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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA, S.C.

Student home after freak accident

BY DIETRICH EPPERSON
THE GAMECOCK

Chemistry can be a very dangerous field. Just ask Chris Dyke, a 28-year-old chemistry graduate student at USC. Dyke was involved in a freak accident Aug. 17, while doing routine laboratory prep work.

As a result of the accident, Dyke literally caught on fire and ended up in the hospital for a week. The accident also caused thousands of dollars in damage to the brand new Graduate Research Center.

Fortunately, Dyke is back at home and doing well.

The accident occurred a little after 10 a.m. in Room 436 of the Graduate Research Center on Devine Street.

The room is Dr. Tom Bryson's laboratory.

According to Bryson, Dyke tripped while "drying a solvent." The student's stumble exposed the solvent, called tetrahydrofuran (THF) to air and possibly water. When THF meets air or water, it can combust, Bryson said.

Dyke said he wasn't sure how the fire started. He is sure that once the fire started, he fumbled and broke the four-liter bottle of highly flammable THF. The burning THF got all over him and the surrounding area of the laboratory.

Dyke was alone in the lab at the time of the accident. His clothing and skin burned for some time before colleagues in an adjacent lab rushed to his aid and took him to the infirmary. He was then taken to the burn center at Doctor's Hospital in Augusta.

Dyke said he stayed there for a full week and received multiple skin grafts for third-degree burns on his legs. He returned home August 24 and is now in good condition. He plans on teaching a class this semester.

According to another chemistry grad student present in the building at the time, sprinklers went off on all four floors of the research center. The building was evacuated for about two hours.

By the time the Columbia Fire Department arrived at the scene, the fire had been contained and extinguished by the building's internal sprinkler system.

The State newspaper cited an estimate of \$12,000 in damage to the facility. Dr. Scott Goode, a colleague of Bryson, provided more de-

STUDENT SEE PAGE 4

Parking lot to be half decals, half meters, SG says

BY BROCK VERGAKIS
THE GAMECOCK

Results from Student Government's online poll on what should be done with the gravel parking lot behind the Bull Street garage are in, and SG Pres. Jotaka Eaddy is sending in her recommendation to parking services today.

The end result of the poll, and a committee meeting among student leaders and administrators, is dividing the 90 spaces into two different lots.

One half of the lot will consist of parking meters, and the other will be open to all students with decals. In the SG poll, 172 people voted for decals, and 142 voted for metered lots. The result was a compromise.

Under the compromise plan, students who choose to park in the decal lot will only have to pay \$20 a semester for a regular decal, instead of \$20 a month for a special decal, as was originally suggested in the pros and cons section of SG's Web site.

Eaddy said there was no reason to believe Parking Director Derrick Huggins wouldn't accept SG's recommendation.

Director of Student Life Jerry Brewer, who does not have to pay for a decal, was in favor of charging students \$165 a semester to park in the gravel lot. This is the exact same price as parking in a lighted garage with video cameras.

"I'd charge the same for the lot as I would the Bull Street garage," Brew-

er said. "Don't underestimate how much people will pay for convenience. I say charge a fair market value, or don't charge at all."

However, Eaddy didn't feel it was fair to charge students \$165 a semester to park in the gravel lot or \$20 a month as was indicated in the poll.

"It's not fair to charge students \$80 a semester, until it's the same quality as the garage next door," she said. "Once the lot is up to the same standards, then it's fair to charge the same amount."

Student Government Vice President Corey Ford agreed that the quality of the new parking lot wasn't high enough to charge the amount that was originally sought.

"I think it's a comparable park-

ing lot to Bates, and that's why I think it should be \$20," Ford said.

One of the reasons Brewer wanted to charge students more for the lot is that all revenue generated from the decals and the meters will go into a special fund to make improvements on the lot, such as paving it and providing the area with lighting.

"We need to be clear. If we want to raise money to improve parking, we need to charge a fair market value," Brewer said. "It's extremely expensive to develop parking lots."

The compromise on meters and decals was made for a number of reasons. The committee was concerned that if the entire lot was reserved for decals, resident students would park their cars and never move them.

One of the fears the committee had about making the entire lot filled with meters is that it would be open to the general public and faculty, not just students.

Eaddy said that by making half the lot open to students with decals, they at least have a fighting chance to find a parking spot without having to run back to feed the meter and not lose out to faculty.

All students with decals can still park in the lot while the Department of Parking Services prepares to make the necessary adjustments.

The university desk can be reached at gamecockdesk@hotmail.com.

Increase in apartment fires prompts safety summit

BY JOHN HUIETT AND
JENNIFER AUTREY
THE GAMECOCK

Spurred by more than 10 major and 100 minor apartment fires that swept Midlands complexes this past summer, the Columbia Fire Department vowed to adopt stringent new fire safety codes during a summit on Monday to assess recurring fire causes and discuss solutions.

Fire safety experts, including local and out-of-town fire officials, architects, building code enforcers and insurance company representatives, comprised the panel that met for the summit in Eau Claire. Representatives of the Greater Columbia Apartment Association were also present.

