

Check out this week's Friday Football Blitz for all the reasons why Steve Spurrier is shaking up USC's starting lineup this weekend against Troy.



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Students up in arms over Facebook group

Cries of racism surround USC student's posting that references 'Negroes'

Stephen Fastenau
NEWS EDITOR

Several USC students have become angered in the past week over a group on the popular Web site thefacebook.com that they believe is racist.

The group, titled "Northerners Dress Like the Negroes Do," came under attack by several students, black and white alike, as a war of words took place on the group's message board.

Fourth-year marketing student Kevin Ekman, the group's founder, said he created the group in response to a group criticizing the way

Southerners dress.

The name of the group originally included the term "coloreds," but Ekman said he changed it after being threatened by numerous people through Facebook's messaging system.

"I didn't really think it was racist," Ekman said. "It was more going after Northern people. I wasn't out there to get black people. I mean, I guess I could have chosen a better word to use."

Third-year retail student Chiquita Martin, who sent messages to Ekman asking him to change the group's name, said she wouldn't have had much of a problem if Ekman's word choice had been different.

"Those two words (negroes and coloreds) I got really offended by because I can't believe somebody in the year 2005 still uses those terms," Martin said. "I was kind of offended

by the whole name and description of the group. If it had, like, black people or African-American people, it would have been different. I wouldn't have taken it offensive, 'cause it's just somebody's opinion."

Third-year political science student Grant Smaldone, who is white, posted a message Sunday inquiring why the name of the group had been changed from "coloreds" to "negroes." He also rebutted a previous post in which the term "cracker" had been used to describe the founder of the group.

His statement drew three other responses, two opposed to the group and one in favor.

"Why did you guys change the name?" Smaldone said on the group's site Sunday. "I think coloreds sounds funnier, but I guess Negroes works well too. I can't believe the little Negro girl used a racial slur and called us

'crackers.' Some of them colored folk are still racist, I guess. Weird ..."

Those comments were followed by a post from Ronnetta Alexander, no longer listed on Facebook, who said she has no respect for anyone who uses the words mentioned in the group's title and that "any African-American believes the word Negro or colored is a racial slur, so I feel calling you a cracker doesn't do ... your group justice."

Joshua Caldwell, a second-year computer science student, fiercely opposed Alexander's comments, claiming in his message he had "no problem with black people" and said he'd rather not "spend the rest of my life in prison for committing a hate crime."

Ekman said he received several

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Michael Atsworth / The Dallas Morning News

Hurricane Rita evacuee traffic is stopped on Interstate 45, early Thursday near The Woodlands, Texas. The 40-mile distance from downtown Houston turned into a seven-hour trip.

Thousands of evacuees flee as Rita approaches

Hurricane's march on Texas coast stirs residents into agonizing exodus

Mike Graczyk
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HOUSTON — Hurricane Rita closed in on the Texas Gulf Coast and the heart of the U.S. oil-refining industry with howling 145 mph winds Thursday, but a sharper-than-expected turn to the right set it on a course that could spare Houston and nearby Galveston a direct hit.

The storm's march toward land sent hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the nation's fourth-largest city in a slow, bumper-to-bumper exodus.

"This is the worst planning I've ever seen," said Judie Anderson, who covered just 45 miles in 12 hours after setting out from her home in the Houston suburb of LaPorte.

In all, nearly 2 million people along the Texas and Louisiana coasts were urged to get out of the way of Rita, a 400-mile-wide storm that weakened Thursday from a top-of-the-scale Category 5 hurricane to a Category 4 as it swirled across the Gulf of Mexico.

The storm's course change could send it away from Houston and Galveston to Port Arthur, Texas, or Lake Charles, La., at least 60 miles up the coast, by late Friday or early Saturday.

But it was still an extremely dangerous storm — and one aimed at a section of coastline with the nation's biggest concentration of oil refineries. Environmentalists warned of the possibility of a toxic spill from the 87 chemical plants and petroleum installations that represent more than one-fourth of U.S. refining capacity.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT Williams addresses students; devotion resolution defeated



Claire Hughes / THE GAMECOCK

SG President Justin Williams delivered his State of the Student Body address Thursday night.

