



'We're all in this together.'

John Palms, USC president, on the state's budget cuts

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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I THOUGHT YOU SAID CONSUMER CONFIDENCE WAS DOWN ...



STAR TRIBUNE

CLASSROOM POLITICS

Don't steal my seat in class

There are certain laws that govern Man and Nature. Laws such as that of gravity and that thou shalt not kill. But chief among these divine laws is the Law of Classroom Seating. This is the law by which God hath ordained and bestowed upon each one of us our own personal seat in each one of our classes.



Nathan White is a fourth-year student in the College of Liberal Arts. Send letters to the editor to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

To the diligent students who come early on the first day of classes go the good seats (near the door, end of the row, etc.); to the slackers who cometh late go the bad seats (front row, middle of the row, etc.). It is God's law.

And of the great sins one can commit, there is murder and adultery, among others. But the gravest of these sins is to intercede in God's divine will and sit in another person's seat.

When I proceedeth to my classes, I have a warm fuzzy feeling knowing that my very own seat is waiting to envelop me in a passionate embrace upon my arrival. That warm fuzzy turns into a cold, cold prickly when I see another person sitting in the seat that God hath given me on the first day of class.

When I see the interloper in my seat, a chill runneth down my spine. I feel cold, naked and violated. I look with horror as I see another person in blissful throes of ecstasy with my seat. It makes me cry.

To sit in another person's seat not only invites God's heavenly wrath, but it issues chaos to society itself. We are all in agreement (those who matter, anyway) that the basis of any sound, civil government is a social contract of which the basis is "to each according to his earliness, to each is allotted a seat." To each his own seat.

Without firmly establishing each person's seat, the social contract cannot be drafted and good governance cannot be executed. Indeed, the first words of our great Constitution are: "We the People agree to sit only in our own seats and respect the sanctity of all others' seats."

So, when I see someone squatting in my seat, I am obligated by God and Country to right the terrible wrong. To date, I have already broken the necks of twelve seat squatters. The stench of the rotting corpses is almost unbearable. Each day I am compelled to find another seat. But I cannot.

Through faith in God and our Constitution, I find the strength to overcome the horrid stank of decaying seat squatters. For if I were to sit in another seat, I would be sinning against God's Divine Law ("Though shalt not sitteth in another's seat"—Carthaginians 4:20) and committing an act of high treason against the United States ("No one shall abridge the rights of another by sitting in their seat"—28th Amendment).

To pick another seat would make me a seat squatter (seat squatter is a derivative from the Latin *set squatres*, meaning "evil hell beast"). I would expect a swift execution for such an injustice, administered by the person whose seat I had violated. My honor and my duty do not permit me to commit such a crime.

Know your role in life. God hath a plan. Our country has a Constitution. Remain in the seat you have been given on the first day of class and be content. Do not be a seat squatter. Quit moving around and sitting in my seat!

Contribute to USC's best forum by writing a letter to the editor. gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com Submission does not guarantee publication.

Keep dining services open during breaks

University Dining Services doesn't seem to realize that students need to eat during breaks. At the beginning and end of each break, dining services mysteriously closes, regardless of when students are actually supposed to leave campus.

The university encouraged students to return early from winter break for the bicentennial opening ceremony. Much to the dismay of the students who did return, there was not a single place to use meal plans for at least two days.

The same thing will happen over spring break. Residence halls reopen at noon on Sunday, March 18, but not a single dining facility will be open until 4:30-5 p.m. If students want to eat before then, they will just have to go hungry or leave campus.

Students still pay for the meals lost while dining services is closed. Students on a 14-meal plan will still have 13 meals left when the next week begins. They will still have been charged for the full 14 even though they were only given the opportunity to use one meal.

The cost of the meal plan is a base price for the week (which varies depending on the meal plan) multiplied by the number of weeks in the semester. Spring break counts as a week because Dining Services opens for one meal on Sunday. This means when students leave campus to eat lunch on Sunday, they are paying again for this meal. Someone is getting a raw deal here, and it is not Dining Services.

It's intolerable to pay for meals when there's nowhere to eat. If we must pay \$900-1,000 for our meal plans, the university should provide these meals. If this is out of the question, reduce the cost of the meal plans.

Workers should be courteous

Some of USC's Marriot food service workers need to realize that the students, faculty and their fellow employees need to be treated with some respect. Some workers are constantly ignoring customers, acting as if it is a hassle to serve them food, and getting an attitude with others. The rude questions, sighs and blow offs are not necessary and are not appreciated. This is a problem that needs to be addressed by management. Though it is probably not the most rewarding job, the workers could be more pleasant to the people who essentially pay their salaries. Unless these attitudes change, more and more students will choose not to sign up for a meal plan in the future.

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 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 columns 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.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Harry Potter can save children

For quite some time, I have worried that the children comprising the generation to follow ours are in trouble. I've heard the music they listen to and cringed. I've seen them spend hours chatting on the Internet on sunny days when they could be out playing wiffleball or manhunt.



Michael Kerr is a third-year student in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. Send letters to the editor to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

I've seen news reports on kids killing other kids, their teachers and their parents. To put it bluntly, I wrote off the next generation.

But there is someone who can save the next generation. There is someone who can pull 12-year-olds away from chat rooms and games of Snood.

