



'You proved to me that you are never a former anything. We're Gamecocks.'

Sterling Sharpe, ESPN analyst and member of USC Hall of Fame

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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Fill out census forms or don't be here at all

Imagine going to the supermarket and paying for hundreds of dollars of food, only to leave it sitting at the grocery checkout line and driving home without it. If you don't fill out your 2000 Census form, you'll be doing something quite similar with your tax dollars.

Indeed, according to statistics released Tuesday from the Census Bureau, many South Carolinians are ignoring the census. Our state is one of only six states that has seen less than a 35 percent response rate so far, while the national average is 42 percent.

For those of us who have received the short form of the census, filling it out is like little more than taking a short, five-minute quiz — except this is much more important than any old quiz. The Census Bureau makes it incredibly easy, allowing you to fill out the short form of the census online at www.census.gov.

About one in six of us received the longer census, a 53-question form that asks more than a few questions that might seem a little probing. The long form, while it takes a little longer to fill out, helps put public money where it's most needed. Almost \$200 billion will be doled out on highway construction, housing assistance, hospital services and school funding based on long-census returns. Filling it out is worth releasing a few private details about yourself and your home that will be kept strictly confidential.

If you haven't done so already, take a few minutes and fill out your census, or call your parents and make sure they've included you in theirs. After all, you wouldn't want your tax dollars to go to waste, right?

Anonymous gun tips inadequate evidence

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously on Tuesday that police officers can't stop and frisk someone based solely on an anonymous tip that the person is carrying a gun.

While the National Association of Police Organizations says the ruling hinders law enforcement officers in their attempts to control violent crimes, the court was right to restrict police in this matter.

The ruling is a triumph for individual liberties, as the court said police need "more than a bare-boned anonymous tip" to have the right to frisk. This protects citizens from intrusive searches and seizures, and it forces police officers to establish a reasonable suspicion of wrongdoing, which is the standard required by the Constitution.

Of course, not all police officers are guilty of jumping the gun, so to speak, after receiving such a tip. In fact, we'd like to think most of them don't. But the fact is that outside issues, particularly personal biases and prejudices, often carry too much weight in the decision to follow up on an anonymous tip.

Moreover, officers all too often must compete with prank calls, questionable informants and flat-out incorrect information, all of which can lead to a potentially embarrassing situation for both the subject and the officer. We applaud the Supreme Court for helping to protect individual rights and for reinforcing a basic Constitutional right.

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. Opinions expressed in The Gamecock are those of the editors or author and not those of The University of South Carolina. The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of The Gamecock. The Department of Student Media is the newspaper's parent organization. The Gamecock is supported in part by student activities fees.

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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.

