

Racists?

The Gamecock staff not racist; such charges irresponsible lies

In *The Gamecock* Friday, an irate reader made a charge. *The Gamecock* didn't run photographs of USC's Homecoming to the sufficient satisfaction of the letter writer. And apparently, the staff is racist because editors chose not to run a photo until Wednesday and chose not to run a story at all.

This is a serious charge that *The Gamecock* must respond to, and to respond, *The Gamecock* will quote Al Smith, a man who ran for the Democratic presidential nomination against Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Smith said, "No matter how thin you slice it, it's still baloney."

First, yes, the photo wasn't the best photo, but our photographers are beginners trying to learn their trade — and doing a pretty decent job. And they are honestly trying to do better and are succeeding.

Second, our photo choice was based on the decision of our editors. The last time *The Gamecock* checked, none of its editors were racists, overt or covert. In fact, they are as far from racist as possible.

Third, our editors decided not to run a homecoming queen article because they felt it would have been a fluff piece, which, given our tight space, can never take precedence over important issues such as possible censorship and definite protest (*The Last Temptation of Christ*); a long awaited program of great benefit to students (phone registration); help for a large portion of students (a center to help female students); and continuation of the crime coverage (police report).

The letter is disheartening. First, it accuses the staff of prejudice, but it bases that accusation on nothing.

To quote, "It seems to me that this is a racial issue. In my opinion, Nanette Graham, Miss Homecoming '88, has been cut short of the glory, which the queen usually receives because of her color."

"It seems. . . In my opinion," are the active words on which the letter writer bases her most serious charge. There is nothing else in the letter on which she bases her ludicrous claim.

The letter offers no proof, not one iota of evidence. The letter writer assumes that because *The Gamecock* staff is mostly white, the lack of coverage equal to what she would have given to the queen was made because the staff is composed of a bunch of racists.

Seems to us *that's* prejudice.

The letter writer just assumed the worst, without giving the staff the benefit of the doubt that our decision was based on news judgement and a desire to give the best, most serious news to the USC campus. She just assumed, because a majority of staff member are white, that we made a decision based solely on Miss Graham's color.

Her assumption, her letter, are prejudiced and racial, not our coverage.

The other disturbing part of her letter may explain the problems *The Gamecock* encounters from time to time with all types of students and student organizations.

She says, in her letter, "Furthermore, I feel that *The Gamecock* staff should refrain from allowing their prejudices (to determine) the amount of publicity that is given to issues involving minority students."

We can tell her and every other student how much publicity we'll give their events — none. PR is not our job. It is our job to print the news, and every year we get better and better.

Every now and then, a student organization comes up with the bright idea that the news/editorial department is responsible for publicizing their event. It's not so.

Sometimes, the features desk will pick an event to cover. There was a preview of Homecoming events about two or three weeks ago. But the editors made a decision to run a feature story highlighting the events. They weren't publicizing it.

The Gamecock's editors make story decisions based on newsworthiness and available space. The paper only averages eight pages an issue, so a decision to run a puff piece on the homecoming queen instead of covering important events and controversial topics would mean we're not doing our job.

It's our job to print the news. And we did, and will continue to do our job.

If you don't like our news judgement, write us and tell us. But don't fantasize reasons and make irresponsible charges about this staff when you don't know the character of the people up here.

Calling *The Gamecock* racist is a lie.

