

Viewpoints



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Quote, Unquote

"Especially in the dorms, the students break the directional arrows, use cigarette lighters to burn the buttons and tear the safety signs off the wall. It's vandalism."

Frank Mims

Administrative manager of Maintenance Services

Freedom

South Africa's first free elections major step toward equality

Glancing at the newspaper or watching local television news sometimes seems to bring nothing more than bad news, weather and sports. Story after story tells of another crime which has destroyed somebody's life, family or both.

And if it isn't crime, it's corruption or public protests or the cheery news that movie popcorn can lead to heart disease.

National and international news are not much better. Slaughter in Rwanda. U.N.-protected "safe havens" in Bosnia-Herzegovina that aren't that safe. Palestinian-Israeli violence which seems to never end.

However, all is not totally lost. Despite the senseless killings of mostly black South Africans by white fringe terrorist groups in the past few days, the historic elections in that country have not been derailed. As we speak, black and white South Africans are going to the same polls and putting the final nail in the coffin of apartheid, together.

This simple act, with any luck, will end centuries of white dominance in a society where whites make up only 17 percent of the total population.

Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress, is expected to be the new president of a new South Africa, which will split power between a national Parliament, the cabinet and provincial governments.

Even though this election is a great step toward establishing truly democratic institutions and finally bringing down the racial barriers which have stood for so long in South Africa, this is only the start of a long process of making South Africa a free democratic society.

Most African states, after gaining independence in the '50s, '60s and '70s, experimented with multiparty democracy, only to have the fragile systems fall apart within a few years.

Bloody coups, sometimes by the military, and ethnic violence became the rule rather than the exception in African politics.

And the same threatens South Africa. But this can be avoided, and a man as revered as Mandela is probably the best one to do it.

After being sworn in, Mandela must concentrate on two areas before anything else. He must ensure all major groups in the country have substantial representation in the government. National Party leader F.W. de Klerk is expected to be one of two deputy presidents. And Zulu leader Buthelezi, whose tribe makes up 27 percent of the black population, must also be accommodated.

After creating a government, Mandela must also work to amend the constitution so there is more regional autonomy. Even though the interim constitution sets up a federal system, the provincial governments are quite weak. These must be strengthened in the attempt to keep ethnic violence from bringing down the government.

This week's historic elections are a wonderful start toward a truly democratic South Africa. But the leadership must move fast after taking office to contain ethnic conflict. Otherwise, democracy won't last long.

Youth's political interests should include own future

A federal report was issued recently which stated the government's Social Security trust fund will be exhausted by the year 2036 unless major reforms are enacted.

In the mainstream press, this is a one-day, seven-inch story. And I'm afraid that when I talk about this issue with my peers, my impression is they find it equally irrelevant.

2036 may seem like a long way off, but it is ironic that people born in 1971, many of whom are college seniors today, will turn 65 in that year, the age in which most people begin receiving Social Security benefits.

Political groups such as "Lead or Leave" and "Third Millennium" have tried to raise awareness among young people regarding the way in which the post-baby boom generation is being made the victim of intergenerational rape, yet their voices seem to fall on deaf ears.

Nero fiddled while Rome burned; twentysomethings drink beer and listen to Pearl Jam. And at the same time, young, cutting-edge journalists such as MTV's Tabitha Soren criticize the "white maleness" and "educated elitism" of the debt-awareness movement without acknowledging the validity of the gripe.

The implications of a \$4.2 trillion debt are enormous. It means, among other things, that government is increasingly unable to ameliorate economic downturns. Why? Reagan, Bush and now Clinton have violated Keynes' most ardent rule: Run a surplus in good times and a deficit in bad times.

President Clinton, the man who twentysomethings feel so at ease with, at least judging by his recent MTV appearance, is not making the debt much better. His deficit reduction plan is a misnomer. What he means by deficit reduction is a slow in the rate by which government spends more than it collects. This should not be confused with a reduction in the overall debt. Deficit is actually debt addition.



