

Viewpoint

Rape

Sexual assault awareness essential in fighting society's most heinous crime

Rape awareness. It seems like a simple concept to understand, but it is an essential element in the fight against the terrible, inhumane act of rape. Next week is Sexual Assault Awareness Week, sponsored by Campus Rape Awareness, which will include a number of activities. The importance of these activities cannot be overstated. Even though our society is more conscious of this violent problem today than it has ever been, rape seems to be even more prevalent now. And, unfortunately, the number of reported rapes is only a substantial fraction of the total amount of rapes that occur. The vileness, disrespect and embarrassment of any rape causes many victims to conceal the truth rather than tell their stories and ultimately press charges. Admitting one had absolutely no control of a situation, especially if it was with a boyfriend, or, even worse, a relative, is a humiliating and frightening experience. A large percentage of the rape cases reported at universities are considered "date rape," which is the act of being raped by an acquaintance or friend. Being violated in such a way by someone you know is in many ways worse than being assaulted by a total stranger. With all this in mind, increased education and awareness of this crime are essential in combating it. Both men and women need to know what is legally considered a sexual assault and what simple precautions can be made to avoid these types of situations, on both sides. The key is awareness. Anybody can be sexually assaulted. Nobody is immune to it. But knowing it does happen, how it happens and how to avoid it is the best way to eliminate the chances of it ever affecting you. To put it simply, society will be a much better place to live without it. So be responsible, and learn.

LETTERS POLICY

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Revitalizing Main Street would return city's class

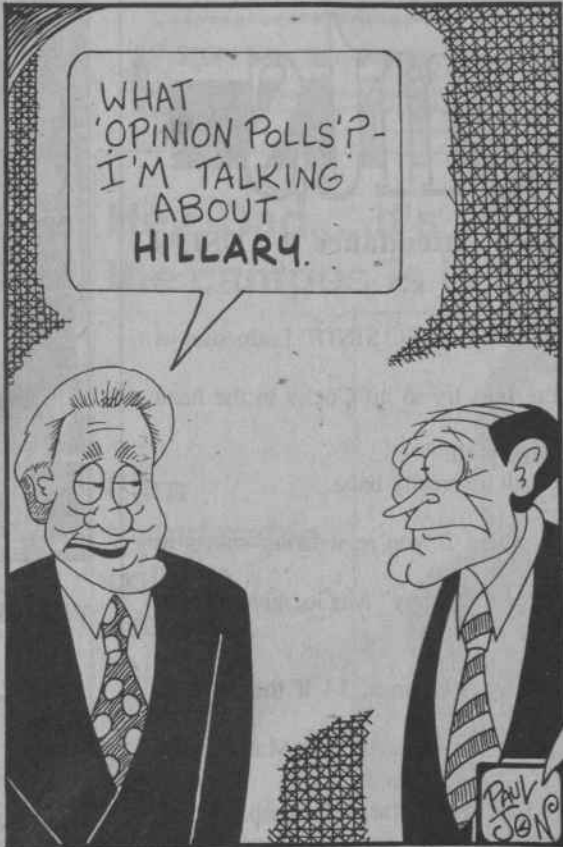
There's a disgrace in Columbia — one that no one ever talks about. It's Main Street. Traveling through Chicago last year, I was amazed at how many people were out at night, shopping, eating and having a great time. Walking through the business district in Chicago is like standing in the center of America with life and culture all around. Certainly, there is crime throughout Chicago, but there, in the heart of the city, there is nothing but life. Downtown Columbia is nothing like that. People who want to have fun go to Five Points, while the prudent stay home, afraid to venture onto the streets at night. Why? Perhaps because there's nothing to do. Aside from the legendary Capitol Restaurant, with its tantalizing entrees, which include brains and grits, and the Capitol Newsstand, the entire street is dead. True, there are some shops, but the loss of Macy's last year seems to have stripped that part of the city of its last iota of class and appeal. It is a truly beautiful part of the city. The brick-accented streets beg to be walked on, and the buildings are a mixture of Southern Americana and modern urban architecture. The presence of the state Capitol would be a wonderful backdrop to shopping or to sidewalk cafes. Instead, it serves as a signpost, saying in essence, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." Does Columbia want to turn into another Washington, D.C.? Center of government and beauty by day, center of crime and destitution by night. We can't let this happen to our home. So what does the city need? Lighting. One reason people are afraid to venture downtown at night is the utter darkness present over most of Main Street. Police protection. People are afraid. Afraid of being mugged. Afraid of being stabbed or shot or raped. And after all, who wouldn't be? The large number of homeless people who wander the streets at night make people uneasy, often



LEE CLONTZ

for no reason other than the lack of protection if something were to happen. The probable argument against installing more lights and hiring more police is that, since no one ever goes downtown, they're not needed. But, because there aren't enough police and lights, people don't go downtown. It's a vicious cycle that must be broken. Perhaps what downtown Columbia needs most is somewhere for people to go. Most shops close early, and many of them seem on the verge of closing down, period. The city is dark at night in more ways than one, and people are scared. What is needed is for a few businesses to take a chance and really reinvest in the downtown area. An Applebee's or another Macy's could be the way to go if done right. Light the place up. Have a grand reopening. Make a new commitment to the city we live in. I love Columbia, and I am proud to call it my home. But I hate to see what it's becoming. The downtown area is turning into a ghost town, and no one seems to be trying to save it. Remember, Five Points isn't all of Columbia. But it is a sign of the direction downtown should be moving toward. If Chicago, in the middle of one of the crime capitals of the world, can create an urban oasis where people can shop and play and just be, why can't Columbia? After all, you shouldn't be scared in your own home.

