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VIEWPOINTS

ONLINE POLL

Should USC discontinue its "Cocks" merchandise?
YES 15%
NO 81%
I DON'T CARE 4%

IN OUR OPINION

Fighting for USC's merit

A Rutgers University survey found that 38 percent of college students have participated in the cut-and-paste style of online plagiarism in the past year.

Almost half of those students did not consider this plagiarism, which means taking from another's work and passing it off as one's own.

The Carolinian Creed says, among other things, "I will practice personal and academic integrity." This is meant to be the cornerstone of the university.

However, plagiarism is also a severe crime, and the real world doesn't accept it. In virtually all

USC needs a zero-tolerance policy against plagiarism to combat the continuing threat to the university's character and credibility.

professions, whether you're writing for a newspaper or working for a business, getting caught can cost you your job and possibly your career.

If a student is caught plagiarizing at USC, several things can happen.

Punishment could be left up to the professor, which could

mean failing the class, or the administration could step in, which could mean a warning, suspension or expulsion.

Plagiarism is not going to go away by itself, and this current system is too open-ended. USC needs a zero-tolerance policy to combat the continuing threat to the university's character and credibility.

But professors shouldn't go into search-and-destroy mode when grading papers. Students shouldn't suffer from a case of mistaken duplication. Rampant plagiarism is a testament to laziness and immaturity, and students need to rise above it.

Gamecock Quotables

"I mean, literally, I was like, 'I want my mommy,' but I told myself, 'I'll just stay here one more day' ... It was tough dealing with the little hellions I taught."

KEITH WEST
PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER ON HIS FIRST FOREIGN SERVICE PROJECT

"It's not rocket science. It's very easy to see incoherence, disparity of writing style."

MARY ANN BYRNES
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS ASSOCIATE DEAN EXPLAINING THE EASE OF FINDING PLAGIARISM IN STUDENT PAPERS

"We've just got to hope that nobody will be releasing the worm over the weekend."

RONNI WILKINSON
USC COMPUTER SERVICES INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECURITY OFFICER REFERRING TO THE CONTINUING THREAT OF THE NACHI WORM TO USC COMPUTERS

"We would've had to play a perfect game to come up with a win down here, and we certainly didn't do it."

LOU HOLTZ
USC HEAD COACH ON USC'S LOSS TO GEORGIA ON SATURDAY

GAMECOCK CORRECTIONS

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

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TO PLACE AN AD



CARTOON BY MARY PINCKNEY WATERS/THE GAMECOCK

Foreign policy needs change



PATRICK AUGUSTINE
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Religion, politics make for strange bedfellows.

America has, since Israel's inception, been a driving force within Middle Eastern politics. While this is primarily because of our vested interest in stable oil prices, a vital component of our economic engine, the rise of the Christian rights' influence in the Republican party has given American politics a new reason to maintain our long-standing policy of unconditional support for the Jewish state. Indeed, the current repolarization of domestic politics means the two dominant political parties in our nation will once again be looking to their core constituencies to carry the day in November of next year.

This can only mean that Carl Rove and Co. will reaffirm our president's support of Israel's "special status" over the next year in an attempt to endear himself to his

"base" voters who are self-defined religious ultraconservatives — who have felt alienated by the administration's (admittedly conservative) stance on everything from gay rights to stem cell research.

What this means, unfortunately, is that our policy toward Israel is informed by a narrow segment of society that thinks a stable Jewish state is the first step towards the fulfillment of end-of-time prophecy. Strange political bedfellows result, and while I won't suggest that Jews in the United States, who traditionally identify ideologically with the Democratic party, would ever immigrate en masse to the GOP, there is increasingly more support under the banner of the elephant than the ass for Zionist causes.

Our current occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan compound the problem and virtually ensure there is no unified American support for a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, only lip service to an idea without measured steps toward it.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons Democratic presidential hopeful Howard Dean's pronouncement last week that both sides in the conflict should be equally treated at the bargaining table brought so much interest from the news media and ire from his opponents. Fellow candidate

Joseph Lieberman properly identified it as a departure from the stated U.S. policy that is over 50 years old; considering how well that policy has worked in creating a mutually acceptable peace, the time may be now to consider alternatives.

It is to Dean's credit that he had the courage to say as much to a party with a large Jewish donor base, although Lieberman's presence in the primary battle might mean that Democrats are freer to articulate an alternate position when it comes to near east policy, a fact which would go a long way to reverse the oft-repeated falsehood in the right-wing Arab press that American foreign policy is dictated by a powerful Jewish minority.

Last week's Sept. 11 anniversary confirms that the American pursuit of foreign policy built on domestic convenience does not achieve the aims of worldwide justice and thus sows the seeds of resentment, whose malevolent blooms could be seen that morning two years now gone. Working for equity around the globe ensures peace — for Americans, Palestinians and Israelis — no matter their religious affiliations or political beliefs.

Augustine is a fourth-year political-science student.

IN YOUR OPINION

Edwards protesters embarrass USC

We were both shocked and appalled by the attitudes and behaviors of a group of students during John Edwards' presidential announcement.

Edwards came from a small town to our university to announce his candidacy for President of the United States. Certain unacceptable behaviors were displayed by several supporters of the Bush camp during his speech. Not only was this behavior rude, it was a complete embarrassment to the university. Those protesting Edwards (while wearing university apparel) were televised shouting comments such as "Communist!" and "Go home!"

