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a day in the life of

Dr. Dan Overcash

Instructor of Astronomy

Shayron Rice
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Dan Overcash, an astronomy instructor from China Grove, N.C., believes the universe is amazing and loves to observe it at the Melton Memorial Observatory on Greene Street.

Overcash, who holds a PhD. in physics, made his first astronomical observation more than 50 years ago, and he has been observing at USC since he became a member of the faculty in 1998.

“Everything we do in physics there are examples in astronomy. Astronomy is a playground for physicists,” Overcash said.

Besides being an instructor and observer, he loves to reach out to students at community schools to educate them about astronomy. He said he likes to tell a joke about how he puts a dime in his shoe every morning so that he can actually be over cash as his last name suggests.

He watches the universe through telescopes about six nights a week, mainly between 7 p.m. and midnight. On clear Monday nights between 9:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. when the observatory is open for viewing, he is usually joined by students and says that at least 4,000 visit every year.

“That’s why I’m here, because students say things like, ‘Oh wow!’ when they see what the universe has to offer. The thing about astronomy and being at the observatory is that I get to do the fun part,” Overcash said.

Overcash said his favorite formation is Saturn, because of its many rings. With new electronic devices, Saturn’s colors are also now visible.

Overcash also likes to observe globular clusters, which contain billions of stars. He hasn’t been able to observe a spiral galaxy yet, but hopes to sometime in the future.

Overcash said he prefers to observe during the winter, because the stars are brighter and there is less haze.

A typical day for the
OVERCASH • 3

Greek Village reaches capacity

Two new houses set to open next fall; last house in 2008

Catherine Martin
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

The Greek Village will expand with two new houses expected to open in fall 2007, said Gena Runnion, director of Greek life.

“Gamma Phi Beta Sorority and Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity should be able to move into their new houses beginning next semester,” Runnion said.

Sarah Noone, a third-year accounting student and member of Gamma Phi Beta, said the sorority has been anticipating building a house since it became a chapter in 2005.

“The main obstacle was a matter of fundraising,” Noone said. “Since we were a new sorority, it was a lot harder, but parents made donations as well as our headquarters.”

Thirty to 40 members of Gamma Phi Beta are expected to move into the new house.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity plans to begin construction of a house in June, and Runnion said Omega Psi

Phi’s house is expected to open in fall 2008.

“The completion of these three houses will signify the end of construction on the first 20 lots,” Runnion said. “It’s exciting to see this project come full circle.”

Jerry Brewer, director of Student Life, said the process has been successful.

“The Greek houses are nice amenities,” Brewer said. “People like them and they will continue to expand in the future.”

Noone said the Greek houses make sororities and fraternities stronger and more connected.

“The houses allow for everyone to be in one central location, which makes meetings more convenient. We can all eat together and hang out,” Noone said. “They really bring everyone together.”

All Greek organizations that want a house are allowed to build one, but the availability of land is a problem.

There are currently 33 sororities and fraternities on campus, and only 20 will have houses once Omega Psi Phi builds on the last lot.

“There are two fraternities, Delta Tau Delta and Delta Upsilon, that are



Meg Gaillard / THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Gamma Phi Beta Sorority and Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity should be able to move into their new houses beginning in the fall.

While only 20 of the sororities and fraternities here at USC have houses in the Greek Village, Jerry Brewer, director of Student Life, says the project has finally come full circle and considers it a success.



USC student prepares for Ironman triathlon

Michael Dole to race for senior thesis, raise charity money

Elizabeth Segrist
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

The Ironman is an ultra-endurance race consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and a 26-mile run.

Sound fun?

Well it does to Michael Dole, a fourth-year biology student who is participating in The Ironman Arizona Triathlon in Tempe, Ariz., on April 15.

Dole is doing the race for his senior thesis to see the effects of an ultra-distance event on the body, as well as to raise money for the American Lung Association.

“The reason I chose the ALA is because I was born with a condition, pectus excavatum. It’s an indentation in your chest,” Dole said. “I have a pretty severe case of it; it reduces your lung capacity by about one-third and decreases stamina and endurance levels.”

Dole has nine triathlons under his belt; however, he has trained for 11 months for six days a week, with two practices a day to do the Ironman.

“I either run and bike, or bike and swim [at each practice]. It takes between 10 and 15 hours a week, and in the past couple months I’ve hit 17 to 18 hours a week,” he said.

Two of the hardest aspects of training, Dole said, are

balancing time and the solitude of training.

“I just had to redistribute my time and really had to load up on classes last semester, so I’d have more time this semester,” Dole said. “Also, I train by myself so it’s a lot of mental preparation.”

The race is both physically and financially straining, although he received a \$1,000 grant from the Honors College to help with expenses, he said.

Dole is excited about the upcoming race, even though he said it is frustrating to do all of that training for one day.

“The finish is exciting, the actual crossing of the finish line. I am just excited about the whole process, just being out there enjoying the whole day and seeing everyone out there,” Dole said. “I just heard that everyone supports each other along because they’re all going through it.”

He said he is a little nervous about the race.

Entry Fee: \$500
Bike Shipping: \$500
Other Gear: \$150
Hotel: \$600

“I guess the start makes me a little nervous because I heard it’s just chaos. Some people get bloody noses because there are 2,000 people in a really small space starting and people get knocked around really easily,” Dole said.

Racers have 17 hours to finish the race, so they have to bring food for energy.

“I have three bottles of endurance drinks. I’ll have gels with electrolytes and salts and a lot of other power bars, but they provide you with a lot on the actual course, because I’ll need a lot more than three drinks.”

Dole said he hopes to finish in about 13 hours, though many finish two hours slower than expected.

Dole said anyone can run the Ironman.

“It takes some people a couple of years to build the base and mentally prepare for it, but I think anyone could do it if they trained,” Dole said.

A fundraiser for the ALA will be held this Saturday at Sesquicentennial State Park, a 3.5 mile “Run For Your Lungs.” Registration is at 7:30 a.m. and the run starts at 8:45 a.m.

There is also a fundraiser for Dole at the Web site www.januscharitychallenge.com. Type in “Michael Dole” to donate.

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Eric Schmadel / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Pollard brothers exit District Court Judge James Albert’s court room Thursday in Greensburg, Pa.

Family charged with holding teen captive

Pennsylvania couple, kids to stand trial for ‘slave’

Dan Nephin
The Associated Press

GREENSBURG, Pa. — A judge on Thursday ordered a couple and their three teenage children to stand trial on charges that they held a woman captive for months and beat her for not doing chores or for no reason at all.

District Court Judge James Albert found there was enough evidence for Mark Pollard, 43; his wife, Cynthia, 41; and their three teenage children to go to trial after a hearing during which the accuser recounted her story.

They stood, in blue prison garb and handcuffed, as Emily Nicely, 19, testified that they would not let her leave, considered her their “slave” and beat her with broom handles, belts,

boards and a metal pipe.

“They did it for anything I did, right or wrong,” she said.

Nicely also testified she was having a sexual relationship with both Mark Jr., 18, and Jonathan, 17, and was in love with Jonathan.

