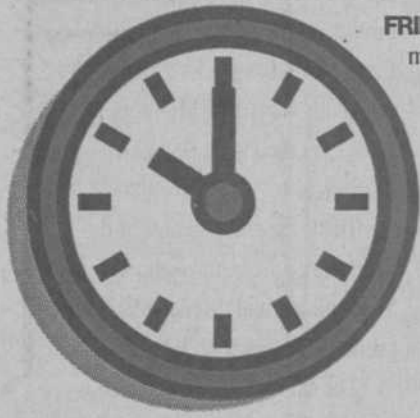


CAROLINA

from dusk 'til dawn

Weekends are the time when students unwind, when they take a break from the essays and exams for a taste of places like Five Points and Wal-Mart. So The Gamecock decided to follow some students — and other people — in the USC community to see what they do on the weekend from dusk until dawn. Follow us across the two pages to see what we found.



FRIDAY, 10 p.m. — Security officer Shirley McKie spends most weeknights in the lobby of Capstone, where many of the students know her by name. On Fridays, though, she occasionally picks up some overtime at South Quad. When one of her “Capstone students” stops by, her face lights up. “I care a lot about each and every one of them,” McKie says. She admits that the job sometimes gets to her. “It gets a little hectic. It gets a little strenuous sometimes,” McKie says. But she has a secret: “My music keeps me going.”

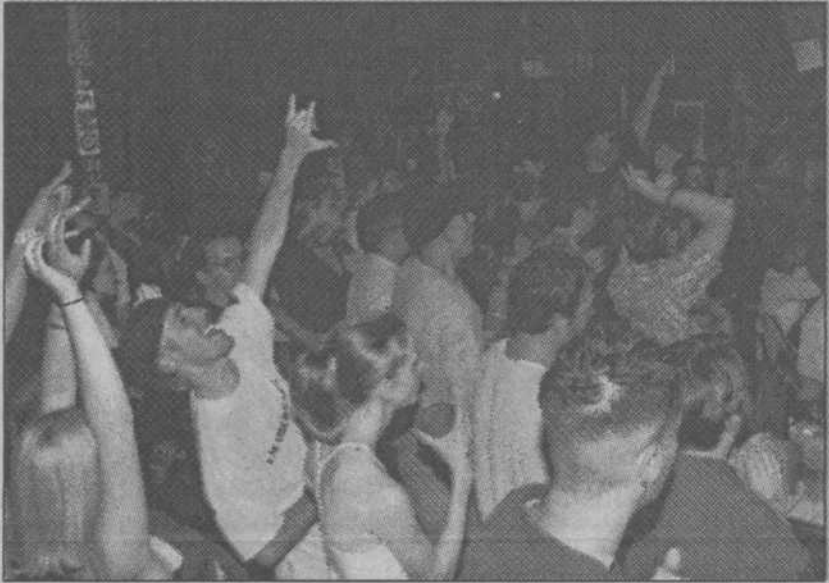


FRIDAY, 11:30 p.m. — A fire engine races by USCPD on its way to The Wilshire House at Union Station. Eventually, three engines and a car from the Columbia Fire Department gather in front of the apartments, which are home to many USC students. The apartment's third and fourth floors caught fire about two years ago, a fireman on the scene says. But this time, the mission is simply to rescue some residents caught on an elevator. The number of trucks on the scene is dictated by standard operating procedure. “It just takes a lot of manpower,” the officer said.



“Friday” photos by Aaron Hark/The Gamecock

James Touzel, the bassist of Fling, plays a set in front of an excited crowd at Friday night's Battle of the Bands finals at Elbow Room (above right). The rowdy fans cheer their favorite bands on (right).



Midnight — Local music fans gather for the Battle of the Bands finals featuring Fling, Hot Lava Monster, Hurt Reynolds, Science Knows No Sin and Mass Connection at Elbow Room in Five Points. The large group loitering on the sidewalk outside competes to be heard over the music coming from inside. “Can I bum a smoke?” one student asks — a question heard repeatedly throughout the performances. “Sure; is menthol all right?” The drunken reply: “You’re beautiful. You know you’re beautiful, right?” Most of the audience has gotten a good head start on the weekend festivities before venturing out to Five Points for more beer, smoke and music.



