

Use St. Patty's to air out frustrations

MATT HANLEY
COLUMBIST

Columbia is known for more than its Blowfish and 35-second yellow lights. There's a St. Patrick's Day festival in Five Points. The annual block party has grown from a refuge for Savannah wannabees into a full-blown carnival atmosphere attracting the fair-weather Irish from as far away as Clemson. It'll be a great place for our student uprising.

Why riot, you ask? I've discovered something twisted and obscene that shows what USC really thinks of its students. "Emolit Mores Nec Sinit Esse Feros." What does this mean? This Latin expression is stamped beside the USC name on everything from sweatshirts to the five-subject notebooks we use to kill roaches. But not even the insultingly thorough University 101 has translated this for us.

Yes, Alanis, it is ironic. Ironic that a state could spend so much oxygen debating whether or not the Confederate flag is racist or merely jingoistic while a veiled insult is flaunted in our face daily.

As an important journalist, I did some investigating on the subject. I couldn't reach our college spokesperson (extra week in Daytona), so I had to dig deeper than the one phone call we Gamecock writers usually settle for.

It turns out the Latin lingo was created in 1964 under a special university committee code named MOPPSLI (Make Our Poor Public School Look Intellectual). The chore of coming up with an expression was given to Lester B. Graves, a distinguished but dark-humored Columbia businessman. Told only to "make it look fancy," Graves used the famous dead language he learned at Midlands Prep to write: "Hey sucker, if you had any brains you'd be out of state."

After learning the meaning, the Carolina Bigwigs (Mungoloids) punished Graves by depriving him of his right as a rich redneck to have a part of I-26 named after him. But the trustees thought it was pretty funny, so they let the logo stick. No one will ever know they thought.

But now we know, and this should be the last straw. We've put up with No Turns On Red, train blockades and a Sunday alcohol policy that discourages private consumption in favor of bar/restaurant hopping so the moral minority can count sinners between church sessions.

Let's give them something to talk about. Hell, let's give us something to talk about. More than one columnist has griped recently that our generation lacks a really big moment. "Where's our JFK assassination?" Obviously, the Challenger explosion doesn't count because we didn't worship the astronauts the way our parents worshipped the Kennedys (although we really felt for the teacher).

Our state needs to be shaken. We are a terribly passive folk. Most of us have good manners, and those that don't are good-looking enough to be stuck up. The well-behaved and nose-in-the-air debutantes make for quiet streets, like Greene Street in front of the "student union." People are too busy politely avoiding Mastercard salespeople or checking their reflections in the Russell House window to talk to one another.

We all have problems, whether it's hearing that "I won't tell your name" song or having to fill the ice trays. But we have far too many telephone prefixes to remember to solve anything. We're told to call Charter if we have a problem. That's completely wrong. If you're depressed, you're probably not drinking enough. Learn to speak up.

So let's act up on St. Pat's Day (well, the 16th). Start downing beers at dawn, and don't stop. Improve the city's streets by filling in the potholes with your puke. Be loud and naughty in any and every way. Lie on the train tracks — make the Old Southern wait on you for a change. If we make enough of a ruckus, we could scare off the few corporations silly enough to reside in our four skyscrapers. If AT&T leaves, they might take some of the prefixes with them.

Part of the planned festivities is a Rock the Vote program to get us students to vote. Do not participate. There is nothing rewarding about the political process. Our goal is not another four years of Clinton and other cool liars. We want to be heard and remembered. A riot will give us immediate positive rewards like national TV exposure and cute girls who dig bad boys.

Our uprising will be the best yet. With all the hip bands playing, we'll have an instant soundtrack. Add a Pearl Jam song to make a bitchin' mixed tape to remember our big moment. This weekend is our big chance, fellow students. Embody the spirit of Judd Nelson raising his fist at the end of "The Breakfast Club." Then wreak havoc. The next day we'll go for bagels. My treat.



QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"I don't feel myself like a lot of people do about who HIV affect in great proportion. I think young gay men, especially young gay men of color, are incredibly disproportionately affected by this epidemic."

MTV star Sean Sasser on AIDS and HIV

Housing sign-up still not foolproof

If housing sign-up season is just too well-organized, monotonous and altogether dull for you, here's a light-hearted little tale of nepotism and treachery to bolster your faith in this well-oiled bureaucracy we call home. Names have been changed to protect the questionably innocent.

If you were a member of RHA Senate or attended the Horseshoe housing forum in the fall, you would have heard a certain housing official (whom we'll call Ms. Informed) describing this year's new and improved housing sign up. The system would be fair to everybody, with no "squatters' rights" allowed and a lottery to ensure equal opportunity for all students, for every room. In fact, this grand plan was described repeatedly as egalitarian, or "affirming political, economic and social equality for all" (American Heritage Dictionary, Third Ed.).

