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VIEWPOINTS

ONLINE POLL

Should USC move the Visitor Center to the McKissick Museum?
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IN OUR OPINION

Visitor Center move is smart

Perhaps it was inevitable. Come May, the USC Visitor Center will have officially made its new home in the first floor of the McKissick Museum on the historic Horseshoe.

The Arnold School of Public Health will begin renovating the Carolina Plaza for its new research center. As a central, easily accessible point of campus, McKissick makes logical sense for the first impression for new students.

The influx of guests as well as prospective students and their parents will surely add to McKissick's numbers and will help to hold it accountable to its nationally recognized standard of quality.

McKissick will lose some space and will be forced to cut down from three to two rotating exhibits, but it really doesn't matter how many exhibits the university offer when barely anyone stops by to see them.

It's no secret that patronage for the museum has been waning steadily over the past few years and that continued funding for the museum has been threatened again and again.

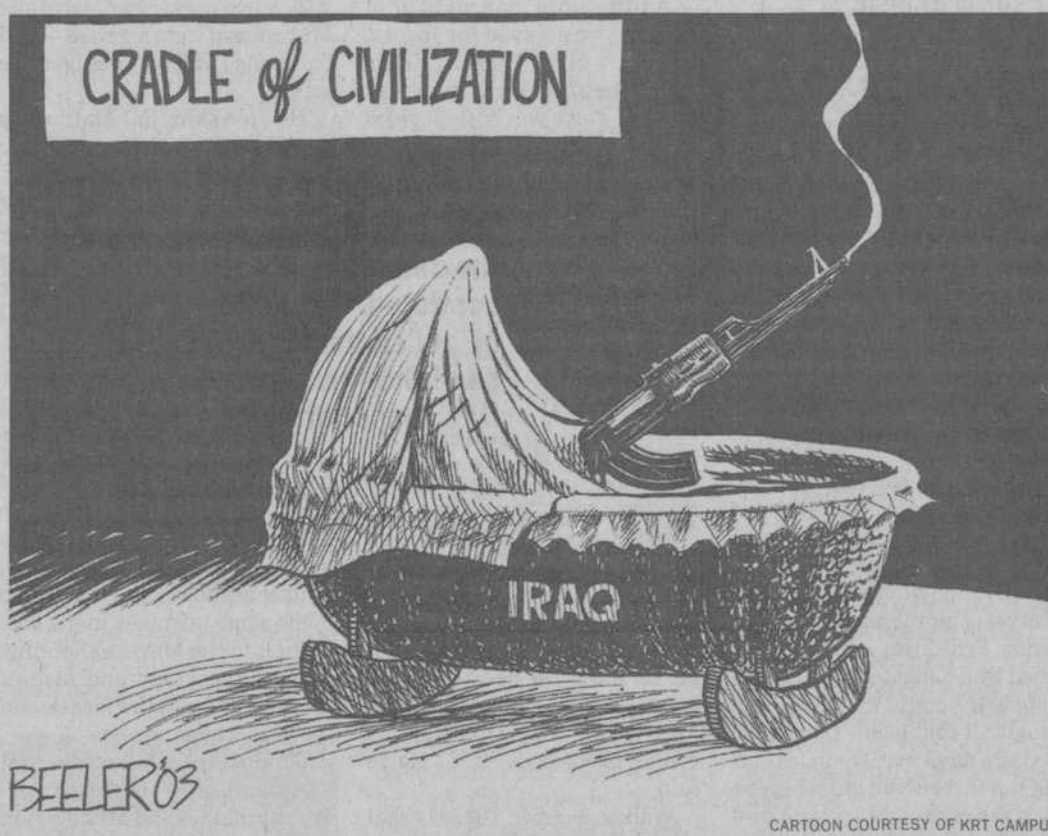
The influx of guests as well as prospective students and their parents will surely add to McKissick's numbers and will help to hold this nationally recognized standard of quality.

Most major universities have an on-campus museum, and USC should not use this as a means of pushing the museum aside and, if anything, should take steps to promoting the museum further.

Winners and Sinners

BLOOD DONORS USC students drain their veins in the spirit of rivalry and helping others.
GAY RIGHTS Massachusetts High Court takes real steps toward legalizing gay marriages and effectively undermines the U.S. theocracy.
MAOIST CHINA The world's most populous communist country plans to play host to the Miss World pageant next month.

