



Viewpoints

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The Gamecock

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The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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USC must warn students of high-pressure groups

This week, *The Gamecock* is reporting on a student's encounter with the Columbia Church of Christ, a "high-pressure group," according to religious organizations on campus.

USC administrators know about the Church of Christ; this isn't the first time it's been mentioned in student media. *The Gamecock* has reported on the church in the past; in that series, USC officials said there was a section on high-pressure groups in University 101. However, that session was held late in the semester, and many students join the church in the first part of their freshman year. Informal conversations with students who have taken University 101 show that such discussions about groups like Columbia Church of Christ either don't take place or aren't remembered.

Several colleges and universities have banned high-pressure groups like the International Church of Christ from campus. The warning about high-pressure groups needs to take place early in the semester of University 101 classes. The university needs to publicize the issue and create services to help students who want to break away from such organizations.

In whatever way it can, USC needs to educate students about high-pressure groups. If not, administrators can't dodge the inevitable questions that will arise about whether they are partly to blame for students' ignorance of the danger such groups pose.

'Sixth Man' should show more support at games

When someone came up with the idea for the Sixth Man Club at basketball games, *The Gamecock* thought it would be a great way to increase school spirit at games. Originally, the club was started to show teams visiting USC that there is a united front of fan support. The Sixth Man Club would get block seating and free shirts as they cheer for the basketball team at games. The club would, in theory, help spur more fan pride and support at games.

A similar student club at UNC is very popular and has existed for years. The Blue Crew at UNC goes to almost all of the home games and cheers for the Tarheels no matter what the score is.

But unfortunately, the Sixth Man Club has fallen short of its goal of showing visiting teams that our school actually has some hardcore fans. In fact, they are only allowed to show up as a club at four home games, and the fact that they don't get to keep their shirts is ridiculous.

If there is going to be a club supporting basketball at USC, then it should be allowed to convene at most of the home games. And students should be able to enjoy a couple of perks from their membership — like free T-shirts.

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 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 and should be e-mailed to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

The Gamecock reserves the right to edit for libel style and space. Anonymous letters will not be published. Photos are required for guest columnists and can be provided by the submitter.

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Guest columns and letters may be submitted by e-mail to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com. Call 777-7726 for more information.



POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Southerner turns to 'radical' liberalism

"Don't let them turn you into a liberal," was the advice I got from my brother, along with a funny look, when I told him I'd be writing for *The Gamecock*. Born and raised in the Solid South, there's no doubt that my friends and family members would echo the same sentiment. That's what makes my next statement so difficult to make.

I am a liberal.

Before jaws drop and great-grandfathers turn over in graves, I need to clarify my point. When I say I'm a "liberal," I don't mean I'm a tree-hugging, pro-labor, anti-gun, bleeding heart, vote-Nader-dot-com liberal.

I am a classical liberal.

My above characterization of modern liberals might be unfortunate, but I think it is fair. I have no personal dislike for liberals. My beef with liberals is strictly ideological. In terms of ideology, it seems to me that modern liberals simply lack it altogether. The ones who grace the Sunday morning talk shows seem only to serve the sprawling landscape of special interest groups. That said, the current conservative branch of the American politics is only marginally superior, if not identical, to modern liberals in many respects. As I



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like to say, the only real difference between the two major political parties is a couple of letters.

So where does that leave me? As I declared earlier, I am a classical liberal. A short definition might describe me as "off the deep end," whereas a complex examination would likely yield the same conclusion. In truth, classical liberalism is a political philosophy so ideologically pure, and its conclusions so harsh, that it deserves its "radical" label. As for the foundational beliefs of classical liberals, the exact wording might vary from individual to individual because it's a highly personal philosophy. I have codified the four pillars of my personal liberalism below:

1. Every individual is born with an identical set of rights which cannot be taken away. An individual's rights belong solely to him or her, are not worth any more or less than any other individual's rights, and exist prior to, and outside the existence of, any government.

2. The most effective and efficient solution to society's economic problems is the classical model of economics. A truly free-market economy is both self-regulating and blindly fair to buyers, sellers, producers and laborers.

3. The role of government — if any — should be limited to the protection of individual rights and the protection against its own expansion.

4. All of the above assertions are absolute.

If these assertions seem radical, their conclusions are much more so. In a classical liberal world, freedom would be the

ideal. Education would be privatized and drugs legalized. Minimum wage and welfare would be repealed, along with corporate tax breaks and farmer subsidies. People would have the right to carry guns and women would have the right to an abortion. The list could continue, but essentially, private individuals would do that which the government does so poorly.

