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VIEWPOINTS

ONLINE POLL

Should the SG presidential elections be overturned?
YEA 44%
NAY 56%

IN OUR OPINION

Spring break survival tips

Among midterms and papers, this week has also been filled with a Spring Fling Carnival, Late Night Carolina and Happy Hour at the Blatt — all alcohol-free ways of promoting a safe spring break.

While the message not to “get caught in a pinch” might sound cheesy, it’s also true. Spring break can present many potentially dangerous situations for students, most of which can be easily avoided.

For example, it seems as if at least one person gets drunk and falls off a balcony every spring break. So if you drink, do it safely. Designate a driver, and generally avoid drinking near an open window or on a balcony. Another serious threat is sexual assault. The FBI has cautioned students that a serial rapist might be on his way to Panama City, Fla., but

potential attackers lurk everywhere. Watch your drinks while you’re out and don’t accept drinks from strangers. Also, the best thing a friend can do is watch out for the safety of other friends.

Above all, remember to have fun over spring break. Having your credit card stolen because you’re careless is not fun. Drinking so much that you have to have your stomach pumped is not fun. Spending spring break in the hospital is not fun. Waking up next to someone you don’t know is not fun.

What is fun is taking a week’s vacation away from the stress of college. This week, The Gamecock relieves you of the challenge to make your college life productive. Instead, just have a good time.

Gamecock Quotables

“Whatever pain and discomfort we’re about to all undergo out there is really nothing compared to what cancer patients face every minute.”

FRANK CANNING
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEUKEMIA AND LYMPHOMA SOCIETY PRIOR TO FIDLER 5K

“Can you believe it, man? There’s still beer over there.”

GRAHAM MITCHELL
 BARTENDER AT ROCKAWAY ATHLETIC CLUB, WHICH BURNED DOWN TUESDAY

“It didn’t take a gun to a head to make these people vote; it took a knock. We’re talking about students at Carolina, y’all; we all know what they’re like.”

CHRISSEY STAUFFER
 DAVID BORNEMANN’S CAMPAIGN MANAGER

“This is a very important need to bring another dorm on line, so it is moving ahead.”

RUSS MCKINNEY
 USC SPOKESMAN, ON PLANS TO BUILD WEST QUAD

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If you see an error in today’s paper, we want to know. E-mail us at gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com.

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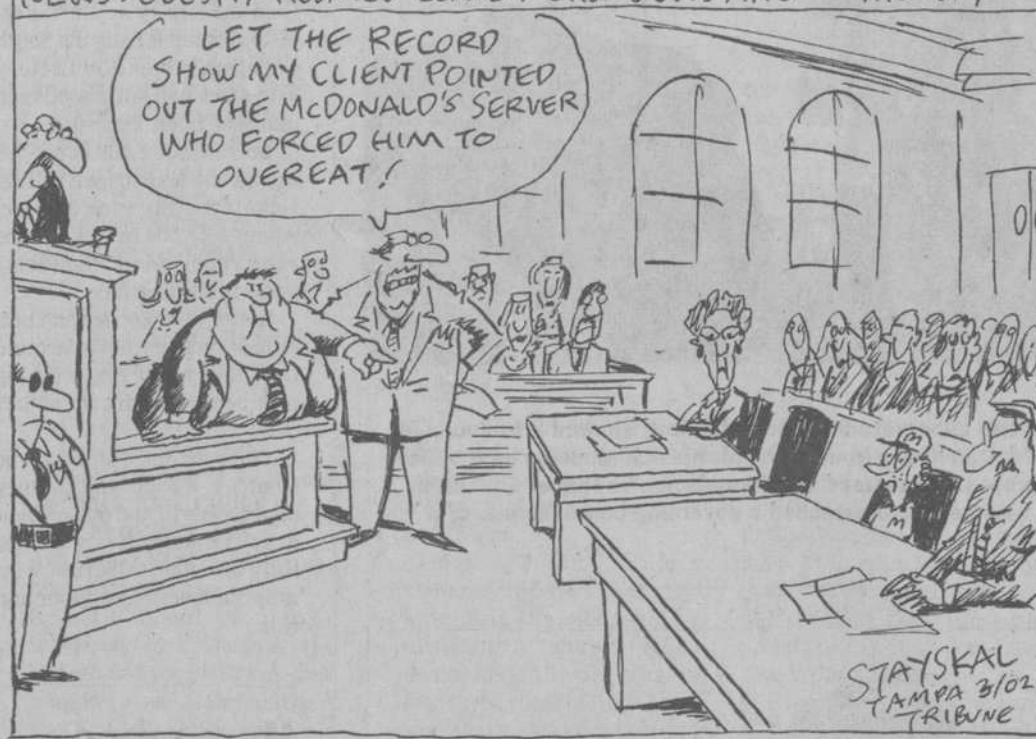
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NEWS: OBESITY-RELATED CLASS ACTION SUITS ARE ON THE WAY



CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

Take care of yourself this spring



BETHANY MITCHELL
 GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

Use campus resources to make sure you're healthy this season.

This month marks the beginning of spring, my favorite season. It’s when men and women start acting crazy just because a little heat gets in the air.

But this season shouldn’t be focused only on the cute guys and girls.

Instead of looking at other people’s bodies all spring, we should also be looking at — and taking care of — our own.

Students on this campus don’t use the resources we have around us. When was the last time you had a physical? If

you’re overweight, and therefore prone to diabetes and heart disease, see the dietitian on campus and hit the Blatt P.E. Center. If you’re scrawny and couldn’t make a muscle if someone paid you, you need to holla at the gym.

Most importantly, if you like to do the nasty, go to the bottom of the Thompson Student Health Center and get the important things you need to wear.

Now don’t get me wrong: I don’t promote premarital sex. But the reality is you’re going to do it anyway. So be protected, not stupid.

For some reason, minorities don’t think STDs, health problems or other life-threatening conditions could ever affect us. Well, if you didn’t know, here’s some startling statistics from the South Carolina African-American HIV/AIDS Council:

- ♦ One of three Americans with AIDS is black.
- ♦ One of four infected men is black.
- ♦ One of two women with AIDS is black.

♦ One of three babies born with the virus is black.

So why do minorities sometimes think they’re exempt? Everyone should be worried about their health. But people get caught up in the moment and think, “He doesn’t look like he has anything,” or “She’s not really nasty, is she?” But, truthfully, you’ll never know.

The Health Center gives free information and confidential testing for STDs.

There’s no excuse not to get checked and do your part to stop a growing epidemic.

Listen, I’m not here to preach. But we need to wake up. Your health is important to me, even if I never meet you.

So check out what this university has to offer. Use your tuition for something bigger than your education: your life.

Get the most out of your college experience, and be healthy this spring.

Mitchell is a third-year electronic journalism student.

IN YOUR OPINION

Politics saved Patel in SG elections

who has more dirt on their record. With the help of Patel’s cronies, this election has successfully ridiculed and eliminated a wonderful and honest person with a clean campaign. Here’s what I have to say about Patel’s “principle, not politics” slogan and his entire cheating campaign: It turns out politics is what really saved the election for him after all. So congratulations, Patel, on your win. Hail to the chief.

ANN ROBSON
 FIRST-YEAR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT STUDENT

Students elected cheating officials

For those of you who have been a victim of incessant campaigning these past few weeks, I would like to shed some light on the intricacies of what Student Government refers to as the “election process.”

As a candidate who won his respective election, I’m in a unique position to give you an insider perspective of the system without having what might be referred to as “sore loser” bias. With this in mind, I can sum up the elections process at USC in two words: corrupt and illegitimate. The actions I’ve witnessed these past two weeks are absolutely mindboggling.

