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Editorial Board

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Keep Barnwell closed

Would you sell away your future for \$10,500? Well, that's what Gov. David Beasley did last week when he proposed to extend the contract on the Barnwell low-level radioactive waste dumping site. The Barnwell site had stopped receiving low-level waste from across the nation last summer and was scheduled to close this Dec. 31, but Beasley's plan would keep the site open for seven more years.

Under the current plan, the site, one of two low-level nuclear waste dumps in the nation, was supposed to be closed the day a similar site opened in North Carolina, but technical delays have moved the opening to mid-1998. Beasley tried to soften the blow by suggesting the new money generated by the contract extension be funneled into the educational system.

In an unrelated note, Chem-Nuclear, the dump's parent company, "donated" \$10,500 to Beasley's campaign and \$500 to Superintendent of Education Barbara Nielsen's campaign.

In upcoming years, Beasley will also have to address the Laidlaw-GSX hazardous waste dump on the shores of Lake Marion. The GSX site, the largest of its kind on the East Coast, is an ecological time bomb. The site is located on the second largest watershed on the East Coast and could conceivably contaminate the Lowcountry's water supply when it fails. Most scientists agree the site will fail.

As the nation celebrates the victories of 25 years of environmental awareness, we all must look ahead to protect the next generation's place on this planet. South Carolina has some of the most beautiful natural resources in the country, but they will not last if our state's leaders insist that we be the dumping grounds for the nation.

Vietnam protesters weren't justified



TOMMY TOUCHBERRY
Columnist

The newly published memoirs of Robert McNamara have reopened the debate on Vietnam. The former defense secretary under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson states in his book that the Vietnam War was a mistake and that it was handled poorly. I don't have any problem with Mr. McNamara admitting his error in judgment, but I do detest the use of this book to justify radical liberal movements during the war.

President Clinton has taken it upon himself to say, "I believe it vindicates the position of those who marched against the Vietnam War during the 1960s." Clinton is sadly mistaken. There is no justification for the behavior that was exhibited by most of the anti-war movement. Supporting socialist ideals, denouncing the United States of America, using illegal drugs, disrupting the peace and causing riots at college campuses, engaging in sexual relations in public and other episodes of civil disobedience are not justifiable or excusable.

I have studied Vietnam from many angles. I have read books by conservatives and liberals, and I have listened to the accounts of those who lived through the war (my parents, teachers, etc.). I do agree that the war was a mistake, but that is in hindsight. The decision should have been made much earlier to either win the war or get out of Vietnam. If Johnson believed that winning the war by "whatever means necessary" would instigate World War III, then he should have removed U.S. soldiers in the mid-1960s.

The anti-war protesters did not oppose the war just because they believed it was unwinnable or unnecessary. Most of the anti-war protesters opposed the war because they opposed a democratic state using its military to stop the expansion of communism. These "flower children" didn't give a crap about the Americans in Vietnam; their disruptive behavior only served to destroy the morale of the soldiers, their families and the American people. The actions of the anti-war protesters did much harm to the war effort and served as a catalyst to the destruction of basic American values and the American family. Clinton and his cronies were wrong.

If the anti-war position had been adopted by the United States, it is

very likely the Soviet Union would still exist today and would be a communist superpower with a clear military and strategic advantage over the United States. Presidents Truman through Bush were correct that it had to be stopped. The policy itself was not flawed and was executed fairly well by Eisenhower, Nixon and Reagan. Johnson, on the other hand, did a very poor job.

Another side note to the McNamara controversy is the statement made by Donna Shalala, the secretary of Health and Human Services. She said on CNN that the Vietnam war was a mistake because "we didn't send our best and brightest sons and daughters." This statement sums up the elitist arrogance of the radical religious left.

These elitists don't believe that middle-class teens from places like South Carolina are capable of being the best and the brightest. They don't believe that black and Hispanic teens can be the best and the brightest. They don't believe you and I can be the best and the brightest. What they do believe is that the best and the brightest are their own kids at Harvard and Yale.

