

"There were a lot of zeros on that check."

Kristin Freestate, Gamecock reporter, on winning Reporter of the Year

VIEWPOINTS

The Gamecock

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LETTERS

HEY KIDS! We're still making sure you guys know about our e-mail address. It's GCKVIEWS@VM.SC.EDU. Use it or don't, but do.

Monday, November 9, 1998

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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TAKE OUR WORD

Gingrich calling it quits, loss for D.C.

And it only gets more interesting. Wednesday morning, Republicans were licking their wounds after keeping a slim margin in the House of Representatives, when they thought they would be gaining seats only a few days earlier.

Newt Gingrich, the man who led the Republican revolution four years ago, said he wouldn't run again for Speaker of the House and now has resigned from Congress altogether.

After the the results came out Tuesday, Gingrich received much of the blame, as critics charged that his strategy of focusing on the Monica Lewinsky affair alienated voters. Several Republicans had already planned to challenge Gingrich for Speaker, and more announced their intentions soon after he made his statement.

These and other Republicans said they had lost faith in Gingrich's ability to lead the party in Congress. He has made several miscues since gaining the speakership in 1994, the most notable being the government shutdown two years ago, which most of the public blamed on him and not Bill Clinton. Many believe this set the stage for Clinton's re-election in 1996.

USC should regulate credit-card booths

A free T-shirt never cost so much. They are there all the time in convenient, well-plotted locations with stacks of fresh, white USC T-shirts and an avalanche of credit-card forms.

Bansheeic voices shriek from the bow of the Russell House, "Free T-shirt, just fill out an application," as the students pass. Those seemingly harmless credit-card stations, which lull unsuspecting students to their pits and offer candy for blood, have always been distractions for students walking to class.

Many students desire that free T-shirt and say they'll just sign up and toss the card out once they get it. But when they do get it, it usually goes to some use, and, as with many college students, they compile quite a hefty debt.

The credit-card company must be sponsored by a certain campus organization to allow them to be on campus. This may come with

TOPIC

Newt Gingrich's resignation.

OUR OPINION

He had the guts to stand up for his beliefs.

This was the last straw for many Republicans, who admit that even though Gingrich was responsible for their takeover of the House, his ability to govern wasn't as great as his skill in leading a political revolution.

It's a shame that we have to see this new fiasco in the soap opera that is Washington politics. While Gingrich's views and methods have always been questionable, there is one thing to say for him: he has always stood by his ideals in the way government should work. These are what led to his rise and, some would say, to his downfall.

This will only lead to more chaos in our national government at a time when more than anything we need stability and firm leadership, which we're not getting from the White House. And, at least for a while, Capitol Hill will be questionable as well.

Newt Gingrich wasn't the most popular politician, but he stood by his views and was loyal to his convictions, something that's been on the endangered species list in Washington for years.

Some fee for the use of university space and equipment (tables, chairs, etc.).

TOPIC

Credit-card stations focus on college students.

OUR OPINION

Students need to be aware of financial responsibilities.

Surely, people want to use credit cards, but shouldn't there be some kind of regulation pertaining to these stations?

Well, let's look at it like this: organizations sponsor many other programs that greatly benefit students (i.e., the Career Fair) and their endeavors in college. These credit-card stations don't do much for students except take their money out of their pockets.

No, don't do anything drastic like get rid of these stations. Research credit-card companies for histories of screwing students over. Check the validity of their specials. Have brochures or seminars informing and teaching students about their financial responsibilities and about credit cards. This will help keep one from paying one's soul for a measly T-shirt.



Body art exhibits personal expression

Bad, bold, dangerous and sexually open. That's what tattoos and other forms of the body art, invented a long time ago in mostly exotic parts of our planet, have supposedly indicated for many.

The leading original idea of tattoos and piercing was to show a belonging to a certain social group. Today, it serves some peoples' personal, 'not-like-everybody' aesthetic needs and is supposed to be a sign of belonging to one of various 'anti-social' groups. And even more than that, it happens to be a huge tribute to recent fashion imposed by the mass pop culture.

