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VIEWPOINTS

ONLINE POLL

Which side do you sympathize with in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? www.dailygamecock.com
Results published on Fridays.

IN OUR OPINION

Lackluster start

College of Liberal Arts Sen. Ginny Wright has proposed a resolution that further complicates the confusion of student organization funding. Her resolution urges protection of USC's chapter of the NAACP from losing funding as a "political" group by designating its actions as moral causes.

Last week, however, Wright was busy proposing a bill that would strip funding from organizations that endorse candidates. It's as if she wants the Senate to pick and choose each organization it considers worthy of receiving general student activity funding.

But the Senate's lackluster response, to heavy-handed pieces of legislation like Wright's and to their

The Student Senate should put effort and research into their jobs.

general duties, is troubling as well. Though Student Government President Ankit Patel has encouraged senators to research everything they do, there are still few pieces of meaningful legislation on the floor. In part, this is because many senators don't know proper procedure or even what the issues are.

This is a problem we've seen year in and year out with the Student Senate. Senators who don't know what they're doing need to find out fast. They had the entire election process to research their jobs; now it's time to use that new knowledge. And if they haven't learned it yet, it's time to make their positions mean something — not just look good on a resume.

And seeing as how some senators have already reached close to their maximum of missed Senate and committee meetings, some have already given up on the importance of their jobs. And that's even scarier than single-minded legislation.

Winners and Sinners



WUSC Raises unprecedented \$3,400 in "Moolah for Music." Station can now buy more music that nobody's ever heard of.

DUKE RESEARCHERS Discover way that a pill might replace a workout. Lazy people try to celebrate, but sofa looks sooo comfortable ...

MITSUBISHI Designs iGlassware that tells bartenders when drinks get low. Thish ish is great (hiccup) idea.

IOWA MATH CHAMPIONSHIPS High schooler adds scores hours after its loss to find that it actually won. Look again: This was a MATH competition.

FINLAND Fines speeding motorists according to income. A \$103,000 ticket seems a bit excessive for a millionaire, but students might have to pay only 37 cents.

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

Monday's editorial should have specified that the Harvard study defined binge drinking as four drinks in a row for women and five drinks in a row for men. The Gamecock regrets the error.

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. E-mail us at gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

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The legacies of two great men



MARK HARTNEY

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A pope, a president and the resonance of death.

A few years ago, the world lost two women who had served their countries, those in danger and those in need. Princess Diana and Mother Teresa are dearly missed.

This year, we'll lose two men. Their legacies are owed to their moral courage alone, but their deaths will resonate differently.

Pope John Paul II and former President Ronald Reagan are both in rapidly declining health, though the pope's frailty is broadcast weekly on CNN.

The pope recently called U.S. cardinals to Rome for a meeting about the church's sex abuse scandals and to discuss how they can avoid another monumental embarrassment.

This is the same leader who apologized for atrocities committed by the Catholic Church during the Inquisition and in later centuries. Now, he's taking responsibility for yet another matter caused

without his involvement.

It could be said that, in general, society is taking steps away from accountability. The actions of the church officials in Boston certainly support that.

It's truer to say the buck is stopping further from the place it starts. John Paul, the first non-Italian to succeed to the papacy, is making his officials accountable. Imagine if we did the same for the Enron officials.

John Paul has worn Doc Martens and published a best seller. He was the first modern leader in the largest church in the world, and his death will leave an enormous cavity in the religious — and moral — world.

Reagan, on the other hand, has been out the public eye for nearly a decade since disclosing in 1994 that he was one of millions who have Alzheimer's disease. This is a man who took a bullet and also survived cancer. Because his place on the national and global stage has been taken and re-taken, his death will surprise few and touch everyone.

I think it's important for America to see him before he dies. He might not be as recognizable as the man who declared the '80s "morning in America," but his presence on a television would be a wake-up call to the Baby Boomers heading into their senior years. His deteriorating condition

wouldn't be pleasant to watch, but it would alarm the country and force people to examine appropriate treatment for their grandparents.

Had he not had Alzheimer's, Reagan could have been a grandfather to the country. Instead, Nancy Reagan is fighting for her sanity.

When the pope dies, a church official will announce it in a solemn monotone and Rome will stop moving entirely. Editors worldwide will summarize his death in five paragraphs and look at the Vatican for his successor. John Paul doesn't have a wife.

We will never know how his death affected those he was close to. Was he close to anyone? Or was he close to everyone by virtue of his position?

Nancy Reagan, however, will be the voice of consolation when her husband dies. She will shock us into remembering what her husband meant to the country. I wish we would be more interested in his life today. Tomorrow, he might be the late president. The final message of the Great Communicator shouldn't be his obituary.

My roommate says Reagan is the greatest president. Maybe you disagree, but he's not wrong.

Hartney is a fourth-year chemistry student.

IN YOUR OPINION

BGLA, LAM should respect other views

The name of Homophobia Awareness Week is disturbing on several levels.

In addition to labeling moral objectors as "scared," it reveals a shift in gay rights activism. Such a name suggests that the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Alliance has crossed the line from defending its point of view to attacking those who oppose them on moral grounds.

