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Spectator crosses line

A nagging thorn has found its way into The Gamecock's side yet again, and this time its sting was much sharper than usual.

The Carolina Spectator, a newsletter published by The Palmetto Spectator Society and edited by Vernon Davenport, has again been distributed on campus. The Spectator is published and distributed infrequently on campus and contains columns and features with a heavily conservative bent. In past issues, the newsletter has published a series of jabs called "The Shamecock" designed to ridicule and criticize writers and issues covered in The Gamecock.

Normally, The Gamecock staff gets a few copies of the newsletter, reads them over, fumes for a bit and then laughs. If a person — or a newspaper — can't laugh at criticism, then it is doomed to take itself too seriously.

In the latest issue of The Spectator, however, several features and stories went over the edge of good-natured fun and into the realm of irresponsible immaturity. Normally, The Gamecock wouldn't even mention The Spectator for fear of legitimizing what its editors are doing, but some of the comments in this issue demand response.

First, the editor, in his column regarding the dispute over the USC elections, states that he does not know either Teresa Wilson or Amy Bigham, but he is sure that both care only for his vote. Earlier in the column, he calls them both "stuck-up sorority queens." Later in the column, he jokes that Wilson has "presumably left school to join a guerrilla insurgency in some Third World nation." These comments reflect an apparent trend in The Spectator to call names and make fun of people rather than offer substantive criticisms of them.

This trend continues in "The Shamecock," where Neil Baumgardner is called "homeboy," Nigel Ravenhill is labeled "idiot" and Chad Stone becomes "moron."

The newsletter's ridicule continues with a picture commandeered from The Gamecock's Viewpoints page (Mr. Davenport, are you aware that copyright law doesn't encourage reprinting photographs owned by other publications and then using them on photo illustrations?) of Byron James' head pasted to Forrest Gump's body. Far more effective would have been a systematic analysis of the issues The Spectator disagreed with.

The "letter to the editor" The Spectator ran also reflected a lack of responsibility in editorial decisions. If "Bob Kennedy Cropp" had falsified his name and sent in the same highly offensive letter to The Gamecock, it would have found the steel grave of a wastebasket more quickly than you can say "editorial judgment." The Spectator is likely to criticize the suggestion that it throw away a letter as ignoring freedom of speech, but the letter the newsletter ran had absolutely no merit in any serious publication. Further, Davenport's response to the letter was an exercise in vulgarity and racism that rivaled the preceding letter.

These complaints don't even begin to detail the lack of concern for factual support, the lack of serious analysis of issues and the lack of maturity in writing in The Spectator. Competition in newspapers is a valuable thing because it forces writers and editors to be vigilant in gathering and presenting information. The Spectator doesn't make an effort to be vigilant, however, and resorts to playground taunts and amateur cut-and-paste photo manipulations.

The Spectator has massacred the concept of objectivity and fair debate of issues. Competition from a serious publication striving for the best in journalism would be healthy for The Gamecock, but The Spectator only does its best to offend, to mock, to disregard standards. The Spectator is, perhaps, aptly named, for like a belligerent spectator at a sporting event, it sits on the sidelines of campus life, shouting obscenities, throwing sharp bottles and doing nothing to help the progress of the game.

Bomb strikes home



RYAN WILSON
Columnist

No one could have planned for an explosion in Oklahoma City that rocked the very foundations of this society. The entire nation watched as smoke poured and rubble fell from a federal building in an obscure little midwest city; all the while the nation wondered why.

We saw the picture of the firefighter with the bloodied baby in his arm, later to learn that baby did not live. This and many other images have been seared into our minds for years to come.

In the early hours after the explosion, the public, guided by the media, speculated on who was responsible. The first description of suspects led us to believe that some Arab faction was the culprit.

That first possibility, much like Susan Smith saying a black man abducted her children, was widely believed to be true. The bombing brought back to mind the World Trade Center incident, in which an Arab faction was held responsible, so everyone accepted it to be the case once again.

My generation has grown up with the idea that terrorism exists, but only in some faraway land. In the span of a few years we have had two attacks on our own soil. The first one we deemed okay because those responsible were not considered to be "one of us," whatever that means.

But Oklahoma is different. The

nation is still reeling after we have found out that a few of our own citizens are responsible for this act. In the past, we could always bomb some area if they were responsible for a terrorist act against the U.S.

What do we do now? The United States gets vehement when our innocent children are needlessly murdered, but now U.S. citizens are responsible — how are we going to react?

