

Is the Sumter Street construction worth the inconvenience?  
**YES, ANYTHING TO MAKE IT BETTER** 41%  
**NO, I HATE ROCKS IN MY SHOES** 59%

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## VIEWPOINTS

## IN OUR OPINION

# The 'moral' tax increase

If you're planning on having any parties this summer, you might want to start buying alcohol now. Because if Sen. Mike Fair, R-Greenville, has his way, South Carolina residents would pay twice as much in taxes on wine and beer by July 1.

Why? Well, the state is in a budget crunch and needs more funds for Medicaid, homeland security and the Corrections Department. So South Carolina needs to raise taxes on alcohol.

**It seems more likely that a tax on beer and wine has nothing to do with raising money and everything to do with social engineering.**

If you fail to see the logic in this one, you're not alone. A Republican like Fair should cringe at the idea of raising taxes to cover budget shortfalls. The GOP loudly protested when Gov. Jim Hodges "raised" the food and medicine sales tax to fund higher education.

Why is this any different? There are problems with this measure beyond blatant hypocrisy. It's foolish to tie vital programs like Medicaid and homeland security to a tax which could see its revenues change from month to month. If these programs are so urgently needed, why can't the money be found in the regular budget?

Republicans have been shaking their heads in disappointment as Hodges has failed to make the "tough choices" necessary with a tight budget. Why can't they make tough choices?

It seems more likely that this tax has nothing to do with raising money and everything to do with social engineering. The state should be looking for ways to tighten its belt instead of trying to save the budget by acting like South Carolinians' moral compass.

## Gamecock Quotables

"You have a baby. What is it? I don't know. Maybe president, might be John Walker."

**LOU HOLTZ**

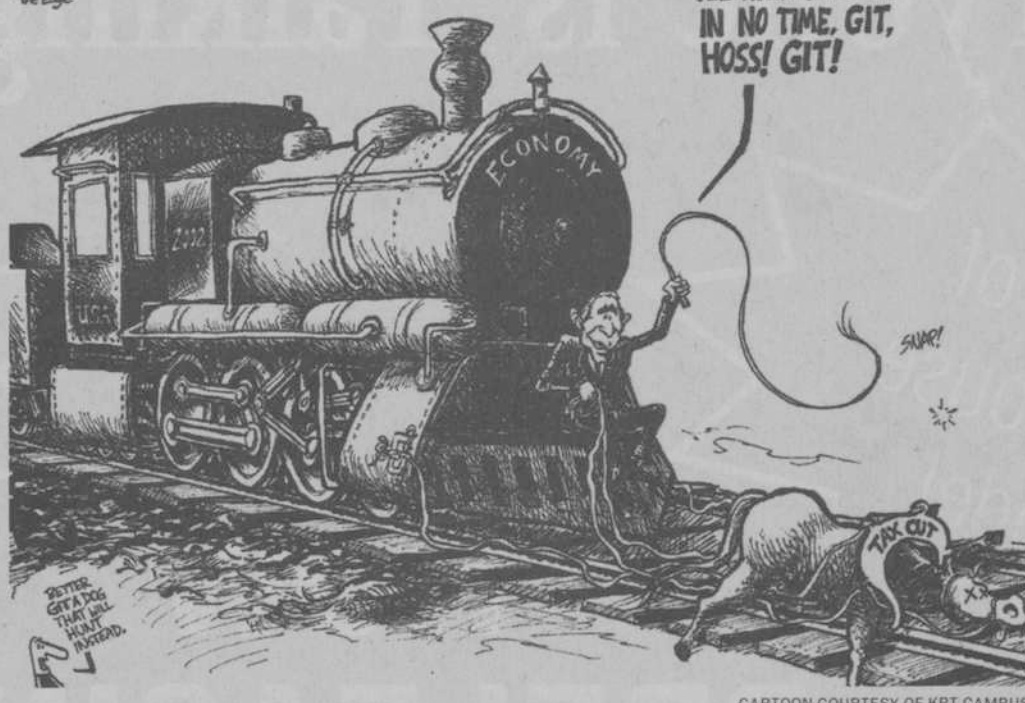
USC FOOTBALL HEAD COACH, REFERRING TO THIS YEAR'S RECRUITING CLASS

"As long as you have the opportunity and the desire you will have some kind of criminal activity out there."

**DANNY BAKER**

ASSOCIATE DEAN, COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**BOELER '02**  
The Eagle



CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

## Accountability is election key



**EDRIN WILLIAMS**

GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

### Students should hold candidates to promises.

I hate February. The shortest month of the year is set aside to celebrate all contributions African-Americans have made to our society. As if that isn't suspicious enough, we can't even celebrate in peace without being aggravated by overbearing Student Government candidates.

Don't get me wrong: I'm an advocate of student involvement. But no other trend, with the exception of Homecoming, brings me more anguish than these elections. For a few weeks in February, fellow students, who for years might have walked past you as if you were invisible, now claim to care about your well-being in their attempt to get elected. It's absolutely hilarious.

