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**IN OUR OWN
OPINION**

Students, groups mirror worldwide intolerance

It's the end of the year. And, oh, what a year it has been.

Every part of our world has been touched by strife and division, from countries thousands of miles and oceans away to fellow organizations down the hall.

Internationally, we have witnessed the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the disintegration of peace in the Mideast. The IRA has become active again, threatening England with bombs. France resumed nuclear testing, amid worldwide condemnation.

In the United States, a Unabomber suspect has been identified. The O.J. Simpson not-guilty murder verdict sparked racial tension and more division. The presidential campaign is underway, starting heated arguments between friends and emphasizing volatile issues like abortion and gun control.

In South Carolina, Strom Thurmond has announced his candidacy for yet another term in Congress. The Redneck Shop opened in the Upstate and cross burnings unfortunately have become a not-so-uncommon event.

And at the University of South Carolina, this trend is continuing. Because we have students from all 50 states and dozens of countries, we have not been isolated from the issues that affect people in other parts of the world. Because we are a diverse community, we have differing opinions on the hot-

THE TOPIC
End of the year

OUR OPINION
Students, organizations need to work together to right perceived wrongs

button issues of contemporary society. Sometimes we are not as tolerant of others' opinions as we should be.

Unfortunately, this divisiveness has shown itself this semester in the place the student body should come together the most: student organizations.

Every group will have some problems and some disagreements; that's only normal. But this year, our organizations have turned on one another and on our umbrella group, the Department of Student Life.

True, staff members are not always right. They may make requests that are really out of bounds of their job descriptions. But you know, staff members are not here to destroy students and student groups. They do not hate students; they do not want to control all information that goes and comes from student groups.

Some group leaders and members have gotten their priorities mixed up. We are here to learn, first through academics and second through extracurricular activities. Hey, everybody, we are all in this together. There is power in numbers. Let's work together to right the wrongs we see on this campus, not pit group against group. Use the summer to change your attitude and come back to campus with an open mind. Let's take the negative energy and turn it into positive production.

Graduation brings hope, time for reflection

There comes a time in everyone's life when you realize that things change.

You either break or bend. There is the old phrase about being a willow or oak tree, seems like there is something in between. Relationships and attitudes change, and people come and go in your life. You learn to be elastic like a waistband. Senior year in college, and the world lies like a big question mark. You can either go out and grab it or wonder what you might have missed behind door number two.

It is scary to start your own life. It isn't your parents who tell you which way to go, your teachers or family. In the end, it is just you and your suitcase full of all the stuff you have learned or at least hope you did. I'm sitting outside Gambrell watching people. One walks by with his head jammed full of walkman noise and hands shoved in his pockets. How long in time before his hands shift to holding his little girl's hands? Time is finite.

It may not seem that way when we tan ourselves a thousand summers of lazy days. It doesn't last forever. I sometimes wonder how many hours I spent as a kid saying how bored I was. I look back and think, "Geez, I'd love to be bored again!" You take some big steps after you graduate.

- What the heck do I do now?
- Can I do something with all this stuff I learned?
- Does this mean I can't wash

JULIE LIBBEY
COLUMNIST

clothes at mom's anymore? What does it mean to be a graduate? I remember being so full of

myself as I walked up to receive my high school diploma. My mom played the graduation music for weeks before I ever walked. College graduation seems a lot more anticlimactic, and there are a lot more catches.

