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Don't let silence become second campus tragedy

Any community that is accustomed to living in security is prone to be taken aback by tragedy. When a community faces only those problems that are relative to its size, larger problems become quite disturbing.

The possibility of tuition hikes, lack of state funding, insufficient time for study or socializing and inadequate parking space are problems that are proportional to the size of the USC community and ones which students deal with on a daily basis. The loss of one of our own to suicide, however, is a much larger, much more infrequent and much more demoralizing problem.

Possibly even more demoralizing is the reticence that has overtaken the campus since this past weekend's tragedy on McBryde Quad. Administrators and students alike seem to have very little to say about the incident, and the community as whole seems to be surviving on fragments of fact while trying to piece together a legitimate account of the events.

A silence of this sort opens the campus up to several potential problems. One is that without a complete set of facts, the human mind tends to fabricate bits of information in order to fill in the gaps. Rumors can run rampant in a dormant period such as this.

Silence also prevents healing. Discussion has a therapeutic effect and is an effective tool in overcoming tragedy. Silence only breeds further problems.

Furthermore, the unwillingness of university officials to talk to the student body about the incident represents an incomplete education. Learning to cope with problems such as these are essential to adult life. The silence of university administrators means that they fail to recognize students as adults.

The possibility always exists that the little bits of information that the community is receiving are the only ones known. Even so, the problem has not been properly addressed.

Please, do not be afraid to discuss the subject in a tactful and tasteful manner. It can't be disregarded or necessarily explained, but it can be resolved.

Popular GOP candidate won't make best president

The next presidential election is only 14 months away. The primaries start in February. It looks as if the race will be a duel between President Clinton and Majority Leader Bob Dole. But is Bob Dole the best possible candidate for the GOP? I believe not.

It's not that I don't like Bob Dole. It's not that I don't agree with Bob Dole on most issues. In fact, I do agree with Dole about 95 percent of the time. The problem is that Dole does not possess the personality to motivate the American people. If the race does end up as Dole vs. Clinton, there is a good chance that many voters will stay home. This could allow Clinton to be re-elected to a second term.

As for the other candidates who have already declared, one stands out plainly as the best of the bunch. That candidate is Pat Buchanan. He is the only candidate who possesses the charisma to woo the average voter. He is rock solid in his conservative beliefs and has consistently pounded away at his position for several years. He also gave the incumbent president George Bush a good race in 1992.

Pat Buchanan has taken a strong stand against the so-called "free-trade" agreements which most conservative Republicans support. Buchanan and Perot are the only viable candidates who have publicly opposed these treaties. Buchanan will have no problem winning the support of the Perot voters, who were the key to the Republican landslide in 1994.

Buchanan has also taken a

TOMMY TOUCHBERRY

Columnist

strong stand on the abortion issue. Other Republicans (except for Keyes) have tried to avoid this issue. I believe that to be a mistake for two reasons. First, I would rather lose with firm principles than lose without them. Second, I believe that the pro-life position motivates Christian voters, while it does not influence the votes of the Perot crowd. In other words, the abortion issue divides true conservatives and liberals, but the independent voters tend to favor the pro-life position or ignore the abortion issue altogether.

I originally had planned to support Bob Dole for the GOP nomination, but my mind has changed over the past several weeks. I have become convinced that these "free-trade" agreements are really hurting the U.S. economy. I think it is time we start looking out for the average American. We need to quit sending millions of dollars overseas. Instead, we need to balance the budget, grow the American economy and reduce the tax burden on all Americans (regardless of their economic class). I believe Pat Buchanan would be the best possible choice for the Republican nomination and for the President of the United States. However, I will support Dole if he receives the nomination, although, in my opinion, he is the second-best candidate.



'Women are up against a wall to prove themselves, and that's not fair.' Senior Trevor Spencer on the U.N. conference on women

Republicans use speed limit for easy political gain

The Republican Congress has taken up the mantra of less government with a zeal that would suggest they want to give up their jobs. Alas, the targets for elimination have been superficial absurdities; substantive problems are to be solved by handing over responsibility to states and corporations. These actions pander to the most base instincts of their electorates, who have come to expect little more.

This Congress—with its megalomaniac Speaker of the House and posturing Presidential candidates—has gone so far in arguing the popular theme of less government that it seems to suggest there is no other role for government than providing for the common defense. My reading of the preamble to the Constitution counts five other purposes of our government.

Surely, there are some things that the federal government can and should do in spite of all arguments. Most obviously are areas of "commons." Commons are used by everyone, but are not in the best interests of individuals to protect because freeloading is preferable. The environment is a common concern whose protection must be a group effort for the benefit of all.

While blasting extremist Liberal tendencies to ascribe to government the capability of universal salvation, the Republicans have practiced their own extremism, putting that role onto the shoulders of private industry. Not only does this incorrectly presume that industry will act in the common interest, but it suggests that the American electorate should be given no vote on these issues except the largely ineffective boycott.

For sheer absurdity, the Congressional effort to eliminate the national speed limit is surely my top nomination. This issue is part of the Republican theme of States' Rights. Even after 200 years and

LAURA HALL

Guest columnist

a civil war, apparently that balance is still questioned.

The call to raise speed limits is a perfect political gambit. It costs no money; it requires no troubling moral debate. And best of all, it would affect everyone, appealing to those who do not care to explore the intricacies of theory or federalism. It is amazing the resonance this suggestion has with people. But aside from the cynical, political impetus for this "reform," there are more concrete reasons to oppose this absurdity.

