

Sexism

Clarence Thomas might just be pioneer in case of women's rights

The Viewpoint section has been dominated by the issue of racism these past few weeks, but all sides have neglected to mention another form of insidious prejudice. Since the sexual harassment allegations against Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas, sexism and the fight for women's rights have received new attention.

Whether or not Thomas is guilty is not the issue. What is so interesting is that the all-male Senate Judicial Committee originally dismissed the allegations as being irrelevant to Thomas' nomination. The senators now deny this, but the perception is unmistakable that they just didn't think of sexual harassment as a serious crime. Physically and emotionally abusing someone because of their gender should always be a crime; unfortunately, the male-dominated U.S. government is just starting to realize that.

Proportionately, it can be argued that women are the most oppressed group of all. Although 50 percent (or more) of the country is female, there are only a handful of female senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress. There are few female governors and there has never been a female secretary of state or defense, leave alone a female president of the U.S.

Women are also vastly underrepresented in the nation's corporations and press. Many women executives talk about the sexist barrier that keeps them from rising to the top of their professions. To be sure, prejudice against all groups is intolerable, but women's rights seem to have been curiously ignored in the past decade. Hopefully, the Thomas controversy will end this neglect.

Citadel's freshmen system not that bad

Is The Citadel becoming soft? Are recent allegations causing administration to crack down too much on what many outsiders are calling hazing and ill-treatment?

It seems like recent allegations are made by the misinformed public who try and pass judgment on a military school that was once unique from others around it. The Citadel gives a particular group of people the challenge and discipline they need and want.

The four athletes who quit and complained about treatment cannot say they hadn't had some type of expectations when they first went in. They could not have blindly entered the school as a knob (freshman) expecting to be given easy treatment.

A junior student at The Citadel talked to me recently about the system at the military college.

The student sergeant said the main feeling on campus is that the allegations are obvious exaggerations from students who quit and were looking for an excuse. They simply could not handle the system.

But according to the junior, the system has drastically changed from his days as a knob.



GREG RICKABAUGH

The hazing was not done in a spiteful sort of way, the junior said. It made knobs work that much harder to succeed and become better.

Having to do 150 pushups two years ago was a common occurrence in the early morning hours for the knob. In fact, he would constantly arrive at class dripping with sweat.

But not now.

The knob system rules now state that a knob can only be made to do pushups in the afternoon — and only a maximum of 15 an hour.

Boy, sounds exhausting to me! I think I would be dead by the time that 16th one came around.

And why such a big change? This junior says it is parents who call in and complain that their children are too tired when they come to class because of the pushups. Waaaaahhh!

Parents need to tell their kids to suck it up, because they chose to go there. Then, and only then, can they get on with making the military college a unique experience for those who want it.

But no, they must bombard the administration with calls of hazing (and even racism). The fourth-class system becomes easier and easier with each new year. And each year the freshmen complain more and more, according to the junior.

Of course there are going to be freshmen who cannot handle the system. But The Citadel is not for everybody, just like a large college like USC or Clemson may not be for everyone.

And yes, the system may not be perfect. But let the students and administration realize the mistakes and make the proper corrections.

But among all the complaints comes one good point. It is the administration of the school who will form an investigative committee to examine treatment at the college. Because, as soon as you let an outsider come in with no knowledge of what The Citadel is trying to do, you can bet he will be the first to scream and point fingers.

Coming Out Day educates USC students

Today is National Coming Out Day. On this day gays, lesbians and bisexuals are asked to take their next step and come out of their closets to someone new: a parent, friend or roommate. On this day those of us who will no longer hide also offend a lot of bigots.

There will be backlash. Letters will be written that will say our lifestyle is a sin (a point I will not argue, as I do not know the mind of God). There will be homophobic jokes, and although some of us will come out with pride, others will hide in fear.

That fear which controls so many, homophobia, is bigotry. That is something which no one says very loudly, in fear of offending someone. But, let's be honest. Bigotry is one of the most hateful, damaging feelings a person can have. And racism, sexism and homophobia are bigotry.

