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No Nukes

SRS has its fill of nuclear waste

While suing the Department of Energy may not be a wise action to take in many cases, South Carolina's measures to keep spent nuclear fuel from Europe from being dumped at the Savannah River Site are completely understandable.

Also easy to comprehend is the U.S. District judge's decision to block the shipment from entering South Carolina, thereby paving the way for a full hearing to be conducted on the matter.

Though many don't like to think about it, the fact is that there is a plant in South Carolina that used to make nuclear bombs, and it's only about an hour away from campus. Forty years of improper disposal of radioactive materials has led to an immense cleanup situation.

While Site workers are attempting to undo decades of damage, the last thing they need is 153 extra spend-fuel elements to add to the mess, without any extra help in dealing with the problem.

If DOE had been willing to address the concerns of our state sooner, perhaps it wouldn't have come to this. By declaring the shipments needed to be taken because this was an emergency situation, however, the department side-stepped its obligation to do an in-depth environmental statement on the cargo.

DOE officials were also evasive on what would be done with the material once it landed near Wilmington, N.C. and had made its 370-mile train trek to Aiken.

Although no one likes to think of nuclear waste floating on a boat at sea, the reality is that some decisions are going to need to be made involving how to process the material and whether or not the United States should reinstate its policy to accept used fuel it had originally sold to foreign countries. The only way DOE has been taking spent fuel back since 1988 is under "urgent" conditions.

While the agency claimed a lack of storage space left Sweden, Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands in such a condition, South Carolina is not sure an emergency really existed. Perhaps the government needs to take a second look at the Savannah River Site. Certainly four decades of neglect constitute an equally desperate situation.

DOE officials claim the blocking of the fuel is purely a political move. The agency is housed in Washington, D.C., however, not Aiken, S.C. Maybe department heads would feel differently if their backyards were nuclear dumping grounds.

Though South Carolina may be the most qualified place to take the international refuge, that is little consolation to us. The Savannah River Site has its own problems to deal with and cannot accept the world's. At least, not without more funding, more people and more operational facilities to deal with it all.

A fear of another entity getting hold of the material and abusing it is a valid one. Certainly no one wants to be under such a threat. That fear cannot be the only factor, however, leading the country to such drastic measures as to accept the fuel blindly.

If the DOE wants to keep the world safe from the improper use of nuclear by-products, it must start at home.

People should decide Confederate flag's fate



TOMMY TOUCHBERRY
Columnist

The Confederate flag issue continues to spark controversy throughout the South. In Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi the debate rages on, but no where is the issue more intense than in South Carolina.

Up to this point I have shied away from this issue. I felt I wasn't ready to comment until I was 100 percent sure of my position. I have always felt the constant attack by liberals, the NAACP, and "outsiders" on Southern heritage was wrong. At the same time I struggled to find reasons why it was so important for the Confederate flag to fly atop our state capital.

In recent months I have listened carefully to the arguments given by both sides, and I have reached two conclusions.

My first conclusion is that ultimately the citizens of South Carolina should have the opportunity to decide this issue. When an issue is as controversial as this one, I think those in power would be wise to let the people decide. Since this issue doesn't involve the civil rights of any citizen, government intervention is not necessary.

My second conclusion concerns the motives of each side. There is no doubt that support for flying the flag comes from white racists, but they make up a very small percentage of the population. On the other side, a seemingly large percentage of support for removing the flag comes from black political leaders who want to make someone pay for the wrongs of the past,

i.e. slavery and segregation. White liberals would also do anything to destroy Southern tradition.