THE GAMECOCK

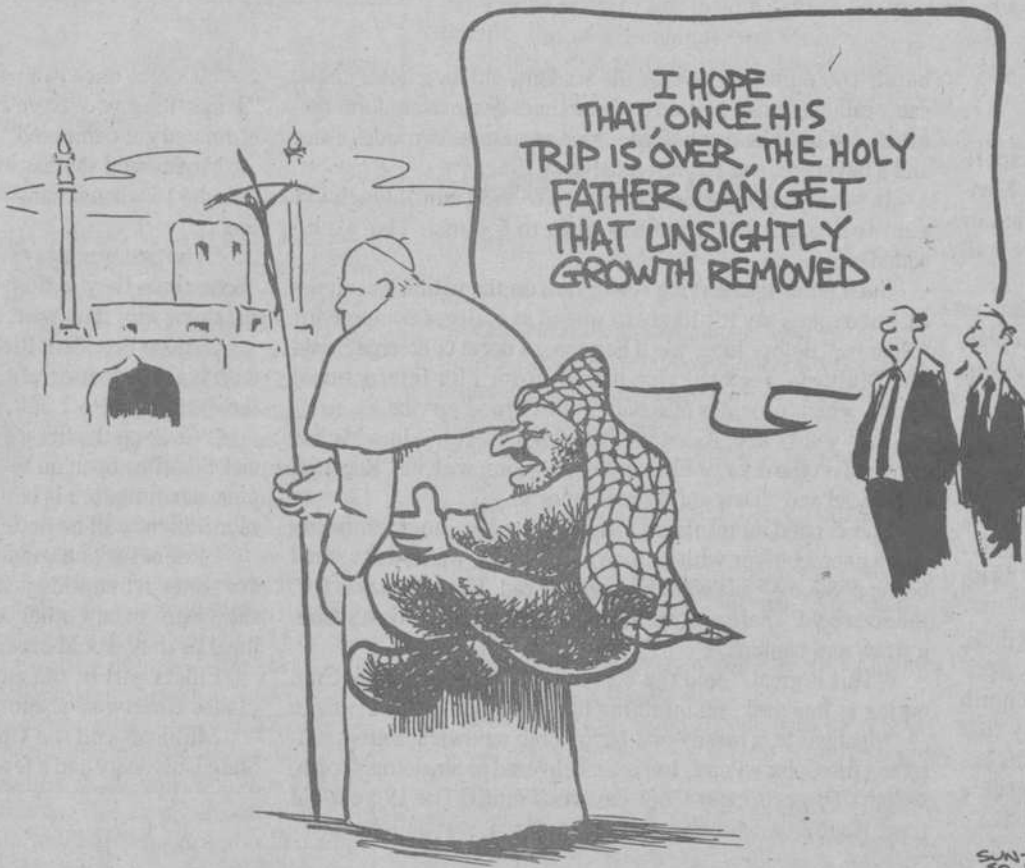
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STERLING SHARPE
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CAMPUS ISSUES

Females love to talk — and talk

The spoken word can be a beautiful thing when used in proper doses. People who talk constantly often speak for no reason at all other than to hear their own voice. I am not someone who prefers to spend the majority of my day talking, but I am intrigued by those who do. Maybe it's because I'm a naturally shy person that there are times I never speak a word. But believe me, just because I'm not talking doesn't mean I'm not watching or listening.



Brock Vergakis is a journalism junior and Viewpoints editor. He can be reached at gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com

Over the years, I have noticed one continual trend when it comes to the spoken word — females love to talk. A friend of mine at the University of North Carolina said one of her psychology professors said that on average, girls say 2,000 more words a day than guys do. In my estimation, this seems like an incredibly low figure, but then again I don't talk a lot to start with. My only guess as to what is balancing this figure out is that there are more female mutes than I thought because anyone who has been on this campus for a semester knows anytime you hear a group of people there's always at least one fe-

male there. I'm curious as to what makes girls have this innate desire to speak so frequently. You never hear of two guys having a two hour phone conversation. You never hear about late night "guy-talk." We like to drink beer on our balconies in silence. When guys come home from class or work, we aren't begging for someone to ask us about our day so we can talk about it. The desire just isn't there. We can have phone conversations that consist of only five words, and be exhausted from it.

When we go out to a bar, we can order a pitcher of a beer without learning the bartender's life story, what a great deal the girl at the end of the bar got on her shoes or the names of all the waitresses. All we need to do is point to the tap and hand him or her our money.

This doesn't mean I or the rest of the male gender doesn't like to talk; it just means we don't have the desire for it quite like girls do. I've got absolutely no problem listening to girls, and I greatly prefer listening to what they have to say than talking about my life. Occasionally there are times when I'll talk every bit as much as the next guy or girl, but I generally try and stay away from that for various reasons.

I've spent many hours on the phone listening to different traumas all the while saying such popular guy phrases as: "yeah," "uh-huh," "oh really," "wow," "I didn't hear about that," and "you're right, she is such a bitch." It's the gospel of every guy's phone conversation. We can't go wrong by sticking to those phrases. Saying what you actually think or something

that you found out or heard from someone is just asking for trouble. Sometimes we might want to actually risk giving a compliment or relaying one that we heard from someone else about a girl, but this is a dangerous move. It's been known to backfire more than once.