Considering this attack came from a far-right faction of our own society, we should see the general movement to the right that Rush Limbaugh predicted so well stopping in its tracks. Sure, many people are disenchanted with government, but they are not willing to blow children up to prove a point.

Even Newt Gingrich suggested that the federal agencies be beefed up to keep events like this from happening in the future. (Sounds a lot like more government to me, how 'bout you, Newt?)

I can only hope those who complain about the effectiveness of our government are watching now. The speed and decisiveness at which many agencies have reacted should teach those "less government" people the errors of their ways.

I am not trying to trivialize the event by making it a left/right issue, but many allegations have already been made saying the anti-government rhetoric that has saturated our society is partly responsible for this tragedy. I wish this wasn't the case.

We have been thrown into a new age. Let's only hope we land on our feet.

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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.



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QUOTE UNQUOTE

"I hope there will be a lot of different kinds of basically intellectual activities [in Preston] that are exciting and otherwise unavailable at the university."

Karl Heider,

USC anthropology professor on the Residential College

Everything I know I had to learn at least twice

Ed. note- In respecting the writer's nationality, this column was spellchecked in the Queen's English of David Copperfield, Robertson Davies and W.H. Auden.

Unlike Robert Fulghum, I needed more than kindergarten to learn everything I know. And even as the sun sets on my second degree this isn't a whole lot. But what I do know is that everything I know I had to learn at least twice. I know that:

If you get the chance to kiss a girl, do it. I have seldom passed on kissing a girl and not looked back at that moment with a lingering element of regret for the what might have been. (Postscript: Having found the woman I plan to wed next spring, I ignore this advice and suggest that these words are only of interest to singles or people who feign commitment, i.e. those who still buy condoms.)

French women do not universally wear their black hair in bobs, but I have spent much time admiring those who do. (Of possible interest to those singles mentioned above.)

Life is too short to drink cheap beer...or cheap wine, or any alcoholic beverage that costs more than \$4 a bottle. My favorites (that's o-u-r, not o-r-r): Beer- Warsteiner, gin-Tanqueray, tequila-Cuervo Gold, white wine-Gewurztraminer or a Vouvray, red wine-any Italian red over \$15 that doesn't give me a hangover.

Automobile manufacturers should be forbidden to make red or British racing green ragtops. Respectively these colours should be restricted to the Italians and the British.

Apple rules no matter how much Microsoft coopts and bullies the computing world and makes their software look and feel like a Macintosh. A proper cup of tea is enjoyed hot.

Contrary to what Rush Limbaugh thinks, not everyone wants to be an American. Despite the 14 months of winter, almost everybody else does seek to move to Canada because of our absurd largesse with welfare for people who have never heard of Gordie Howe or the Stanley Cup. Canadians are much more welcoming to newcomers once they learn to spell G-r-e-e-t-i-n-g.

Snakes are the evil and twisted creation of somebody wired on bad acid.

Life's greatest mystery isn't Easter Island or Stonehenge, it is trying to figure out why anyone would ever seriously consider living in Tasmania where every snake is poisonous.



NIGEL RAVENHILL
Columnist

If you really don't know what you want to do in life, go away for a while to a land where the natives don't speak your language or at least speak it with a strange accent and a Big Mac is called something as exotic as a "Royale With Cheese."

Americans can't play ice hockey, and Canadians can't play basketball. This explains the last-dete detente between the two neighbours.

Classical music is tragically absent from the cultural interests of our contemporaries. Rather than classical music in the classic sense which includes opera, symphonic, string quartets and chamber ensembles, to most people under 30 classical music is anything by Deep Purple or Eric Clapton. What sorrow.

I would never want to marry the heroine of a country ballad.

If you are seriously considering killing yourself, spend the time to put on any CD by the Smiths or Morrissey. You'll be instantly relieved to discover that there is someone far more distressed than yourself, and maybe your problems can be conquered. Think about it.

More doesn't necessarily mean better, it just means more.

It's acceptable to laugh aloud anytime a girl says, "I don't normally do this, you know." Appropriate response: "And I'm very grateful that you're making this moral and sexual distinction just for me."

After shaving my head last month, I realized that black people without hair just look cool, while whites just look weird and psycho.

I will never understand why anyone would want to boil a peanut other than for a joke.

The intransigent right wing so ably represented by some members of this editorial staff really needs a dose of the other side of the fence. I wouldn't want to wish them ill, but what are they going to do if their daughters marry across racial lines or if their sons admits they're gay? People are just people, and you don't have to like anybody of a different stripe. Maybe you might

just consider them simply as someone to whom you wouldn't offer a beer and not as a scourge to be scorned and hated. One day when the energy of your youth has diminished you may need the aid of one of those you marginalized.

