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## THE MIX

## THEY SAID IT

**HONORE DE BALZAC:** "Many people claim coffee inspires them, but, as everybody knows, coffee only makes boring people even more boring."

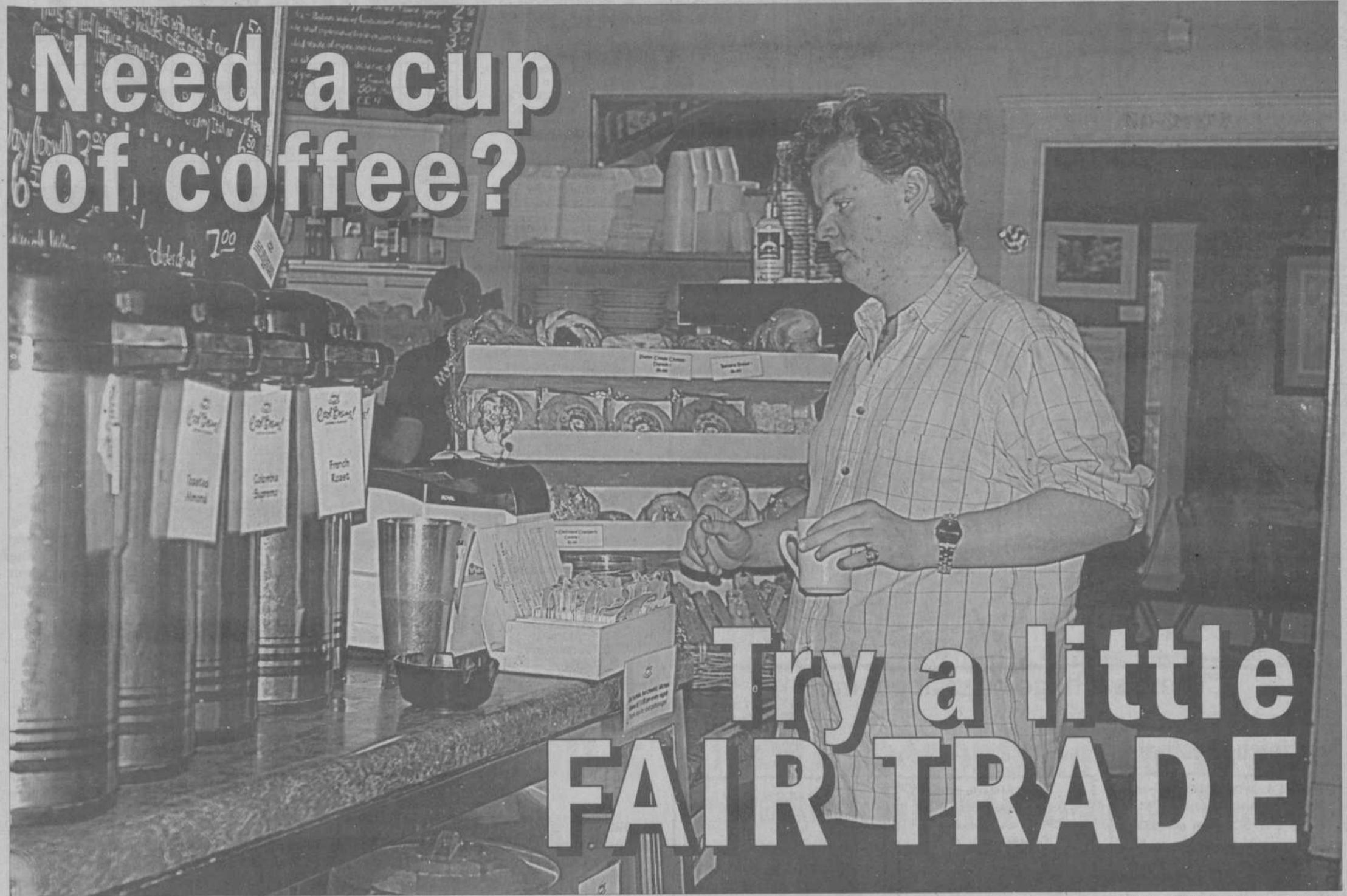


PHOTO BY TRISHA SHADWELL/THE GAMECOCK

Alderman Douglas refills his coffee cup at Cool Beans, located on College Street. The shop is the only place in Columbia that offers Fair Trade coffee.

