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Black Cultural Week indicator of diversity

Members of the USC community will have the opportunity to witness another indicator of our university's diversity.

This week has been designated as Black Cultural Week. Supplementing Black History Month (in February), Black Cultural Week promotes education and awareness of the history and culture of African-Americans.

Throughout the year, various days or weeks are designated to certain groups on campus. It is important that the USC community understand the purpose of these events.

Many individuals feel as though these celebrations of certain cultures only divide the campus and hinder unity. Others feel shunned by the seemingly exclusive nature of these special events.

However, the celebration of one's culture does not necessarily separate them from the community. It is possible, and, in fact, important that all members of the community allow for efforts in the education and celebration of an individual's culture without ostracizing him or her.

Each of us can learn to appreciate others' backgrounds and simultaneously befriend them. We can learn from others — as they learn about themselves.

Keep these things in mind over the course of Black Cultural Week. You might learn something.

Church divided over issues of sexuality

Being Christian can sometimes be very disheartening. There are so many different ideas of what being Christian means, and these ideas sometimes clash head on, causing great controversy.

I am witnessing a great example of this in my native Presbyterian Church (USA). The point of discontent: homosexuality.

I have been holding out on this topic for a few weeks now because I know a lot of people have problems with it. But something happened this past week that angered me to the point of finally breaking through and writing on the subject.

Last Tuesday, I attended the regular quarterly meeting of Trinity Presbytery, the Presbyterian version of a diocese. One of the reports given at the meeting was the final report of the Committee on Human Sexuality.

In 1993, the 205th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) ordered that persons of all levels of the church should seriously undertake a study on human sexuality, including homosexuality, with the findings to be presented to the 208th General Assembly in 1996.

Trinity Presbytery undertook such a study, and over the past two and a half years, the Committee on Human Sexuality has been giving presentations to and gathering data from various groups in an attempt to foster dialogue on the issue.

In October of 1994, the Committee gave a presentation at the Presbytery meeting, so all of the pastors of the Presbyterian churches heard it, as well as many members of the congregations. At the end of the presentation, each of the churches was asked to conduct its own study, and to report the results to the Committee.

When I was handed the results of the study last Tuesday, I was shocked. Of the 71 churches in this Presbytery, only eight did a study. Seven told the Committee that they refused to do a study. The other 56 just ignored everything and kept their mouths shut.

I must admit, I am in favor of the ordination of homosexuals, but that is a topic for a later column. What I find troubling here is that so many churches refused to even discuss the matter. They took the ostrich approach to the issue: if we stick our heads in the sand and ignore the matter it will go away. Well, it doesn't.

The facts are these: there are ho-

CARSON BUSH
Columnist

mosexuals in the church, and they are in pain over the way they are being treated; there needs to be a discussion as to who can join the church and who decides who gets in.

In the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Constitution says that the only requirement for admission into the church is "faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and acceptance of his Lordship in all of life." To be an officer of the church, which includes the office of minister of the Word and Sacrament, one must only be a member of the church.