COLORADO Lawmakers are considering eliminating the 12th grade and adding an established year of preschool instead.
CLAY AIKEN Ran over a cat as a child and brags about it. PETA coughs up a hair ball.
SENATE FILIBUSTER Bored fat cats hold 36-hour, tax-payer-funded slumber party.



CARTOON COURTESY OF KRT CAMPUS

Politics as usual in Senate



RYAN HOLT

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Stubbornness turns system into a joke.

As the sun set on the East Coast and the citizenry settled down for a normal evening, the United States Senate put even Gamecock party-goers to shame as it hunkered down for a debate that lasted through two nights and into the following mornings.

For several hundred days now, partisan tactics on the part of Democrats have stalled the nominations of potential judges, waiting to be confirmed by the Senate.

The rules of the Senate allot debate to certain questions, an example of which is the decision to confirm a judge. Republicans have enough support to vote in a way that would send every waiting judge into a vacant judicial seat.

Yet every time Republicans hold a cloture vote to end the debate, Democrats overrule the vote by failing to lend support to the needed two-thirds majority.

While Democrats are playing power games in the Senate, qualified individuals are being forced to wait in turmoil side-by-side with an embarrassing judicial system that is in desperate need of judges.

After a period of two years, Miguel Estrada, a Cuban-born attorney and former Supreme Court clerk who graduated from Harvard and Columbia, withdrew his nomination to a federal court. And why not? Why should someone who has a family of his own and a life of his own wait around while liberal elitists find every way to usurp the Constitution?

At a high-profile press conference, Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said "what has not ended is the resolution and the determination of the members of the United States Senate to continue to resist any Neanderthal that is nominated by this president of the United States for any court, federal court, in the United States."

It is interesting that Kennedy made this comment when the currently stalled nominees include members of several minority groups. One can only imagine the verbal destruction of Republicans had from such a thing being stated by a member of the GOP.

While Kennedy and his obstructionist colleagues insult respectable individuals, Republican

senators are working to ensure that justice is carried out. Originally scheduled for 30 hours, the Senate debate was lengthened by nine hours at the request of Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Norm Coleman, R-Minn. Graham also announced that he is in the process of filing a lawsuit against the Democratic cause, he and other supporting senators being convinced that the current actions of the leftists are unconstitutional.

The filibuster of Republican nominees is in violation of the "advice and consent" clause of Article II of the Constitution and as such should never happen. It is unfortunate for the Democrats that a Republican president is in office, but the majority of the senators have advised and given consent to the nominees, thus fulfilling all that needs to be fulfilled from a constitutional perspective.

If Graham's lawsuit fails, the actions of the Democrats have created a precedent, which says only 41 senators have the power to prevent any nominee from making it past the Senate floor. With this, the nominees of both Republican and Democratic presidents are in danger, not to mention the United States' judicial system.

Holt is a first-year political science student.

Coming clean on Clemson childhood



JULIE COOK

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Confessing to a past as a fan of the evil Tigers.

I have a confession. From the time I entered this world, and probably a few months before, until my freshman year here, I was a Clemson fan. And not in an arm-chair supporter way, either. So devout, my blood ran orange. My parents, incidentally, were both products of the USC system in some way, yet became avid Clemson enthusiasts shortly before the Tigers became National Champions in 1981.

I was born soon after and became an ignorant follower of the Tigers, spending my formative autumns at Death Valley, playing football with my cousins on the baseball practice field, getting a tiger paw painted on each cheek and cheering for Danny Ford and an endless list of players. Every New Year's Eve since 1989, I could be found at a bowl game. I'll even admit I learned a few Carolina jokes along the way and heartily enjoyed myself at several Chicken Coop Burnings. When I look back on those times, Carolina still remained the enemy, though it was a different time, one of Steve Taneyhill — the mullet? — and those black jerseys. I slip up and say "we" when talking about Clemson in those years, but don't question my allegiances now.

No, I never seriously considered actually going to Clemson. I might have been blind, but I was never dumb. You can imagine how my parents reacted when I decided to head down to Gamecock Country. My father still refuses to sign any checks to USC. There are some tailgating friends of my parents that still don't know where I go to school. They just didn't think the older ones' hearts could take it. Among the ones that do know, I'm loved anyway, like that wayward screw-up who just can't help but make bad decisions.

I struggled with my decision myself. It was hard to admit that I loved the campus, needed to live in a bigger city and couldn't resist the scholarship offers. Plus, a ton of my close friends were going here, and we had to continue on into college, much like the "Beverly Hills, 90210" gang.

