



The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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Supreme Court ruling unfair to journalists

Journalists, despite gripes to the contrary, perform public services when they consult driving records for the purpose of, for example, disclosing that some school bus drivers have drunk-driving records. The public needs to know this stuff, right?

Wrong, according to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that the 1994 Driver's Privacy Protection Act prohibits states from making driving records available to the public. Journalists' jobs just got harder.

We understand the importance of protecting the privacy of citizens who have driver's licenses. It is true that making driver's license records publicly available heightens the risk that evil-doers will misuse the information by targeting abortion clinic workers at their homes or stalking — but information like a home address is available through one way or another to anyone who desires it badly enough. Furthermore, private investigators will still have access to driving records — stalkers and extremists have only to hire a P.I. to get a home address and phone number of anyone registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Insurance companies and other businesses still have access, too. States are still allowed by the federal government to sell our personal information to marketing companies. How's this for protection of our civil liberties? Is this the thin end of the wedge?

What's next — removal of marriage licenses, voter's registrations and property ownership from public record? Sometimes, individuals are "protected" by having private concerns a matter of public record — it is for our safety, not for our dignity, that criminal trials are held publicly. The media are justifiably concerned about the court's decision. Our position is not a knee-jerk response to a threat against free speech, nor is it an arrogant reaction to a minor transgression against the Fourth Estate. This ruling inhibits journalists in doing their most important job — gathering information in the interest of protecting the public.

Serve on MLK Day

For the second consecutive year, USC will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday by declaring it a day of service for all students, faculty and staff members. Although no classes will be held, the university's Office of Community Service Programs is encouraging the Carolina community to participate in some form of service — to make the holiday "a day on, not a day off."

The Gamecock staff, too, is asking USC students and faculty members to register with the university's office and get involved Monday in the day of service. After all, civic responsibility and community service are large parts of what the King holiday is all about.

Many USC students fought hard to get university administration to recognize the holiday and honor one of the greatest American figures of all time. By taking part in Monday's activities, the USC community can pay homage to King's memory and the lofty, progressive ideals he espoused.

King envisioned a day when men and women of all races, religions and nationalities could cooperate to bring about nonviolent social change in their communities. It's our turn to give a little back to our city and take a small step closer to realizing King's vision. Make Monday a day of service, not of mere recreation — "a day on, not a day off."

ABOUT US

The Gamecock is the student newspaper of The University of South Carolina and is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and nine times during the summer with the exception of university holidays and exam periods.

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SUBMISSION POLICY
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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THE WASHINGTON POST

"PLEASE LET ME FINISH — WAIT — PLEASE — LET ME FINISH —"



SOCIAL ISSUES

New Year's Eve disappointing

New Year's 2000 — the party of the millennium or a big disappointment? This New Year's Eve was no different from the rest, aside from a few more fireworks and the holiday from the most well-known places in the world — Moscow, London and of course, Times Square.



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I look at New Year's Eve celebrations as one of those times when no one dares admit that they didn't have fun or that their party was a complete bomb. Have you rated your celebration yet? It might just fall short when you lay it out in front of you. New Year's is supposed to be "the sneak preview of what the new year has in store" or "the party of the year" or decade, in some instances, or millennium, in this year's case. Millennium! That means my whole upcoming millennium will be based on how my New Year's rated on the scales of fun and success? Oh, shit.

I personally feel that New Year's Eve and the hoopla surrounding it is pressure-laden and overrated. I've talked to so many people this year who just didn't enjoy the millennium celebration any more than they have in the past. To some, New Year's is just another wasted, overpriced holiday.

If you look at the history of New Year's Eve, you'll see that it's based on the Gregorian calendar and wasn't adopted by England until the 18th century. So the celebration is fairly new, although the years will have technically passed through two full millenniums in the year 2001. It was invented by people, for people, kind of like the gift that keeps on giving. But what if you didn't feel like re-giving that gift this year? What if you were too bogged down with the thank-you cards for your holiday gifts and the planning for the upcoming Super Bowl bash? New Year's is another excuse to get drunk, which is a fine tradition to many, but why spend all that money for an event that just might end up fizzling anyway?

