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IN OUR OPINION

Turn on the Greene light

Walking down Greene Street has been a perilous adventure. The sparse path lighting is so dim in some places that pedestrians essentially must feel their way through the darkness on their way to or from Five Points. But, finally, the Columbia City Council has decided to enhance the lighting on Greene Street, and the improvements are well overdue.

The suggestion to add lighting to Greene Street has cropped up numerous times over the years. Because of the poor lighting, parts of Greene Street have become a hotbed of crime on the USC campus. Students have been attacked and mugged, and Michael Messner, a

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federal prosecutor, was killed a year ago on his way from Five Points to the National Advocacy Center on campus.

The lighting improvement should lessen the criminal activity on Greene Street,

which will make students generally feel safer as they walk around campus after dark.

The sad part is that it took a death to finally goad City Council to remedy the lighting situation.

Moreover, this death occurred a year ago. The problem has been evident for years. It shouldn't take that long to react to a situation that has caused so much crime.

In the future, USC and City Council should work together efficiently to alleviate student concerns around campus, especially when students' safety is at stake. And the changes should be implemented as soon as possible.

Winners and Sinners

NEW MEXICO STATE Coming all the way from Las Cruces just to get their butts kicked. **CLEMSON** Ranked No. 1 in Princeton Review's 345 Best College Rankings in marijuana use and intramural sports. Go Cows ... er ... Tigers! **ARIZONA STATE** Some fraternity members allegedly involved in a sexual scavenger hunt with porn stars. Incriminating videotape catches them with their pants down.

PRO BASEBALL Tempting the fates with yet another strike. Try increasing batting averages instead of salaries for once.

LIBRARY MOLD Infesting Thomas Cooper Library. Are you sure it's not just dust?

DEREK WATSON For missing his court date. See, if you were still a Gamecock, you could've written the date down in your Mortar Board.

STAR TRIBUNE
SOCK

GOBBLEHEADS



Embracing individualism



TERRANCE BEEKS
GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

Risk rejection from the majority; be yourself.

"Don't be fooled by me. Don't be fooled by the face I wear for I wear a mask. I wear a thousand masks; masks that I'm afraid to take off and none of them are me." — Charles C. Finn

The above quote is an excerpt from the poem "Don't Be Fooled By Me." A teacher of mine gave me a copy of the poem while I was in high school. It didn't mean much to me at the time. I most likely stuffed it in my book bag and continued about my business.

Recently, a friend e-mailed the same poem to me. It's funny how past events have a habit of repeating themselves, especially if you choose to ignore them. I gather that both my teacher and my friend thought the poem would help me deal with issues I had tried to ignore. My second read-

ing of the poem really hit home.

I firmly believe we should always reinvent ourselves. We should build upon the foundations from which we were formed in order to improve the quality of our lives and the lives of those around us, even if it means setting ourselves apart from the crowd. I haven't been doing that at all. I wear so many masks that even I have forgotten exactly who I am.

It is our human nature to want to be accepted and to fit in. We are inclined to feel we will be more accepted if we ignore all those things that set us apart from the norm. We strip ourselves of any hint of individualism if it doesn't fall in line with whatever happens to be "in" or "cool" at the time. It seems that our culture embraces diversity, but steers clear of individualism. All people are allowed to partake in the circle, no matter their ethnicity, religion or background, as long as they all dress, act and think alike.

We all wear masks. Masks are our tickets to being accepted and fitting in. Those of us in the minority become part of the majority because of the masks we wear. Some of us wear more masks than others, depending on what we feel we need to cover up. We put forth a front that all is well

within us, and that we are secure and happy, when clearly we are not. We are terrified of exposing our true faces. We cower and hide behind our proud masks for fear of rejection and shame. No one wants to be an outcast. We would rather choose weakness behind a superficial front than being true to ourselves and removing the veil.

I have complied with society and conventional thought for long enough. It's time that I lived according to my beliefs and not behind a mask. I don't like shielding my true self. I can't change the way that I am; believe me, I've tried. I want those closest to me to know me for who I really am, not someone I created in hopes of gaining acceptance and love.

It won't be easy. I understand that I risk rejection, hate and disappointment, but it's time for me to bow out of the parade of masquerades. I am laying mine down. I once heard someone say it's better to be hated for who you are than loved for who you are not. I agree. I encourage you to do the same, whatever the reason you wear your mask. Be true to yourself and to other people.

Beeks is a fourth-year political science student.

Clinton to blame for bad economy



CHRIS FOY

GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

Bush Jr. can't be completely at fault.

The economy is an issue that has always intrigued me. As we approach a new election, I'm fascinated by the argument (brought up mainly by Democrats) that President Bush is the reason our economy is slumping. In fact, I really have to question whether Democrats could have won any election in the past 10 years if they hadn't used the economy as one of their main platforms.

The fact of the matter is the president has little control over the current economy. I can certainly acknowledge that a president's policies will cause fluctuations in the economy — but they won't have immediate effects. But the American people as a whole don't realize this.

People buy into the liberal notion that President Bush Sr. really had control over the mild recession in the early 1990s. People buy into the notion that President Bill Clinton's policies were the reason we had a good economy for most of his tenure. And the most sickening thing is that people don't realize the economy had already begun a downward spiral before George W. ever stepped into office.