The American South has always been considered traditionally conservative. Regardless, tattooing and piercing have found a number of devoted fans here. The state of South Carolina, however, is still pretty tough on the issue. Although there's no state ban on piercing, tattoo administration is officially prohibited. But getting some permanent body artwork is as easy as cross-

ing the state border to Georgia, where getting and giving a tattoo is perfectly legal and a thriving business, too.

Is this another way, apart from their lottery, that Georgians found to keep money coming into their state's economy from South Carolinians?

Semi-legal, fresh from prison, and unpredictable bikers and lusty, insatiable 'have-been-around' female strippers are probably still considered to be the most likely carriers of tattoos.

And, they might have tattoos and their bodies pierced. But they are the people who like to show their skin-deep Celtic designs, raging oriental dragons and cute pussycats.

Now they are more like heads of icebergs (like any iceberg, not necessarily that from "Titanic"). Much more is under there, out of everybody's sight. There are a lot of people, not so obviously wild, who also wear tattoos and get their bodies pierced but usually keep them private.

Corporate America, law enforcement officers and even high school teachers get their bodies embellished. They seem to be tired of guys with big bucks or other types of powers telling them what to wear and how to look. A lot of people get sick of being controlled by the "Big Brother." And they get rebellious. They don't want to join militia troops, though.

Getting a tattoo or a piercing in a navel or a nipple (ouch!) seems to be just right. They get rebellious under



GUERMAN ABAEV
columnist

"There are a lot of people, not so obviously wild, who also wear tattoos ... but usually keep them private."

the clothes, basically at themselves, so other people and, most importantly, their bosses, usually don't notice. Unless they sleep with their bosses, of course.

There's a number of reasons to get a tattoo or a piece of jewelry running through your body. However, proving your boldness and shocking, unstable maturity to your parents and competing with your "friends" don't seem to be the best reasons.

Scott Brewer, 27, co-owner of Body Rites, Columbia's only all-piercing professional establishment, believes: "Getting a tattoo or some piercing is very personal, and it should be done for yourself and not anybody else."

Some non-liberal people experience panic, and even uncontrollable fits of anger, about the tattooed and pierced nation, which is no surprise to me. It seems to originate from the same old good rural folks' belief that everything they didn't understand was hazardedly perverse to them and thus required immediate government intervention.

Alyson Funderburk, 29, who has a noticeable and colorful tattoo depicting

the Virgin Mary on her shoulder, recalls: "Some people in public places feel threatened and negative about my tattoos, but usually never take time to see that they have religious themes."

Like "South Park," permanent tattooing and piercing is not for everyone. Definitely not for me. It may be true that those "not exotic anymore" gimmicks do work for a number of people. They might satisfy their needs for self-expression.

Also, it may help them get extra attention from other people, including the opposite sex, in today's "everybody is self-centered" culture (I still have trouble understanding how a picture of a naked girl on a male is supposed to attract a female to him).

Personally, though, I believe the best and sexiest decoration you can have for your body is clear skin and toned, lean muscles. Nevertheless, remember the beauty of it is that your body is all yours, and you are free to do anything you want with it.

Countries' turmoil erupts live in action

JAKE NEWCOMB
guest columnist

I was with my fiancée, Yaneth, and her family when it happened. In a white Ford Explorer, we were meandering along the crumbling road from Bogota to the city of Ibague in the Tolima section of Colombia. I was admiring the greenness of the mountainous Colombian countryside when I heard a gasp and a command to look out the other side of the car.

Outside was the strangest scene I had ever witnessed. A man was lying face-down by the side of the road, wearing jeans, boots, and a denim jacket. Standing next to him was a policeman clad in the green-and-white uniform of the Colombian army. The policeman was writing something down on a clipboard. Surrounding these two figures was a mixed group of children and old people who were bouncing up and down.

It took me a second to realize what it was. I heard the word "muerto" and finally understood. The man on the ground had a pool of blood encircling his head that had the peculiar flat-

tened shape of a throat lozenge. Something had hit him hard.

"A motorcycle accident?" I asked my fiancée in Spanish.

