

## The Gamecock

Serving USC Since 1908

Jennifer Stanley, Editor in Chief  
Nikki Thorpe, Viewpoints Editor

### Editorial Board

Marcus Amaker, Sarah Efird, Rosalind Harvey, Bryan Johnston, Dwayne McLemore

## IN OUR OPINION

### Going dry an unsure step

College is a time of living, learning and experimentation.

For many students, experimentation involves large quantities of alcohol. The alcohol often associated with partying and having a good time is also associated with things like D.U.I. and date rape.

It also may conjure images of fraternity parties. This is what two fraternities at USC are trying to combat.

Sigma Nu and Phi Delta Theta have both proposed plans to go dry by the year 2000.

Their proposals come not only from image problems, but also the rising insurance rates their chapters are facing.

This may be an inevitable step for Greeks to reestablish their reputations and deter costs. Parents and the community will also see it as a responsible move.

Although this move is noble, there are some uncertainties involved in dry fraternity housing.

At USC, students 21 and older are permitted to have alcohol in campus housing.

Going dry seems an obvious step because most on-campus students are under 21. Therefore, this new move seems to simply enforce USC's rules and national laws.

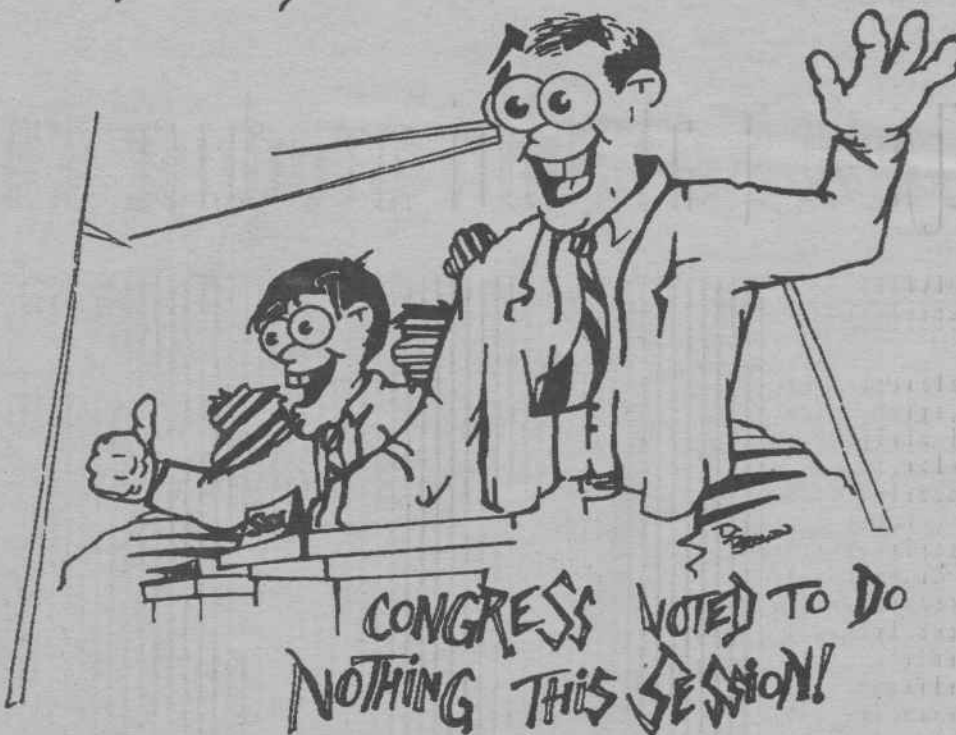
However, forbidding those 21 and older is unfair and irrational.

The councils of these organizations should also seriously consider the problem of drinking and driving. If fraternity members are prohibited from drinking in their place of residence, they're likely to go somewhere else. This greatly increases the likelihood of drinking and driving.

Fraternities might do better to teach their members the responsibilities of school and the realities of date rape and alcohol abuse. They should teach the laws regarding drinking and the consequences of those who violate such laws.

Prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in fraternity houses will not stop alcohol drinking. It will merely change the location of consumption and possibly make the consequences more serious.

AFTER HOURS OF DELIBERATION...



### Quote, Unquote

**"We need to focus on the positive aspects of friendship, leadership, scholarship, brotherhood and community involvement."**

Robert Deloian, president of Phi Delta Theta General Council

### ADAM SNYDER columnist

I thought I would discuss my city's latest blight in the national spotlight. Birmingham, Ala., was the only city in the nation not to see the hour-long special of "Ellen" over a month ago, when the show's main character admitted she was gay. As with any controversy, there is always more to it than what you see on Oprah or the nightly news.

