

E-MAIL!
Remember, we have an e-mail address, so don't hesitate to write us. It's GCKVIEWS@SC.EDU. Write one, write all!

Viewpoints

QUOTE, UNQUOTE
"I used to watch the basketball team a lot; now I don't care anymore because they are awful."
Mark Piras,
Journalism Junior

The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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TAKE OUR WORD

Too little parking at Thurmond Center

As USC tears down Gibbs Machinery on Blossom and Assembly streets, it's making way for the new "gate to USC."

But most students, faculty and staff will have to walk to the Strom Thurmond Fitness and Wellness Center instead of driving, even if they live off campus. Columbia's Zoning Board of Adjustments made that clear when it approved fewer parking spaces for the new facility than what was required.

The center will cover six acres, and the board usually requires about 800 spaces for a facility of this size. However, the university requested and received approval to have only 80 spaces.

According to Director of Student Life Jerry Brewer, who's heading the project, the city was calculating the same number of spaces as it would for a commercial facility, not taking into consideration the capabilities of the shuttle service, parking garages and other nearby parking areas. The success of getting people to and from the facility will depend on improving the Carolina Shuttle, adding night service, and creating more dependable schedule, Brewer said.

Improving the shuttle is easier said than done. Although a night service will help on-campus students get from their residence halls to the center, it's a trek that will take them across one of the

TOPIC

Parking at the new Strom Thurmond Center.

OUR OPINION

Parking issues need to be considered before construction begins.

busiest and most dangerous intersections in Columbia.

Even if the shuttle is improved, off-campus students and faculty members won't benefit. Going to the gym is an inconvenience for anyone who lives off campus

and who has to park across campus from their destination and then spend another 15 minutes getting to the gym.

The university might argue that off-campus gym-goers can utilize the parking areas behind the Carolina Coliseum on Blossom and Park streets. However, during the day these lots are often full, and in the evening there are often events at the Koger Center and Coliseum, meaning people have to pay to park.

It's true that the centers end of campus might one day be bustling with Greek housing and intramural fields. That might make the center seem safer and less isolated. But until there are other residence halls, secure parking garages and dining facilities, it would seem ridiculous to walk to the gates of USC and less time-efficient to drive there.

The Carolina Shuttle improvements have been discussed for several years, but there seem to have been few results. Until the shuttle service can run nights, run dependably and transport people courteously, USC might want to find another alternative.

SG impotent without support from students

Today marks the end of filing for Student Government elections, and tomorrow the actual campaigns can begin.

No one is as critical of Student Government as we are, but not because we have some kind of permanent hatred for the organization. We simply realize how much power they have and how much good they could actually do. We want what's best for the student body, and there's no organization that could achieve as much as SG.

This is why we'll be watching the campaigns closely, and we want you to, as well. Look close-

TOPIC

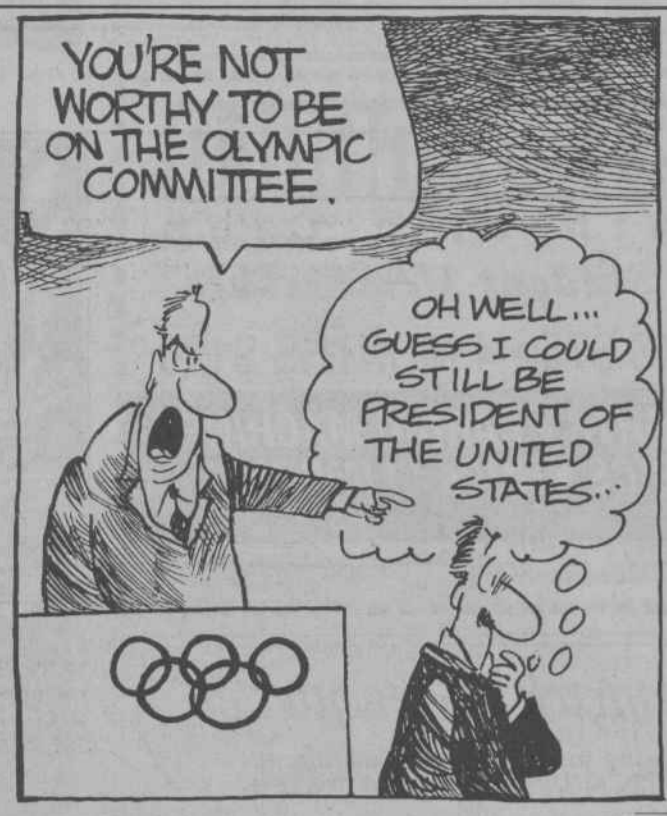
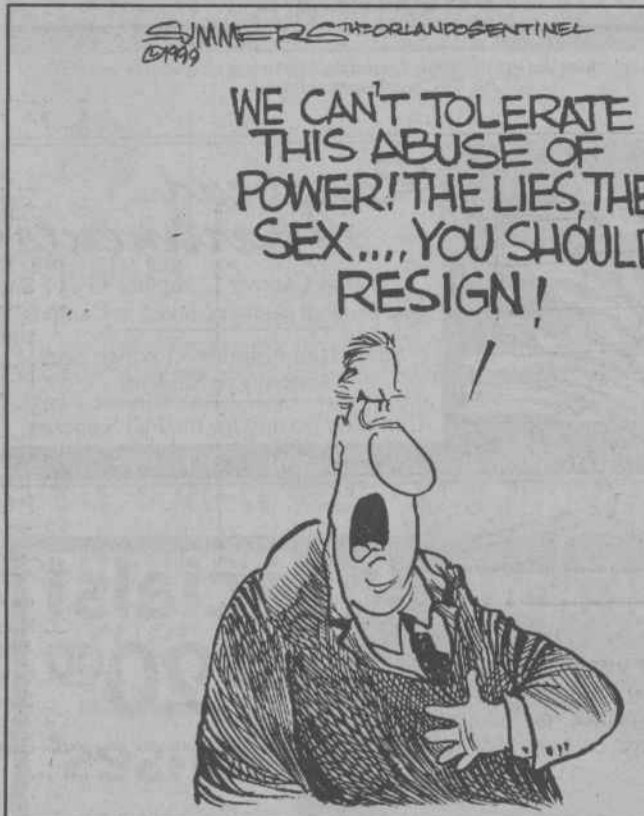
The upcoming Student Government elections.