Jeff Turbitt

COLUMNIST

I would say that a good number of people in their 20s are political. However, they seem mostly interested in environmental issues. I would suggest to those people you do not lecture on the "greenhouse effect" while your fiscal house is being ransacked.

There is no American Association of Young People to lobby on young interests, but there certainly is the American Association of Retired Persons — ubiquitous and loud in the halls of Congress making sure that Social Security laws are not amended.

This is a particular farce because recent studies show that the average retiree regroups all the money they ever placed into the Social Security trust fund, with interest, in slightly more than three years. The net effect is that the generation that defeated Hitler is having lunch on younger generations.

I suggest that the retirement age increase by six months every year until the government finds a way to finance the dilapidated system. With people living longer, it is only normal to expect them to work longer as well.

It should also be noted that the only group of people who are openly discriminated against in the Constitution are people under the age of 25. One must be at least 25 or 30 to have the vision and sagacity of a Newt Gingrich or Ernest Hollings.

Twentysomethings should consider saving themselves as they continue their work in saving the whales.

Nixon strong president despite political errors

Richard Milhous Nixon's political career began after his service in the Navy during World War II. He was elected to Congress in 1947, running against his opponent as an anti-Communist. In Congress, he joined the House Un-American Activities Committee under Sen. Joseph McCarthy. Nixon participated in the grilling of Alger Hiss, a State Department official accused of being a Communist. Nixon also served as a Senator from California between 1950 and 1952.

In 1952, Dwight Eisenhower selected Nixon as his running mate. Nixon almost lost the nomination because of charges he had accepted contributions from California millionaires. Charges of corruption rained down on Nixon. In his famous "Checker's" speech, Nixon defended himself and went on to accept the vice presidential nomination. The Eisenhower/Nixon ticket won election, and Nixon served eight years as vice president until 1961.

Nixon believed himself the heir apparent for the presidency and ran for the office in 1960 against John Kennedy, who won the election by a mere 10,000 votes. The defining moment in the election was the Kennedy/Nixon television/radio debate. During the debate, Nixon appeared a shady character, while Kennedy seemed honest and confident. People watching the debate believed Kennedy won, but those listening by radio believed Nixon won.

In 1962, Pat Brown defeated Nixon in the California gubernatorial race. Nixon vowed his political career was over and told the press, "You won't have Richard Nixon to kick around anymore."

However, if anyone could be described as the "comeback kid of politics," Richard Nixon was that person. Nixon won the Republican nomination in



Stephen King

COLUMNIST

1968, defeating Democratic Vice President Hubert Humphrey in a close race.

Nixon made many important contributions to the United States. He integrated the Southern school system and moved the Supreme Court to the center. For the Republican party, Nixon established a political coalition of Southern Democrats and Northern Democratic blue collar workers, along with the traditional Republican constituencies.

In foreign affairs, Nixon opened relations with the People's Republic of China in February 1972, and he signed the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty with the Soviets the same year. "Detente" became a household word for hope in continuing the peace between the superpowers.

Nixon's credentials as an anti-Communist made him an unlikely person to reach out to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. However, he put the interests of the United States ahead of his ideology.

Nixon's presidency cannot be discussed without examining Watergate. Ultimately, the weight of political pressure from Watergate forced him from office. Where Nixon had transcended his Cold War anti-Communist ideology as president in foreign affairs, I don't think he transcended his ideology in domestic politics.

I believe Nixon could not escape his "them vs.

us" mentality, and why should he have? The day he arrived in Washington, the Washington Post claimed that Nixon "becoming president was like the Nazis taking Paris." This animosity toward Nixon heightened the president's distrust of the media and the Democratic political establishment.

