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WEATHER

**TODAY**  
Sunny  
High 65  
Low 45

**SATURDAY**  
Sunny  
High 66  
Low 44

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STUDENT ORGANIZATION LOTTERY TO BE HELD SOON

The "Lottery" for the Russell House Ballroom and other meeting rooms for Jan. through Aug. 1997 will be held Oct. 10 in RH 218. The first drawing will be at 9 a.m., followed by a second one at 10 a.m. Academic classroom space may not be reserved until Jan. 20, 1997.

CINEMA DU MONDE FILM FESTIVAL CONTINUES

International Programs for Students is continuing its Film Festival, which began in Sept. On Oct. 20, "Mediterraneo" is being shown. On Nov. 3, "When Father Was Away On Business" will be shown. On Nov. 17, "Tampopo" is being shown, and on Dec. 1, "The Fringe Dwellers" will be playing. Admission to the movies is free. All movies will be played at the BA building in room 351 at 7 p.m.

## Freedom, joy gained in coming out

MARTHA HOTOP News Editor

Nine years ago, lesbians and gays marched on Washington for equal rights.

A year later, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) designated Oct. 11 as National Coming Out Day.

According to the HRC webpage, "The Coming Out Project is an ongoing campaign to help end discrimination by encouraging and assisting gay people to be open and honest in their lives."

From its beginning, NCOD affected, and continues to affect, the lives of students and faculty members at USC.

"Normally, people assume you're heterosexual unless you tell them you're not," said Guarv Shroff, president of USC's Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Association.

We often pretend we're something we're something we're not, he said. NCOD "is like a festival where we can celebrate ourselves just like other [cultures] have festivals, and we don't have to pretend."

However, HRC works year-round to encourage people to be open about their sexuality.

"HRC's NCOD encourages lesbians, gay men and bisexuals to be honest about their sexual orientation all year long to family members, friends and co-workers," according to the HRC homepage.

"NCOD organizes and facilitates educational and outreach events, resulting in media visibility that serves to inspire, educate and inform gay and non-gay Americans by presenting the true diversity of the gay community," the HRC homepage also said.

Some members of the gay and lesbian community at USC view NCOD as a symbol of encouragement to those who question their sexuality.

"NCOD is a symbol each year for closet homosexuals. When they see people, average people, who they didn't know were gay, it provides a good viewpoint and help encourages those who are not



out yet," senior Mike McMahan said. "It also re-enforces those who have come out."

For others, today reaffirms that gays

**"I plan to decorate my bookbag with buttons and wear a pride t-shirt. Others who can't afford to be visible might tell a friend."**

BGLA President Guarv Shroff said

do exist in the USC community.

"NCOD helps to the extent that it emphasizes the fact that homosexuals exist. Generally, we're ignored unless we choose to say something," Shroff said. "It helps to affirm those who are questioning their sexuality."

The act of 'coming out' is a process that the individual works through. HRC's

Resource guide to coming out calls it "a process of self-acceptance and disclosure. Coming out is different for different people and it requires self esteem."

Though there are many different ways of coming out, there are generally three steps in the process: Accepting one's own sexuality, telling others and integrating themselves and their sexuality into the world around them.

According to HRC, there is not a particular order to the steps of coming out, nor do the steps happen within a certain time span. Rather, it's considered a life-long process of coming to terms with one's sexuality.

Those who have made the choice to come out talk about the feelings of freedom and relief that come with their decisions.

"The chaplains at school were the first people I told, and I got a positive response from them. It was a feeling of joy, liberation, like a burden was lifted,"

Shroff said. "I compare it to resurrection and new life. Before I lived in fear afraid people would find out my secret. This was one of the best things I did, because everything God creates is good, no matter whether one is heterosexual or homosexual."

No longer having to lie to others about one's sexuality is another common relief associated with coming out.

"There was a freedom of no longer having to worry about lying to everyone," McMahan said. "My family had some suspicion prior to my telling them. Most are tolerant or supportive of me."

Making the decision to tell one's family is something with which many gays say they struggle. Gays express a fear their parents will have a difficult time accepting their decision. Choosing to tell one's parents also requires a certain timing.