Gays and lesbians can be fired from their jobs solely because of whom they love, and it is legal. In many states, we cannot adopt children,

KYIRA BROOKE

Guest Editorial

just because of sexual orientation, not because of unfitness to parent. We can be together for 20 years and never be allowed to marry, and still be kept from seeing our spouse if hospitalized because we are not legally "family." We are killed for who we are; made into public spectacles and moral threats.

All because of who we love.

Does anyone find it ridiculous that a person hate someone else for what they do in bed? What happened to privacy, or support or diversity? Our country was supposed to guarantee the right to pursue happiness, not just for heterosexuals.

Even if sexual orientation is partially choice, why is it wrong? What religion we are is a mat-

ter of personal choice, yet it is staunchly defended by our government. Why is one choice worse than another? Perhaps some people are so insecure that everyone has got to be exactly like them, and if we aren't, they feel justified in hating us.

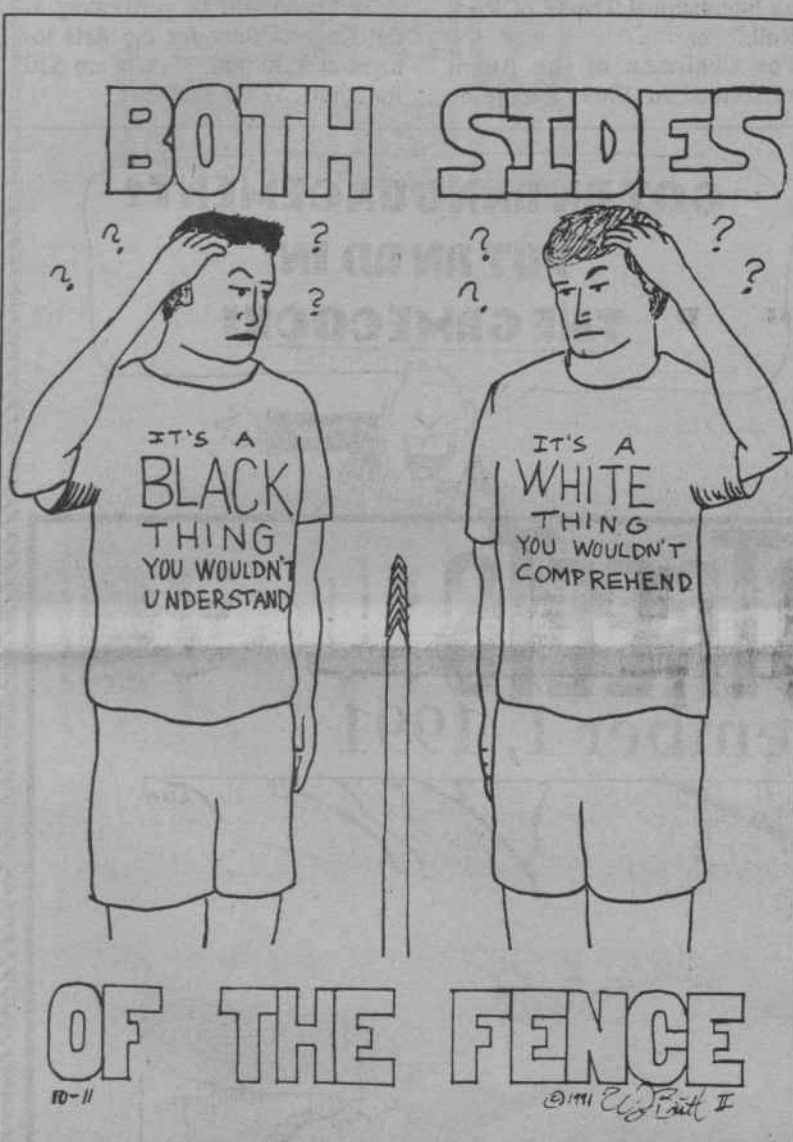
Instead of discriminating against gays, lesbians and bisexuals, we should be happy that others are finding love together. To do anything else would be unjustifiably narrow-minded.

