

Anti-smoking group campaigns on St. Pat's

● Columbia organization uses Five Points celebration to push agenda

By JON TURNER
NEWS EDITOR

While St. Patrick's Day is commonly associated with the consumption of alcohol, one Columbia group used last weekend's festivities to campaign against another drug.

"If Ireland went smoke-free, why don't we?" asked Smoke-Free Columbia advertisements at Saturday's St. Pat's in Five Points party.

Smoke-Free Columbia, a branch of the S.C. Tobacco Collaborative, advocates banning smoking from Columbia bars and restaurants.

At the party, the group distributed Koozies with an anti-smoking message derived from a USC study that "62 percent of city residents say they'd go out to eat more often if the restaurants were smoke-free."

Last year Marcos Gardner directed a three-week USC program to help "high-risk" smokers quit the habit. He said then that about 27 to 28 percent of USC students were smokers.

The College of Charleston's Student Government Association last year debated a bill to divide its campus into smoking and nonsmoking areas, banning the practice from places like residence halls and dining areas.

In 2002, USC's Residence Hall Association passed legislation to ban smoking within 25 feet of residence halls. The policy was adopted by University Housing,

but has been widely ignored by students, many of whom regularly smoke on porches or balconies.

First-year psychology student Daniel Balint, a member of the Thefacebook.com group, "Smoking May Kill Me, But At Least I'll Die Happy," said he had picked up his habit before coming to USC.

"I've probably been smoking since, I'd say, about halfway through my ninth grade year," he said.

Balint said that although he and most other USC smokers are aware of USC Housing's residence hall smoking restrictions, many tend to ignore the policy.

"As long as you're not in the building, and nobody complains about it, nobody really cares," he said.

Balint said he had been cutting down on his cigarette smoking, limiting himself to a pack every

two days. "Yeah, that actually is me cutting down," he said. "Earlier in the semester I got up to a pack a day. Then I cut back."

Although an avid smoker, Balint said he could manage to live with a ban on smoking in restaurants and bars.

"That would really suck, but I guess I could get over it. I've never had a problem waiting to have a cigarette before," he said.

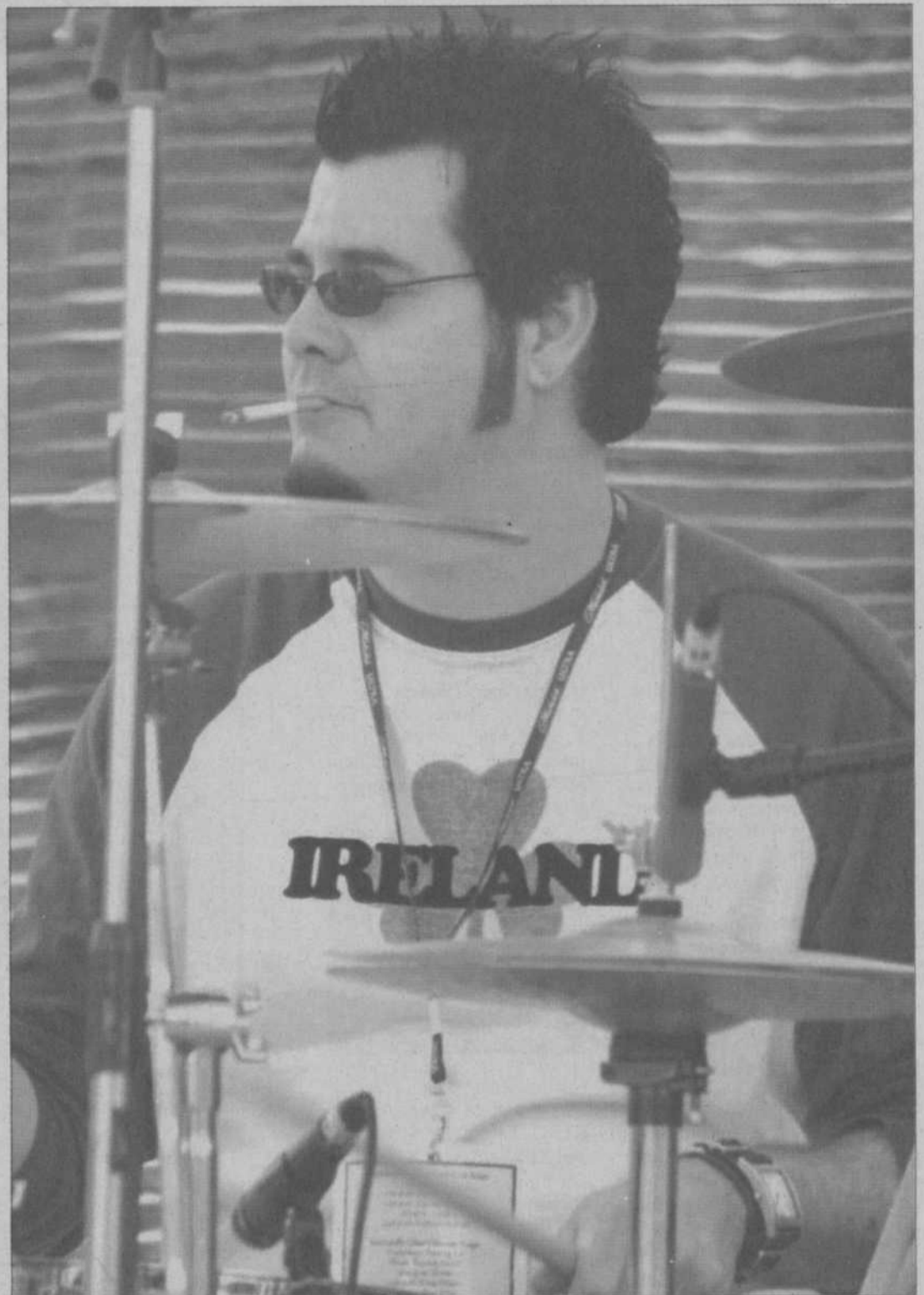
The state of California has banned smoking in bars and restaurants since 1998. So have several cities around the country, including New York. Smoking has become increasingly regulated around the world, with Ireland, Italy and Cuba setting restrictions during the last year.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocknews@gwm.sc.edu



