

VIEWPOINT

Address

Commencement speaker should not be Palms

George Bush, Desmond Tutu and John Palms. Hmm. Seems like one of those childhood tests in which you pick the element that doesn't belong, in reference, of course, to commencement speakers.

About 1,800 seniors are being graduated in May, and if plans don't change, they will be shafted in the process.

Graduating seniors don't want President Palms to deliver their commencement address, and "their" is the operative word.

It's nothing personal. They just want someone from the outside world who is prestigious, someone like all past speakers. That is only fair.

Seniors should feel incredibly insulted by not only the fact that Palms is going to speak, but also by the pathetic lie of an excuse the administration offered up — they can't afford to pay a speaker.

But you bourgeoisie bureaucrats can afford a \$4 million hotel. Palms: listen to the students. Listen — to — the — students.

Graduating seniors: the only way you'll get the entrenched, totally cavalier administration to listen is to act. And act now.

- Sign the petition going around for a different speaker.
- Send letters and make phone calls to Palms' office.
- Hold a rally on the Horseshoe to demonstrate your demands.
- Form a committee and start your own search for a speaker.
- Boycott graduation.

If you do just two or three of those things, they will yield. History has shown that to be true.

Graduation is a pinnacle in young lives. Those walking and those watching are filled with powerful emotions. It is a time of great expectations. Now it's being fluffed over by people who are supposed to be serving students.

How out of touch are you administrators? Have you forgotten what it's like? What will it take to get you to take students seriously. Whatever it takes, it will take place. Take that to heart.

Students feel the frustration as they scream into the of the deaf administrative ear. Nothing.

It would be so easy and such a statement for the administration to do what is fair and what is desired.

USC is not a student-friendly university. It should be. There is no tradition in the president speaking at graduation.

Palms, a question, what's your justification? How do you defend the hypocrisy of the financial excuse? Why don't you care?

Students — cast off the fog of apathy and act. Let your disaffection and anger manifest itself in action. Right here, right now.



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USC VOICES

Question: Do you think the recession will end by this summer?



Lutz Reuter
English major

"No way because they're (economists) talking about long term development."



Shelby Bert
Political Science major

"No, I don't think it will by the summer because we're not coming out of it. No one's spending."



Ramel Natividad
Medical Technology major

"I really don't know. If I had to say, then I don't think it would be over by the summer. It's just been lasting a little long. I don't think it's going to be readily fixed. I think it's going to take a while."



Wanda Gee
Mechanical Engineering major

"I think that it won't because there's just too much that has been bogged down. There's too much to clear out, like Bush."



Tax allocations require guidelines

Did you know a small portion of the taxes you pay annually go to the National Endowment for the Arts?

This means, whether you like it or not, you are giving money to the NEA every time you pay your taxes. Thus, it is reasonable to expect certain restrictions to be placed on those who receive our dollars.

Last year, restrictions were passed which set guidelines that must be adhered to, or at least not crossed, if an artist wants to get some of our money.

These restrictions are meant solely to keep artists who put out obscene work from getting federal aid. This includes such staples of Americana as graphic illustrations of bodily functions, such as intellectually stimulating material depicting a male urinating into another male's mouth, as done by Robert Mapplethorpe.

Now maybe I am the only one, but I really don't think my money should go to someone who creates such thought-provoking material.

While no one can, or has, set definite guidelines for obscenity, I would have to say his work came pretty close.

Even if the NEA decides to grant money

to all artists, we should have the right to deny them our hard-earned wages. With unconditional funding, we would have no say as to who my money would help.

There are already sections where we can choose to, or not to, give money to everything from politics to charities. Wouldn't it make everyone's life a lot easier if we didn't have to debate the issue?

Couldn't the whole volatile situation be avoided if we all had the freedom of choice as pertaining to NEA contributions? Shouldn't we all have this right? Maybe this would make too much sense.

This way, those who aren't too thrilled about an artist's work can choose not to support such individuals. This would eliminate part of the problem with very little hassle. It would also give the artists a greater sense of independence concerning their work, since they won't have to answer to the public, which can be so fickle. Wouldn't this make everyone happy, or at least content?

- Tim Thorsen

Tim Thorsen is a staff writer for The Gamecock.

Obscenity not easily judged

Robert Mapplethorpe has been called one of the greatest portrait photographers of his generation. His interpretations of flowers are the standard by which many measure their work. But are many people aware of this? Of course not.

All they know is that he is a dead guy who did strange things with riding crops. And as far as Jesse Helms is concerned, that's fine. If it was up to this old man we'd all be looking at apples and bannanas.

But he is not the problem. The problem is people are listening to him.

The man is free to choose what he likes and what he doesn't. He can even say he thinks something is obscene.

But, and this is a heavy but, the moment he tells me what to think or what is obscene he has overstepped his bounds.

It is a politician's job to work in our best interests, not to act as our moral watchdog. And that includes funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.

The NEA was established to promote art, not dictate what it should look like.

People keep saying they don't want their tax dollars going to fund "filth." Well, I didn't care for the billions of dollars spent on a stealth bomber that never flew, or the money spent on the Supreme Court nomination hearings for Clarence Thomas, which proved nothing. At least with art we have something to show for the money.