Nicely acknowledged on cross-examination that, while she wanted to leave, “I stayed there because I was in love with Jonathan.”

She still loves him, she said.

Nicely also said she was beaten if she didn’t do exercises correctly.

She said she was forced to do jumping jacks and sit-ups to lose weight, saying Cynthia Pollard told her she did not want her sons

SLAVE • 3



Sports

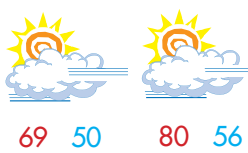
The No. 1 Gamecocks gets ready to take on No. 3 Vanderbilt Commodores at Sarge Fyre Field in a weekend series. See page 7

The Mix

A new Discovery Channel show astounds audiences with amazing filming and stunning sequences of life on “Planet Earth.” See page 5.

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TODAY Tomorrow



Tuskegee airmen recognized for service

Black WWII pilots receive Congressional Gold Medal in front of emotional crowd

Ben Evans
The Associated Press

Growing up in segregated times, Charles "A-Train" Dryden never thought he would fly war planes for the U.S. military, much less win an award for doing so.

But there he was in the Capitol on Thursday, sitting at the feet of Abraham Lincoln's statue, being honored alongside other Tuskegee Airmen for defending an America that hardly honored the black aviators when they came home from World War II.

"For all the unreturned salutes and unforgivable indignities ... I salute you for your service to the United States of America," President Bush said as he bestowed the Congressional Gold Medal.

Before a crowd packed into the sun-filled Capitol Rotunda, the president raised his right hand to his forehead in salute.

Some 300 of the retired aviators — most of them well into their 80s — stood and saluted back.

"We are so overjoyed," said Roscoe Brown Jr., one of the six Tuskegee Airmen who accepted the medal on behalf of the entire group. "We are so proud today, and I think America is proud today."

Nearly 1,000 fighter pilots and crewmen trained as a segregated Army Air Corps unit at the Tuskegee, Ala., air

base. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had overruled his top generals and ordered that such a program be created.

Even after they were admitted, many commanders continued to believe the black airmen didn't have the intelligence, courage and patriotism to do what was being asked of them.

Not allowed to practice or fight with their white counterparts, the Tuskegee Airmen distinguished themselves by painting the tails of their airplanes red, which led to them becoming known as the "Red Tails."

Hundreds saw combat throughout Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, escorting bomber aircraft on missions and protecting them from the enemy. Dozens died in the fighting; others were held prisoners of war.

"You caused America to look in the mirror of its soul and you showed America that there was nothing a black person couldn't do," said Colin Powell, a retired Army general and Bush's former secretary of state. Powell, who is black, thanked the airmen for paving the way for his career.

Dryden, 86, a retired lieutenant colonel from Atlanta, expressed mixed feelings that the honor came so long after the war and that many of his colleagues died without knowing that



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Also known as the "Red Tails," the Tuskegee Airmen recieved the Congressional Gold Medal at Thursday's ceremony.

Americans appreciate their service.

Just a couple of days ago, he said, a fellow pilot was hospitalized in Atlanta and couldn't be at the ceremony.

"So many of the guys have passed on," he said.

Dryden recalled his pride in returning from Africa and Europe after serving in Tuskegee's original 99th Fighter Squadron, only to be stationed in Walterboro, S.C., where he saw German prisoners of war get privileges

in theaters and cafeterias that were denied to black soldiers.

"That was the low point of my career," said Dryden, who uses a wheelchair.

Thursday's medal has helped convince him that the country recognizes the airmen's contributions.

"It's really something," he said at an honorary breakfast before heading off to the ceremony.

Congress has awarded gold medals to more than

300 individuals and groups since giving the first one to George Washington in 1776. Originally, they went only to military leaders, but Congress broadened the scope to include authors, entertainers, notables in science and medicine, athletes, humanitarians, public servants and foreign officials.

The medal for the airmen, made possible through legislation by Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., and Sen.

Carl Levin, D-Mich., and signed last year by Bush, will go to the Smithsonian Institution for display. Individual airmen will receive bronze replicas.

"It means a lot to a lot of people," said Ret. Maj. George M. Boyd, 80, of Wichita, Kan., a Tuskegee pilot and adjutant who served 28 years in the military, including in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam. "There was so much resting on our success or failure."



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Suburban neighborhoods have become a popular place for marijuana operations.

Suburban homes offer cover for marijuana greenhouses

In last 6 weeks police have raided nearly 70 homes in north Georgia

Errin Haines
The Associated Press

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. — In Coldwater Creek, a middle-class housing development outside Atlanta, the neighbors mind their own business and respect each other's privacy — ideal conditions, it turns out, for

growing marijuana in the suburbs.

Police this month raided an utterly ordinary-looking red-brick house on the block and broke up a pot-growing operation with 680 plants arrayed under bright lights.

"You'd never know from the outside. I guess that's the idea," said Doug Augis, who lives with his pregnant wife and a toddler in Coldwater Creek. "That doesn't give you a really good feeling."

Around the country, investigators are increasingly seeing suburban homes in middle-class and well-to-do neighborhoods turned into indoor marijuana farms. Typically investigators find an empty home, save a mattress, a couple of chairs, some snacks in the fridge and an elaborate setup of soil-free growing trays.

Grow houses have been a problem for years in California and Canada, but investigators are now seeing scores of them in the South and New England. In the past six weeks alone, more than 70 have been uncovered in northern Georgia — nearly 10 times last year's total for the entire state. Only one was busted in 2005.

Indoor pot farms also have been discovered in recent months in residential areas of New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina and Florida.

Crackdowns in Canada and elsewhere have apparently led some operators to move into parts of the United States where the public and police are not as familiar with the operations and less likely to

detect them, authorities say.

"They can go in and basically fly under the radar," said Ruth Porter-Whipple, spokeswoman for the Atlanta field division of the Drug Enforcement Agency. "These aren't neighborhoods where they would stand out."

In Georgia, the latest busts averaged about 200 plants per house. With each plant yielding \$4,000 on average per harvest, that works out to about \$3.2 million per year, considering the plants can be harvested every three months.

The DEA said more than 400,000 plants with a potential annual value of \$6.4 billion were seized from grow houses in the U.S. last year — up from about 270,000 the year before. That is less than 10 percent of the marijuana plant seizures in the U.S.; most pot is grown outdoors on farms and in ditches, backyards and gardens.

Grow houses typically grow marijuana hydroponically — that is, using a nutrient solution instead of soil. They also use 24-hour-a-day lighting to produce plants more rapidly. The marijuana is usually cut, dried and packaged on the premises.

Typically, the windows are covered up, and the electrical system is rigged to hide how much juice is being used.

Nearly all of the grow houses busted in Georgia were connected, police say. Fayetteville resident Merquiades Martinez — a Cuban immigrant — and his wife, a real estate agent, are accused of recruiting other

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AAAS debates 'the video vixen'

Group looks at role of women in media, business worlds

Leslie Bennett
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Members of the Association of African American Students debated Tuesday night about why some women choose to take on the provocative role of "video vixen" in the media.