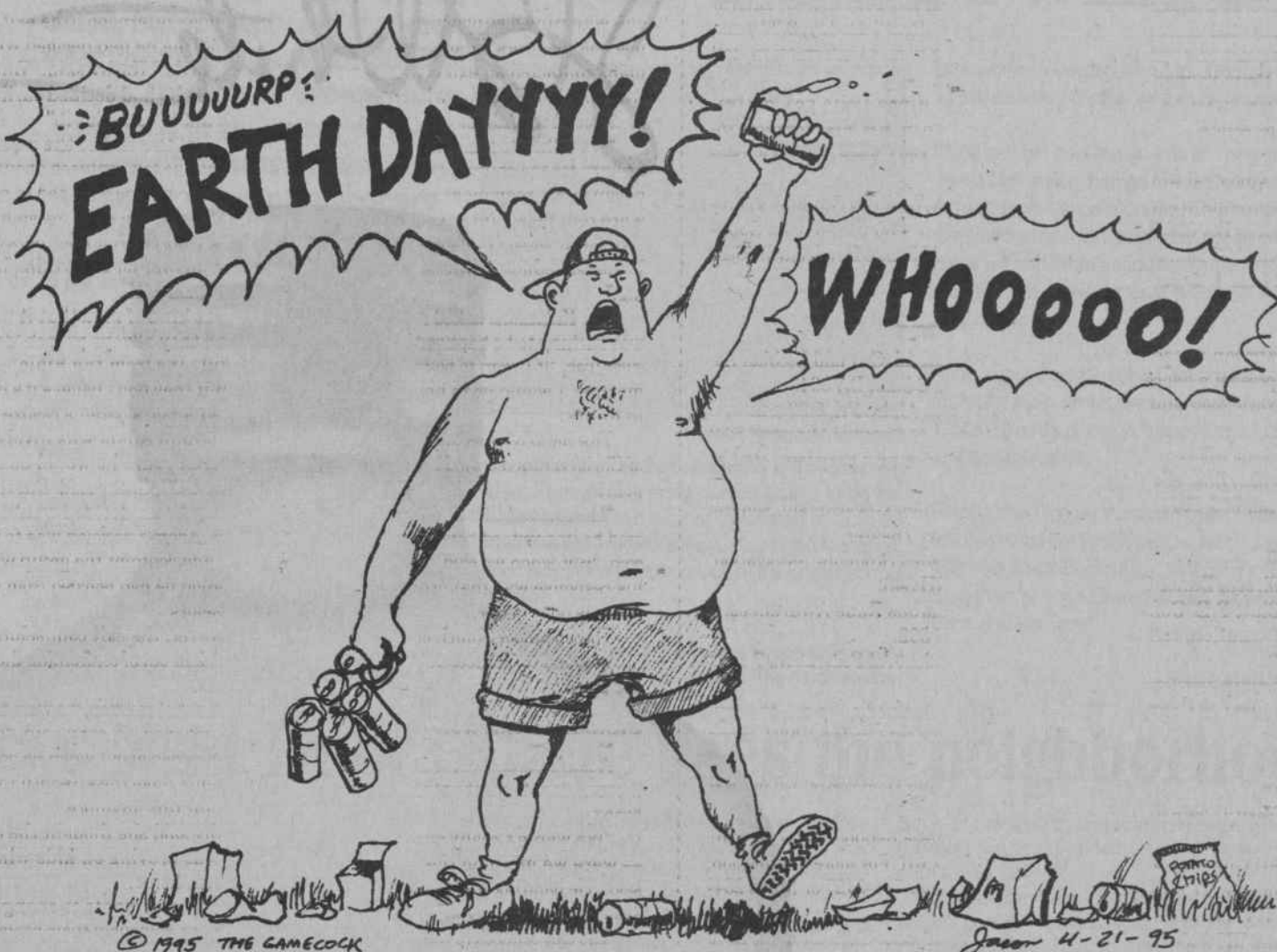
Finally, I would like to address the issue of confidence in our government and the widespread cynicism that exists in America today. Robert McNamara said one of his purposes in his book is to restore America's confidence in its government. I am the first to admit there are a great many politicians who are not guided by principle and honesty, but rather by special interests and deception. But there are also a great many who are guided by principle and honesty. I think the GOP has earned back some of our trust with the "Contract with America." We have to trust someone, otherwise our government will never function at an optimal level.

