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VIEWPOINTS

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IN OUR OPINION

Forget early admissions

This past week, Yale announced it would be dropping its early-decision program, and Stanford quickly followed suit. It's time that other schools do the same and cut out a policy that restricts their ability to build a strong academic class.

As it stands, early admission hurts financially burdened students. Because the policy requires them to attend the first institution they gain acceptance to, students don't have the option to shop around for

High school students should have as many options as possible in their choices of colleges because it's such a critical part of their lives. schools that might offer them better scholarship packages. Moreover, financial burdens hamper a student's ability to go to college. If they don't have the ability to bargain shop, they could find themselves in serious financial trouble before their college careers are over.

In addition to helping financially burdened students, the removal of early-decision programs would allow high-school seniors more time to make one of the most important decisions of their lives. Once a student is accepted to a school through early admission, that student is required to attend it. Yale's and Stanford's new plans allow for students to waive that requirement, and though they can still be accepted early, they won't be obligated to attend that school. High-school students should have as many options as possible in their choices of colleges because it is such a critical part of their lives.

Early admission might be better for the schools' planning, but its removal is a better service to the students.

Winners and Sinners

U.S. SUPREME COURT Denied act that would require public libraries to block pornographic Web sites. First Amendment, perverts are safe. **NEWSPLEX** Newsroom revolution takes its first steps at USC. Well, at least journalism students are excited.

THE J-SPOT Certified sex educator Jay Friedman knows all there is to know about sex. The key to a successful sex life is a cute mullet.

FLORIDA Mass confusion in second straight election has made it official: Florida residents must now pass test to be eligible to vote. **LONGHORNS BASEBALL** Team gets probation for coaching violation. College World Series play looked good last year — a little too good. **"JACKASS" IMITATOR** Fifteen-year-old suffers severe burns after re-enacting movie stunt. Johnny Knoxville is no longer the biggest idiot.

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

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

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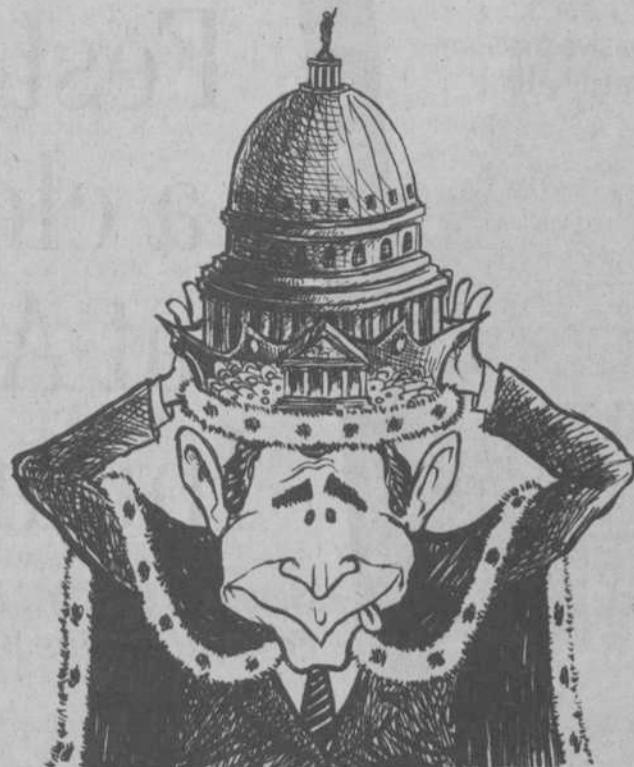
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BEELER '02
The Eagle

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Stress stinks, relaxing works



EDRIN WILLIAMS

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Don't let the end of the semester get you down.

As the end of the semester draws near, college life begins to show its ugly side. For many freshmen, you find yourself in the midst of that overwhelming pain a drowning victim feels as he succumbs to the inevitable. For many sophomores, your rooms reek of marijuana and vodka as you try to escape the agony of last year's freshman experience. Juniors from all over campus flock to the library, but even those hollow, moldy walls cannot keep you from shivering at memories of last year's brush with alcohol poisoning. All the while, seniors laugh at you all and wait for the first chance to sell back books.

