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**IN OUR OWN  
OPINION**

## International Week program merits students' support

Everyone wants their week to hail their cause. There is Greek Week, Cultural Diversity Week, and Creed Week. Well, what may seem to be a trend out of control has, so far, proved to be interesting. One can only wait to see how well International Week accomplishes its goal of

**THE TOPIC**

International Week

**OUR OPINION**

It's important to get involved in other cultures besides your own.

educating the USC community about goings-on in other parts of the world.

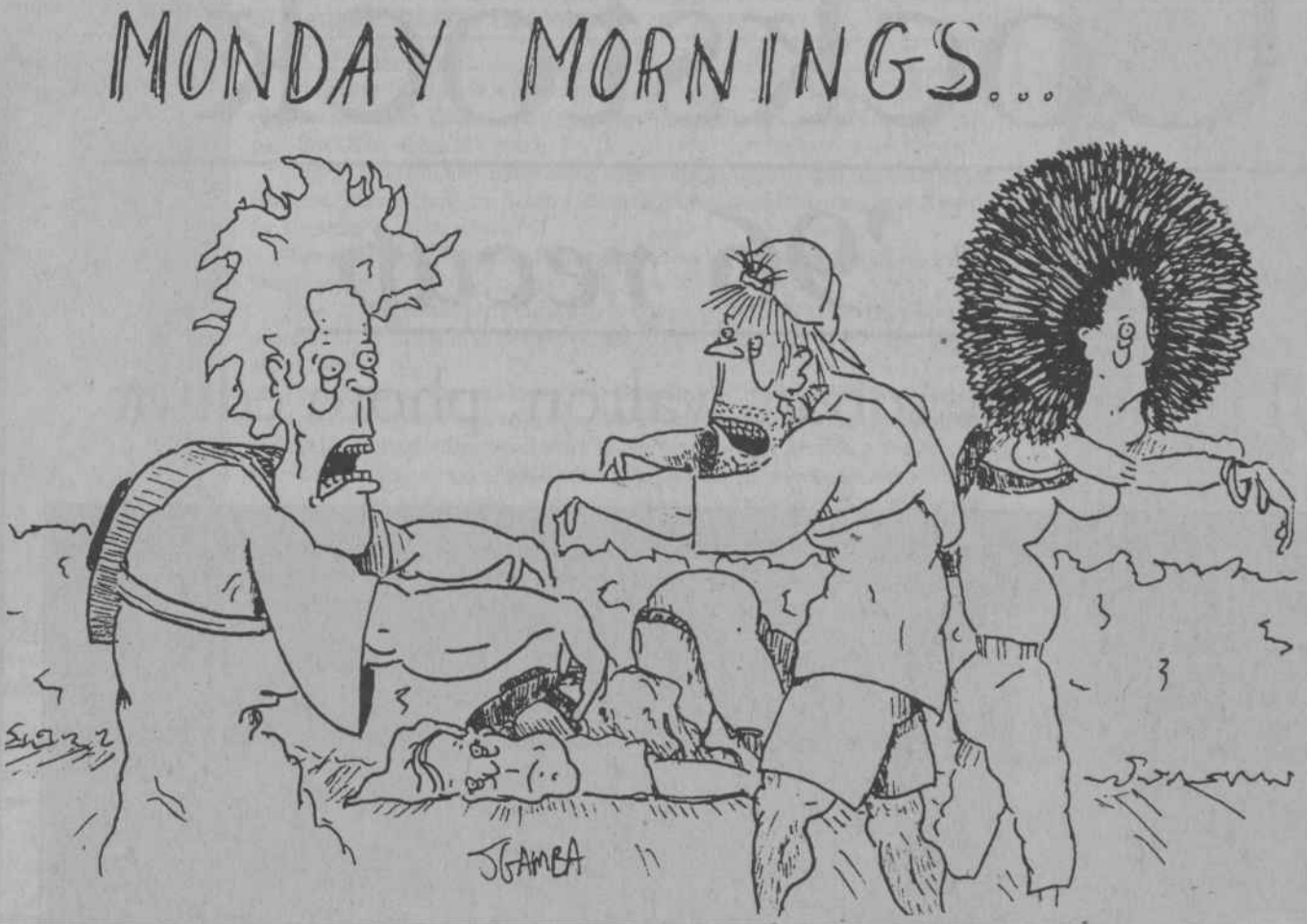
If you take a look at the brochure the International Programs people sent out (we know you'll have to dig it out of your trashcan - something about university-related mail dictates it be "filed" this way), you'll notice they really have done a wonderful job of cultivating the culture far and beyond our dear ol' U.S. of A. There is food from Greece (get some Baklava!), India, Saudia Arabia, Germany, China (more than fried rice, trust us), Kuwait and much

more.