OUR OPINION

If we all show interest, they might actually mean something.

ly at all the candidates and what they're saying. Do they really want to help their fellow students, or are they just looking for something to put on their resumes? Decide who you think are the best leaders to help Student Government reach its potential.

One of the reasons the administration doesn't pay attention to SG is that so few students seem to care what their student government does. Maybe if we all showed we cared a little more, we'd have a bit more of a voice in what goes on here. And now is the perfect time to start.



Apathy toward RH patio disappointing

A shadowy Russell House patio at midnight is revealing. For a more striking view, have a look from the second-story balcony.



EMILY STREYER columnist

The happy mushroom-land tables have no free room from the breakfast, lunch and dinner debris of the day's college students. A fungus of Grand Market Place leftovers had sprouted behind our student union.

It had overtaken every table and many of the benches, and had spilled onto the stone patio around them. I've seen cinemas post-"Rocky Horror Picture Show" that were cleaner.

Some people will keep their nest clean only as long as finding a trash can doesn't require an undue trek. Other

people just don't care. One explanation for the trash might be that the bins in the area (and in front of Thomas Cooper Library, as well) are filled well past capacity by lunchtime. Are attempts to keep the trash cans empty futile? Is that task neglected from too much civic-mindedness or not enough? Which is the chicken and which is the egg?

I hadn't been this disheartened by evidence of such a mixture of obliviousness and apathy since I walked across the Horseshoe after Bid Day festivities and realized what the self-glorifying Greek girls had added to campus that particular day was a kindergarten collage of lunch bags, straw wrappers, paper napkins and blue cups with flat Diet Peps.

Forget the crime at Capstone. This is far more dangerous. We're supposed to be old enough to know the world doesn't revolve around us but young enough to think we can change its course if we try hard enough.

Those who want to change the world lock horns with the sheeple psycholo-

"Those who want to change the world lock horns with the sheeple psychology of they-did-it-first."

gy of they-did-it-first and only a few make it past 30 still caring.

From my summer jobs in retail, I've learned that a lot of people will try to observe some sort of order if they can distinguish one — you keep the puzzles organized by publisher, title and size, for example, and most people will try to put a puzzle back where they found it.

If they don't, you can tidy up with a minimal effort when the store is slow. On the other hand, some salespeople use a less-than-100-percent return as an excuse for not even bothering at all. An assistant manager actually made fun of me for putting the puzzles into some sort of discernible order, claiming that because they'd never stay that way by themselves, I was more or less

an idiot for trying even though a modest return from my effort was evident.

Less-than-100 percent is worth it. Ask someone who works with disadvantaged children or the disabled. Ask a performer who reaches a small but receptive audience. Ask anyone who's willing to drink a half-full glass of wine because it tastes good. Maybe you can't change the world, but you can change the part of it you live in.

Entropy is a fact of life, and it catches up with all of us eventually, but it's pretty boring to watch in the meantime. Think for yourself. Act for yourself. Start at the Russell House.

Comments welcome at TheGamecock@esstreyer@mindspring.com

S.C. gambling needs close examination

Only a short time ago, if you wanted to legally gamble in a casino, you had to go to Atlantic City or Nevada. But over the past decade, riverboat gambling has been legalized in 26 states, and casinos are allowed on all Indian reservations.



ROB GIOIELLI columnist

The primary motivations behind this wave of legalization have been to raise tax revenue, provide jobs and promote tourism.

Not being a state to follow the traditional route, gambling came to South Carolina in the form of video poker. There's always been a strong debate surrounding this unique gaming industry, but with the election of Gov. Jim Hodges, video gambling looks like it's here to stay.

But questions still remain on how we'll regulate video poker, and a new form of gambling has reared its head in South Carolina.

