

## The Gamecock

Serving USC Since 1908

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### IN OUR OPINION

## Phone problems lead to red tape aggravation

Being a freshmen is tough enough.

You have to learn so many new things in a matter of days. Buildings must be found, textbooks bought, the meal plan system decoded, and an alcohol limit found. (Some students never do get around to this last one. Most of them don't stay students long.)

The last thing any student needs, especially a freshmen, is another hassle.

Would you consider a phone not ringing when a long-distance caller calls a hassle? Maybe some wouldn't, after all a cushion from the parental unit is always appreciated. But when best friend from high school calls to tell you of the massive party she's having in Athens, and you never get the invite because the phone never rang, well, then we enter into hassle territory.

### THE TOPIC

No rings for long distance calls

### OUR OPINION

Red tape should not get in the way of fixing this minute problem

All right, so the phone doesn't work. Call up maintenance and it'll get fixed, right? Or was that Housing? Or Computer Services? Sometimes it feels as if the run-around each department gives you is enough to make one hurl the innocent phone at some adult's smilingly sorry-dear-but-we-can't-help-you-face.

Let's cut the red tape. People who don't have an easy way to solve a problem will inevitably try to pass it onto someone else, or simply say it is impossible.

Could someone, just this once, fix a problem, without sporting the red tape?

There is a number one can call that will reportedly connect you to someone who can fix the non-ringing phone epidemic. But in the meantime, we suggest a lot of e-mail.

## Florida wins suit over tobacco companies

We all know the scene — you can see it at any concert or in any mall or in any school parking lot: underage smoking.

Heck, many of us probably have participated in this ritual of sorts. For some reason or another, teenagers get a thrill off smoking. Maybe they think it makes them look older; maybe they think it's the fashionable thing to do; maybe they see mom and dad doing it and think it's ok. Who really knows the cause of underage smoking in the U.S.?

Well, actually, the U.S. Government feels that it knows the cause of it, and it's citing the advertisements cigarette companies plaster all over the place.

In fact Monday, U.S. cigarette companies agreed to pay the state of Florida \$11.3 billion over the next quarter of the century. According to an article from the Los Angeles Times, the money is compensation "for money Florida spent treating sick smokers and punitive damages for the industry's allegedly fraudulent conduct."

### THE TOPIC

State suits of tobacco industry

### OUR OPINION

Pulling advertising will not lesson underage smoking

their products away from schools and playgrounds. Plus, all billboards in the state have to be removed within five months. And, they have to remove vending machines from "any place accessible to children and remove tobacco advertising in sports arenas and on public buses and

trains."

Wow. That's a puff full. Essentially, we believe the problem with underage smoking yes, may lay with the appealing advertising. Joe Camel's cool. The Marlboro Man is handsome. So smoking is cool too?

But, a big problem with underage smoking also lies in the fact that parents smoke in front of children. A big problem lies in the fact that children see other children smoking and think that is cool.

And, it doesn't help that anti-smoking education has only recently come into vogue in schools.

Eliminating cigarette advertising isn't necessary. Curbing it could be a positive thing. Underage smoking isn't going to stop overnight — just look at underage drinking.



### Quote, Unquote

"There seems to be more e-mail junkies in the making than internet."

Brette Barclay, Thomas Cooper Library lab assistant, on internet addiction

## Small town charm works its magic on Atlanta girl

STEPHANIE SONNENFELD  
Asst. Viewpoints Editor

Sunday was a particularly lovely day, and Sunday morning was the brilliant start of that day.

Since I'm not a regular churchgoer, and since I got to sleep early enough Saturday night (or was it Sunday morning?), I decided to attack the morning and immerse myself in it. In short, I took a run Sunday morning.

It wasn't a long jaunt, but one that winded me, so interpret that at your leisure. Despite the relatively flat course and mundane route, it so inspired me that I eventually ended up at the Capitol Newsstand, where I bought a copy of *The State*.

Walking back towards my apartment, I wandered through the few, but assorted, patches of space around the Statehouse that aren't roped off. Then, I crossed the street and headed home past Trinity Episcopal Church.

There was a nice looking man standing outside the church. I'm assuming he was a greeter, or something of the sort. Since I was in a good mood (a rarity some might note), I smiled a little smile at him and clutched my paper.

He looked at me and then at my T-shirt, which blatantly advertised the Peachtree Road Race, an annual race in my hometown of Atlanta on the Fourth of July. I'm real proud of the shirt because it actually proves I ran in the race, and that I finished it, and that I managed to survive it.

"Peachtree Street," he said. "Yes, sir," I said, beaming at my shirt. "I love my hometown and as I mentioned above, I really love that shirt."

He opened his mouth to say something else. I thought he was going to say, "What a nice shirt," or "Are you from Atlanta?"

Neither of those two things exited his lips. Rather, he just assumed I was from there, and obviously, he didn't like my shirt.

"Go back," he said. "Hee-hee," I giggled. I walked off, clutching *The State* even more possessively.

"What the hell?" I thought. What does he mean by that?

I'm sure he was making a poor attempt at a joke there, but still, I (the hypersensitive me) was, as always, offended. Slightly. I like Columbia, and right now I don't want to go back.

There was a time in my life, like a few weeks ago, when I would have gladly said, "OK, I'll go."

But, in all honesty, I like Columbia. I was born in the shadow of Atlanta, a city where you can legally get tattoos, a city with more than one Gap and a city where you can buy liquor drinks (sans the mini bottles) past 7 p.m. in the stores.

When I first came to Columbia I was homesick, an ailment that occasionally appears in my life. Yet, despite all of Columbia's quirks, I got used to the city, its accent, and its atmosphere.

