

VIEWPOINT

The media

Professionalism lacking in today's slanted media

The public malaise for irresponsible journalism in this country is growing. From all sides the media is blitzed with complaints and disdain.

Over the years the malaise has given birth to stereotypes: The media are negative, self serving, unfair and so on.

Sadly, the stereotypes are often well-deserved, brought about by the media's behavior.

The only way to break down the public's generalized attitudes is to practice responsible, professional journalism. Personal character attacks, tacky use of air time for insignificant, irrelevant editorial comments and uncaring attitudes concerning the impact of negative publicity must cease.

The jaded, arrogant journalist is the future unemployed journalist.

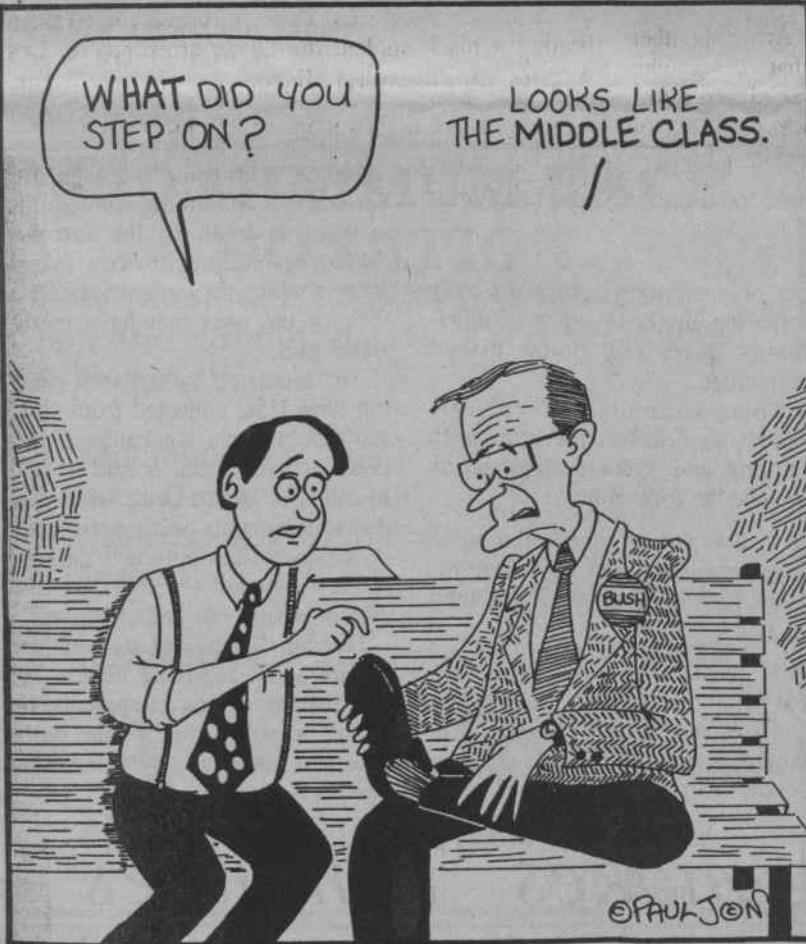
It's no secret that the media can not continuously please everyone. But that is every good journalist's goal.

News people need a greater awareness of the groupthink mentality they often develop after years in the business.

The quest for exposing corruption, the jadedness from people trying to use and manipulate the media and the knowledge acquired from years of reporting build walls around journalists that frequently close in around them. Trapped inside, they are out of touch with their audience.

Their arrogance and unrealistic views build as they attempt to deal with complaints and set society straight. It becomes a vicious circle, driven by journalists' out-of-touch mentality.

The solution is based on a simple concept, known as balance. Journalists must be cognizant of the fact that their knowledge and power is great but must be accompanied by sensitivity and open-mindedness. Otherwise, the public malaise will continue to grow and jeopardize the credibility and future of the American media.



If you have an issue or question you would like to see addressed in *Cross Fire* or *USC Voices*, Please drop it in a Suggestion Box or Call *The Gamecock* Newsroom at 777-7726.

Discrimination being ignored

To the editor:
If only 95 percent of USC's campus had to be racially integrated, there would be outrage. Imagine barriers stating "Whites Only" and effectively keeping out all non-whites from 5 percent of the buildings here.
Of course that wouldn't mean that non-whites couldn't attend all classes or participate in enough campus programs to satisfy federal regulations, only that certain residence halls and academic buildings would be accessible strictly to whites.

If a non-white wanted to participate in activities normally taking place in a "Whites Only" building, that person could request the activity be moved to an integrated area. But, even in integrated buildings, certain entrances and passageways could still be reserved for whites.

Naturally, the university would have the option of integrating the entire campus, but since many older buildings

are historically white and removing "Whites Only" signs is rather expensive, USC would be under no obligation to integrate 5 percent of the campus.

Actually, as pointed out by the *The Gamecock* on Wednesday, Jan. 15, USC does have such a policy. But rather than discriminating against non-whites, USC discriminates against disabled persons. Inaccessible buildings shout "Able-bodied Persons Only," while university officials seem proud to have bothered obeying the 95 percent rule at all, as if USC is already doing its disabled faculty and students a favor.

The USC's policies perpetuate discrimination, an insult to everyone at the university.

Jennifer Holder

International studies freshman

USC VOICES

Question: Should mandatory drug testing be required in the workplace?



Charles Traywick
History major

"Definitely, for safety reasons and because it promotes a better workforce."



Rosalind Rice
Engineering major

"Yes, because with the jobless rates being so high why allow people using drugs on the job when they have so many people needing jobs out there."