Nixon's approach to dealing with the Watergate scandal became a model of how not to deal with a political crisis. He resigned Aug. 9, 1974. In retrospect, the Watergate break-in seems ridiculous. Nixon's opponent, George McGovern, was a weak candidate whose nomination at the turbulent Chicago National Convention aided Nixon's theme of law and order.

If there was a positive side to the Watergate scandal, it was that the American political system ultimately worked. Power changed hands from an embattled president to his successor without a shot being fired. Where else in the world could such a transition take place?

Despite his domestic political controversies, Nixon was a strong president. How history will record the Watergate era in relation to Nixon's accomplishments cannot be adequately assessed today because we are too close in time to the event.

Nixon was a very human president in a job that requires presidents to act as marble monuments. Whether you love him or hate him, Nixon's death should be regarded as the passing of a tragic, brilliant giant.

He was a political product of his time and the leading American post-World War II president. I join Americans around the country in offering his family sympathy for its loss.

Letters

Recital-goers must learn courtesy

To the editor:

After observing one too many instances of rude and really annoying behavior at campus music recitals, I felt it was my duty as a music major to attempt to clue others in on the "do's and don'ts" of attending any kind of performance, recital or concert pertaining to genres other than "pop."

Please do not interpret this column as a means of patronization. It is, however, apparent to me that several students who attend the free performances at Gambrell Hall (many of whom are required to because of MUSC 110 Appreciation stipulations) are clueless with regards to concert etiquette.

Let's look up the word appreciation in the dictionary, shall we? "Appreciation - sensitive awareness, as of art." Wow, that's funny. So many appreci-

ation students seem to be neither sensitive or aware of anyone else around them, much less the performer and his/her music.

Unlike your own cozy living rooms, you cannot come to a recital with a six-pack and a remote control, expecting to change the channel when the performance doesn't thrill you. For those who didn't realize that there is such a thing as etiquette at a recital, here are a few surefire ways to really annoy the dickens out of a performer or an appreciative audience:

1. Walk in late. After all, if you're in MUSC 110, you need credit for attending these recitals, right? Besides, the worst your tardy entrance could do is completely interrupt the performer's line of concentration. No biggie.

2. Feel free to leave at your leisure. You're a student of the '90s. You've got places to be, things to do. Who has time to sit around and listen to some guy crank out Mozart on a piano (or was it Beethoven? Aw, it's all

the same anyway).

3. Your comments during the performance are welcome. I'm sure others around you are interested to know your opinions about the pieces played, how boring it is or at what point you're planning to bust outta there so you can watch "Beavis and Butt-head."

If you enjoy these recitals, great. If you don't, no big whoop, but respect and courtesy are not too much to ask. It is both sad and scary that in this convenience-based culture of ours, people cannot find time simply to listen.

Megan Greenan
 Music sophomore

Columnist's words, actions don't match

To the editor:

In response to the column, "Harpoonian comments typical of liberal

hypocrisy," in the April 25 issue of The Gamecock, I would like to make a few points in disagreement.

First, I know of few TV shows which "make fun of Christianity and its followers." I do, however, know of some which criticize religious fundamentalism. That is an entirely different matter.

Second, it is ludicrous for someone to complain about bigotry, when in the next breath he voices his own bigotry. Check the beam in your own eye, before trying to remove the mote in your brother's.

Third, people of the Religious Right may "preach love and tolerance to everyone," but until they are willing to practice these virtues, the preaching is hollow.

James U. Gleaton
 Staff member
 College of Nursing

Voices

How will the free elections in South Africa affect apartheid?



"Since Mandela should win the elections, things should begin to get better within a few years."

Shawanna Wilson
 Political science junior



"It seems like there will be continued violence because of all the extremist groups in South Africa."

Velma Bracell
 Business senior



"I think everything's probably going to stay the same. It's not going to change or solve any problems."

Tim Calderala
 Psychology freshman



"Economically, the country is not controlled by black people. Things will probably get worse because the racism will become more subtle, like in the United States."

Marquil Douglas
 Computer science senior



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