

## Students question efficiency of campus call boxes

By JON TURNER  
NEWS EDITOR

With several Student Government presidential candidates campaigning on safety issues, the sufficiency and efficacy of USC's call-box system has been called into question on multiple occasions.

"If I see one, it makes me feel like it's nice to have, but if I ever got into a situation where I need one, I'm not so sure it would be right there," said Leah Smith, a first-year accounting student.

During his campaign, SG President-elect Justin Williams promoted student responsibility for campus safety issues. He pointed out that the call boxes served several purposes.

"They're strategically placed so that you can mash them as you run, and the police can track where you're going," he said. "Also, to a certain degree, they act as a deterrent."

Williams said he'd used a box once when someone broke into his car.

"I think they are a good investment," he said. "They're not just for when you're in trouble."

Campus Safety Director Ernest Ellis said the call boxes were far from the only means the USC Police Department employed to catch criminals at work around campus.

"We do have regular uniformed patrols," he said. "We have bike patrol units. Depending on the need, there may be

plainclothes officers on surveillance."

Ellis said the department monitored security cameras in several parking garages "on a regular basis."

Call-box placement, he said, was mainly at the discretion of the campus safety committee, but he said the system had definitely grown during the last decade or so.

Ellis said the average call-box response time was about two to three minutes the last time it was tested.

Smith said she wasn't sure a panic button would be much help in a crisis.

"I think someone could take me away in 45 seconds, before the police could get there," she said.

Smith said she generally felt safe around

campus, but she did make a point to walk with company after dark.

"I never walk by myself," she said.

USC has about 70 campus call boxes, with a heavy concentration in the northeast corner near the Horseshoe and Capstone College. Boxes have also been placed as far south as the Athletic Ticket Office off Rosewood Drive and as far west as the Colonial Center.

Williams said he doubted there was a need to bulk up the present system.

"It's easy to say we should expand them," he said, "but I don't know if adding more would be efficient."

Comments on this story? E-mail [gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu)

### Safety tips

- Use the USC Campus and Call Box Map to identify high-traffic and well-lit areas.
- Plan your route ahead of time. Tell someone where you are going and when to expect you.
- Know where emergency call boxes are located and how to use them.
- Never walk alone at night.
- Plan ahead and park in a well-lit place.

Source: 2003-2004 USC Campus and Call Box Map

### DEAN DIALOGUE



NICK ESARES/THE GAMECOCK

Charles Bierbauer, right, dean of the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies, watches students in the school's newsroom.

## College plans relocation beyond Coliseum confines

By TAYLOR SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

College of Mass Communications and Information Studies Dean Charles Bierbauer sees a bright future for the school under the Coliseum.

Bierbauer began serving as dean in July 2002, shortly after the merger of the School of Library and Information Science and the School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

"I think it has gone well in terms of allowing the two schools to each retain their identity and culture, while at the same time realizing the points they have in common and opportunities the merger has created for them," Bierbauer said.

Bierbauer said one of the challenges facing the newly merged college two and a half years ago was effectively combining and emphasizing the identities of the two schools.

Budget cuts made the merger more difficult, he said, but failed to disrupt the process.

"It would have been easier to come here as a dean and not have to go through the merger and the new budget system," Bierbauer said. "On the other hand, by all these things

happening at once, we really got a fresh start."

After successfully fulfilling his role as coordinator of the merger, Bierbauer said he and the college are facing new challenges. He emphasized the importance of collaboration with other colleges to benefit the university as a whole, citing partnerships with scientific and healthcare fields.

Bierbauer said knowledge of mass communication and information distribution could contribute to any student's education.

