

Campus Opinion

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Opinion: U.S. can teach other countries about democracy

JONI SMITH
Staff Writer

The recent presidential election spoke volumes for our country. After the most controversial election in our nation's history, Bush was inaugurated without violence, weapons or disorder.

Protesters were abundant on his inauguration day, yet they were peaceful. This peaceful shift of authority is something that few countries can say they have.

There is rarely a day when you can turn on the television and not see a picture of a war torn country in distress over a political figure. In many other nations, the transition period following a leader's leaving office and another's taking over is filled with bloodshed and riots.

Instances in countries such as Peru, Russia and, most recently, Yugoslavia, with Slobodan Milosevic, demonstrate how a country can literally be torn apart because of political differences.

Sure, many of Bush's opponents were present at the inauguration, anti-Bush posters in hand, but no one was hurt and the inauguration ended successfully.

I am not saying that I agree with Bush's being our president, and I am not even saying that I like him. As American citizens, we have the right to like or dislike our government's leaders.

What I am saying, however, is that I am happy and relieved that democracy was able to shine through after the events of the 2000 election. In the end, who knows if the winner really was Bush—indeed, we may never know—but we all know that our country is strong enough to face an event like

this without violence.

The Constitution allows Americans the right to express opinions regarding the government.

This principle has been exercised in a very noble manner from those who would rather see some one other than President Bush in the White House. These people let their thoughts and concerns be heard without the violence that often accompanies such a situation in other countries.

2004 will come faster than we can imagine, and Americans will vote again for president. We all want 'our' candidates to win, but if they don't, it is important to recognize and respect the authority of our government.

If you do not like how the 2000 election turned out, make sure to be at the polls in 2004. If you do not like the outcome and chose not to vote in this past election, then don't complain because it was your decision not to vote and let your voice be heard.

We can only hope that the United States set an example for other countries to follow earlier this month during the inauguration.

Perhaps if people in other countries see that change, favorable or unfavorable, can be made without bloodshed, they will remember the reaction of democratic America if their own countries are in the same situation.

Raleigh experiences the love and revolution of *Les Mis*

LISA WILSON
Staff Writer

It's a story set against the backdrop of love and revolution, and it is still attracting audiences today.

Set in war-torn France during the Revolution, the musical *Les Miserables* explores the life of Jean Valjean and Cossette, the girl he raises. The musical, based on Victor Hugo's novel by the same name, is one that will evoke every emotion from excitement to sadness.

The musical was performed

last Feb. 2-4, 2001 at the Raleigh Memorial Auditorium.

Valjean is a man who goes through such trials as prison, but attempts to overcome these hardships in order to become an honest man.

The performance had every element to keep the audience on the edge of their seats. The actors were excellent in their portrayal of characters and in keeping the story line fluid and interesting.

The musical score was full of swelling emotion in everything from Ebonine's painful "On My Own" to the firing of

the canons during the battle scenes.

Also, the child actors, such as the young Cossette, made the performance even more poignant.

You can catch *Les Miserables* on Broadway next, but Raleigh Memorial's spring season is in full swing.

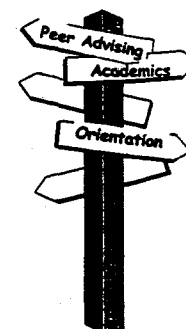
Up next is the *Wizard of Oz*, playing Feb. 9-18. Raleigh Memorial Auditorium is located at 1 East South Street. Call the box office at (919) 831-6061 for more information.

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