It's amazing, the money people put into New Year's. Thousands of dollars. Look at the New Year's concerts given by stars, like Bette Midler's in Las Vegas — hundreds of bucks a pop to see a versatile, renowned artist perform at all ranges of her talent. If it were any other evening, you could see that show for a mere fraction of a cost. It's all about the marketing. I can see it now: "Bette's first show of the millennium! Don't miss it!" But will her show have any less content or give any less customer satisfaction Jan. 3? I don't think so.

We, of course, are the victims of this marketing. It astonishes me how people can vault into the first month of the new year, indebted to credit cards and exhausted from the hard work of the gift-giving season, only to squander more money on a sketchy endeavor. That's right, it's a sketchy scene, especially if you go to one of the more populated or more lively areas surrounding Columbia, like Broadway at the Beach, for instance, or Savannah, not to mention the faraway but elusive pre-Mardi Gras scene in New Orleans.

Topless girls. Body shots. Disappearing roommates. Hedonistic activities. While all of this sounds like a lot of fun, it's also a risky chance that you'll end up benefiting from the experience. Yes, of course, an opportunity to see free

nudity (and perhaps advance the viewing to a later midnight kiss-turned-gropefest) is an invaluable perk of being of prime college age at a wild rage at a midnight extravaganza; that, I don't protest. I do, however, sympathize (not to be confused with empathize) with those lowly chums who accompany their cuter and more charming roommates, only to be shafted and left singing "Auld Lang Syne" alone, with a few bottles of flat champagne and an armchair, dreaming of next year, when he or she would be the one scheming on the sought-after prey and still popping fresh champagne at the three and four o'clock hours.

Attending wild parties or not, most of us saw the various celebrations around the world, preceding and following the Times Square tradition so long awaited with the oh-so-prominent Carson Daly and John Norris of MTV. Thank God we got to see pre-pubescent Christina Aguilera perform, but where were those Backstreet Boys? Oh yeah, they were ringing in the New Year privately.

Privately is the way many people, including myself, opted to celebrate this year. Such a contrived holiday could never beat those sporadic nights with my nearest and dearest, accompanied by no expectations or overdrawn bank accounts. New Year's Eve is pressure and continuously turns out to be both a failure and a success — a failure to the mass of celebrators (it's OK — you can admit that you were underwhelmed) and a success to those marketers.

So start saving your money now — Valentine's Day roses will be skyrocketing for February. Why buy your loved one flowers now while they're inexpensive and more meaningful? Ah, yes, Hallmark would be devastated.

LETTERS

Eating disorders big hurdle to overcome

This letter is in reply to Brock Vergakis' column on eating disorders ["Eating disorders aren't diseases," Jan. 12]. My immediate reaction to this editorial was one of anger and disgust. As someone who has had and has seen several other close friends struggle with these diseases, I feel as if I have been personally attacked.

As many know, eating disorders are most prevalent during adolescence and into college, and they affect women at a much higher rate than men. However, there are men who suffer, too. Take a look at your high school wrestlers who starve themselves to weigh in and then binge eat only to have to drop the weight again. Is that not disordered eating?

I became a "fat" kid around age 8, when my parents moved me to a private school to avoid a bad school district. Daily, I had to bear the harsh comments of elementary peers and even adults. My first boyfriend told me that his dad called me his "little fat buddy." Can you imagine what this does to a 13-year-old? I'll tell you. It makes her a victim to anorexia for five years. I did not draw positive comments from ANYONE when I lost almost 50 pounds in three

months. My closest friends hated me for what I was doing; my family would not even acknowledge my problem. This disorder is not a "compliment-fishing nondisease."

To this day, I am only friends with one person, who stuck with me through those years, and I cannot even bring up the subject of eating disorders to my family members for fear that they will drag me through the mud for what I did to them. It took five years to look at my body in the mirror again.

And then I went to college, only to hate myself again. I was bulimic for my first two years here at USC, taking laxatives almost every other day. During the summer of my freshman year, I lived off of apples, cottage cheese and laxatives. And no one knew. No one had the faintest clue, because bulimics maintain their weight, they do not lose it as drastically as anorexics.

Two years without compliments or acknowledgment. It took being close to someone who ignored my body for the first time in my life to make me wake up for the final time, and even he does not know. So let me ask you this: If I am fishing for compliments, where are they?

