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VIEWPOINTS

ONLINE POLL

Does PETA have a legitimate point about our mascot this time?
DOES IT EVER? 50%
ROOSTERS CAN POKE OUT YOUR EYES 7%
WHAT'S THAT NOISE I HEAR AGAIN? 43%

IN OUR OPINION

Smoking is still a right

A Housing Department policy to make all residence halls smoke free will begin next year, with little opposition from students. This broad-reaching plan takes important autonomy away from the students.

It won't be up to students and their roommates anymore to determine if they will agree to smoking in their rooms — they simply won't be allowed to smoke inside. Preston College students have had something to say about this, but they are the only

Students should be allowed to determine what goes on and what doesn't, barring illegal activities, in their rooms. ones. They believe they will be exempt because their residence hall is a residential college, but a specialized living situation shouldn't be the reason they wouldn't be affected. Students should be allowed to determine what goes on and what doesn't, barring illegal activities, in their rooms.

The issue isn't about smoking, but about students having the right to set policies that affect their individual rooms and lives. The policy disallows a lifestyle habit that is perfectly legal. The new policy is meant to give nonsmokers a smoke-free environment, but with the current roommate contracts, no nonsmoker should have to deal with that already. They just tell their roommate they're not interested, sign the contract and the smoker goes outside.

All on-campus students, not just smokers and smoker-sympathizers, should fight for their right to choose policies for their residence halls.

Gamecock Quotables

"At times, aspects of our past are not flattering, but we should embrace and acknowledge times of difficulty and tension and learn from them."

BOBBY DONALDSON
USC PROFESSOR URGING USC STUDENTS TO OPEN RACIAL DIALOGUE

"We're trying to get everybody's heads up and moving on to next week. We have to look forward to Clemson because it will make or break our season."

DEANDRE EILAND
USC DEFENSIVE BACK ON BEING OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE USC-CLEMSON GAME

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

In Wednesday's corrections, the actor playing Donald should have been identified as Heaton Tate, not Maxwell Highsmith.

In an article Wednesday about the senior football players' rivalry with Clemson, USC's left guard should have been identified as Cedric Williams.

In a football caption in Wednesday's sports section, USC punter Tyler Dean's name was misspelled.

In a column in The Mix on Wednesday, Carroll O'Connor's name was misspelled in a caption.

In a graphic on Wednesday about the memorable moments in the USC-Clemson rivalry, the score of the game in 2001 was 20-15. The Gamecock regrets the errors.

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

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CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

Purple and orange exposed



BROOK BRISTOW
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What everyone should know about Clemson.

So, maybe it's just me, but I think the only thing Clemson ever did right as a university, if you can call it that, was to choose its colors. The marriage between purple and orange is a perfect representation of the school. Purple, of course, being the color of royalty, and orange being the color of convicts on a chain gang.

You know, few schools get Gamecock fans' blood boiling like Clemson. Oh, sure, there are the morons in the mountains at the University of Tennessee and the "cesspool of the South" at the University of Georgia, but Clemson is in a league of its own. So what is it that makes Clemson so rancid? Well, most Carolina fans and students will give several responses. They'll start with the dirt roads on campus to help security with the occasional runaway truck, the trac-

tors with personalized license plates for the football team, the custom-made overalls for the coaching staff and fans, and something about the Clemson debacle in the College World Series. So you'll get a variety of answers from Gamecocks.

But surely there is more to this than meets the eye. Well, in reality, there isn't really. Besides having one of the most common mascot names in the country, Clemson also suffers from a Georgia-and-Auburn complex. But which is worse? This is a school that is so paranoid, even Woody Allen is jealous.

Because of these complexes, Clemson even has a pet rock. You see, Clemson didn't have many friends as a kid and had to imagine its friends. Now, this might be news to some Carolina fans, but the rock is apparently a memorial where Clemson enters the stadium fans rub it for good luck. It has nothing to do with the mental capacity of certain Tiger players.

So what is Clemson, exactly? Well, to answer simply, Clemson is a mecca for people without teeth. It's ground zero for zeroes. It's a place where, when something bad happens, you have to tell the dog to look away. It's a place where plastic reindeer migrate for the winter. It's a place

where "Cotton-Eyed Joe" is playing 24/7/365 on the jukebox at Tiger Town Tavern. It's a place where "The Farmer's Almanac" is more important and vital to a collegiate education than are literary classics, such as "Pride and Prejudice," "Moby Dick," "Great Expectations," or even the instruction manual to George Foreman's Lean Mean Grilling Machine. It's a place where the Wrangler jeans are so tight that when you try to turn, the metal tongs at the top of the zipper will pull themselves apart, causing the belt buckle, which is the size of a serving platter, to break and hurl itself at you harder than a Randy Johnson fastball.

Finally, here are the two ground rules for Saturday night:

1. Gov. Hodges: Even though the game might be on ESPN for whatever reasons, there is no reason for you to proclaim Saturday another "ESPN Gameday Day" throughout the great state of South Carolina.
2. Clemson fans: Just relax, have a good time and try to enjoy yourselves. Before you know it, the game will be over and the Gamecocks will be bringing home a victory faster than Tommy Bowden's coaching career went by.

