

VIEWPOINTS

The Gamecock

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Columbia

Progress reliant on positive attitudes toward growth, change, prosperity

Columbia's edge-of-the-cliff mood is hard to miss. Along with the searing heat of summer, tolerance of the relentless apathy of the '90s reached its boiling point. Seven years shy of the year 2000, time is running out. The city is frenzied with innovation by those in government and business who tire of needless stagnation and want to move on.

Future college graduates, listen up. People making the changes in our community to improve the economy are the ones who do the hiring. According to The State, the highest growth jobs in Columbia will be skilled jobs in the service sector. Physical and occupational therapists, computer engineers and programmers, and legal and medical secretaries will be in high demand.

Why would a USC graduate want to live and work in Columbia? In the past few years, complaints abound of Columbia being a nothing-to-do city, either in entertainment or careers. The first step in growth is to redefine our attitude about Columbia instead of fretting over heat and boredom. If you see that there is little to do, the call is yours. Be brave, hit the streets and do it yourself.

Marie-Louise Ramsdale, former USC student government president and inventor of CityYear, is a fine example to follow.

Columbia is stuck in an adolescent, sleepy stage that requires work and commitment. Fast-growing companies have filled the metro Columbia area, meeting needs and using the resources of workers fired from bigger companies during downsizing, according to The State. This is the result of vision, which is healthier for Columbia than pounding down the town's self-esteem.

Remain in Columbia to seek a job or internship. Discover what the city offers before flocking to Atlanta or Charlotte. A better future is being developed by hardworking community leaders as we speak. Aren't you tired of the bleak outlook on our future, the absence of the American Dream?

If so, take the opportunity to create a dream of your own in a city that needs risk takers, innovators and entrepreneurs. Columbia is full of diversified, educated people, a source to tap and maintain. Even if you leave one day, Columbia, as a relatively small city, is a great place to get started and learn job skills to apply in other areas of life. A progressive spirit, Columbia's greatest need, is achieved through unity.

Media portrays Catholicism with misunderstanding

With the visit of Pope John Paul II to Denver for World Youth Day, members of our beloved American media such as CNN and Newsweek have once again proven their ability to vastly oversimplify events and to take them out of context.

The pontiff's visit immediately sparked debates about how the Vatican should change its view on this issue or stay the same on that issue. The media picked up on this and painted a picture of a Roman Catholic Church in crisis, a church that is at any moment going to crumble.

This portrait of imminent destruction is false and is a typical picture that groups such as the media and other Christian denominations paint because of their lack of understanding of the oldest Christian denomination.

Many American Catholics disagree with certain aspects of Catholic doctrine, but any intelligent human who uses the brain that God gave him should realize Catholics are not going to always agree. That's the way it always has been, and that's the way it always will be as long as the church is a human institution.

As usual, the church is growing and changing in its doctrines while still maintaining its faith and focus on Jesus Christ and his teachings. This is a changing time for the church, but it will survive just as it has for almost 2,000 years.

But the pope, cardinals and bishops must closely examine certain subjects while keeping their interpretation of sacred scripture in mind. These subjects include abortion, homosexuality, sexuality in general, birth control, celibacy and the possible ordination of women.

Some parts of Catholic doctrine and theology on these issues will, sadly, never change. Changes that will occur, however, will occur slowly.

The church is not just a bunch of upstart American liberals. It is a worldwide church containing some groups more traditional than others, even in the United States. The pope, cardinals and bishops have to take these groups into consideration when making changes. Without a conservative changing process, there would be only chaos, and then the church would be in trouble.

Do not expect the church to change its opinion on abortion or euthanasia. The theology with these issues is so strong and clear that I doubt the Vatican would yield.

What the church will do, however, is what it has done for nearly two millennia, which is spread the teachings of Jesus Christ, fight for social justice and needy people and continue to build a healthy, loving and closely-knit community of those who believe in Christ while still welcoming those who don't.

The church will not convert people with Bible thumping or hellfire and damnation techniques. Conversion will come by the example of Christ's love and hope.

Jay Tilley is a columnist for The Gamecock.

USC VOICES

Do you prefer to find a job in Columbia or elsewhere?



"Elsewhere. I don't know too much about Columbia, but if you really want to make money, go to Atlanta, Charlotte or Raleigh."

Terrance Gerald
Biology senior



"Elsewhere. I'm majoring in nursing and thinking about joining the Peace Corps. I like to travel."

Kindel Turner
Nursing freshman



"I want to go to a major city like Atlanta. I like Columbia, but it's just not Atlanta."

