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IN OUR OPINION

The state of the governor

There is an increasing possibility that Gov. Mark Sanford could be called up as a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve to participate in a war effort. The timing of this — at the beginning of Sanford's term as governor of South Carolina — is perilous for the state's near future.

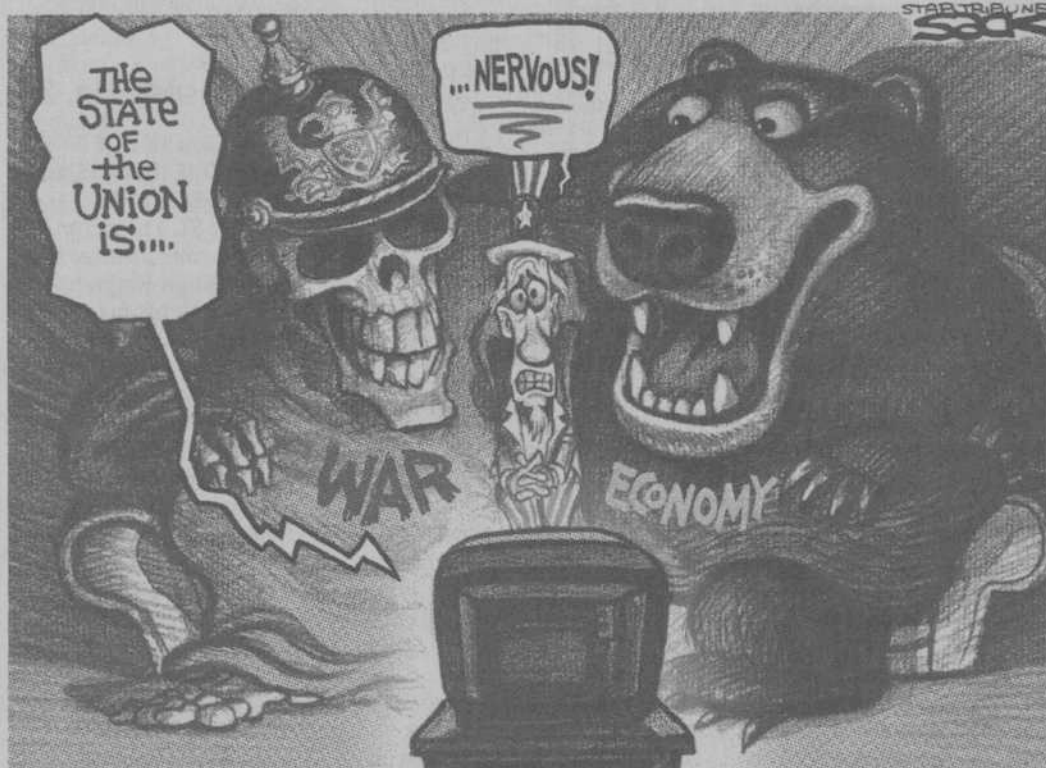
Although Sanford's decision is admirable in that he is keeping his word, he gave South Carolina his promise that he would lead the state, not a reserve

With the state government still in transition, losing Sanford for any extended amount of time could be a blow to his administration's goals.

unit. With the state government still in transition, losing Sanford for any extended amount of time could be a blow to his administration's goals. Being a governor and a reservist is a dual obligation that might prove risky.

Ideally, the state should never have had to face this precarious situation; Sanford should have made his choice before he ever decided to become South Carolina's leader.

But now, with Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer in position to potentially act as governor in Sanford's place, it is imperative that Sanford discuss any and all important issues that South Carolina could face when and if he is called to duty. Bauer's level of preparation in such an event could make the difference in how easy Sanford's absence is to bear.



CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

Bush's speech proved nothing



TYLER JONES
 GAMECOCKVIEWPOINTS@HOTMAIL.COM

The State of the Union didn't address much.

Being addicted to big-time politics is not a pretty sight. At least your basic crackhead or heroin-addled fool receives distant sympathy. This is not the case for a political junkie. Being castigated from the depths of society for being more excited about the State of the Union than about the Super Bowl or "American Idol" is a lonely and hideous ride to the bottom, but it is one I will gladly take for a fix of King Bush mispronouncing three-syllable words.

Not surprisingly, the State of the Union rose to prominence like most grandiose political soires. The television revolutionized this yearly public-relations event between the CEO of America and his 270 million constituents. In fact, the term "State of the Union" was not known until the wheelchair wonder, Franklin D. Roosevelt, coined the phrase in his 1935 address to Congress. In 1947, Harry Truman took the show to the TV screen, where it has languished ever since.

