

'We are kind of in competition with other labs now, so [the research] is fun.'

Radha Anandalakshmi, biology graduate student

The Gamecock

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Recent ruling tragic for campus freedoms

For more than 30 years, courts consistently held that college journalists enjoyed First Amendment protections similar to those afforded the commercial news media. With Wednesday's ruling by the United States 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in *Kincaid vs. Gibson*, however, those rights have been unfairly and unreasonably slashed.

The case began in 1994 after administrators at Kentucky State University in Lexington, Ky., confiscated 2,000 yearbooks because they were unhappy that the yearbook cover's color (purple) didn't match the school's official colors and because of what they deemed to be a general lack of quality. At the same time, school officials transferred the student newspaper's faculty adviser to a secretarial position after she refused to censor material critical of the university from the newspaper.

The decision, although it doesn't officially apply to this part of the United States, can now be used as rationale for courts anywhere in the country to uphold the censorship of college publications. In effect, it lets school administrators use student media as a public relations tool and puts college media on the same level as high school media.

Newspapers are one of the most powerful tools for change; they present the facts and for some of those facts offer analysis and opinion. This analysis might be critical, but only through criticism and the expression of dissatisfaction does change occur.

According to the court, this decision allows universities to censor publications if they can show they have a "legitimate pedagogical [educational] reason" for doing so. But by effectively causing a publication to cease as a credible source for informing the public and teaching students about journalism, the decision will lead to the impediment of education. All our support goes to student journalists in the 6th Circuit and around the country who are fighting the decision.

Greene Street gates need earlier closing

For years, the gates on Greene Street have been closed to motor traffic from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays so that students may safely cross from the Horseshoe area to Russell House.

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, classes start for many students at 9:05 a.m., and on Tuesdays and Thursdays, many have classes starting at 9:30. A high number of students have to cross Greene Street shortly before the gates are scheduled to close so they can get to class on time. A daily view of Greene Street a few minutes before the gates close shows about as many students as you'd see at 2 or 3 in the afternoon trying to cross the street. Unlike in the afternoons, however, the early students have to sidestep to avoid cars that cut through on Greene Street to get to and from Five Points and Shandon.

Drivers will already say that navigating around the closed part of Greene Street is a necessary evil. So why not close the gates a little bit earlier so that those students trying to cross the street en route to class can be safer? If people can drive around the closed gates seven hours a day, surely closing them a few minutes earlier would hardly be noticeable to the drivers.

COLLEGE PRESS EXCHANGE



CAMPUS ISSUES

Only safe haven at Pavlov's

Imagine this: It's a Friday night, and you and some of your friends are at one of the many parties going on in the Columbia area. Let's just say that on this particular evening, you are standing in the parking lot of Mad Hatters. It's a beautiful night, spent with great friends in a safe environment.



Lauren Vergona is a guest columnist this week. She is an electronic journalism sophomore. She can be reached via The Gamecock at gckviews@sc.edu

Earlier in the week, you were telling your parents, who are some many miles away, how much you loved being a student at USC. "It's great, Mom," you tell her one night. "Last year, I was so homesick, but this year I have all my friends, and I am just so happy. I couldn't have found a better school."

Funny how times can change, though. Only a week later, while you're at the most fun party of the year at Mad Hatters, you run into your worst nightmare. Is it your ex from back home whom you hoped you had finally gotten away from? Unfortunately, it's worse.

"Excuse me, Miss, but can I see some identification?" Officer Friendly asks you.

You're busted. You shouldn't have had an open container in the parking lot anyway. I mean, let's be serious here for a minute: What were you thinking? All 19- and 20-year-olds know better than to be so incompetent as to drink a beer or two on a Friday night in celebration of the weekend. As if!

"Certainly, sir," you softly reply, "but I'll let you know that I'm only 20 and I know that I'm not supposed to be drinking. Sorry."

"OK, well, I'll have to write you a ticket, and you'll have to appear in court next Wednesday," Officer Friendly confidently replies with a smile.

Writing the ticket takes approximately 20 minutes, though it seems like a century. Afterward, you grab your friends and decide to take the happy bus on home.

Your night's basically over.

The next night, at around 10 or so, some of your friends ask you to head out to Five Points.

"We won't go anywhere that SLED might be," one of your friends suggests. "If the police look bad at some of the bars, we'll head home." You decide to go for a bit, but warn them that you all must be careful.

In the fight against drunken driving, you and your four girlfriends decide to walk the short distance toward Five Points. The crowds are jumping, but unfortunately, SLED is out in full force, covering every centimeter of every barroom. You decide to walk back home.

