

Fred Leach goes 'solo' this Friday as he writes about something.

VIEWPOINTS

"Some people think that if we ignore this problem, then it will go away."
Mike Moore,
chairman of student services committee

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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TAKE OUR WORD

Student government plagued with apathy

[Editor's note: Adam Snyder, now Editor in Chief of The Gamecock, wrote this last year as a column. We are re-running it as the lead editorial today because a year later, it still applies. But the point remains: vote Thursday and let our student leaders know you care and want change.]

PROBLEM
A year later, student government still faces apathy.

SOLUTION
Vote, damn it. Get off those lazy butts and make your choices known.

strength lies in the fact that they can get their constituents to vote. Other "independent" candidates have very little or no constituency. All they have is every nine out of 10 students not giving a damn if they or anyone else represents them throughout the university.

But you do care when your tuition is being increased. You do care when your club or organization gets short ended by the Finance Committee. You care when you are tired of the food Marriott is serving. You care when you miss two classes because you are looking for a parking spot.

You still don't care on Election Day. You don't care at 5 p.m. Wednesdays to sit in on a senate meeting in the Russell House Theater. You don't care to call your representative to find out what he or she can do for you.

And guess what? They don't care either, and they know it. I have never seen a group more deserving of the do-nothing nickname. Absences were outrageous this session. Legislation has been nil. The call for old business brings a chuckle, and the call for new business has them rolling in the aisles.

This time the fault is shared, though. Student apathy bleeds into the senate where they are unmotivated to do anything for the small portion of people who even know they exist. Some representatives are in it for resume padding while others just like the ring of an official title.

What can be done? First, you can vote to show the powers that be that you are out there and you want to have a say in how your university operates.

Secondly, you can follow up your vote with pressure. Ask why it has taken over a semester to decide what to DO with the Assembly Street tunnel art design much less pick up a brush and paint it.

Other universities' student governments actually accomplish something. Care enough to get our representatives doing their jobs.

But what could you do with this fascinating story idea? Oh, there is so much. We could dive deep into this hard-hitting issue to find out what everybody already knows. People just don't care.

In passing, maybe they do. As a whim, as something to whine about, they will wonder why nothing seems to get accomplished. But that slips away as thoughts of tests, papers and how to get this weekend's supply of beer quickly take its place.

So come Thursday, less than 10 percent of our student body will take the time to vote. They will go in and out of the Russell House, not bothering to take a step towards the polls. The Election Commission has made this election season run smoothly and efficiently.

Polls will be at the Russell House or your respective school or college. You'll be more than likely to be there anyway, or at least can get there all day long. But you don't care. Not on Election Day at least.

I heard someone say the other day that there is no point in voting because either Greeks or African Americans (and lately a combination of the two) dominate the campaign. So, in either case, close to 80 percent of the student body doesn't feel represented in the executive or legislative side of Student Government.

Whose fault is that? Albeit, both factions have had increasing political prominence in student elections recently. But their



college press EXCHANGE

Olympics all about 'scoring'

Ah yes, that special something is in the air that comes every four years, thrilling the world and allowing the dreams of many to come true. No, I'm not talking about that bit of napalm hanging in the air with

Anyway, it's somewhere in that great country of Japan, which has brought you great products such as glow-in-the-dark condoms and microwaveable moth balls.



KURT JOHNSON
Asst. viewpoints ed.

that's an official rule: Article 3, Paragraph 5, Sentence 1 of the How to Determine Where to Hold the Olympics Handbook states, "When held in a non-American city, the corresponding city, in accordance with the following rule, under which is in accordance with the current sentence, shall be as difficult to pronounce as it is for Bill Clinton to keep his pants up."

But really, the Olympics are a real special time. It's a time when the world comes together to watch their best athletes compete for bragging rights. It's also a time when us guys can use such words as "luge" and "moguls" in our pick-up lines. Examples: "Hey baby, why don't we go back to my place and practice for that two-man luge competition" or "You wouldn't mind if I practiced my mogul skiing on your slopes, now would ya?" Or something to that effect.

And speaking of pick-up lines, you KNOW there has got to be some hook-up at the Olympics. I ain't lying, I am not lying. Think about it man, you've got a bunch of foreigners living in a village and then two weeks later, they all return to their respective parts of the world. Surely, the athletes go out at night to celebrate a medal or whatever and the next thing you know the Swedish bobsled team is waking up next to France's women downhill skiers and the German Hockey team is scoring with Canada's women snow-

"...the Olympics are a real special time. It's a time when the world comes together to watch their athletes compete for bragging rights. It's also a time when us guys can use such words as 'luge' and 'moguls' in our pick-up lines."

boarders! It has hook-up written all over it. You know, all those figure skaters are pretty hot, and not to mention (I'm really not joking here) the Russian's Women's Hockey team.

Yes, the Olympics are more than all that, however. It's about these people's dreams to be the best (and then losing their medal for tokin' weed and then getting it back again), it's about new countries trying to break through as Winter Olympic super-powers (such as Kenya's one-man Olympic team finishing 28th out of 28 in the biathlon) and introducing new sports to the worldwide forum (who cannot get riled up and excited over that great slide and brush game of Curling?).