Most awareness weeks bolster support for a cause, but this program has the potential to assail those who reject the acceptability that homosexual practices. Of course, all people deserve the same respect and dignity, regardless of sexual orientation. Likewise, the gay community should respect the views of those who have ethical objections. I urge the BGLA and the League for Alternative Minorities to recognize the moral basis of their opposition while they defend their social equality.

LOREN RODGERS
FOURTH-YEAR BIOLOGY STUDENT

Atheists, agnostics tired of Christianity

Upon reading Lark Patterson's letter in Friday's paper, "Society is sensitive about Christianity," I'm compelled to reply while secretly "praying" that the slightly radical ideas I'm about to express get published. Not only am I amused by

Patterson's letter because of her indulgence in the only accepted form of mythology, I'm also amused because she seems to think Christianity makes non-believers uncomfortable. I think not.

We're just — to put it plainly — sick and tired of hearing about it. How often do you turn on the television, flip through the channels and see some Buddha-like individual preaching the gospel in hopes of converting another unfortunate soul?

The truth is that non-believers like myself want nothing more than to get away from the crazy world of religion. The truth is that it's the biggest avenue for violence, intolerance, bigotry and hatred — not peace, hope or acceptance. My advice to Patterson and others is to run along, pray and leave us alone.

Patterson says that prayers to Jesus bother American society and that there's something about saying "Jesus" that makes us cringe. But how often do you see Louis Farrakhan or an atheist proselytizing the general public? Now compare that to the number of times Pat Robertson, Creflo A. Dollar, Jerry Falwell, Billy Graham, Rod Parsley or Benny Hinnis are seen doing the same thing.

Atheists, agnostics and those who don't really care are just tired of hearing about Christianity because it's the only religion we're bombarded with on a day-to-day basis.

CLYDE PURCELL
THIRD-YEAR CHEMISTRY STUDENT

Take steps to protect yourself if USC won't

We would like to bring attention to something that occurred Saturday morning at Patterson Hall. Two male students managed to get past the sleeping Sizemore security guard around 4 a.m. and made their way to our room. We were awakened by the sound of them trying to enter. After some time, they were able to again walk right past the security guard and leave Patterson.

In an effort to raise awareness and protect fellow students, we'd like to offer some advice.

First, your well-being depends solely on you. No one is here to look out for you. This means you must lock your doors at all times. Don't make the false assumption that someone can't get into your dorm. Second, if you're faced with this situation, call the police immediately. If you don't catch the intruders in the act, it will be your word against theirs. You'll go from being the victim to being the one on trial. Be prepared to defend yourself.

We aren't sure what kind of act it will take for new security measures to be enforced, but we hope that others will learn from our situation and take measures to protect themselves until USC decides that students are worth protecting.

MEREDITH CROCKER
FIRST-YEAR PRINT JOURNALISM STUDENT

CHRISTY LOVE
FIRST-YEAR BIOLOGY STUDENT

♦ LETTERS, SEE PAGE 5

Lessons about great timing



PHIL WATSON

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Politicians should deal with any press scrutiny.

It's been a crazy ride since my last column. Misfortunes that make little, if any, sense have plagued me and my friends.

First, one of my friends back home finds out his appendix is about to burst and has to have it promptly removed. Then some stranger shoots a gun at me from across the river while I'm riding my bike at Riverfront Park. And then I find out I have mono.

Bad timing, but not necessarily bad luck. Bad luck would have been an appendix that burst before doctors got it out. Bad luck would have been taking a .44-caliber bullet in the chest. Bad luck would have been not finding out about mono until my spleen swelled up to three times its normal size and burst, killing me in a much more painful manner than that .44 caliber bullet would have.

Student Government President Ankit Patel could learn a few things about bad timing.

For example, if you're going to try to pass a bill that would restrict student organizations from endorsing candidates, time it so that your Web site doesn't have an active link to an endorsement from a student organization.

SG is a joke. And in this case, it's a joke with an ironic twist, like the one about the man who asked the genie for a 10-inch pianist.

What makes it ironic is that Patel was endorsed by The Gamecock and used that to his advantage during his campaign, linking it on his Web site and trying to get the few people who actually care about SG to vote for him. Now, he tries to stop "student organizations" — aka The Gamecock — from endorsing candidates.

The joke gets even more ironic when Ginny Wright, the senator sponsoring the bill, contacts members of The Gamecock to try to get them to back it. Obviously, they said no because Wright was basically asking them to let SG bend The Gamecock over and spank it like a redheaded stepchild.

Many students in SG want to become politicians. Undoubtedly, some of them go to bed at night dreaming of being a senator or a representative, and they get goose bumps at the thought of having unbridled power over the vulnerable masses.

SG gives them a slight taste of what that might be like. Similar to real politicians, some people in SG have resorted to sleazy tactics to serve their own interests.

For example, last year, someone in SG decided to practice communism and stole almost 1,000 copies of The Gamecock on the day candidate endorsements were published.

A government professor I had my freshman year told the class that those who dream of being politicians probably won't ever live that dream but that many of those who have no interest in politics during college will end up in Congress. I hope he's right.

If students in SG want to be real politicians one day, they need to learn what it's really like to be a politician now. And that includes taking punches from the media.

If you're scared of press scrutiny, pick another field, like library sciences.

Watson is a third-year print journalism student.