

SHADES OF GRAY

DIVERSITY AT USC

CHRIS DIXON Assistant Features Editor

Racism is an ugly truth America cannot seem to escape, and especially with the glaring stigma of slavery, no one can deny racism was ever a part of society. According to Dwayne White, President of the Association of African-American Students, racism may not be as blatant as it once was, but it still exists.

"Racism is deep in your heart," he said. "It is hard to let go. The South is becoming a lot more diverse than what people give us credit for. People are aware of racism, but no one can understand unless they experience it personally. Being black in America isn't easy."

South Carolina has gotten a lot of flack lately because the Confederate flag still flies atop the State House. To some, the flag represents Southern heritage. To others, it represents hatred.

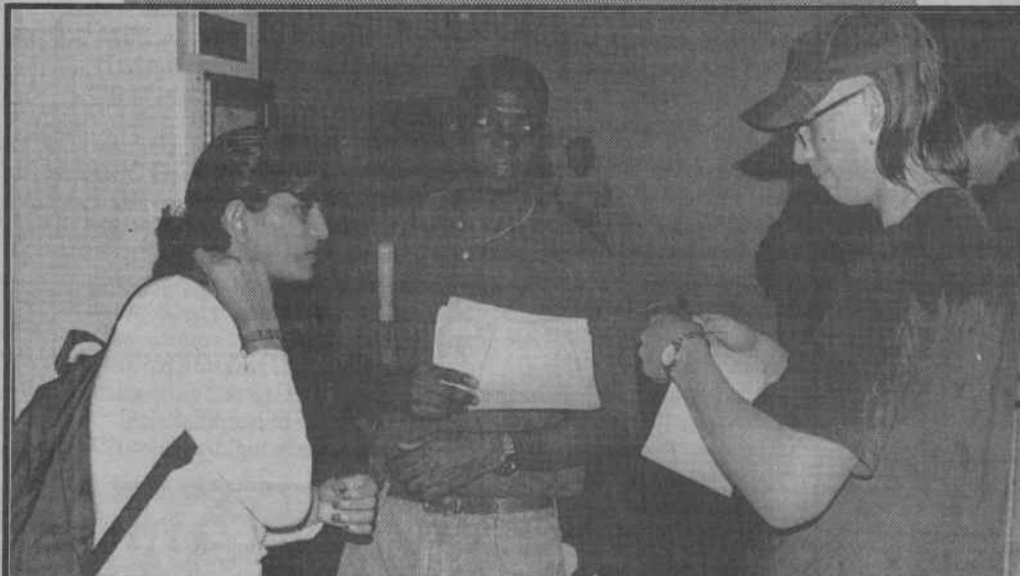
"I understand the flag is a part of some people's heritage," White said. "That's in the past, so let the past be. If it's a part of your heritage, then hang it up in your home. It shouldn't be on top of the State House because everyone doesn't feel that way. The past is behind us. Let's learn from those mistakes and move on."

White said Affirmative Action has played an important part in combatting racism by helping African-Americans attain positions that might not have been available to them before.

"We can gain equality through Affirmative Action," he said. "Once they take Affirmative Action away, there will be less equality than there already is. What they are saying about it is idealistic. It's not realistic to me. We need Affirmative Action because racism is still there, it's just hidden."

Rap music is both a form of self-expression and entertainment for many African-Americans, yet opponents of rap claim it is responsible for violence and other forms of deviance.

"Music is an art form," White said. "When you listen to it, it doesn't mean you have to go out and do it. A lot of it is idealistic. It's there for entertainment. Music is how people express



how they feel on the inside. We should understand that everything on T.V. and in music isn't real."

According to White, there are a number of negative stereotypes surrounding African-Americans, such as all African-Americans wear pants that sag, are drug dealers, and can do nothing but play sports.

"It's hard when you go for a job or go to work with someone," he said. "They automatically think you can do something because you're black. We are all humans. People should realize everyone is different. It doesn't matter what race or color you are."

The media has a tendency to overlook positive images of African-Americans, and focus on

RACISM

SEXISM

HOMOPHOBIA

All have been evils of society since the beginning of time. Even in America, a country that is supposed to celebrate diversity, bigotry can be found everywhere from the playground to the boardroom.

