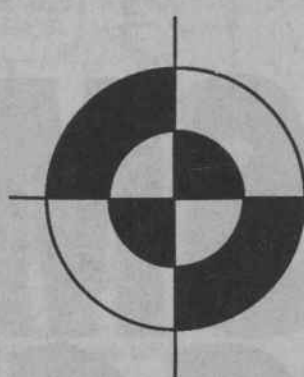


Viewpoint



CROSSFIRE

Should stores be allowed to sell wine and beer on Sunday?

Violence

Parental responsibility, security a must to reduce violence in S.C. public schools

It's only getting worse. The violence continues; each incident seems more horrifying and closer to home than the previous one. The rape of a substitute teacher in a North Charleston High School restroom Tuesday is just the latest example of the senseless violence that has invaded South Carolina's public schools.

The winter has been riddled with stories of violence. The ensuing drama of a Greenville boy kicking a teacher is still unfolding while police are looking into possible criminal charges against him. The Columbia area was stunned earlier this winter by the shooting of a 16-year-old at Lexington High School.

Increased violence, whether it be rape, shootings or assaults, has captured the attention of the state's politicians, school officials, teachers, parents and students. But instead of looking for a solution, the schools seem to be taking the violence in stride. This is a dangerous attitude to take.

Most psychologists feel much of the violence perpetrated by students and youths are a result of poor parental guidance and, sometimes, broken homes. The kids take their frustrations and misguided ideas to school with them, throwing their wrath on their teachers and classmates.

But instead of discussing the importance of focusing on the parents and the family, many critics and policy makers stress the need for thorough security, including guards and metal detectors.

Of course, security and order must be maintained in the public schools if any sort of educational experience can occur; however, making the school entrance similar to customs before entering Cuba is not the perfect solution.

Policy makers must stress the importance of the parents' role in the education of the student, both in the classroom and at home. This is a long, difficult process, but it is necessary if we truly want to eliminate these heinous crimes in the schools.

It is still early enough to halt this highly disturbing trend, but it will take foresight and time.

Otherwise, get accustomed to reading about more and more school violence. It is a problem, and it won't go away by itself. But making school into a police state is not the answer.

PRO

J.T. WAGENHEIM

It's Super Bowl Sunday, and your team is up 14 points at halftime. In all the excitement, you and your buddies don't ration your alcohol properly and run out of beer just as Billy Ray Cyrus takes the stage for the half-time country music laser light show.

Being the host of the party, you quickly dash out to the nearest Pantry to reload your beverage arsenal. Guess again, pal, it's Sunday and you're in South Carolina. Unfortunately, you end up having to cruise back to the party with a few cases of RC and Snapple.

Why we can't purchase beer and wine on Sundays is another one of those Southern Bible Belt localisms that has never ceased to boggle my Yankee mind.

What is it about Sunday that dictates that people shouldn't be allowed to buy alcohol? Why not outlaw it on a day like Tuesday or Wednesday? Sunday is the day of rest and relaxation. To many, resting involves kicking back their bare feet with a beer in one hand and a remote control in the other.

Many work hour upon endless hour in school or at work for the other five or six days of the week, so Sunday should be a six-pack kinda' day.

But not in South Carolina. Oh, no siree, Bob. Forget about it. These are the kind of laws we need to get off the books now. In some Florida schools, sororities aren't allowed to have houses because there is a law that was written God only knows how long ago. It says that any residence that houses more than eight females at one time is a brothel. It is these same primitive, founding-father principles that lock the beer coolers on Sunday.

The state House of Representatives recently endorsed an amendment that would allow grocery and convenience stores to buy a seven-day, \$1,000 license that would allow them to sell beer and wine. Although the permit would only be available in three counties and nine other cities, South Carolina is on the right track.

The amendment still has to be passed by the Senate and signed by Gov. Carroll Campbell, who has openly disapproved of Sunday beer and wine sales.

I ask you, Governor, what's the big deal? Why don't you just sit back this Sunday with a glass of White Zinfandel and think it over? Just make sure you buy it on Saturday.

J.T. Wagenheim is an associate editor for The Gamecock

CON

BRIAN GARLAND

The state House of Representatives passed a bill Tuesday to allow grocery and convenience stores to have a license to sell beer and wine on Sundays in three counties and nine cities.

I have written on this subject in the past, but my views are even stronger now because of an experience I had this past summer.

I traveled to a place new to many maps and geography classes — Kazakhstan, a Central Asian country and a former Soviet republic. I spent eight weeks there learning a distinctly different culture while telling the nationals about mine.

During my stay, I had a chance to drink kumiss, or fermented mare's milk — disgusting. I also had a chance to eat parts of a sheep's face. I still cringe at the thought of it. I interacted with Muslims who drank alcohol — an action the Koran considers a tremendous sin. But these were things the Kazakhs did and enjoyed because their ancestors have been doing them for years.

Surely anyone who has been to a foreign country can understand the culture shock one goes through, but even going to different parts of the country one can see cultural distinctions.

Prostitution is legal in rural Nevada. The drinking age in New Orleans is 18. Even Charleston's atmosphere is very different than Columbia's.

The South is the Bible Belt. A church on every corner is spreading God's word and attempting to stop sin. And dry Sundays are simply a part of that culture.

As of now, beer and wine are allowed to be sold in bars on Sunday, but not in convenience stores and supermarkets.

The legislation, if passed, would allow alcohol sales in Richland, Lexington and Charleston counties and nine cities, including much of the Grand Strand.

If the Senate passes this law and Gov. Campbell does not veto it, beer and wine could be more available for sports couch potatoes on Sundays.

They will not have to go to a bar and watch the games there. They can get all the beer they want and take it home to drink. But why can't they go buy the alcohol Saturday night?