Unfortunately, Columbia has the misfortune of being lodged between two

## "When I first came to Columbia I was homesick... Yet, despite all of Columbia's quirks, I got used to the city, its accent, and its atmosphere."

rapidly growing cities — Charlotte and Atlanta. Sometimes it gets overlooked by more traditional southern tourist cities like Savannah, Charleston and New Orleans.

Sure, Columbia doesn't have its Graceland, and it doesn't have its Bourbon Street, but it's a strong city in its own right.

I like Columbia because it still has its Main Street. It has its own amount of beautiful buildings. It also has its own culture, evident in everything from the large amount of theaters to the reputable art museum.

Another plus to Columbia is the open arms it ushers to all transplanted here, students and families alike. When I came here, I knew no one in Columbia except for my older sister, who graduated from USC in 1992. But, I met people, many of them Columbia natives.

These people were eager to show me their home. They took me to the places they knew and loved. They allowed me to adopt many of Columbia's charms, which is something that allowed me to

value Columbia as a surrogate home. Columbia has done this for three generations of my family who attended USC as out-of-state students. One (my father) visits as often as possible, one (my sister) who chose to live here and pursue a career here, and one (me) chose USC partly because of Columbia itself. I do complain about Columbia sometimes, but when I go home, I miss it. In Atlanta, you can't really go out at night and be as safe as you can in Columbia.

You can't find places like the Capital City Restaurant in Atlanta, and you won't find the community as tight as it is in Columbia.

Even though I plan on heading back to Georgia after I graduate this spring, I'll always remember Columbia as a place I called home for four years.

So, in response to the remark issued by the long-ago referenced man I encountered Sunday morning, "No, I'm not going back to Peachtree Street for a while. I'll settle for Greene Street right now."

## Bar code tattoos creative alternative to keys

KURT JOHNSON  
COLUMNIST

It's 12:47 a.m. You open the door to your hall lobby and think to yourself what a killer party you've just returned from. As you enter, a security guard kindly asks to see your room key.

You are shocked (shocked!) and appalled! You can't believe this nice, kind person is actually asking you to (talk about gall) reach into your pocket and take out your key!

No, that's just too much work for you.

Rather than doing so, you plead for half an hour that you really live in that dorm and for the guard to just let you go up to your room.

After a court hearing and many non-key related comments, you're forced to show your key.

This is a mockery of a shame, of a shame of a shame, of a mockery of a shame.

Why are we forced to do this? Don't they realize we're just too lazy to reach in our pockets?

I bet you're saying to yourself right now that there has to be a better way. Well, that's where I come in. I've proposed a solution to the people who actually care about stuff (aptly named "The Board of People Who Care About Stuff"). The bill is still in the works, but here's how it breaks down.

Solution:

What I'm looking for here is a way students can enter their dorm lobby and automatically be recognized as living in that dorm. Though it may add a couple of bucks to tuition and may leave a pretty nasty scar later in life, I find this proposal totally logical.

When someone is accepted to the university and given their room assignments, they would also be given a bar code, of sorts.

So, when the student moves on-campus and gets everything settled, they would go to the Office of Admissions, where the bar code they were given would be tattooed across their forehead. The first letter of the bar code would be the first letter of the dorm where they live. The rest of the bar code would consist of that person's room number and a bunch of other numbers (this will come in handy for guys when trying to stalk a girl, because then we'd know where she lives without having to ask her.)

OK, so now when we enter the dorm lobby, all we have to do is stand there like a cigar-shop Indian while the guard runs a laser over the code for verification. No keys, no pockets, no hands in pockets, no anything. It's that simple.

Q & A time.

Q) Aren't tattoos illegal in South Carolina?  
A) H m m m , ugggh...well...next...ahem...next question please (snikk).

Q) Who would do the tattoos?

## "What I'm looking for here is a way students can enter their dorm lobby and automatically be recognized as living in that dorm."

A) I have an Uncle Joe, who's really cool, in Pennsylvania who does tattooing, and he would be more than happy to oblige as "The Tattoo Guy." However, we're still negotiating over the contract. He wants a six-year deal worth \$12.5 million, but the university is only offering a five-year deal worth \$7.3 million.

Q) What happens after we leave a certain dorm and enter a new one?

A) Modern technology enables us to remove the tattoo and construct a new one. Well, not yet, exactly. What will happen is that we'll just scratch out the other tattoo and put a new one on there, but don't worry, I have my friend in the Honors College Engineering School working on this one.

Q) What was that scar thing you were talking about earlier?

A) Hmmm, did I say scar? I think you read me wrong. I probably wrote "scare," no, no, I mean "smooth," yeah, that's it "smooth." You're just an idiot.

Q) Well, what about that illegal tattoo thing again?

A) Well, that's all the time I have for today. Please, if you have any more questions, hesitate to call me.

Like I said before, this proposal is still in the works. I hope you've read this carefully and understand what I'm trying to do here for you. This would make things so simple, so thoughtless. Think how cool it would be to walk around with a bar code on your forehead. Also, it could take the place of our ID cards. No more taking them out of wallets, putting them back into wallets, and carrying them around.

We can go to the cafeteria, the gym, anywhere our cards are needed and not have to do anything! God, I'm a genius.

It's 12:47 a.m.

You open the door to your hall lobby and the security guard kindly asks you to stand there. A red laser scans your head. You hear a beep on the computer.

"Good night," the guard says with a smirk on his face. "I've got some Preparation H in case that hemorrhoid flares up tonight."

## The Gamecock

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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 letters for style, possible libel or space limitations. Names will not be withheld for any circumstance.