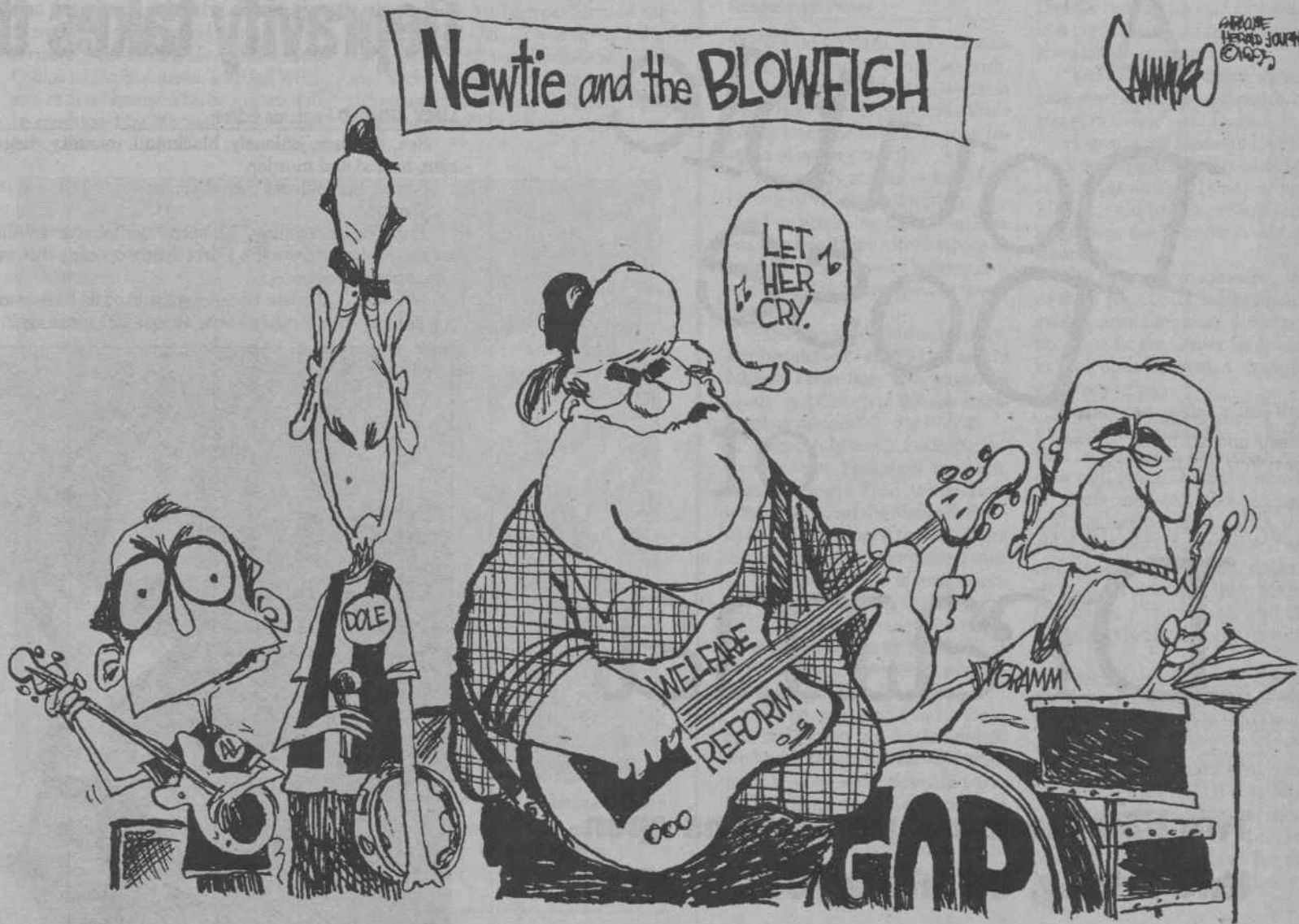
However, the church has added the criteria that you must not be a practicing homosexual. To deny someone across the board the right to hold office because of sexuality, or any other matter, is really denying them the right to be a fully-functioning member of the church. No matter what your opinion on this matter, this contradiction must be worked out, and that occurs only through dialogue.

It is that very dialogue that is being denied. People fear the schisms that will form in the churches should the homosexual issue be brought into full light. I fear it, but I know that the beast of conflict must be faced.

In 49 CE, many of the people in the church feared what would happen if they let Gentiles in, but they knew the issue had to be discussed, so they called the Jerusalem Council. It is time that we learned from the courage of the church mothers and fathers and took this issue head-on.

Silence is deadly. If we ignore the pain that many people feel because of the church's policy, the problem will fester until it overtakes our very soul. I am ashamed of what happened last Tuesday at Presbytery. There are divisions over the issue, and reconciliation can only occur when people are willing to start talking again.

I turn with hope for a found peace to the words of Samuel Stone's great hymn "The Church's One Foundation". Though with a scornful wonder this world sees her oppressed, by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed; yet saints their watch are keeping; their cry goes up "How long?" And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.



QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"Black Cultural Week is a supplement to Black History Month (in February). We want to celebrate all year, and this is a good time to celebrate and educate about our history."