Ife Ekpenuma, a fourth-year engineering student, said some women push the envelope and are comfortable with taking on such a role.

LaTanya Johnson, a third-year history student, pointed out that women who decide to become video vixens might believe they have nothing else going for themselves.

"They may not believe they can make it in corporate America," Johnson said.

"They may think they are not smart enough and the only thing that works for them is their physical appearance."

Owen Black, a first-year marketing student, said money is a powerful motivator.

He mentioned an article in King magazine showing the incomes of several video vixens.

"With an annual income of \$358,000 a year, these women are seeing this as a way to make money," Black said.

Others said they believed the media had an influence, most notably in the rap industry.

Daliyl Skinner, a third-year philosophy student, said females are bombarded by such images beginning in childhood.

"Seeing stuff like that all the time becomes programmed into their minds," Skinner said. "Back

in the '50s, '60s and '70s, classy was in. Now it's all about showing off your body."

The discussion continued by turning the focus from the entertainment industry to the corporate world.

Students debated whether or not women who use their looks and sexual appeal to advance in business are any different from the things video vixens do to advance in the entertainment industry.

Jordan Crafton, a second-year hotel, restaurant and tourism management student, compared and contrasted the entertainment and corporate worlds.

"Entertainment is actually part of the corporate world," Crafton said. "Video vixens bring in money for entertainment just like corporate women bring in money for businesses."

The difference lies in the fact that you're known by people who may not matter

in the corporate world. In entertainment, you're known by the people who have money."

It was also said that both video vixens and corporate women disgrace themselves when they use sex to advance their careers, and that corporate women's images are ruined for good, but a video vixen can continue despite her negative reputation.

Skinner said women might have to keep sleeping around to continue up the corporate ladder, but a video vixen may have to sleep around once.

Crafton said if a corporate woman sleeps around once, she is expected to keep doing it.

"If that's how she climbed up the ladder, when she decides to pick up her morals, she may find herself going back down the ladder," Crafton said.

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GREEKS • Continued from 1

ready to build houses, but there is no land available," Brewer said.

Runnion said she is hopeful more land can be bought in the future.

"I would like to see as many of the other 13 to build as possible" Runnion said. "There is a great deal of interest."

Brewer said buying more land will be considered to assist in the expansion

of the Greek Village, but there are important factors that must be taken into consideration.

"To buy land requires both resources and land," Brewer said. "There is currently no land available to purchase."

In the mean time, space in McBryde and South Tower is being used by the Greek Community.

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SLAVE • Continued from 1

to be with a "blimp."

Attorneys for the family argued she wasn't held against her will.

They said the physical violence was the result of disputes involving Nicely and Jonathan, and that she was free to leave at any time.

The Pollards were arrested March 20, a few days after police in Greensburg, about 30

miles east of Pittsburgh, interviewed Nicely at a hospital where she was treated for a concussion and a kidney infection.

The couple and their children, including Tabitha, 16, are charged with kidnapping and terroristic threats among other offenses.

They deny the accusations.

The Pollards are being held in jail on \$50,000 bail.

WEED • Continued from 2

Cubans to buy homes that cost \$300,000 to \$450,000.

Investigators employed tips, surveillance and information from the power company on electricity usage to find the Coldwater Creek grow house and other operations.

It was a string of electrical fires that led New Hampshire authorities to more than dozen grow houses in December. (Marijuana grow houses often have rows of power strips and spaghetti clusters of extension cords and other power lines.)

"They are very sophisticated, probably the highest quality of marijuana we've seen in years," said Lt. Terry Kinneen, commander of the New Hampshire State

Police narcotics unit.

In another elaborate scheme, more than 50 houses with thousands of plants recently found in Florida were traced to marijuana financiers in New Jersey who offered "relocation packages," with 100 percent financing for the homes. Buyers would agree to operate a grow house for two years, after which they could sell the house and split the profits with their backers, or keep growing pot.

The big advantage of such operations is the privacy that comes with being in a community full of people so busy working and raising their families that they don't know the neighbors well and pay little attention to what is going on next door.

When Tom Paige met a

woman living three doors down last summer, she told him that she and her husband wouldn't be around much.

"As I remember, they had some kind of boat business in Florida and they were splitting time between here and there. I didn't think anything of it," said Paige, president of the homeowners association in Waterford Place, another Lawrenceville neighborhood where a grow house was found.

A few months later, the couple put up a for-sale sign.

"They were taking care of the house and taking care of the yard," said Paige, a security contractor trained to notice suspicious activity. "As we found out later, they were taking care of other things."

OVERCASH • Continued from 1

instructor usually begins around 8 a.m., when he arrives in the Coliseum Parking lot. He then takes the shuttle to central campus and brings any extra equipment he might need for the day with him to the observatory. After that, he checks the sign-up sheets for the labs and maps out a plan about what needs to be repaired or built for the day. Sometimes he cleans lenses, repairs or

replaces cables, or builds cabinets to go along the sides of the building.

Before he begins to observe around 7 p.m., he calls the atomic clock in California to make sure he gets an official time, because that determines where objects will appear in the sky. If there are any group tours or sessions for the day, he completes those and then ends the day around 11 p.m.

"I am searching for man's place in space and time," he said.

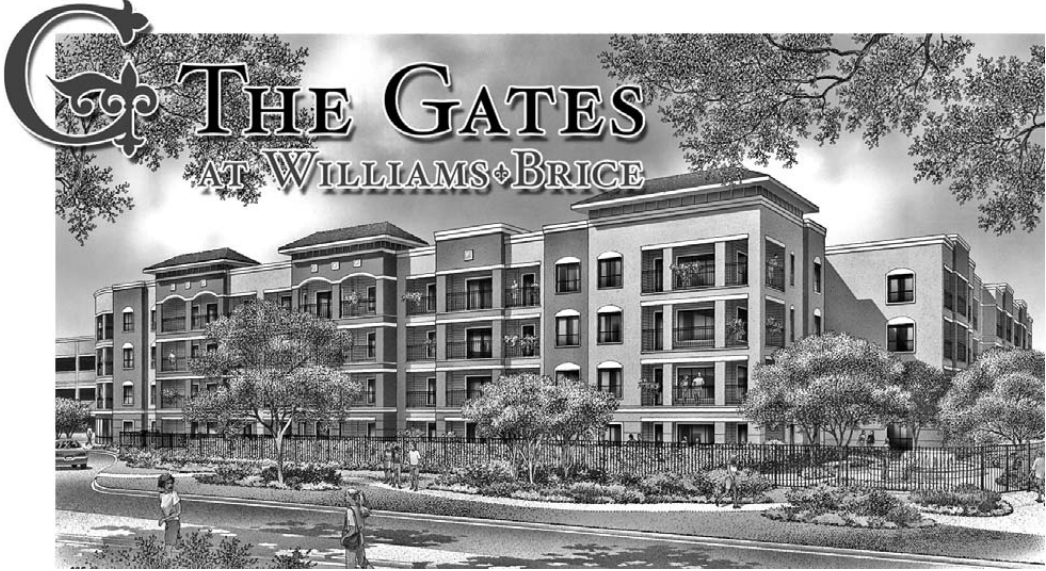
Overcash said he is overwhelmed with a sense of joy each time he sees students' eyes light up as they begin to understand something about the universe.