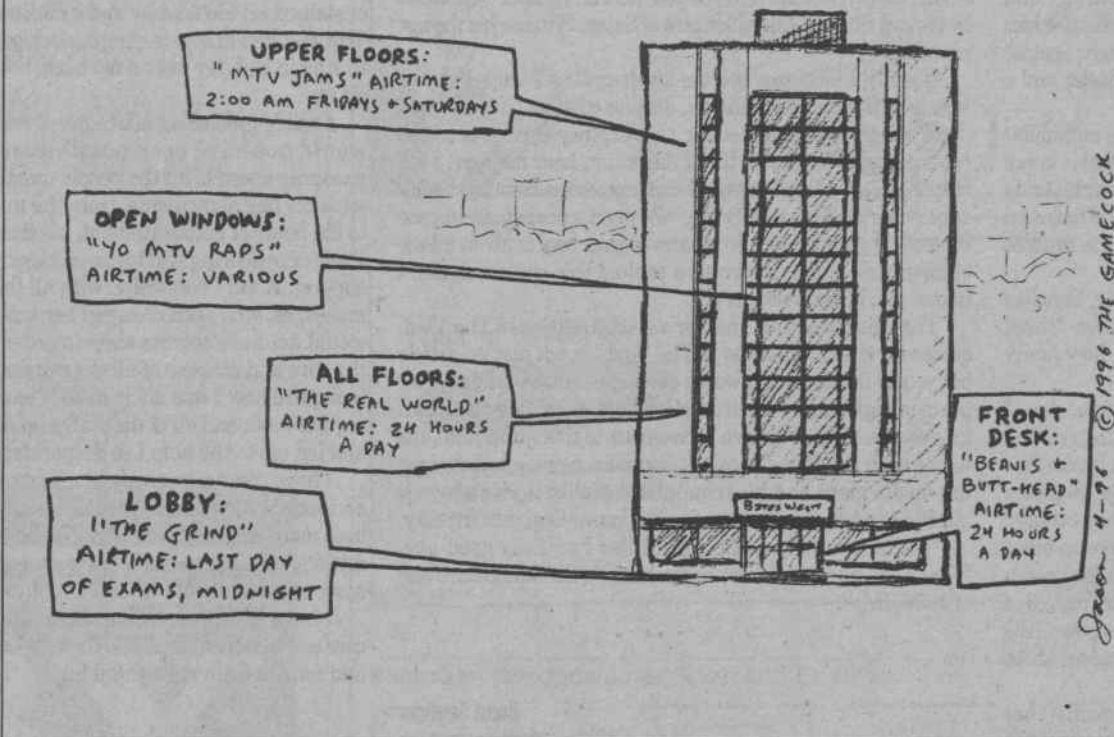
People expect you to do something with all of that learning. You should have figured out and have matured during those college years. When do you stop being a kid and become an adult all of a sudden? It happens very quickly.

So here's the change. Wow, I am a full-fledged adult, taxpaying contributor to the great society. Okay, then why am I scared to death?

It is a big world out there. Do I have all the stuff I am going to need in my little suitcase? Am I going to remember to pack my toothbrush without mom to remind me when I am living in North Carolina? Who am I going to rely on? Me. I think that is the biggest change of all. My family will always be there. But ultimately, I have to count on myself. I have to find my strengths somewhere inside me. All those summers playing in the woods and years of school have made the recipe that is me. Hopefully, it all got cooked right.

So here is a salute to all the graduates. You got what it takes - go and get them!

SURE, THE HORSESHOE IS FINE FOR "UNPLUGGED." BUT ONE USC AREA OFFERS MTV GREAT LOCATIONS FOR ALL ITS PROGRAMS... **BATES WEST!**



QUOTE, UNQUOTE

"It's kind of scary. I just hope they put it out because our whole lives are in that building."

Freshman Katrina Judy about the fire in Patterson residence hall

College Republicans stand up to criticism

When I was 5, I can remember my father telling me after a repeat offense of cookie jar larceny and my small excuse of "I'm sorry," that "Actions speak louder than words." These words were of little significance to me. Today, their inherent wisdom is guiding principle in my life. When I reflect on the happenings of the last two weeks, most notably, the involvement of the College Republicans in the election attempt of USC Board of Trustees candidate Brian Comer, these words seem to provide a theme under which falls the actions of the club I represent.

That College Republicans serves as a student interest club is certainly a given. Like other student interest clubs at USC, it functions to introduce and unite students with similar interests and ideas. It is a source of information and learning. It is a forum for serious discussion. While in these areas it is just like any other club, it differs in that it is also a full functioning part of the Republican Party and hence carries with it a responsibility. Unfortunately, the realms of campus politics and "real world" politics rarely overlap, but when they do, a very real responsibility prompts a very real call to action.