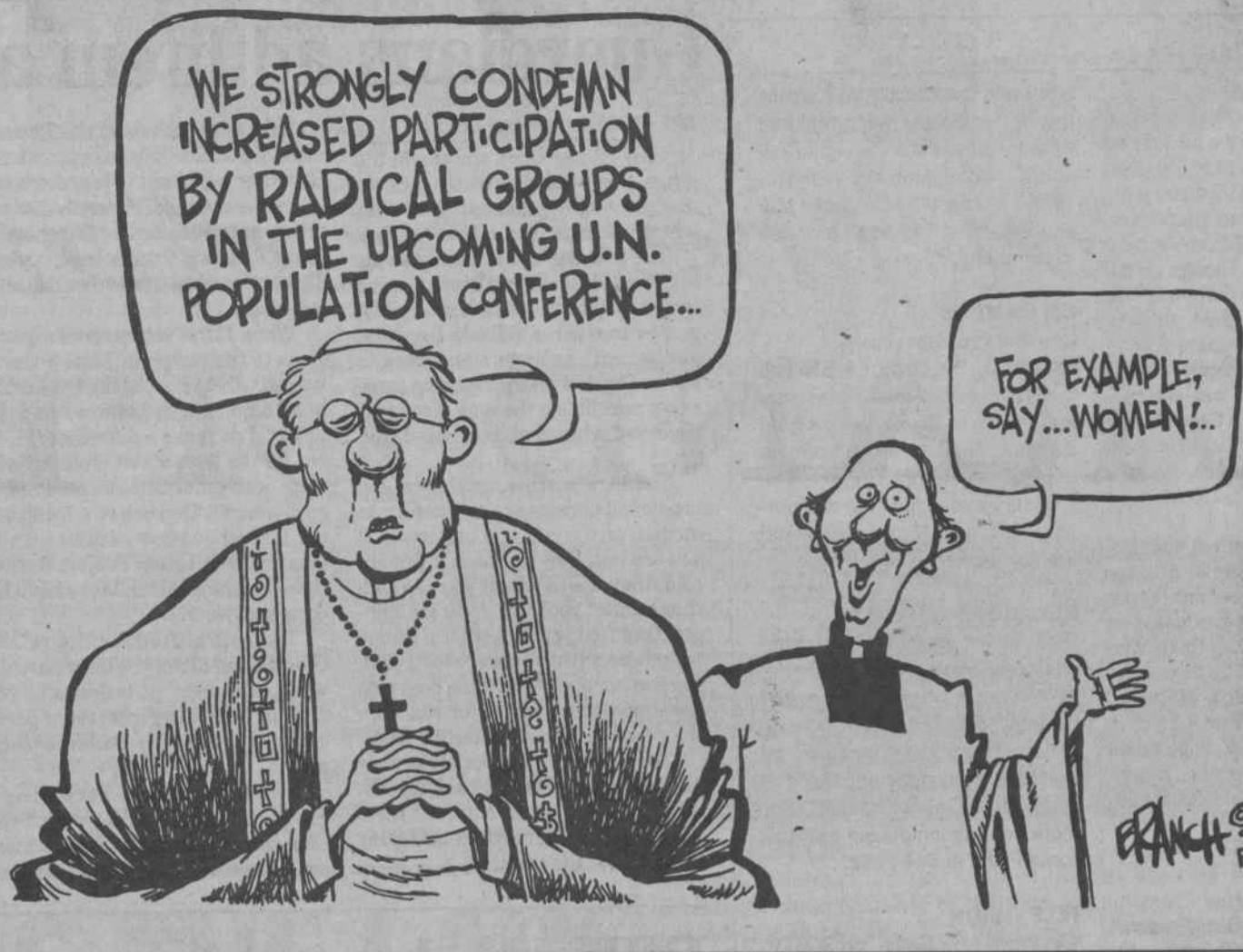
Those groups are the extremes. The majority of South Carolinians are decent, caring people who are proud of their heritage. These people have grown tired of being the scapegoat for every wrong that occurred in the past. No society is perfect and certainly the United States and the Southern states are no exception.

To these people, the Confederate flag doesn't stand for racism. It stands for family, community, hard work, dedication to God, and, most importantly, pride. The flag symbolizes a simpler time when most children grew up in real families and no one had to fear constant crime and moral decay. During the Civil War, many South Carolinians died for their state. They felt they were fighting for their sovereignty. How could any true American not understand that?