For example the age-old compliment of, "You've lost some weight, haven't you?" can easily be turned into, "So, what, you're saying I was fat before? That I just happen to not look fat today? Why don't you just go ahead and start mooing and call me Bessie?" Or the always risky, "Hey, that's a nice haircut." It seems like such a nice comment, but one that must be said in a timely manner or you'll hear, "Thanks, but I got it cut two weeks ago. Nice of you to notice. Why don't you ever pay attention?"

Maybe that's the real reason guys speak so infrequently. We just don't want to make complete asses of ourselves and have our statements taken the wrong way. Just because we don't talk all the time doesn't mean we're not friendly. I tend to think that those who speak less often speak with the most sincerity, but I'm biased. I'm not likely to approach someone and start up a conversation, but that doesn't mean I won't talk or listen to you all day if you talk to me. Just don't expect me to break into a soliloquy on my five-minute walk from campus to Five Points. I'd rather hear about your day anyways.

LETTERS

USC coaches should stay out of flag issue

Now comes the latest of notable authorities weighing in on the Confederate flag issue. Like others of their stripe, these two have also chosen to exhibit total ignorance concerning this matter.

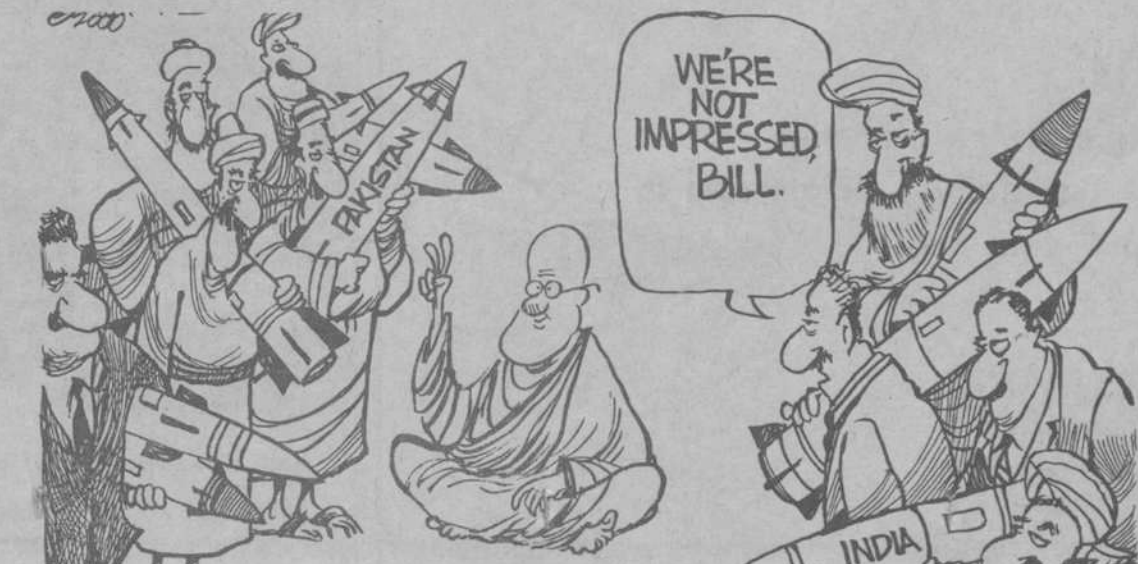
I speak of none other than USC's illustrious basketball coach, a product of Brooklyn, N.Y., and its distinguished football coach, a native of East Liverpool, Ohio — neither having an inkling of Southern heritage, yet jumping onto this politically correct bandwagon. With the basketball program still in shambles after seven years, save a tidbit of glory at season's end, and the football program appearing hopeless, much like Columbia's condition after Sherman's march, I suggest that these overpaid, underachieving interlopers "bone up" on Southern history before marching to drumbeats of these misinformed and uninformed propagandists. Better still, with an old, tired, and worn-out football coach

who thinks so little of his players as to prohibit their names on uniforms, is so dedicated to South Carolina that he purchased cemetery plots in South Bend, and who is more interested in trash along the state's roads than he is in familiarizing himself with Southern history before spouting anti-flag venom, should be reassigned to a highway cleanup crew — and at vastly reduced compensation.