Jackie Rice, AAAS Special events co-chair

Horgan's guide to zesty Halloween costumes

MATT HORGAN
Columnist

Hey all you College Guys and Gals, guess what's right around the corner? No, it's not a man with a knife; guess again. Well, yes, unemployment is correct, but it isn't the answer I'm looking for. No, it's Halloween you dummies! Halloween, the trumped-up, Americanized, commercial version of that ancient festival of carnal delights, All-Hallows Eve. However, instead of the traditional drinking and sex late into the night, these days kids get dressed up like morons and go grovel for candy.

Halloween is an unforgettable part of every person's childhood. Your mom would take you to K-Mart or some other store run by invertebrates, and then she'd pick out one of those horrible plastic costumes that fit too snugly in the crotch. I'm sure you remember them—they came with the masks that looked as if they were designed for Quasimodo (no air holes and the eyes a foot apart). Then you found yourself walking the neighborhood streets dressed as Tweety-bird, He-Man, or one of those damn Mon-chi-chi's, and by the end of the night you'd have 20

pounds of tootsie-rolls and those black and orange-wrapped Hell taffies.

Sadly, things are no longer that simple. At our age, Halloween deteriorates into a cheap, petty competition of who has the best costume. And I'm here to help you dog all of those other losers. So here it is, my "Guide to Coming Up with an Innovative and Disturbing Halloween Costume".

Okay, first of all, you gotta break away from the monotony of the old standards. Dracula, Frankenstein, the Wolfman... they're all passe, so forget about 'em (though if you dress up as Michael J. Fox as "TeenWolf", you're in business). Go with something new, something fresh, something that screams "Freak." Now, just as an example (don't steal this from me, 'cause I'll know if you do), I'm going to be a giant maggot for Halloween. It's easy and economical—a couple of white trash bags, paint my face black, and root through trash cans... it's that simple!

Now, I know what you're thinking, "Matt, I don't want to dress up as a larvae, I've got family and friends to think of." Well, do not fret, there are endless possibilities. You could be a pirate, an alien, an emu, a giant sanitary napkin (in general though, I would avoid hygiene products as costumes).

When you are coming up with your concept, keep in mind the logistics of your costume. It's all well and good to say you want to dress up as a Flying Buttress, but how are you going to do it?

It's also a good idea to avoid abstract concepts and terms as costumes. Don't show up at a party dressed as Avarice, or Self-Pity. Not only will you not be well-received, other partygoers might throw snide remarks your way.

So what's the key to a successful costume, you ask? Two words: Celebrities artichoke (actually, celebrities is the only important word here, but I had to meet my quota). Yes, dressing up as a well-known or famous person is always your best bet. But make sure that the person's fame is rather re-

cent, or you're walking the fine line of a costume disaster. If you array yourself as former Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev, you're sure to flop. The same goes for Carol Burnett, Walt Whitman, Ernest Bornine, and Meatloaf (the singer, on the other hand, dressing yourself as the entree would be a good idea).

Try to pick celebrities that have done something bad or really stupid lately. You could be Michael Bolton with a bad case of dysentery, or a Bay-watch character with a Portuguese Man-o-War wrapped around your torso. Ooh, here's one for you couples out there: Hugh Grant and Divine Brown arm in arm... how charming! And as always, you can't go wrong with Flip Wilson.

These are just a few of the many guises you can don during that most twisted of our holidays, Halloween. Give the kiddies lots of candy, unless they're dressed as a Power Ranger... then give them a swift kick. And for God's sake people, don't eat those Halloween decorated doughnuts in the Grand Marketplace.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Berube's complaints about Plaza petty, unjustified

After subjecting myself to Professor David Berube's tirade on the legislature being in the Plaza, I have decided to "Just Say No".

Professor Berube states that is "virtually impossible for those faculty and staff...to find an elevator to go up to the seventh through 12th floors" because the legislators and their staff take the elevator from the first to the second floor and the first through the third floor.

For the 35,000-odd faculty, staff and students at this University, please let me tell you that there are two elevators at the Plaza. One is and "express" elevator that skips the legislative floors. The second elevator accommodates all floors. Yes, it's true that the second and third floor inhabitants could walk up the stairs — most of the second floor does. I have waited for an elevator for five minutes once — big deal Professor Berube, big deal. Life is complicated.

