

VIEWPOINTS



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Obese Thousands who starve to death proof of America's attitude about food

Chances are you are eating something at this moment. If you are having breakfast, maybe it is a bagel and coffee. If it is lunch, maybe a hamburger or an eggroll. If you are not eating, it is probably your own choice. Perhaps you are on a diet, or you just do not have the time.

Either way, consider yourself lucky that you are not part of the 20 percent of the world's population who have nothing to eat today...or tomorrow.

As students, it is not difficult to get wrapped up in our own lives and problems. We constantly forget that parts of the world have bigger problems than long lines at Sub City or waiting for breadsticks. They do not have anything to eat.

Today, an organization called Carolina Oxfam is urging USC students to give up something — a meal, cigarettes, alcohol or even food for the entire day — and donate the money they would have spent to Oxfam America.

Oxfam America works in the United States and 28 other countries to alleviate hunger and poverty by educating, providing resources and empowering local people through self-help programs toward better food production.

Members of the organizations expect 750,000 people nationwide to fast today to experience what true want feels like.

The United States is one of only a few food surplus nations in the world. We actually make more food than we need.

Through efforts in Ethiopia in the '80s and Somalia this year, the citizens of the United States have shown themselves to be legitimately concerned with the needs of the rest of the world.

College students have a bad reputation when it comes to being conscientious. A large portion of the general public looks at twentysomethings as self-centered, profit-driven and jaded.

Today, everyone can make a difference without even trying that hard.

The sole problem with events such as Oxfam Fast Day is they tend to be restricted to a single day. Earth Day is a good example. People go through the motions without really thinking, and then they forget by the next day.

Hunger is not temporary, but it can be stopped. It will take more than skipping a meal to help end it. It will take a change of attitudes and, for some, a few changes in lifestyle.

But with 40,000 children dying of hunger-related causes every day and people starving on the streets we walk on, there has to be a change.

And we, the "generation of change," are going to have to be the ones to help make it happen.

So, take a day off from junk food or detrimental habits. You may feel hungry or distracted for a while, but maybe you will have a new outlook tomorrow.

Do it because you have a choice.

Timing wrong to grant statehood to Puerto Rico

The United States dodged a bullet Sunday when Puerto Ricans narrowly defeated their chance to become the 51st state in the union.

By a tally of 48.5 percent to 46.2 percent, supporters of the current commonwealth system stumbled Gov. Pedro Rossello's quest for Puerto Rican statehood.

Since the plebiscite was non-binding, the vote does not actually decide whether Puerto Rico will apply for statehood. It was only a vote to gauge how Puerto Ricans felt on the issue.

But it is highly unlikely that a bid for statehood would be taken seriously by Congress since less than 50 percent of the island's population supported the notion. And that is the way both Congress and most Americans want it.

In this time of fights over NAFTA, health care and government reform, the last thing Congress needs is to decide whether it wants to absorb another state. And Puerto Rico is not just another state such as Alaska and Hawaii, which were both moderately wealthy when they were added to the union in 1959.

A large segment of Puerto Rico's population is impoverished; more than 60 percent are under the U.S. poverty level. And only half of Puerto Ricans speak English. Puerto Rican statehood would mean billions of additional federal welfare benefits, billions more than we can afford.

Statehood adherents say it would help economic development, which has stalled in the past few years. New development would bring jobs to an island with an unemployment rate stagnated at about 18 percent.

However, a new state is only guaranteed two things: taxes and federal benefits. Develop-



Gordon Mantler

ment is not a given. And many of the companies in Puerto Rico, which are enjoying extremely low taxes now, might leave because they can find tax breaks elsewhere.

Poor Puerto Ricans do receive some federal benefits now, including food stamps and education grants, but statehood would require a lot more tax money flowing down there. And the taxes from wealthy Puerto Ricans will not make up the difference.

The idea of a 51st state is an exciting idea, one this generation has never experienced. But the timing is all wrong. Puerto Rican statehood would drain too many resources from the government in this time of dire financial straits.

Given time, statehood could be an excellent investment there, but we cannot afford to take that risk now. Another plebiscite probably will not come up again for at least a few years. Maybe by that time, both Congress and Americans in general would be more willing and able to accept Puerto Rico into the union with open arms.