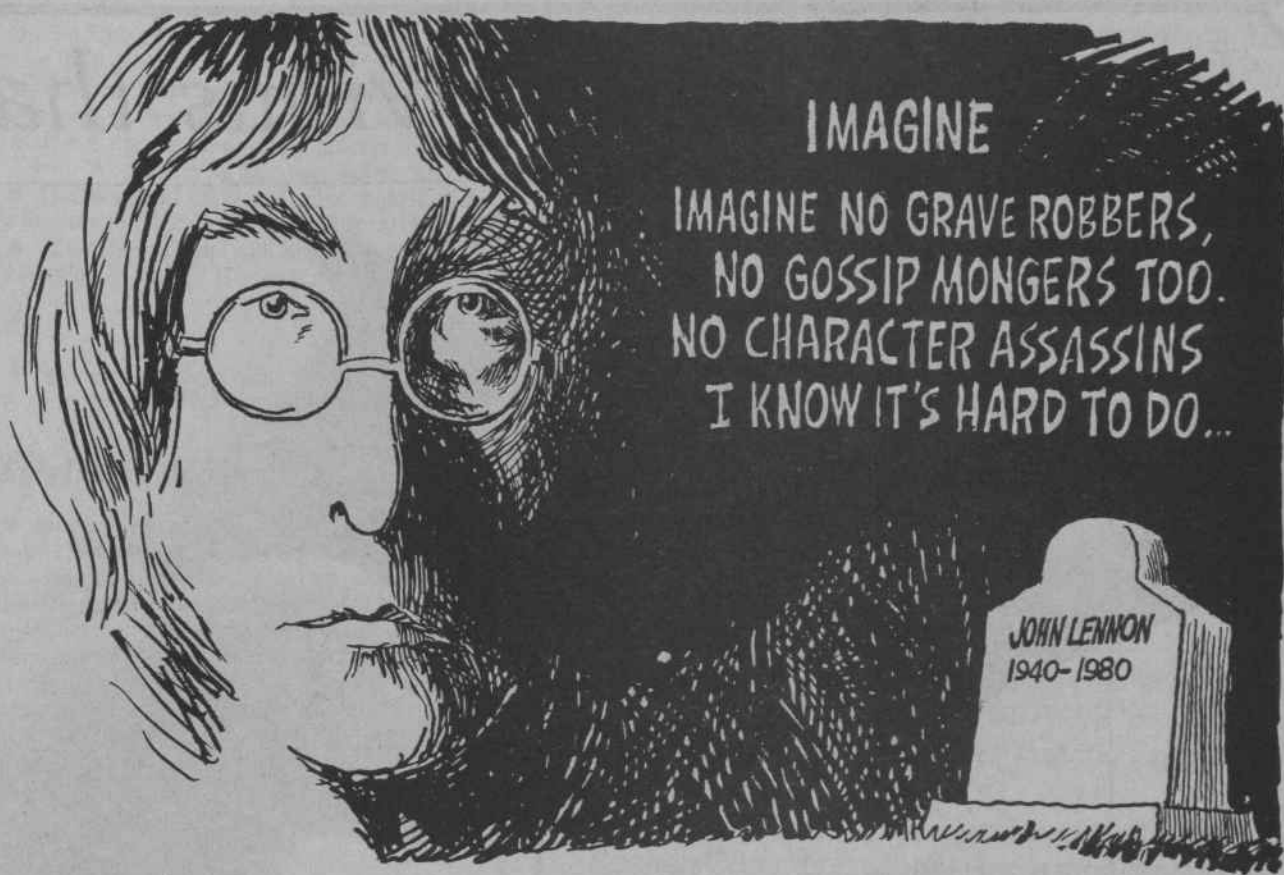
The Gamecock

Best Non-daily Collegiate Newspaper, Southeastern Region
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Letters Policy: *The Gamecock* will try to print letters received. Letters should be, at a maximum, 250 to 300 words long. Guest editorials should not exceed 500 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for style or possible libel. *The Gamecock* will not withhold names under any circumstance.



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THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

Letters to the editor

Movie protests unfounded

To the editor:

A quote from Mary Pearson in the Oct. 3rd front page article "Movie brings controversy," underlines a big problem with all *The Last Temptation of Christ* protests of late, in fact, with many protests in general: "... 'The Life of Brian,' which portrayed Jesus as the son of a prostitute. . . ." This movie classic by the Monty Python crew certainly does not portray Jesus in any way, shape or form. The story is of Brian, who was mistakenly thought to be the Messiah by the "Wise Men," who, in the rather comic opening scene, suddenly realize their mistake and burst back into the infant's home to take their gifts across the street to the real Jesus.

The point, of course, is that the protester had absolutely no idea what he was protesting against since he quite obviously had not actually viewed the movie. How many people protesting against the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* have seen it?

In the same article, Kelly Clary is quoted as saying, "We were there as individuals to tell people what Jesus Christ is really like, instead of the way the movie portrayed him." That's an awfully large boast, to say that you have lived long enough to have met Jesus. That is somewhere on the order of 2,000 years; I can safely say I know no one else as old as that! And you know what he is (is? Hmmm) "really" like? In fact, how can anyone alive today say they know what life was like 2,000 years ago?