As striking as these conclusions are, I did not arrive at them by myself. The timeline of classical liberals is full of individuals more radical and out of touch with reality than I. Thomas Jefferson, for example, proposed the extreme idea that individuals have the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Even more extreme was Mary Wollstonecraft. She extended the then-laughable idea that women possessed the same rights as men. Henry David Thoreau, living in a small shack in the woods, had the gall to call government evil and even suggest that slavery should be abolished. The are the poster children of classical liberalism.

Sarcasm aside, it is a sad truth that the ideas of history's greatest political thinkers have been lost in a sea of status-quo politics. Each week in this column, I hope to offend more than 90 percent of the readership, and at the same time show that my offensiveness is not malicious and discriminatory, but reasoned and egalitarian. Secondly, and more importantly, I hope to illustrate that classical liberalism does not belong on dusty bookshelves or in the minds of radicals, but instead in daily life.

LETTERS

USC student appeals for cleaner campus

To the Editor:

I am appalled. How can you spend close to \$3,000 for a semester of graduate education, have a great initial impression of classes thus far and feel nauseated due to the excessive amount of trash as you walk around this campus?

It doesn't make sense, since a clean, organized environment is one of the keys to success for many students. We should demand nothing less of our university environment than what we expect from our own personal environment. I happen to value cleanliness and organization. Why doesn't our university hold a higher standard for itself? I know an easy answer to this question would be that the university doesn't have enough money for maintenance crews.

This is ridiculous. First, we have a football team that is now on the national radar. This, to me, is a great thing, and being from South Bend, Ind., I hope Lou Holtz can replicate what he did at Notre Dame. However, big football led by big name coaches is expensive. New athletic facilities are expensive. If the campus as a whole can't be maintained, then how can we add new expenses to our university universe?

Lou, you said something about the trash along highways in this state, and people listened. Could you please say something to the effect that you can't use a bathroom on campus and not feel like you are in a dirty gas station or that there are more cigarette butts around the union than leaves? I think you would agree with me in that these are important issues to raise.

Tony Clauss
First-year graduate student

CURRENT EVENTS

Learning the news takes time

I was sitting in class the other day, and the smartest kid in the entire world was behind me.

He was loftily chatting with the professor about all sorts of political garbage and current news, and the rest of the class was sitting there with that "What?" look on their faces.

"How does he know this stuff?"

I consider myself a fairly informed person. I know who the president is (Republican, right?), and I have my own take on some current hot topics (seat belt laws are bunk). I'm even registered to vote (Libertarian, thank you very much), but somehow, I feel left out of this giant journalism loop that seems to have its finger on the pulse of the world.

In an effort to improve my conversational skills, I decided to bulk up on the information the public needs to know. I'm forcing myself to watch the nightly news, but even that isn't helping.

Headline News, a CNN-affiliated channel, was my first stop on the television circuit. After all, they promote themselves as "getting to the point," but all I learned was that there was a bus crash in Jersey and the Lakers beat the Pacers. That sports ticker is awfully distracting.

Maybe I set my goals too high. Maybe national news is too much for a beginner. But WIS wasn't much of a help, either.

Turns out they're manufacturing pre-moistened toilet paper now (I learned this by watching a WIS newscast). The problem with becoming informed is that in order to see the story that's of any interest at all, one has to sit through a pile of crap that doesn't affect them. Why bother? Do I care about Jesse Jackson's infidelity? Maybe, but can someone tell me what makes this news and not just mindless gossip?

Watching a newscast is comparable to listening to "the drunk" at a party tell one of his off-the-wall stories. You're pretty sure that half of the tale is irrelevant, and what's to be done with the unrelated facts that are left over? We need to piece them together and make sense of the subject. But in order for me to string these tales together, I already need to know a little about what's being said, right? Otherwise, all I have to offer is third-hand information and a few ideals that my parents handed down to me. How do I end this vicious cycle?

The answer is to keep on watching. Keep reading the paper. Gather every speck of information that's offered and review it into the ground until it makes sense. Like the smart kid in class told me, "If life is your classroom, the news is your text." Thanks a lot, buddy.

Store's suspicion based on racial bias

To the Editor:

I walked into a store the other day and went to a certain section. Over the intercom, a voice called out, "Security, scan section C, please." Assuming that "section C" was the section that I was in, I immediately moved to the next section of the store. Over the intercom, the same voice hurriedly said, "Security, scan section D please."

On top of that, the manager of the store stared at me the whole time. It was painfully obvious that I was the target, a potential felon in their eyes. Felon? I have never come close to being in trouble with the law. I am a year from beginning study in the business master's degree program at USC. Just because my youth and skin color matches the stereotypical criminal gives no one the right to treat me as such.

I left the store having stolen nothing except their unwarranted suspicions. But they had stolen much more from me.

Darryl Green
Fourth-year business major

Check *The Gamecock* online every day for new columns.

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