS ROZNOVSKY

These words, etched into the base of the Statue of Liberty, have come to embody the American spirit of freedom and equality under the eyes of the law. Unfortunately, for many disadvantaged Americans the nation's second-most famous female statue, Lady Justice, might as well have words etched into its base as well. "The tired, the poor, the huddled masses should seek justice elsewhere."

For millions of Americans, including many Texans, the use of state and federal court systems is far too expensive a prospect to contemplate seriously. In today's society, justice has too high a price for a large number of this nation's citizens.

Although Americans are entitled to court-appointed legal representation in criminal cases, they are on their own when it comes to finding legal advice or representation in civil matters. The necessary procedures of transferring property, making a will or getting social security benefits are impossible to carry out

for the large number of economically-disadvantaged Americans who cannot afford the services of a legal firm.

And even though nearly one out of every five Texans lives in poverty, the Lone Star State ranks a pitiful 48th in providing legal assistance to the poor. The vast majority of Texas lawyers come nowhere near meeting the American Bar Association's recommended annual amount of pro bono work — 50 hours or one hour a week.

In fact, according to the Texas State Bar, four out of five Texas attorneys report absolutely no pro bono work at all. Many of those who did report pro bono work cited time served on community arts boards or PTA work, neither of which actually helped the indigent citizens of this state receive the legal assistance they need.

In 1994, a class action suit filed by South Texas farm workers argued that, in exchange for their exclusive license to practice law, Texas lawyers should comply with

the moral, ethical and professional duty of providing pro bono service. The workers asserted that it is part of the legal profession's responsibility to ensure that all of America's citizens are adequately represented in court.

In response to the class action suit, the Texas Supreme Court held a brief hearing on the need for legal services for low-income Texans Thursday. Although they failed to come up with a solution to the pressing shortage of pro bono work, perhaps the hearing will remind the lawyers, judges and lawmakers of Texas that something needs to be done.

Can Texas lawyers be made to do pro bono work? Can the state reasonably ask its lawyers to abandon their wealthy clients, lower their incomes and do legal work without getting paid for it?

The answer, of course, is no. The state cannot ask lawyers to do that anymore than it can ask restaurant owners to donate dishes to local food shelters. The initiative to

help the poor must come from within, it cannot be forced upon the individual by an outside force.

That being said, the lawyers of Texas should be ashamed of their failure to do anything to help alleviate the problem of legal underrepresentation of the poor. By perpetuating a system where only those with money can seek justice, the principle of justice itself is being undermined.

As St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, law is "nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good." The common good cannot be served by a legal system which excludes the poverty-stricken portion of its population.

The true goal of the legal establishment should be to champion the rights of the downtrodden, not merely to defend the rights of those who can best line their pocketbooks.

To be sure, lawyers have the right to earn money, but they have an additional responsibility as citizens to protect the founding principles of this nation. In the end, the bottom line should be justice and civil rights, not the almighty dollar.

The mere concept of "Equality Under Law" does no good for those who cannot pay to get into the courtroom.

Nicholas Roznovsky is a junior political science major.

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MAIL CALL

'White trash' column draws criticism

In response to Ann Hart's Feb. 1 column.

The *Battalion's* Opinion page has sunk to a new low of ignorance and contradiction. As an "offended citizen" and at the urging of Ann Hart, this writer will not take the *Battalion's* racist "affronts lying down."

After reading Hart's column, one draws the conclusion that she believes speech that is deemed offensive on the grounds of racism should be banned. However, if one follows Hart's rationale, then *The Battalion* should be banned for its "inflammatory rhetoric."

Hart's editors completely contradict her opinion with the headline, "White trash on the highway." The definition of white trash according to Webster's Dictionary: "White Trash — slang, (disparaging and offensive), a member of the class of poor whites, esp. in the southern U.S."

The use of the racial slur is not justified in print because it pertains to a group of ignorant activists who happen to be white.

Hart then goes on to contradict herself saying, "The prospect of [the Klan] slipping into obscurity terrifies them, so they do whatever it takes to stay in the limelight." Why not let them slip into obscurity instead of dedicating six columns, 400 - 700 words and a graph-

ic to this topic?

Finally, as if writing racial slurs across the top of the page in large letters isn't tacky enough, the column runs on the first day of Black History Month.

Perhaps instead of making readers aware of the evils of the Klan in Missouri, a better topic might have been the achievements made at Texas A&M University by Black students and what still needs to be accomplished.

Joe Schumacher
Class of '99

In response to Heather Corbell's Jan. 31

Bush's religion alone not a reason for support

column.

It disturbs me to read an editorial that implies we should vote for someone solely because he appears to be a "model Christian." Just because George W. Bush appeared at a church after the Bonfire tragedy (read — another politician's phony media tactic), I should vote for him?

Let's wake up and realize that politicians know all the tricks to fool the voters, but more importantly that our future president's choice of religion is immaterial. One is not hired for an occupation because he is a moral Christian; he is hired because he can do the

job properly, regardless of his personal life.

The main issue that concerns me, and hopefully the rest of the campus, is that our economy continues to flourish, leaving an ample amount of job openings in the near future.

I never planned to spend six years earning two degrees at A&M so I could work at McDonald's when ultimately complete my education. Think about this situation, and choose your votes wisely.

Thomas Lee Stone
Class of '00

The *Battalion* encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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