Hot Lava Monster performs for a packed Five Points crowd at the St. Patrick's Day festival on Saturday.

NICK ESARES/THE GAMECOCK



The drummer of South smokes as activists handed anti-smoking Koozies to the Five Points crowd.

NICK ESARES/THE GAMECOCK

Student hospitalized for meningitis

By KELLY CAVANAUGH
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

A USC student was diagnosed with acute meningitis Sunday morning at MUSC.

Third-year theater student Debbie Dreyfus had a spinal tap, a brain scan, and electrocardiograms, among other tests, her mother said Sunday night.

"They found elevated white blood counts, meningitis, and strep," she said. "It's acute meningitis and the last I heard they're not sure but it's leaning towards viral."

Dreyfus' mother said her daughter was "not feeling too good right now, her whole body hurts" and that she wasn't eating well.

She said Dreyfus first noticed a "crick in her neck" coming back from her Spring Break trip Saturday night, and then it started getting progressively worse. Dreyfus then noticed a rash on her lower legs, and on Wednesday she went to the Thomson Student Health Center.

"The doctor said he did a blood test and he didn't think it was meningitis," her mother said. "He thought it was a 'major muscle spasm.'"

Dreyfus began to develop "one massive rash" on her lower legs that gradually spread all over her legs, back and hands, her mother said. "Her back was hurting, and her muscles. Her headache was getting progressively worse, and she was getting progressively

dizzier."

Dreyfus saw her family's doctor Thursday. "She had a severely high fever, but she had been taking Ibuprofen so it wasn't high when she got to the doctor," Dreyfus' mother said. "The family doctor gave her Valium for the pain. It is also used to relax people with muscle spasms."

Dreyfus was taken to the hospital Saturday afternoon and was admitted that night. "The ER doctors at MUSC started giving her antibiotics for bacterial meningitis because they weren't sure what it was," her mother said.

Dreyfus' mother said the MUSC doctors were "upset that the doctors at USC didn't catch anything earlier."

"I can see her body is fighting it,"

her mother said, "I'm a religious person and I believe that God has put her at MUSC to get her well, not to make her suffer, I do believe that she is going to get well."

Other residents of Dreyfus' dorm have been notified of the situation and briefed about preventive measures.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the more common symptoms of meningitis are fever, severe headache, stiff neck, sensitivity to light, drowsiness or confusion, and nausea and vomiting. The best way to avoid contracting meningitis is to wash your hands thoroughly and often.