But if you actually attended housing sign up on March 11, you were treated to a new meaning of egalitarian: "Favoritism shown or patronage granted to relatives" (American Heritage Dictionary, Third Ed.). Ironically, this is the definition next to "nepotism."

Fully believing in the egalitarian procedure, many students arrived at the Russell House ramp the day before equipped with sleeping bags, long underwear and their favorite pillows. Seizing Ms. Informed's egalitarian treatise, the students organized

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themselves according to a list based on who arrived first for the vigil. This ensured that those most dedicated to living within this egalitarian community would receive a just reward for their suffering in the bitter cold. For most of the group, 18 hours without sleep and constant shivering followed, but the list grew longer and longer. Throughout the night, the students envisioned the rooms they would earn for their efforts.

The weary students staggered into the warm confines of the Russell House at 7 a.m., with stiff muscles, windburned faces and mild exposure to vouch for their long night on the ramp. They knew the hard part was now over. What they didn't know was that not everyone had to do things the hard way.

Apparently, select students with family connections in housing had already been signed up a week before for a room that many in the line had been coveting. This led to expressions of disbelief, anger and finally, in some cases, grief. It seems the majority of the housing officials were completely unaware of this transgression. When they were informed of the situation, they were in no position to rectify it.

After the initial shock, the story became clearer. A housing official, acting on her own and in violation of

the all-new egalitarian system, had signed up a family member and that student's preferred roommate for a prime apartment. This eliminated housing spots that should have been guaranteed to people who had waited in line for them.

This just goes to show that blood is thicker than honor, and not even the Carolinian Creed holds water at all times in the administration. The Creed states, "I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings and their need for conditions which support their work and development."

According to the 1995-96 Carolina Community handbook, this is a pledge to be compassionate and considerate, avoiding any behaviors that are insensitive or inhospitable. The handbook also goes on to state, "This last clause reminds community members that they are not only obliged to avoid these behaviors, but that they also have an affirmative obligation to confront and challenge, and respond to or report the behaviors whenever or wherever they're encountered."

As students we have done our part. While it is true that the Housing Administration did not have the ability to control this event, it does have the ability to see that the situation is rectified and that it never happens again.

GOP agenda mired by infighting

In this year of political debate and mudslinging, we, the people of the United States, have been subject to the Republican presidential debates.

Okay, so the race is really Bob Dole's. As a Democrat, I will even concede he's the best the Republicans have to offer. But has this party actually enticed us with anything new? No, not really.

The problem with a platform is that it never really changes. That is why they call it a platform. This is not to say the Democrats are always the same, but it does seem the Republicans are contradicting themselves. A platform is really a large, flat object people build stuff on. Lately, the Republican Party has been building a whole pile of stuff on a platform that, because of Pat Buchanan, Steve Forbes, Alan Keyes et al., has been unsteady.

These are the so-called fundamental beliefs of the Republican Party.

- 1) Outlaw the use of abortion. Some uphold this for all cases, including rape, incest or life-threatening situations. Ironically, this would cause government to interfere with the lives of Americans. This leads then to...
- 2) Small government that does not interfere with people's lives. Nuff said?
- 3) Outlawing indecencies. Okay, the point of this is that the PARTY would attempt to blind people to the truth of society and censor the right to speak out. To a Republican, society is sick, and they feel the need to cleanse its mortal wounds immediately instead of progressively. Does this sound something like megalomania? To the Democrat, society is sick, but that's what makes society wonderful. In this concept, it seems reasonable that forcing women to perform self-inflicted coat hanger abortions and people to actually act out their obsessions instead of trying to tastefully quench their thirst on the Internet is the solution. This seems to be a blind man approach,

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suggesting that if they don't see, it does not exist. To the Republican Party, these are moral acts. These things that really do not affect the lives of the socially challenged, i.e. the Republican Party, are at the forefront of the platform of a group of people who actually don't partake in these supposed indecent activities. It seems plausible that one should actually experience the indecency before passing judgment and censoring "indecencies." (See homosexuality.)

4) Public school prayer. Okay, one of Gingrich's pet bunnies. Basically, Gingrich believes everyone should become a Christian. Little do the Republicans know, we have other religions in the United States. There is something called Islam; there is Buddhism; there is Hinduism; there are a whole bunch of -isms and only one -anity. It would seem the needs of many would outweigh the needs of the few. That would seem to be the basis of the entire American political system, but is it? No. Besides, if a non-Christian student did not pray before classes began, would it not put undue embarrassment on the person from unfeeling classmates. Hey, kids are cruel. All of us can attest to having gone through the hell of kindergarten and elementary school. Right?

