

The Gamecock

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OUR OPINION

Citadel misses chance to prove its character

According to reports from The State and the Charleston Post and Courier, ex-Citadel cadets Kim Messer and Jeannie Mentavlos are planning on attending USC this spring.

Although we are happy to welcome these new students, it is unfortunate the circumstances surrounding the transfers are loaded with such unsightly charges against the Citadel.

The Citadel is supposed to be the shining example of the good qualities of the South.

The Citadel has enjoyed a prestigious reputation of turning out gentlemen committed to family and community.

That reputation is shot, due to the alleged hazing and harassment of some cadets against Messer and Mentavlos, including dousing the women with nail polish remover and lighting the fluid.

There was sentiment against the Citadel, prophecies and premonitions that the military college would fail in successfully integrating the women.

The Citadel had a chance to prove the nation wrong. It didn't.

Instead, administrators did not aptly relay to the Corps of Cadets how important it was for them to live up to their reputation as gentlemen.

Just about any other term besides "gentlemen" aptly describe the cadets who allegedly hazed Messer and Mentavlos.

The rest of the Corps also made the mistake in believing if they ignored the women, they would disappear.

It is not enough to turn away from a problem. That is not conquering it and coming out on top. Lack of action is acting in a cowardly manner.

Perhaps the greatest light in this whole mess is Mentavlos's older brother, Mike Mentavlos. Mentavlos was a senior at the Citadel, just one short semester away from graduating. He had made it through Hell Week, Hell Night, his knob year, and two ensuing years of a military life-style and studies. Yet he immediately stepped down in support of his sister.

Looks like the Citadel, or perhaps his parents, managed to produce at least one gentleman.

Confederate stars, bars wrong for Statehouse

Once upon a time, there was a place called Dixie. It was in the land of the Old South.

One day, a war broke out between the Old South and the North. Battles were fought and bonds were broken.

And, a thing called the confederate flag appeared in battles. It was bold and bright, and represented the old south.

Today, the old south is gone and the fabled new south has arrived.

The new south is a place where businesses thrive and a culture is alive.

And yes, the confederate flag of the old south is still alive and well in the new south.

Here's where the controversy lies.

The confederate flag to many represents hatred. To them, it comes from a time when other humans were enslaved because of the simple color of their skin. To opponents of the confederate flag, it is reminiscent of a place which catered to human injustice.

To proponents of the flag, it represents heritage. The confederate flag withstood many bloody battles to stand for a belief and a society which was brave enough to break the U.S. apart.

Here in South Carolina, the

flag flies upon the top of the state flag — along with the state flag and the U.S. flag.

Tuesday, the South Carolina Legislature met in Columbia for its 1997 session.

Among topics lawmakers plan to address this session are education, reapportionment and, of course, taking the flag off the top of the statehouse.

Late last year, Governor David Beasley voiced his opinion on the matter. He wants the flag down.

But, there are members of his legislature who want it to stay where it is.

What to do? The flag should be removed from the top of the statehouse. We agree with the stance of flag opponents.

However, the flag does have a place at the South Carolina statehouse.

Fly the flag on the statehouse grounds as a memorial to the confederacy.

The flag is, despite its origins, a legitimate piece of history. It, like the Declaration of Independence and the battle of Iwo Jima, is something which deserves a place in history.

The confederate flag of yesterday can be remembered today without hindering the future.



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It was a lot of fun. The last time we played [at Florida], we lost to them, and in order for us to be a good team, we have to win these types of games away from home.

Larry Davis, senior USC guard, referring to the Gamecock's 80-79 basketball victory over University of Florida

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Charleston has its fair share of tourist humor

Nikki La Rocque
COLUMNIST

They usually come either in couples or happy families. They are not well-dressed, as in fanny packs worn right in the middle of the tummy and sweatshirts from no-name colleges in the North. Then they utter the words I now declare to be the most uncreative in the world.

"Hi. This is our first time in Charleston. Tell us what we should do."

How about taking the first flight out of my city?

I work for the Visitor Center in downtown historic Charleston. I enjoy my job for lots of reasons: the building is historic, my co-workers are great, and I love showing of the best city in the nation, one far superior to the likes of New York.

I enjoy helping the families with young children the most. I see the fear in the kids' eyes when the parents start asking me about two hour bus tours and tours of historic homes.

A house tour is a child's worst nightmare of "look with your eyes, not with your hands" come true. Nikki saves the day by quickly steering the floundering parents to a much shorter horse and carriage tour. Kids are ecstatic because they actually get close to a real, live horse, and the parents think I'm so sweet as to offer such a charming, unique way of seeing the city. Yeah, thanks, so ah, how about a tip?

Elderly couples go one of two ways: either a) they're carbon copies of your own grandparents; they are so sweet, patient, and kind. Helping these people is a joy. Or, b) elderly couples' eyes

glaze over as soon as you begin dispensing information, then they get cranky because they can't keep the prices straight, and "damn it, I fought in World War II, so how come I have to pay for things around here?" I actually had someone ask me that once.

Working with the public is tricky. You get so used to answering the same things over and over. You are here (point to the map). We have three different kinds of tours. These are the prices. Don't drive downtown, use the trolley. This is how you get to the Market/Mt. Pleasant/West Ashley (again pointing to the map.)