The Olympics are also a time when we get to see a different part of the world each night on our television and

make fun of it for being so different. Like the Japanese have a soft drink named (I'm not making this up) "Sweat." Of course it means something different in Japanese, but still, I'm sure the English-speaking people over there are having a hard time holding their lunches down.

Yes, it may have seemed I ragged on the Olympics, but really, I love them. It's great to see all these neat sports that I in no way could ever get in. Also, it's fun to just sit there, get into the event, and cheer for the United States (even though the only people who can hear me are my disgruntled next-door neighbors). I guess, when you think about it, what the Olympics boil down to is trying to score...ah, that is, make the score.

Good old South just not cuttin' it

Remember when all the stores were closed on Sundays? Not just the malls, but grocery stores and gas stations locked up on Saturdays, not to reopen until Monday morning. Can't you remember needing pantyhose for church and never finding anywhere to buy them? In one triumph of few of our societal advances, most places open late on Sundays and close early.



FELICIA BROWN
Columnist

Ain't nothin' like livin' in the Dirty South. Red dirt and tobacco growing coincide with city streets and corrupt politicians. We are a multi-faceted society. But in a world that encounters technology and social successes daily, we are considered slow, backwards, ignorant and stubborn.

I believe it was in my fourth grade social studies class that I was intro-

duced to South Carolina Blue Laws. We were doing vocabulary definitions. Webster's defined a blue law as "1: one of numerous rigorous laws designed to regulate morals and conduct in colonial New England 2: a statute regulating work, commerce, and amusements on Sundays." All my life I have heard that Sunday is the day of rest. Not only should you not work on Sundays, but you should keep the day Holy. I guess that meant that you shouldn't do anything sinful on Sunday, but the rest of the week was open to suggestions. This was normal and right to me because everyone said that this is the way things were.

The other day I was working when a revelation came to me. Isn't it funny that the people who say they are looking out for my best interest, who say they are trying to protect me from the sins I could encounter, never once asked me for my opinion. It's the old people that think they know better. Elder generations established these restrictions and we continually accept them. The Bible Belt was buckled by people living in another time. They had no way of knowing that by trying to "protect" us from the immoralities of secular behavior they would actually shelter us in a glass bubble wait-

"You can't buy beer from a convenience store on Sunday, interracial marriages are still illegal and the government still has to periodically vote on whether or not blacks should have the right to vote."

ing to tempt fate and have our way with the world. We don't know better because we don't know any other way. We were brought up with these foundations. What else are we supposed to do?

It's no wonder that South Carolina is the state that fights over subjects like video poker, flying the Confederate flag over the State House, strip joints in certain zones, giving condoms out to teenagers and sex education classes in public schools. You can't buy beer from a convenience store on Sundays, interracial marriages are still illegal and the government still has to periodically vote on whether or not blacks should have the right to vote. I even read somewhere that participating in oral sex in South Carolina is illegal.

Ass-backwards, that is what I think. Isn't it phenomenal that other states are trying to solve issues like poverty and drug abuse and we are fighting over whether or not there should be a poker machine in the local Amoco station? If I am not mature enough to control myself and my personal habits, then I am the one who will have to suffer the consequences. It is not up to the government to protect me from myself. Don't we want a public of responsible adults that know how to conduct themselves and want to be accountable for their mistakes? Look at our alternative model. I cannot think of one person in my generation who is thankful for the protection the law is trying to give us. Isn't it time to abolish some of the foolishness engraved in our foundations? Shouldn't we update the books?

Hey, got nothing to do?

Write a letter to *The Gamecock* and voice your opinion.

Or, even better, join our staff.

We are looking for editorial cartoonists and staff writers for news and features. Call 777-7726. Take our word.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Planned Parenthood crucial part of women's choice

To the editor,
I'm responding to the Jan. 26 letter "Pro-lifers give choice of life to unborn baby."

In the letter, Ms. Hiland said that an editorial painted "an incorrect and absolutely absurd picture of the pro-life movement." In attempting to counter this apparent injustice, she resorts to blatant untruths based on illogical reasoning, fear and anti-choice propaganda.

Many of the arguments she uses to make her case are irrelevant, hard to follow and barely worth any serious response. However, I feel compelled to counter her statements regarding Planned Parenthood.

The worst among Ms. Hiland's claims is that "Planned Parenthood depicts a fetus as an indiscriminant glob of tissue in an attempt to convince women in crisis to have an abortion." I would like to know if Ms. Hiland has ever had any experience with Planned Parenthood at all.

I feel safe in saying that the majority of us who have received health care services of any kind there would argue that she clearly has not. I

must add that Planned Parenthood's scope of services include annual gynecological exams, cancer screenings, self-breast examination training and birth control education and provision, the best way to prevent the need for abortions in the first place.

Planned Parenthood is not only bound by law, but also compelled by its own ethics and standards to provide complete information to all patients. Women seeking abortion services receive frank explanations of the procedure.

They are presented with the options of both parenthood and adoption, and resources to help with either are

on hand. They are each counseled, not coerced, about their choice.

Planned Parenthood supports women who make the very difficult and personal decision to terminate a pregnancy. But it's both incorrect and insensitive to promote the myth that the very complex issue of abortion is taken lightly by either service providers or by those of us who are pro-choice.

Kirsten Havig
Graduate student, Social Work