Finally, I would like to say that I am deeply offended by those who try to destroy every institution or bit of tradition that has made the South a wonderful place to live. The attempt to "outlaw" God, rip apart our moral foundation, and rewrite history is sinfully wrong.

As for the Confederate flag issue, I believe that a well-crafted monument on the Statehouse grounds honoring the Confederate flag and a state-sponsored "Confederate" history month would be a reasonable compromise. But I would like to see the citizens of South Carolina make that decision.

Tommy Touchberry is a marketing junior. His column appears every Friday.



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QUOTEUNQUOTE

"I was already across the street (Assembly) when they pulled out real quick and that's when they hit me. When it hit my knees it sent the front of my body forward. I was touching the wheels and I held on to them."

Sonya Yardley, on her hit-and-run accident

Water fun entertains, humiliates the brave

I love swimming in lakes.

I used to be scared of giant attack leeches, unknown schools of piranha, freshwater sharks and other common lake dangers, but I realized I might one day have to jump into a lake to save a beautiful woman. She'd then fall in love with me, and we'd live happily ever after, so my fears faded. Also, I live in Greenville, less than an hour from Lake Hartwell, so the residual chemicals in Hartwell ate enough of my brain cells to make me a lake booster.

I went to a friend's lake house this weekend, and we had a watersport-o-rama.

It was the first time I'd ridden a Jet Ski, and I decided I really liked it. A Jet Ski is a nifty little device made by Kawasaki that has some kind of water propulsion jet, probably stolen from a small Air Force T-38 training plane. A button starts and stops the Ski, and another button controls the throttle. The really neat thing about a Jet Ski, however, is the fact it circles around you like Jaws when you accidentally fall off.

My Jet Ski spent much of my ride circling around like Jaws.

The trick to riding a Jet Ski is to drag your body out behind it and start going pretty fast, fast enough for the jet to jet-propel your swim shorts off of you. You steer by leaning over and falling off the Ski. You can also jump waves by hitting the waves and falling off the Ski. If you stand up on the Ski, your falls can be more creative.

Someone had rented a kayak, a water device I have more experience with. (Notice I didn't say anything about more skill.) I pulled on the spray skirt, a device designed to keep water from pouring into the cockpit of the boat and to make you look like an exotic dancer in a neoprene miniskirt. I paddled the boat around the lake, but paddling a white-wa-



CHRIS MULDROW
Columnist

ter kayak on a lake is tough because the boat's not designed to go in a straight line. I try to aim for the spot I definitely don't want to go on the lake, and the boat steers itself the opposite direction. It's like driving a car with Jell-O tires.

I learned how to roll a kayak last semester, so I decided to impress a friend on the dock with a roll in the lake.

She was impressed greatly at how long I could hold my breath and thrash about underwater. She was also stunned at my ability to push myself out of the boat (a wet exit, for you yackers (my very own invented slang word for kayakers) while I was upside down in 10 feet of water. I think she was also flabbergasted I could drag a plastic kayak full of water back to the dock and empty the water out. Sometimes you've just gotta show off.

At this point my water addiction was electrifying, so I went out in a canoe with a friend. We paddled around a point, which is the ultimate goal of any lake canoe trip. Points on a lake, little peninsulas sticking out into the water, are the ultimate adventurer's milestones. Second in importance are coves, hidden pockets of discovery and turtles. Third are docks with cool boats because I could never afford a cool boat unless it doubled as my house. Fourth are strange things floating in the water. They usually turn out to be bottles, trash, dead fish or soiled things no one on land would get within 10 miles of if possible.

In fact, the perfect canoe trip would go some-

thing like this:

Front paddler: "Let's go around this point and see what's over there!"

Back paddler: "Okay!"

(Silent moments of paddling)

Front: "Wow! Look at that cool ski boat over there!"

Back: "You mean the one in that cove next to the turtle?"

Front: "Yeah!!!"

Back: "What's that in the water in front of it?"