Shroff said he has told his friends, but not his parents, who live in India. He intends to tell his parents when the right time presents itself, but he expects it to be difficult.

"My parents must go through the same process [of accepting it, which took me seven years]," Shroff said. "They're afraid for you, think you'll be lonely or get AIDS and die. It takes time, energy and pain [to get used to the idea]."

As students and faculty at USC and around the country come out today,

different people will do different things to let others know about their sexual orientation.

"I plan to decorate my bookbag with buttons and wear a pride t-shirt. Others who can't afford to be visible might tell a friend," Shroff said.

Making a decision to come out benefits not only the individual who's gay, but others too. As more people become open and honest about their sexuality, the myths and negative stereotypes surrounding homosexuals is expected to dissipate.

According to the NRC's resource guide to coming out, the following are some of the benefits of coming out.

- It dispels myths and turns ignorance and fear into acceptance

- It means no longer hiding the truth about one's life

- It builds self-esteem and integrity

- It makes relationships more open and honest

- It gives models to others struggling with their orientation

- It empowers gays to get involved in the gay rights movement

"Gays are also involved in issues everyone else faces, like ordering take-out and coming home from class tired," Shroff said.

Everyone on campus is invited to show their support for National Coming Out Day by wearing blue jeans.



Special To The Gamecock  
BGLA members and friends who support them, pictured, will have a table in front of the Russell House for National Coming Out Day.

## Theses, reflecting student interests

ANGELA SHEPHERD Staff Writer

Many projects and research topics for this year's crop of Honors College seniors are diverse and vibrant, contrasting the stereotypical image of dry and stuffy theses. Andrea Baker is writing a rough draft for an episode of the X-Files and said she hopes to put the completed project into production.

Her project director, Dr. Benedetto in the media arts department, is a recognized producer, and Baker said she hopes to get her screenwriting project on the air.

Seniors in the Honors College are required to complete a senior thesis to be graduated with the honors distinction, and these may include artistic endeavors such as creative writing projects.

Gary Stork is writing a seven-chapter novella that deals with the life of a physically handicapped man and "the events that shape him."

"I thought it was a topic I don't see dealt with much in literature," he said.

Stork, who is handicapped himself, said he both draws on personal experiences and fictionalizes, and he chose this type of project because "it's more of a freestyle format."

Topic ideas have a variety of origins.

Amy Kulp said she chose to do her thesis on "marketing research behind Pizza Hut" to prepare for the ad-team's competition next semester, in which a new ad campaign

**"The topic is odd, I think, because it's an imperfect person researching perfection."**

Holly Grant, senior on writing her thesis on the subject of perfection.

will be developed.

In addition to spending time researching in the library, Kulp also visits Pizza Hut restaurants.

"The best way is to go in and see what I think can be improved — taste the product," she said.

Other students decided to continue working on projects with which they had previous experience.

Dan Nale interned at a police department in Madison, Wis., over the summer and chose to expand on one of the projects he worked with there — designing a citizen police academy.

In Wisconsin, Nale also had the opportunity to go on ride-alongs and work with a SWAT team.

"That was a lot of fun," he said.

Carla Vale also worked with the development of organizations.

She established SALA (Student Association for Latin Americans) and said its purpose is to "promote cultural awareness with regard to Latin American issues,

countries and people."

She called the attendance of seventy people at the first meeting "very encouraging."

Her thesis is based on a survey "to trace the development of Latin American associations in the United States," she said.

However, only three of the 12 surveys that she sent off have been returned.

Students face a variety of problems and obstacles during the completion of the thesis.

Clanitra Stewart, whose thesis deals with word ambiguities and human responses to them, said one problem she has had was that "people have been paranoid; they think I'm trying to analyze them."

Holly Grant's thesis explores the possibility of perfection, and she said she believes the most controversial question will concern when perfection is achieved.

"The topic is odd, I think, because it's an imperfect person researching perfection," Grant said.

Some students have difficulties that make them to change topics; Jason Greene said he is currently working on his thesis.

"There are a lot of different types of problems," Reene Harrison-Cook, coordinator of the senior thesis, said.