Along with all the great food will be a series of programs more than one of us will appreciate - information on study abroad. Want to get away for a while? These speakers have "been there, done that" and should be great sources of information. Carolina

Productions has added to the cause by showing special films.

With all the designated weeks to celebrate this and celebrate that, let's not lose sight of what we are all (or at least most of us) here for - an education. The International Week activities offer something for all types of folks. For those who like action, there is table tennis and a performance by The Incredible Acrobats of China. For those wanting to travel, there is helpful information. For those who want to meet other students, there are socials. Get involved.



**QUOTE, UNQUOTE**

**"The typical American student at USC doesn't realize there are international students here."**

NADA Resident Hall Director Heather Emmert

# CROSSFIRE

## Movies should highlight Southern way of life

You know, folks, the Academy Awards got me to thinkin' (as do many things) about the movies.

**DREW STEWART  
COLUMNIST**

You know, they just don't put out many great movies anymore. In a year where a movie about talking barbeque can be nominated for the top honors, I've decided the industry needs to go back to making movies about the South.

Two of the most honored movies of all time, "Gone With the Wind" and "Forrest Gump" are about Southerners. And certainly, no one could forget "Smokey and the Bandit."

But, since the movie industry isn't likely to reshape itself based on the words of a gentleman from Summerton (pop. 975), I guess I'll just have to imagine.

Suppose "Star Wars" had been about the South.

First of all, the theme wouldn't have been the music written by John Williams. It would have been something like, "A Country Boy Can Survive" by Hank Williams Jr.

Instead of flying in the Millennium Falcon, the heroes would have flown in a black Chevy Extended 4x4 with a cherry bomb muffler.

Darth Vader would have worn a solid black suit much like the white one Boss Hogg on the Dukes wears. Also, his name would have been something like Sheriff Vader, and instead of being leader of the Empire, he would have headed up Empire County.

And the most famous line of the movie would be, "May the Fawce stick to ya like white on rice, boy."

And what if "Saturday Night Fever" were to take place in Clarendon County? The only thing flashy about that movie would have been Travolta's Dixie-embossed belt buckle.

Suppose Indiana Jones had been created as Alabama Jones.

And how about "The Godfather" re-named as "The GodDaddy." Marlon Brando's role would have been played by Sorrell Booke (of Boss Hogg fame),

and the movie's most famous line would have been, "Boy, you bettah take that offah or I'm puttin' it up yo' (obscene word for hindquarters)."

Certainly, a film that could easily be transformed into a Southern film is the saga of "The Wizard of Oz." To convert it, make the tornado happen in Georgia, make Toto a blue tick hound, turn the Tin Man into the Tin Gentleman and completely do away with the Cowardly Lion because there ain't nothing cowardly about the South! (That is, unless you make him in the likeness of Bill Clinton.)

And for the witch, you could make her in the likeness of Jane Fonda or Hillary Clinton.

"Rocky" could easily be about a Southern boxer. Just change the name to "Bubba," make it take place in Charleston instead of Philadelphia and put the Stars and Bars on his trunks instead of the American Flag.

Another thing. If more movies were based on Southern characters, the catchlines would be more colorful.

Dirty Harry's famous catch line is, "Go ahead. Make my day." Imagine if Dirty Harry had been Southern. The line would have been instead, "Boy, if you as stupid as that dum brick over theah, you just messin' with son. 'Cause if you do, I'll cut yo' tail so bad yo' great grandmama'll feel it."