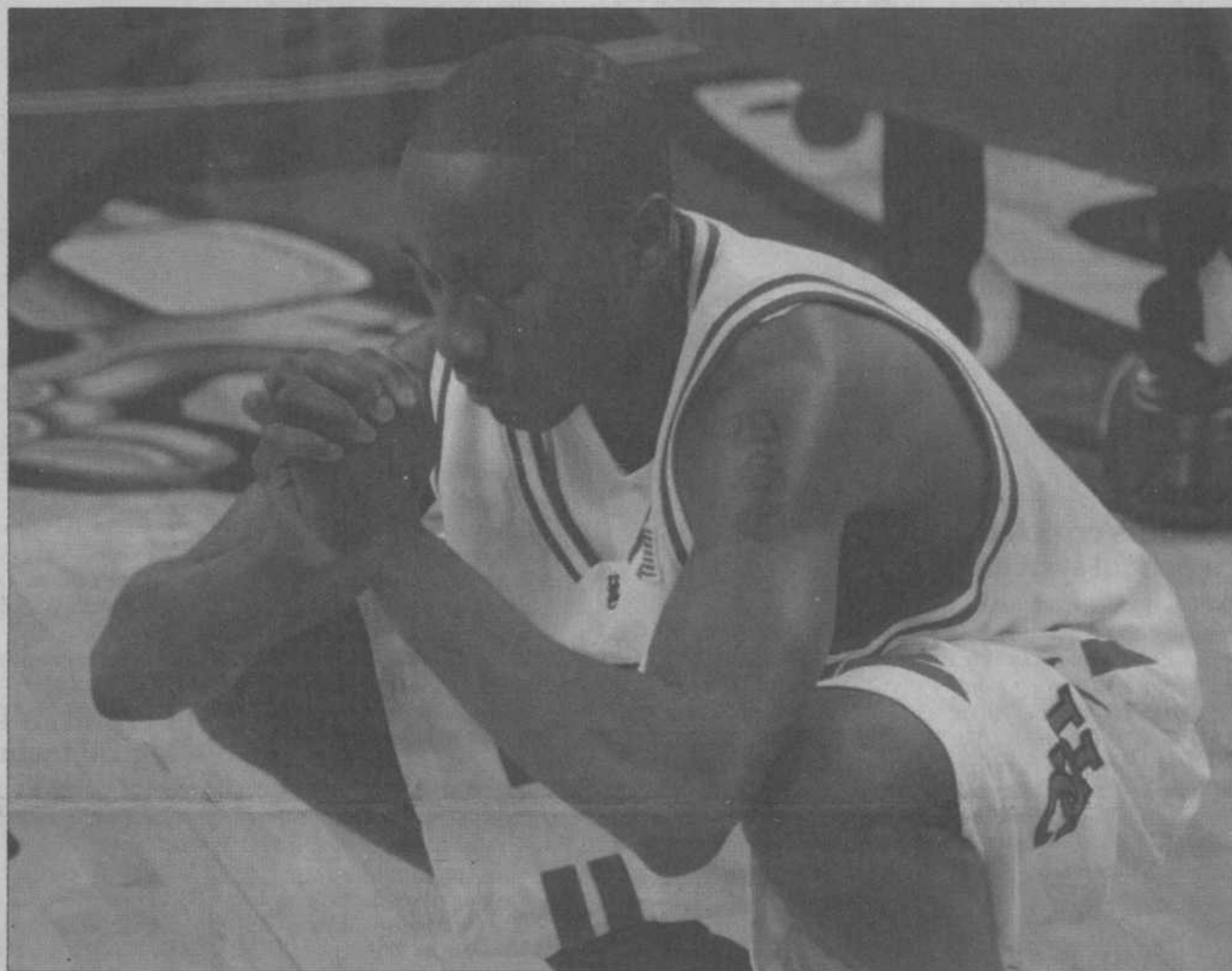
Space is another challenge facing the school, Bierbauer said, pointing out that the dark rooms underneath the Coliseum could be a discouraging factor for students.

"I worked for nine years in the basement of the White House, so I can work without a window in here, but there is a morale factor," Bierbauer said. "People are affected by their surroundings. There is a reason why the suicide rate in Finland is higher in the winter when it is dark and gloomy."

With more than 1,500 undergraduate students admitted in fall 2004, the college is large, but still

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### FLORIDA 65, CAROLINA 66



CHARLIE DAVENPORT/THE GAMECOCK

Senior guard Josh Gonner kneels after what he said was the worst loss he has experienced since he has been at USC. The Gamecocks lost by one point in the last minute of the game against the Florida Gators on Sunday. See Sports, page 8.

# Syrian politicians court U.S. favor

● *Saddam's half-brother captured by Syrians, handed to Iraq in 'goodwill'*

By TODD PITMAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Iraqi officials said Sunday that Syria captured and handed over Saddam Hussein's half brother, a most-wanted leader in the Sunni-based insurgency, ending months of Syrian denials that it was harboring fugitives from the ousted Saddam regime. Iraq authorities said Damascus acted in a gesture of goodwill.

Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hassan, who shared a mother with Saddam, was nabbed along with 29 other fugitive members of the former dictator's Baath Party in Hasakah in northeastern Syria, 30 miles from the Iraqi border, the officials said on condition of anonymity. The U.S. military in Iraq had no immediate comment.

Syria is under intense pressure from the United States, the United Nations, France and Israel to drop its support for radical groups in the Middle East, to stop harboring Iraqi fugitives and to remove its troops from Lebanon.

The capture of al-Hassan, who was believed to be operating from northern Syria

to help organize and finance militants in Iraq, was the latest in a series of arrests of important insurgent figures that the Iraqi government hopes will deal a crushing blow to violent opposition forces.

A week ago authorities grabbed a key associate and the driver of Jordanian-born terror leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaida in Iraq and believed to be the inspiration of the ongoing bombings, beheadings and attacks on Iraqi and American forces. Iraqi officials said they expect to take al-Zarqawi soon.

Iraqis welcomed news of al-Hassan's capture.

"I hope all the terrorists will be arrested soon and we can live in peace," said Safiya Nasser Sood, a 54-year-old Baghdad housewife. "Those criminals deserve death for the crimes they committed against the Iraqi people."

"I consider this day as a victory for Iraqis," said Adnan al-Mousawi, a resident in Mahmoudiya, south of Baghdad. "By God's will Saddam will stand in court with his officials and this will be the end of the unjust dictatorship."

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● *Opposition party representative to speak on democracy, nation's role in bombing*

By SYDNEY SMITH  
STAFF WRITER

A representative from the Syrian opposition party will lead a forum discussion encouraging political change and democracy in Syria at 7 p.m. in the Nursing building 125.

The Professional Society of International Studies and Students Defending Democracy will play host to the discussion with Reform Party President Farid Ghadry.

The groups also cooperated to bring Iraq democracy advocate Ali Ramadan to USC last semester. The groups select speakers whom they believe support democracy and anti-terrorism to lead discussions. Ghadry, a well-known activist and native Syrian, often speaks on Syrian and Middle Eastern affairs on national and international news programs, like "Hardball."

Syria is undergoing investigation by the U.N. following the Feb. 14 Beirut car bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, a leading proponent of change. U.S. leaders and Syrian opposition party members have strongly hinted at Syrian involvement in the attack, but Syria has denied aiding or

abetting terrorism.

U.S.-based democracy supporters founded the Syrian Reform Party as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, according to the Reform Party of Syria Web site, [www.reformsyria.org](http://www.reformsyria.org). The party's leadership includes second-generation Syrians from Europe and the Americas, and native Syrians who advocate a peaceful, secular "New Syria" that would "embrace democratic and economic reforms," the site said.

Jeremiah Bush, of Foundation for the Defense of Democracies at USC, helped bring Mr. Ghadry from his home near Washington, D.C., to help involve USC students in the Syrian democratization effort.

Ghadry will discuss Syria's alleged role in the Hariri's assassination and accusations of Syria's support for the insurgency in Iraq. He will also address U.S. foreign policy toward Syria and the larger issue of democratic reform in the Middle East. The forum is not strictly formatted; rather, Ghadry will allow the audience to steer discussion. Last semester's discussion leaned

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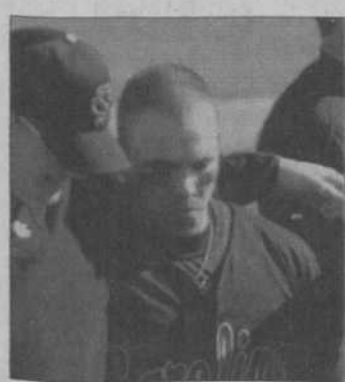


#### ◆ THE MIX

### 'Curse' on the box office

Christina Ricci stars in Wes Craven and Kevin Williamson's new horror flick 'Cursed,' which doesn't live up to 'Scream' potential.

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#### ◆ SPORTS

### Pearce, USC pummel Niagara

The Gamecock baseball team notches its third sweep in as many series at home against the Purple Eagles behind the strong hitting of senior Steve Pearce.

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