



Oct. 21, 1999 – Campus Internet filters prevent research on sports and sex because of the word “cock”.

USC ambassador takes job seriously

BY ZEINA MAKKY
THE GAMECOCK

Sporting beige trousers and a white “USC bicentennial” T-shirt, he walked straight in my direction and offered a firm and long handshake. 19-year-old political science sophomore and part of the Honors College, Ed Black is one of the USC ambassadors and tour guides at the Visitors’ Center.

Prospective students can visit USC before or after they decide to apply. The role of the USC ambassador is, therefore, all the more important, and Black knows this well.

“It means a lot [to be a USC ambassador]. I take it seriously because I had some really negative college visits when I was in senior-high school, and one of my visits turned me away from [the university concerned],” he said.

Basically, his job, as he put it, “is to convey how much you like USC to prospective students.” And he sure does. “I grew up in Columbia; I’ve attended football games since I was tiny...I have grown to love USC,” he said.

“You have to get involved in activities. It helped me meet people. And that is how I got to know about the ambassadors,” he said.

Those are the reasons why he decided to apply for this position, one he has occupied since Spring 2000 when he was selected by other ambassadors.

USC ambassadors have to be interviewed before they are chosen and then have training.

“Training is really a program that helps new ambassadors get new ideas. A lot of times, ambassadors go on each others’ tours to pick up knowledge,” he said.

One thing he does before each tour is look up the names of the visitors.

“If the parents and students hear their names, it makes a difference. It

lets you know that the tour guide isn’t doing this just because he or she has to but rather because they honestly care if the students are listening and want them to come to USC,” he said.

On Monday’s tour, Black took a small group of mostly high school students to the main areas of the campus: the Horseshoe, the Russell House, the Women’s Quad, etc.

He also revealed some interesting facts about the history of the university, the rankings of some schools and also that the Longstreet Theater was supposedly haunted.

“It used to be a hospital during the Civil War,” he said.

He also revealed that sometimes community bathrooms in residence halls can be better than individual ones. “They are cleaned every two days,” he said.

During the tour, he often paused to see if anyone had questions.

He also gave tips for freshmen. Not really being a science aficionado, he told students which easy science electives they could take.

Although he worked every day during the summer, he decided to take fall off, but still work when the Visitors’ Center would need him, “usually once a month,” he said.

Black takes his job seriously, even asking me my opinion on the tour. There was one thing he failed to answer: the meaning of the Tree of Knowledge in front of the Russell House.

I asked him if he was going to look that up. He smiled and said, “Yes.”

The spotlight desk can be reached at gamecockspotlight@hotmail.com.



SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Weekend Excursion, a six-member band from North Carolina, continues to progress its music. The band has played at the House of Blues, opened for Melissa Etheridge, and made two appearances on Dawson’s Creek.

An ‘Excursion’ to remember

BY ERIN O’NEAL
THE GAMECOCK

Six musicians en route to a studio in Greensboro, hoping to get their demo tape on a compilation CD, stopped for lunch at a Burger King.

To get on the compilation CD, the group needed a name, and their mission was to have one by the time lunch was over. The result? Weekend Excursion.

While their lineup has changed slightly since then, the name has endured, drawing crowds throughout the Carolinas.

“Looking back on it, how the first

four years of the band started, we were all in school, and we could only play on the weekends, and so the name kind of fit,” said Chris Groch, Weekend Excursion’s lead guitarist.

