

USC VOICES

Question: Do you think the Confederate flag should fly above the State House?



Tomer Tishgarten
Biology/Pre-Med major

"Yes. It's a piece of important U.S. history that should not be ignored."



Julie Vereen
Nursing major

"Yes. It's a part of our heritage, and good or bad, we should never try to ignore history."



Candy Clayton
Retailing major

"Yes. It's a part of South Carolina's history, and whether people like it or not, it just can't be ignored."



Willie Orr
Political Science major

"No. It represents a time of cruelty and injustice."

VIEWPOINT

Bigotry

Confederate flag symbol of hate, not backward Southern heritage

South Carolina is stuck in the quagmire of backward mentality. And the Confederate flag, which hangs on top of our State House "in respect to our heritage," is a symbol of this state's ignorance.

The Confederate flag is not a symbol of heritage, it is a symbol of bigotry, disgrace and affliction to the African-American race.

It is time to burn the flag. Burn it before we make you burn it. There is no reason why a flag that represented this state 132 years ago should still fly. This is 1992, not 1860. The United States has come a long way in race relations. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about South Carolina.

The Confederate flag is a slap in the face to progress. South Carolina is so fixed on its past, it's blind to the present and future.

Most of the other states don't hang flags on their state houses that meant something 130 years ago. Why must we? Why must we suffer the same mentality we had so long ago?

Why is it so hard to consider the feelings of others? Don't legislators realize just how much the flag cuts at the heart of anyone who respects human dignity?

These are the last days of Black History Month. We should recognize the plight and recovery of African Americans. And how do our state leaders celebrate it? By debating useless bills housed in a building that flies a flag spitting in the African-American culture.

Respect. That's all we ask of you. Respect the rights of others, before they make you.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. told the country more than 30 years ago he had a dream. He had a dream of whites and African Americans working in harmony.

How does South Carolina respect him? By putting a flag, which symbolizes the destruction and enslavement of African Americans, on top of their State House.

It is time to demand our leaders to take down the flag. It is time to demand our leaders to live in this century and look toward the next one. It is time to demand respect.

With advocacy comes action. It is time to rip apart the mentality of the "old south." It is time to tear apart the bigotry hanging blatantly above this state, this city and this school.

It is time.

Cross Fire

JFK evokes deep thought, emotion

Unquestionably, Oliver Stone's movie "JFK" makes you think, and think deeply. That is the strongest merit of the movie, whether you view it as propaganda or reality.

The political and media establishment has lashed out at "JFK," calling it a tool of persuasion.

But consider this — how do people react when you give them criticism or observation dead on the mark? The fact the establishment has been so vocally opposed to the movie validates to a large degree its historical truth.

Stone penetrated the layers of governmental haze and from the secretive, dark, corrupt world grabbed reality and threw it up in our faces.

Consider Watergate, the Iran-Contra affair, the Savings and Loan fiasco.

Consider corruption. Its tentacles infest our government at all levels. That's simply indisputable. To deny it, is to deny reality and view the world in an artificial naive manner.

Many "experts" who believe and disbelieve in the validity of the movie can be sited to support either side. But in undertaking such a vain effort, Stone's point is lost.

Stone wants to make you think and feel. To lie awake in bed and replay. He wants to disturb and provoke. He succeeds.

It's doubtful the American people will ever know the truth behind the assassination of their president. And that's sickening. And the whole point.

Somewhere in a deep governmental vault lie documents of the investigation. They're locked away and have been for years. Our president was murdered, and we can't see the evidence for their conclusion of guilt.

Is this America? What is the justification? National security is what the government says. What a pathetic insult to our intelligence.

Or, perhaps national security is a justification, because if we knew the truth, there would quite possibly be a civil uprising. And it would be justified.

Stone's movie has been a catalyst for a new movement to open the files. More than likely much of the original information has been destroyed. The American public should never have let it happen.

Don't wallow in the details of "JFK." Let it make you think and feel. Let it make you feel anger for the way our government has kept you in the dark like little children unable to handle the truth. Seek the truth. Make them open the files. Right here, right now.

- Eric Ward

Eric Ward is the editor in chief for The Gamecock.

Stone theory too much to swallow

Oliver Stone is a very silly and frustrated man.

All conspiracy theorists are by nature. Whether it's the KKK believing there is a Jewish conspiracy to destroy America, or Al Sharpton believing there is a white conspiracy to destroy blacks, it takes a special mixture of fear, anger and naïvete to believe there are grand hidden schemes to ruin the world.