Big George Washington delivered the first State of the Union way back on Jan. 8, 1790, in New York City, but it did not return as a public event until Woody Wilson revived it from a printed speech to a public rambling in 1913. Now, 90 years later, it is a huge extravaganza for the multitude of networks and the 50 million or so Americans who decide to tune in.

Tuesday's speech was widely anticipated to be the unveiling of proof against Saddam or the Bush monarchy's reasons for war. Bush did everything short of naming actual proof and made some interesting points that need analysis.

First, Bush made several strange remarks about the environment, even saying that the possibility of hydrogen-fueled vehicles is going to be extensively researched. Second, the president gave a stirring soliloquy about how America needs to provide medication for AIDS victims in Africa.

Now, this is all well and good, but is there any validity to these uncharacteristic statements? Is the emperor trying to appeal to our sensitive war protesters out there with this eco-humanitarian approach? I, for one, am not buying this nonsense. But I am placing a bet that King George II is going to slash taxes for the numerous millionaires out there. And why shouldn't he? Last time I checked, the Bush family was included among the more than 225,000 millionaires who would receive big-time checks in the mail courtesy of Uncle Sam.

But let's not turn this into a class conflict or a partisan debate; let's focus on the facts. First, America is going to war with Iraq. Second, no matter what the truth is, Bush has committed himself and America to war and must follow through or risk losing face with not only the American public, but with the international community as well.

That, my friends, is George's biggest mistake. Shockingly, I am not against ousting Saddam Hussein. I am, however, against the Bush administration's handling of this whole fiasco. By bullying Iraq and using threats, Bush has not only put his name on the line, but he has actually come off as the villain to countries that should be our allies. By using brains instead of brawn, Bush could have unilateral support, but no one has ever suspected this administration of having assiduous resolve.

Jones is a graduate student in the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies.

Not a child, not yet an adult



ALLYSON BIRD
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It's hard to know how to behave when you're 18.

I was on the phone with my parents the other night, complaining to them about one thing or another, when my dad said: "Allyson, don't give me this teen-angst crap. I've got one thing to say to you: 18. You are 18, and I am 52. That's all I'm going to say."

And that was all he had to say.

I always tell my parents that I hope my life is half as interesting as theirs have been, traveling the country like gypsies during the '70s. They have stories of New York City bars, voodoo in New Orleans and crazy people from town to town.

But then I realize that, when they were 18, they were still stuck in a small coal-mining town in Pennsylvania and had traveled less than I have.

Life is only beginning. And while many of my peers are already thinking about settling down, I can only think that they're settling for less. If you don't see the rest, how can you know that you've found what will make you happiest?

The therapy for my own teen angst is, logically, to pretend that I'm not a teenager, and to go to the circus. My four friends and I were definitely the oldest people there without children of our own, but since the circus gives a student discount, I figured everyone else had just forgotten to come.

I know what you're thinking: People in grades K-12 are students, too. Don't ruin my world, OK?

Watching three rings of colorful costumes, exotic animals and superhuman dexterity, I was pleased to find I was still captivated by something that had touched me as a child. Perhaps I even got more out of it this time. While the single-digit-age folk are still concerned most with the snow cones and glow sticks, those of us with a little more worldly knowledge can lend it to our appreciation.

As an elementary-school student, I never wondered about the performers' salaries. I was

never curious whether Democrats had ever raised a stink about the clearly partisan idolatry of the elephant. I never noticed the great bodies the male performers have under their glittery tights and vests.

And I never wondered what it would be like to meet someone in a bar and say: "You're a lawyer? How nice. Me, oh, I'm the girl in the hot-dog costume from the circus. ... No, you can't buy me a drink. I'm actually with the midget over there."

Not that I think about those things now, or anything.

I am 18 years old: barely an adult, but just old enough to be treated like one. I am 18, barely started on the path of life, but far enough in to take a few wrong turns and young enough to follow the bread crumbs back and start over. I am 18, and I am steeped in the possibilities of what I can do with my life.

If this journalism thing doesn't work out, I can study something new or search myself and the world until I find my real passion.

Or I can even join the circus.

Bird is a first-year print journalism student.

Gamecock Quotables

"This is probably the best thing to happen to Tampa. Maybe now this will put us on the map as a real city."

