

►Our last summertime issue comes out! Then we'll, well, start on the first fall issue.

VIEWPOINTS

"I know he will show the same spirit fighting through this as he displayed on the football field." *Dolphins coach Jimmy Johnson on Wheeler's accident.*

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

The Gamecock

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The Gamecock

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TAKE OUR WORD

USC athletics needs to be careful with creatine use

Let's face it. We worship our athletes here. Gamecock football and basketball stars, among others, serve as our local celebrities and our ambassadors.

They represent University of South Carolina for

countless sports fans who may know nothing of our academic programs, and who otherwise may not even have heard of our school.

It would be hard to determine to what degree the reputation of any university depends on the performance of its sports teams. But it is a good guess that when the Gamecocks do well, the name of our university garners positive connotations in the minds of countless fans.

It makes sense, then, that we should have a stake in the high performance of our athletes. Put simply, we want them to do well so that we'll look good.

We are faced with a dilemma, then, when we are presented with a substance that will help our athletes improve performance with possible detrimental effects to their health. Such a situation is at hand with creatine.

Creatine is a substance sold in health food stores that maximizes the effects of workouts by helping build muscle and making recovery time shorter.

Technically, it is a "natural" substance, because it is found in our bodies; however, creatine's status as a "natural" substance doesn't mean it is necessarily safe.

PROBLEM
The athletic department allows creatine use with too little care.
SOLUTION
We should restrict use; athletes shouldn't be sacrificed for school.

There are reasons to be cautious about the use of creatine. It may cause dehydration; in fact, it may have contributed to the deaths of three wrestlers. The Food and Drug Administration has even issued a warn-

ing concerning the substance.

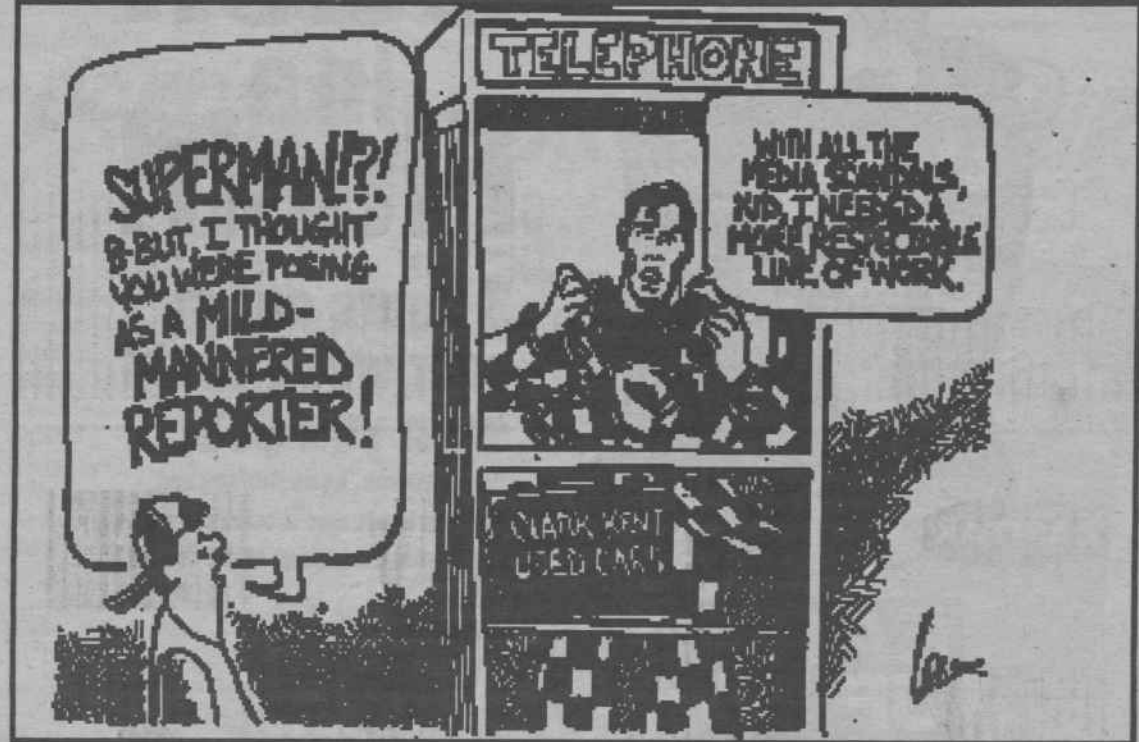
Some sports teams have taken concerns over creatine's safety to heart, and have discouraged use among their players. Others widely encourage use of creatine.