"Do you see a motorcycle?" she replied.

Every day I heard on the news in Bogota of the bloodshed in the countryside. Whole clans and villages were being put on their knees and executed by leftist guerrillas and their right-wing paramilitary counterparts. But even living in the country's capital city, the ubiquitous violence on television and in the newspaper was remote.

If I had never bothered to turn on a TV or read a newspaper, I would have been happily ignorant of the rural slaughter. But here it was right in front of me.

The sensation of the moment was like watching some news footage, only the window of the Explorer was my screen. We drifted by very slowly — more slowly than one does for a mundane car accident. My camera — where was it? It was tucked away in the trunk. I bit my lower lip in frustration from this wasted photo op.

Later, when we arrived in balmy Ibague, I thought about the dead man.

One dead person does not attract attention in Colombia. Colombians have expressions like "pentagon," which is a buzzword for "little bomb." "Oh don't worry, it was only a pentagon; it only killed two people," was something I heard on several occasions during my stay.

This one dead man probably didn't even make it into the newspaper. And yet he was my only real connection with the socio-economic conflict that pervades throughout the country. The Marxist guerrillas, in the name of establishing a regime of economic equality, have waged a seemingly endless war with their own country.

They have destroyed countless lives in order to "liberate" the peasantry from an oppressive oligarchy. The right-wing paramilitaries have followed suit their predation upon the Colombian people. They were formed to "protect" vulnerable country peasants from the guerrillas.

In reality, the conflict has been between two bullies who shoot at one another for the acquisition of coca-producing land. Ordinary citizens have made up most of the casualties.

There could have been a million reasons for why the man was killed. He could have been an informer for either side. He could have been a workers' or human rights activist. He could have been seeking political office.

As I look back, I feel guilty for wanting to turn this experience into an anecdote, a snapshot to wet the appetites of everyone wanting to know about the blood and guts of one of the most misunderstood countries in the world. Colombia, to most Americans, is a country where bad things happen.

They are right in that assumption, but what the news flashes on CNN have not shown Americans is complexity of war routed in the deprivation of a people. Those who take up arms do so because it is impossible for them to express their civil grievances in any other way.

I feel, more than ever, like just another stupid gringo who only nurtures the sensational blurring of Colombia's violence.

To get a better picture, I am going back in December. And this time my camera stays in my lap.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Gamecock will try to print all letters. Letters should be 250-300 words and must include full name, phone number, professional title or year and major if a student. Hand written letters must be personally delivered by the author to the Russell House room 333. E-mail letters must include the author's telephone number. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letters for style, libel or space. Names will never be withheld.

University's minorities not equally represented

To the editor:
I am writing in response to the recently published articles regarding recruitment and retention of African-American faculty and students at USC in both *The Gamecock* and the *USC Times*. These articles appear to be in response to the recent resignation of Dr. Pigford. While Dr. Pigford's contributions to this campus have been

many and her resignation is a loss, I am also greatly disappointed by the complete lack of information about the overall lack of representation of all other underrepresented students and faculty/staff, such as Latinos, Native Americans, Asians, etc.

There appears a need for clarity of the words "minority" and "African-American." In a recent *Times* article, Dr. Dennis Pruitt was quoted as saying, "we have an 18.6 percent minority undergraduate enrollment." Later in the article, it was cited that African-

American students make up 18.6 percent of the overall undergraduate population.

This is the same statistic used to represent the entire "minority undergraduate enrollment." Obviously, a very narrow and exclusive definition of "minority" appears to be used.

As a senior at USC, I am disappointed by the lack of commitment to cultural, racial, religious, and sexual diversity. This is a tragedy both for the University community and for myself, as we are not being exposed to other

ideas, experiences, or values. As USC strives to attain AAU status, the importance of diversity among the faculty and students will manifest itself.

We must recognize the important contributions that all diverse groups bring to a University community. The word "minority" should not be limited to certain groups, as it weakens its overall meaning and minimizes the needs of groups excluded from the definition.

Megan C. Hoffman
Spanish Senior

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