Now imagine this: With two in front and three in back walking side-by-side down Greene Street, you chat about the slow weekend. Suddenly, one of your friends gets thrown into the air and lands face first in the middle of Greene Street.

A car swiftly pulls away, while your best friend lies in the middle of the street, gasping for air. She's just been beaten over the head with a metal pipe, and blood is everywhere. She's now become one of the many USC students to get mugged walking home from Five Points.

After about 10 minutes, the USCPD pulls up and calls for an ambulance. It looks as though your friend will not be able to accompany you to the courtroom to pay your open container ticket next Wednesday. This time, the police were too late. Your friend didn't make it.

Fortunately, I didn't personally experience or witness any of these occurrences. And fortunately, no one has died as a result of being mugged on USC's campus. On the other hand, however, it seems that this is the path we're headed down, and everyone is at risk.

It sounds absurd, I know. But the truth is, it's really. Welcome to the beautiful, happy and safe campus at the University of South Carolina. I wonder if that image will make the admissions video next year.

What is it going to take to get the cops out of the barrooms and onto the unlit streets and parking lots to start protecting the thousands of students here on South Carolina's campus? When 19- or 20-year-olds walk into a bar down in Five Points with fake IDs, that is their own risk. Yes, it's illegal, and quite possibly it could cause serious problems. But what about the oth-

er students who don't choose to break the law, yet they feel guilty walking alone to their car parked in Bull Street garage?

Why are the cops spending their valuable time giving citations to the students down in Pavlov's, for instance, when the punishment will eventually catch up to them anyway? Shouldn't the police officers be driving up and down Greene Street and through the parking garages, listening for the helpless cries that are being heard much too often since classes have been back in session? It just seems so obvious.

Fact: Tons of college kids drink. Fact: Numerous college students own a fake ID. Fact: Many of the students who get a citation one night will be back in the bars drinking the very next evening. (You might even see them at Happy Hour.)

Fact: In the past week, two girls whom I know personally have been mugged on two separate occasions, one on Greene Street and one in Bull Street garage. The fact is, in my opinion, that this is a serious problem.

The outrageous statistics of muggings could quite possibly decrease. But the chances that the cops will run underage students out of the barrooms in Five Points is a far-fetched idea at this stage in the game.

What needs to happen to make this picture clearer? From what I know, no one has walked into a barroom in Five Points and mugged someone while beating them in the process. Last year, the problem was in Blossom Street garage because it was unlit and unsafe. Now, young girls are getting mugged at 9 p.m. walking back from the Bull Street garage. Where were the cops? Or need we ask?

"It's awful Mom. When I chose to go to a school 600 miles away, I thought long and hard about my decision. I wanted a beautiful, fun and safe campus where I could feel at home. I loved the atmosphere of the Horseshoe and the excitement down in Five Points. I just don't understand now why it all seems so different. Why are the cops hanging around parties and barrooms when in the past week, two of my friends have been mugged? I'm scared to walk anywhere by myself, and that shouldn't be the case. If I get a citation, please excuse me because I'm safer at Pavlov's than I am walking to the library on a Sunday night. Know I love you, though, and tell Daddy I said the same."

NATIONAL ISSUES

Papers vs. the Web

Newspapers were declared dead when radios became household features, and again when television invaded homes. Yet papers survived. Now, with computer ownership and Internet use on the rise, newspapers are once again on the defensive. And I, who missed the other scares, am afraid this might be it.



Kiki McCormick writes every Friday. She can be reached at ballsx3@aol.com.

I think my fears are legitimate. Newspapers are losing circulation and, therefore, advertising dollars, their main source of revenue; advertisers often defect to the Internet. Soon, it might be too expensive to set news on newsprint.

I fear that as newsprint gives way to the Internet, people are becoming more ill-informed about local and world issues and less connected to their communities.

Already, some of the smartest young people I know do not read newspapers. They can speak intelligently about philosophy, religion, literature. But they have no idea why David Beasley is no longer governor. And they cannot distinguish between (the former) Czechoslovakia and (yes, it still exists) Yugoslavia, despite the fact that the latter has been in the news daily for months. I guess they get by with the common strategy of referring to all things Eastern European as "Russian"; anyway, they seem complacent in their ignorance.

They keep up with the buzz in parts of the world like, say, the music and film industries. The more intellectual might even seek information about their majors, or some other particular interests. With the Web, they can visit sites that cater to their very specific brands of curiosity, bypassing all that boring stuff like politics, war and famine, to which they would be exposed if they had to thumb through a paper to find things that interest them.