Canoe conversations are enlightening. We went up to a dock to look at a 33-foot sailboat, which sitting in Lake Murray is like putting a Carnival Fun Ship on the newly-filled mechanical white abstract Gamecock reflecting pond in front of Gambrell. (Okay, they filled the pond. Now the chickens need to move, and I'll be the happiest student on campus.) The guy with the boat said he couldn't go under any of the bridges on the lake because the boat's mast was too tall. I was gonna suggest he get one of those pirate cannons and just blow the bejeezus out of the bridges, but I remembered I had to drive home.

The only thing I didn't do at the lake was water-ski. The idea of being pulled on a rope behind a boat while strapped to two planks just doesn't float my boat. (Yes, I did add that line just to use that really poor pun.) I can't get up on skis; I just keep hitting my head on the back of the ski.

Of course, fall is approaching, and soon the lake will be too cold for water sports. I guess I can just go paddle in the library pond. I've been wondering about something I saw floating in the water.

Chris Muldrow is a journalism senior. His column appears every Friday.

LETTERS

Medical school needs to use alternative methods to teach physiology

This letter is for all new students at USC and any old ones that we may not have reached last year.

In case you didn't know, there is a physiology course taught at the medical school that utilizes pound dogs that would otherwise have been humanely euthanized. These dogs are strapped to a table and cut while still alive. They must be alive to get neuromuscular responses.

Also, Dr. Matthew Wolf does basic hypothermia experiments on cats. He removes one hind leg from an alive cat and discards the rest. Many physicians have said his work is non-relative to humans.

Last year, we collected over 900 signatures to end dog lab. We have pamphlets of devices that could be used in place of dogs. Schools such as Yale, Ohio State and NYU have stopped using dogs in this way.

There are many alternatives but the bottom line is that USC uses dogs out of habit and convenience. We echo our challenge to the medical school for a debate with a member of the Positions Committee for Responsible Medicine.

If you have any questions or want more information, be sure to stop by our table at the organizational fair today.

David Oberly II

Geology junior and vice president of Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Group helps voters with candidate info

The Gamecock (Friday, Sept. 2) published, "voters need only punch a

few personal computer keys to ..." check their representatives' records in Congress "... under a system unveiled Thursday by a conservative taxpayers' group." Please publish the more interesting details (i.e. group's name and address and how to access this resource). For your readers' information, there is a non-profit group, called the Center for National Independence in Politics (CNIP) that has provided this service since 1992.

Computer access to CNIP's "Project Vote Smart" data on all U.S. senators and representatives is available via the internet: gopher.neu.edu and bulletin board: 503-737-3777 (14.4K N81). Otherwise, simply dial 1-800-622-7627 (1-800-622-SMART) to get voting records, campaign finance information, candidates' answers to CNIP's "National Political Awareness Test," and other important informa-

tion. For example, when I decided to write to Congress about the crime bill, I flipped through CNIP's biannual newsletter. There I found voting records, addresses, phone numbers and the levels of campaign financing from the National Rifle Association to each member. Then, for more information, I called the 800 number and found out how South Carolina's six representatives and both senators voted most recently on the crime bill. I would like CNIP to get the credit they deserve for their ideas and all-volunteer efforts; rather than some nameless, faceless "conservative taxpayers' group."

Bev Huntsberger

Computer Services Division

Should SRS accept foreign nuclear waste?



"I think Americans should be concentrating on their own country. I think this country needs a lot of work to be done. There's so much helping of other countries. Maybe America needs help, too."

Naz Akhtar

Sociology/Psychology senior



"I think if the plant can handle that kind of waste and if they're bringing it from other countries that don't have the technology we have, then they should. Someone has got to get rid of it. If they can't, maybe we should."

Mark Gugino

Marketing/Personnel management senior



"Of course not. I just don't agree with it. It's just the same problem. A better idea is to not produce the nuclear waste."

Phil Li

Computer science graduate student



"No, it shouldn't. We don't need other people's problems. We have our own to take care of."

Jennifer Thompson

Education freshman



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