There are worse things to worry about than having to wait for an elevator for five minutes. Talk to someone you always see but never talk to. Read The Gamecock. Read the Carolina Quarterly. Look at your date book. Look at the art work and displays that are close by.

Professor Berube's complaints concerning parking are justifiable. Once the music building was completed, the authorized "G" parkers park in the "All Decal Lot" - even though the "G" lot right next to it is often half-full.

If these G's would park in the G lot (and you know who you are!) then the All Decal lot would be left for staff members that only have a Z. Professor Berube, has it ever occurred to you that staff members at the Library and others places have to park behind the Coliseum and walk (yes, walk) to their place of employment, often in the rain (because the

shuttle is sometimes full and often late). And you are concerned about waiting for an elevator? Try making \$18,626 per year (gross) and paying \$187.50 a year to park in the seventy-five cent parking lot.

Professor Berube, your concern about lobbyists is lame. Everyone knows lobbyists only come around during lunch and in-between conference meetings. And when they come they like to park on the street so they can make quick getaways (lobbyists, leave me alone, this is tongue in cheek but true, and I want to be a lobbyist!). Furthermore, the General Assembly begins on Jan. 9, 1995 and ends (hopefully) on June 1st. The Spring semester begins on January 8 and ends on May 1 (with a break from March 3-10). You will only have to suffer for about 16 weeks (remember you will have just had a four-week break).

Why don't we follow Denise Wellman's idea and look at this as an opportunity. Invite a legislator or a staff member to your floor. Show them the view (in my case, the Heart of Columbia's stagnating pool of green slime). GET A LIFE!! Waiting for an elevator or climbing six floors is the least of our problems!

Jeri D. Cook
GINT graduate student

Touchberry missed a few important issues

I am writing in response to Tommy Touchberry's article "Verdict marks national division on race line."

against white issue.

Mr. Simpson and former Mrs. Simpson being an interracial couple was already an issue because interracial couples are not fully accepted by some blacks and whites. This issue would not have been addressed in the news media because blacks and whites would share a common point of view. If this was a marriage of a black man and a black woman or a white man and a white woman, this would not have been on the news media one tenth as long.

Another issue that the news media could have focused on, but did not, is that Mr. Simpson is a wealthy man. If he was a man of average income, regardless of race, the case would not have taken half as long. The murders might have been announced on the news. One of the first questions directed to Mr. Simpson after the case referred to his financial status.

Another comment he made was about affirmative action. Affirmative action is for all minorities, not only blacks, which was whom you kept referring to. I think America is starting to realize that blacks are as qualified as whites, which some whites are refusing to accept and are using the excuse of affirmative action.

In my opinion, the O.J. Simpson case took entirely too long, and it is time to leave Mr. Simpson alone.

Tawanda Shondell Jones
Chemistry freshman

Palms correct in leaving out homosexuals

President Palms was absolutely correct in not adjusting the university's equal opportunity statement to specifi-

cally mention sexual orientation. Race, ethnicity and gender are entirely separate issues from that of homosexuality and to lump them together would be a mistake.

Race and gender are properties that you are born with and have no control over. No one should discriminate on these basis because they are merely physical characteristics people are born with due to their particular ancestry. They have nothing, inherently, to do with a person's behavior or actions.

Sexual orientation, on the other hand, is directly related to a person's behavior. Whether that behavior is proper or not is another issue, but that issue should not be lumped together with that of gender and race. This is what many homosexuals do not seem to understand.

I resent gay rights activists constantly relating their cause to the civil rights movement, they have absolutely nothing in common. The civil rights movement was about giving people freedom, equality and equal opportunity so that no one would be limited, as to what they can achieve, from birth.

Now, all people in America are considered equal from birth (including homosexuals), what happens after that is another matter. Homosexuals must realize that their cause is about society's acceptance of a kind of behavior. They are not defined as homosexuals from birth.

I empathize with homosexuals' desire for full acceptance, but to put their situation in the same basket with the situations of women and blacks would be a gross misrepresentation. Thankfully, the President realizes this.

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