All of you know someone who is gay, although you may not be aware of it. Does it really matter, in the long run, who they love? Don't be so fond of hating that you won't stop doing it.

I'm a lesbian. I refuse to live in fear. I am not ashamed to love. No one should be controlled by bigotry.

The Gay and Lesbian Student Association can be reached through P.O. Box 80098.

Kyira Brooke is the president of the Gay and Lesbian Student Association.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Abortion isn't merely logical

To the editor:

It amuses me that Brian McCarter thinks he can logically conclude an answer to a question of morality. Logic has very little to do with the realities and emotions of everyday life.

In any case, he has given us an intellectualized version of the anti-abortion/pro-life side of abortion, and as such can be useful. I have always been of the opinion that you can't be for or against a belief or movement if you don't know what the issues are.

As someone who does not want to see abortion banned, I would like to explore his arguments and come up with my own logical conclusions.

First, I want to say that this is not an attack on Brian McCarter. He is probably the most thought-provoking person I have ever met, and I respect his opinion. We just don't always agree with each other.

So, I'll start with McCarter's assertion that women who get pregnant chose to do so by not abstaining from sex or not using birth control. Having sex without any kind of safeguards, may be stupid, but it is not an automatic choice to become pregnant. Our species, unlike most, don't have sex to just procreate.

Of course, women and men are both responsible for providing effective birth control in their sexual relationships. But I also realize that in reality, birth control is not a 100 percent guarantee against pregnancy. And let's face it, there is inadequate sex education that deals with birth control in this country whether it be in the schools, churches or health care facilities and especially in the home.

McCarter's second contention is that abortion is an act of violence against a child by its mother. When a woman chooses to have an abortion, it is usually after a difficult period of deliberation that may include the father or her family. Logically it is reasonable to assume this same woman actually hates the embryo or fetus inside of her? Is she trying to figure out a

way to make it suffer?

McCarter's strongest argument is that the fetus should be thought of as human and entitled to protection under the 14th Amendment. Is a fetus the same thing as a human being?

Since this is an emotional issue, let's define our terms. To be human is to have human form and attributes. A fetus is a developing human usually from 3 months after conception to birth (an embryo is a developing human from conception to 8 weeks).

The key word here is developing and this is where the issue gets complicated (and the courts will have to set personal philosophy aside).

A human fetus is not a viable organism until around the eighth month. By viable, I mean born alive with such form and development of organs as to be normally capable of living. A seven-month old fetus usually cannot survive outside of the womb without mechanical intervention (although it does happen).

Only .01 percent of abortions by choice are in the last trimester and most of those are because of health problems of the fetus.

The pro-choice movement wants to protect the legality of unrestricted abortions during the first and early part of the second trimester (91 percent of all abortions occur in the first trimester). The question now becomes does the 14th Amendment protect the fetus until it can become a viable human being?

The 14th Amendment guarantees that life or liberty cannot be taken away from a person. Is an unviable fetus a person yet? Tough call, isn't it?

Logically, and as far as the 14th Amendment is concerned, no. An unviable fetus is not a legal person yet, because it cannot sustain its own life functions.

In order to ban abortions completely in the U.S., it will take a constitutional amendment. Sounds very cold and calculated, doesn't it? Sorry, that's what logic is all about.

In reality, arguments on viability and the 14th Amendment is not what goes through the mind of a woman faced with an unwanted pregnancy. She is very much

aware of the potential life inside of her. In fact, the majority of women who want the ability to choose (even though they may never have to choose) realize the responsibility involved.

Still, whether a woman decides to end a pregnancy, give the child up for adoption, or keep the child herself, it will be a decision that reflects her own unique circumstances and personal philosophy.

Even then, someone will think she was right; someone else will think she was wrong.