The fact that many Columbia apartment buildings are in dire need of construction and design updates has been the major cause of many fires, said Columbia Public Fire Education Officer Robert Amick.

"The problem is on the rise because so many buildings in this area are aging and have old wiring," Amick said.

Amick also stressed the need for USC students seeking off-campus housing to be extremely careful in choosing where to live. Although University dormitories provide ample fire safety for students, some apartments near USC have multiple fire hazards such as electrical shorts in the wiring and old, defunct heating systems that have never been removed, he said.

"We urge students to be a little more selective," Amick said. "We want them to know that all properties are not the same, as far as fire safety."

But Amick said that doesn't discount the role of the tenant.

"As in any residential structure, carelessness and lack of fire safety and prevention have been a source of the problem," Amick said.

This assessment is based on Columbia Fire Department studies conducted over the past 10



Amy Goulding THE GAMECOCK

The Tamarind at Stoneridge apartments is one of many apartment complex fires that have attracted attention from local fire officials.

years, indicating that incidents of apartment fires have risen sharply in the Midlands area. This rise is mostly due to the aging apartments, which have a heightened risk of electrical problems and might

not be wired according to safety codes. Some apartments also have aluminum wiring installed, which heightens the risk of electrical malfunction.

FIRE SEE PAGE 2

Children's group short staffed

Child abuse advocacy group seeks volunteers

BY JENNIFER CARTER
THE GAMECOCK

The Richland County Court Appointed Special Advocates, an advocacy group that helps abused and neglected children, is currently recruiting quality volunteers.

CASA handles between 600 and 620 cases of abuse and neglect at any given time.

"We handle everything from emotional and educational neglect to physical and sexual abuse to abandonment," said Kelly Davis, director of CASA.

CASA currently has 275 volunteers to handle these cases, but they need about 100 more. About 70 percent of their volunteers work full time, but they also have a large pool of student volunteers, mostly from USC, many of them law students.

"Volunteering is a great opportunity, especially for students who are not sure what they want to do because they learn about so many different systems," said Caroline Dennis, volunteer coordinator for CASA. "It is the best way to get an overview of the medical field, Department of Mental Health, the school system, drug and alcohol treatment programs, the criminal justice system and the legal system."

Volunteers are appointed by a judge to a case of abuse or neglect and represent the child in court.

The volunteer goes into the home, meets with the child, parents and the foster family, if the child has been placed in foster care.

They also talk to the caseworker from the Department of Social Services. The volunteer then makes an independent assessment of what has happened, submits a written report to the judge and goes to court on the child's behalf, to spare the child further trauma of appearing in court.

VOLUNTEER SEE PAGE 4

IN FRIDAY'S ISSUE: BSU GETS NEW LOOK



CARLA WYNN THE GAMECOCK

The Baptist Student Union has moved to a new location, and will be building a new facility.

SG Senate convenes this afternoon

BY AMANDA SILVA
THE GAMECOCK

Student Government Senate convenes today with guest speaker USC graduate BJ Mackey, the all-time leading scorer in USC basketball history.

Mackey, now working with the USC Athletics Department, will speak at the SG Senate meeting to promote ticket distribution to the games.

In addition to Mackey's discussion, the meeting will address the year ahead, review such processes as parliamentary procedure and how to write a bill or resolution.

According to Vice President Corey Ford, there have been new appointments made to some SG positions, while

other positions remain open.

The role of SG advisor has become a collaborative position shared by SG Coordinator Angela Dusenbury, Director of Student Life Jerry Brewer and Vice President of Student Affairs Dennis Pruitt.

The three are sharing the responsibilities of former SG Adviser Woody Carrothers, who retired at the end of last year.

Angie Alpert has assumed the position of election commissioner, having been appointed last March by SG President Jotaka Eaddy.

There are currently four openings in the Senate, as four of last year's senators are not expected to return, Ford

said.

Ford said the Senate would also consider Eaddy's appointments to some University committees, including her nominees for the Disability Affairs, Registration and Traffic Court Appellate committees.

New legislation, which will be introduced at the meeting, concerns amendments to the finance code.

Although this week's meeting is primarily concerned with the basic review of SG procedure, it will get the year off to a quick start, Ford said.

"I expect next week's Senate meeting to be jam packed," he said.

The university desk can be reached at gamecockdesk@hotmail.com.

WEATHER

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Check out who's playing at the clubs this weekend in Spotlight!

WEDNESDAY

- SG Senate, 4 p.m., RH Theater
- PALM Campus Ministry, 5:30 p.m., PALM center
- SAGE, 8 p.m., RH Theater

THURSDAY

- NAACP, 6 p.m., RH 205
- Muslim Students Association, 7 p.m., RH 305
- SALA, 7:30 p.m., RH 305

Did SG make the right decision with the gravel parking lot?



Vote at www.gamecock.sc.edu. Results will be published each Friday.