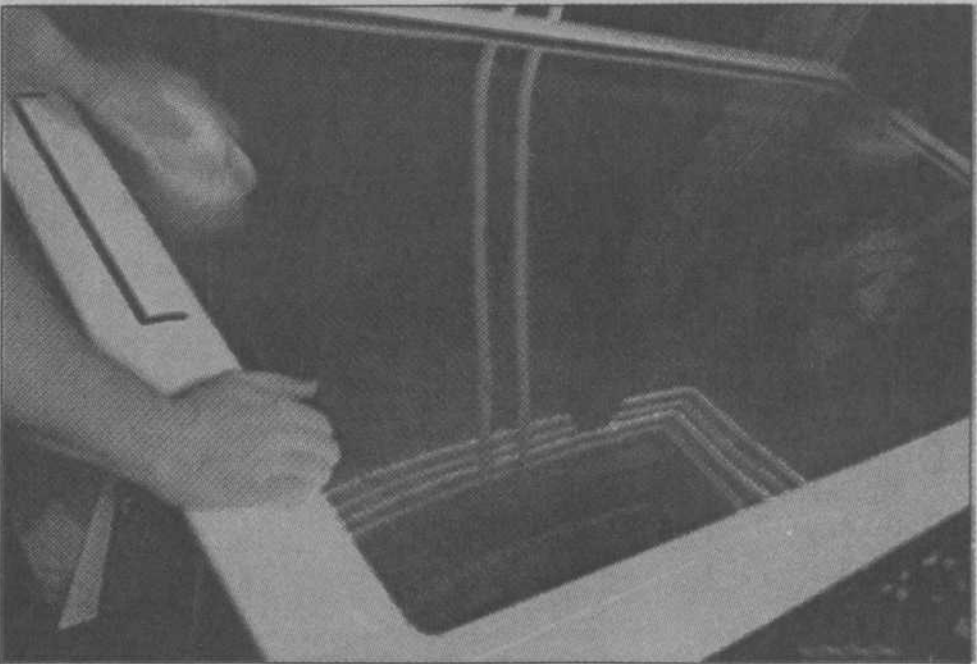
SATURDAY, 1 a.m. — It’s easy to mistake the Exxon Station in Five Points for a Dunkin’ Donuts. Columbia’s police officers have staked out the parking lot. “We stay in Five Points all the time ... whether it’s busy like this or whether it’s regular times.” One officer was hesitant to comment, but his reaction was instant when asked if USCPD helped patrol the area. “HAHAHAHAHA! Y’all have a good night, now.”



SATURDAY, 2 a.m. — Feeling grubby after walking around Five Points? Take a nice bath in the fountain. Someone has poured bubble bath into Five Points’ trademark.



SATURDAY, 3 a.m. — Construction workers slave away under gigantic fluorescent lights on the new Strom Thurmond Fitness and Wellness Center. The light spills out onto the street but leaves the workers mostly shrouded in darkness.



SUNDAY, 2 a.m. — It’s late Saturday night, and Brandy Branham is at Wal-Mart. “I just got off work, and we were just coming by to pick up a few things like milk and whatever, and we saw a couple good buys,” says Branham, a third-year student in the College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management. What does she buy at Wal-Mart? “Everything.” When the Russell House Gameroom is closed, students can go use Wal-Mart’s gaming area, complete with an air hockey table, racing games, Skee-ball and Deer Hunter, to name a few.



SATURDAY, 7 p.m. — The Grand Marketplace isn’t where Student Government President Corey Ford wants to eat this weekend. But he doesn’t really feel he has a choice. “I like to go out to some cheap places and stuff ... but I’m broke right now. My past few nights have been staying in and stuff,” Ford says as he eats a plate full of spaghetti.



SATURDAY, 8 p.m. — “I had to catch this ride,” says a young boy, scooting into the elevator in the Russell House behind a girl of about the same age, also on a razor scooter. She’s obviously not thrilled about her tag-along. “I’m getting out of here,” she says, and scooters out with the boy still chasing behind. “Stop following me!”



“Saturday” photos by Michael Ronquillo/The Gamecock

USC student Brandy Branham, buying the week’s groceries, shops in the produce section of Wal-Mart (top above). The gameroom at Wal-Mart features air hockey tables (top right) and the racecar game “Cruising Exotica” (right). The Grand Marketplace sign remains well-lit, even after hours (above).