Right now, Puerto Rico as a commonwealth is truly the "best of both worlds" for both Puerto Rico and the United States.

Gordon Mantler is university editor of *The Gamecock*. His column appears every other Wednesday.

USC VOICES

Are you fasting tomorrow and why?



"No. I'm not fasting. I don't believe in fasting because of my religion. I also have to take medication. So, I can't fast."

Shakimah Glover
Elementary education
sophomore



"No. Actually, I hadn't heard about it. My religion doesn't believe in doing that anyway."

Sharon Belcher
Biology freshman



"No, I think it's kind of overrated. It's not really my thing. A lot of people are doing it because it's a fad. There's not a whole lot of sincerity involved."

Michael Timbes
Biology junior



"Yes. I am because I believe that we are spoiled. We waste too much food. If someone can gain because I don't eat, that's fine with me."

Marlone McCoy
Psychology junior

Master Minds—

Consider research papers detective work

Every semester, professors tell me that they dread having to read their students' research papers. "It's not that the students don't try or that they haven't worked on the papers," they say, "but the papers are so hard to read." One professor told me that her students' papers are usually disjointed and seem to rehash other writers' ideas.

Well, it is getting to that point in the semester when students need to think about putting together research papers. So, in order to help students and professors alike, the Writing Center offers some advice on writing good research papers.

First of all, we urge students to be sure of the assignment. There are few things worse than spending weekends in Thomas Cooper researching something that is not part of the assignment.

Once the researcher understands what to do, the next step, which is the most important step, is to formulate the research question. The writer may have to do some preliminary reading and prewriting to help formulate a research question. The research question will solve many common problems.

It will prevent researchers from going off on tangents and thinking they need to include



Chris Helms

everything in their papers.

It will lead to better organization. If the purpose of the paper is to answer a question, then the paper should answer the question.

It will also provide subquestions and guidance for where to do research.

Armed with a good research question, researchers can then begin investigation.

Many experienced research paper writers see themselves as detectives assigned to solve a case. Where should you, researcher and detective, go for answers? We encourage our clients to make sure that they exhaust all possible sources of information.

That means making friends with the research librarians, using sources other than the encyclo-

pedia, such as CD ROM, journals and magazines and asking more questions. In addition, think about using the phone to set up interviews, getting pamphlets from organizations and bouncing ideas off of your friends.

Research involves a lot of work and requires plenty of time. Not only will you have to devote time to your work, you will also have to plan. Anybody who has tried to make efficient use of the libraries on campus at the end of a semester can tell you that it is frustrating and will probably drive you insane. If, however, you get to the resources before the other 10,000 researchers do, you will be better off and saved from self-destruction.

After all your research is done, you can begin the next step: putting together a paper. The writing process is different for everyone, but you should make sure you give yourself time for prewriting, planning, organizing and for writing several drafts.

For help in any stage of the research process or for help in any writing task, call the Writing Center at 777-2078 for an appointment.

Chris Helms is interim director of the Writing Center.

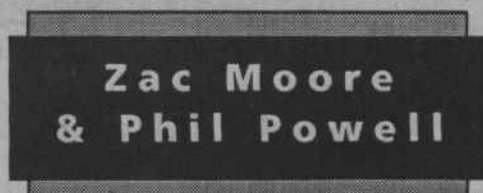
Global economy depends on NAFTA decision

Too often, the North American Free Trade Agreement is debated from a U.S. perspective. It is important to consider the impact of a failed NAFTA on Mexico. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari is both an economic and democratic reformer whose political future rests on NAFTA's success.

NAFTA's failure could mean not only the end of Salinas' economic reforms, decreasing investment and privatization in Mexican commerce but also the end of democratic elections and human rights improvements. In this vein, cancelling NAFTA could also lead to a resurgence of the autocratic PRI, the formal ruling party in Mexico.

First, if NAFTA is voted down today, both Mexico and the United States will lose face in the international arena where prestige matters. Already, anti-NAFTA slogans and stereotypes pushed by Ross Perot have caused racial animosity in Mexico. The image that all Mexicans are poor is misleading. Mexico is the second largest consumer of U.S. goods and will only continue to increase its demand for U.S. exports as Mexican wages and the standard of living increases.