"Sometimes [the students] procrastinate, sometimes they get sick, sometimes rats or crickets die, sometimes the professor leaves town," Harrison-Cook said.

## Professors' research impacts classroom

STACEY BROWN Staff Writer

Students at USC may not know that their professors are involved in research.

Most students know that some kind of scholarly research is done in every department, but they aren't sure how that research benefits them.

"My professors, who are involved in research, add so much more to the lecture, more than you can get from a textbook," freshman Valeria McClure said.

Professors at USC say being involved in research is just as important as teaching.

"A good teacher is a good researcher because the two are interrelated, they go hand in hand," Professor and Graduate

Director in the Department of Religious Studies, Donald Jones said.

USC President John Palms agrees with the importance of having professors involved in research.

In meetings with faculty, students and the press Palms has stressed the importance of USC attaining membership in the American Association of Universities.

The AAU is made up of the top 50 schools in the United States.

In order to be invited to join, USC needs to have a strong research foundation, as well as a strong teaching foundation.

However, some students feel it's harder to learn in a class taught by a professor who's also doing research.

"Sometimes I feel that the professors who are involved in research teach over my head," freshman Cheryl Burnett said.

Professors disagree with the notion that their research interferes with their teaching.

"Research is the most important thing that helps a professor be a good teacher. For problems that arise, there are office hours and appointment hours," Jones said.

At USC, the majority of professors are expected to conduct research in their field.

However, some professors say teaching is the most important aspect of their job while research is a close second.

"Teaching and research are both required for promotion and tenure, but better teachers do research for the students," Jones said.

## Senate bill proposes longer library hours

**■ Senators proposed legislation yesterday that would keep Thomas Cooper library open 24 hours a day during exam periods.**

REGINNA GREEN Staff Writer

Legislation introduced in the SG Senate meeting Wednesday may keep the Thomas Cooper Library open 24 hours a day during exam weeks beginning in the 1997-1998 school year.

Recognizing the importance of time to study during the exam periods that begin at each semester's end, Senate Pro Tem Bryan Menees proposed the library extend its hours from 7:30 a.m. to 1 a.m. Mondays through Fridays, 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. Saturdays and 1 p.m. to 1 a.m. Sundays during exam week to a 24 hour operation all days of an exam week.

"The reason behind 24-hour operation of Thomas Cooper [Library] is, first of all, that we're behind other institutions in regards to our library operations and hours of operation," Menees said during the resolution's first reading.

"There are a great deal of students who rely on the library as a source of quiet, peaceful time during exam periods, and it helps dramatically because students who need to study late without having to relocate."

Athletics Committee chairman Sen. Gene Willis introduced key ideas regarding next year's basketball season, including a possible "Midnight Madness" event.

According to NCAA regulations, athletes may not practice as a team until the official NCAA-recognized date at the beginning of the season. The committee proposes to elevate the team's first practice of the season to more than just the first practice.

"[Midnight Madness] would have things like slam dunk, free throw contests and a pre-season scrimmage among the players," Willis said. "It gets the crowd hyped

up for the season and lets students see the individual players."

"Midnight Madness" would begin at the stroke of midnight on the date of the official start of the season. The committee hopes to establish strong student spirit and support by sponsoring the event, which would begin its first year at the start of the 1997-1998 season.

Planning for a Coliseum students' section tentatively titled "The Cockpit" is also in the works for next year, Willis said.

SG Vice President Jamel Franklin praised members of the student senate for their support of the Farm Aid '96-related, canned food drive. Senators provided the funds to purchase more than 86 canned good items for the collection.

"It [SG Senate] can be a force of good and this is evident of our power, even if it's only the power of our hearts," Franklin said, regarding student senate support of the food drive.

In other business, the senate continued its process of filling their many vacant seats with College of Nursing-seniors Alison Moody and Lori Moody being approved. Jennifer Byrom, a sophomore in the College of Business Administration and Michael Phillips, a junior English major, will represent the College of Liberal Arts.

The following Senators were not present at yesterday's meeting:

- Ranell Cheney
- Craig Harrison
- Mike Moore
- Lashawn Johnson
- Amy Mason
- Richie Estes