Housing issues are indicative of larger problems

By Ted Gildea

Last week, a select group of students received a rather unpleasant surprise with regard to their housing for next year. Twenty-five students were given leases to live off-campus next year, as they have earned the right to be in a modified suite. These acts of manipulation are grossly inappropriate, and are unacceptable. Specifically, Mike Morrill, of the Residence Life office, jumped the gun on some of their would-be suitemates at the last minute was inappropriate. Leaving the students uninfected left many out in the cold (so to speak). Students who have waited until next year, when he hopes to have the housing process completely revamped, to make any changes to this system. His decision to remove students from the lottery at the last minute was inappropriate. What happened last week was a total shame for a lot of people. It was unfair for Residence Life to make a snap decision on the eve of the lottery process. What happened was that Mike Morrill was rushed to make an article about about life (trust me, that would be the easiest article I have written all year). This housing lottery debacle does bring up two good points that do need more dialogue on this campus. The first is that the very students of this campus and Residence Life, the relationship can be summed up in the idea “us versus them.” The other is the lack of housing options on this campus; boarding schools have been known to have a wider variety of housing options than Holy Cross. While discussing the topic of the housing lottery with Mike Morrill and Christine Pitz, these topics came up, and perhaps the future of these issues is not as bleak as it seems right now. The relationship between students and the Residence Life office is very poor for a variety of reasons. By the tediousness of Residence Life has for hanging out far-too-stiff punishments, or the seemingly arbitrary nature of many decisions made by this office, Residence Life is not a favorite of the students on this campus but the students follow every rule in the book, the letter. This is the job of those in Residence Life, but it should be noted that they do have some problems communicating with students, and what happened last week is a perfect example of this lack of communication. They stepped on a lot of students’ toes unnecessarily with their decision to pull some students out of the housing lottery, when they could have easily dealt with abuses of their perniciously abused system for one more year.

Morrill and Pitz gave assurances that the housing process is only a year away, it would have been far more appropriate for Mike Morrill to wait one more year to change his system. He acknowledges that “[the residence life office] does not have great public relations going on right now,” but “the administration tends to make that change.” Let’s hope so, because in an impromptu poll, nine out of ten students said that Mike Morrill was the enemy of the Residence Life office. This is the us versus them complex, and trivial things such as what Mike Morrill can do with the housing lottery just adds fuel to an already out of control fire.

The other issue that comes out of this situation is the simple fact that what housing is available at Holy Cross. This year, 48 juniors lived in Nealy. That is a large amount of juniors living with another person in a single room, without a bathroom. This is entirely inappropriate. This school does not provide enough living options. A common misconception involving Holy Cross students is that they have housing situations improve with each year of college. Holy Cross provides some extremely lucky students with three years of the same exact freshman style housing on the top of the hill. That is definitely not something you can find in the viewbook. Holy Cross needs to work on the housing situation, and they are. According to Mike Morrill, Holy Cross is preparing to spend “a significant amount of money” on new on-campus housing. He went on to explain that there are in fact “actual drawings” of the proposed new housing, and the last major hurdle before an announcement and construction is getting the OK from the board of trustees. It is rather advisable that the board of trustees approves as soon as possible. The College could possibly need to upgrade housing. Housing is quite possibly the worst aspect of this school, and this situation definitely needs to be worked on. Hopefully we will know how much attention it will receive very soon.

Armchair Polities: Bush and Powell stand up to China

By Christopher Jones

For Ronald Reagan it was the threat of Cold War communism, a dark and ominous cloud looming over half the world. For George Bush it was the aggressive Saddam Hussein and his threat to the United States’ energy supply. For Bill Clinton it was the vast right-wing conspiracy, the amorphous conglomerate of Republican legions commanded by Speaker Newt Gingrach, a chameleon. For George W. Bush it is the aggressive Saddam Hussein and his threat to the United States’ energy supply.

Each of the previous three presidents have had a défining nemesis, an archenemy, a focal point around which he can rally his troops and circle his wagons. For President George W. Bush, the People’s Republic of China could emerge as his nemesis.

