



# Viewpoints

## QUOTE, UNQUOTE

'I'm not really concerned about people who think that this bill is in violation of church and state.'

Rep. James Law, on placing "In God We Trust" placards in public schools

## The Gamecock

Serving the Carolina Community since 1908

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## Board of Publications should be abolished

It's hard to decide what to bring up first in this editorial: the machinations of the Board of Student Publications and Communications, the fact that the board shouldn't exist or the sustained indifference members of the Department of Student Life have shown for the First Amendment.

The board has reprimanded Brock Vergakis, an editor in chief whose leadership has greatly strengthened the news-gathering and editorial aspects of *The Gamecock*. And while the board hasn't informed Vergakis of his status for next semester, his exclusion from a meeting to select student media leaders was a spineless way of blocking his return.

Vergakis was reprimanded in part because *The Gamecock* — like virtually every other newspaper in the nation — decided to endorse candidates. According to the board, *The Gamecock* shouldn't endorse candidates because the newspaper receives student activity fees. This excuse doesn't wash; campus newspapers around the nation receive student fees and endorse candidates. While the university believes its policy prevents *The Gamecock* from endorsing candidates, we're pretty sure the U.S. Constitution supersedes any "constitution" the university can apply to the newspaper. The Student Press Law Center agrees with us.

In an attempt to control the newspaper's editorial content, Director of Student Life Jerry Brewer has written letters to nearly everyone who's had even a passing familiarity with *The Gamecock*, telling them they've been "nominated" for Vergakis' job. Some of those nominated didn't even have staff experience. Obviously, Brewer thinks anyone can handle this demanding and time-consuming post.

The board's apathy for the journalistic quality of this newspaper is as obvious as its ignorance of the First Amendment. The board has engaged in a cowardly series of closed-door meetings and secret decisions, skirting the S.C. Freedom of Information Act at every opportunity. What's most embarrassing is that a journalism instructor, someone who should understand the First Amendment, endorsed this action.

The board is a worthless, antiquated body that should be eliminated. Its duties include appointing leaders of the three Student Media outlets — WUSC, *Garnet & Black* and *The Gamecock* — but the board has shown itself too incompetent to even get that done within a reasonable time frame. This task could easily be assumed by students, as is the case with most other student organizations.

These actions are the latest sign of Student Life's total disregard for freedom of the press — an attitude that has encouraged attempts by at least one Student Government candidate to prevent *The Gamecock's* publication and has allowed the unpunished and uninvestigated destruction of almost 1,000 issues of *The Gamecock*.

This last incident is particularly galling considering that Student Life did nothing to penalize the SG official involved, while Vergakis exercised *The Gamecock's* First Amendment rights by endorsing SG candidates and was punished.

It seems the board's only purpose is to quash the First Amendment rights of Student Media organizations whenever they anger someone in the board's good graces. But it shouldn't get an inflated sense of self-importance from the success of its coup d'etat. The members of the board could dismiss every editor at *The Gamecock*, they could decide our fate in secret meetings, they could dole out favors to their friends.

But the newspaper's creed would remain the same: We will not be silent.

Staff note: Because Vergakis is a subject of this editorial, he abstained from voting on, contributing to or reviewing its content.

### ABOUT US

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 nine 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 the newspaper's parent organization. The Gamecock is supported in part by student activity fees. One free copy per reader. Additional copies may be purchased for one dollar each from the Department of Student Media.

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**SUBMISSION POLICY**  
Letters to the editor or guest columns are welcome from all members of the Carolina community. Letters should be 250-300 words. Guest columns should be an opinion piece of about 600 words.

Both must include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. Handwritten submissions must be personally delivered to Russell House room 333. E-mail submissions must include telephone number for confirmation and should be emailed to gamecockeditor@hotmail.com.