I've been tremendously involved in student leadership at USC, even before I was a student. I was selected to participate during my senior year in high school in the Board of Visitor's Leadership Council. This experience allowed me to see these people operate.

Most of the students in office or seeking office began

their political journey in organizations like Emerging Leaders and Freshman Council. Week after week, we were taught how to network, get name recognition and ascend the leadership ladder. Somewhere in there, they must have offered training on doing and saying whatever it takes to get yourself elected.

Trusting what they were taught, many of the candidates make fools of themselves for weeks just for the right to hold a particular title or position.

For example, last year, one of the candidates for president suddenly gained an interest in other cultures and spent weeks sitting in on AAAS meetings. While I knew what his purpose was for being there, many of my peers thought this candidate was being genuine and embraced him. After losing his bid for president, this guy hasn't been seen at a meeting. Am I the only one who had a problem with this?

This year's group of hopefuls seems every bit as willing to go the extra mile for your vote. I receive calls daily asking for my endorsement for somebody's campaign. Had I been uninformed, I would have gladly granted each of the candidates the right to say, "I am endorsed by Edrin Williams!"

Luckily, for my sake and yours, I know the game. Therefore, I refuse to let anyone use my name to garner a few more votes.

In other words, I am not a part of anyone's camp. I decided a while back that I would be in control of my destiny. I'm not comfortable

leaving my fate in the hands of someone who knows nothing about me, my interests or my concerns.

As students of this university, each of you has been granted some rights. The one we most often neglect is connected to accountability. We listen to candidates make promises to get elected, but when those promises aren't kept, we remain silent. When elections are over, and these candidates disappear, the silence lingers. That silence is what allows this cycle to continue. We have to hold these guys accountable for the things they say and do during campaigns. A "politics-as-usual" trend is no longer acceptable.

Over the next few weeks, you'll likely see all kinds of efforts to influence your vote.

Make a decision based on what you feel is right. Don't be influenced by your friend who is this candidate's campaign manager or that candidate's spokesperson. Do what you feel is best for USC.

Most of all, once someone is elected, constantly remind them of the promises and actions that got them elected in the first place.

Until accountability becomes as important as advertising in student government, these elections and the resulting terms will continue to be nothing more than a case of children playing grown-up.

*Williams is a fourth-year African-American Studies student and is president of Brothers of Nubian Descent.*

## Don't be ignorant



**BROCK VERGAKIS**

GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

### Candidates are good at outwining their opponents.

I thought about selling doughnuts in front of the Russell House to raise some money, but I knew my efforts would be in vain. No amount of money would be enough for some Student Government candidates to buy a clue.

Already, it appears their ignorance is insurmountable. And as a member of the Elections Commission, I feel compelled to help candidates learn what makes them look stupid in the public eye.

First, quit crying conspiracy anytime a photograph or article about a candidate other than you appears in The Gamecock. Your whining only shows the public you weren't smart enough to write a news release. USC has a slew of public relations students who I'm sure would be happy to assist you if you can't figure out how to send The Gamecock an e-mail.

Instead of trying to outwince your opponents, outsmart them. It might seem like a radical concept, but it can work.

It's no secret the Student Life Department coddles SG more than a mother with a newborn, but that's no excuse to act infantile. Each of you, I hope, is a freethinking individual. Don't let Student Life control you like virtually every other SG member before you. It makes you look weak. And weak candidates hardly get votes from a large number of students.

With this in mind, it's not surprising that USC only gets about 2,000 people to vote each election. One of the best things you could do to stop looking like a future administrative puppet is to stop filing elections code violations. Besides being cowardly because they're anonymous, they're a waste of everyone's time.

Student Life probably doesn't want you to know this, but the First Amendment applies to everyone. Yes, even SG candidates. This year's Elections Commission realizes that, so don't be scared to exercise your First Amendment rights with vigor. Post as many signs as a building will allow. Speak with as many students and organizations as you wish. Distribute all the campaign materials you want.

As long as you aren't breaking any federal, state or local laws, the Student Affairs Department can't prevent you from doing any of the above, just like they can't dictate what can appear in The Gamecock. That's not something they like to talk about because it diminishes what little power people perceive them to have.

I assure you The Gamecock knows its First Amendment rights, and it's time you learn them, too. Newspapers, even those supported in part by student activity fees, have every right to make political commentary and criticism. If you don't believe me, I challenge you to find a single court case where a judge ruled against the right of a student staff to be the sole determinants of the newspaper's content. Happy hunting.

So please, accept the fact that, as public figures, you should expect commentary to be made about you. Learn to deal with it. Last year, your predecessors proved they couldn't. I expect better this year.

SG is often mocked because it doesn't govern anything. Its title is a misnomer. But as long as there are ignorant members who blindly accept what has been done in the past, it shouldn't govern anything. Governments need leaders. Leaders embrace change. And let's face it, drastic changes need to be made if SG ever wants to be anything besides a tool of the Student Life Department.

Your opportunity to change SG has already started. How you conduct yourself in this election will say loads about whether you're an advocate of progress or another puppet in training.