According to various reports, a United States Navy reconnaissance plane completed an emergency landing after colliding with a Chinese fighter jet on March 31. The U.S. views the incident as an accident that occurred during a routine surveillance mission conducted over international waters. The Navy plane, an EP-3, is slow moving and cumbersome. The Pentagon has recently announced that the EP-3 is not a “spy plane” as has been reported by the media. Spy planes are used to infiltrate a nation’s air space and air, to ensure that they are less visible and more maneuverable. The Chinese fighter jet was an agile vessel, capable of quick and responsive maneuvers.

A likely scenario advanced by some experts describes the contact as an accidental bump occurring due to an aggressive confrontation, forcing the heavy Navy plane to land and the Chinese jet to crash. According to Captain William Mar-riott, Navy Paired and Reconnaissance Commander, the EP-3 is incapable of evasive maneuvers, and probably concentrated on flying in a straight line, while the fighter jet darted around it. If this scenario is correct, then the United States have violated international law.

However, China claims that the United States did, in fact, violate international law. Placing blame squarely on the Navy plane, China has taken the 24 servicemen and women on the plane hostage until the United States formally apologizes for the incident. Furthermore, KH-11 “Keyhole” satellites in synchronous orbit 500 miles above them have intercepted geographic data of the EP-3’s top-secret equipment sitting outside the plane on the target. Whether or not the Navy plane violated international law, the Chinese have already handed down a guilty sentence.

Clearly articulating his opposition to Chinese actions, Bush said on April 2, “Our priorities are the prompt and safe return of the crew and the return of the aircraft without further damaging or tampering.” The next day, slightly increasing the urgency of his tone, Bush said, “It is time for our servicemen and women to return home.” It is time for the Chinese government to return to our plane.” Adding his voice, Secretary of State Colin Powell also called for the release of the crew members and plane. At this point, it seems as though the United States is tired of walking on eggshells around China and is in no mood to compromise on an issue of the greatest importance to America.

For the past eight years, the United States has been soft on China. The U.S. government has overlooked human rights violations committed by the Chinese government affecting Christians, members of the Falun Gong religious sect, and other members of Chinese society. The State Department under Presidents since Carter has upheld a doctrine known as the “One China” policy, which maintains that China and the Democratic Republic of Taiwan, a strategic ally of the United States, are one state. The doctrine refuses to officially recognize Taiwan’s sovereignty. Because of the One China policy, the United States has been reluctant to sell arms to Taiwan, even though China continues to amass mountains of missiles aimed at Taiwan. Furthermore, last year, the United States Congress bestowed its highest commercial honor upon China, that of “Most Favorited Nation Status,” by granting it “permanent normal trade relations.” China has been living a charmed life for quite a few years, receiving favorable treatment from the international community while violating the human rights and bullying its people, but it seems to be time for a wake-up call.

As anyone can see, this most recent incident is merely the tip of China’s aggressive iceberg. While Clinton could afford to placate China as its value as a trade partner, Bush and his foreign policy team realize that continuing such a stance would be a moral and political act of cowardice. It is high time that someone stopped treating China like the 800-bll gorilla of international relations. In the near future, look for Sino-U.S. relations to continue their turbulence. Look for the United States to sell billions of dollars worth of weapons to Tai-\nwan. The United States’ usual brown-nosing of China has effecti-\nvely ended. While the Clinton Administration might have sent the Rev. Jesse Jackson over to negotiate the crew’s release, as was done during a similar capture in Kosovo, it seems the Reverend is currently cupied by his own battles.

In Jackson’s absence, President Bush and Secretary Powell have decided to handle the situation with statecraft and stoicism, rather than holding down. Just as his father made no deals with Saddam Hussein, President George W. Bush will not give concessions to the takes of American hostages. In the process, Bush may earn the animosity of the Chinese government, but just as Reagan decreed communism at every turn, it is the right thing to do.