## Brand seeks to reward troubled coffee farmers

BY BRIAN RAY  
THE GAMECOCK

Let's say tomorrow morning you look in the mirror and discover that somehow you've been transformed into a Guatemalan coffee farmer. You own a small farm and you have a hardworking spouse and three kids who help around the field. Yet despite the warm climate and love of your loyal family, a world of responsibility and worry has consumed you. Of course, you're working 70 hours a week or more in a sweltering clear-cut jungle, and the fruits of your labor have a market price of \$.30 per pound.

You've got three choices. You can crawl in bed and wish upon a star that tomorrow you'll wake up with a different job in a different country. Or you can bemoan

your fate internally while picking coffee beans like hot tamales to double your product — which will inevitably drive your price further down. Or you can start scouring the nation for a Fair Trade broker.

This is assuming you don't stand to lose your farm like 60,000 Nicaraguans, or you haven't already lost your job like 30,000 El Salvadorians.

Jay Shreve, owner of a local coffee shop, said Fair Trade coffee is the way to right wrongs and pay small plantation owners what they deserve for their hard work. The system guarantees over three times the market price per pound for coffee planters, paying farmers \$1.30 per pound.

"I first heard about it a few years ago and was very interested in the concept of it," Shreve said.

Shreve said there are quite a few places where the coffee stops before it reaches your cup. He said growers usually sell their beans to processors, who in turn sell it to brokers, who sell it to roasters

and then the roaster finally sells it to the drinker.

"Every retailer knows it's the grower that gets treated unfair," Shreve said.

Shreve also said that he buys as much Fair Trade coffee as possible.

OK, this is where all cafe wastrels should slap their foreheads and say, "Oh, that's what the Fair Trade label means."

Not only does Fair Trade guar-

antee fair pay, but it also ensures quality of product. In order to meet the standards of Fair Trade consumers, the farmer or plantation owner has to grow his beans organically in the shade. This means sans pesticide, which is a good idea since DDT, although banned in many counties in 1972, is still widely available to coffee cultivators. DDT is notorious for damaging the nervous system, liver and kidneys.

If you grow coffee in the shade, it obviously means you can't sun-cultivate your coffee; sun-cultivation results in the vaporization of rainforests' biodiversity by cutting down the homes of hundreds of songbirds and other animals.

Monocropping is also consequently out when you shade grow your coffee because — being the smart farmer you are — you'll know planting banana trees or nut

trees will diversify your farm and bring in more money.

Of course, most small farmers can't afford the machinery to clear cut their farms anyway, so all they have to do is make sure they don't slash and burn once they can afford it.

Anyone against the price floors proposed by Fair Trade coffee should note that there was once a price regulating initiative known as the International Coffee Agreement, which controlled the amount of coffee allowed into the market, but the United States helped destroy it in 1989. Now, anyone and everyone are flooding the market because they know we can't live without our coffee in the morning.

Any specialty coffee shop has the power to acquire Fair Trade. If it doesn't, Shreve said, encourage the shop to buy Fair Trade coffee.

Statistics gathered from [www.globalexchange.org/coffee](http://www.globalexchange.org/coffee).



PHOTO BY TRISHA SHADWELL/THE GAMECOCK

Fourth-year art studio student Kirill Simin, left, and Douglas play chess at Cool Beans.

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## Labor Day means more than just a day off

BY ALLISON PEELFR  
THE GAMECOCK

It's all too common for our generation to look through our syllabi, quickly highlight and mark the dates accompanied by "No Class" and start daydreaming about the places and things we would like to do on those breaks. Whether you are cooking out, having fun at the lake, partying or simply wasting away in dreamland, you should know that there is indeed a greater reason that we break for Labor Day every year.

