

## THE GAMECOCK

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### IN OUR OPINION

## Thompson's 'prank' dilutes collegiate art

When former defensive end Moe Thompson pleaded not guilty to burglary and petit larceny after he admitted to breaking into two East Quad apartments, we winced. But what really ground our gears was the defense that the ex-footballer concocted with his attorney, Hemphill Pride. The whole thing, Thompson claimed in court, was all just a prank.

We pause here to draw a long, tired sigh.

Maybe we're getting too old. Maybe we're out of touch with the way real college students think. Maybe, to everybody else, nothing screams "prank" louder than getting drunk at a strip club before barging into some poor girl's apartment while she sleeps and making off with, among other things, a set of her bed sheets.

True, Thompson claimed he was so drunk he thought he was stealing things from his football teammates, and there's no way to prove what he was really thinking that night.

### A prank entails a little more time, energy, planning and — in some cases — money.

But to us, a prank entails a little more time, energy, planning and — in some cases — money.

Prying the golden ball from the peak of the Maxcy Monument and keeping it in your dorm room until the cops catch on? Not a prank.

Sprinting naked through the GMP while cradling a football and wearing a Gamecocks helmet? That's getting a little warmer — but come on, man, we eat there.

What ever happened to the good old days of college pranking? To the days of water balloons and toilet papered trees and — at the very worst — a cherry bomb down the commode?

We regret that the term has been tossed around so much by now that Thompson's attorney would even think about presenting it as an excuse for a crime. There's a pretty well-defined line between playing a joke and committing a crime. The former defensive end did the right thing when he pleaded guilty to lesser charges last week, and we hope this trial helps students realize it's not a prank if nobody's laughing.

### IT'S YOUR RIGHT

Exercise your right to voice your opinion. Create message boards at [www.dailygamecock.com](http://www.dailygamecock.com) or send letters to the editor to [gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu)



### CORRECTIONS

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know. E-mail us at [gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu).

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THE GAMECOCK is the editorially independent student newspaper of the University of South Carolina. It is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the fall and spring semesters and nine times during the summer, with the exception of university holidays and exam periods. Opinions expressed in THE GAMECOCK are those of the editors or author and not those of the University of South Carolina. The Board of Student Publications and Communications is the publisher of THE GAMECOCK. The Department of Student Media is the newspaper's parent organization. THE GAMECOCK is supported in part by student-activity fees. One free copy per reader. Additional copies may be purchased for \$1 each from the Department of Student Media.

**TO PLACE AN AD**  
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1400 Greene St.  
Columbia, S.C. 29208

Advertising: 777-3888  
Classified: 777-1184  
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Cartoon courtesy of KRT Campus

## A couple of cents, sense could help parking

### Making more spaces could answer prayers of all student drivers

It seems like lately everyone has been putting their two cents in on the ever-present USC parking problem. So I figured, what the heck, I'll put in my two cents also. Maybe if more people put their two cents in, we'd have enough money to build more parking garages.

There are lots of ideas flying around about how to deal with parking — some good, some bad. The idea of eliminating freshman parking is not really that helpful. The bottom line is that USC is in Columbia, the state's capital, and there are more people than the parking system can handle. That's even without counting USC students. I have no problem with upperclassmen getting first dibs on garage spots, but saying freshmen shouldn't have cars makes no sense. The huge freshman classes are just going to turn into huge sophomore classes who will have cars in a year's time anyway.

As an aside, I also dislike the idea of upperclassmen denying freshmen their cars simply because it smacks of eating your own young. We were all freshmen once and — for a variety of reasons — having a car is invaluable.

Whether it's because you can go home on the weekends, go to a job to pay your tuition or



JACOB DAVIS

Third-year print journalism student

just have the freedom to get up and go, having a car makes you feel more confident, secure and empowered.

They say "all complain, few do." With this in mind, as a person who does his fair share of complaining, I've come up with a few creative suggestions on alleviating the parking situation here at our fine university.

It seems to me that the problem is one of supply and demand. There are many people who want parking, and not so many spaces. Obviously, the solution is to create more parking spots.

Even with a new 5,000-space garage going up behind the Russell House, chances are the demand for space will still be an issue. The first spot that comes to mind for a new garage is that huge mansion with the lawn the size of a football field located across from Gambrell Hall. I have no idea what they do in there, but I'm willing to bet they could do it just as effectively in a cubicle somewhere. You could easily put one or two new full-sized garages in that spot alone.