TANIA STABLEIN
 BUCCANEERS FAN ON THE TEAM'S WINNING SUPER BOWL XXXVII

"This country has many challenges. We will not deny, we will not ignore, we will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, other presidents and other generations."

GEORGE W. BUSH
 PRESIDENT ON THE SITUATION IN IRAQ IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

"Saddam has not been compliant with weapons inspections. Now, we've found chemical weapons in clear breach of the U.N., and that justifies war."

CHRIS DICKSON
 FIRST-YEAR POLITICAL-SCIENCE AND ECONOMICS STUDENT ON THE POSSIBLE WAR WITH IRAQ

"It was too much drama, and it ended up making us look like a joke."

TYLER ODOM
 CRIMINAL-JUSTICE SENATOR ON ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT ANKIT PATEL

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

The caption for the lead photo in The Mix on Wednesday should have stated that "Where do Flies Go in Winter?" is a fictional spy novel that draws from the author's military experiences.

The Gamecock regrets the error.

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

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Bush is a threat to reproductive rights

Does it seem ironic to anyone else that a president who has no qualms about recklessly bombing Afghanistan and who is champing at the bit for an excuse to invade Iraq has declared a Sanctity of Human Life Day?

Bush should say what he really means: "Paving the Road to Overturning the Roe v. Wade Decision." The law that guarantees women reproductive freedom has become increasingly endangered since Bush took office. And if re-elected, he'll get to appoint as many as four new U.S. Supreme Court justices, all of whom will be anti-abortion, which translates to pro-fetus and anti-woman.

Life is more than a physical existence, independent of another human being. Certain things are necessary to make it worth living — such as the freedom to make choices that determine the course of one's life — e.g. whether to terminate a pregnancy.

Morality debates aside, it is absolutely necessary that abortion remain legal. Outlawing it would put scores of women at the mercy of amateurs with vacuum cleaners, coat hangers and rusty knives — it is ludicrous to assume that just because abortion is illegal, it won't happen.

A legal, professional first-trimester abortion is located somewhere between having a mole removed and liposuction on the complexity scale, while a dangerous, illegal abortion can leave a woman sterile and permanently scarred.

Until the point of viability, a developing fetus is an extension of its mother's body. A woman's

body is her own, period. The Supreme Court has no right to try to take control of it. Everyone, especially women, should fight to refuse to let it.

KATHRYN MICHAELIS
 FIRST-YEAR ENGLISH STUDENT

'Kindness' won't kill tyrants in Iraq

I am writing to address the disturbing trend of student protests against possible military action against Iraq. Joey Oppermann appears to be the oft-quoted poster child for this movement in The Gamecock.

Those opposed to military action simply fling criticism at the administration's policy while failing to provide any form of feasible alternative. Mr. Oppermann proposes that we "kill them with kindness," through the implementation of some form of "a modern-day Marshall Plan to provide the Iraqis with supplies."

Perhaps Mr. Oppermann has yet to study the Marshall Plan and the events leading up to it. In 1945, the United States had just succeeded in leading a multilateral coalition force to remove from power a regime led by a ruthless dictator with no respect for human rights. Adolf Hitler ordered the gassing and execution of an ethnic minority.

Hitler was also pouring immense amounts of money into the first nuclear-weapons-development program. Only after removing Hitler from power was the United States capable of implementing the rebuilding that took place under the Marshall Plan.

There are appalling parallels between the regime of

Saddam Hussein and that of Adolf Hitler. Hussein has repeatedly ordered the use of chemical weapons against both the Kurds in the north of Iraq and the Shi'a Muslims in the south. It is because of these past transgressions that the no-fly zones exist to prevent future occurrences. To this day, oddly similar to his denial of possession and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, Saddam denies any of these well-documented attacks. It is obvious that Mr. Oppermann, along with the rest of the anti-war movement, has failed to examine the facts available in the public domain.

It is difficult to comprehend how students such as Mr. Oppermann are able to claim to be in favor of what is best for the people of Iraq while simultaneously supporting the continued rule of a man who has spent \$2 billion on private palaces while providing his people with mustard gas rather than bread, medicine or water.

In addition, I encourage everyone to educate themselves before assuming a position in this important public debate. The British government has produced a report detailing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs that is easily accessible on the Internet at www.ukonline.gov.uk/featurenews/iraqdossier.pdf.

JAMES WHITTINGHAM
 FOURTH-YEAR MATHEMATICS STUDENT

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