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USC provost identifies hiring as top priority

By TAYLOR SMITH
STAFF WRITER

To maintain USC's status as a historic state school while elevating it to the level of a premiere research university, USC Provost Mark Becker says Carolina must continue to attract renowned faculty.

While college deans handle everyday challenges within their individual colleges, provosts manage the academic affairs of every college within a university.

As provost, hiring is one of Becker's primary responsibilities.

But a statewide budget crisis in recent years has made faculty member recruiting more difficult.

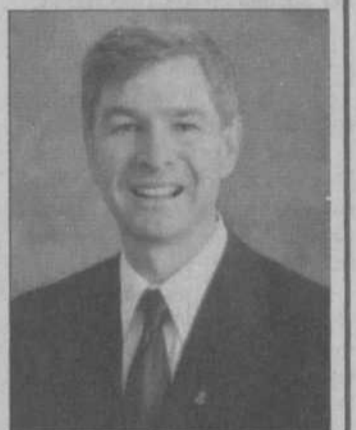
"We have seen a plain, if you will, of what was a national period of budget cuts at state universities," Becker said. "We have come through that cycle, and now it is time to pick up the pieces."

While USC administrators have grappled with state budget cuts, they are facing a new challenge, Becker said.

"The big challenge of the past was how to absorb those cuts. The challenge going forward now is that we are in a planned period of strategically growing the faculty," Becker said. "Over a six-year period we are looking at hiring more than 600 faculty."

USC's hiring practices are changing, Becker said, and though the new strategy may be less conventional, it will help the university's evolving academic pursuits.

"It is not a matter of a person



Provost Mark Becker said attracting better professors is key to improving Carolina.

NICK ESARES/THE GAMECOCK

retiring in discipline 'A' and lets go find someone in discipline 'A,'" Becker said. "The question as we are hiring new faculty is, where are we hiring them into? Are there new areas we are moving into? Are there new disciplines moving up? ... There needs to be strategic planning."

Despite raising the status of USC's academics and research, new hirings will also benefit USC in the game of statistics on the playing field of student-to-faculty ratios, a statistic typically used to measure the quality of a university.

Becker said USC is doing well in the area, with a ratio of 17 students to 1 faculty member. But, he added, Carolina needs to improve.

"The goal is to bring ours down to the 14-15 range," Becker said.

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USC historian honored for work on Laurens

By JASON REYNOLDS
THE GAMECOCK

David Chesnutt, USC historian and professor emeritus and recent recipient of the S.C. Order of the Palmetto, is continuing his work to make rare historical documents available on the Internet.

The award honored Chesnutt's contributions in preserving South Carolina history throughout his career. His most recent contributions include work as editor of the 16-volume collection documenting the life of Henry Laurens, a well-known colonial S.C. patriot.

"This award is a fitting recognition of David Chesnutt's major contributions to the history

of this state and the nations," said USC history department chairman Patrick Mane in a news release. "His pioneering efforts have helped bring documentary editing into the computer age."

Chesnutt said at a presentation last Monday that technological advances had helped make documents not only more available but also more historically telling.

"Beyond the efficiencies in publishing, technology enabled us to create published texts which showed changes that Laurens and others made when they wrote letters or drafted documents," Chesnutt said at a presentation last Monday.

The digital collection documents the diaries and letters

of Henry Laurens, a wealthy Charleston planter, merchant, president of Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence. The S.C. native led a movement to oust royal British rule, but was captured and held prisoner for 15 months in London. Laurens was traded in exchange for Lord Cornwallis following the American Revolution.

"Preserving and publishing South Carolina's heritage have been wonderful aspects in my life," Chesnutt said. "I could never have imagined in 1970 that I would spend my career reading other people's mail and preserving and publishing it. It's been a grand ride."

Chesnutt has been a member of

the State Historical Records Advisory Board and president of the Association for Documentary Editing. During

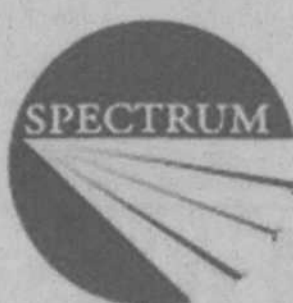
Chesnutt's tenure on the State Historical Records Advisory Board, the board worked to preserve modern and historical state records using new technological media. Chesnutt has also directed an international project known as the Model Editions Partnership with the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, which helps to make some of the nation's most significant historical documents available in online digital libraries.

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