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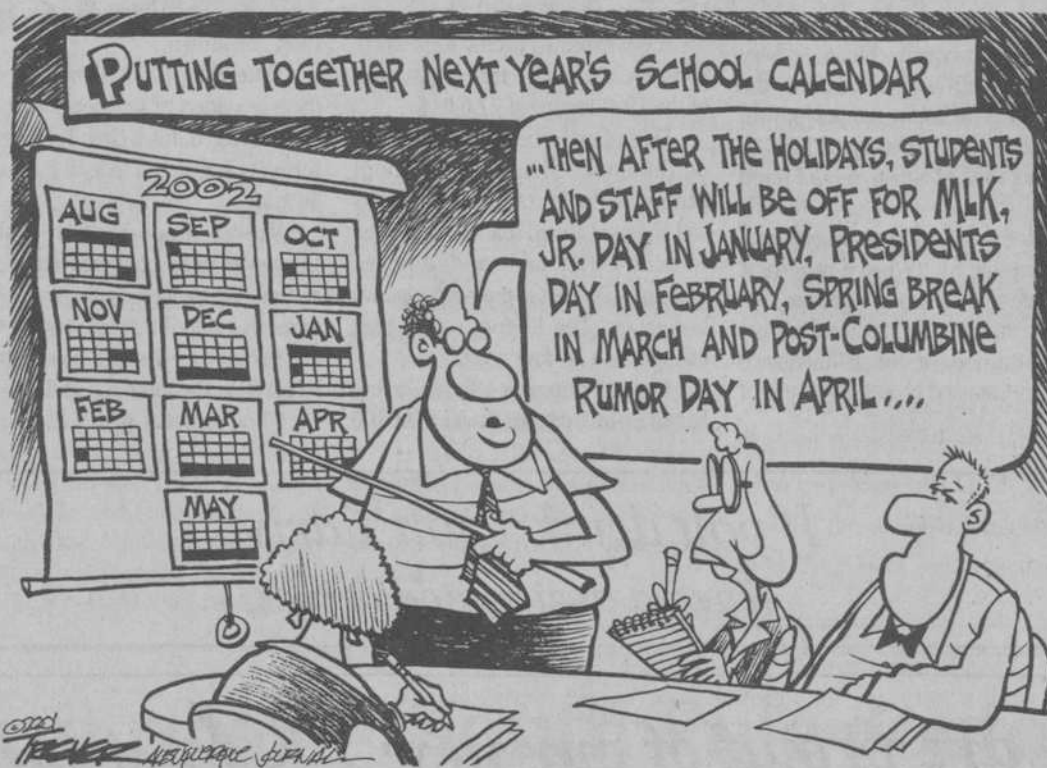
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Guest columns and letters may be submitted by e-mail to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.  
Call 777-7726 for more information.

### COLLEGE PRESS EXCHANGE



## Editor apologizes to everyone

I guess, in retrospect, I should apologize. There are a lot of things *The Gamecock* did this year that people didn't like, things that people found too controversial. A lot of people didn't like our endorsing candidates in SGElections, identifying the culprit in newspaper thefts or allowing letters to the editor to run that were openly critical of anyone or anything.



**Brock Vergakis** is a fourth-year student in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications and *The Gamecock's* editor in chief. Send responses to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

But it's never too late to say you're sorry, I suppose. I have only a few issues left before my term as editor in chief is finally over, so now is as good a time as any to do it — I'm sorry.

I'm sorry for not warning the university community that I had no intention of letting *The Gamecock* be intimidated this year.

I should have warned Student Government that crying to the Department of Student Life about our legal right to endorse candidates wouldn't do a whole hell of a lot to influence me.

And I should have warned the Department of Student Life that I have absolutely no sympathy for anyone who tries to silence the voice of a free press by destroying the medium it's printed on. When *The Gamecock* is destroyed or censored, USC's only true public forum is abolished along with it. But I guess I should even apologize to our

readers for allowing the Viewpoints page to be an open, public forum. I guess the smart thing to do would be to call up every student, faculty member, administrator and employee on campus to make sure that the only editorials, columns and letters to the editor that appear on the page are ones that nobody will find offensive.