Sundays in the South should be a special time to spend with church, family or friends. If you want to drink, it is just as easy to buy the alcohol the night before or go to a bar. After all, people over 21 are free to drink the other six nights of the week.

Monday morning hangovers were never meant to be a Southern tradition.

Brian Garland is Copy Desk Chief for The Gamecock

Yeltsin's ouster in Russia necessary to stabilize world

With the possibility of Boris Yeltsin being ousted from power in Russia, everyone seems to believe the Cold War is going to return.

Well, what we called the Cold War was a much more stable situation than we now face. The international system is an anarchic one, and when there was the bipolar balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States, there was at least some stability. These two powers balanced each other — neither side crazy enough to think they could actually win a nuclear war on an international level. The leaders of these two nations were night and day in ideology, but they all understood the consequences of a nuclear war.

Well, the good old days are gone, and many people feel today's world is now a much safer place than during the Cold War; however, in reality, we are now in the middle of one of the most unstable international situations we have ever faced.

Yes, the former Soviet Union is moving towards democratic government, and the United States is the only superpower; but I would argue the United States would, in a strategic sense, be better off if the hardliners succeed in taking power.

It's not because I want to see communism return to Russia. But it will take something of that magnitude to puncture the idealistic bubble in which the Clinton administration now sits.

The Clintonites argue there is no major threat to America's interests if Russia stays on the course Boris Yeltsin has set. From a quick glance, which is apparently all that was given, this is true.

In reality, though, the world is much more dangerous now than it used to be. There are nine nations known to have or to have had nuclear weapons. There are many others that are believed to



WESLEY LOCKLAIR

have them, and many more who are seeking them.

Both Pakistan and India are believed to have nuclear weapons and, according to many sources, were on the brink of using them. Iraq, Iran and Libya are all seeking nuclear capabilities, while Israel is believed to already possess them. The possibilities in the Middle East are clearly frightening.

North Korea is believed to have nuclear weapons; they have also been recently causing trouble along their border with South Korea.

There is not only the threat of these nations using their weapons, but there is an increased probability that terrorists could obtain a small nuclear device. It doesn't take a genius to figure out the possibilities there. The effects of the World Trade Center bombing is nothing compared to the possible damage inflicted by a hand-held atomic device.

This may seem to be a pessimistic view, but the world is a dangerous place, and the United States cannot be too careful with its military. Cutting forces may seem like the right thing to do, but there are too many variables in the realm of international politics to gamble on peace.

The Congress would be wise to formulate a policy of pragmatic realism instead of getting caught up in the euphoric web of Clinton's idealism.

Wesley Locklair is a columnist for The Gamecock

Misunderstanding, fear spark writer's views

To the editor:

Concerning gays in the military, Douglas Winters and right-wingers should not be so puzzled when it comes to understanding why their viewpoint is not given journalistic precedent. The homosexual community is saying and doing one thing, and the conservative community is believing and saying another.

Right-wingers are losing the battle on this front because finally the homosexual community has a voice that is being heard. With the defeat of the conservative agenda in this past election, a re-education process is commencing. Conservatives shudder in fear, dreading the idea of thinking outside their white-bread world. Thus, we have Winters' desire to uphold a ban based on oppression and misunderstanding.

For the past 12 years, we have had the politics of division, hate and calculated fear. The survival of Winters' political agenda was dependent on the suffocation of diverse groups and agendas that

contradicted the conservatives' fragile arguments. Thus, we had the attacks on the NEA, civil rights and womens' issues.

The politics of fear is becoming less popular as time marches on under our new administration. With the hearings on the issue of gays in the military starting in a few short weeks, we will hear, with eloquence, the voice of a large community of people who just want the same rights as everyone else.

They will remind us that we encounter gay people in every walk of life. We will realize that there are plenty of gays in the military now. We will listen to members from a gay veterans' organization in California. We will come to recognize gays as unique individuals in their own right.

We will be reminded that important personalities from Socrates to Rock Hudson did not live Douglas Winters' life, but nonetheless made significant contributions to our culture.

Winters needs to understand that the homosexual ROTC cadet has served his country with pride, but to ask that cadet to stop serving because right-wingers are not secure with their sexuality and

morality is extremist.

Ultimately, Douglas Winters needs to understand why his viewpoint is not prominently posted in the news — the paranoid Rush Limbaugh conspiracy theory excluded. It's based on fear and misunderstanding. After the hearings on this issue, conservatives will look silly with their prejudices and stereotypes.

Gregory DiMedio
English graduate student

NRA cartoon sends incorrect message

To the editor:

With all respect for the field of journalism, it seems that only liberal people major in it, except for a rare few. Paul Jon's March 24 "NRA (National Rifle Association) Headquarters" cartoon isn't from one of the few; his bias shines through clearly.

I know this cartoon was only for the means of poking fun, but it sends a bad message to USC students about the NRA. The NRA is very concerned about children being around guns. Despite the car-

toon, the NRA does not think of it as "free advertising" when a kid takes a gun to school.

I found this to be very offensive to the NRA and its members; it could almost be considered slander, but I'm no lawyer.

The NRA supports educational programs in school to teach children about gun safety methods and the dangers of guns. For example, there is the Eddie Eagle program, but this program has been denounced by school boards and the media on the grounds that it promotes violence.

They figure the best way to stop kids from carrying guns to school is to not teach them anything about guns. Obviously, this idea isn't working. Isn't there something wrong when we teach kids safe sex and the dangers of alcohol and drugs while we don't teach them anything about gun safety?

We're taught here at USC to avoid being biased and prejudiced against people and their ideas. Shouldn't The Gamecock try doing the same when it comes to the NRA?

Brad Pittman
Business freshman

Letters to the Editor

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