The majority of these ever popular "yo' mama" scenes would be a lot shorter, because if you ever talk trash about a Southern man's mama, you can expect to have your butt cut within minutes (if not by him alone, by the rest of the male members of his maternal family).

And the sequel to "Babe" would be called, "Dinner at Maurice's."

Hopefully, someone in the movie industry will get a copy of the column and follow up on the suggestions listed here. If they do, the highlight of next year's Oscar won't be seeing who's got the ugliest dress.

## Smokers' rights an issue of health, individual rights

**ANTI-SMOKING**

If you want to smoke and die, that's fine. Just don't take me with you. As an asthmatic child of two smokers, facing the day-to-day barrier between breathable air and toxic air is very personal. My parents have always been conscious of my health (unfortunately, as smokers, I can't say the same for their health) and kept their cigarette smoke away from me as much as possible. In the past few years, I have asserted myself and banned it from my presence. All I wish is that I could walk into a restaurant or other public place and have the same common courtesy from strangers.

Some strangers at tobacco industries have recently admitted to many incredulous acts. For starters, they set out to make an addictive product. While this is a smart economic venture for them, they failed to see the health-care costs smokers would entail for our country. Lung cancer, cancer of the esophagus, lip and tongue cancer - you name it, and you can probably link it back to the economic genius of a few tobacco marketers. And if you think this point of the anti-smoking argument is trite, try watching a loved one suffer because they had a two-pack-a-day habit. It ain't pretty.

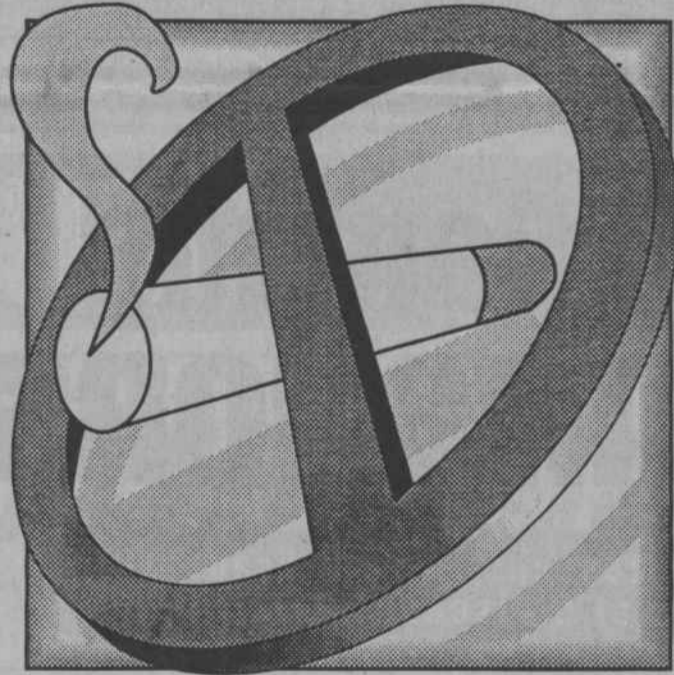
Okay, so admitting they were out to get us from the start, let's personalize this a little. Imagine living with a smoker - and chances are this won't be hard since there are so many of them out there. Wash your clothes in the home of a smoker. They stink. Dust their home. Cigarette ashes fly everywhere and are hard to get rid of. Try kissing a smoker. I never have, but I can only imagine licking the bottom of an ashtray. Sound appealing? Well, tell that to the millions who have been suckered by all of the attractive advertising.

Joe Camel is cute. He's got big biceps and an impish grin. Beautiful models wearing bright colors hold onto a cigarette while in the seemingly carefree world of heavenly bliss. It is an irresponsible argument to say these ads are the cause of the rising numbers of smokers. However, it is plausible to say these ads represent how slack our society is when it comes to one of the most dangerous and accessible toxics. Let me throw out a pretty far-fetched argument.

Once upon a time, men realized our civilized world would eventually surpass the need to fight great and devastating wars. They invented the cigarette to eradicate the future portion of the population that would have otherwise contributed to a population explosion. They marketed it. We liked it. Far-fetched? Maybe not.