Most of all, I should apologize to the kangaroo court of injustice that is the Board of Student Publications and Communications. I should have warned its members that I'm intelligent enough to understand campus media law, that I've read the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and that I keep in contact with the Student Press Law Center about the board's shady activities.

I really could have made the board's life much easier if I hadn't decided to challenge the status quo on campus by publishing material that editors before me were too intimidated by administrators to print, such as endorsements. Administrators have even tried to tell current and past *Gamecock* staff that we're forbidden from using "Cocks" in a headline.

I should apologize for not warning others that my staff would stand behind the First Amendment and our exclusive right to control the content of this newspaper, despite the efforts of a few disgruntled and misguided Student Government members.

And I'm really sorry for pushing through with an effort that would make South Carolina's best collegiate newspaper a daily. *The Gamecock* would be the only collegiate daily in the state and would fill a deep void left in the education of USC students who want to practice journalism after graduation.

Really, what the hell was I thinking

when I actually believed the board could accomplish something of value for once, instead of proving its own incompetence by attempting to schedule a meeting of a public body without 24 hours' notice, as is required by South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act?

And I apologize for believing that even though the board's ignorance runs rampant when it comes to collegiate journalism, that at least when it did decide to take action, that action would be a forceful one.

Earlier this week, the board held a closed meeting that they didn't bother to tell me about in which I was disciplined for having the audacity to allow what nearly every student and commercial newspaper in the nation does: endorse candidates for political office.

I was merely reprimanded — but come on; if you're going to prove your ignorance of student press law, go all-out and suspend or fire me and quit behaving like cowards.

About 20 years ago, the board illegally fired an editor, but that was a board with guts. However ignorant and illegal its actions may have been, it was still a board with guts.

If the board wants to send the message that it controls the content of this newspaper, it needs to be more forceful. A reprimand? How lame.

Does it really think it can intimidate future editors from making political commentary by reprimanding me? It probably does. But I can't apologize for the board's stupidity. I can only apologize for my own stupidity for believing that free speech, robust debate, acceptance of both popular and unpopular opinions and ideas, and an intellectual atmosphere of political dialogue are welcome at South Carolina's largest public university.

### LETTERS

#### Budget cuts mean dropping classes

To the Editor:

I am writing to convey my deepest concerns to university students about the severe budget cuts that are under way. More than thirty classes from the McMaster College of Arts are being dropped. Many classes from other colleges are in the same process. Why are we paying tuition if we can't get the classes we need to graduate? And how is it that none of the authorities seem to care — i.e., the president and vice president of USC? The only way we can change something like this is to take it into our own hands.

Budget cuts! Budget cuts! Budget cuts! Take a stand and fight for your education! Join the protest against university budget cuts at noon Friday in front of McMaster College and march to the State House.

Save your education!

**Kristen Hard**  
Third-year Student  
College of Liberal Arts

#### Parking services lacks priorities

To the Editor:

As if parking isn't already a big problem, the "parking gods" have become the enforcers once again. The Bates/Bates West parking lot is now "Student Only."

I am a student! I might not live on campus, but off-campus students make up about 70 percent of the student population here. Why don't we have anywhere to park?

The Bates/Bates West parking lot is never full, so why does it need to be for students only? In the past, this lot has been used by students, commuters and faculty because it is near a shuttle stop.

I'm really concerned about where the priorities of the parking staff lie. My car just fell into a pothole the size of a kitchen sink in the commuter lot near the police station. Why haven't they taken care of that instead of posting needless signs about who can park where?

Why are faculty lots often filled with six or seven cars? Maybe we should look into a first-come, first-served system because I'm wasting time, gas and energy driving around this campus in search of a parking space that doesn't exist.

**Letisha Taylor**  
Fourth-year Student  
College of Science and Mathematics

#### Turtle Tug mess is still there; clean it!

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to Amanda Ingram's April 20 letter about the Delta Zeta Turtle Tug.

After contacting the Blatt P.E. Center, I was informed that Delta Zeta was responsible for cleaning up the rancid mounds of reeking Jell-O.