There is someone attempting to teach children good values once again. His name is Harry Potter. Actually, our hero is really a heroine named J. K. Rowling, the author of the best-selling book series, Harry Potter. Note I said

"books," not "children's books."

I first became aware of the Harry Potter phenomenon a little more than a year ago. I was walking through a Borders bookstore, looking for *Have a Nice Day* by Mankind, when I spotted the first two books in the series. What caught my attention was the contrast. The artwork on the cover told me they were children's books, but the sizes of the books made me think otherwise.

I left the store and didn't think about Harry Potter again until this past summer. The fourth edition in the series had just been released and was enjoying national news coverage. Kids across the world waited up until midnight so they could get the book the moment it went on sale. They interviewed some of the kids on the news. I had never seen a child that excited about a book.

It was then that I realized the potential Harry Potter had for greatness. Think about it for a moment. In today's society of personal computers, PlayStation 2, DVD players and Backstreet Boys albums, a book was exciting children worldwide.

You might recall from my earlier columns that I love to read and write, so I ask you to excuse my dorkiness when I say that I got excited, too. If a book could gain interest from so many kids,

maybe there was hope for the next generation. I had yet to read a single word of Rowling's, but she already had my respect as an author.

Now that I've begun reading the Harry Potter books, I remember what it was like to read as a child. When I was about 10 years old, my favorite book was *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. It was that book, along with *Charlotte's Web*, *James and the Giant Peach* and others that got me interested in reading at an early age. More than 10 years later, I'm still hooked.

If you can get a child interested in reading at a young age, you will make him a reader for life. That's why Charlie, Charlotte and James were so important to me. Though I haven't read any of those books in years, they still rank among the most influential I've ever read. This is the type of impact Harry Potter will have.

J. K. Rowling is starting a new generation of readers. Without readers, we could not have writers, and without writers, we'd be lost. Rowling is giving millions of children their first step in the right direction, and, in some small way, is helping to preserve a society of readers.

LETTERS

Mailings intended to inform, not convert

To the Editor,

This is a letter of response to Aaron Perlmutter's Wednesday letter regarding the mailing "Sex and the Search for Intimacy," distributed by the Christian organization Campus Crusade for Christ.

I am a member of Campus Crusade and helped orchestrate the mailing that is in discussion. Mr. Perlmutter argued that the mailing was a waste of paper—that college students would not base their faith on a mass mailing. He is partially correct. The mailing, primarily, is not designed to convert people, but rather to inform students of the Christian stance on important issues, in this case sex and intimacy.

The better the student population is informed of such issues, the better off, I feel, we will be at making religious decisions, to whatever degree we feel the need. But Mr. Perlmutter's primary statements against the mailing are not my primary concern.

His finishing remark suggested that those people who would accuse him of religion-based hatred should take a look at themselves for evidences of the same. At first, I felt that it was unnecessary stereotyping of Christians.

However, when discussing the letter with friends, I found that there was a small element of resentment, and even hatred (if superficial), among those who disagreed with him. This element of pride is an unfortunate product of many religions, and I would like to say this: any Christian acting or reacting hatefully to his or her fellow men and women is not acting under the doctrines prescribed by Christianity. Christianity teaches a doctrine of love, never hatred.

I do urge, however, that Christian disagreement with secular views is not interpreted as judgment nor Christian argument as a dictation of morality.

Christianity does not mean to be judgmental on the secular world. Rather, we strive to demonstrate love and what we understand as its source.

Nathan Bell
First-year Student
College of Liberal Arts

Columnist should read more in future

To the Editor,

For the second time this semester, I find it necessary to take columnist Hamp Nettles to task for one of his columns. The first time was to alert him to the dire effects of Clintonism, of which it appeared to me he was actively suffering. This time, it's for his March 7 column, "Discrimination is society's issue."

In particular this statement: "History is littered with horrible examples of governments regulating 'equality': the Holocaust in Germany, the Inquisition in Spain and Jim Crow in America."

The Holocaust was the government-sanctioned persecution of those of non-Aryan descent, mainly, but not limited to, the Jews.

The Inquisition was the persecution of non-Catholics and/or those who did not toe the Catholic line. It was practiced by the Catholic Church and, by proxy, the Crown.

Jim Crow was designed to continue the infringement upon the civil rights of African-Americans, utilized mainly by local and regional governments in parts of the United States.

Mr. Nettles, the examples that you

listed in your column are of governments regulating inequality. I don't normally associate words such as persecution and infringement with enlightened, tolerant societies.

I suggest you read your history text more carefully next time, or at least look up the definition of a word before you use it sarcastically. Furthermore, your statement that you are "anti-anti-discrimination" indicates that you are, in effect, pro-discrimination.

John Vincent
Graduate Student
Spanish

Alcohol isn't needed to make friends

To the Editor,

Lately, every week in front of the Russell House there have been students passing out fliers to come and drink free beer at a social event on campus.

I think that this is poor of USC to allow students to do this because there is already so much temptation out there to drink. Why are they feeding that temptation?

I think it is great for students to get to know each other and become friends, but not in the presence of alcohol. USC should encourage more responsibility and leadership instead of drinking beer, which can lead to addiction.

I do commend USC for allowing support groups to encourage students to sign petitions not to drink and drive during spring break week.

Marianne Corder
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