Pamela Bigger
Journalism freshman



"I prefer to stay in Columbia because I can do a lot with my major here."

Stuart Bedenbaugh
Accounting sophomore

CROSSFIRE

Does ban on play draw curtain on artistic freedom?

PRO By Patrick Sharbaugh

It's not about Lee Atwater is it? The controversy, I mean. It's actually about art and its role in our society. Atwater is merely the hapless name upon whose incorporeal shoulders the issue of the nature of art has most recently settled, vulture-like.

USC officials rejected Robert Myers' play for production because they deemed it a savage representation of Atwater's life and out of supposed concern for the family of the man.

It is inexcusable for a group ostensibly dedicated to the ideal of a liberal education to presume to deny us, on the basis of assumed dramatic intent alone, the opportunity to judge the play for ourselves.

Were they afraid we weren't equal to the intellectual challenge of determining the relative worth of the play? One way or another, they made the decision for us. The people of the ex-Soviet Union were recipients of that kind of favor for nearly a century.

Of course, Longstreet Theatre can't possibly present every play that makes a bid for production, but how many dramatic presentations come through that can claim as their central focus a Columbia native who achieved a political notoriety of international proportions? The production has already garnered accolades across the country. What more incentive does USC need?

That Atwater's family might have become upset hardly justifies denying the city's remaining population the chance to judge its value themselves.

What about the free exchange of ideas? What about dedication to the ideal of art, not as something that must have a practical use such as furthering the party line, but as something whose value lies in its very existence? The truth or falsehood of art has nothing at all to do with its inherent value.

What difference does it make whether Henry V truly hung his best friend as a matter of principle or whether Willie Loman was a real person? None. All that matters is that we have "Henry V" and "Death of a Salesman."

For USC officials to have rejected Robert Myers' play on the basis that it might not have presented us with their collective subjective idea of what Lee Atwater was like is presumptuous beyond expression. We have art, as Friedrich Nietzsche wrote, "in order not to die of the truth." I'd rather be allowed to determine my truth for myself, thank you very much.

Patrick Sharbaugh is a regular contributor to Crossfire.

CON By Ryan Atkinson

Opponents liken the decision not to produce a play about Lee Atwater's life to censorship. Artistic types are quick to cry foul at the slightest impediment to their artistic freedom. Yet, let one of them find something offensive, and your First Amendment rights quickly erode. However, this is not a matter that can be easily covered by the First Amendment.

The decision was made based on respect for the late Lee Atwater and compassion for those who survive him. The dean of the USC arts school felt the play was intended to denigrate Lee Atwater. This may or may not be true. However, the play does include many unsubstantiated claims of wrongdoing that did or did not occur in Atwater's life. To dramatize these as facts is almost as bad as proclaiming them to be.

I understand the purpose of art is to make people think, and in most cases, I would uphold this right. However, for the university to sanction a malicious, intended or not, attack on an individual is not warranted in this case. The play can be seen in other places. Therefore, this is not a serious attack on anyone's artistic freedom. It is merely a person in authority exercising a code of decency and compassion.

Ryan Atkinson is a regular contributor to Crossfire.

LETTERS

Cartoon not historically accurate

To the editor:

I found Paul Jon's cartoon on the Aug. 30 editorial page both bizarre and absurd.

In picturing four cross-eyed hillbillies - one of the characters had a jug labeled "moonshine" - hoisting a Confederate flag, Jon apparently caricatures flag supporters by associating them with stereotypes of mountaineers. Anyone who has read a book on the Civil War knows that the overwhelming majority of hill folks in Tennessee and North Carolina fought for the Union, not for the Confederacy.

Either they were smarter than Jon thinks they were, or they do not belong in the cartoon. It is dismaying to see yet another willful distortion of that period in our history for a modern-day political statement when only an accurate portrayal and recollection of it can help us understand the Civil War and its legacy.

There are far too many experts on Civil War times who have never read a book on the period. We need less perpetuation of stereotypes and less misrepresentation of history.

Sincerely yours,
Michael Montgomery
Professor

Arrest shows unfair police behavior

To the editor:

I am outraged over the corrupt and unethical behavior of the local police department and their dealings with Steve Taneyhill. Never have I seen such an outright and blatant misuse of power from any authority figure.

There were between 50 and 200 people partying at the scene of the incident. At least one third, if not more, of the people there were probably drinking underage. Why only arrest one?