I have a friend who believes that no person is trustworthy and that every politician has done "bad things," e.g., smoked pot, gotten drunk or cheated his or her constituents. I often question him on his premise by saying, "What about me? What about my friends, people I know from my church?" He responds with his "90 percent" number — that's how many people he feels are bad.

I personally don't buy that philosophy. I believe that a majority of Americans are good, decent people.

I believe there are many of us who got through adolescence without using drugs or abusing alcohol. If you let cynicism run too deep, then you really lose any reason to live.

That's not a healthy attitude.



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QUOTE UNQUOTE

"You, as an individual, make an impact every day by the choices you make and the products you buy."

Chris Thomas,

Coordinator of USC Recycling

Newspaper people are completely insane

This year's Gamecock is winding to a close. Next week's our last week of publication, and then we kick out all the people who are being graduated and close up shop for much of the summer.

I've been working up here for three years now (except last semester, when I moved into the Coliseum for my journalism practicum), and every year it's one of the most entertaining and educational experiences of my schooling because newspaper people are insane.

Yes, we don't really think or act like anyone else in the world. We're a weird, freaky bunch. We work really late. We ask questions about everything. We eat the heads off live chickens every third Thursday of the month.

Most newspaper people survive on carbonated beverages and caffeine. I can exist on one meal a day as long as I drink about 15 Cokes during the day. My blood is artificially caramel colored.

Lee, our editor, goes for the hard stuff — Mountain Dew in the Grand Marketplace's industrial-sized soda kegs. Mountain Dew can keep a person awake through an entire afternoon of the O.J. trial and still have enough kick to get a compact car with a dead battery started.

Newspaper people also tend to be masters at getting outdated computer equipment to do amazing publishing tricks. The computers in our newsroom have slightly less computing kick than a good \$30 scientific calculator, but we're able to produce the newspaper on them every day.

Through a careful combination of electronic know-how, diligent work and voodoo rites, we keep all the computers running between Russell House's random, sudden server breakdowns. This way, we've got time to type several entire stories



CHRIS MULDROW
Viewpoints Editor

before we lose them all to the computer erasure gods.

After we type in the same stories 10 times, we get a copy editor to read them. It's the job of the copy editors to remember obscure grammar and style rules such as the spelling of "adviser" and the right way to capitalize Legislature. Section editors like me are required to argue with the copy editors over said obscure grammar and style rules, mainly so we don't have to reprint our pages and paste them down again. If the copy editor wins, I find ways to cut individual letters out of the paper and paste them over other letters to capitalize things or move commas.

As you'd expect, the newspaper is a great place for healthy debate about prevalent issues of the day. Ongoing debates include:

- Why is there a condom machine in Gambrell? Do people get the sudden urge to bump and grind in the middle of history class?
- Why doesn't the Big Bird restaurant on Main Street have more business? Our semester-end party's at the Bird every year, and it is kinda like heaven with pool tables and grease. We're not upset it's our little secret, but we wonder why it's not a more popular place.
- Will the journalism school ever be moved, or will journalism majors from Carolina have huge quads for years to come?
- Why can't Fox show more than one episode of "The Simpsons" a night?

Jaywalking is hereditary disease, but it can be helped

Wow, I actually wrote two columns within a month of each other — that's a first for this semester. Gimme a cookie. Well, it seems quite a few people took issue with what I wrote about Marshmallow Peeps in my last column. I've received quite a few Pro-peep comments over the past week, some bordering on violence ("Hey man, you got a problem with Peeps, you got a problem with me!"). So, I'm going to issue a public retraction that while Marshmallow Peeps may be vile and putrid, they aren't the demonspawn mockery of God's natural world that I made them out to be.

Today though, folks, we will travel 180 degrees and tackle another subject entirely: law enforcement. It seems the boobs in blue at the Columbia Police Department have shifted their crimefighting focus away from murder and the like toward stopping a pure, unadulterated evil — jaywalking. Yes, jaywalkers are now Public Enemy No. 1, and we're not gonna take it anymore* (* courtesy Twisted Sister, circa 1984). Forget the drunken drivers swerving all over the road — it's the damn jaywalkers who keep walking out in front of them who are the problem.