And this is what "JFK," if taken as literally as Stone means it to be taken, is telling us.

Stone asks us to believe the Kennedy assassination was a grand plan between the CIA, the FBI, the "Military Industrial" complex, the guy who drove Kennedy's limo, the Dallas police, Lyndon Johnson, Earl Warren and gay Cubans in New Orleans.

Do you believe that? I sure don't. Oliver Stone claims to be fostering dialogue, but there is no dialogue in "JFK." No possible options other than those given by Jim Garrison get any recognition in the film. As all conspiracy theorists do, Stone selectively omits facts about Kennedy's killing and even creates his own when they suit his purposes.

For example, during the final court scene we see Kennedy's head snap back over and over again as Jim Garrison, portrayed by Kevin Costner, plays the Zapruder film,

supposedly showing that shots came from the area of the grassy knoll in front of the car.

But never does Stone, through his characters, tell us that during the Warren Commission investigations, ballistics tests were done on apes which proved a shot to the back of the head causes a nervous reaction which makes the head jerk back.

Of course, Stone is free to disbelieve those results. Conspiracy theorists are always free to ignore any factual discrepancy in their argument.

Conspiracy theorists are also free, when their argument has gone haywire and is completely confused, to tie all the loose ends together by bringing to the scene some mysterious, nameless CIA agent to present some completely unverifiable facts.

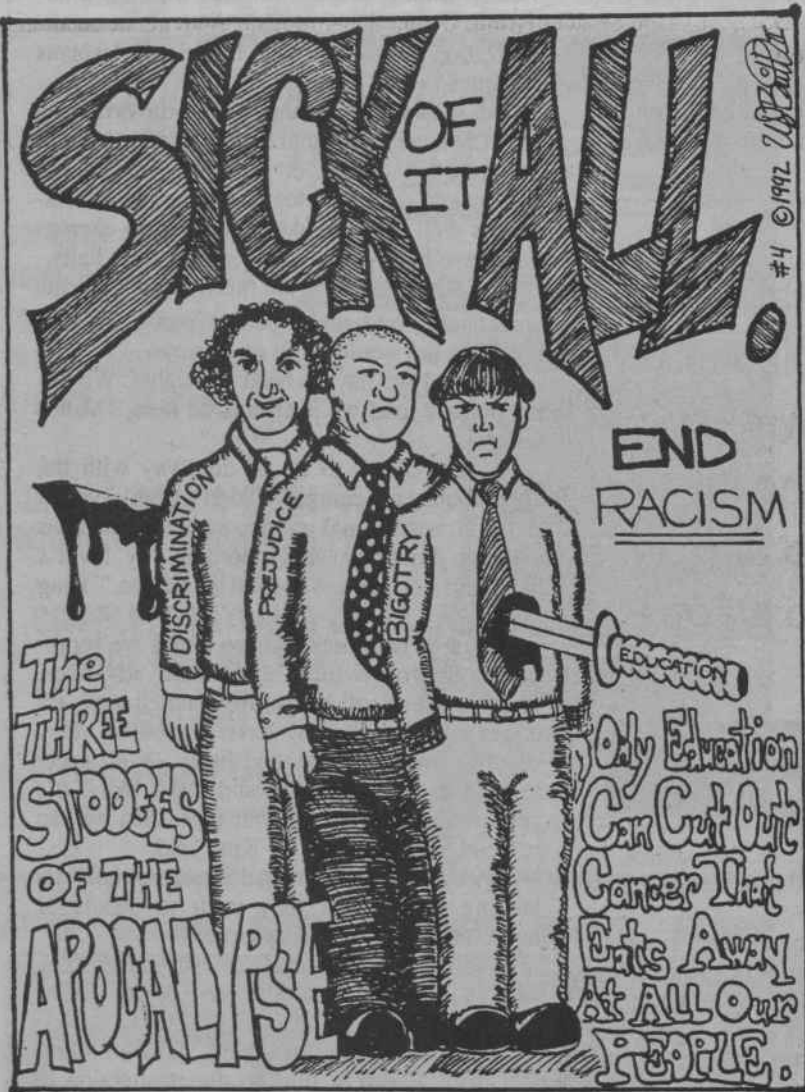
In effect, Stone says arrogantly to the audience "Hey, you can't prove me wrong, so I must be right."

Should we accept this kind of logic? I don't think so.