Such was the case with the candidacy of Brian Comer. Let me, for the record, say I do not in any way dislike or disparage Brian or his achievements, for he will certainly see a bright future ahead of him. During

the course of his candidacy, his polish and professional demeanor were good selling points to many of the legislators, and with good reason, but such attributes are only a part of what makes a candidate. Politics, especially when it comes to issues like education, is about ideology, and thus the most important of any candidate is ideology. Brian wasn't consulted about his ideology by the College Republicans for one simple reason. Brian has a record. A campus record of following the administrator's "more money" philosophy. A record of taking actions on behalf of candidates whose ideology on education is in direct opposition to those of the College Republicans and the Republican Party of South Carolina. Actions speak louder than words.

Brian's opponent is a former member of the legislature. He has a record that our legislators are aware of. Being a youth auxiliary of the Republican Party, the College Republicans exercised our responsibility to inform our elected officials of Brian's record or face the possibility of them making their decisions without full information. Great pains were taken to accurately research public stands taken by Brian, and we stand 100 percent behind the facts as we presented them.

RANELL CHENEY
GUEST COLUMNIST

Unfortunately, there are people who believe our motivations were selfish. I want to let everyone know that we have and always will act upon what we believe is in the best interest of our school, community and state. We are Republicans because of what we believe, and not the other way around. We will always stand firmly against those things that we believe will be detrimental, just as we will always fight unyieldingly for those things we believe will be beneficial.

We are proud of our record of political involvement and success. Last year, we passed a resolution urging a freeze on tuition and presented it in a press conference with support from a large number of legislators, including the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, who spoke in favor of the idea on our behalf. While this, as well as other efforts, might not have gotten the coverage it should have, we have enjoyed more legislature cooperation than any other student group. I truly believe the biggest opportunities for students to make a difference in their school and community are found in our club.

In the face of criticism and misunderstanding, we are proud to be able to say our actions have, and always will, continue to speak louder than even the loudest critic, no matter who they might be.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Biblical meanings up for interpretation

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a man, and he was the Son of God. He spread his wisdom around the world, from Jerusalem all the way to India some say. He came in peace, for that was his way, and he endeavored to instruct others so they could lay aside their disputes and embrace one another, reveling in their humanity and coming together in worship to their creator. At least, that was what he planned...

Alas, Christianity has come so far that of everything I have said, the only thing everyone agrees on is that Jesus is the Son of God. Everything else is left up to interpretation, for it was not his way for him to show us pictures but to regale us with fables and let us decipher their morals ourselves, for that was the only way we would truly learn. Unfortunately, he underestimated the human concept of analysis.

Humans are curious, which all in all is a blessed thing, for we would not learn anything otherwise. The flip side of this curiosity, however, is an inability to let things be once they seem solved. In science, this is beneficial, for without this we would still believe the sun revolved around Earth. In religion, which is far less empirical, this is disastrous. It is always better to trust your first instinct; it will very rarely lead you astray.

Jesus' teachings were of love and of forgiveness. A mentor of mine said, "The Old Testament is a book of vengeance; the New Testament is a book of mercy." And mercy is, above all else, what Jesus wanted to leave implanted in our minds. So why is it that we can't leave well enough alone?

Jesus taught his own version of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others with love, and they will see that you are blessed, and they will endeavor to become like you. Teach by example, not by lecture." And yet, over the years and over much overanalysis, some have decided they definitely know what Jesus meant when he told his stories. Only Jesus knows what he meant, and it is my belief he meant whatever his listeners thought he meant, because the only way to widely spread a concept like love for your fellow man is to put it in words people can understand. And what better way than in effect having each person put the lesson in his own words? No two people will agree on specifics, but the overriding lesson is always there.