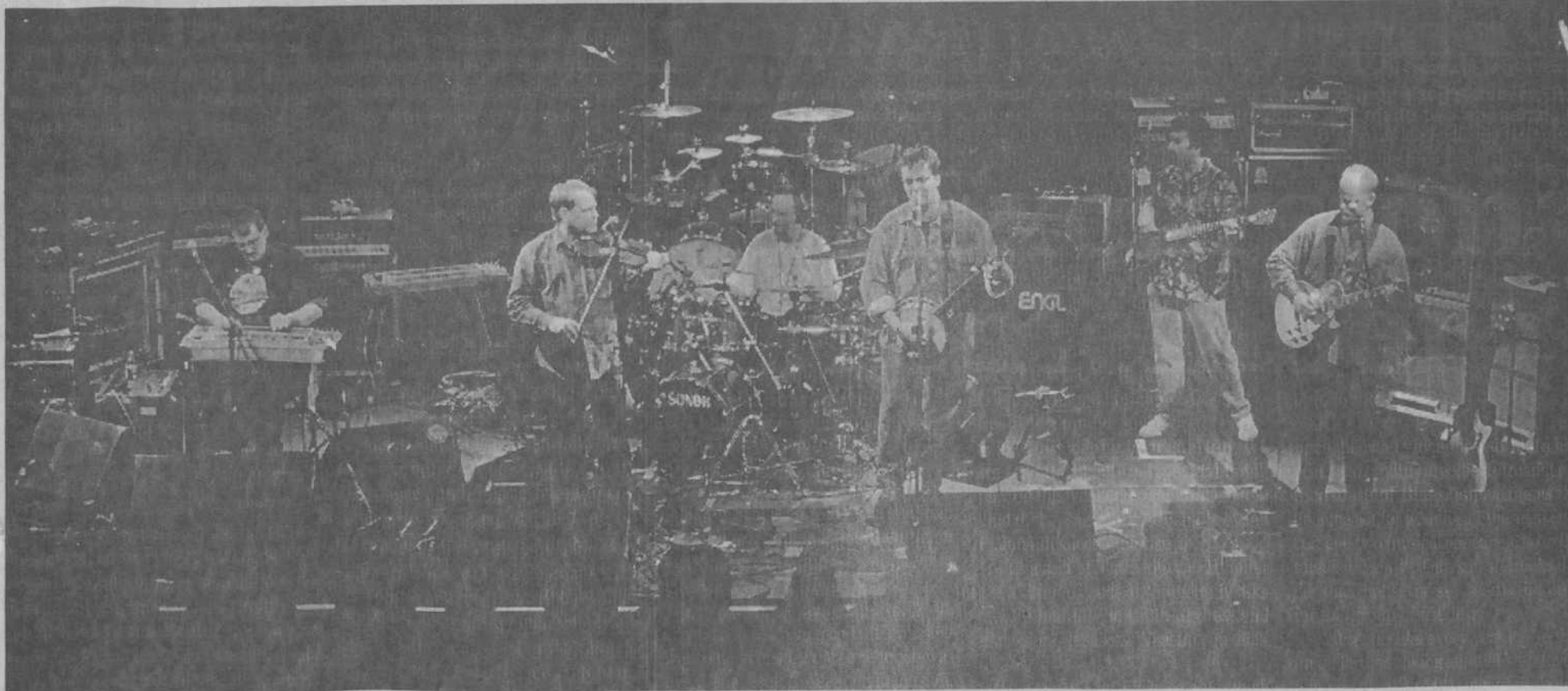
“It’s a part of our identity,” drummer Cas Edmunds added. “Somebody asks me, ‘What do you think of Weekend Excursion?’ It’s like, ‘What do you think of Cas?’”

This North Carolinian sextet, which also includes bassist Danny Donovan, rhythm guitarist Jeff Foxworth, vocalist Sam Fisher and Michael Ferry on violin, has been progressing quite nicely

since the band’s inception six and a half years ago. With three performances at the House of Blues, appearing as the opening act for a Melissa Etheridge concert and two musical appearances on the television show, Dawson’s Creek, under their belts, the sky seems the limit for this group of friends.

“It seems like every year we’re that much farther, taking another step to another level. We’re playing more shows, we’re playing better shows. So it’s been a constant progression,” Donovan said. Some say their sound resembles that

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SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Blueground Undergrass, an Atlanta-based band, provides a mixture of bluegrass, blues, country, folk, swing, jazz and rock music. The slide guitarist, Mark Van Allen, described the band’s music as “hick-hop.”

Hick-hop band gives new sounds

BY JAMES BATTLE
THE GAMECOCK

If you read the name Blueground Undergrass and then have to stop and read the name Blueground Undergrass again, you’re not alone.

And as the name suggests, this is not an ordinary group of mountain boys singing about old dogs and whiskey.

Instead, this Atlanta-based group sounds as if they put Widespread Panic, Marshal Tucker, Bela Fleck and Ralph Stanley in a blender.

Often, their songs start as traditional bluegrass and end in electric guitar solos.

The instruments of the band include a banjo, pedal steel, fiddle, electric and acoustic guitar, bass, mandolin, Dobro and drums.

The lead singer and banjo player,

Jeff Mosier, brought the band together with his brother Johnny playing guitar. Together, Jeff looks like a chubby Elvis Costello and Johnny, a smaller Stone Cold Steve Austin.

When I asked Mark Van Allen, the slide guitarist, about the band members, he said, “Each guy brings his own musical tastes. Johnny prefers more traditional music while Kyle Spark, the bassist, brings a more funk sound.”

When I asked Mark about his own tastes, he said, “Man, I dig it all.” Mark met the Mosier brothers while performing at Six Flags, and the bassist and drummer went to Berklee together before finally joining the band.

The band’s leader, Jeff Mosier or the “Reverend,” has been playing bluegrass well over 20 years and is also an accomplished playwright and actor.

Recently, his play, “The New Old Time Christmas Gathering,” premiered at the Art Station in Stone Mountain, Ga., breaking all attendance records.

Jeff considers his major influence to be Col. Bruce Hampton, though he admits other influences have been Charles Sawtelle, Miles Davis and Tony Rice.

Beyond Blueground Undergrass (BGUG), Jeff has played with Phish’s bluegrass coach, Widespread Panic and the Allman Brothers.

He also plays in a traditional bluegrass band with his brother called Good Medicine.