Lee Clontz is an associate editor for The Gamecock



Feminist movement should focus on issues of all races

"Rights for all, or rights for none" was a popular chant during the feminist movement about 25 years ago. However, the feminist movement deals with issues that predominantly pertain to middle-class, white women. Is this because many white women may be culturally insensitive to women of color, and therefore, only concern themselves with rights for women within their own economic and educational backgrounds? Is this because many women of color alienate themselves from the feminist movement and have not demanded that the feminist movement be inclusive? Is this because well-educated women believe they are better than less educated women? Feminism affects all women. Therefore, the



ROCHELLE KILLINGBECK

feminist movement should focus on issues that affect all women. For example, lobbying for on-site day care while mothers are at work seems to have become a big issue when masses of mostly middle-class, white women began to work outside the home. This issue had been a concern in the African-American community for a long time. For years, poor women of color, as well as poor white women, have had to leave their children at home while they worked to keep food on the table and a roof over their family's heads. Why didn't the feminist movement cover latch-key children then? When will the feminist movement push for day care centers for mothers dependent on government aid (and who want to work), as well as

mothers who work and are not dependent on federal aid? How many multicultural issues do women's organizations on campus cover? How many women of color participate in campus organizations that strive for the betterment of women? How many women care, one way or the other? In order for the modern feminist movement to achieve ultimate success, it must be inclusive. Poverty, poor health care, lack of education, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, rape and physical abuse are issues that affect all of us. These issues are not race or economy specific. Remember the chant from the last feminist movement, "Rights for all, or rights for none."

Rochelle Killingbeck is an assistant news editor for The Gamecock



Letters to the Editor

Scriptures condemn homosexual activity

To the editor: In its March 22 issue, The Gamecock covered a story on the gay men who desired to be married and "be right in the eyes of God and their family." Before we go any further, we must make it clear that we are speaking about The God, the one who wrote the Bible, and not just a god. There are many convenient gods that will meet any lifestyle. However, there is only one God who inspired the writing of the all-time best-selling book — the Bible. With this in mind, I wish to express my concerns about how this book can be so misinterpreted. First of all, Proverbs 30:5 reads, "The word of God is flawless." That means it does not make mistakes. The Bible has been on trial more than 10,000 times for its accuracy, and it has never lost. Not once. Now if we look at Leviticus 18:22, "It is an abomination for man to lie with man as he lies with a woman." Or Leviticus 20:13, "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death. Their blood will be

on their own heads." Other scriptures concerning this issue include 1 Corinthians 6:9, and Romans 1:20-29. In the light of these scriptures, I find it very difficult not to understand what God's view is on men lying with men, or women with women, or homosexuality. Sure, God does love everyone, but he hates sin. He always will. If any homosexual or any other person in this world desires to be right in God's eyes, then they need to do it on His terms, not theirs. God is waiting for you, and He always will be.

John Hazares
Chemistry senior

Shoddy umbrellas lead to frustration

To the editor: Yes, it was one of those mornings in which I felt unusually enthralled to take my umbrella to class with me. Upon waking up on Monday morning, I felt the overwhelming need to bring it with me. Since I live on the top floor of one of the Towers' buildings, looking out the window or standing out on the balcony, for that matter, doesn't give any kind of perspective on

what kind of weather to expect. As it turned out, it was raining, and I had no clue until I made it down the elevator that it was actually pouring. Ah, but I thought I was smarter than Mother Nature because some part of my unconscious psyche told me, "Bring your umbrella, Eli!" So naturally, a sense of elation was about me as I was heading towards the perimeter of the overhanging ledge. Yes, it was my moment of brilliance that had come to light. I was about to show my expertise in simple thought by unfastening the velcro strap and expanding the black acrylic luster over my head. "Click" went the triggering mechanism, plop went the umbrella. Uneasily, I looked down at my hand, and low and behold was the remains of my poor weather-beaten, Russell House Bookstore-bought, one-month-old piece of crap umbrella. What had happened was that the entire top portion of the umbrella had launched itself off the holding piece and proceeded to open in mid-air and land with a resounding "plop" upon the brick-layered walkway. What ensued thereafter were a few choice and quite colorful expletives spoken in an archaic, yet

guttural tongue. However, I was not daunted and managed to do a quick reattachment of the umbrella axle. Fortunately enough, it sufficed for the time being. However, later on, the wind picked up and sent the top half of my umbrella careening into a nearby mud puddle. Now, as I'm writing this, I am thinking, "Wow, what a real testament to students about college this must be?" Like many other college students, I must be frugal in my expenditures and must not be extravagant when choosing a means of protection. So, naturally, I decided on the cheap, \$10 umbrella at the bookstore that for some unknown reason to me hasn't sold many. But the nice \$25 hand-glider sized umbrella seems to be receiving raves by all the suit-wearing alumnus on campus. However, I'm not here to poke fun at anyone. I'm only here to say this, and this is for all of my fellow Gamecocks and college students alike: Get us some real stuff and not some of this reconstituted crap called aluminum for our umbrellas. Hey, some of us are on a budget.

Eli Sanchez
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