Maybe their protests would mean something if they had the education (i.e. facts) behind them to back up what they say. On the other hand, the people who say that censorship is bad do know what they are talking about: America is all about freedom of choice. And we have seen enough censorship around to know that it exists — and enough of its results to know that it is bad. If something offends you, do not associate yourself with it.

John J. Gemmill
chemistry graduate student

Racism charges unbelievable

To the editor:

This is in response to Arethia B. Hyatt's unbelievable letter labeling *The Gamecock* and its staff as being racist.

First off, although Homecoming is a time for celebrating, the students, alumni and Gamecock fans do not consider the crowning of the queen the highlight of the day. I'm sure — without speaking for people I have no business speaking for — it can be proven that the majority of people were more concerned with the outcome of the game instead of the outcome of a beauty contest.

Secondly, it seems to me that you do not have any idea of how or why a newspaper works. A newspaper's main concern is to inform its public of the news. In this day and age, censorship of any kind is news. Therefore the story on *The Last Temptation of Christ* should have run. Information about the "Five Points shuttle" (a service that may have already saved the life of one of our fellow students) is news. Who was crowned Homecoming Queen 1988 is not front page material. What would you write the story on anyway? She waved, she wiggled, she

won — big deal. Maybe if there wasn't a game to back up the event it would have been news Saturday, but not three days later.

Just when I thought I had heard it all, Ms. Hyatt comes up with the absurd idea that this was a racial issue. I'm sure the staff sat around the office and thought it all out. . . . since the black one won, let's not put the story on front page. Put this unimportant story about the shuttle in its place and not even write the story." I'm sorry, but I just don't see it happening this way.

The world becomes a scary place when you find racism every time you turn around. Next thing you know, people will call it racism if they see me sitting across from my white friends instead of next to them. Racism is stupid, and the people who keep it alive are stupid. If you don't like the coverage on the homecoming queen (or anything else for that matter) say so. Don't turn things into a racial issue that are not racial issues.

Becky Huntley
journalism sophomore

Use street savvy to solve parking

To the editor:

Your publication has given much coverage to the parking situation at USC. The problem, however, is not parking. The problem is dependence on the automobile. USC students insist on the car and the parking space as a God-given right. It will be much easier to change this attitude than to create more parking places on a campus where space is at a premium. The following are several ideas designed to reduce automobile dependence at USC.

- 1. Create a more efficient shuttle system.** Scrap the small Shuttlecocks and purchase larger buses. Scrap the circuitous routes for faster point-to-point routes. For example, establish a central-campus terminal and several outlying ones. A route from the Pendleton Street parking lot to the Bates House parking lot using Pickens Street would provide a quick way to park and ride to Gambrell, Humanities, the BA Building, Capstone and Columbia Hall. A similar point-to-point route would travel from the central campus to vast parking lots at the coliseum via Pendleton Street. Russell House and Thomas Cooper Library could be another central terminal. USC should also provide a daily shuttle to Five Points.

- 2. Take the bus.** Most middle-class USC students have never deigned to set foot on a city bus. There are several bus routes that connect in-town neighborhoods to the USC campus. Discount tickets are available at Russell House.

- 3. Ride a bike.** This mode of transportation provides door-to-door service as well as aerobic exercise. The proliferation of bicycles on the USC campus shows that there are plenty of savvy students beating the parking crush in the most efficient way possible.

- 4. Limit vehicle registration.** Many large universities do not allow freshmen students to register automobiles. Given the crisis, USC should be among them.

- 5. Revise parking lot assignments.** On-campus students should be assigned to outlying lots. There should be reserved lots for commuting students with addresses outside a two-mile radius. Security for all parking lots should be increased.

- 6. Leave home early.** If you arrive on campus at 6:45 a.m., you can find a great spot at a meter on Greene Street. Five hours for a dollar.

- 7. Wake up to the realities of**

authority. University administrators with great parking spots are not inclined to sympathize with student parking problems. Students at USC should learn an important lesson in life: rank has its privileges. A good parking space is one of them.

No amount of whining can create parking spaces from thin air. Students must take the initiative and beat the system by leaving the car at home.