He said this opportunity to educate students in a hands-on environment is what drives him to return to the observatory night after night.

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"It's an explosion of flavor"


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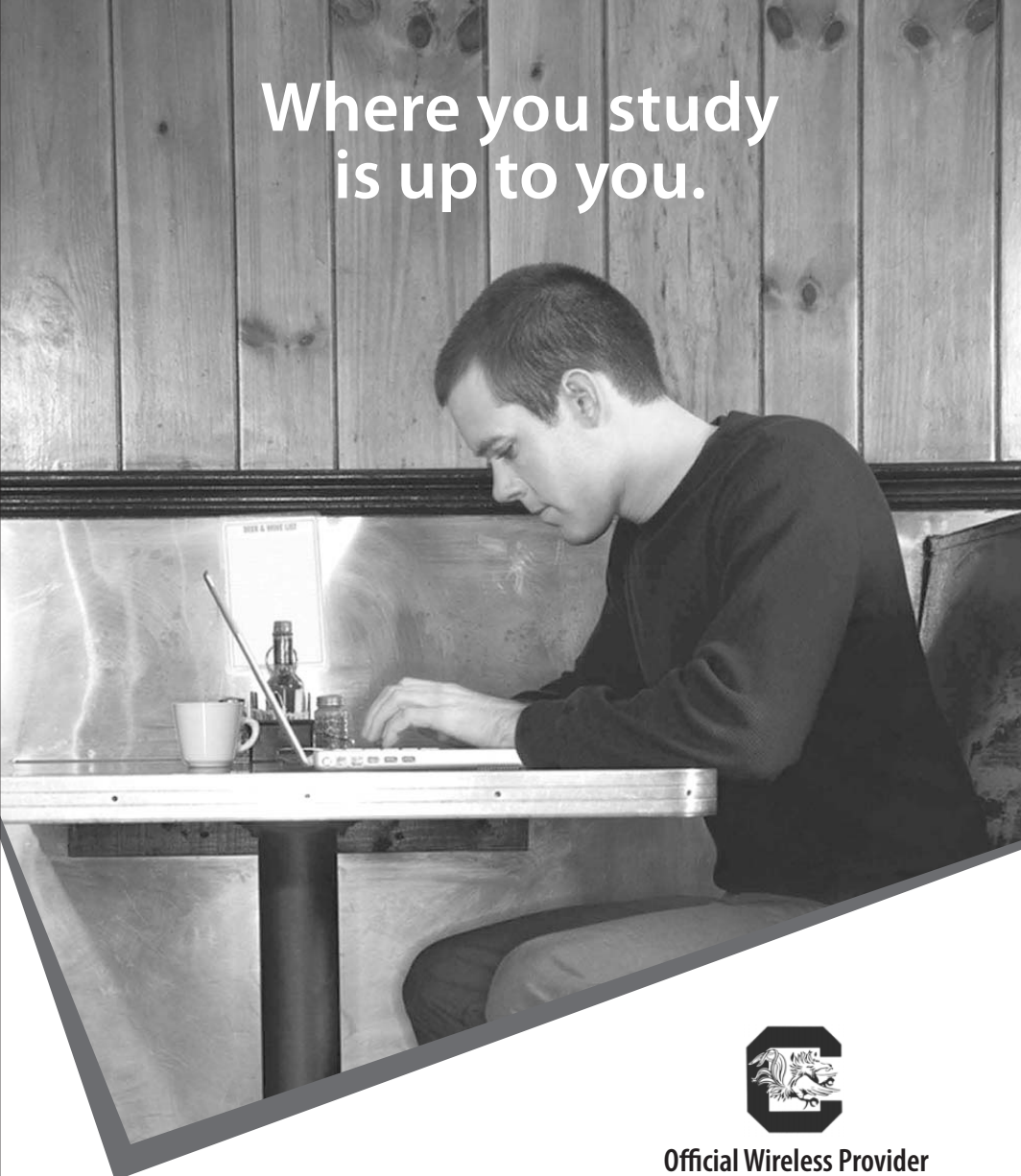


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IN OUR OPINION

Not-so-eager beavers need humane solution

Killing anything besides a roach isn't the kind of decision to be made on the spur of the moment — beavers included.

Columbia City Council has approved \$50,000 toward killing problematic beavers, breaking down damns and improving the flow of creeks and rivers, according to a report by The State newspaper.

Hopefully the city will think long and hard before jumping on the killing-beavers bandwagon. When

Children taking a dip could find themselves crying rather than laughing.

It comes to the delicate balance of an ecosystem and the future of an animal population, pros and cons lists and multiple possibilities should be considered. It's evident that a long-term goal is needed to fix the flooding, sewage and clogging issues the growing rodent community is causing for residents. No one wants to come home to sewage backup or a flooded road, but underwater snap traps that break the beavers' spines and necks aren't just dangerous and inhumane for the furry creatures. Children taking a dip on a sweltering South Carolina day could find themselves crying rather than laughing.

With a species' life in the crossfire, this debate should include the unintended consequences that aren't clearly foreseeable at this point. Other options such as water-flow devices could solve the problem before taking the big, rash step to kill non-threatening animals.

That's the kind of option that should be on a last resort list and nowhere else.

CORRECTIONS

If you see an error in today's paper, we want to know about it. E-mail us at gamecockopinions@gwm.sc.edu

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DA SToudenMIRE CODE

Video games reveal inner guitar hero

Hours in front of screen don't waste time, show secret to hidden purpose



CHASE SToudenMIRE
Third-year history student

Until last weekend, I had always thought the thing that makes video games so popular is that you get to pretend to be something you aren't.

But then a thought crossed my mind — what if video games are popular not because you're pretending to be someone else, but because you're connecting with your secret identity?

What if video games are God's way of showing us our purpose?

What if you can actually determine your true calling in life by playing video games and finding out which ones you're really good at?

Who would have known that there were so many people in the world who were meant to be a short, fat Italian plumber with a propensity for saving princesses, abusing turtles, relying on dinosaurs for transportation and dying at least 30 or 40 times per

day? If my theory holds true, I've just discovered what I'm supposed to do with my life: trash hotels, get drunk on weekday afternoons, consort with loose women and be a total badass in everything I do.

I know this thanks to the most amazing home console game ever: "Guitar Hero."

I picked it up from scratch a few weeks ago, and I'm already totally awesome at it, even when you set it on "Hard." I must be destined to be a rock star!

Problem is ... I'm terribly uncool. If I'm supposed to be a rock star, how come I'm such a dweeb?

Then it hit me.

I only own an acoustic guitar. Generally speaking, guys who have acoustic guitars also have hearts, souls, feelings and write love songs. That's

not what I'm after here.

I immediately walked back into my bedroom, logged onto musiciansfriend.com and bought the cheapest electric guitar they sell. Who knew that fame, fortune and glory only cost \$79 plus shipping?