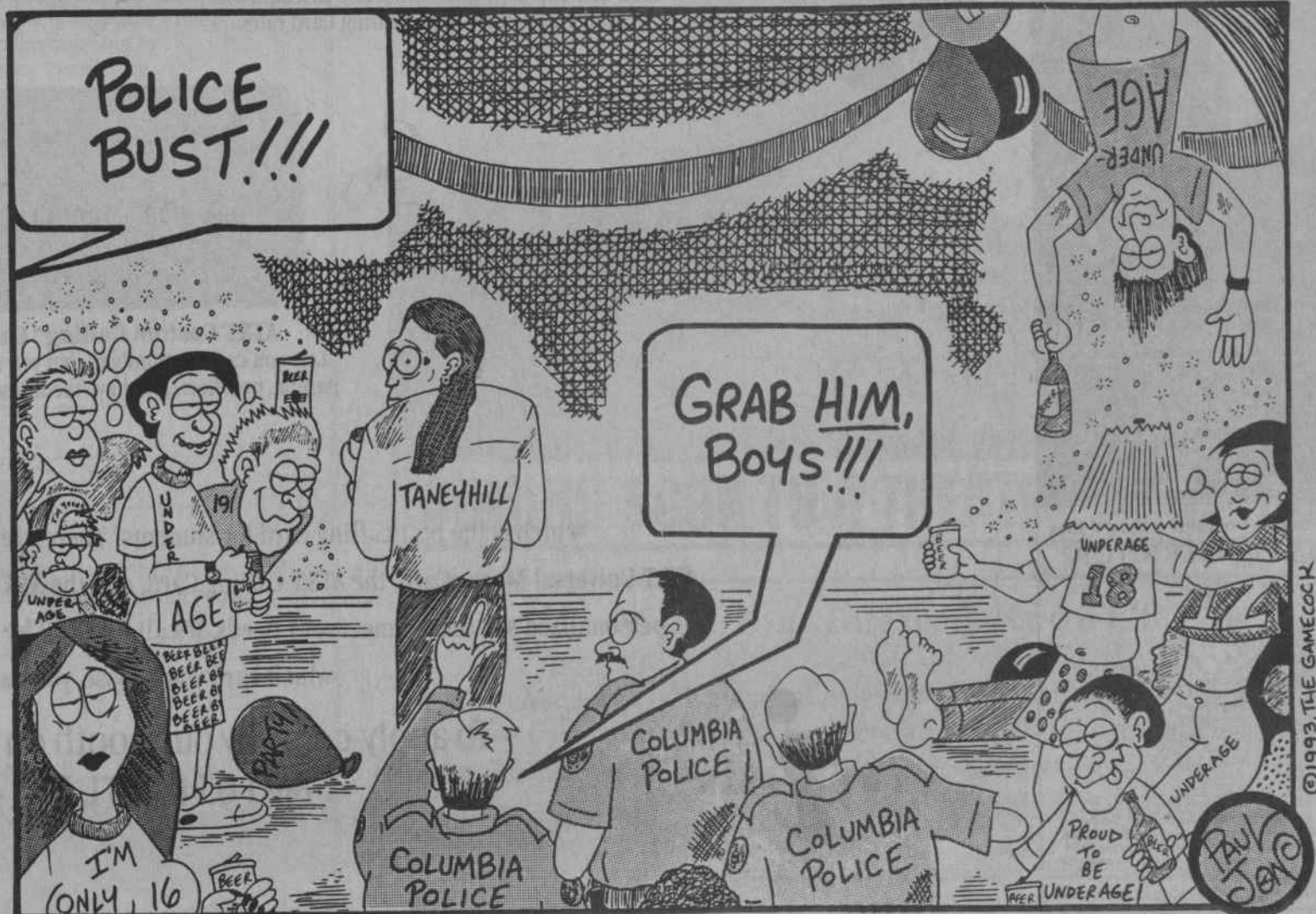
First of all, Taneyhill is a high-profile figure. What cop would not fuel their own ego by targeting someone famous? This makes the police department look intimidating and powerful.

Can you imagine the chatter at the police station?

"I'm the cop who brought the star quarterback of the Gamecocks down!" They probably give promotions for that.

I do not believe the police made an example of Taneyhill to discourage underage drinking. Our best interests are not at the heart of the police department. Taneyhill was set up to further the illusion of power or the extent of intimidation that they have over this community. I hope this incident blows up in the face of the Columbia Police Department.

Chris Duncan
Freshman



Letters Policy

The Gamecock welcomes letters to the editor and will do its best to publish each one submitted. Letters must include phone number and address and must be submitted in person by the author to the Russell House room 321. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style and possible libel. Letters should be no more than 250 words.