USC has taken few steps to ensure players' safety. Head trainer Rod Walters told The State that each player must be approved for creatine use by a physician, but this is not enough. The long term effects are not yet known; current creatine users are, to some extent, guinea pigs. We have no way of knowing what will happen to those athletes "loading" creatine.

We should feel a little guilty that we are allowing our athletes to act as guinea pigs. It is as though we are sacrificing them for our own possible gain.

The athletic department does not, in effect, take responsibility for the possible negative repercussions that will result from creatine use. The department is requiring students to sign a waiver excusing them from responsibility.

We have a responsibility to protect our student athletes; hopefully, USC will adopt more prudent guidelines before someone gets hurt.



college press EXCHANGE

We need to really talk

Steven Yates
Columnist

"We are all slaves to our histories. If there is to be a bright future, we must learn to break those chains." - Delenn, Minbari Ambassador, Babylon 5.

African Americans lament what they perceive as subtle (or not-so-subtle) forms of prejudice: "white flight," snubs from potential employers, rejected loan applications, etc.

Whites sometimes complain bitterly about affirmative action preferences. Blacks respond that these aren't "preferences" at all but attempts to create a level playing field. They add that society cannot reverse the residual effects of more than 300 years of oppression and systematic discrimination with 30 or so years of affirmative action.

Today's younger whites answer with this: "But we weren't there, 300 years ago. No one alive today owned slaves. I haven't personally discriminated against any black people."

Blacks retort: "You still have advantages you don't even notice, simply because you are in the dominant group."

Every so often, though, an act of racial violence occurs which is so startlingly heinous that it brings us all up short. Or ought to.

I refer, of course, to the event a few weeks ago in Jasper, Texas, a town most of us never heard of before three white men were arrested for having dragged a black man to a gruesome death involving his decapitation. The three were connected to a white supremacist group.

No white people in Jasper came to the defense of these men. The KKK showed up. What these white-robed lunatics thought they were accomplishing is another good question. Fortunately, just about everybody ignored them, as well as the militant black group which appeared.

What would have been appropriate, however, would have been for both mainstream conservatives and Christian Coalition types to have denounced the violence. In particular, those of us who have previously criticized affirmative action programs in one context or another have a moral obligation here.

Our obligation, whatever our politics, is to repudiate violence and racial hatred when they appear, not to score political points, but because opposing racism is the right thing to do. There is a sense in which we are slaves of our histories. Our attempts to escape these histories by political means haven't exactly been smashing successes. Hopefully we haven't

grown so cynical that we no longer are willing to entertain the possibility that racism is a moral problem, not merely a political one. The Christian Coalition is wrong. We haven't lost our moral center, we never had one! We are still trying to discover it. Breaking the chains of history was always fated to be hard. It's probably the hardest thing we have ever attempted. But that doesn't absolve us, all of us, white, black, etc., of the responsibility to try and to keep trying.

So can we stop tormenting one another and start talking? It ought to be clear that those struggling economically in this "booming economy" are more similar than we are different. We should be allies, not enemies.

Fact is, I don't think we have a choice. With our rapidly changing demographics, if we don't create racial peace, we don't have a future. Not really. I don't think a soaring stock market is going to give us the answers, either. We either learn to talk and get along, developing ideas and morals we need, or our society is going to self-destruct.

Oh, about the quote at the beginning of this column. It may seem strange that a character in a science fiction TV series has more to say than any of our real leaders, black or white. But then again, we live in strange times.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 250-300 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Hand written letters must be personally delivered by the author to The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 333. Email letters must include the author's telephone number. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letter for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld for any circumstance.

To McCormickus "Not-a-cluehus" Erectus:
Upon reading your recent absurdity, I was left with an uneasy feeling

in my head (and stomach). It led me to one conclusion: "We mock what we can't understand."

Saying all NASCAR fans are red-necks is absurd! NASCAR is not only the FASTEST growing spectator



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