But people have managed to twist his words. Most often

by accident. Richard Moore wrote a letter to the editor on April 4 in which he voiced his beliefs about the morality of homosexuality. In his argument, he claimed, "many newer translations (of the Bible) leave out some fundamental parts of the older translations." This is true but not for the reason he believes. The King James Version of the Bible, which he holds to, is not always faithful to the original ideas of Christ. His general teachings come across for the reasons I outlined above, but the specifics are sometimes skewed, altered somehow from the original thoughts.

One of the reasons some newer translations leave out parts of the older translations is that those parts were found to not be original. And even the original parts are somewhat skewed occasionally for the simple reason that they are told from different points of view and are therefore subjective accounts, tales of what the disciples thought happened. Memory is a fickle thing, and one of its amazing qualities is the fact that if you want to believe something bad enough, pretty soon you'll remember it that way regardless of what truly happened. There were no tape recorders in Jesus' time, and every epistle was written years after his death.

Is there no possibility someone might have misremembered what Jesus said or, even worse, sworn to himself that that just HAD to be what Jesus meant by that story because it just made so much sense, to him at least.

Everything in the Bible is up for interpretation. It is my suggestion we interpret the specifics all we like, and when Judgment Day comes, we can ask God if we were on the right track. However, no matter how much we interpret, we should never blindly deny the possibility of someone else's interpretation simply because we do not agree.

Sex is just another way of expressing love, one of many. And love is what holds us all together. As for sinners, Jesus did say he was here to redeem the sinners. Notice, he said HE was here to save them. It seems he said something else, too. It's on the tip of my tongue...

Oh, yeah. "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone."

Earth Day celebrates basic needs

CHRISTOPHER THOMAS
GUEST COLUMNIST

Monday April 22, 1996, marks another historical milestone in the

development of our nation's cultural awareness. Not because MTV has packed up to head on to their next "unplugged" show, or because Hootie and The Blowfish have stayed around to play another free show for their loyal fans.

Today, amongst all the Hootie-Hoopla, marks the 26th anniversary of Earth Day. This annual celebration began in 1970 and has since brought together hundreds of millions of people to take part in demonstrations, teach-ins and rallies to raise awareness of our Planet Earth. These activities have educated the masses, given way to regulatory reform, increased corporate responsibility and helped improve the quality of our environment.

Today, the pendulum of environmental progress is coming to a halt. Congressional resolutions to reduce the budget deficit are wrongfully threatening the future effectiveness of environmental regulations. These changes endanger every American's right to a clean and healthy environment. It is time to realize government and industry are not going to make changes unless we, the public, fully understand and articulate our opinions regarding the issues.

It is time we start taking some personal responsibility with respect to our own individual impact on the environment. We should explore working with corporations, instead of against them, to address the activities that threaten our environment. It is also time to cast support for the development of new "environmentally responsible" technologies and alternative fuel sources. The last 26 years have brought positive changes. They have not, however, provided long-term sustainable solutions to protect the health and resources for future generations.

This anniversary of Earth Day represents an opportunity to take action for the future. It is time to send a clear message to Washington to protect and preserve our endangered ecosystems. As college students, we must put aside differences in political affiliation, socioeconomic background and race in order to reinvent grassroots activism nationwide. As educated consumers, we should support environmentally responsible businesses, as opposed to those whose operations or products pollute our environment. Most importantly, as responsible citizens of the United States, we need to share our knowledge and concerns with elected officials. This will ensure they may make more informed and sustainable decisions in the future.

While environmentalism may not be as trendy today as the music of Hootie and The Blowfish, it is something we should all have in common. It is time to realize we rely on the Earth to provide us with our basic needs: air, water, food and shelter. Without these things, there would be no means to enjoy such luxuries as good music. Next time you're enjoying a video on MTV or a song on your favorite CD, remember what makes it all possible and ask yourself, "What have I done for Mother Earth, lately?"

"Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little" -Edmund Burke

Hey!
If your Letter to the Editor wasn't part of this semester's Gamecock Viewpoints, we will look forward to hearing from you during the summer!

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Chemistry Junior

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