Second, NAFTA is not a free trade agree-



Zac Moore & Phil Powell

ment. It is a managed trade agreement that will produce international conflict around investment, intellectual property rights, environmental protection and treaty violations. However, we feel NAFTA provides a needed formal mechanism for international policy on these issues.

Third, almost the entire United States is the trade partner of choice for Mexico. A failed NAFTA will force Mexico to turn elsewhere such as Japan and Latin America for investment in the form of export platforms and subsidiaries.

Fourth, labor and environmental groups opposed NAFTA early on when they were left out of the negotiations. Hence, leaders on both issues became locked into a negative strategy with the news media, hoping to increase their bargaining strength in an election year.

Fifth, we cannot predict net job growth from trade even in 10 years for the same reason we

cannot predict the weather and other non-linear systems. There are too many changes for precision modeling to be accurate.

Finally, what about job loss versus trade and investment? In the long run, the treaty may do two things: improve our bargaining hand with other trade regions of the world, namely Asia, and lead to greater consumer benefits and increased trade between the three countries. The failure of NAFTA, however, could be an ominous sign to global investors and hinder the success of future trade negotiations.

In the short run, jobs will be redistributed as global companies become specialized to labor markets. Some S.C. industries such as textiles that are losing productivity may be replaced by knowledge-intensive industries. With or without NAFTA, local economies will have to improve their education systems to attract new investment and survive the inevitable structural changes in the global job market.

Zac Moore is a former USC Congressional Fellow. Phil Powell is a Ph.D. candidate in economic development at Vanderbilt University.

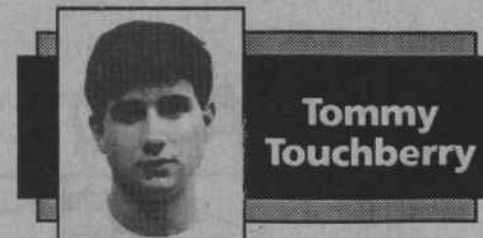
Coaching change necessary if better coach available

There has been a lot of talk about the status of Sparky Woods' job and rumors about prospective replacements. There are two distinct factions on this issue. The pro-Sparky group claims the USC program is headed in the right direction and is just one step away from being a top 25 caliber team. They cite youth, injuries and the difficulty of the SEC as reasons for USC's failures this season.

The other faction, the anti-Sparky crowd, says Sparky has not shown any improvement this year, is a poor game coach, does not prepare the team well for the game and is not capable of ever competing in the SEC.

As a longtime Gamecock fan who has seen virtually every game for the past decade, I believe the truth falls somewhere in between these two viewpoints. The USC program is no doubt a competitive one. With the exception of two games this season, USC has been in a tight ball game every Saturday with the likes of Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

USC's recruiting has been getting stronger with every season under Woods. I believe a



Tommy Touchberry

Sparky-coached USC team will probably win about seven games next year. Woods probably would give USC some stability over the next several seasons.

But on the other hand, I do not think Sparky will ever be capable of leading USC to an SEC championship, a 10-win season. Former USC coach Joe Morrison was able to win 10 games in 1984 and field a top 10 team in 1987 because he was an excellent game coach.

Morrison never had top-notch recruiting classes, but he used star players such as Sterling Sharpe and Harold Green to put USC in a position to win almost every game. A Morrison

team could beat top 10 teams such as FSU, Georgia and Notre Dame. And they were within one touchdown of beating Miami and Nebraska.

Woods' team cannot seem to get over the hump and beat Alabama or Florida. Sparky's biggest wins have been against teams such as Georgia, Clemson and Tennessee when they were in slumps or having a bad season. Even worse, Woods' teams have lost home games to lightweights such as Kentucky, East Carolina and The Citadel. If there is one factor that will cost Sparky his job, it would be losing home games to opponents USC should whip easily.

The issue of whether to replace Sparky is really quite simple. If Mike McGee can land a Dennis Erickson or Dick Sheridan, then he should make the change. If he cannot, then he should give Sparky one more year. In that case, the decision in November 1994 could be a much clearer and easier one.

Tommy Touchberry is a guest columnist for *The Gamecock*.

LETTERS POLICY

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Letters must be personally delivered by the author to The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 321.

The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld under any circumstances.