I think the only useful thing "JFK" has shown us is how much power the movies have to reinforce illusions. Certainly, if Stone had written his ideas in a brief opinion column, most people would have not paid attention.

- Todd Venezia

Todd Venezia is a journalism junior.



President-elect given suggestions

- Patrick Villegas

Dear Mr. President-elect:

Today is a special day for you.

As students of The University of South Carolina, we have elected you to represent our university in the best manner possible. We have bestowed upon you privilege, honor, and responsibility.

Therefore, because you are the most influential student here at Carolina, I have compiled a few things you should remember as your one-year term begins.

■ Don't screw up. You have spent well over \$500 in campaign posters and signs, plastering and littering your name all over the walls and halls of this fine campus to earn your position. Please make sure it is not the last time we see your name in print. We want to see your ideas work for us, not for you and your campaign.

■ Remember, you are student president, not a miracle worker. Don't work on things you know it is impossible to accomplish.

■ Contrary to popular belief, the world does exist outside the student government glass cage. You are a college student and someone has paid an enormous amount of money for you to learn at USC. Don't squander your education. Your new job is not worth skipping classes or burdening yourself with the world's problems. You'll have plenty of time to solve the world's problems after college.

■ It is the first time in a long time a minority will not hold the top position. Try not to forget them.

■ You represent the university. Everywhere you go, people will be watching what you say, what you do, and how you act. Don't disappoint us. Make us proud.

Well, Mr. President, you will probably be reading this column in the late morning hours because your victory party did not end until late last night.

Do me a favor. Get a pair of scissors and cut this column out. Put it in a safe place and reflect upon it a year from now. If you follow these easy guidelines, the student body will probably wish you could stay another year.

Sincerely,
Patrick Villegas
News Editor



Government weak, ineffective

To the editor:

The overwhelming majority of students have chosen to abstain from voting in the student elections. Some people, Mr. Queen for example, adopt the cynic's view. These people contend the majority of students simply do not care about the important issues which affect their everyday lives, that they are, in short, apathetic.

Others see the lack of voter turnout as a sign marking the beginning of the end of student government as we have come to know it. If 15 percent of the students vote, and that 15 percent is divided almost evenly between two candidates then, at best, 8 percent of the students support the student body president. Mr. Queen then implies the 92 percent who did not vote simply do not care about important issues like parking, crime, tuition increases, visitation policies, commencement ceremony, etc.

If a finger is to be pointed as the cause of this extraordinarily low voter turnout, I will proudly stand behind the 92 percent who were forced to pay to an ineffective student government. If Mr. Queen would rather support the 8 percent who purport to represent the student body, that's fine with me, but it compels me to ask, "Who indeed is the 'cynic' with 'twisted' views?" Some of us place our faith in small governments who extort money from the majority in the guise of social service. Others of us place our hope in the people.

Mr. Queen did not address any of the points I made in Monday's Gamecock. I will attempt, therefore, to simplify them for the sake of the simple minded.

(1) The student body president has insufficient power to represent his constituents.

(2) It is the Board of Trustees that ultimately dictates policy.

(3) The students do care about the issues but realize points one and two (above).

Voting for the student body presi-

dent is like betting on an armless boxer. The promoters will proclaim him ambidextrous, a few will bet, and the integrity of the event will be lost at the cost of the spectators.

John C. Foster
Media Arts senior

Homecoming a dead issue

To the editor:

Will someone please tell the student government to stop beating a dead horse?

For those of you who do not know what I'm speaking of, it's the issue of the Homecoming Queen. Once again, it's reared its ugly head, and I'm personally sick of it.

As a member of the Homecoming Commission, I can safely say the following: Beth Dubil has said "No Homecoming Queen," and Ilana Myerson has said "No Homecoming Queen." When will the student govern-

ment get the message?

The issue is no longer discussed in commission. We have made our stand, and we're going to stick with it. It was stated if another organization wanted to sponsor it, no problem. But so far, no one has offered to my knowledge.

Homecoming Queen was an event which did not serve to unite campus. That is why it was discontinued. In an age in which feminism is on the rise, it was probably a decision well made.

It's unfair to run a popularity contest using the student activity fees, when the money could be used to add some new events, like the marathon, or to improve current events, such as comedy night. I feel the Homecoming Commission made the only decision it could regarding this issue. If no one really cares, why have it in the first place? Student government has better things to do than drag this out any longer than it already has.

Chris Duncan
Graphic Design sophomore
Homecoming Comedy Night Chairman

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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