If there is anything college has taught me, it would be connected to the idea that, as a student, it is your responsibility to look af-

ter your own best interests. That can mean a lot of things, but at the risk of angering some people, I have the perfect interpretation.

An overwhelming proportion of the student-body population is involved in extracurricular activities. Whether under the umbrella of Student Government, intramural sports, Greek life or a professional organization, few students list class as their solitary obligation.

At about this time each semester, things begin to tighten up. Every professor decides to assign one more test and one more paper to be completed in time for the final. Every organization pulls the reins a little harder and swears the group needs you more than ever. Your boss suddenly decides that your presence is needed for at least two extra hours per day. Last, but perhaps of most probability and consequence, the person with whom you are involved claims that the two of you are at a critical time in your relationship. What the hell?

Don't scream; it does nothing to relieve the stress of the situation. Luckily, I have a practical solution that has been proven effective since 1801. The solution basically says that you have to do what is in your best interest

and let the other things fall where they may.

Since three out of five people here seem genuinely concerned with getting an education before they exit the stage, I would dare to say that academics should hold the trump card on all other interests. Therefore, when the semester tries to suck the life out of you, let the other things take their places in coach. If that means missing a few volunteer hours, so be it. I'm positive that those hours will still be there, whether you fail or pass a class.

If you can't figure out how to study for those tests and make your shift as a refreshment coordinator at Dutch Square Cinema, let the popcorn wait. I don't know too many people who were permanently relegated to serfdom by taking leave from Pizza Hut.

I'm sure that educators everywhere would agree with me. Anyone who would disagree probably is profiting from your time and efforts. There is no better time to take control of time, and I promise that soon you'll realize you can take control of your future, too.

Williams is a fourth-year African-American studies student.

IN YOUR OPINION

Negative ads don't portray democracy

This letter is in response to Phil Watson's Nov. 6 column on negative advertising ("Vitriolic ads are tons of fun"). I appreciated his sense of humor, but it failed to convey the point. I would have given him a big hand, if he had bothered to dig deep into the present-day decline of standards in campaign advertising and come out with an antidote.

The founders of democracy never thought of television. I'm sure in the days before mass media existed, the road to an elective office involved meeting with as many of your constituents as possible, winning debates, attending meetings and shaking hands. But the present-day situation isn't about any of the above competencies. The pathetic standards in campaign advertising, the personal attacks, the absence of any concrete debates, all point to certain palpable conclusions:

1. The "who-cares" attitude among voters has encouraged this poison tree to grow for quite a long time. I remember Craig Kilborn saying: "The big worry for this year's elections is apathy. You know it's a problem when there's a bigger line to see 'Jackass' than there is to vote."
2. A candidate wins or dies based on his or her television advertising. Because it takes a lot of money to do television advertising, those candidates who are rich have a significant advantage over their less-wealthy opponents. And again, who cares whether the rich guy is wise or otherwise.
3. Rather than projecting their own strengths and con-

structive beliefs, candidates are content with incriminating their opponents, thereby forcing people to choose between "the lesser of evils." And the general consensus is that it works and the candidates know that this works, and they will be doing this again and again, unless people realize the truth and stop it from working.

People need to give democracy its true meaning, and they need to realize that the only way to do that is through an active participation in understanding the reality and resist getting carried away by fallacies. We need to pause a bit and ask ourselves this rather odd question — are we learning?

VIJAY SETHURAMAN

SECOND-YEAR CHEMICAL ENGINEERING DOCTORAL STUDENT

Zipsheet new form of urban terrorism

I have some very important news. USC is under attack by a vigilante group of militant enforcers! They are at every corner of USC, forcing their yellow sheets of propaganda on young, impressionable minds. A determined glare is quickly turned into a blank gaze after helpless students read the sheets. The evildoers do not take "No" for an answer, chasing and even diving on students until they are able to force their anti-USC agenda upon the students. Whatever it takes, they go to any length.

I have managed to avoid them: I dove into a thicket of brush seconds before they saw me. Another time, I placed my arms above my head and acted like a tree, frozen until they walked by.