Marvin McManus
Finance major

"It's not professional to have people in the workforce who are drunk or high and unsafe."



Karla Fulmer
Biology/Pre-med major

"I think it should depend on the job, it's especially important for people like doctors, machine operators, politicians, athletes and things like that."

Cross Fire

Choices, rights cannot be limited

I am not pro-abortion.
I don't think anyone is pro-abortion.

It's sad that we live in a society so closed to discussing its own sexuality that abortion is a major issue. Perhaps, if we could talk about responsible sexual behavior without fear that natural functions will corrupt our children, those children wouldn't ever be standing terrified at the doors of a local clinic. But it is an issue, and, unfortunately, it must be addressed.

This column is not meant to tell you what to think. It's only asking you to ensure that you can always think for yourself. I'm writing this because I believe that neither the male-dominated bodies of the Supreme Court nor the members of the Senate can be granted the power of telling a woman what she can do with her body. Pro-choice laws do not mean anyone must have an abortion. They leave you able to make decisions for yourself. Pro-life laws do not.

The state cannot tell you what to think, the state cannot tell you who to love, and the state cannot tell you which God to worship. No governing body reserves the right to make your moral judgements for you. That is why you have your own mind, and your beliefs are the only thing in life you can truly call your own.

Abortion robs rights from fetus

The right to choose an abortion is the most frightening freedom our country gives its citizens.

When any society begins to fight for the right to kill its future, it is time to re-evaluate that society's level of intellect and its conscience.

The Supreme Court told women in 1973 they had the legal right to choose abortion. Since this landmark decision, pro-life and pro-choice groups have debated the right to be born across the mass media. Their emotional outbursts and rioting create stereotypes and confusion that cloud the problem.

The problem is that fetuses, Latin for "little ones," are being extracted from their mothers before they've had a chance to try life.

The right to choose indicates the presence of responsible and intelligent qualities in the chooser. A woman who chooses to kill the life inside her chooses to cheapen the value of life in general. This decision is sad and horrifying for the future.

It is terrible when a 14-year-old, unwed, impoverished girl becomes pregnant. It is unfortunate that men and women don't receive enough education about birth control. It is unfortunate that a great percentage of our country's population lives on welfare.

No state has the right to tell you what you can do with your body.

And as it stands right now, it is only your body that is the issue here. Remove a fetus from the female body, and it cannot live alone. The day that scientists can prove that a fetus is truly alive, that it is not part of a woman's body until it is birthed, I will be one of the first to step aside and make way for a new law on the books.

When we let the state step in and start making choices about our values for us, we will be watching the foundation upon which our way of life is based crumble beneath our feet. And we may be unable to claw out of the pit into which we would fall.

If the state can make abortions illegal, then it is only a step or two away from telling us how many children we can have, or making abortions mandatory when population figures rise too high. It happened in China, it can happen here.

The rules and regulations of the federal government are important to preserve our way of life. However, they have no place in my home trying to legislate morality, and certainly not in my womb.

- Shelley Magee

Shelley Magee is Viewpoint Editor for *The Gamecock*.

Day to reflect upon equality

- John Palms

Today's observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday offers us an opportunity to reflect upon his ability to transcend racial and cultural division in the name of community, equality and non-violent social change.

For my generation, memories of Martin Luther King Jr.'s devoted struggle often evoke images of his vision and selflessness during civic strife. We witnessed his fearless efforts to recast our nation's commitment to human dignity.

Decades later, his courage and the lessons of that era remind us of our interdependence as human beings and our obligation to honor the rights of all people. The relevance of such values was made clear when Nobel Peace Prize recipient Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa shared his message of decency and freedom with our December graduates.

Similar ideals were related to our announcement last Friday that we had established a partnership between the Penn Center near Beaufort and our Columbia and Beaufort campuses. The center is a vital part of this state's history. The University will help preserve its rich African-American heritage and that of our other sea island cultures. Such an initiative symbolizes what we might accomplish in sharing in the diverse character of our nation.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught that we must not only guard freedom but guard against racism and cultural fracture. Particularly at this time of international political upheaval and fiscal crises, it is important to be mindful of his example. This day helps us to appreciate and respect the sacrifices that have been made, and the responsibility we share, to safeguard human rights and the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution.

As we observe the birth of a leader who gave his life to the causes of peace and justice, I join with our students and all of the USC community in honoring his legacy.

- John Palms is president of the University of South Carolina.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"PC" language gives identity

To the editor:

The idea of political correctness is a hot item lately. When I first heard the term, an image of a little, grey-haired lady fussing over whether she should put her finger in the air when she has a cup of tea, came to mind. But when I look at the exact issues that are raised, I can see that we are not just talking about how to behave. This is not just a superficial issue here.

People are saying, "Hey, look at me! I'm a human being with a past, a culture and feelings about them, just like you." And people are trying to understand that. And when they do understand, they think differently about something, and their language changes as a result, just naturally. That's healthy. That's being educated, learning something about life. And that's

what we're here for.

The character Cockwheat is supposed to represent two different kind of students, one Cocky and the other the African-American culture, and whoever came up with the term probably meant well in trying to represent everyone. But the point is that the name implies that there are two different peoples here, and the keyword is different. I say we are not different. We are all human beings. The fact that we can distinguish group characteristics does not change the fact that we are basically more alike than we are different.

So, long live this movement. The more the better. There'll be some problems with it of course. There always is. But we're much better off for having heard from everyone than not. We live in a society in which everyone has a right to speak and be recognized for who we really are, and not who others who don't know us think we are.

Ann Winchell

Journalism graduate student

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