My first football game as an official "G-word" fan (at the time I couldn't say "Gamecock" with love and affection) was the Clemson game at Williams-Brice Stadium in 2001. I occasionally slipped up and did the wrong cheer or fight song, but all in all, that was my moment of transition. I became a Gamecock that day. My Clemson key chain has long since been tossed from the balcony of my apartment into oblivion, and I only wear my Clemson T-shirts if I'm back home and running to the gym or grocery store.

Part of my past is irrevocably tied to that tiny town and its team, and I can't help but treasure those memories. However, my college years are completely entrenched in what it means to be a Gamecock fan, and while these memories might not outnumber the others, they certainly outperform them.

So while you won't see me at the blood drive, rest easy that it has nothing to do with my devotion to this school and our team and everything to do with my being out of the country this summer. And while I still haven't made it to a Tiger Burn, it's only because I've always had other plans. And if you see me on the Clemson campus and there isn't a Carolina game there, rest assured that I'm just visiting my brother, who will be going there next fall.

Cook is a third-year anthropology student.

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TO PLACE AN AD

Construction is a pointless hassle

I'm one of those frequently maligned Honors College Horseshoe dwellers, so my opinion will count with few readers, but I feel I must express it nonetheless.

The construction between Woodrow (of 202 fame) and Rutledge (of incessant wedding fame) is asinine. While I see the point of wanting a walkway from the Russell House to the Horseshoe, I must admit I'm missing the point of moving the road 15 feet to the side and eliminating several precious parking spaces in the process to give us a new brick sidewalk.

Why did the powers that be feel the need to tear up a road only to repave it a few feet over? Why did they also tear up a patch of the parking lot only to replace it a few days later with asphalt and then PAINT the rest of the lot black? Count me as another student who would rather see them pave the whole damned campus and paint it green. That or make the administrators fight for Coliseum parking and wait for the bus like the rest of us.

BRANDON BARBEE
FOURTH-YEAR ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING STUDENT

USC disrespects faculty members

Today is the last day that my daughter's favorite teacher at the USC/Gateway Academy Child Development and Research Center, Katie, will

IN YOUR OPINION

work. She is taking her warm smile and her M.A. in early childhood education to a job with better benefits, hours, vacations and pay. And we professors think we don't get enough for what we give.

Our early childhood educators get even less. I hate a system that values teaching children so little as to not offer the preschool teachers who teach the professors' children the same retirement plan, pay or health benefits package that we, the other employees at USC, get. I hate a system that ranks preschool teachers lower than professors. I hate a system that couldn't hold on to Katie.

I can't understand why this news hit me as hard as it did. When she first told me earlier this week, I cried like I had been told a relative was dying. I left the building, sat in my car and cried some more. All day, my stomach ached with a new sense of emptiness.

Now, here is the last day, and I need to go buy her a present. I want to find her something that will thank her for making it OK for me to leave Sarah and go to work, for helping me through this very rough transition, for giving me faith that Sarah would be just fine. But I can think of nothing that would honor her enough. Flowers? Candy? Books? A little statue that says "Great Teacher"? They all seem too trite.

To compound my sense of emotional turmoil, I don't even know what teacher will be in the classroom with Sarah on Monday. I know Angie and

Andrea will be there in the morning, teachers that Sarah knows and likes, but she doesn't run to them like she runs to Katie.

Katie makes Sarah smile even on her grumpiest mornings. Katie knows how to play with Sarah's hair to put her to sleep and remembers that Sarah's favorite color is pink. She holds Sarah in her arms to play with her, to laugh with her and to comfort her when she cries.

I've watched other teachers try to talk children through their tears, as if words can ever be enough. Katie knows that the human touch is the most important comfort and doesn't leave a child to cry alone. Katie isn't afraid to touch, cuddle and love because, I think, she realizes there is enough love inside her to go around.

Why can't we reward USC/Gateway preschool teachers like Katie with decent wages and benefits? What is our problem?

Unfortunately, I don't think it will be only Katie who we lose. Andrea, Angie and other excellent teachers will be next if we don't do better for those who are doing so much for our children. USC needs to extend the same benefits to the USC/Gateway preschool teachers it extends to all USC employees, or we will be the ones who lose.

Let's not define them as "Gateway" employees, but as part of the USC family.

AMY E. HUDOCK
USC ENGLISH PROFESSOR

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