

The Gamecock

President Bush is a 'political prostitute'

As I write this, it's early August, President Bush has decided to take one of his longest presidential vacations in history and all of the pundits have been anxious to analyze his first six months in office.



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It's simple: He's a political prostitute who sold the soul of the Republican Party to the HMOs while deciding to declare war on our environment and Europe.

He also found some time along the way to backstab the poor and minorities on school vouchers and change his position on almost every issue he took a position on during the campaign.

But let's not focus on the Vacationer in Chief.

Instead, I thought it would be useful to review this summer's series of current events, because this is, after all, the Welcome Back issue.

On the national scene, our Leader of Very Little Brain's daughter got picked up on alcohol charges, which promptly triggered a media sensation, which immediately triggered a media sensation over whether the media sensation was justified. (What hath Ted Turner wrought?)

And, speaking about media coverage, just where is Chandra Levy? Under a Virginia parking lot? Under Gary Condit's rug?

Of course, he has nothing to do with her disappearance. That's why he told several women to lie about relationships, why he lied to police about his relationship with Levy and why he was reportedly seen in Virginia throwing away the box from a gift from one of his girlfriends shortly before police searched his apartment.

The media reported on it. And did they report. They reported that Levy might have been pregnant when she disappeared. They reported that Gary Condit had a mastectomy. They never reported how the two might be linked.

And, as the order of the universe goes these days, the Chandra Levy coverage sparked a soul-searching series of reports by the media about whether the media has gone too far.

Speaking of interns, former President Clinton has inked a book deal for quite a bit more than \$10 million.

Even accounting for inflation, this beats the Pope's former record for a book deal. Bill Clinton is serviced by an intern and gets more than John Paul II for his book? That has to be blasphemy.

Let us forget state politics, the S.C. Legislature is fuming because Gov. Jim Hodges vetoed their cuts for higher education. To do that, he had to veto a cut in the food sales tax.

That will hurt the poor and elderly, the GOP says; after all, Republicans have always shown themselves to be the friends of the poor and elderly, as long as they own guns or have a lot of money, respectively. Besides, the state is short on money, and everybody knows you cut taxes when you don't have enough money.

And, as I will read this, the summer will have ended, and I will face one more year of school before going into the real world. How well have I spent my summers? How well have I spent my life?

I have flown through my summers — and the first fourth (or less, I hope) — of my life, as we so often do. We spend so much time trying to find out what is going on, or trying to figure how to make more money, or looking for joy from a variety of different sources, that we often lose sight of how much time is slipping through our fingers.

I have two brothers that won't stay young forever, and yet I have spent less and less time with them as the summer has marched on. I have a grandfather who is gravely ill — with what, not even the doctors know — and yet how often have I spoken with him this summer?

The summer is gone now, the last time; I will refer to "the summer" as a distinct period, a time of rest.

Hopefully, I will spend the rest of my life wisely, perhaps more wisely than I did in the summer that has just passed.

Back to school brings fun, high expectations for all

What is it about the start of a new school year that makes everyone feel that just about anything can happen?



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Well, maybe not everyone. Maybe just me. Okay, I am weird — I admit it.

Before I go to my first class I know that I can make the Dean's List. I know that I can pass all of my finals and go to Five Points every

night. I know that I will make friends with everyone in my classes and still manage to not have to go to any of my classes. Everything will be effortless, yet with the results of many hours of effort.

Until I get the first syllabus and take that first pop quiz. Then I know that those nights out aren't possible and that I will not be going on any dates. Toogie's will become the first number on my speed dial, and my resolve to work out at least three times a week will be nothing more than a dream.

I am now reminded of all of my hopes and expectations when I arrived my first semester at Carolina. What exactly did I expect?

I know that I didn't expect to have to pay at least \$8 to wash my clothes downstairs in my dorm. I didn't know that everywhere delivers food, and yes, I'm stupid enough to order it no matter what it costs. I didn't think that I would spend as much time studying as I do. I certainly didn't expect to spend so much time at The Gamecock office.

With these downs there come so many things that I didn't expect that are now unexplainable, irreplaceable parts of my life. That includes so many friends that are so very different.

I formed the sort of independence that makes it impossible to stay at home for more than three days at a time, but makes me call my mom at least twice a day.

USC has so far given me a sense of self that is possible to find at any col-

lege, no matter which one you end up going to. (Unless it is Clemson, and then I am so sorry for your misguided attempt to create a real college experience. I have heard that those Clemson people don't read, and so this concept of a newspaper column is probably beyond their grasp.)

I thought while I'm being a little wistful, I might give you freshmen some advice while you're reading your first real college paper.

— Only take one of the Zipsheets. They never change. They're yellow. People will force them on you, but they'll only stick around in your already cramped dorm room. Nobody expects you to give the coupons when you order food.

— Ask for directions. Only a mean person would lead you astray on this big campus. This is the South. There are no intentionally mean people.

— Being stupid and not paying attention in class is only annoying in college.

— Don't spend all of your time studying if you're that type of person. Learn more about life than what's in the book you bought for an inflated price by the person who's teaching the class.

— Girls: Don't date everyone the first week. Though you might think this is what college girls do, you will only end up with STDs and no friends to watch out for you and share everything that is stupid in your life with.

— Boys: Try not to come to class still drunk. You'll just fall asleep. Most likely, you'll have on the same clothes as last night. Even if you don't notice, the people beside you will know you smell like Jungle Jim's and the back end of that dog that walks with the man with the shopping cart in Five Points.

— If you think you're going to be a doctor and are pre-med, definitely have a back-up plan.

Okay, I rambled. Now I'm back to thinking about newly sharpened pencils and shiny binders just waiting for my initials. It's time for me to think of how my next two years are going to work at USC.

I'm sure they'll be great and unforgettable, with many forgettable pauses.

LETTERS

Bush's tax refund checks are political ploy, but still deserve to be applauded

To the Editor:

While I would tend to agree with the notion that the GOP led initiative to hand out refund checks on taxes paid last year is probably little more than a ploy to win over support for the party, I nevertheless applaud the tax cuts which have been made for the next 10 years.

These cuts are but a drop in the bucket compared to what needs to be done to relieve the tax burden that the government imposes upon its citizens. Tax rates are upwards of 50 percent of income once property taxes, income taxes (federal and state), sales taxes, etc. are combined.

Imagine, for a moment, the outrage that would ensue should the government not allow

taxed to be withheld on a worker's paycheck.

For many people, the withheld taxes amount to money that is never seen, and therefore isn't as big of a deal as it would be if these people were paid their full wages and then had to write a check to the IRS every April 15.

Now, I'm not saying that taxes should be eliminated. It's true that we need the government to provide basic services such as national defense, police protection and so on, but many modern government programs today border on a socialistic sort of redistribution of wealth that is downright contra-capitalistic.

Wellfare and social security are two examples of programs that should be eliminated. I mean, come on — force people to save??? If a person wishes to save for retirement then he should go to a bank and OPEN AN ACCOUNT!!! He doesn't need government telling him how to do it.

Anyway, one last comment regarding the use of the example of the student who planned to purchase illegal drugs with his tax refund.

It's a particularly poorly chosen example because it would actually not "subvert" the government's plan to stimulate the economy. It is true that purchasing goods on a black market will not count towards U.S. gross domestic product, but it will increase the wealth of the person selling the drugs, and that individual in turn will likely end up purchasing legitimate goods that will stimulate the legal economy.

To effectively avoid any potential stimulation of the economy, that student would need to burn his refund check, or otherwise destroy it.

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