The journey begins with the Student Senate campaign for the College of Liberal Arts. Just hours before voting began on VIP, the individual who would later become the largest vote recipient in the college (Zachery Scott) was caught flagrantly ripping down election posters of his rival candidates as well as a presidential candidate. Despite the fact that a violation was filed, and that the election was even contested based on the grounds of election fraud, the

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Elections Commission made it clear that a candidate can’t get disqualified from a race, no matter how many posters are ripped down or how many witnesses saw the actions take place.

Instead, the entire incident was swept under the rug. Not surprisingly, the elections debacle doesn’t end there. Even in the runoff race, we saw a slew of elections violations once the word got out that a candidate was caught ripping down posters. Not a single action was taken; it was basically open season for a no-holds-barred election. President-elect Ankit Patel capitalized on this by going door to door the night of the election, violating a myriad of election codes. Not surprisingly, this, too, will go unpunished, and David Bornemann will go home a loser because of one reason: He played by the rules.

As for the students here at USC, do you think we elected the best leaders? Not hardly. What we did was elect those individuals who can cheat the best. I think, as a student body, we must all drastically re-evaluate our elections process and send a message that we want the most qualified candidate, not those that can slip through the cracks of justice.

J. D. SHIPMAN
 FIRST-YEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT

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Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words and include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. Bring letters to Russell House 333 or e-mail gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com. The Gamecock reserves the right to edit for libel, style and space. Anonymous letters will not be published. Outside submissions supporting or opposing a candidate or a party in any election will not be published before or the day of an election. Call the newsroom at 777-7726 for more information.

SG SPEAKS

SG should party it up



BROOK BRISTOW
 GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

A party system might get students to actually care about elections.

So when is the win-at-all-costs, steel-cage-match battle that is an election going to end? By your yawning, I sense something: Who actually cares? That seems to be a consensus. We don’t care, and we’re tired of reading about it. That seems to be one thing that people involved with Student Government never seem to get.

Why don’t people care? It’s easy: Democracy is voluntary, and it’s not an existing practice at Carolina. And it’s kind of hard to make people care when campaign teams are on Greene Street being more aggressive than a Zipsheet guy on speed. So let’s talk about reforming the process.

First, let’s have our leaders step up. Every year they remind us why we elected them. And upon evaluation, it always seems to be that voters get the short end of the stick.

Candidates need to be honest. Telling the truth takes bravado, but sometimes little phrases like “Sure, I’ll call,” “Wow, I always wanted one of these” and “Yes, I will take out the trash” are coaxed into our vocabulary so that we don’t breach the contract of social civility.

But it shouldn’t be that hard to do. Candidates shouldn’t only be honest, but they should also be able to take criticism. Or, at the very least, take negative publicity with a 500-pound bag of salt.

Being a candidate means putting yourself out there on display for everyone to see, ridicule and judge. And by people chastising candidates, it does nothing but set off emotional launch codes that leave them sour toward the process and more pissed off than a Kennedy after last call.

Anyone can give their two cents, but you have to give them their due. If someone says something negative about you, walk away from it and let it go.

True, criticism can cut harder than an acid-coated Ginsu knife, but there’s a little thing known as the First Amendment backing up what people say. Tune out things that offend you; if you don’t like what’s on, change the channel.

It’s easy to criticize a campaign. Each candidate has his or her own agenda, and most have a campaign manager and staff who put the student body through the same ordeal every year. However, there is a way out of this vicious cycle.

Candidates should be allowed to run on a ticket — either as a president-vice president pair or as an entire executive branch. Nothing positive comes from having the top two offices oppose each other.

Even if they have different “territory” — the vice president has the Student Senate and the president the Cabinet — a like-minded partnership would be a much more powerful one-two punch.

Think of it as a little bureaucratic handholding that can only lead to better things for this university.

The possibilities are endless. Parties would form, involving more students and creating an efficient SG would be a necessity. If one party fails, another would sweep the next election.

By changing the process, we change the status quo, which is way overdue. It’s time to party up.

Bristow is a fourth-year advertising student and Student Senate president pro tempore.