



# THE MIX

THEY SAID IT

**ROBERT FROST:** "Two roads diverged in a wood/And I took the one less traveled by/And that has made all the difference."

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# Leaving for the holidays



PHOTO BY MORGAN FORD/THE GAMECOCK

*USC students, who travel in a variety of ways during the break, share stories about making the trip home, whether flying or driving*

BY CARRIE GIVENS  
THE GAMECOCK

In about two weeks, students will make a mass exodus from USC. As soon as that last exam is completed, they will pack to go home — which is everywhere from Minnesota and Vermont to 10 minutes down the road.

For many out-of-state students, going home means navigating busy, large airports. First-year international business student Tameka Porter will be flying home to Lebanon, Tennessee, for Christmas. Although Lebanon, which is close to Nashville, is not

far from Columbia, Porter is flying home because she does not have a car. Porter will be flying out of Charlotte, N.C., because the Columbia airport is "so small ... if you get stuck, you're stuck."

A veteran traveler, Porter suggests that travelers pack lightly and "check as few bags as possible."

To make airport security procedures easier and speedier, Porter also recommends wearing shoes that "can be slipped off."

Porter said she knows what to pack and what to leave out of her suitcase.

"Never pack fingernail polish or cuticle cutters, they will be

confiscated ... trust me," she said. Porter had a bottle of fingernail polish taken from her on a flight to London.

Although Porter enjoys flying, she does have a horror story concerning airport security. Flying back from the Netherlands, Porter was frisked and "touched in improper fashion by a Dutch airline security lady."

Porter, who was in a wheelchair at the time, laughs about it now, although at the time she didn't find it amusing.

Second-year music student Roger Keane's home is in Columbia. However, he travels to Dallas for Christmas to visit family. He does not especially enjoy traveling during the holiday season but said, "It's worth it."

His advice on how to navigate busy airports during the often-hecktic Christmas season: "Get there early and don't panic."

Keane normally flies out of the Columbia airport because, "It's small and easy to use."

First-year biology student Rita Czako will be spending Christmas with her grandparents in Budapest, Hungary. Although Czako is very excited about traveling overseas for Christmas, she is wary about her connecting flights as she goes from Columbia to Paris and then to Budapest.

Czako warns all fellow holiday travelers to "make sure you are at your boarding gate on time ... some airports are massive." She said she has always feared "getting stranded in some random city" because of a missed flight.

Although this has never happened, Czako does have some amusing airport horror stories of her own. In airports in Europe, the luggage carts are designed to take up the escalator. She said her mom was pushing a luggage cart

when the luggage fell off the cart and down the escalator.

Some USC students drive instead of fly. First-year chemical engineering student Chris Aholt will drive 15 hours to his hometown in Arlington, Texas.

Aholt is not worried about driving alone for so long, although he admitted, "It is hard to drive at night."

He said he plans to get a good night's sleep, stop for meals and sing along to loud music because if "keeps me awake."

Aholt recommended that drivers "try to plan it so you don't hit rush hour in big cities ... like Atlanta or Dallas."

There is one thing Aholt is not looking forward to. He said he detests "the roads in Alabama ... they are very bumpy ... and there is construction through the entire state."

For other advice on what to pack and security, check the air-

lines' Web sites. American Airlines does not allow fireworks, flammable liquids, bleach or weapons on flights. Although most students will not be taking such restricted items as scuba tanks or self-inflating rafts home for Christmas, students easily could forget not to pack pepper spray, pocketknives or scissors.

If you are unsure about an item, try shipping it as air cargo and not in luggage. All students flying home should expect stringent airline security. Expect bags to be opened and checked, and pack smaller items in bags within your suitcase.

Lastly, always remain patient, and do not make jokes when it comes to testing security. You might find your flight home delayed.