President outlines plans to help students through television, grade revision

Students will have a chance to correct some bad grades and be better connected to Student Government via television if Student Government President Justin Williams gets his way with policy goals he outlined Thursday at his State of the Student Body Address in the Russell House.

Williams, a fourth-year public relations student, addressed a number of concerns at the annual event and revealed efforts by the executive staff and the Student Senate to improve on "academics, transportation and student life." In his speech, Williams encouraged professors to continue to use the Internet as a teaching tool, advocating the full use of Blackboard as a tool to post course materials. He also called for professors to post their course syllabi on the USC Registrar's online master schedule. "This will eliminate students signing up for

Senators defeat bill that would discontinue prayer before sessions

Tensions rode high Wednesday in Student Senate chambers as that body debated and ultimately defeated a resolution that would omit a devotion from weekly meetings.

After several rounds of questions and speeches mired by motions to limit and extend debate, the resolution failed by a vote of 8-21, with one abstention. Several senators applauded at the result and were chided by Vice President Ryan Holt.

"It is my honest opinion that our business schedule should be kept to business," Sen. John Rabon, a fourth-year English student, said in his opening remarks. He and three other senators sponsored the resolution.

"Here at Carolina, we come from different states, countries and religions. Our senate should represent that to the upmost," said a statement by Sen. Nicole Modeen, a third-year international students student, who sponsored the resolution but could not be present.

The resolution met strong criticism from a handful of senators, who approached the resolution's validity from a variety of angles.

Sen. Chris Floyd, a fourth-year international business student, called into question the number of complaints about the devotion coming from outside the senate. Rabon admitted that to his knowledge no one had come forward in opposition.

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Justin Chapura
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR



Nick Eures / THE GAMECOCK

Derrick Huggins, director of Parking Services, at his desk on Thursday.

DIRECTING TRAFFIC

Parking chief plays bigger role than you might think

Jess Davis
STAFF WRITER

Whether it's parking a car, having USCPD respond to a call or getting maintenance to a fix a light in dorm rooms, USC students can't go a day without directly feeling the impact of one administrator.

Derrick Huggins, who has served as director of Vehicle Management and Parking Services at USC for five years, says there's more to his job than students realize. His behind-the-scenes efforts help keep everything from maintenance to mail delivery running smoothly.

Besides the more visible aspects of his job, organizing university parking, Huggins and his team of employees are in charge of all transportation on campus. Maintenance of USCPD vehicles, post office vehicles and the fleet of Carolina Shuttle Buses is a daily responsibility for his staff. In a motor pool located on the west side of campus, VMPS even has its own supply of bio-diesel to fuel the shuttle buses, and recently received a \$32,000 grant for ethanol to fuel other USC vehicles.

Over the past few years, new programs have come out of Huggins'

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INSIDE

Viewpoints

Chase Stoudenmire implores students to bring back the lost art of the secret admirer; Aaron Brazier spotlights the often-exploited, always underappreciated graduate student

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The Mix



Curtain call

Theatre South Carolina will open its season at 8 p.m. Saturday with Arthur Miller's "A View From the Bridge."

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USC to research impact of Hurricane Katrina

Engineering, biomedical departments team up to study storm's aftermath

Chelsea Hadaway
FOR THE GAMECOCK

USC is funding and spearheading 18 research projects in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Almost \$400,000 has been set aside by USC to fund these projects. USC's Office of Research asked for research proposals within days of Hurricane Katrina.

Faculty members responded quickly, said Harris Pastides, vice president for Research and Health Sciences.

"In the immediate aftermath the faculty came together and everybody wondered how they could help, but as a research and scholarly community we looked at ourselves and ... we decided the best thing we could do was to prevent this from happening in (South Carolina)," Pastides said.

The research projects will focus on aspects of coastal resiliency, recovery of natural processes, and ecosystems and societal changes caused by the rebuilding of communities.

Pastides said he believes knowledge

gained from all fields, such as natural sciences, engineering and the humanities, is crucial for developments in tools, data and models that will allow improvements in coastal resiliency.

The criminal justice department will work on a project assessing the law enforcement response to Katrina, and the engineering department has a project titled "Data on Levee Breaches and Closure Procedures" led by Hanif Chaudhry of the civil and environmental engineering department. Ivo Foppa from the

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