Critics of my theory might say, "Chase, you're an idiot."

You don't even know how to play guitar." But the thing is, you don't have to actually know how to play, you just have to be able to look women in the eye and say, "Hey baby. I own an electric guitar." They go crazy.

The acoustic guitar will come in handy on mornings when I apologize for all the things I did the night before with my electric guitar.

So, if anyone out there is having trouble figuring out what to do with their life, I suggest you pick up a couple of new games and see what you're good at. Maybe — just maybe — you can grow up to be a rock star, just like me. It only costs \$79.

Learn before debating with professors

Unfamiliar teaching style creates new opportunity for personal adaptation



MONIQUE CUNIN
Third-year print journalism student

Some teachers are just not great at the job. However, some students are not that good at being students either. These two sets of people are forced into a classroom where everyone is put at a disadvantage.

Many times, these teachers will begin to lecture only to be under the false impression that what they are saying and explaining makes perfect sense to their students. Students will draw in their notebooks, stop caring, or just stop showing up to class altogether because they don't understand what is going on. To them it seems pointless to go.

In the cases where a teacher has a very strict attendance policy, students will show up to class, play with their phones, and then pick an argument with the teacher on their teaching and testing style.

This vicious cycle will continue for multiple class periods until one or the other concedes. There are classes where teachers and the majority of their students do not understand each other.

They argue with each other instead of listening

and waste time that could have been devoted to a million other things.

All of this because instead of realizing the teacher doesn't understand

that we don't understand so maybe we should try a new way of learning, the students insist on beating a dead horse. At the end of the class period, everyone has left irritated, disgruntled and with nothing solved.

These may be the same students who do not make the effort to do the homework, which is assigned to help them learn the material.

Or these may be the students not meant for college because they are too wrapped up in their social lives to take time out and go to the Supplemental Instruction sessions or even read the book and try to understand the material.

For whatever reason, these are students who have never heard the saying "change what you can, and adapt to what you can't."

If a teacher does not understand that their teaching style and your

learning style are clashing, then it is pointless to argue with them over the same topics day in and day out. Not only does it irritate you and the teacher, it also irritates your classmates who do understand the material.

Really, they just wish you wouldn't waste their time because you feel you have been done a great injustice.

This mixture lives and breeds in classrooms all over campus. By the time every student graduates, they will unfortunately have been in one of these classes.

To the students who understand the material, or at least are intelligent enough to make the effort, your best bet for survival in this environment is to turn around and politely explain the meaning of the words "office hours" to the person behind you.

To all the students who don't understand and don't try to: either adapt, drop the class, go to an SI session or be quiet and quit wasting everyone else's time.

To the teachers with students like these: listen and take into account that while you know what you're talking about, you aren't being very effective if half your class isn't catching on.

Net gaming shows fix for world's ills: fight demons

Despite disputes between nations, supernatural foes provide outlet for anger

As most of my friends know, I'm one of the millions of people worldwide who plays the MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game) "World of Warcraft". Notice I said "plays" and not "is addicted to."



SAGAN HARRIS
First-year media arts student

The players are divided into two sides: the dominating, power-hungry Alliance and the ragtag, rebellious Horde, the latter of which I am proud to be a member.

Last weekend I was reading through the forums on my guild's Web site and came upon a post in which the writer spoke on the careful balance of time between the game world and the real world.

This got me thinking: even though I don't spend anywhere near the majority of my time playing, I do spend a significant chunk of it there. So why do I play? There are many reasons, but one towers above the rest:

Real world, you suck. In the real world, battles and wars are fought over stuff like religion and moral principles that could just as easily be resolved through peaceful discussion, compromise or simple tolerance.

But no, everyone always has to make sure his or her opinion is the universally "right" one and everyone else who disagrees is wrong. In WoW, such conflicts exist as well, but the futility of such squabbles is abandoned in the face of bigger threats.

And that is what I think this world needs: a catastrophe of epic MMORPG proportions - a demonic invasion, an outbreak of zombies, an indiscriminate, destructive evil force that threatens every human being on an equal scale.

Some would argue such a force already exists, that the dangerous, malcontent mass of worldwide militants the media always refers to as "terrorists" is the black-and-white villain I call for.

But, in reality, terrorists are just like you and me; they just think differently. Every suicide bomber, every insurgent is someone's son or daughter, someone's brother or sister, someone's mother or father. And they're fighting for what they personally believe is right, for what they think will make a better tomorrow.

But demons? Well, anyone well-versed in that field can tell you that demons live to end and conquer life for no other reason than to end and conquer life.

Who would spend time arguing which God is better or who deserves oil when the human race needs to be rescued?

I look forward to the day when people of every creed and race can stand together against some unearthly menace, ready to save the world. Not for natural resources or for their God of choice, but because the right to live is precious to us all.

COUPLES CAN DATE WITHOUT EMPTYING POCKETS

Romance, thoughtfulness are achievable without wearing out bank account

Maura Clement
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Dating can be fun or frightening, romantic or woeful, and it can be very expensive. Here are some date ideas that will win over your sweetheart and not empty your wallet.

Recreating your first date:

Chances are your first evening out was not that expensive or fancy. The sweetness of experiencing those initial feelings all over again will surely charm your sweetheart.

Afternoon coffee from one of Columbia's many coffee houses?

Try Jammin' Java on Main Street or Cool Beans, not far from the Horseshoe. The coffee pick for lovers is Adriana's on Saluda Avenue in Five Points. It is romantic and a little off the beaten path as coffee goes.

An afternoon walk along the West Columbia Riverwalk:

It's a gorgeous place to spend some quality time walking and talking with the one you love. You can't really go wrong because it's thoughtful and free.

Trip to Riverbanks Zoo:

It's open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and admission is only \$9.75 a person. The zoo is such a fun place to hang out, and you can feed a giraffe from your hand. Your special someone will give you major points for creativity.

The Columbia Museum of Art:

On Wednesdays it's open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and admission is only \$2 for students. The museum houses a wide variety of paintings, including a Picasso. There is a romantic environment when you and your special someone can discuss art and feel cultured.

Dining for two:

Romantic dinners out need not be expensive, and the winner for our cheap date idea is the home-cooked, candlelight dinner. Surprise your significant other with his or her favorite dish, some Frank Sinatra and candles "Lady and the Tramp" style. Afterwards, rent his or her favorite romantic movie. You can't go wrong with "When Harry Met Sally" or "Casablanca."

Whatever you do, don't forget about the romance. Put effort into your date, because that is far more important than money.



Special to THE DAILY GAMECOCK

James Murphy's latest album, "Sound of Silver," which offers a fun variety of dance tunes, is in stores now.

Murphy, LCD Soundsystem release breaks new ground

'Sound of Silver' mixes quality tunes, piano-driven dance music

"Sound of Silver"
LCD Soundsystem
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆☆

Tyler Mobley
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Two years ago, James Murphy's first full-length release under the LCD Soundsystem moniker provided refreshing change from the relatively stagnant genre of dance music. Sure, some people were doing good things, but not many releases felt like they were trying anything new.