Maybe the idea of a shorter drive home is attractive, but remember the driving habits you see on our interstates before you decide that you'd like those cars any faster. The fact that more dangerous driving conditions would result is a much more important argument to advance than that of less government interference in our self-centered lives.

To anyone from Nevada—OK, go ahead and drive 75 when there are miles of straight, empty road ahead. To South Carolinians—let's not jump on this bandwagon.

I frequently drive I-26 between here and Charleston and every time I am amazed at the horrible driving of my fellow travelers. Clairvoyance should surely be designated as the state sport. No one in this state seems to think seems to think that a turn signal is a necessary tool, making driving a constant game of guessing the other guy's intentions. Since he doesn't always convey his intentions well enough, sometimes the only thing to do is to get really close behind you as to suggest that 65—or even 70—is just not his speed at all. If that doesn't rattle you, remember that a large percentage of

trucks have faulty brakes.

With these sorts of habits, it's a wonder I ever make it here intact. My blood is chilled by playing the game at higher speeds—which would be way above the posted 75, don't kid yourself. It is really not about anyone's right to drive at breakneck, uncontrollable speeds. It is about innocent people being put in danger through others' indifference and irresponsibility.

This argument is not always effective, so I have come up with a few that appeal to self-interest:

■ Higher speeds increase the number of accidents and that raises everyone's car insurance.

If you are involved in accident in which you hit someone from behind, chances are it will be deemed your fault. Most such collisions could be avoided by leaving more space between cars and therefore more time to react to situations.

The same is true for accidents that could have been averted had both parties signaled their intentions. The first question asked at the scene is whether turn signals were used.

■ Another good argument is the simple one of self preservation. Imagine the times a lack of simple signals could result in a major accident: two cars simultaneously changing to the center lane from the outside two, opposite cars moving into the median to make opposing turns, a car turning into a lane which you are moving into.

A simple reminder: you may be a fine driver when conditions are normal and there are no surprises, but the fatal accidents happen when the unexpected is too sudden for you to react.

Increased speeds would shorten reaction times already dangerously on the edge of disaster because of bad driving habits. And that is more important than any political argument.

Let's start campuswide protests

I expected some friends of mine to be excited that I had a column in The Gamecock. After all, they are always telling me to find something to do besides lay on the couch and watch television. However, to my dismay, last Wednesday as I ate lunch in the Russell House many of them laughed. My friends said, "Why should you write about anything, nobody cares! Everyone that writes for The Gamecock only writes 'stuff' that no one really cares about."

As a result, I decided to write and give my opinion about several things I know the majority of students on this campus care about. Is there anyone who does not know that our tuition has been increased for the past four years? Well, I sure as hell do. Are we getting better services for our money? Should we have to pay tuition increases just because the president of our university and members of the Board of Trustees can not communicate and work with the S.C. Legislature? Should we have to pay higher fees because our Legislature does not see the need to give financial assistance to higher education? Should we have to pay higher tuition because our university decided to spend an exorbitant amount on an organ? Would a less expensive one have sufficed? Yes!

Marriott food services have been very responsive to the needs of students. We have seen many new and welcomed additions to various areas of campus and the Grand Marketplace. However, why do two hot dogs, with chili, cost \$4.89? I can get two, with chili, for 99 cents at the Circle K.

Furthermore, those people who check the parking meters. They really are nice people with just a very ugly job. But why do they have to give out tickets when I am in the middle of class or unloading my car and can't feed the meter? Why do we have meters throughout this campus when we pay so much money to come to school? We should have the freedom to park where we please. Does it seem like the university has not only charged an arm and a leg for a parking garage sticker but also oversold the garages? I am not even going to touch the outrageous subject of the monopolizing bookstores.

Many students, and even more parents, ask the question, "How can they get away with this?"

The answer is very simple...we let them. We may write an occasional column about these prob-

TRAV ROBERTSON

Columnist

lems. Someone may make an occasional phone call about these problems. However, we as students merely bitch and complain to ourselves and peers ... and do nothing.

Well, do not fret because I have a solution that comes straight from the radical '60s. Four years ago, when I was a freshman at this great institution of higher learning, my very first English professor suggested that we, as students, accomplish three things. He argued that every person should get a ticket for jay walking, get arrested and participate in a protest. I once recommended to Dr. Palms that he emulate the chancellor at LSU. The chancellor was afraid the Legislature was going to cut funding for the school, so he canceled classes and led the faculty and student body in a protest to the state capitol. Dr. Palms merely stated, "Sounds good, let's call the press." Would our tuition have gone up if we had 5,000 students ascend on the Statehouse or the president's office? I don't think so! The individuals in power simply believe that we as students don't care, therefore we are susceptible to anything.

If the students at this university wanted two hot dogs for less than \$4.89, let's protest. What would happen if the entire student body boycotted the bookstore in order to demand fair prices. Could we do this? Yes. Contact the president of Student Government. Ask the president of SG not only to be the voice of the students in a board meeting but to be the person who will lead us into action.

While there are those who have the power to make decisions about these issues that affect our daily lives, we have power in numbers. We have the ability to change many things on this campus. I would dare to argue that when we as students have decided that enough is enough, someone better watch out. Unfortunately, some of us have not realized this, or simply have fallen into the trap of our generation: cynicism.

A closer look



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