

# Viewpoint

## Service

### Volunteer opportunities abound in Columbia

Despite the chill wind and the threat of rain, more than 30 people gathered in front of Russell House Saturday morning to participate in a community service program called One Shot.

A monthly program sponsored by the Division of Student Life's Office of Community Service, One Shot's main purpose is to introduce people who normally don't volunteer to the world of community service.

Saturday's group went to the Peachtree Rock Preserve, a local park maintained by the Nature Conservancy.

Their task was to clean up litter in the preserve and to create fire lanes, which allows controlled forest burns. The burns are a natural part of the forest cycle; before man cleared much of the forests, parts of them would be destroyed each year because of lightning.

And after just three short hours of hard work, the preserve was noticeably cleaner and the fire lanes completed for the spring burns.

This program is just one example of the many worthwhile service opportunities in the USC community and Columbia area.

There is a large selection of programs and charities for students interested in serving the community, ranging from the One Shots to soup kitchens to just giving blood.

But in these times of shrinking budgets and staffs, many programs can afford only limited public relations and depend on individuals' own initiative to get involved.

Even though, when asked, most people say they strongly support volunteerism and would be willing to devote a small part of their time to it, most never act on it.

This is very unfortunate and disturbing. And trends seem to show volunteerism is decreasing.

In a time of sacrifice, as Bill Clinton has called it, we know government can't do everything or even most things. With this in mind, volunteerism is even more important.

It is imperative that individuals become active and stay active. Without this help from the private sector, many people will suffer. This could mean closed soup kitchens, dirty parks, illiterate adults or bloodless bloodbanks.

The call for service is now louder than ever. And we must respond.

The opportunities are there. USC's Office of Community Service is always willing to help people find their niche in volunteering. But students must go to them. They do not have the staff nor the budget to go to the students.

So get involved. A little bit of devoted time can go a long way.



## Feminists on the wrong side of pornography fight

For many years, the pornography issue has been making unlikely bedfellows of feminists and fundamentalists. Although the basic principles of feminism inherently lean to the liberal left, lately they seem to have undergone a directional mutation that brings feminist ideals about erotic materials 180 degrees around until they have gone so far left they find themselves, inevitably, on the doorstep of the right.

Feminists' philosophies are changing from progressive to suppressive, and women should be very uneasy.

By opposing pornography because it "victimizes" women, feminists are creating a dichotomy in the women's movement. This protectionist philosophy is absolutely ridiculous.

It does nothing but drag women back into the dark ages. How can women stand as strong and empowered individuals when our own movement keeps telling us we are victims, that we need to be protected, that we are mindless enough that our moral standing must be legislated for us?

The women's movement was born from a need to equalize women in a patriarchal society. Nothing is accomplished toward that goal when our sexuality is suppressed.

Women who take part in the creation of nor-



SHELLEY MAGEE

mal erotic materials sign a contract. They make a conscious decision to participate in those activities, and they even make money doing it. How can this woman be called a victim? What kind of a feminist says women are not capable of signing a contract? This means women should not be allowed to sign a business deal, a lease or a bill of sale, since obviously we are incapable of understanding the nature of such agreements.

Let's give ourselves some credit here. The moment we become victims by virtue of being female, we should go ahead and pack it in, because we can't handle being functioning members of society.

For the first time society is beginning to hold men responsible for their crimes. Men do not commit rape because of pornography, but because some of them are twisted individuals. Feminists must stop connecting rape with pornography. A man does not suddenly go out and force himself upon a woman because the Playboy centerfold was a 36D wearing black garter belts.

Feminists are unwittingly helping shift blame away from the men who perpetrate sex crimes and transferring it to pornography. There should be no room in the feminist movement for

women who are willing to give men an excuse for rape.

Novelist Anne Rite pointed out that when we start giving credibility to the idea that "pornography made him do it" we must also accept the excuse, "but she was dressed like she wanted it."

Yet, feminists are still busily trying to ban products that cater to audiences of erotica. Don't they realize success in removing this material from the shelves gives moral majority groups equal ground for limiting sex and AIDS education in schools because it discusses homosexuality and in taking the Wizard of Oz off library shelves because it has an evil witch in it?

Feminists should be supporting the movement women are making towards discovering their sexuality. Instead of trying to rip this material off the shelves, they should be proud women are finally able to step out of the traditional role of sex as a duty and take part in erotica as beautiful, self-aware, sexual beings.

We are breaking away from suppression by patriarchal religious tyrants who would keep women barefoot and pregnant. We can no longer subscribe to the idea that women sullied their sexuality and corrupted mankind during that fateful tree-side apple seduction.

We're just too smart for that.

Shelley Magee is a columnist for The Gamecock

### LETTERS POLICY

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words maximum. Full name and professional title or year and major, if a student, must be included along with an address and phone number. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit for style, possible libel or space limitations. The Gamecock will not withhold names under any circumstances.