For the past year, casino boats have been operating out of the Grand Strand. These ships, dubbed "boats to nowhere," take passengers aboard and then travel two miles offshore into international waters, where gambling is perfectly legal. There hadn't been much trouble with this operation until recently, when the state Legislature began to consider regulating, or possibly outlawing, these boats.

In response, the owners of the floating casinos have threatened to sue the state, arguing that prohibiting their operations constitutes a seizure of property without just compensation, which is illegal under state and federal law. The validity of this claim is questionable, since the government wouldn't actually be seizing their property. But in addition to legal arguments, opponents to these new gambling ventures have brought up some other interesting points.

Along with more jobs and increased tax revenue, other states have experienced a fair number of problems from legalized gambling. From an aesthetic point of view, the businesses that gambling attracts are cheap and tacky. The low-rent restaurants and motels that cater to the tourist crowd spread like a bad rash across the area, and the

bulk of the new jobs are at the minimum wage level.

While tourists flock to this kind of area, they might blow only a couple hundred bucks and then leave after a few days. But the local community in a casino town tends to suffer more than it gains from legalized gambling.

While these are some of the valid arguments South Carolinians are making against casino gambling, gambling's proponents fail to see the irony in them. The Myrtle Beach area, where most of these boats operate, is quite possibly the most outlandishly commercial strip of land in the country. Any place where the rate of miniature golf courses per capita is that high shouldn't worry about becoming too garish in appearance.

As far as problems with compulsive gambling, that's a road South Carolina has already had the displeasure of traveling. The unregulated nature of video poker means it preys upon the low-income residents of this state, offering an escape from reality and a chance to solve life's problems with one jackpot.

In Columbia, video poker machines aren't in Irmo or Spring Valley; they're on Rosewood and Two Notch. Anyone who has ever gone into a Rosewood Drive convenience store on a Friday af-

ternoon has seen the row of machines filled with essentially working-class and lower-income people, blowing their paychecks on something that offers dubious odds of really paying off.

The problems with gambling already exist in South Carolina, and I must admit a certain amount of responsibility for their existence. I voted for Hodges in the last election, knowing full well his connections to Collins Entertainment, the company that's doing an excellent job of preying on the less fortunate of South Carolina. At the time, Hodges and organized gambling were a lesser evil than Beasley and the Christian right.

But now, after fully realizing how harmful video poker can be, I regret even voting at all. Before we consider whether we want the "boats to nowhere," there needs to be some serious regulation of the video-gaming industry.

Gambling isn't ethically or morally wrong. In a democratic society, people have the right to spend their money as they please. But it needs to be properly regulated so it isn't focused on taking advantage of those who can't afford to feed hundreds of dollars into a video game.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions for columns are welcome from all members of the Carolina Community. They must be between 650 and 750 words in length, and guest columnists can only be printed twice a semester. Please deliver all submissions to Russell House room 555, or call 777-7726.

Professor upset with bookstore

To The Editor:
During the Christmas break, the textbook department of the Russell House Bookstore informed me that a book for my Sociology 307 course was out of print or out of stock at publishers and used book dealers. I ordered a replacement book and gave you an exclusive order on the understanding that you would order all 50 copies. Only 20 copies were ordered. My students came in and bought all 20 copies in the past few days. When I called today, no one on your textbook staff was aware the book had sold out, despite the fact several students had been told that it was sold out and had come complaining to me. We begin re-reading the book

on Monday. I had relied, unwisely it would seem, on your bookstore to manage this order properly without constant supervision by me.

I must tell you that your current system of monitoring orders, placing orders, monitoring stock and covering shortfalls and other errors of the present kind is woefully inadequate. This mistake is not an isolated one, I believe, based on experiences of myself and colleagues in past semesters. It demonstrates a clear case of mismanagement of the textbook department of the bookstore. You will not receive any more exclusive orders from me, and I warn my colleagues of the likely consequences of such actions. In fact, I am seriously considering omitting your store from all my future textbook orders due to continuing shoddy performance and lack of supervision of the ordering and

sale process. Some professionalism is called for here.

Elwood Carlson
Professor of Sociology

Reader suggests a soul searching

To The Editor:
This is in response to Guerman Abaev's column from the 25th. I feel I must apologize to you for the rude encounters you have received. I don't know where you go or who you frequent with, but not all Southerners are rude. And not all of them force their beliefs in God on others. Do I believe in God? Yes! Do I have faith? Yes! In today's society, the world is so mixed up that you do encounter phony, neurotic, two-faced,

nasty people, but again, not all are like that. Some are true, genuine, lovable Christians. And a lot of them receive their education from USC just as you do. Stop searching for that perfect whoever or whatever you're looking for. One day, you'll find it, or it'll find you. And I've learned that true friends are those that do call you and that you call. Maybe you're the one that has the combination of being neurotic and two-faced because you're looking way too hard to find what I call happiness and you're too afraid to just believe in anything that can bring you that. So my advice is to search your soul and find that something that gave you your misconceptions because it's not what I'm hearing; it's something deeper.

Iris Doctor
Marriott Food Service

The Gamecock

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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 authors 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 the newspaper's parent organization.

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