Labor Day is not a religious holiday, a memorial to a certain person or a commercialized event

designed by stores that want to take your money.

The first Monday of September was designated to celebrate the American worker. Although the founder of Labor Day has been disputed, the most likely candidate is Matthew Maguire. Maguire, a machinist serving as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York, decided he was tired of the working man and woman being overlooked and under appreciated.

He proposed a day to celebrate and show appreciation for their hard work and commitment to the prosperity of the country. The proposal included a street parade to exhibit the "strength and 'es-

prit de corps' of the trade and labor organizations" followed by a festival for the workers and their families to enjoy.

On Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1882, the Central Labor Union held the first Labor Day celebration in New York and continued the tradition the next year. By 1884, the holiday was an annual observance in the city. Over time, the celebration evolved to include prominent leaders and union leaders striving to encourage workers to unite.

As union organizations around the country began demanding better conditions for workers, the



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Labor Day offers students a break from classes and an opportunity to enjoy other activities.

♦ LABOR DAY, SEE PAGE 6

## University offers wide range of student organizations

BY TRINA RAHMAN  
THE GAMECOCK

Greene Street was buzzing with activity Wednesday — extracurricular activity, that is. There were student organizations as well as local businesses vying for students' attention. Yes, it's time again to sign up for those outside-of-class activities that make college a genuinely worthwhile and fun experience. Students are able to join organizations related to their majors or take part in a sport that they

played in high school.

USC also has a variety of organizations that are off the predictable path. As a school that prides itself on its diverse student population, USC offers activities that appeal to an equally varied assortment of interests.

Refried Films, a new organization on campus, offers students with inner Spielbergs the opportunity to show their skills. The group invites all aspiring directors, editors, cinematographers, writers, actors, stagehands, costume designers and makeup

artists, and no experience is required.

For those who like to guess what's going to happen next in a film — normally ruining it for the people sitting next to them — Refried Films offers students the chance to play the critic. Student screeners view and discuss one to four films per month. Selections will include mainstream, independent and student-produced films, all chosen by the club's members. The aspiring filmmakers are also welcome to show their own films. The club

aims to connect all students across campus who are interested in moviemaking.

USC also boasts a male a cappella group, Higher Harmony. Organized three years ago, the ensemble includes tenors, basses and vocal percussionists. Past performances have included the USC Showcase, a Martin Luther King Jr. Day concert and an annual spring concert, which the group is hoping to hold in Gambrell Hall this year. The group's female counterpart, Cocktails, was started last year and has also per-

formed at various events.

Organized for interested animation fans, NASHI is a unique on-campus club celebrating Japanese Anime. The members also host a video game tournament each semester and maintain a Web site at [www.clubnashi.org](http://www.clubnashi.org).

With such a variety of activities offered, USC students have an assortment of reasons to get involved.

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## BRIEFLY

### Ailing Cash misses Video Music Awards

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Typically, the annual celebration of music videos takes a back seat to wacky antics, barely there outfits and eye-popping performances at the MTV Video Music Awards.

But this year may be different. "Hurt," a haunting video by 71-year-old Johnny Cash, was nominated for six VMA awards and threatened to upstage the usual craziness at Thursday night's extravaganza at Radio City Music Hall.

Although Cash had hoped to attend, he was hospitalized with a stomach ailment.

Cash's video, nominated for video of the year, best male video and best direction, among others, was hardly a staple on MTV over the past year.

His cover of the Nine Inch Nails song wasn't played very much, and most die-hard MTV watchers may not recall even seeing it. But it resonated with those who vote on the nominations, including music executives, video directors and journalists.

More people were familiar with Missy Elliott's "Work It," the most nominated video with eight. The music clip was loaded with special effects, dancing and surreal images.