In this first installment of the Gamecock's series on diversity, racism will be discussed from the point of view of an African-American student leader on campus.

TYSON PETERHEW The Gamecock more sensational figures like O.J. Simpson. White said young African-Americans can look up to their parents and leaders of today and of the past.

"We can't forget about the past," he said. "We must look at where we came from, take those experiences, and move forward. All we know is what the history books tell us. We don't know enough because they don't teach it in schools. We don't know enough and we should. Governor Beasley vetoed money for African-American studies. That's bad because it's not only for African-Americans, it's for the entire campus. If we want to become a diverse world, we need to educate each other about each other's world."

According to White, the biggest problem fac-

ing the African-American community is the violent society in which young African-Americans have to grow up.

"Our young ones are coming up in a lot of violence," he said. "If we don't stop it, that's how they'll be. We are headed towards destruction as a race."

Considering all the discrimination African-Americans have to deal with, White said he doesn't feel his race puts him at a disadvantage.

"Being black is a powerful thing," he said. "It's an advantage because of our family values. We've always been taught to love one another. We're brought up in a community where we love each other and respect each other. If we stick to that, then we'll do alright."

The Association of African-American Students is a programming board on campus with approximately 190 members. The goal of the organization is to help African-American students feel like they are a part of USC.

"I like to talk to folks and get to know them," White said. "I hope we can keep up participation in activities throughout the year. We haven't had much participation outside the African-American race. It's for African-Americans and for anyone who wants an education on African-Americans. It's an education and a tool for everyone on campus."

According to White, America can achieve the idea of the melting pot through education.

"We can come together and still be different once we are all educated," he said. "We need to accept and respect one another. Once we have acceptance and respect, then we'll be alright. Getting along isn't good enough. I can always get along with you, but that doesn't mean I respect you."

Discrimination will probably never go away, but human beings can learn to overlook pigmentation and love and appreciate one another for who they are on the inside.

"You can never get rid of discrimination," White said. "We as a race must learn how to get along with others before we can move forward. God put us here with others. It shouldn't be a matter of skin color. We are all humans. It's not the color of your skin, it's who you are."

HUMANS IN THE NEWS

A century of coconuts

NEW YORK—The audience at the Wednesday matinee of "Having Our Say" got to sign an 8-foot-high birthday card for centenarians Sadie and Bessie Delany.

The sisters, whose life story is the basis for the Broadway play, both celebrate birthdays in September. Bessie turned 104 on Sept. 3 and her older sister will be 106 on Tuesday.

They already had a small party at their Mount Vernon home with Amy Hill Hearsh, co-author of the sisters' two books.

"Bessie is wild about fresh coconut, so my husband, Blair Hearsh, always makes them a cake with fresh coconut frosting," Hearsh said in Tuesday's editions of The New York Times.

"Bessie loves the idea of a man making the cake, and he must serve it to her, too," Hearsh added.

The perfect crime

OREGON CITY, Ore. — Police have given up trying to figure out whether Tonya Harding was a burglary victim.

The former Olympic skater told sheriff's deputies a former boyfriend pried open a sliding glass door at her home south of Portland Sept. 5, set off the alarm system and fled with a pile of his own clothes and papers.

Deputies found no fingerprints on the window and have ruled out a break-in by a stalker or the tabloid newspaper reporters who have been following her, Deputy Damon Coates said. For now, the investigation has been suspended, he said in Wednesday's editions of The Oregonian.

Harding was banned for life by the U.S. Figure Skating Association for her role in an attack on rival skater Nancy Kerrigan in January 1994.

Gone Bon Jovi

LOS ANGELES — Jon Bon Jovi is being sued over a no-show in Peru.

Phantom Productions, a Latin American theatrical promoter, sued the rock singer and his band Tuesday, seeking return of a \$155,000 advance, compensation for other expenses and unspecified punitive damages.

The lawsuit alleges that Bon Jovi's agent canceled the November 1993 concert for security reasons and because of Peru's political instability.

