



VIEWPOINTS

IN OUR OPINION

Yet another budget mess

Always known for their wisdom and ability to think ahead, South Carolina's legislators have again gotten caught in the act of using one-time funds for recurring costs, meaning the state is likely headed for yet another round of budget cuts.

No doubt there will be an endless stream of recriminations and passing blame. The fact is, the lion's share of the blame falls on the Legislature, which has a wonderful tradition of cutting taxes and spending millions on pork. And, yes, they love to spend money they will never see again on "spending priorities" that will come around again.

Unfortunately, it seems that Gov. Jim Hodges will be unable to spare higher education a deep cut to its budget next year, as he did through a veto this past May. This time there are no tax cuts to veto; there simply is not enough money.

The best South Carolinians can hope for is a more responsible Legislature. If lawmakers can act responsibly, perhaps we can end the devastating cycle of reckless spending and massive budget cuts.

The business of sisterhood

Kappa Alpha Theta's recent decision to pull out of rush and relinquish their charter has left a few lingering questions. How did this happen? And now what happens to the women in the sorority?

Kappa Alpha Theta's national headquarters said the women at USC voted to relinquish their charter and that the Grand Council voted to accept it. The women officially remain Thetas, but they don't have a chapter in which to participate.

The Thetas had to pull out of last week's rush because they weren't making their numbers. That raises yet another question: Is a Greek organization a business or a fraternal group? Sororities and fraternities pledge sisterhood and brotherhood, but a part of that's gone when they are no longer a chapter. In the business world, companies cut portions that aren't producing, as well they should. The point of a business is to make money. And that appears to be the overarching goal of Greek organizations as well, as illustrated by the end of Kappa Alpha Theta's USC chapter.

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. Write us at gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

ABOUT THE GAMECOCK

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Page Designers
Mackenzie Clements, Crystal Dukes, Katie Smith

Community Affairs
Betsy Baugh, Karen Yip

Copy Editors
Crystal Boyles, Jason Harmon, Jill Martin

Photographers
Stephanie Gibbs

CONTACT INFORMATION

Offices on third floor of the Russell House.
Editor in Chief: gamecockeditor@hotmail.com
University Desk: gamecockdesk@hotmail.com
City Desk: gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com
Viewpoints: gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com
Spotlight: gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com
Sports: gamecocksports@hotmail.com
Online: www.dailygamecock.com
Newsroom: 777-7726

TO PLACE AN AD

The Gamecock
1400 Greene Street
Columbia, SC 29208
Advertising: 777-3888
Classified: 777-1184
Fax: 777-6482

STUDENT MEDIA

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HERBLOCK'S CARTOON



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The pain, joy and tears of rush

MEGHAN MCNAIR
GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

There were some sororities where I could tell they didn't want to talk to me.

My mom decided for me in early June that I would do sorority rush. She filled out the sheet for me, exaggerating my talents, and I just posed for a picture and signed the bottom.

Rush. The word itself just made me think of more confusion added to my already-heck, college-bound existence.

On the first day, all 700 girls were sorted by last name into groups. Unfortunately, I missed what group I was assigned to and wandered aimlessly until I found other lost girls. Eventually, we all found our way and were assigned to Rho Chis, disaffiliated sorority members who guided us through the process. My Rho Chi seemed really down to earth — and I found her to be a great person to call at 4 in the morning for reassurance.

That day was casual day, but I had never seen so many cute outfits in my life. I admit I was guilty of standing in front of the mirror and covering my floor with rejected clothes. My roommate was my judge, rolling

her eyes at each new outfit.

When day one was over, I wanted to quit. I had been surrounded by hundreds of girls I didn't know and felt like cattle for twelve hours.

Day two was the reason I stuck with it the whole week. Not because it was amazing and wonderful, but because I would rather walk barefoot in the showers of Moore than drop out and have to start all over again next year. My feet bled, my cheeks ached and my throat hurt. We were shipped to Williams-Brice Stadium. We went to all 10 sororities introducing ourselves. It was overwhelming. I heard of a few girls dropping out after day two, and while it took some convincing for me to come back, I now want to go up to those girls and shake them, slap them — whatever it takes for them to realize they shouldn't have dropped.

At the end of the second day, we were given cards inviting us back to talk with seven sororities. The following days were more personalized, with themes like scholarship, philanthropy and sisterhood, and one-on-one discussions with sisters. On the last days, we were bribed with sodas, Shirley Temples and fruit juice. An entire sorority's reputation is based on the one or two girls

that you speak with. This can be good or bad; there were some sororities where I could tell they didn't want to talk to me. This made me want to cry.

In fact, when I went on the third day to one sorority, I did cry. The Rho Chis had said from the beginning that we would each click with one group, and by the third day I was misty-eyed because of the automatic bond I felt with Delta Zeta. Maybe it was because my mother had left that morning, running behind with camera in hand, eagerly snapping the last few pictures for months to come. Maybe it was because home was about 10 hours away and I felt like everyone else knew each other, but whatever it was, I broke down, and it brought us closer together because a Delta Zeta shared her experiences coming as an out-of-stater and introduced me to other sisters. The next day I felt the same warmth and knew I had made up my mind.