Comments on this story? E-mail [gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com)

## CD Releases for Tuesday



"THE DIARY OF ALICIA KEYS":  
Alicia Keys



"BEST OF BOWIE":  
David Bowie



"ATLAS":  
Kinky



"GOOD 2 GO":  
Elephant Man



"THE SAND AND THE STARS":  
Movietone



"COMIN' ON STRONG":  
Trace Adkins



## TOP 10

These were the most-played albums on USC's student radio station from Nov. 17-Nov. 23.

1. "AS THE ETERNAL COWBOY" Against Me
2. "THE INSTINCT" Denali
3. "VINTAGE SLIDE COLLECTIONS FROM SEATTLE, VOL. 1" Trachtenburg Family Slideshow Players
4. "12 MEMORIES" Travis
5. "A BEAUTIFUL EP" Clemsnide
6. "THE TERROR STATE" Anti-flag
7. "ASTRONOMY" Bleach
8. "WHERE I AM I AM WHAT IS MISSING" Laika
9. "EVERYONE HERE IS WRONG (EP)" Working Title
10. "BAZOOKA TOOTH" Aesop Rock

## Lighting up for the season

Dragging cords across the front yard and standing precariously atop ladders, they are always the first ones ready and the last ones to pull the plug. During the height of the season, the suburban street in front of their house becomes a congested traffic area as their decorations draw eager-eyed visitors from neighborhoods far and wide. In the front yard, the trees twinkle, the shrubs sparkle and snowflakes dangle in the air, frozen at various heights above the ground in all of their electrified resplendence. And surely, somewhere, Santa is watching and adding a few bonus gifts for extra effort to their holiday stashes.

Such festive families, such self-proclaimed Christmas light fanatics with their beavies of colored bulbs and illuminated displays, seemingly seek to set communities aflame with holiday zest — first the neighborhood, then the world. They take the typical front-yard light display and multiply it tenfold by stringing every available branch with strands and reaching impossibly tall treetops.

Although, as their friends and neighbors, our reactions to these spectacles are mixed — they tend to either excite or annoy — childhood experiences have instilled in most of us a fascination with such holiday glitz. We decorate our dorm rooms and look forward to seeing our families' Christmas trees. Some prefer colored lights, and others like the more reserved look of white bulbs. Blue, red, green — single-color strands seem to be growing in popularity as well.

For those who cannot wait for that trip home to see the lights, the Columbia community has its share of decorative displays commemorating the Christmas holiday. While many area churches and performing arts groups put on seasonal celebrations, local light displays and community Christmas trees remain popular representations of holiday cheer as well. 'Tis the season to raise the electric bill.

**LIGHTS BEFORE CHRISTMAS:** Nov. 28-Dec. 30 (Closed Dec. 24-25). Lights and displays at Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, off Greystone Boulevard. 6-9 p.m. \$6 adults; \$4.75 children 3-12; free for society members. (803) 779-8717.

**HOLIDAY LIGHTS SAFARI BENEFIT/ENCHANTED DEER FOREST:** Until Jan. 4. Inman, near I-26 and I-85 in Spartanburg County. More than 3 million lights. Nativity displays, music and live animals. \$4 per person. Additional \$1 for admission to the Enchanted Deer Forest. (864) 472-2038.

**HOLIDAY LIGHTS ON THE RIVER:** Nov. 28-Dec. 31. Saluda Shoals Park, Old Bush River Road between the Lake Murray Dam and St. Andrews Road. 6-10 p.m. Drive-through tour. \$7 per car. (803) 731-5208.

**FANTASY OF LIGHTS:** Nov. 29-Dec. 31 at Swan Lake-Iris Gardens in Sumter. Featuring more than 100 lighted figures and more than 1 million lights. For information about vending opportunities in Santa's Village, call (803) 436-2640 or (800) 688-4748.

**BOAT PARADE AT LAKE WYLIE:** Dec. 13. 6:30 p.m. "Lights on the Lake." Boat registration, \$20-\$25. (803) 831-2827.

**CAYCE TREE LIGHTING:** Dec. 4 at City Hall. Music and reception.

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