I am still confused as to why Delta Zeta didn't plan the event on the space allowed for tug-of-war provided by the school. If you look on a map in the P.E. center, the spot is clearly marked.

And how dare you all think that you have more important things to do, such as "\$1,600 for deaf and hearing-impaired children." Delta Zeta probably cost more money in damage to Field F than they raised. I hate to spread the word, but there is still hard Jell-O on the field.

Ms. Ingram said, "... we, Delta Zeta, were not responsible for the Jell-O cleanup." Then who was? We're not in kindergarten; we have to clean up our own messes.

The men's rugby team had to host a game against Davidson on the rancid mounds of reeking Jell-O. It must have given Davidson a bad impression. When they hear the name USC, all they probably will think about is the time they were tossed down in "that nasty red stuff that smelled like puke."

As a member of the Field Hockey Club, I know our practices are scheduled from 5:30-7 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday on Field F.

I, too, am in a sorority, so I think fundraising and supporting your philanthropy is important. While doing good deeds for others, you also have to shout out your own school.

**Liz Supples**  
First-year Student  
College of Liberal Arts  
Field Hockey Member

### GENDER ISSUES

## Women, men live separate existences

I was sitting on my front porch with a girl and two guys. The two guys' names were Florence and Tuffy, and the girl's name was India.



**James Battle** is a third-year student in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications. Send responses to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

On my front porch, there's a bedraggled couch that I got from my great aunt when she died, and we were sitting on it. We were listening to the radio and watching cars go by. It was the middle of Tuesday afternoon, and we were sweating.

"Hey, Florence, how much money would it take for you to have sex with another man?" Tuffy asked.

"A lot," Florence said.

"I'd probably have sex with another guy for a million dollars," Tuffy said.

"Well, I'd do it for a million dollars, but only if I could shoot the guy afterward," Florence said. "Then he couldn't tell anyone."

"What if it would save all of humanity? Your having sex with this guy. Would you do it then?" Tuffy asked.

"No," Florence said.

"I wouldn't either. But what if you only had three days to live, and after you had sex with this one guy, you could hook up with as many women as you wanted? You could even have auditions and pick out the hottest girls. Hundreds of them. Would you do it then?" Tuffy asked.

"Of course. But only if I could still shoot that one guy," Florence said.

"Please, shut up," India said. "You sound like complete idiots. Do you hear how ridiculous this conversation is? 'Yeah, I wouldn't ... but you would ... but only if.' Just give it a rest."

"Oh, and what do girls talk about?" Tuffy asked.

"We talk about our emotions, and we nurture each other. Our conversations are about things that matter, and they are radiant," India said.

"Right. The last time I heard you talk to your roommate, you were trying to decide what to watch on TV. I wanna watch whatever you want to watch ... well, I don't care ... we can watch anything ... no, really I don't care ... OK, well, I'm just going to set the remote down here." And when she left, you told us how much you hate her," Tuffy said.

"Hate is a strong word," Florence said.

"That it is," Tuffy said.

"None of you would understand. Boys are too competitive. They're always trying to put each other down, and they never get anywhere," India said. "It's like you're always playing that game where you stack your hands on top of a baseball bat."

"I could kick your ass in that game, Tuffy," Florence said.

"See? This is what I mean. You're always nagging each other," India said.

"Look," Tuffy said. "Florence and I, we understand what you're talking about. I used to date a girl, who finally dumped me, thank God, but she used to tell me the same thing. She always wanted me to go to these movies called 'romantic comedies.' Only there was a lot more romance than comedy, and the parts that were supposed to be funny were stupid. Usually, a girl lost her wedding ring or something, and it was this 'big deal.' I mean, guys would do those girly things, but they suck, so we don't."

"Personally, I just nod and wave when they're talking to me," Florence said. "Try not to listen to all that 'blah, blah, blah' and perk up when it's time for lovin'."

"Nice one," Tuffy said.

"I hate both of you," India said.

"I think I might change my name to Don Perignon," Tuffy said.