Sadly, jaywalking afflicts one out of every six Americans, and the numbers are growing every year. So as a public service to the community (because I just love the community, don't you know), I will provide a handy-dandy checklist entitled "How to Tell If You or Someone You Love Is a Jaywalker."

Warning signs include:

- at social functions, subject always suggests a rousing game of Red Light, Green Light;



MATT HORGAN
Columnist

- subject has an endless supply of those corny chicken-crossing-the-road jokes;
- favorite video game is Frogger;
- subject drools at the sight of a six-lane divided highway;
- refers to Five Points as "The Arena";
- subject wakes in the morning to find tire tracks on his/her buttocks and a Honda-logo-shaped indentation on his/her forehead.

Now, I'd like to remind everyone that these are just individual symptoms of jaywalking and that the full-blown disease is far worse. No one seems to know what causes this malady, but heredity seems to play a big part. Say, if you come from a long line of roadkill, you're eight times more likely to be a jaywalker than another person.

However, treatment is available — namely in the form of \$152 tickets from the Columbia Police. Get tagged with a few of those, and instead of crossing the street you'll be standing on the corner asking for change. Oh, I'm sure the police have our best interests in mind; it's just that the station house needs a couple of new couches in the break room, and Murray's sister has to have that kidney stone removed...

Well, enough about Columbia's finest; I'm sure I've exhausted the subject. You know, flowers may bloom and groundhogs may fail to see their

• When Manchu Wok opened, The Gamecock loved it. Little buckets of that fluorescent red special sauce sat all over the newsroom. After a few months, though, the magic faded. Now we're all addicted to the chicken fingers at the Gamecock Grill. Will the fingers fade, or are they the new food of choice for USC?

The editorial board has to decide on lead editorials, those unsigned editorials up in the corner, every day. Some days, we don't really discuss the topics much; I mean, who can argue about an editorial urging people to study or vote? Well, actually, our copy editor Carson does argue with that sort of thing. In fact, Carson has the exact opposite opinion of everyone else on staff on just about every issue raised for lead editorial. I never have to actually ask the entire editorial board about the issues. I just ask Carson what he thinks and write the exact opposite. Carson keeps trying to send me pipe bombs.

Newspapering has all kinds of benefits. We need benefits because we get paid less than most subsistence farmers. For instance, we get to read Calvin and Hobbes and the crossword puzzle before you do. We get to act first on good classified ads. We get to see the lingerie ads early...not that we care about that, of course. We get to bug people all over campus with phone calls. We get to endure scathing criticism from every professor on campus. (One stipulation of being hired as a professor at USC is to dismiss The Gamecock as mindless drivel and mock it every three classes.)

I think I'll finish this next week. I'm going to the Bird.

shadows, but the one true sign that spring is here is the appearance of the ice cream truck in the Russell House parking lot. Nobody is buying anything, though. He's been here about a week straight, and I have not seen the guy get any business yet (which I think is an indication of this particular ice cream man's business savvy, but anyway...).

I think it's a sad state of affairs that we, as supposedly fun-loving, herky-jerky college students, can't take a little time out of our day to stop and savor life and a Slimer Pop at the same time. Sure, you'll be a little late to that 2 o'clock poli sci course, but you only live once — be somebody, dammit! Kick back on the grass, prop your head on your books, peel open that Orange Push-Up and think to yourself, "Now, this is living!" I think one of the great college experiences is showing up for class with sticky fingers and red and blue stained lips. (Read into that what you may, the intent was pure.)

Finally, I'd like to state for the record that after having endured my 21st Easter on this earth, I still get an Easter basket. There, I've said it, and I'm proud. Hell, it's free candy; who am I to say no? Actually, these last few years I've really gotten better about not eating the Easter grass. That Easter grass is tricky — it always finds a way to wind itself around your candy so you end up eating it, too. When I was little, I would "excrete" Easter grass for weeks after I got my basket. But enough pleasant thoughts for the day.



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