I myself have prejudices. I want my city to look its best at all possible times. But, I think this event is more about homosexuals gaining acceptance in society than the image of Birmingham.

That's why I think the whole story should be told.

The decision not to air Ellen's coming out episode was made by one man, but influenced by three communities. However, you need the background information first.

In September 1996, the local ABC affiliate (Channel 6) became a FOX affiliate. Stations from Tuscaloosa (west of the city) and Gadsden (northeast) joined forces, built a tower in Birmingham and created a new ABC affiliate.

Therefore, quite a shakeup occurred in the area of local news anchors and reporters.

The most significant defection from Channel 6 was James Spann, the locals' favorite weather man. Birmingham viewers, like those in Columbia, had become attached to their news anchors. How else do you explain Mr Knows-It (Joe Pinner) still being on the air?

Spann, citing Christian beliefs that didn't agree with FOX programming like "The Simpsons" and "Melrose Place," said he wanted out of his contract. Apparently he had no qualms with ABC's "NYPD Blue" and its nudity. With his departure, some of his fans followed him to the new ABC station.

So, when Jerry Heilman, president and general manager of the new station, kept "Ellen" off Birmingham television sets, it was all business. He realized that entrenched Southern Baptists and other so-called Christian traditionalists viewers in all three cities would stick with their moral weatherman and his "moral" station.

Despite the bad press he and his station received, several weeks later the station was picked as the top station for news, and its meteorologist was the town favorite in a Birmingham News readers' choice poll.

Heilman made his decision with his wallet, without regard to censorship, the education and entertainment of the city, the city's national image or, especially, the gay and lesbian

community. It worked for him to play on prejudiced, uneducated, religious purists' fears, but it didn't work for the city or the nation as a whole.

But, people of this city didn't let Heilman take them captive. Plans were quickly made to televise the show via satellite in Boutwell Municipal Auditorium. The screening sold out in minutes. The audience was a diverse group of people, including some of the other news anchors at the ABC station. Activists picketed and protested the station's decision.

Alabamians Against Senseless Censorship began an ad campaign in local newspapers. The ads encouraged citizens to boycott the station's biggest advertisers. The ads also included telephone numbers of the businesses to tell them to pull their advertising.

Heilman said he intends to blackout any episode of "Ellen" that has to do with her sexuality. The strong gay community and more progressive members of Birmingham intend to make that a bad business decision.

If they are successful, Heilman, making a business decision, will no longer think homosexuality is immoral an inappropriate for children to see on his station. And maybe the traditionalists of this city, state and nation will see that "Ellen" is not the problem, but fear and hate is.

## The Gamecock

Student Media • Russell House • USC • Columbia, SC 29208

**Jennifer Stanley**  
Editor in Chief

**Nikki Thorpe**  
Viewpoints Editor  
Photo Editor

**Rosalind Harvey**  
News Editor

**Marcus Amaker**  
Features Editor

**Dwayne McLemore**  
Sports Editor

**Ben Pillow**  
Copy Desk Chief

**Sarah Efird**  
Graphics Editor

**Kristen Richardson**  
Asst. News Editor

**Jessan Hager**  
Donnie Baker

**Matt Alsop**  
Elizabeth Welborn  
Creative Services

**Amy Shannon**  
Asst. Features Editor

**Jim Green**  
Creative Director

**Carolyn Griffin**  
Business Manager

**Ellen Parsons**  
Graduate Assistant

**Erik Collins**  
Faculty Advisor

### How to reach us

The Gamecock

Editor (803) 777-3914

News 777-7726

ETC. 777-3913

Viewpoints 777-7726

Sports 777-7182

On-Line 777-3913

Advertising 777-4249

Classifieds 777-1184

Fax 777-6482

The Gamecock is the student newspaper of The University of South Carolina and is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and five times during the summer with the exception of university holidays and exam periods.

Opinions expressed in The Gamecock are those of the editors or author and not those of The University of South Carolina.

The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of The Gamecock.

The Department of Student Media is its parent organization.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Gamecock will try to print all letters received. Letters should be 200-250 words and must include full name, professional title or year and major if a student. Letters must be personally delivered by the author to The Gamecock newsroom in Russell House room 333.

The Gamecock reserves the right to edit all letter for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld for any circumstance.