With LCD Soundsystem, Murphy blurs instrumental and electronic dance music with a little bit of rock, and the result is dance music that's fun and a little weird. "Sound of Silver," LCD Soundsystem's second full-length album, blurs the boundary between rock and dance music even further. That confusion creates something that might not always be a dance album, but it's definitely always different.

"Sound of Silver" sees Murphy's vocals filing through a wider musical range than would normally seem reasonable for just one album. The album opens

with a piano-driven, mostly sulky ballad to New York titled "New York I Love You." Two songs later, listeners are greeted by a 7-minute homage to New Order and Talking Heads called "Get Innocuous."

Honestly, you could detail every song on this album, and none of them would seem like they belong on the same album. In one sense, it's incredible that Murphy is capable of shape-shifting all over the place like he does. In another, it kind of leaves you wondering what you're supposed to be getting out of "Sound of Silver."

Still, the songs on "Sound of Silver," despite their schizophrenia, are a solid bunch of dance tracks. Odds are, a lot of people won't be sure how to dance to these tracks, but they tend to make you want to try anyway.

The most danceable of tracks on "Sound of Silver" can sound like anything from straight-faced New Order electronics to spastic little anthems reminiscent of dance-punk. Such variety can be a lot of fun, but it's bound to turn off people who get albums to hear one specific sound. If you don't feel lost without a common theme in your music, you'll be a lot more

likely to enjoy yourself.

Be warned, "Sound of Silver" probably isn't an album to sit around and concentrate on. Honestly, that's probably a good indicator of its danceable factor since "Sound of Silver" is an album for doing things (preferably dancing). If you just listen on your headphones and focus on the music, you might get bored. After all, dance music is all about rhythm and repetition, and the lyrics aren't exactly supposed to change lives here.

The indie hype monster has already decided that "Sound of Silver" will be this year's Jesus of dance albums.

LCD Soundsystem is doing things with dance music that are worlds apart from average dance music. With "Sound of Silver," Murphy gets to sing rock songs over dance beats. If you've not heard LCD Soundsystem before, approach it slowly. This is not music that you will adore at first listen. However, after a few listens to get used to it, you just might find a pretty sweet little deal of a party mix.

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

Wilderness documentary brings reality back to roots

Discovery Channel observes natural world by exploring ecosystems in "Planet Earth"

"Planet Earth"
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆☆

Thomas Moore
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

After spending the past decade releasing reality-based entertainment shows such as "A Baby Story," "Trading Spaces," and "What Not To Wear," the Discovery Channel has returned to its roots to create the dazzling and captivating "Planet Earth," an 11-episode triumph of nature documentation. The show explores the world's ecosystems, including caves, jungles, the deep ocean and deserts in high definition. Get to a high-definition television to watch this, because the shots are absolutely crystal clear and breathtaking.

Four years in production, the series visited 62 countries and 204 locations during its creation. A BBC documentary, the series originally aired in the UK in March 2006, though it had a different narrator. The narrator for the U.S. version, which has just recently shown its first episode, is Sigourney Weaver who does a terrific job.

What makes this series different from "Wild Discovery" is that it pays attention to the entire ecosystem, instead of focusing almost solely on the animals. However, the parts featuring animals are the most entertaining.

The series does not merely take shots of different animals and page through the members of the ecosystem like a card catalog. The show follows packs of animals and even individuals for days at a time. This story-like view of nature allows the viewer to fully appreciate the activity and happenings of the natural world. Nature is not simply a word. It is a living, breathing thing. Giving information as a storyline is not only more easily digestible for the viewing public, it also makes a connection between the animals being studied and the individuals watching; this way, when an observed animal falls prey to another beast, the audience is struck with a pang of remorse and sympathy for the creature.

In creating "Planet Earth," the Discovery Channel has not only made a beautiful documentary, it's created a touching and impacting impression of nature. Catch it next on the Discovery Channel at 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. on April 1.

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

'Sopranos' fans hope for exciting finish

David Bianculli
MCT Campus

We wait nine months for an original episode of "The Sopranos," and when the show finally returns, the highlight of the opening hour is watching Tony Soprano play Monopoly? Well, yes.

It's a great scene — showcasing Tony (James Gandolfini) and his wife, Carmela (Edie Falco), sister Janice (Aida Turturro) and brother-in-law Bobby (Steven R. Schirripa) in all their inebriated, uninhibited, unstable glory, as Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" plays on their stereo.

It also propels the plot

and helps establish the themes for the show's final nine climactic installments: family, legacy, mortality, resentment and revenge.

Still, even the most fervent and forgiving fans of the HBO series (and I count myself among them) have to start looking at the clock and stop excusing every scene as merely a foundation for the Big Ending.

After last year's season of simmering, this mixture has to boil — fast.

The first two hours of this final cycle are really good — alternately funny, dramatic, poignant and surprising — but they're all mostly tease.

At this point, "The Sopranos" can't afford to play too many games. It should go directly to the big showdowns — do not pass Go, do not collect \$200.

Tuesday night at a preview party at Radio City Music Hall, HBO unveiled the first two episodes (on HBO, the first new episode arrives April 8 at 9 p.m. EDT).

The same two — a smaller number than usual — were sent to critics, suggesting that major fireworks, too incendiary to reveal, are just around the corner.

They better be. The first two episodes show Tony and



Special to THE DAILY GAMECOCK

The popular HBO series, "The Sopranos," will return to the airwaves April 8 at 9 p.m. This will be the program's ninth and final season since its debut in 1999.

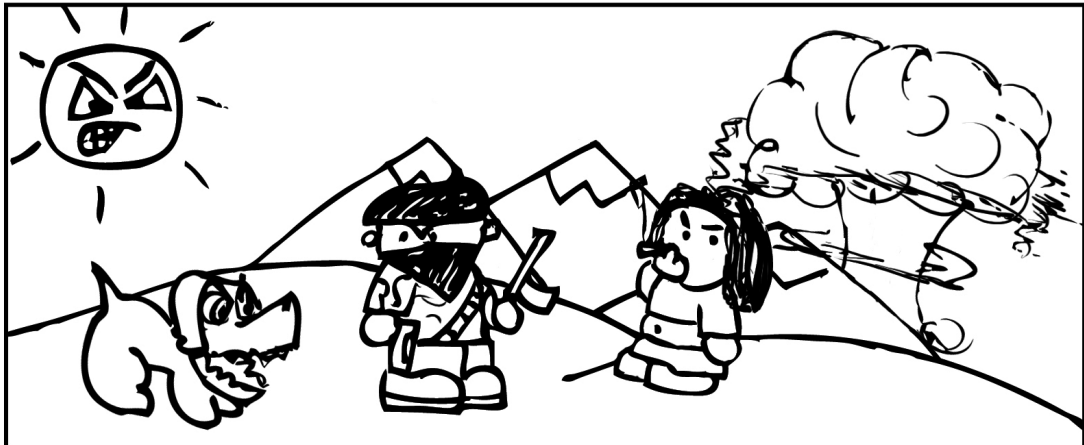
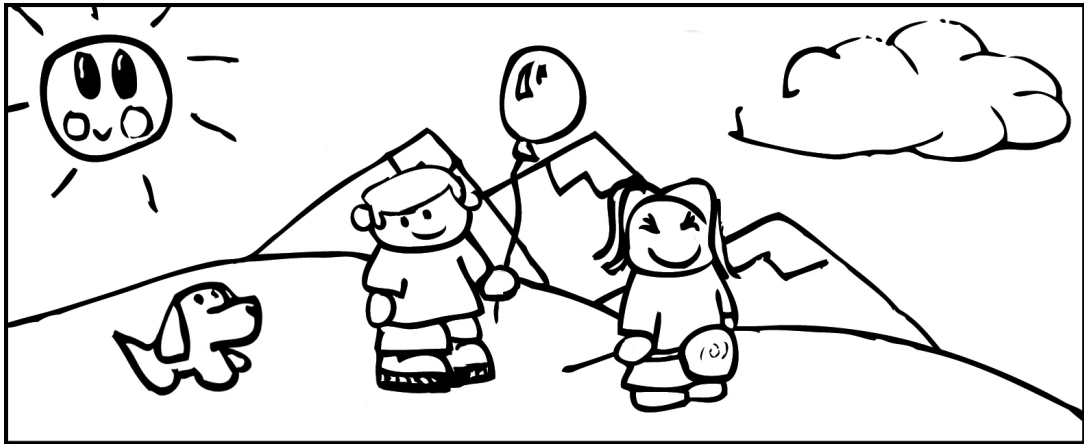
PIC OF THE DAY