James Dunlap
history graduate student

Programming at K95 tragic

To the editor:

In response to Friday's editorial, I am upset about the format change at K95Rock-FM. The most upsetting part is that I was an employee there, training to be a disc jockey. When I found out about this tragedy, I immediately called Art Boerke, who was the production manager and a darn good one at that. He was the most valuable person at the station, but the owners fired him. I asked if there was anything I could do. He suggested distributing a petition and have my friends write letters requesting the old format. At this moment, I am formulating a petition to distribute to various record stores, buildings around campus and anywhere I can think of. We need thousands of signatures. Letters will be a great help, and it only takes a little bit of time. The address to send them to: K95, 910 Gracern Road, Suite C, Columbia SC 29210.

I do not understand why the owners would want to change except that they think they will make a lot of money within a year's time. What do you think? I think not. Now they have several other stations to compete with instead of just one, FOX 102-FM. We, as loyal fans of K95Rock, need to get together and fight this. It is not fair to any of us who want to hear hard rock or metal but cannot find any station that plays it. K95Rock was the *only* real rock station, and we need it back. And when we do, we can celebrate; but, first, we need your help.

Jessica Lewison
marketing sophomore

Olympic coach blameless

To the editor:

I am responding to "Pep Talk" by David Caraviello in the Oct. 5 edition of *The Gamecock*.

I cannot believe your criticism of John Thompson's coaching ability. Coach Thompson is one of the very best; yet you insist on using him as a scapegoat for the U.S. Olympic basketball team's loss. I think that you are way off the mark. You fail to mention that the Soviets have played together for several years. John Thompson had to develop a team in less than three months. Could inexperience of the players have been a factor? This "amateur" Soviet team beat the Atlanta Hawks of the NBA. Was that loss due to poor coaching by Mike Fratello? I think not. If you must blame someone, blame the U.S. Olympic Committee for prohibiting NBA player participation in the Olympics. Could the Soviets really match up with the likes of Larry Bird, "Magic" Johnson, Michael Jordan or Isaiah Thomas? If the U.S. really wants to dominate, why

don't we just send the "Dream Team" and be done with it?

Don't be so quick to criticize John Thompson. I sincerely doubt that you have coached a team to the NCAA Championship or an Olympic gold medal. Until you do, don't let your ego run away with you. John Thompson, correct me if I am wrong, has a little more experience in championship games than you.

Overall, I think John Thompson did an outstanding job of choosing, developing and coaching our Olympic team. Could it be that his players simply didn't execute or that they were young and inexperienced with international rules or maybe, just maybe, they were beaten by a better team?

Brian D. Connon
Geography junior

Paper showed news judgment

To the editor:

In response to Miss Hyatt's letter published Oct. 7 regarding the coverage of Homecoming:

No, Miss Hyatt, you do *not* speak for everyone in saying an article about Homecoming and the homecoming queen should take precedence over articles concerning responsible reactions to significant social events, i.e. *The Last Temptation of Christ* controversy and the concern over the safety of students. Homecoming is a nice fluffy affair with little real significance or importance. I feel *The Gamecock* has greatly improved over last year in reporting events (although not in its objectivity). I don't think that the lack of coverage was a function of race, but rather a decision to put relatively more important issues in the forefront.

Secondly, the whole homecoming queen idea is sexist and antiquated. If we as a culture are to conquer sexism (and racism), we need to lessen the emphasis of sex and/or race on issues and the reporting of issues and make a concerted effort to regard people as people, not as members of factions.

Terri Chaput
geology graduate student

Commuters deserve spaces

To the editor:

I think the commuter students who park in the vicinity of the College of Business Administration have been extremely patient. When the school, in its infinite wisdom, began construction on a resident student parking lot during the school year, we paid money every day to park at meters, even though we had parking permits for commuter lots.

Now, however, the lot across from the BA Faculty and Staff lot is completed, and still the majority of cars in the commuter lots are resident students' cars. I recognize that resident students prefer to park near their residence halls, but it seems unfair when commuters arriving anytime after 7:15 a.m. cannot park in any of the commuter lots near the BA building.

I hope that Parking and Vehicle Registration will soon begin enforcing the rules about parking in commuter lots so that at least those commuters who arrive early in the day have a chance at parking in this section of campus.

Lynne Kerrigan
graduate student