The best beer is actually that which is free. I never appreciated how much my parents meant to me until Mom passed on to her next engagement and I was left with the surviving half of the parental units, my dad, a person whom I admire beyond the limits of my vocabulary. To those who take their parents for granted, appreciate their past sacrifice and the limited time remaining that you have with them.

Sunday mornings are made for the newspaper, bagels and cheese and real orange juice with lots of pulp that sticks in your teeth.

People don't kill people and neither do guns. No, bullets kill people, and I don't see anywhere in the Second Amendment where it says that one has the right to carry ammunition. So just ban the ammunition.

I need the silence of snow falling at night and the rustle of autumnal leaves to appreciate the passage of time.

Whenever I get the feeling that I can write well, I only have to look toward the oeuvre of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Shakespeare or Evelyn Waugh for instant humility.

Dying for one's country in some stupid irrelevant overseas war is just stupid.

That there must be some legitimate role in life for statistics. Although even after two graduate courses it continues to escape me.

South Carolina would be a wonderful place were it not for the heat, the snakes crossing in front of a tee shot and an anomaly called grits. Thanks for the memories and the education both in and outside the classroom.

I look forward to returning to the Southeast in the autumns of my graying years for Gamecock football, sea breezes and par fives.

Cheers.

Year of Summerton (pop. 975) stories comes to close

Yet another semester has come and gone here at the good ol' University of South Carolina (pop. 26,000). It flew by me like a fly near a cow patty.

This has been the first semester I've written for The Gamecock, and I'd like to thank Lee Clontz and Chris Muldrow for affording me the opportunity to bring you these thoughts each week.

I'd also like to thank the USC population for giving me such a warm reception (well, the ones who didn't use it for their bird cage anyway).

As most of you faithful know, I usually write a lot about my hometown of Summerton (pop. 975), located in Clarendon County (pop. 27,035), situated in the Lowcountry of South Carolina (pop. 3.2 million). I have always been told to write about what I know, and I know more about Summerton than Hillary Clinton knows about cattle futures.

I have tried not to talk about Summerton too much, but I know I have overdone it just a little. One fan of the column, a newcomer to USC this semester, told me she felt like she knew more about Clarendon County and Summerton than she did about Columbia.

And yes, there are other Summertonians at Carolina besides myself.

In fact, there is another one on the staff of The Gamecock, but she'll never freely admit it.

The others who aren't afraid to say they are from Summerton usually dread Thursdays be-



DREW STEWART
Columnist

cause they worry the rest of USC will think they are like me.

One such fellow Summertonian told me if he gets asked about barbecue, Rimini or that stupid "Yankees Annex Myrtle Beach" column one more time, he's going to run over me with his four-wheel-drive.

Many people have asked me, "Why don't you write about politics?"

Politics and my style of writing are like a barbecue dinner and a roller coaster ride: it ain't wise to mix them. Besides, Pat McNeill and Tommy Touchberry pretty well sum up what I'd say if I wrote a political column anyway.

I also frequently get asked, "Have you been other places besides Summerton?" (Then they usually try to state the population and get it wrong.)

Yes, of course, I have. What do you think I am, a tree? I have been to Manning and Sumter several times. You folks must think I have no culture.

I've had one or two people ask me "What would I do to make USC a little more Southern?"

First, I'd get a barbecue place in the Russell House.

And I'm not talking about the heated pork you get at Maurice's; I'm talking straight off the pit, cooked for 10 hours over hot oak coals, based in vinegar and pepper hog meat with liver hash, cole slaw, sweet potatoes and hushpuppies.

I would also like to bring some country bands to Cockstock.

If CPU would bring in Hank Williams Jr. Cockstock would probably enjoy its biggest success ever.

Finally, many folks ask me what do I call the readers of this column. Rush Limbaugh calls his listeners "Dittoheads" and Mickey Mouse calls his faithful "Mousketeers," so what should I call mine?

I thought about it for a while, came up with a few prototypes, and finally decided what you, the ardent readers, can call yourselves: Summertonally Enhanced.

I am really going to miss writing this column over the summer. I have looked forward to writing it as much as a redneck looks forward to "Hee Haw." Don't you worry, though. I'll be back this fall with some more stuff from Summerton (pop. 975) Maybe by then, someone will have a baby in town and it'll be Summerton (pop. 976).

Most of all, USC, have a Summertonally Enhanced Summer.

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