Pamme L. Eades
Art history graduate student

Sensitivity allows unity

To the editor:

My letter is written concerning the letter written in Wednesday's paper, "Whites don't understand." As a white male, I can say that I truly do not understand. A lot of the reason being that most blacks don't give white people a chance to.

Saying "It's a Black Thing, you wouldn't understand" doesn't help solve the country's problem of racism and prejudice, it only makes them worse. The feelings that whites are out to get blacks and make them suffer are not true at all. Progress is being made in America. In 1950, blacks and whites had their own water fountains, schools and restaurants. Since then, the doors have been opened for any man, black or white, to be anything he wants to be.

It's not a "Black" or "White" thing, it is an American thing, and until you realize that you will never get ahead. Don't live in the past, look to the future. Maybe then we can be one people.

Benjamin A. Merritt
Music education sophomore

All races can be prejudiced

To the editor:

"It's a white world and I don't have to!"

For those of you wondering what this means, place the word

"understand" at the end of that phrase. I'm sure many black people would consider that phrase to be both racist and offensive. I would have to agree with them. Unfortunately, I would also have to consider the phrase that Taifa S. Graves ended her letter (published on Wednesday, Oct. 9) with to be equally offensive and racist: "It's a black thing and you could never understand."

It is interesting to note that Graves' letter was written in response to an article she considered racist. My letter is written in response to a letter I consider hypocritical. It would seem that Graves has no objections to racism, except when practiced against blacks.

Racism is defined by The New Webster's Dictionary as "the assumption that one race is biologically superior to another." It does not say, "The assumption that the white race is biologically superior to the black race." This would lead me to believe it is equally possible for both races to practice their own particular brand of evil.

Graves is a marvelous example of this belief. How can she, in good conscious, criticize anyone for racist writings, when her letter is equally offensive to whites? Does racism become right when she turns the tables on the white people by attacking them?

Graves clearly gets her point across, she believes racism against blacks is bad. I can also agree with this point, but I'd like to broaden the comment to — racism is bad — whether practiced against blacks, hispanics, Asians or even whites.

Graves suggests that "the next time you (I assume she refers to white here) want to write about us (black people), I suggest you (whites again?) get some help from a knowledgeable brother or sister!"

Well, I suggest that the next time you, or anyone, want to write against racism, you get some help from a person who isn't racist. Hypocrisy has been called the Vaseline of social intercourse, but let's keep such intercourse private.

J.A. Osborne
International studies freshman

THE GAMECOCK

News: 777-7726

Advertising: 777-4249

CHRIS SILVESTRI
Editor in Chief

DAVID BOWDEN
Managing Editor/Viewpoint Editor
TIGE WATTS
News Editor
AARON SHEININ
Sports Editor

BRANT LONG
Copy Desk Chief
OCTAVIA WRIGHT
Carolina Life Editor
TEDDY LEPP
Photography Editor

PATRICK VILLEGAS
Asst. News Editor
TRACEY DAVIS
Asst. Carolina Life Editor
VIRGINIA MARSHALL
Asst. Copy Desk Chief

GORDON MANTLER
Asst. News Editor
RICH TAYLOR
Asst. Sports Editor
GREG RICKABAUGH
Asst. Photography Editor

WAYNE WILLIAMS
Comics Editor

ERIC GLENN
Darkroom Technician

RENEE A. GIBSON
Asst. Media Director/Advertising Manager

LAURA S. DAY
Production Manager

STACIE LEWIS
Asst. Advertising Manager

RAY BURGOS
Asst. Production Manager

ERIK COLLINS
Faculty Adviser

CAROLYN GRIFFIN
Business Manager

LARA CHAPMAN
Asst. Classified Manager

Letters Policy: The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be, at maximum, 250 to 300 words long. The writer must include full name, professional title if a USC employee or South Carolina resident, or year and major if a student. An address and phone number are required with all letters sent. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit letters for style, possible libel or in case of space limitations. The newspaper will not withhold names under any circumstance.