What it boils down to is this: if something makes you feel or think, it is art. If you start dictating what is art, you start dictating what people think and feel.

That is completely unacceptable. The reason we have museums is so those inclined can view art. It's not on the street or in your kitchen.

If you don't want to see it, fine, stay home. But don't condemn an artist for your close-mindedness.

- Eric Glenn

Eric Glenn is the assistant photography editor for The Gamecock.

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Escort service misrepresented

To the editor:

This letter concerns the profile on Beth Reid that appeared in the Feb. 17 edition of *The Gamecock*. In this interview it was stated that the Alpha Phi Omega Escort Service sometimes takes up to two hours to respond to a would-be passenger.

As Escort Chairman I can confidently say that this is simply not the case. I do not know whose mistake this was, but to be honest, this isn't my concern. The point is that our Escort Service is a very important resource for safety at this university, and this misinformation could lead to fewer people taking advantage of the service. I would hate to think that some student would risk walking across campus after dark simply because we had been misrepresented in the newspaper. To reiterate, I'm not laying the

blame at anyone's doorstep. A mistake has been made, and my fraternity brothers and I feel that it should be corrected.

Benjamin S. Martin
Alpha Phi Omega Escort Chairman

Pro-life group in Columbia

To the editor:

Abortion is an issue of importance in the state of South Carolina at this time. On Saturday, Feb. 15, I attended the meeting of Operation Rescue at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Columbia to listen to speakers for the group. This was an attempt on my part to understand their position on abortion and respect their right to choose in their own lives.

I found that their plan is to target 48 healthcare facilities, 10 of them in Columbia, with the intention to prohibit

health care to anyone attending these clinics. Pickets at these facilities are being scheduled because of the possibility that a woman "might be seeking an abortion."

Any woman seeking medical attention, prenatal care or counseling will be intimidated or embarrassed. This same group, which has printed every statistic regarding abortions performed in this state, refuses to provide any information on Operation Rescue to Jim Miles, the secretary of state, who has requested information on the group regarding its status as a "religious" organization.

In addition to site-specific dates to demonstrate at individual clinics, there are dates to demonstrate weekly in front of the State House on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The ultimate goal is to change legislation in this state, to "rescue" all the unborn children and to deny women the free choice for their own lives and the lives of their children. I support the right to choose what is best for each individual, but I abhor the attempt by Operation Rescue to intimidate any woman at any

healthcare facility and their attempt to change legislation in this regard.

Keep in mind that there are 35 million people in the U.S. who have no healthcare insurance, and South Carolina rates among the highest in the nation in infant mortality. Also, a quote from INTO THE STREETS has this to think about, "Over 35 million people in the United States live in poverty. The majority of them are women and children." We need these healthcare facilities open!

Thirty women and men from the University of South Carolina demonstrated outside the Marriott Hotel this past Saturday night. What percentage of the student body who also support pro-choice do you think this represented? I challenge you to consider how you feel and to join a rally for pro-choice on the steps of the State House on Saturday, February 29, from 1-3 p.m. Whatever your choice might be, this is the time and the place to express it!

M. Kay Perry

A little defiance is just natural

- Rahul Sharangpani

The next time you come across a sign on a park bench that says "Wet Paint, Do not touch," observe it closely for the next five minutes. The chances are that at least three people, including you, will get their hands smeared by paint by trying to test the truth in the sign.

It's just another example of one of our strangest idiosyncrasies. We may not realize it, but we seem to have an irresistible craving for all things we are not supposed to do.

Science may have figured out most of life's mysteries. It falls short, however, in trying to explain why little Johnny won't walk around a puddle and will insist on splashing right through it, in spite of being told not to. The more his actions are dictated, the more rebellious he seems to get. Small wonder he imagines that his full name is "Johnny — Don't," because he is *always* addressed that way.



An advertisement that gives a phone number and warns, "Children under 18, please check with your parents before calling," fills all youths younger than 18 with an overwhelming desire not to do just that. Mail a package with the words "Delicate, handle with care" on it, and by the time it reaches its destination it looks as if the Redskins had used it for football practice. It appears that the key to getting a person to do something is to make it sound forbidden!

This peculiar trait is not confined to any specific age group. The truth is, there is a recalcitrant streak in all of us that surfaces and says, "Don't just tell me, make me," whenever we are ordered to act in a certain way.

Perhaps the slow changes in the connotation of some common adjectives, which are inevitable in this language's evolution have something to do with it. "Meek" and "submissive" are almost becoming synonymous with "cowardice." On the other hand, "brashness" and "arrogance" have become more desirable qualities.

Needless to say, our proclivity for defiance can turn out to be self destructive. Saddam Hussein's resolve to stay on in Kuwait increased with the number of countries that told him to get out, and just look where that attitude has gotten him today.

Having your hands smeared with paint of a park bench is one thing, but having to go through thorough humiliation in front of the whole world, all because of listening to some obscure voice inside us, is another.

God forbid that happen to any of us. Or, on second thought, maybe we would benefit more if He doesn't forbid, but just keeps quiet and lets things take their natural course.



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