Bristow is a fifth-year advertising student.

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Lessons learned outside of class



STEPHANIE THREET
GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

Friends and family can be great teachers, too.

I've only been a student here for a couple of months. But I've learned so much here — and not just in the classrooms. The lessons I've learned about family, friends, love and life in general have been lessons that don't even compare to the lectures I've been to.

The most important lesson I've learned is that your family will always be there — they'll always be a part of you. There will always be a place to go home to for Thanksgiving. My brother will always be my best friend, even if I don't see him as much as I used to. Mommy and Daddy will always take care of me when the rest of the world doesn't seem to want me to succeed. Friends will come and go. The ones who stick around — despite their sororities and fraternities or busy schedules — are the ones who will stick around forever; they're the ones you can always count on. They're the ones who remind you of family.

Some friends you don't see often, even if they're minutes away. Life and busy schedules just don't let it happen. But as soon as you both get back to your hometown, she's the first person you call. But some high-school friends don't get to share the same college as you, and they get holiday custody.

Friends come in different forms; some stick around longer than others, and some will always be there, just a little farther away. Distance becomes an excuse. It only gets in the way of relationships if it is allowed.

Luckily, I've found a relationship that exists only 10 steps away from me. After getting out of a long-term relationship only two weeks after moving into the University Commons, I went to meet my neighbors.

That night, I met my new obsession — he stands at 6 feet, 4 inches, with beautiful brown eyes that adore me and big arms that feel so right around me — so right it scares me. Love doesn't show up and reveal a face you dreamed of; it brought something to me that was more beautiful than I had ever imagined.

I learned from my cousin — who just started serving at a restaurant again — to always tip your waitress fairly. They don't get minimum wage. I learned from my psychology professor that rewards sometimes work better than punishment. I learned from my grandma to always stand tall and keep good posture. It makes you look more important, and it makes you feel better. I've learned from my father that diamonds in the rough truly exist. I learned from Mommy that you shouldn't be gun-shy — follow your heart and don't be scared. I learned that loyalty pays off, but leadership is important, too.

I've learned for myself to make life goals — just ordinary goals: Before retirement, buy husband car of his dreams; be published in three major papers; change my car's oil every 3,000 miles; be in a movie; learn how to play poker; take an alphabetical road trip (Amarillo, Boston, Chicago, Denver).

I'm taking this trip one day at a time and not planning much else. I've learned you can't plan your wedding without knowing who the most important part of it is. You can't name your children until you look in their eyes.

Only a semester here, and I feel as I've learned something every day — in and out of the classroom.

Threet is a second-year public relations student.

IN YOUR OPINION

Jones doesn't quite understand politics

This letter is in response to Tyler Jones' column ("Money assures victory for GOP," Nov. 13). While reading the column, I kept wondering whether Jones was going to start writing anything worthwhile and halfway intelligent, as opposed to his incoherent, unfounded babble.

It seems to me that he is just sore that the Democrats did not fare as well in the recent elections as their Republican counterparts. From the article's title, I expected Jones to make excuses for the Democrats' poor showing that dealt with the amount of money Republicans spent on campaigning or something else along those lines.

Instead, Jones talked about dreaming of President Bush and Vice President Cheney in their underwear. It sounds like Tyler Jones has a personal problem to me.

Jones describes politics as a war of the "rich versus the poor or the elite versus the intelligent," as if there were no wealthy Democrats or no intelligent Republicans. For that matter, he is implying that there are no poor Republicans and that Democrats are intelligent in the first place.

Furthermore, Jones makes an absolutely inane statement about Republicans, "sending big names to the political arena and winning," and then he proceeds to toss out a few names: "George Jr., Jeb, Fred Thompson, et cetera."

First of all, I am not aware of any politicians named "George Jr.," you must be referring to

President George W. Bush.

Second, these Republican politicians obtained notoriety by making a name for themselves in other political roles; it's logical that successful politicians gain name recognition and continue to succeed.

Third, even if Republicans were sending people into the "political arena" simply because of their names, Democrats would be hypocritical to complain and point fingers — ever heard of a family named Kennedy?

I, for one, wouldn't put any of my money on a Democratic resurgence just yet, especially if Mr. Jones is representative of the party.

I cringe at the fact that Jones is a graduate student in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications; please don't tell me that means I'm going to have to see his writing — and I use the term very loosely — somewhere other than The Gamecock after he graduates.

Personally, I think we might have found our next "Toolbox of the Week" in one Mr. Tyler Jones.

MATT GEARY
SECOND-YEAR CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDENT

Local shops offer more individuality

I have admired Ms. Baab's musings all semester; most all of them have given me thoughts of responding, but I can procrastinate no more. Her most recent work strikes too deep a chord within.

I would encourage students to take advantage of the local flavor that still exists in Columbia and in their hometowns. Check out the locally owned specialty shops, boutiques, restaurants and record shops in Five Points and the Vista. These places offer premier goods with something national chains usually can't offer: top-flight service and pride.

Support the hard-working, ingenious entrepreneurs who make our communities unique. The sense of pride and community that comes from these relationships is priceless.

JUSTIN NORTHCUTT
SECOND-YEAR BUSINESS STUDENT

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