*Vergakis is a fifth-year advertising student and former editor in chief of The Gamecock.*

## GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

In Wednesday's paper, an article about USC crime index statistics should have quoted Kyle Mitchum, a graduate student completing his master's in crime mapping.

In Wednesday's paper, the letter to the editor entitled "College might be mastermind scheme" was by Joe Prisco, a second-year business student.

The Gamecock regrets the errors.

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. Write us at [gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com).

## ABOUT THE GAMECOCK

**Mary Hartney**  
Editor in Chief

**Ginny Thornton**  
News Editor

**Kevin Fellner**  
Asst. News Editor

**Mackenzie Clements**  
Viewpoints Editor

**Carrie Phillips**  
The Mix Editor

**Justin Bajon**  
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**Page Designers**  
Crystal Dukes, Sarah McLaulin, Katie Smith, David Stagg

**Kyle Almond**  
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**Copy Editors**  
Crystal Boyles, Andrew Festa, Jason Harmon, Jill Martin, Paul Rhine

**Mark Hartney**  
Online Editor

**Corey Davis**  
Photo Assignment

**Photo Technicians**  
Robert Gruen, Candi Hauglum

**Kelly Petruska**  
Community Affairs

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Offices on third floor of the Russell House.  
 Editor in Chief: [gamecockeditor@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockeditor@hotmail.com)  
 University Desk: [gamecockdesk@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockdesk@hotmail.com)  
 City Desk: [gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockcitydesk@hotmail.com)  
 Viewpoints: [gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com)  
 The Mix: [gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com)  
 Sports: [gamecocksports@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecocksports@hotmail.com)  
 Online: [www.dailygamecock.com](http://www.dailygamecock.com)  
 Newsroom: 777-7726

### STUDENT MEDIA

**Erik Collins**  
Faculty Adviser

**Ellen Parsons**  
Director of Student Media

**Susan King**  
Creative Director

**Carolyn Griffin**  
Business Manager

**Sarah Scarborough**  
Advertising Manager

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Classified Manager

**Creative Services**  
Todd Hooks, Earl Jones, Jennie Moore, Beju Shah

**Advertising Staff**  
Betsy Baugh, Denise Leveaux, Laura Miller, Jackie Rice, Stacey Todd

**TO PLACE AN AD**

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

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 activities fees. One free copy per reader. Additional copies may be purchased for one dollar each from the Department of Student Media.

## IN YOUR OPINION

### USC deserves a clean campaign

So it's begun. The first official day of the campaign and The Gamecock is already running articles that spread rumors and hide the truth.

This campaign should be about character, not e-mail. This campaign should be about credentials, not mud. This campaign should be about creative initiatives, not gossip. I want to run a "Clean Campaign for Carolina." The campaign might get dirty, but my hands will be clean.

That's why I'm asking every presidential candidate (and any other candidates that want to) to sign the "Clean Campaign for Carolina Pact." I will hold myself and those on my campaign to the highest standards set by the Carolinian Creed; I hope the other candidates will concur.

1. No infractions will be filed against a candidate without alerting the candidate or the candidate's campaign manager first.

2. No personal attacks will be made against any candidate.

3. The Gamecock shall do its own reporting; I will only bring my actions to their attention.

4. All campaign expenditures shall be made

public either by releasing expenses to The Gamecock or publishing them on a Web site.

I hope all candidates will decide to sign this pledge to the students of the University of South Carolina. Regardless, it's my pledge to Carolina.

**DAVID BORNEMANN**

THIRD-YEAR FINANCE STUDENT,  
 BUSINESS SENATOR AND  
 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

### HRTM taught me real-world lessons

I'm a part-time student majoring in hotel, restaurant, and tourism management (HRTM). There was an article in Monday's edition of The Gamecock from a student talking about professors teaching us real-world lessons.

In the HRTM Department, all of the outstanding professors teach their students real-world lessons.

For example, in HRTM 421, Hospitality Finance, professor Steve Morse teaches important finance issues you can use in your personal finances and business finances. Morse doesn't teach things that you won't use in the industry and on a personal level.

Prior to taking his class, I didn't care for business finance. However, he taught me how important it really is.

In the fall semester I took HRTM 357 — Hotel,

Restaurant and Travel Law. This class is taught by Ed Coon. Coon taught his students a lot of important legal terms that apply to the hotel and travel industry. Everything we learned in Coon's class, we will use in the industry.

These two professors know their stuff and teach you real-world lessons. Then there is my adviser, Sandra Strick. Anytime students need something, she'll help them out.

The person who helped me with my transfer process was Charles Boswell. I met him in 1999 just to speak with him about transferring to USC. I finally transferred to USC in 2001. It had been two years since I met him, but when I saw him again, he remembered my first name, which amazed me.

To the HRTM professors: Keep up the excellent job you all do. You all are outstanding professors to USC and to the industry.

**EDWARD BRECHT**

HOTEL, RESTAURANT AND TOURISM  
 MANAGEMENT TRANSFER STUDENT

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