According to the band’s Web site (www.bluegroundundergrass.com), BGUG provides a smooth mixture of bluegrass, blues, country, folk, swing,

jazz and rock, but when I asked Mark about the group’s unique sound, he described it as “hick-hop. You know, instead of hip, hick.”

And after hearing their show, it’s a fair description.

Usually, the songs lasted over 15 minutes and wandered through acoustic and electric music.

Two instruments that don’t see the inside of the Elbow Room too often, the slide guitar and upright bass, added to the band’s unique sound.

One of Blueground’s best features is the crowd can actually understand the lead singer, and in a sea of hard rock and rap, this is a noticeable and refreshing difference.

Another difference is the band took no breaks between songs, but kept a steady flow of music until the show’s

end. Blueground has a surprisingly strong following for a group that started only three years ago.

Taking in Blueground’s good music and the crowd’s enthusiasm, it was a great show.

Their two albums include Barnyard Don Juan and Live at Variety Playhouse.

Their next album, Live at Fox Theatre, should be coming out in the next couple months.

The band will be playing in Asheville on Oct. 26 at the Music Zone and in Spartanburg on Dec. 15 or 16 at the Magnolia State Pub.

The spotlight desk can be reached at gamecockspotlight@hotmail.com.

What’s Happening

Wednesday, Oct. 18

- ELBOW ROOM, Fathead, 10 p.m., 18+, \$5 Cover
- DELANEY’S, Joel Rush
- UNCLE LOUIE’S, LaToya and Greg
- VISTA AFTER FIVE, Edgewise, 6:30 p.m., All Ages, No Cover
- MACS ON MAIN, Blues and Jazz Showcase with Skipp Pearson
- RAFTER’S, Kenny Floyd Unplugged
- MONTERREY JACK’S, Lee Barbour Quintet
- NEW BROOKLAND TAVERN, Mandible, 10 p.m., 18+, \$4 Cover
- JAMMIN’ JAVA, Robert Gardiner Quartet
- DECISIONS, Muddy Quarters
- DIANNE’S ON DEVINE, Ross Holmes
- FUBAR, Hip Hop Night
- GOLD RUSH, Acoustic open mic with Rick David
- NONNAH’S, Pianist Drake Reily
- ROADRUNNERS, Tony Mojo
- ZA’S, Island Close By
- ART BAR, Coup
- WINGS & ALE, Toyko Joe

Thursday, Oct. 19

- ELBOW ROOM, Melt-Banana, 10 p.m., 18+, \$8 Cover
- DELANEY’S, Peter Ledbetter
- ART BAR, The Motion Rotation with WUSC DJ Eric Hess’s Deep House/Trance Show
- NEW BROOKLAND TAVERN, Skillet, 10:30, 18+, \$4 Cover
- NONNAH’S, Bill Wingate and Tony Moore
- KOGER CENTER, Deborah Voight, 7:30 p.m., All Ages, Students \$7 Admission
- SUNDANCE GRILL, Muddy Quarters
- O’CHARLEY’S, Johnny Fecco, 5-8 p.m.
- SANDRA’S CORNER POCKET, Blues Band with Jay Edmonds
- CRACKER JACKS, Acoustic Jam with Rene Russell

Friday, Oct. 20

- DELANEY’S, Peter Ledbetter
- ELBOW ROOM, Jump Little Children, 10pm, 18+, \$10 Cover
- ART BAR, Dance and Serious Crazyness
- NEW BROOKLAND TAVERN, 351 Cleveland, 10:30pm, 18+, \$4 Cover
- HUNTER-GATHERER, Suck, 11:30 p.m., \$2 Cover
- SUNDANCE GRILL, Edgewise, 10 p.m., 21+, No Cover
- HEMINGWAY’S, The Whatever Band, 9:30 p.m., 21+, \$2 Cover
- FUBAR, Blake, 10 p.m., 21+, \$5 Cover
- DECISIONS, No Stage Fright Karaoke, 9 p.m., 21+, No Cover

Saturday, Oct. 21

- DELANEY’S, Buddy Ray and Frank Smoka
- ELBOW ROOM, Jump Little Children, 10 p.m., 18+, \$10 Cover
- ART BAR, Dance and Serious Crazyness
- NEW BROOKLAND TAVERN, Erectorset, 10:30 p.m., 18+, \$4 Cover
- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR MEMORIAL PARK, Little Ed and the Blues Imperials, Guitar Shorty, Tab Benoit, Roy-Book, Binder, Rosie Ledet, Buddy Ray and Frank Smoka, Moon Legacy Duo, Free Admission from 12 p.m.-10 p.m.
- SUNDANCE GRILL, Redsky, 10 p.m., 21+, No Cover
- HEMINGWAY’S, Sourwood Honey, 9:30 p.m., 21+, \$5 Cover
- FUBAR, 454, 10 p.m., 21+, \$5 Cover