Jessica Smith / THE DAILY GAMECOCK

The 2007 USC Prayer Breakfast was held Wednesday morning in the Russell House Ballroom. The breakfast featured speakers, along with prayer and music.

Inside the Box ♦ By Marlowe Leverette / The Daily Gamecock



CAN YOU FIND THE FIVE DIFFERENCES IN THESE TWO PICTURES?
EMAIL WEBMASTER@TBCOMICS.COM THE ANSWERS TO WIN A PRIZE!
1ST PERSON TO SEND IN THEIR ANSWERS GETS A SPECIAL PRIZE!

Whiteboard ♦ By Bobby Sutton / The Daily Gamecock



SOPRANOS • Continued from 5

his New York counterpart, the incarcerated Johnny Sack (Vincent Curatola), both contemplating their own mortality, and Sack's loyal lieutenant.

But the game is almost up, and "The Sopranos" is finishing by giving almost everyone around Tony — the FBI, the New York mob, even some of his own cronies — a reason to target him or his loved ones.

I still love being on the ride as "The Sopranos" winds down. But this novel for TV can't be judged completely until the final chapter. In this case, it's not just the journey that counts. It's the destination.

the scene at USC

Cities Apart



TODAY
"APOCALYPTO"
Russell House 322/326 6 p.m.

"BABEL"
Russell House 322/326 9 p.m.

MEANT TO BE MORBID, HEAD FIRST FOR HALOS, DARK DAY RISING
6 p.m. \$5 over 21, \$8 under 21
CITIES APART, MILE HIGH SCHOOL, WOODALE
9 p.m. \$6 over 21, \$8 under 21
The New Brookland Tavern 122 State St.

"INLAND EMPIRE"
Nickelodeon Theatre, 937 Main St., 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.
\$5.50 for students

TOM CONLON
Jammin' Java, 1530 Main St. 9 p.m. \$5

ZACH GALIFIANAKIS
Russell House Ballroom 10:30 p.m.

HOROSCOPES

Aries You'll get more done in the next day or two than you have the whole previous month. **Taurus** A dear friend would like to provide comfort, a generous thought indeed. Take the kind thought. Don't go shopping. **Gemini** You'd love to be out playing with friends, but you have to clean your room. The specifics may be different, but that's the general idea. **Cancer** More caution is advised now. Don't go overboard with innovations. You're just about to have a reality check. Proceed with caution. **Leo** Choose your words carefully, the same way you spend your money. You will have to go shopping soon. **Virgo** You're more assertive and dynamic now, which could cause controversy. You're not in the mood to just go along when you disagree. **Libra** Old memories are stirred, raising new questions. Before you wander off to ask them, remember to do what you promised. **Scorpio** Get other people to talking and catch up on all the news. You can share some of your latest ideas, but don't expect to get funding. **Sagittarius** If you truly enjoy what you're doing, you'll easily make the cut. **Capricorn** As you look back on your old limitations, some of them look pretty puny. Don't make a big mistake again. **Aquarius** One thing you shouldn't delegate is the counting of the money. This may be interfering with your creative processes, but that's OK. **Pisces** Follow through with as much energy and enthusiasm as you can muster. Don't go limp yet.

Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

3/30/07

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ACROSS

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ISLAND Tan 32" LCD HDTV GIVEAWAY! STOP BY THE WEST COLUMBIA SALON FOR DETAILS! Island Tan • 519 Meeting St. • West Columbia

Sudoku By Michael Mephram 03/30/07

	2		3	5		4		
					9			
	7		4			8		
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	9		3			6		
6			7		5			8
	1			9			2	
		6						
	4		8	7		5		

Level 1 2 3 4

How to Play
Complete the grid so each row, column AND 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9.

Solutions to Thursday's Sudoku

6	2	4	1	9	5	8	7	3
7	3	9	8	6	2	1	5	4
8	1	5	7	4	3	2	9	6
9	8	2	4	3	6	5	1	7
1	6	3	5	8	7	4	2	9
4	5	7	2	1	9	6	3	8
5	7	8	3	2	4	9	6	1
2	4	6	9	7	1	3	8	5
3	9	1	6	5	8	7	4	2

Solutions from Thursday

O	P	T	S	A	L	B	U	M	G	L	I	B
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A	V	E	C		A	E	R	I	E	S	C	A
V	E	R	Y		N	O	E	N	D	S	E	R

38 Gun lobby inits.	50 Legally bars
39 Ballpoint pen inventor	53 Alphabetizes
40 Coup d'__	55 Islands near Sumatra
41 Deception	56 Table scrap
42 Practice punching	58 Current units
45 Romes and pippins	59 Manitoba tribe
46 North Africa, mostly	62 South American tuber
47 Short-billed wading bird	63 Prickly husk
48 Finger Lake	64 DDE's command
	65 Highest alert

Gamecocks ready to corral Commodores

No. 1 USC meets No. 3 Vanderbilt in weekend series, clash of college titans

Beattie Daniel
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

The USC baseball team (22-4) jumped up to the top spot in Baseball America's rankings after winning last week's series against Mississippi State University.

Carolina hosts the Vanderbilt Commodores (24-3) this weekend with games at 7 p.m. on Friday, 4 p.m. on Saturday and 1:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Expect a big crowd this weekend. Saturday's game has already sold-out, but will be televised on Fox Sports South.

"We got to play our best baseball of the season to do well in this series. [Vanderbilt is] one of the best teams in the country, if not the best team. They've got a tremendous pitching staff, balanced attack offensively, and they pick the ball up," said coach Ray Tanner. "They are about as good as I've seen on paper in a long time."