Though rush was a very stressful experience for me, I think I speak for all of my sisters and fellow new pledges when I say we wouldn't trade the experience for the world. I met so many girls through rush I think will become great friends. I've gone from feeling out of place to feeling once again at home.

IN YOUR OPINION

However, as a considerate human being, I was offended by the comment made by Christopher Kettrey, who said, "I wasn't a fan before — and I won't be now — because I saw *Romeo Must Die*, and hopefully her music was better."

Of course, everyone is entitled to their own opinion; however, it shows a lack of decency and respect to feature degrading remarks about such an admired young person.

I feel that *The Gamecock* has an obligation to the USC community to present a compassionate, decent article that reflects the facts about this unfortunate event, not the careless, unfeeling observations of a person who obviously doesn't have any compassion.

TEVRA L. JOHNSON

CLASS OF 2001

Thanks for editorial about lawsuit

I just wanted to say thanks a bunch for the editorial called "USC's Pitiful Racial Record."

Knowing that we are all not naive of the racism existing on all socioeconomic levels, it's nice to see someone stand up and challenge others and their actions, no matter who they are or what they do.

We all know how horrible it feels at one point or another in our lives to be discriminated against things we cannot change, and when people use those things we cannot

change against us.

There must obviously be a reason they have made such claims, and not for attention or for the heck of it — especially 26 of them!

Shame on individuals who don't take this case up in the name of justice and fairness.

If anyone doesn't believe such claims can be true, just walk by some workers and see their heads bow as if they are less than we are.

I dare someone to smile at them, and see if they are rude back.

Thanks once again for addressing the problem and proposing that individuals face their fears. It's editorials like these that bring attention to the real problems that are usually being hidden or covered. Honestly, I had no clue this was going on, yet I wasn't exactly shocked or amazed.

This editorial helps the men and women who do an awesome job working for our campus on USC have a bigger voice which they should already have had if this was a fair situation.

JESSICA ZAMORA

THIRD YEAR STUDENT, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

Submission Policy

Letters to the editor or guest columns are welcome from the Carolina community. Letters should be 250-300 words. Guest columns should be about 600 words. Both must include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. Deliver handwritten submissions to Russell House room 333, or send e-mail to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com. *The Gamecock* reserves the right to edit for libel, style and space. Anonymous letters will not be published. Photos are required for guest columnists and can be provided by the submitter. Call 777-7726 for more information.

A bright spot called Cleveland



MICHAEL KERR

MSKERR187@HOTMAIL.COM

Cleveland is a great place for a vacation — as long as it's free.

My summer vacation was spent in Columbia taking classes. I didn't want to spend it that way. I wanted to spend it partying with my friends on the boardwalk of Seaside Heights, New Jersey, or laying on the beach with my girlfriend or backpacking through Europe. Hell, I wanted to do *something* fun. But looming over my head were my parents' expectations that I actually graduate in May. So, instead, I took nine hours this summer and did more work than I usually do during a regular semester.

The one bright spot of the summer came at the very end. There were two weeks between the end of Summer II and the start of the Fall semester. My girlfriend and I decided to take a break from the drudgery of classes and working. We decided to take a vacation. But not just any vacation. Bermuda, Cancun or Fort Lauderdale weren't going to be good enough to make up for a boring summer spent in steamy Columbia. We needed something bigger, something better. So we took a trip to the tropical paradise that is Ohio.

The thought of spending my summer vacation in Cleveland was enough to make me cringe when my parents first suggested it. But I assure you, we had our reasons to go. My sister and brother-in-law had a cottage on Lake Erie for a week. My parents were going to be there, and it would give me a chance to catch up with my immediate family. My girlfriend also has family in the Cleveland area that she hadn't seen in a while. While it wasn't quite the tropical island that summer fantasies are made of, I figured it would at least be a nice and relaxing week. Plus, it was free.

The thing about vacations is that they are what you make of them. I could have sat in the cottage all week pouting that my mommy and daddy didn't send me on a cruise like some other kids' do. I could have bitched and moaned about how my summer sucked. Instead, I decided to just have fun.

We went to an Indians game. While the Indian faithful have neither the loyalty nor charm of a Yankee Stadium crowd, they sure know how to have a good time. It was a classic game between the Indians and Twins, who were battling it out for first place at the time. It took two ninth-inning comebacks and eleven innings to settle. By the time Kenny Lofton crossed the plate with the winning run, I was actually rooting for the Indians. (The best part of the game, however, was still the "Rot in hell, Rucker!" chant directed at the worst closer in baseball.)

We also spent a day at Cedar Point. If Disneyland is the happiest place on Earth, then Cedar Point is surely the most badass amusement park on Earth. There were more roller coasters than any Six Flags I've ever been to. They were tall. They were fast. They were scary as hell. We even got my mom to go on one of the old wooden coasters, although I don't think she'll ever go on one again.

We hung out at the beach, went for a boat ride and (probably most importantly) caught up with family. You can take your big-budget trips to the Bahamas and shove 'em. I'll take a week in beautiful, sunny Cleveland any day — as long as it's free.