Smokers are starting earlier - some as early as elementary school. For those who think "to each his own," this isn't a scary fact. Unfortunately, these children represent higher health-care costs, failure to use their full potential because they will probably suffer from diseases earlier in life and, quite frankly, more people to pollute our air.

Pollution is being attacked from every industrial sector. What is amazing is that there are millions of individual smokestacks puffing away, and we have failed to regulate them in the name of individual rights. I believe in individual rights; however, in most cases your rights end when they interfere with the rights of other people. This means I can't play my STP really loud in the middle of the night without headphones. That way, if I lose my hearing, the only



ETHAN MYERSON The Gamecock

person affected is myself. This is how I propose we solve what has become as much of a social problem as an economic and health concern.

Instead of going so far as to ban cigarettes (which, for the sake of my own parents' health, I would love to see happen), I propose lawmakers continue to create smoke-free areas. And these restrictions have to be enforced. If I want to watch a movie in a theater, I damn sure don't expect to have to leave the theater because some teen is being cool while away from mommie.

Expectant mothers should be prosecuted for smoking just the same as mothers who drink heavily and cause fetal-alcohol syndrome. Parents should naturally have the respect for their children's health, even if they don't have the same concern for their own. Education in schools about the hazards of smoking should increase and include graphic photos of sick smokers.

What people do in their own homes is none of my business. However, when it affects the future of our country as in the lives of children or rising health care costs, we should all have some say. Keep your cigarette butts off our streets, smoke out of our air. As for the future, maybe someday this toxin will be treated as just that - a toxin to be controlled.

-By Tina Morgan

**SMOKING**

Throughout its more than 200 years of existence, America has operated on a foundation of discrimination. Whether it be women or blacks, children or the disabled, Americans have always managed to infringe on the rights of minority groups. Only the select group of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants has managed to escape the woes of discrimination.

And throughout this country's existence, once a group has managed to assimilate and step beyond minority status, the American majority has merely

shifted its attention to other groups.

Once the Irish became an acceptable ethnic group, discrimination against blacks began to rise.

So it is that new groups are defined to provide the American majority a target at which to express its concern.

One group currently bearing the heaviest burden is smokers.

The image of the cigarette industry and its supporters has become increasingly offensive to the middle-class view of a nice, clean America living in Suburbia and adorned with straight-A students, two-story houses and dogs in the backyard.

Smokers have been relegated to the most uncomfortable, least desirable sections in restaurants. In the same way, workers who smoke are often denied break rooms where they can smoke while other, nonsmoking employees are free to enjoy their breaks in comfortable break rooms.

Likewise, advertising by cigarette companies is monitored much more closely than other types of advertising.

Spuds McKenzie never had to stand up to the scrutiny Joe Camel has.

When the habits of smokers impose upon the rights of others, there may be some need to make adjustments, but the current situation goes far beyond that.

Discussion has taken place in the past few years to consider special taxes on cigarettes.

This is so completely unjustified. Only the most blind-sighted bigot could agree that an extra tax on cigarettes is a good thing.

But then, as in many cases of discrimination in the United States, most Americans are generally unconcerned about the plight of the few.

Why should smokers be forced to bear more of a tax burden than anyone else? Why not place more burden on those who use hair spray or gel? Why not design special taxes on coffee and soda so members of society who rely on caffeine can pay the price for their addiction?

These proposals are no more ridiculous than the proposal to tax smokers more than other Americans.

Likewise, the division of restaurants, hotels and other public places into smoking and nonsmoking areas completely defies the logic of the Supreme Court in its decisions regarding civil rights in the '60s.

The Supreme Court decided separate cannot ever truly be equal, and if this is true for blacks and other ethnic groups, why isn't it true for smokers?

By dividing public places into smoking and nonsmoking areas, one group will surely suffer by receiving inferior services.

This country was founded under discrimination, but despite a plethora of bigots and slow, tedious methods of change, many Americans have struggled against this standard.

Discrimination against smokers is no more admirable than discrimination against any other group.

Smokers are a part of this country just like all the rest of us, and this discrimination must come to an end.

-By John Lyons



News: 777-7726  
Advertising: 777-4249  
FAX: 777-6482

Student Media • Russell House-USC • Columbia, SC 29208

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