5) Outlawing Financial Aid for Liberal Arts students. Alright, now this is a Bob Dornan and Pat Buchanan pet project, not necessarily one in which the entire Republican Party states. Most of them are hesitant to attack fundamental building blocks of the American system, including reading and writing. These two skills fall under the auspices of the English Department, which, in turn falls under the jurisdiction of the Arts (another thing the Republican Party wants to cut), or Liberal Arts. It seems the

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IN OUR OWN OPINION

Diversity Week puts best foot forward

Contrary to popular belief, diversity isn't necessarily related to skin color or race. It expands far beyond that. Far beyond.

For some reason, society has deemed diversity as color and race, when they are only one rung on the latter of diversity. People ignore the other elements.

Perhaps it is this reason that prompted USC to hold Diversity Week, which is currently in full swing. It is a shame that by the time students reach college they are not comfortable enough with diversity to even understand what it truly means. Hopefully, programs like USC's Diversity Week can aid students and the community in understanding the pluses and minuses of diversity.

THE TOPIC
Diversity Week
OUR OPINION
Programs like Diversity Week lead to better understanding.

It is a heavy burden to carry, but spreading the word about diversity has proven to be easy and rewarding. At USC, diversity has inspired a variety of programs that have turned out to be vital to many at the university, not only because they meet the needs of students and staff, but because they address specific interests.

Everything from the Women's Student Association to religious groups celebrate a certain area of diversity. Rather than shun or admonish the differences among USC students, these types of organizations offer a welcome environment for individuals to feel at home and congregate with other students, in turn teaching students a little about one another.

Buchanan's policies reek of racism, xenophobia

Pat Buchanan supports his isolationist policies by claiming that America needs time to "assimilate." He calls for the formation of a unified American culture.

His well-intentioned rhetoric reeks of racism and xenophobia. By insisting American culture needs to be assimilated at all, Buchanan ironically negates every culture that has contributed to the history of this country. In a land made up entirely of immigrants (except for the Native Americans, whom Buchanan has not mentioned), xenophobia doesn't make much sense.

If we are to follow Buchanan's social engineering project, how will we determine an authentic American culture? The first Americans we find in our grade school history texts — not counting the Native Americans, of course — were the Puritans. Is their culture the one we are seeking to emulate? After all, they were almost here first.

A unified culture demands a little corner-cutting in American history. Not to worry: Buchanan has it covered. He also demands students be taught a history of which they can be proud rather than ashamed. But history centered around blind glorification is nothing more than propaganda. It certainly is not dedicated to true learning and understanding.

The study of history is not necessarily a celebration; every nation has a few stories its people would like to forget. Americans have many things of which to be proud, and we have many reasons to feel ashamed. Such a condition is not a moral judgment; it is merely the way of people. A history that only recognizes triumphs without addressing failures and motives is worthless.

Diversity takes a blow if a unified culture is adopted. Ideally, diversity in education does not devalue any culture in its investigation of all cultures that contribute to our American heritage. If diversity is viewed as going overboard in its pursuit of this goal, it is a backlash to centuries of calculated

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underrepresentation. For instance, as little as a century ago, female authors were dismissed simply because of their sex. Now the literary canon is still being expanded to include these and others' writings. The point is, we must remain aware of cultural bias, or we risk overlooking rich, worthwhile aspects of our heritage.

Buchanan's talk of assimilation reminds me of other famous rhetoricians of this century, men who moved nations to bloodshed with promises of a great pan-Germanic destiny. Likewise, talk of the United States' unified culture is an unnecessary fiction. Technology has forced a truly global community into being. Isolationism of any kind is impossible. We need not assume our global neighbors are enemies or that their cultures infect the so-called American way of life. There's nothing wrong with holding our heritage dear. But first we must determine what our heritage truly is.

Does America really need an assimilated culture, or, more importantly, is such a culture possible? Where does assimilation end and fascism begin? Buchanan has been criticized for racist innuendoes in his campaign rhetoric. Hispanic Americans criticize his compulsion to refer to all Mexicans as "Jose." His exaggerated pronunciation of Justice Ginsberg's name has roused cries of anti-Semitism.

Buchanan has indeed expressed a deep resentment toward cultural "others." He interprets Americans' cultural ties to their countries and other languages as treason rather than as integral aspects of our collective identity as a nation. Will there be room for American Jews in an assimilated nation? Catholics? African Americans?

By advocating an assimilated culture, Buchanan and those who agree with him are calling for the construction of a social fiction. A history that never was will bolster a present that never can be.

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