Reading this column breaks my heart because I think the editor is simply mis-

informed. Why don't you take a trip to the local hospital and enter the ward where 80-pound girls lie dying in their beds with tubes in their arms and nurses watching their every move? Why don't you ask them what it's like to die?

Why don't you take the time to overcome a mental illness of self-contempt that haunts those girls and many walking the streets today? These girls dread to walk in front of any reflective material for fear that they might catch a glimpse of their bodies, that they might see FAT. Well I do, and so do countless women in this country and all around the world. I hope your friend recovers, and I hope that your letter is not read by all those girls out there who have been a victim to this very real disease. God help those with terminal illnesses like AIDS, leukemia and cancer. You are right. It is not fair, it is not their fault. But how dare you trample those people who chose to kill themselves slowly, possibly for the rest of their lives, for in my eyes, they are even sicker.

Gweneth B. Lazenby
Marine Science Senior

NATIONAL ISSUES

S.C. used to national spotlight

With South Carolina's customary adoption of divergent or lost, causes, the state's history, no matter how one looks at the picture, grabs the attention of any student of history. By bucking national trends, like establishing a defiant resistance to Union occupation following the Civil War, the state acquires an unrivaled reputation in the national spotlight — albeit often a negative one. Historians



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relish the opportunity to research the rich history of South Carolina, especially the state's rebellious role in the Civil War. Many historians, however, neglect the state's significant role in the Revolutionary War. The most battles in the war occurred in South Carolina.

After the British Army, under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, failed to destroy George Washington's Continental Army (the regular army) in the Northern campaign of the war, the British government proceeded to focus on the Southern states — or colonies, as they still called them — and then move north to finally defeat Washington. The plan nearly succeeded. With the exception of the British attack on Fort Moultrie — an early, enormous victory for the Patriots both psychologically and strategically in 1776 — the British conquest seemed evident. In 1780, the Patriots surrendered Charleston, the largest surrender of the war; British Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton slaughtered a band of Continentals at the Waxhaws; and when the Americans finally had a chance to defeat the British, they were routed in the debacle at Camden.

The cause for American independence appeared bleak and dismal in South Carolina exactly 219 years ago; only a third of the American people embraced the prospect of freedom. Another defeat of the southern Continental Army by the British would have left the Patriot militia at the hands of the daunting Gen. Cornwallis, thus, in all probability, all but wiping out resistance to Britain in the entire South.

The commander of the Southern Army, Nathaniel Greene, devised a dangerous, risky plan by dividing his army. Brig. Gen. Daniel Morgan, a seasoned veteran of the war and hero of the Saratoga campaign, commanded the other wing of the army. Cornwallis, after learning of the split, sent Tarleton and his unbeatable legion to obliterate Morgan's band of Continentals and militiamen. Even if Tarleton did not engage Morgan, the British would force the Patriots to cross the Broad River in the Upstate into certain defeat at the hands of Cornwallis.

So as ultimate defeat loomed, Morgan resolved to end his retreat and fight Tarleton in January of 1780. At a cluster of cow pastures in northern Spartanburg County known as the Cowpens, Morgan halted his army to battle the British. On Jan. 16, a day before the battle, Morgan invented a battle strategy to throw off the advancing Tarleton, whose army strongly outnumbered the Patriots.

Militia sharpshooters would hit the oncoming British officers. Following the shots, these men would retreat to the main militia line under Gen. Andrew Pickens, who would then fire two rounds and retreat past the right flank of the main line held by the Continental regulars under John Eager Howard. The Continentals would have to then finish off the charging British.

The battle began just as Morgan had wished. Yet, the Continentals, under the mistaken move of a company officer, began to retreat along with the militia. Sensing a pending route, Tarleton, better known as the Bloody Bastard for his butchering of surrendering opponents, allowed his bloodied men to advance upon the American defense line in an unorganized rush. At the most critical moment of the battle, Morgan rode around his retreating men and rallied them by shouting, "Give them one fire and the day is ours!"

Cowpens totally changed the character of the war. For Greene, whose plan was not to win battles but just fight them, the miraculous victory at Cowpens granted him the ability to pursue a frightened Cornwallis into North Carolina. Eventually, Cornwallis would retreat to a peninsula in Virginia named Yorktown, thus giving the Americans the independence which changed the course of world history.