

JAMES

Palmyra, N. J. 08065

3-2-82-8

Dear Sir:

- I have read recently that the Viet. Vets. Memorial Fund has had their ground-breaking delayed for a review of their design:

- As a competitor in their program - who felt the original design chosen was vastly inappropriate - May I bring to your attention the "indictment" which I have circulated to various interested parties - please consider the particulars in your review -

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Sincerely,
James

A MOST FORGETTABLE MEMORIAL

ITEM 1 - PROCEDURAL DEFAULT

A. The selection of Ms. Lin's design was suspect from the onset. The thousand entries I saw featured the required site plans - specific as to scope, size, topography, elevation and scale. On this basis, Ms. Lin's sketch should have been eliminated.

B. The Jury and others violated explicit commitments to know and to enforce the Competition Rules and Program as relates to the above.

C. The competence and integrity of the Jury needs judging by those who seek relief from the Jury's judgment, in particular: the Jury failed an implicit "charge" "to honor ... those who SERVED and died and to provide a symbol of acknowledgement of ... courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty." It appears this task was beyond their abilities, if, indeed, it was attempted.

ITEM 2 - TECHNICAL DEFICIENCIES

A. The selected design is in many areas plainly impractical. The program requirement states: "The memorial should be accessible in all seasons and at all hours ... no barriers ... for the handicapped the design should impose no hazards."

This design has a blind approach from the north. Its grassy slope would be perilous in times of wetness or winter icing. The walls present an attractive hazard to playing children. The required fencing would limit access, and Ms. Lin's "grassy slope" would require paving for wheelchair access.

B. We must, from given information, anticipate a considerable problem with ground and drainage water. The converging walls seem a splendid design for a storm drain. The depth at conflux appears to be only 5' above mean sea level. The need for pump installation and tax supported maintenance should be determined by Park Service engineers.

C. The proposed listing of names in order of demise would make it most unlikely that a visitor could succeed in finding a particular name (this violates another stated requirement).

Ms. Lin's "simple Trajan" with letter size of 3/4 inch, and an allowance of nine inches per name seems woefully ignorant.

A working abacus with seventeen - eighteen letters per name (the Fund's estimate) and minimal spaces above, below and between names and some small allowance for borders could permit at most 20,000 names. Letters smaller than the 3/4 inch would tax legibility, as well as the techniques of "carving" granite.

ITEM 3 - "CONTENT" AND ARTISTIC MERIT

A. As to the philosophical content and aesthetic merit of the design, it would seem logically impossible to disprove the existence of nothing. The Jury, we suspect, hoped to push "minimalism" past the point of debate. Perhaps the luckless Jury actually did see the emperor's splendid new clothes. It somehow seems easier to suffer fools than hypocrites.

Ms. Lin, in her artless innocence might be forgiven for not knowing that a memorial must have meaning beyond bulldozer burial and the inevitability of death. A memorial, past body counts and carrion, must celebrate transcending qualities of spirit, viz: courage, sacrifice and enduring hope. A memorial should speak to the passing of a torch, not its snuffing in some damp landfill.

either way → THIS ABYSS IS A MONUMENTAL FAILURE
- THIS MONUMENT IS AN ABYSMAL FAILURE

JAMES