That is part of the value of newspapers - the "thumbing-through" process, which significantly raises the likelihood of exposure to a subject that one hasn't before considered. That is important for a well-rounded understanding of current events. Some magazines offer the same experience, but they're going online, too.

I also value the reliability of my sources. At a local paper, I know there is some commitment to journalistic integrity, while any anonymous Web site I find in a search might contain incorrect, outdated or biased information. I also find it helpful when I recognize the names of writers; I know I can believe what I read from a writer who has a history of objective and thorough reporting. I also know whom to ignore.

Another thing we'll lose with newspapers is community debate. Opinion/editorial pages give the readership a forum for debate. Editorial writers are paid to consider a subject longer and more deeply than the average reader, and with more information, because they have access the rest of us don't. They help start dialogues, not only on the op/ed page in the forms of letters to the editor and guest columns, but also in homes and businesses and school and legislatures.

True, online local news sources provide a forum for debate within a community. But I fear that the worldwide nature of the Web will make people lose interest in community issues, and less likely to visit those sites. And why not? The idea of community is waning anyway, as we do more online banking and shopping, which keeps us from having to greet one another in public, and as our friends become geographically distant people we only meet in chatrooms. Why bother with community issues when you don't feel a sense of community?

But newspapers arrive on our doorsteps every day. If something lands on your doorstep, you are probably going to look at it, in an opportunity akin to that of the "thumbing-through" process. If it's there, you're likely to glance at it and glean something from it. With the Web, we don't stumble across information that is truly important; we don't even know to look for it.

I foresee a future in which people recognize fewer people in their communities, and opinions are based in even less than they are now, and people care even less about problems that aren't bothering them personally.

And we'll yearn for something to tie us together. But it will be too late.

Jason Cromer
Computer science sophomore

LETTERS

Misunderstandings of Christianity upsetting

To the Editor:
In Jeremy Touzel's column["Heaven: Not what it seems," Sept 8], he explains why he does not believe in the validity of the Christian religion. As a Christian, I feel that he has not looked into Christianity well enough to have a well-informed opinion and that he is basing his opinion on his own thoughts rather than the Bible. I also feel that he has unfairly stereotyped Christians.

First of all, as a Christian, I have never informed anyone that I think they are going to hell. Most of my friends are also Christians, and I have never heard any of them tell someone that they are going to hell. I've never even heard any of my ministers tell anyone that they are going to hell. I also feel that Christians who tell people this are doing more harm than good. They are just turning people away rather than turning people toward God. I also feel that these people are arrogant and judgmental, because it is God's place to judge people,

not man's. I think that Mr. Touzel is unfairly basing his opinion of all Christians on a few overzealous, judgmental fundamentalists.

Also, Mr. Touzel says in this column, "It is my opinion that organized religion fails on principle alone, because when erring humans try to organize the most personal facet of human life, failure is inevitable."

What he doesn't understand is that the point of a church is not to tell you what to think; it is to offer support, to offer the encouragement of fellow Christians and to offer chances to serve God and humanity. I agree that we will inevitably fail, however, because we can never measure up to what God expects of us. That is why God sent Jesus, because He realized that we can never measure up and that we need salvation, because we could never make it to heaven on our own. The gift of salvation is God's divine gift to us, even though we are unworthy, failing humans. In short, church is for the sinners.

Mr. Touzel also expresses his belief that in heaven, you no longer have free will. I have read the entire Bible and have gone

to church for my entire life, and I have never heard of anything like this.

Let me pose this question to you, Mr. Touzel: If God doesn't want us to have free will and if God wants to have absolute control over us, why would He give us free will to begin with? God does not want a bunch of mind-numbered robots that He programmed thoughts into, worshipping him blindly. That's why He gave us free will. We have the right to choose.

In conclusion, I think that Mr. Touzel should study the Bible and read about our religion before he makes decisions, because in his column he exhibits his immense ignorance. He should also visit one of the many religious organizations on campus and see that we are not all standing on the street corners beating our Bibles and preaching hellfire and brimstone, and that we will lovingly accept him regardless of his current beliefs. He is more than welcome to visit the organization I attend, the Partnership Among Lutherans and Methodists (PALM).

ABOUT US

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Letters to the editor or guest columns are welcome from all members of the Carolina community. Letters should be 250-300 words. Guest columns should be an opinion piece of about 600-700 words.

Both must include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. Handwritten submissions must be personally delivered to Russell House room 333. E-mail submissions must include telephone number for confirmation.

The Gamecock reserves the right to edit for libel, style and space. Anonymous letters will not be published. Photos are required for guest columnist and can be provided by the submitter.
Call 777-7726 for more information.

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