My second location: "The President's House," located on The Horseshoe. Does President

Sorensen really live there? And if so, how does he put up with people traipsing around his front yard all day? Surely better quarters could be found for whatever goes on in there — say, on some land that isn't ripe for development as a parking garage.

Finally, the neighborhoods behind Greene Street. Cruising through them one can easily find numerous homes either in disrepair or for sale located mere blocks from campus. Surely USC could obtain these for a nominal fee (compared to what they would bring in from the parking) and convert them into pay lots.

There are also dozens of spots on streets adjacent to campus, such as Henderson Street, that sit unoccupied all day because they are reserved for city parking permits alone. Isn't there any way USC and Columbia could work out some kind of "joint-usage" pass so these spots don't go to waste? It seems like the dedicated city meter-readers who wasted so much ink and paper guarding this valuable city property from me freshman year would be happy to be rid of the work.

Given that any reform is bound to take years to implement, I offer some advice for those who will be here after I'm gone. If all else fails, become friends with an old person who lives near campus and steal their parking space after they leave in the morning.

### IN YOUR OPINION

We know more about the surface of Mars than we do about the deep oceans of Earth — and they cover almost 3/4 of the planet! Why are billions of dollars being spent to learn a few interesting things about space when that same funding could be directed to the oceans with a much larger payoff?

Anyone heard of global climate change or new cancer-fighting drugs? I don't have space to go into detail here, but trust me, we should be looking to the oceans for answers to those difficult problems. How much do you enjoy eating seafood in Charleston or diving in the Caribbean? Think for a minute about how much you enjoy the products of the sea. Those are the ones we already know about — a tiny piece of the puzzle.

I understand that sending a guy to the moon might make better headlines than

photographing a giant squid, but which do you care about more: a stationary flag on the moon or actually studying our own planet with the potential of saving it from ourselves? We need to know about the planet we inhabit, not the ones we might send a few lucky people to one day if we happen to destroy ours, which is even more likely if we don't have the means to study the oceans. Maybe it's time to get the stars out of our eyes.

#### BONNIE COGGINS

Fourth-year marine science student

### Submission Policy

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words and include name, phone number, professional title or year and major, if a student. E-mail letters to [gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu). Letters will be edited. Anonymous letters will not be published. Call the newsroom at 777-7726 for more information.

## Statesmen deserve fine for too many dubious acts

### Congressmen disobey laws, should be forced to pay like students

In Oct. 17's thrilling installment of Viewpoints, I discussed the wisdom of fining students for their irresponsibility regarding their CarolinaCards.



TIM McMANUS

Fifth-year print journalism student

Another journalistic venture of mine, one which almost makes me seem like a respectable journalist, was some reporting I did for The Associated Press a few weeks ago.

In this act of journalistic watchdoggery, I investigated how well a certain county in South Carolina obeyed the state's Freedom of Information Act. In particular, I interviewed several statesmen in that county's government, asking them how well they obeyed the act's section on executive session.

In the course of the interviews, the statesmen said that other statesmen — not them of course — often try to break certain Freedom of Information Act procedures regarding executive session.

The act says executive session is a public body's meeting that can be closed to public. The act also lays down a few rules that the public body must obey if they want to go into executive session. First of all, the body can discuss one topic and one topic only, which must be defined before going into executive session. Further, only a select few topics may be discussed, notably personnel and contractual matters.

One of the statesmen, a board moderator, said often members of his board would try to talk about subjects not defined or try to initiate polls or votes. But, he said, it is the moderator's job to keep them in check, and "get them to shut the hell up." (I didn't use that quote with the AP, unfortunately.)

Another statesman said that when fellow statesmen try to break Freedom of Information Act standards, he refuses to participate and figuratively "walks outside."

While these solutions are very good decisions for each of them — we should all give them a nice pat on the back — it seems that forcefully interrupting would-be violators of the law or looking the other way doesn't cut the mustard.

One of the statesmen spoke of attaching fines to violations and attempted violations of the act. Indeed, this would carry more weight than the governmental "big no-no" or giving them the cold shoulder.

If it's acceptable to fine students \$25 for losing their identification, fining a statesman \$25 for abusing a privilege given to them by the governed seems reasonable, and might even do a better job of getting them to "shut the hell up" than a moderator being mean to him.

Heck, perhaps even charging them more than \$25 dollars might not be too far out of line. And maybe, just maybe, fining a public official for tipping the scales of justice in their favor should create an even heftier dent in their income.

## Online Poll

Do you think the fine art of genuine college pranking has died?