I understand that, if the tables were turned, Republicans would probably be making the same accusations, but I still have to question why. Maybe in eight years, we'll have a run-down economy because of some stupid decisions made by President Bush. But to blame him now for things beyond his control is just flat-out ridiculous.

What is he going to do now? Encourage Alan Greenspan, chief of the Federal Reserve Board, to cut interest rates again? Perhaps he can suggest another tax cut. Of course, that solution would automatically be shot down by the same people who frequently are critical of the current economy. He can't control it, at least not right now.

When Greenspan's policies have been in existence for a while, and enough time has passed for them to have had an actual effect on the economy, then, by all means, pick up the pitchforks and burning sticks. But for now, we have to realize it's not up to Bush to make these changes.

What he can do is lay down stricter laws about corporate scandals such as WorldCom and Enron. Or even Martha Stewart and her alleged insider trading.

A large part of our economic slump can't be pulled up until things make a recovery from the post-9/11 hit on the market. What happened in September has made a big difference in the money we spend. There is more hesitation in many markets.

So someone tell me, aside from asking the American people to spend more money, what can President Bush actually do? He could always raise taxes, but that would result in more people holding onto their money.

The president of the United States might be our nation's leader, but sometimes we have to be realistic in our expectations about that office. He might be in charge, but screaming for him to do something about the economy is asking him to do the nearly impossible. He does have an effect, don't get me wrong. We're just not going to see most of his contributions to the economy, probably, until he's out of office. If Democrats want to point the finger at someone for the state of our economy, they should point it at Bill Clinton.

Foy is a fourth-year entrepreneur management student.

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

In an article Wednesday about Bid Day, Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Delta Pi and Delta Zeta were left out of a list of sororities that will be moving to the Greek Village in the next year.

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

ABOUT THE GAMECOCK

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Community Affairs

TO PLACE AN AD

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Offices on third floor of the Russell House.
Editor in Chief: gamecockeditor@hotmail.com
News Desk: gamecockdesk@hotmail.com
Viewpoints: gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com
The Mix: gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com
Sports: gamecocksports@hotmail.com
Online: www.dailygamecock.com
Newsroom: 777-7726
Editor's office: 777-3914

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Mitchell's description of USC "myths" wrong

When did everybody at USC get so negative? I'm referring to the Monday, Aug. 26, edition of The Gamecock, presumably the first edition many incoming freshmen will see.

The "Senior Dispels College Myths" article didn't exactly sell the school. In fact, it made me want to pull a Cobain immediately after reading it.

I hope the author isn't a marketing major. Look, man, I know three years of classes at the Coliseum can make a guy bitter, but hell, you made this place sound more like a concentration camp than a university.

That's why it is my duty to dispel the myths that you created by dispelling the myths that really weren't myths in the first place (thus making them myths, I guess).

People, listen to me now and feel me later: USC is the bomb. I'm talking Hiroshima. You will make lifelong friends. You will learn tons about yourself and become a better person in the process. You will take hundreds of fascinating classes and sleep through them all.

Is parking hard to find? Sure. Do Bates House chicken sandwiches look more like hockey pucks? Of course! But it's all part of the not-so-unique experience that is USC.

And let's not forget the rewards. If it wasn't for the stellar education I received I never would've scored this awesome job where I can not only read the e-mail edition of The Gamecock but type a letter to the editor and listen to "Back

IN YOUR OPINION

Dat Azz Up" while doing so, all on company time!

Was it Shakespeare, or was it Billy Madison who said "Stay here as long as you can. For the love of God, cherish it."

Freshmen, you will love it here, I promise, if not for anything else than to try to explain to your mom on parent's weekend why everyone's wearing shirts that say "You can't lick our Cocks."

To the author of "Senior Dispels College Myths," I say put down those pills, untie that rope from your ceiling rafters, and have a great senior year. I had two of them.

MIKE MONZITTA

COPY WRITER, CLASS OF 2000

Guest football tickets unreasonably priced

I was surprised to learn today, while standing in line for my student football ticket, that validations for guests will not be given out.

I had already picked up my 2002 student football ticket information packet, followed the instructions listed inside for bringing a non-student guest to a USC game (which includes presenting another student's ID and then paying cash to validate that ticket for a guest) and braved the lines in the Russell House, all in the name of Gamecock spirit.

I was told, however, that individual validations for student tickets would not be given out, and anyone wishing to bring guests would have to pay \$154 for a date coupon book (increased apparently from the \$134 listed in the packet).

This "coupon" book would allow me to bring a guest to each football game throughout the year. Problem is, my guest is only coming down for this Saturday's game.

Had I known this would happen, I would not have bothered; this seems to me to be another vain attempt on the part of the university to make more money for an already sold-out season.

I understand that the demand for tickets is high, but I'm not looking to validate a guest for a Tennessee game. I followed procedure and was willing to pay for one ticket.

However, because I can't afford to shell out \$154 for just one game, I guess I will not be showing my support at the Gamecocks' season opener. USC athletics, you just lost two loyal supporters.

CAROLYN PEROZZI

FOURTH-YEAR BIOLOGY/POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT

Want to voice your opinion?

E-mail
gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com

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