The Gamecocks have to play strong this weekend because the Commodores boasts two preseason All-Americans who have continued to shine in third baseman Pedro Alvarez and pitcher David Price. Alvarez has hit 10 home runs this season and looks to be the main offensive threat.

USC junior pitcher Harris Honeycutt recognizes the determination that Vanderbilt brings to the diamond. "A team like Vanderbilt probably won't fold. They'll keep fighting no matter what the score, so it keeps you on top of your game,"

Honeycutt said.

Price is one of the best starters in the country, averaging 1.33 strikeouts an inning. Carolina will have to be hot at the plate to beat him.

"It's going to be difficult," Tanner said. "Not only do they have Price, but they have (RHP) Casey Weathers in the bullpen who is in the upper 90s. They have a deep pitching staff."

Honeycutt versus Price could be the best pitching duel this season, but Honeycutt remains confident. "I don't think of it as me versus Price. It is me against myself. It's me with my defense behind me, my catcher in front of me, and Coach (Mark) Calvi calling a great game," Honeycutt said.

Holding a 6-0 record, Honeycutt is pleased to be undefeated. "It's real exciting. It's good to be undefeated so far. I don't really think about it. I don't dwell on it," Honeycutt said. "I just try to do the same thing every week and it has turned out good so far."

Freshman pitcher Blake Cooper is another undefeated player with a 3-0 record. Cooper starts Sunday's game holding an impressive 1.00 ERA with 17 strikeouts in 18 innings.

"(He has) been pretty steady," Tanner said. "He had a good game against LSU. He has done a nice job. He doesn't show his age on the mound. He is pretty poised for a young guy."

One player that everybody is glad to see step up is



Juan Blas / THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Top-ranked Carolina will play a series against third-ranked Vanderbilt in a monster matchup over the weekend.

sophomore shortstop Reese Havens, who hit a career-high five hits in Friday's rout against MSU, including three doubles.

"You got to give Reese credit. He hasn't wavered. He has continued to work hard," Tanner said. "He hasn't changed his practice approach. You know, the good players, the tough ones, don't waver they stick at it. It has worked out for him."

One hot hitter who is looking to have a big impact is leadoff hitter and right

fielder Harley Lail, who comes into the game batting .345 with 13 RBIs in 14 starts. Lail said he has been gearing up for Price's fastball. "He has a good fastball ... that is up there pretty good," Lail said.

Lail also mentioned that the team is looking to be more aggressive this weekend to help them get on base. "A couple of times we had taken a lot of strikes against lefties against MSU on Saturday. We just watched a lot of strikes on the outside

corner. We are going to be more aggressive. (If you) Swing the bat you are going to make things happen."

The players have a positive mindset going into the weekend. "It is going to be a great experience. I'm really looking forward to it. I think all the guys are ready," said sophomore third baseman James Darnell.

The Gamecocks are looking to put up a fight this weekend in the toughest matchup of the year.

Carolina has been hitting well recently, and will go into this weekend coming off of seven consecutive games with 10 or more hits.

Tanner hopes the fans will make an impact this weekend. "Our fans already with a sellout, they are going to get here and help us all they can. They've been there and behind us," Tanner said. "We are going to need all the help we can get."

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

ICE COLD SEASON ALMOST OVER

Inferno fizzle, slide toward lukewarm finish on tough year

Cory Burkarth
STAFF WRITER

The Columbia Inferno (26-32-9) have five games left this season. The Inferno will face off against the Gwinnett Gladiators (38-21-7) tonight for the 10th and final meeting of the season between these Southern Division foes.

Owen Fussey leads the Inferno in points against the Gladiators with five (two goals, three assists). Gwinnett, on the other hand, has seven players with more than five points against Columbia.

Inferno goalie Rob Gherson is 1-5 against Gwinnett with a 3.72 goals-against average and a .893 save percentage. Goalie Todd Ford has a 1-1 record against the Gladiators with a .382 goals-against average and a .895 save percentage.

NO LOVE AT HOME — Columbia's 12-16-5 home record has them near the bottom of the league at 23rd place out of 25 teams. Their record away from Columbia is better, but not by much at 14-16-4.

A BLAZIN' BIRTHDAY



Juan Blas / THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Brad Ralph and the Columbia Inferno failed to make the playoffs this season. Their last game is on Saturday.

— To celebrate the birthday of their mascot Blaze, the first 1,500 fans in attendance at tonight's game will receive a free Blaze bobble-head doll. Other mascots are expected to be on hand for the celebration, and they will face off in a broomball game during the first intermission.

PLAYOFFS — The top six teams in the Southern Division are separated by 9 points as each of the six (Florida, Texas, Gwinnett, Augusta, Charlotte and South Carolina) battle for five playoff berths. Because all six are so close, none have clinched a playoff berth yet, and the Southern Division

is the only division in the ECHL without at least one clinched playoff spot.

AFTER TONIGHT — Saturday, the Inferno head to Charlotte for the eighth of nine meetings between the two teams. The Checkers are 5-2-0 against the Inferno this season. One week from tonight, the Inferno play its final home game of the season against the second-place Texas Wildcatters (38-20-9).

The final game of the season takes place the following night in Charlotte against the Checkers.

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

Softball snaps sour streak

USC picks up win against Winthrop, gets ready for MSU

Savi Smith
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

After suffering seven consecutive losses in nearly two weeks, Carolina's softball team took a break between their double-header with Winthrop on Tuesday to prepare for their second game.

"People were disappointed because we knew we were better than that," said junior outfielder Jessica Josker. "It motivated us even more for the next game."

USC (25-10) put those seven straight losses behind them and defeated Winthrop 2-0 in the second game of the double-header.

With things looking up for the Gamecocks, South Carolina will take the field for a series against Mississippi State in Starkville, Miss., that starts with a double-header beginning tomorrow at 2 p.m. The third and final game of the series will be played on Sunday at 2 p.m.

A key player to look out for at Mississippi State is freshman Chelsea Bramlett who is leading her team in runs, hits and batting average. The Bulldogs pulled out a win in the seventh inning against Ole Miss on Wednesday to improve its record to 21-15.

Carolina has faced tough competition in its schedule already. The streak of losing seven straight games included five closely contested



Juan Blas / THE DAILY GAMECOCK

USC's softball team broke out of a seven-game losing skid with a 2-0 victory against Winthrop Tuesday.

matchups where USC clearly had a chance to win each. After taking on Alabama (31-3) at home, the Gamecocks traveled to Knoxville to play the No. 1 ranked Volunteers (33-2.) Against Alabama, Carolina lost 1-0 after the Crimorun Tide hit a solo homerun. The Gamecocks lost the following game in extra innings.

"We played the No. 1 and two teams in the country head to head," Josker said. "I feel like we can surprise

some people."

Carolina's loss to Winthrop in the first game of the double-header was more of a disappointment for the team, though.

"I wasn't on my best game," said junior pitcher Melissa Hendon. "It was a tough game — sometimes you have good days, and sometimes you have bad days."

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