But always out of this routine come the Really Weird Questions to smack you upside the head and make you take notice. Some of them are really sweet, like the elderly gentleman who shyly told me he was getting married, and did I have wedding information, or the young guy who wanted to know the most romantic place in Charleston to propose to his girlfriend.

The rest of the Really Weird Questions amaze me with the enormity of their stupidity and lack of common sense.

"I know you guys have historic plantations, but do you still have real working plantations, you know with cotton and slaves and everything?"

This was asked of one of my African-American friends. Russell just smiled and handed the man some brochures.

"How do I get to Tara? It's here, isn't it? I know it is because my friend saw it last month. And

where is Rhett Butler buried?" This was all mine. Never, ever openly confuse a literary work of fiction with reality, especially in front of a Southern English major who has read Gone With the Wind a few thousand times.

First of all, even if GWTW was not fiction, Tara was located in Jonesboro, Georgia, not Charleston, South Carolina. As for Rhett Butler, the closest you'll ever get to his grave is Clark Gable's.

Once, in the middle of July, I had a phone call from a woman wanting to know what the weather would be in Charleston on November 15, because she planned on taking a boat tour. So I told her the average temperature of November and precipitation fall. That wasn't enough.

"So, what's the weather for the 15th" she repeated. "I want to know exactly what it will be. Rainy? Sunny? Cool? Will a warm front come in?" Oh, hold on and let me whip out my crystal ball and find the forecast.

Really Weird Questions sometimes involve colloquial faux pas.

The Lowcountry is known for she-crab soup, but once someone got a little mixed up and wanted to know where to find "shoe-fly soup."

Let's not forget the people who don't want to take a boat tour out to Fort Sumter, located in the middle of Charleston Harbor, and insist that they just want to drive out there.

Hey, maybe if you were driving Jesus's car it would work, but other than that...

"Welcome to Charleston. What can I do for you? Well, we have three different kinds of tours ..."

Newt Gingrich: Role model, despite obvious flaws, mistakes

Lucy Aruold
COLUMNIST

Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic, their sexual immorality, or their stealing. -Revelations 9:21

He is known by many names. Fat Boy. Visionary. The Gingrich Who Stole Christmas.

He's just one person—a guy who got elected to the Congress of the United States of America (which doesn't mean much when one considers the criminals, hooligans and various entertainers who have been elected to such offices). But, obviously, some people think he's more than that.

You'd think he was the Antichrist from what they say about him.

He got elected to his office because he made certain campaign promises. He said he'd fix the national deficit, repair (or put out of its misery) welfare and start a new era of conservative ideals in the government.

He is probably the first politician since James K. Polk to keep his campaign promises.

And for doing what we told him to do, for enacting the vision he described to us in great detail beforehand, for keeping his word, he is condemned. To burn in the fiery pits of hell, according to some.

The media and, to all appearances, the public, is ready to string him up for, are you ready for this?, failing to understand the Government Funds and Tax System of the U.S.

Ye who have not sinned, feel free to throw the stones. (I should be hearing the ch-chink of approximately three rocks because that's how

many people understand the aforementioned Government Funds and Tax System of the U.S.). Now let me just say that by no stretch of the imagination am I excusing Mr. Gingrich. He probably made a mistake.

In fact, he ADMITS to making a mistake. Once again a political move unheard of in the 20th century.

And on the whole, using the rank system of sins, Gingrich's sin is really quite small. Now if we were talking about murder or lying or stealing or sexual immorality...

Either Newt was an incredible magician when he first began, fooling us all into thinking we wanted change with some clever slight of hand, or we, the American public, are a big pile of idiots.

I'm tempted toward number two. We knew that the system wasn't working and we finally had the brains to stand up and say, "Yes, let's do something about it!" And the man who listened to us is now the great horned beast.

Well, let's talk for a moment about the great horny beast in the White House. I think I mentioned something about murder, lying, stealing and sexual immorality.

But he, the man who has yet to look us in the eye and tell us his name, rank and i.d. number with honesty, has been re-elected.

And instead of investigating him, we're standing by, nodding our heads and saying, "Now if that boy ain't restoring the majesty of the presidency,

I don't know who is." If anyone has cast a magical fog of stupidity and forgetfulness over the public, in my mind it would have to be President Clinton.

He says one thing and does quite another. Or, as is more often the case, says two or three different things, then does something else entirely.

Did we re-elect him because of his unwavering vision? Because of his strong and capable leadership? Because of his glowing "inner beauty"?

Or because he can come on television, smile at us benignly and tell us exactly what we want to hear? Nobody ever said it would be easy to bring change to the United States.

Nobody said it would be painless and that our grants, food stamps and social security checks wouldn't be touched.

Just for the sake of clarification, I am not equating Newt Gingrich with Jesus Christ, nor am I aligning political parties with either good or evil. I am saying there is right and there is wrong. Our justice system is based on morality, and though these morals are not necessarily tied to religious values, religion, and especially Christianity, have certainly played a role in the development of morality in this country.

That's part of the reason that it's not okay to assassinate people here, whereas in other countries it is acceptable, if not desirable. It's okay for us to say that some things are bad, nay, it is necessary for us to say some things are bad.

So you liberals who keep shouting about how Newt is a demon, the scourge of our country, remember another ancient Biblical adage.

It takes one to know one.

The Gamecock

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