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NEWS Dangerfield passes away

Famed comic and movie star Rodney Dangerfield passed away from heart problems. Page 2



NEWS Panel discusses Patriot Act

Media Arts department sponsors a presentation of "The Price of Freedom" by visiting filmmaker Chip Duncan. Page 4

*** VIEWPOINTS** Put a face on your grades

Curtis Chow says USC should replace its letter grading system with instant messenger smiley faces. Page 7

◆ THE MIX Jam band has classic sound

Southern California band Ten Mile Tide rolls into Columbia with a sound that mixes classic rock with jam band cool. Page 9

DeMint visits Russell House

Senate candidate doesn't address comment that gays shouldn't teach

By TAYLOR SMITH THE GAMECOCK

About 60 USC students packed into a room of the Russell House to hear Republican U.S. Senate candidate Jim DeMint and former U.S. House Majority Leader Dick Armey talk about social security.

DeMint spoke just one day after his debate with Democratic candidate Inez Tenenbaum, when he said gays should not be allowed to teach in public schools. DeMint did not speak about his controversial comment or take questions. Student Government President Zachery Scott, who is gay, attended the news conference so he could ask DeMint to clarify his statement.

"I know in a debate you can say things

off the top of your head and it not come out right," Scott said. "He had the opportunity to retract that and he has not, so I don't think that is the case."

Scott said he felt DeMint's statement was like "trying to divide South Carolina like it was 1964 instead of 2004."

"I think that most South Carolinians will agree that being a dedicated teacher has nothing to do with being male or female, black or white, Democrat or Republican, gay or straight. And I think a man of his credentials should know better than to say something like that," Scott said.

DeMint did use the 20-minute news conference with the USC College Republicans to discuss the "ailing" Social Security system and DeMint's proposed plan for fixing it.

"It is very important right now," said Randy Dargan, co-chairman of the USC College Republicans. "Because it isn't the people who are about to get Social

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SARAH ZILINSKY/THE GAMECOCK

Jim DeMint speaks about Social Security during Monday's news conference, as former GOP House leader Dick Armey looks on.

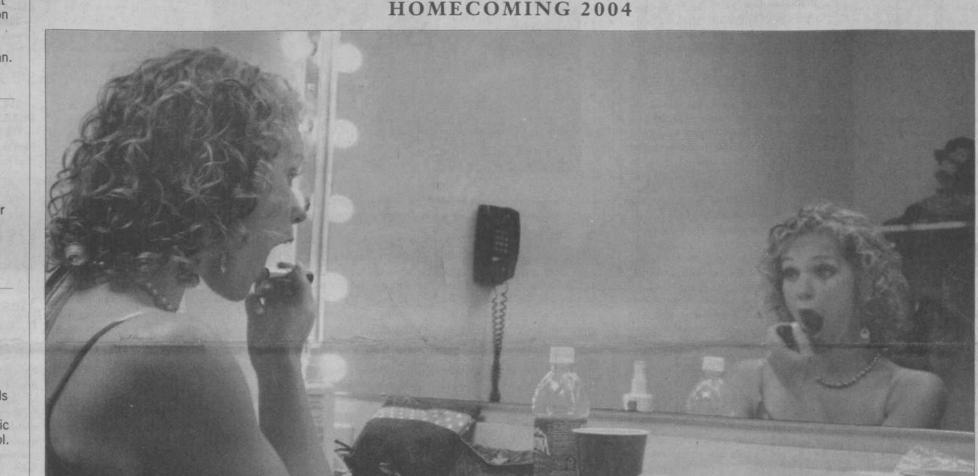
Students question fire drills' necessity

By JON TURNER THE GAMECOCK

USC's fire marshal said complying with fire drills can be a problem at an institution that requires drills and is plagued by false alarms.