### EDITOR'S NOTE

## Block voting unnecessary in student body elections

UMOJA, an organization stressing black unity, and the USC College Republicans this past week tried to wrangle partisan politics into the student government elections, and, to my knowledge, that's an understood no-no here at USC.

These two organizations gave their members a list of executive and legislative candidates to vote in hopes of securing a voice that would represent these groups or views in the upcoming year.

When the results were finally tallied Thursday evening, 30 candidates backed by these two groups won senate seats, 20 of them backed by UMOJA. This list by UMOJA even included a write-in candidate for vice president who received more than 15 percent of the vote.

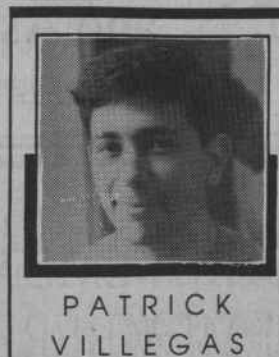
This, boys and girls, sounds like a good case of partisan politics to me.

Although we should not rule out the fact that these people were elected on their own merit and that they won without the backing of a separate party, we bear the responsibility of reading between the lines.

Last week, the USC College Republicans sent out a list of Republican candidates in their official newsletter urging its members to vote Republican in the SGA races. The list included more than 35 members and asked members to take it to the polls with them.

The newsletter also urged members to "reclaim Carolina" from the liberal majority and said, "The most horrendous outcome of this election would be an enormous defeat for conservatism and fiscal responsibility and a victory for liberalism and fiscal waste as our tuition increases."

The newsletter also went on to say that Republicans "must not let the liberals succeed in bashing American traditions and ideals in the name of 'cultural diversity.'"



PATRICK VILLEGAS

And we cannot let the big-spending liberals waste thousands upon thousands of our student activity fees on useless projects and specialized groups."

This type of thinking scared many of the liberals on campus, and groups like UMOJA started putting out their own list of candidates for which to vote.

So instead of thinking for the best interests of the students this past Thursday, many of the students wound up voting for the best interest of the party or organization they supported and ultimately forced out many senatorial candidates who had good ideas, but did not have a group backing them.

This whole system caused a major disruption in the integrity and fairness of our selection process, and, instead of voting for a better qualified candidate, many disallowed the possibility of fresh faces and new ideas to enter the arena of student politics.

As I have said all semester long, student government is not a place for little Jesse Helmses or pseudo-Teddy Kennedys to be running around the Russell House Theatre politicking for the left or right cause. It's a place for us students to have a small voice in how we spend university money and how life is governed here at USC.

Let's try not to make student government bigger than what it really is.

Patrick Villegas is editor in chief of The Gamecock

## Letters to the Editor

### Gun control a key to lowering crime

To the editor:

Recent letter writers have been at pains to assure the readers of The Gamecock that firearms somehow have nothing to do with the high rate of homicides committed with guns each year in the United States and in South Carolina.

The fact is that in 1991, the last year for which complete figures are available, there were 24,703 murders in the United States and 402 in South Carolina. In every state, year after year, half of all murders are committed with handguns, and firearms of all types account for two out of three murders.

The homicide rate is higher in some states than in others, but the

percentage of murders committed with firearms is quite consistent throughout the country.

One recent letter writer claimed that New Jersey, where all guns are supposedly banned, has a higher crime rate than South Carolina. The fact is that in 1991, when the U.S. murder rate was 9.8 per 100,000 population, the rate in New Jersey was only 5.2 and the South Carolina rate was 11.3.

In most European countries, where firearms and especially handguns are not readily available, the murder rate is less than one per 100,000.

Anyone who is interested in working for a lower rate of homicide in the United States and in South Carolina will quickly recognize that firearms are a great facilitator of murder. Restrictions on the

availability of firearms will make us all safer.

Bruce Pearson  
English faculty

### 'Valentine condoms' a tasteless promotion

To the editor:

As a graduating student at USC, I just wanted to express my extreme disgust for the ads that ran last week all over campus for "Valentine Condoms." The motto was "Show your valentine you care — send a condom!" First of all, the thought of sending a condom as opposed to the traditional rose or card is completely tasteless.

Secondly, I would just like to state some facts about condoms so

that people are not misled in trying to show their care. Condoms have a 15.7 percent failure rate. Banking a fatal disease or any other STD, not to mention pregnancy, on an 84.3 percent success rate is not my idea of showing concern. This is a fact, and an organization on campus wants to encourage you to take that chance, possibly with your life.

The only 100 percent sure way to show your valentine you care is to abstain. The media and popular opinion today say that college students basically cannot control themselves. That is a lie. Don't believe it because there are students on this campus who are abstaining until they are married and are still enjoying life to the max.

Jenny Hazeres  
Marine science senior

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