They had no idea. They are

from Zippyvania, and their boss is, well, I guess the guy who drops them off in front of the Russell House in his Honda Accord. The guy who takes about 10 pounds of useless Zipsheets out, hands them to his helper and speeds away, "catching a wheel" in the process.

At first, when they approached me, I would accept my Zipsheet to avoid any awkwardness. But after a while, I started to politely say, "No, thank you." Doesn't matter; one guy shoved one in my face and said, "Zipsheet, sir!" after I already said, "No, thank you." Students have enough to worry about on their way to class.

One guy was chased all the way from the Russell House to the science building, where he was caught and beaten for hours by a gang of Zipsheet dudes until he took a Zipsheet. OK, I'm exaggerating. I dread walking on campus and seeing a glimpse of yellow up ahead, ready to say, "Here you go. Sir. Sir? Zipsheet!"

One day, I was given so many Zipsheets, I started handing them out to other students! I had become what I had long feared. Just kidding.

Seriously, are these guys the only legitimate solicitors able to be on campus?

If they are, USC should ensure ways of dealing with the students are improved. And, it's not just the attitudes of the "Zippers," but the fact that their boss encourages them to do it. Dr. Sorensen, protect your students from being annoyed.

TODD HAM

THIRD-YEAR BIOLOGY STUDENT

Submission Policy

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words and include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. E-mail letters to gamecockviewpoints@hotmail.com. Letters will be edited. Anonymous letters will not be published. Call the newsroom at 777-7726 for more information.

Money assures victory for GOP



TYLER JONES

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Big Money, names come out on top in elections.

It wasn't a coincidence that I was ravaged by a rare case of "swine flu" after this past Tuesday's election. I found myself in bed with a triple-digit fever and a swollen face that resembled Phyllis Diller at her best. The Big Money had stomped its way to victory, which was no surprise to me, but the gruesome truth of it all was probably what sent me to the infirmary.

Slowly, but surely, my senses returned to normal and the incessant nose blowing was replaced with the usual seething distrust for the establishment. The vapid NyQuil dreams had morphed into nightmares of Donnie Rumsfeld running naked on the White House lawn, while Dubya and Dickie Cheney watched reruns of "Knots Landing" in their underwear, with World War III raging in the Middle East. It was enough to make an honest man like myself turn evil without hesitation.

Fortunately, I still cling to my somewhat rational sense of being. I remembered that politics are nothing more than a class war played out in cycles. The rich versus the poor or the elite versus the intelligent, it's all the same — that is, until the last dozen years or so. The robust economy of the '90s, coupled with the new threat of terrorism, has caused a shift in political thinking across America. And let's not forget that the Republican Party has a virtual lock on charismatic or name-worthy politicians.

If all this banter is true about how "stupid the American public is," then there should be some merit to the fact that recognizable candidates fare better than unknown candidates do. Republicans are sending big names into the political arena and winning: George Jr., Jeb, Fred Thompson, and now it looks as though the Terminator will be California governor.

The prime example of this "New Party of Lincoln" is the Round Mound of Rebound, Sir Charles Barkley. The outspoken former NBA superstar has taken public his political ideas on more than one occasion. Barkley has threatened to run for the governorship of Alabama more times than he has threatened opposing fans. And though Barkley is nothing more than a neophyte in the world of politics, his credo deserves proper analysis. Barkley is a symbol of the New Republican: wealthy, young and completely repulsed with political correctness.

This is not to say that the older, less affluent America has remained in stasis. These are the individuals who flock to Bill O'Reilly and buy Viagra by the bushel. The simple fact of the matter is that there has been a birth of a New Republican who has core beliefs of fiscal conservatism and a much more moderate social agenda. These are 30-something men and women who probably listen to Eminem; pay their taxes; claim to believe in a Christian deity, but don't attend church; plan on, or are, raising several children; watch and read the news daily; and think that being a Democrat is the most insane choice a person could make.

Of course, I could be wrong and horribly askew on my stereotyping, but this New World we live in needs new rules and new politics. Just watch. The Democrats will start to shake things up rather quickly. Perhaps Santa Claus can endorse Tom Daschle's presidential campaign this holiday season in hopes of spicing things up for the Dems.

Jones is a graduate student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.