Todd Griffin, a Columbia fire marshal who is assigned to USC, said minor accidents and false alarms could contribute to the problem but, for the most part, alarms serve a crucial role acquainting USC students with emergency evacuation procedures. Matthew Roberts, a first-year

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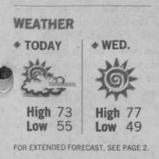
SPORTS

Soccer squads half way home

Jake Broom and Matt Nagy recap the first half of the men's and women's soccer. seasons and preview what's still to come.

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Behind the Showcase scenes

By LaDONNA BEEKER THE GAMECOCK

The curtain was about to rise in USC's Homecoming Showcase, and backstage the 10 finalists waited for their introduction. They could hear fans yelling names and cheering from the other side of the curtain. The finalists wished each other luck while waiting their turn to be introduced by USC

alumnus Darci Strickland to the judges and show off their business attire. Most of the contestants never participated in an event like the showcase, so they found themselves deciding which outfit to wear.

Amy Buchanan-Feinberg, a fourth-year Spanish student, works on her make-up backstage at the Koger Center before the Carolina Showcase.

But most importantly, they were hoping the judges liked the talents they displayed. The finalists chose talents that were extracurricular activities or speeches that were expected to encourage the audience.

"I have danced all of my life, but never in this context," said Ginni Campbell, a fourth-year business student. Many finalists agreed with Campbell when she said that although she performed in front of an audience plenty of times, this audience was different because it was full of their classmates, friends and family.

The cheering from the audience was uplifting for the contestants, they said.

"It was truly an unexpected boost of energy,"

said Cori Alston, second runner-up for King and a fourth-year criminal justice student. After each finalist completed the talent section of the Showcase, they asked each other nervously if anyone knew what the interview question would

Tyler Jeffrey, a third-year advertising student who was named Homecoming King, was the last

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DAVID STAGG/THE GAMECOCH

VICE PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE Cheney, Edwards clash on Iraq

By TOM RAUM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEVELAND - Sen. John Edwards accused the Bush administration Tuesday night of bungling the war in Iraq and presiding over a historic loss of jobs. "Your facts are just wrong," Vice President Dick Cheney shot back in a crackling campaign debate.

In a clash at close quarters, Edwards accused Cheney of "not being straight" with the American people about the war. He said U.S. casualties are rising monthly and the United States is bearing 90 percent of the cost and suffering 90 percent of the dead and wounded.

Cheney promptly challenged those figures, saying the Iraqí security forces had taken nearly half of the casualties. "For you to demean their sacrifice is beyond the pale," he said to Edwards, detection in metal detectors. seated a few feet away.

"Oh, I'm not," Edwards protested before the vice president cut him off.

The debate format encouraged giveand-take, and neither the vice president nor Sen. John Kerry's running mate shrank from the task.

"Frankly, senator, you have a record that's not very distinguished," Cheney said to the North Carolina lawmaker after accusing him of a pattern of absences in the Senate during his one term.

Edwards summed up his points like the former trial lawyer he is.

In a jab at the Bush-Cheney campaign's claim on experience, he said, "Mr. Vice President, I don't think the country can take four more years of this type of experience."

He also said that as a member of Congress more than a decade ago, Cheney voted against Head Start and banning plastic guns that can escape

Edwards was on the attack from the

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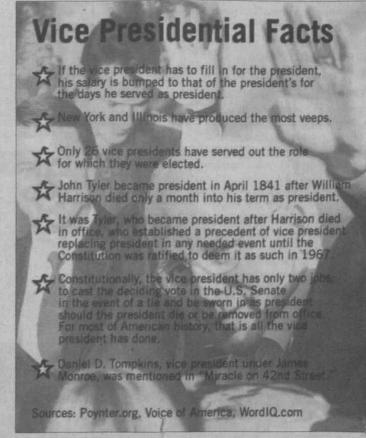


"Frankly, senator, you have a record that's not very distinguished."

DICK CHENEY VICE PRESIDEN'

"Mr. Vice President, I don't think the country can take four more years of his type of experience."

JOHN EDWARDS VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE



NICK ESARES/THE GAMECOCK