John Edwards has a First Amendment right to speak here, and they have the right to protest, but under no circumstance do they have the right to be rude. We are in college to be educated; they should act like it. Such negative portrayals of the University should not be tolerated.

KATIE BECK

FIRST-YEAR PRINT JOURNALISM STUDENT

ANNA FOX

SECOND-YEAR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES STUDENT

Readership program has plans to grow

I want to assure any concerned students that the readership survey will be moved to

several other areas after the four-week survey period. In order to get the largest survey amount, we needed to place the survey points in residence halls with a large flow of students. I am currently working on getting other places on campus approved for future placements of newspapers. I would like to place stands in the Russell House, business administration, liberal arts and other academic buildings, depending on the amount of funding we can use.

In the beginning, the areas with papers may be limited, but I hope to increase this program so all areas of campus can benefit from these newspapers. I have contacted RHA in hopes they will assist in this program to bring the newspapers into the residence halls.

If you enjoy the benefits from the readership program, please let the Office of Student Government know, so that we can show the administration that this is a program that students want at USC. I have gotten some very positive responses and I am happy to hear that students are in favor of this program. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me!

KATIE DREILING

STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT

Engineering school has fixable flaws

I am a student in the school of engineering. I would like to recognize the effort of the faculty, staff and students of engineering, who try to keep our school as advanced as possible.

In order to reach that goal, I would like to mention some points that bother not just me, but all of my friends. These points should have already been noticed.

There is often a lack of paper in the printers, and that causes problems. I went the other day to print something important for a class and did not find any. I went to most of the labs, and still nothing. Papers are not that expensive, and I think I pay for them as well. It is a part of the tuition, right? Besides, if one of the students exceeds the limit of 500 pages, he has to bring a pack of 500 pages plus 200 more. The 300 remaining are considered a cost for the toner. We pay a lab fee every semester. What is that for?

This past summer I was working on a computer project when the power went out. I lost what I had been working on; as a result, I had to do it again. It took me much time and physical effort and I had to talk to our professors about it, and the lateness affected our grade.

It's an electrical engineering school; why does the power keep going off? Why isn't there a spare power supplier? And it's a computer engineering school too; how come there is no software for automatic backup? This is our school, actually our second home, and our future depends on it. I'm saying this for the sake of improvement and making the engineering school competitive in the United States, so let's try to overcome these slight issues.

AHMED ALSAIDI

THIRD-YEAR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING 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 gamecockopinions@hotmail.com. Letters will be edited. Anonymous letters

Who's afraid of the scary RIAA?



RACHAL HATTON
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Recording industry's solution isn't the best.

It's becoming apparent who the true enemies to freedom are: grandfathers, 12-year-old girls and college students around the country. They are ruining the economy with their thievery and blatant misuse of the Internet and must be stopped.

In a time when our president has warned about excessive litigation, lawsuits are popping up like hotcakes. The culprits are users of music-downloading applications who have been stealing songs instead of buying records. Some record labels are reducing the cost of CDs with the hopes lower prices will stimulate sales. Why didn't industry leaders think of this years ago? Such foresight would have meant music downloading technologies wouldn't have gotten so big in the first place. That's the basic law of supply and demand. The profiles of music downloaders show that only 8 percent of downloaders have more than 1,000 files, but that 8 percent composes 56 percent of 11.1 billion downloaded files.

I understand what the industry's big hoopla is all about. But they don't seem overly concerned about the artists whose music is being "stolen." That's one fallacy I could do without. These big businesses care only about their profit margin being eaten away. Overall, the RIAA reports industry losses of \$4.2 billion annually. That's quite a chunk of change.

But it seems that for the majority of users, downloading a few songs from an album is actually a stimulant to record sales. You download, you sample, you like, and you buy. I don't see any real problems there.

The problem isn't "thievery" — it's the way the RIAA is handling the lawsuit issue. The RIAA is suing 261 people for up to \$150,000 per song, and the people they're going after makes them look more like bullies than defenders of copyright justice. I've done the math. For example, if somebody downloads 2,000 songs, and that averages out to be 140-something albums. Multiply that by \$14 and you've got over \$2,000 missing from industry coffers. It just seems a little unfair of them to sue little Brianna LaHara for downloading old-school Madonna and the classic "If You're Happy And You Know It, Clap Your Hands."

Suing old men who claim to not know how to use a computer is not aiding their intent. Subpoenaing universities and insisting they tattle on students just makes them look silly and manipulative. Music shouldn't just be about money-making. It's nice to pad your pockets after a long and arduous tour, and it's nice to make a living doing what you love, but the big business of the music recording industry has turned into another American institution, rife with moneymaking schemes, political interests, and serious censorship issues.

For these reasons, we listeners need to start insisting music be about music, not about propagating the status quo and letting the fat cats eat caviar and smoke cigars. Trends are moving toward this sentiment. Thank goodness independent music labels are starting to have more selling power and that our own music independents are beginning to pull themselves to the Top 40 by their own bootstraps.

If the RIAA really wants us to repent of our sins, then they've gone and done it the wrong way. No one's getting misty-eyed about the red-faced bully who shakes his mighty fist at all the little people bopping along to "Material Girl."