But a lawyer for the promoter, Michael Novicoff, said the political situation in Peru was "well known" when Bon Jovi agreed to appear there and many other U.S. artists have performed there during and after 1993.

Calls to Creative Artists Agency, which represents Bon Jovi, weren't immediately returned Wednesday.

Beat It, Sasha!

VENTURA, Calif. — "Step by Step" actor Sasha Mitchell pleaded no contest to beating his pregnant wife and endangering his daughter.

Mitchell, 27, entered pleas Tuesday to hitting his wife on two occasions in April. His 7-year-old daughter was sitting on a bed in their Westlake Village home during one of the attacks.

Mitchell, who co-stars with Suzanne Somers on ABC's Friday night comedy show, has since reconciled with his wife, Jeanette, said his attorney, David Dudley.

Mitchell agreed to the no-contest plea on three misdemeanor counts so his wife and daughter wouldn't have testify at trial, the lawyer said.

Mitchell will be sentenced Sept. 21. Prosecutor John Colombo said he likely will be placed on probation and ordered to attend domestic violence counseling sessions.

Back to the beginning: Generation X

In 1991, Douglas Coupland pigeonholed a generation with his book "Generation X." Four years later, the story remains the same.

PAIGE HAGGARD Staff Writer

Sometimes we don't see the effects of a book, movie or television program until long after it has been published or shown for the first time. That is definitely the case with Douglas Coupland's novel "Generation X."

Coupland's book has the dubious distinction of naming a generation. Since its printing in early 1991 coincided with the release of Linklater's film "Slacker" and with the upsurge of "grunge" music, commercial mongers quickly united these events and turned them into a profitable market of combat boots, flannel and striped T-shirts.

Ironically, the book's title was inspired by an "X" category of people described in a Paul Fussell book, "Class," who were trying to escape the materialism and status games of society.

The book is brilliant. Coupland's style is hip and addictive. Margins are filled with direct and catchy terms for our lifestyles, such as "MoJobs," "decade blending" and "divorce assumption." The chap-

ters are short, and the book itself is only 183 pages.

It's easy to zoom through this book. However, "Generation X" is anything but superficial.

The book follows Claire, Andy and Dag, who've moved to the fringes of Palm Springs, California to separate from an identity-devouring society. Their main entertainment is telling one another stories. With these stories, they try to create their own personal mythologies and, at the same time, a collective consciousness. The characters are at times insightful and at times blind. These individuals are neither pathetic nor jaded; they are simply trying to find meaning in a soulless culture.

So, why take an interest in a book that's now technically passe? Because now that the hype's died down, it's time to read the book and understand

University 101 molds student leaders

TAMARA LAW Staff Writer

For the past three years, University 101 classes have been using an innovative way to help freshman students cope with their transitions to college life.

The peer leaders program is designed as a mentor-like program for freshman students so they can draw on the experiences of juniors and seniors who have successfully balanced academics and extra-curricular activities. Peer leaders assist University 101 professor in planning and meeting course objectives. Students who are

chosen as peer leaders must have effective leadership skills and meet academic and extra-curricular requirements.

Dan Berman, University 101 professor and co-director for Instruction and Faculty Development, explains the reason for the leadership program, "Essentially, we realized that the freshmen would listen more to outstanding undergraduate students who have already been through the same stages of development and know the ropes around the university. So we thought if we recruited students outstanding for both

their academic skills, ability and track record as well as their personal and social skills and proven leadership abilities, they would be outstanding mentors and role models for incoming freshmen."

"We draw from all the outstanding areas on campus, honors college, fraternity and sorority council, judicial council and student government", he said.

Students who are chosen must be at least a junior or senior, have a 3.0 GPA and a history of involvement in campus activities. They must also suc-

cessfully complete a peer leader training workshop. Students apply for leadership positions in the spring, and those who are chosen enroll in a three hour course entitled "Teachers' Management," in which they receive academic credit and attend a two-day workshop. Students choose which professor they want to work with, and at the end of the course they receive evaluations by the professor and a final grade.

Past leaders are Amy Bigham, student body president, and Wendy Hudson, editor-in-chief of The Gamecock.