As for the basketball coach and his foul mouth, along with the perpetual young and inexperienced team that obviously will never grow into those oversized uniforms, he should seek a new character, say, selling shoes or peddling used cars. The thought also occurs that his energies could be better expended attempting the repurchase of Brooklyn's many-times sold bridge. The ultimate, however, would be for both these vagabonds to fold their respective tents, move on to somewhere outside the South and wreak havoc with someone else's athletics programs!

Frank Abernathy
West Columbia

COLLEGE PRESS EXCHANGE



SOCIAL ISSUES

Strike a pose; there's nothing to it

Hey buddy, nice Abercrombie shirt! And those Hilfinger pants are stylin'! Those Oakleys, that Structure hat, those Doc Martens, they all go so well together. What a killer wardrobe you have. What's that? Could I spare a buck for lunch? Extra Value Meal time, huh?



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Here's a tip, bud, why don't you stop trying so hard to look good and pay more attention to spending your money on more important things like food and rent.

Fashion these days leaves a lot to be desired. By today's standards, a decent pair of sunglasses will cost \$100, a pair of worn-out pants that looks 5 years old will cost \$60 and a torn-up hat will cost \$25. What ever happened to buying new clothes and breaking them in yourself? It is now "fashionable" to look unfashionable.

And people only go to the most fashionable places to find these clothes that will make them look unfashionable. Sure, I can dig some of the new styles. I have a few Acapulco shirts, I have a Structure hat that I broke in over the course of 2 years of hard work, thank you very much.

But I definitely can't dig the fact that stores like Abercrombie & Fitch and Structure are basically manufacturing substandard clothing and selling them at outrageous prices simply because of a logo. I could go to a thrift store and get the same quality of clothing for about five bucks.

I find it scary that our society is so concerned about our clothes being "in style." Some people cannot leave their house or dorm room in the morning unless their hair has the perfect amount of gel in it and their outfit is prepped out, but not too uptight looking.

Yes, folks, it is time for the soccer tuck. Next time you walk around campus, count the number of guys you see with the front of their shirt tucked in and the back untucked. There will probably be an overwhelming number. Lets face it, a lot of what you buy this spring will probably be horribly out of style this time next year.

I'll admit that I look like a slacker, but I assure you, I don't try so hard to look like I'm not trying at all. I do it on my own accord, that being that I would much rather buy my clothes at the Salvation Army or Goodwill rather than go to a corporate superstore. The entire store is a clearance rack, and everything is an unexpected find. At the Salvation Army, you can get excited when you find something cool.

But I could walk into an Abercrombie & Fitch tomorrow and see the exact kind of merchandise that I would have expected to see. You will always find the same choice of overpriced merchandise every time you go.

People shop at trendy stores simply because they feel cooler wearing a label that proves that they can afford to shop there. Why does outward appearance mean so much to so many people? I'll tell you why, because these people are awkward with who they are.

The best way for them to feel good about themselves is to spend tons of money and dress in accordance with the latest styles in order to fit in. This, my friends, is superficiality at its finest.

Superficiality will always reign in the land of the weak-minded. We don't know how to be individuals. We are all sheep being led by a blind man who seems to know what is cool come fashion season.

Most of these clothes are made in foreign sweatshops anyway. The company is making a killing and the peasant workers are suffering, but at least you contributed to some of that \$.75 a day wages they are earning.

Congratulate yourself: you helped a few of those poor workers afford some minuscule amount of food for their families today. Kathy Lee would be proud.