

## When I grow up I wanna be...

by Mark Piras, Staff Writer



**F**or some students, elections offer students a chance to think about their own aspirations and possible futures in politics.

Freshman Sally Underwood is interested in politics because she wants to "try to better society as a whole."

Sophomore Jenny Malizia wants to help change "women activism at the local level. I have some pretty strong ideas about how things are now," she said.

Graduate student Rhett Power is running for a S.C. House seat in district 75. "I've always had an interest in politics, and I've always followed it," Power said.

The motivating factor that got him involved in politics was a phone call that he placed to the man he is running against.

"I'm on the State Board of the Sierra Club," Power said. "I wanted to talk about the nuclear waste dump at the Barnwell facility, and the guy hung up on me. He didn't even talk to me."

That's when I realized that he just didn't care about listening.

"That's when I decided to get into the race," Power said. "I thought I could do a better job."

Power is running for office

under a three-prong platform.

"First and foremost, we must close the nuclear dump. It's just bad public policy. The dump was supposed to generate money for our schools, but the money's just not there like it was supposed to be. We have to safeguard [the people] from the attack that Republicans have made on our environment. It would break local and state governments to enforce that legislation.

"Next, we need to find new ways to fund education. I'm endorsed by the teacher's association because of my commitment to education.

"Third, we need campaign finance reform. Who are these people accountable to? It was very important

to us not to take PAC money. We wanted an old-fashioned, grass-roots campaign."

Malizia thinks her campaign platform would center on "a commitment to a quality. We also need to help people understand that 'equal rights' does not necessarily mean 'special rights'."

Malizia, a political science major, realizes that if she is going to pursue politics after graduation, she will "have to start with something at the local level and then work my way up, so that I can learn the ropes."

Underwood thinks she will adopt a liberal platform if she ever pursues a political career.

"I'm really a moderate right now, but the liberal platform has a lot more weight in society," she said.

Underwood outlined her plan for getting involved in politics.

"I'm a double major in political science and criminal justice. After I graduate, I'll either go to law school or graduate school for criminal justice. After that, I'll probably go to the FBI for a little while and pursue political office whenever I'm done with the FBI."

All three were asked which offices they felt to be realistic goals.

"I really think I can go wherever I want to with this," Power said. "The Democratic Party has really opened its doors to us. It will take me a while to go anywhere from here because I have things I want to accomplish at the state level first."

Power feels that there is no limit to how high anyone can ascend on the political ladder.

"To use a cliché, the sky's really the limit."

Malizia agreed.

"I think that you can't try to reach too high too fast," she said. "But if you start small, you can work your way up."

Underwood thinks that "all congressional offices are realistic" for her.

Power encouraged anyone interested in politics to

start getting involved.

"Work hard and be involved with student government and organizations. Being involved prepared me for my campaign. Get involved in local and state campaigns. Young kids played a vital part in this campaign."

Power says that, win or lose on election day, "this has been a tremendous learning experience into the

inner workings of state government. It's amazing the influences and pressures that are put on these people."

Although these and other students consider a career in politics possible, most Americans do not want their children to be president, according to a Knight-Ridder newspaper poll.

Many Americans consider the Oval Office a dreadful place to work and believe the president has less influence than journalists, judges, lawmakers and lobbyists, reported the Miami Herald, which published the poll.

The poll surveyed 1,002 registered voters between Sept. 3 and 15 — about two months before Americans went to the polls.

Sixty-three percent of respondents said they would not want their child to become president, and 32 percent said

they would. Five percent had no opinion.

Respondents said the president has the least influence over the issues Americans wanted their presidents to tackle — drugs, crime, education and the guidance of children.

"The presidency has been weakened. It's not quite as strong and all-powerful as it was," Larry Hugick of Princeton Survey Research Associates, which conducted the poll, told the Herald.

When asked what they would prefer their child to be, parents chose doctor, professor, minister, governor, carpenter, mayor, lawyer, professional athlete and police officer over the presidency as professions.

—College Press Exchange contributed to this article

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