

Title: **2016 Buzzards honor SC's best, worst**  
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## THE BUZZ

# 2016 Buzzards honor SC's best, worst

BY CASSIE COPE

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With 2016 drawing to a close, it is time to reflect on some of the best – and worst – that happened this year in S.C. politics.

### MOST #SAVAGE POLITICAL MOVE

**Winner:** Lt. Gov. **Henry McMaster** to become governor.

South Carolina's McMaster was the first statewide elected official in the nation to endorse then-GOP presidential candidate **Donald Trump**. McMaster stood by Trump throughout the primaries and, in July, delivered one of the nominating speeches for Trump at the GOP convention. After Trump was elected president and Cabinet rumors started to swirl, McMaster said Gov. **Nikki Haley's** name had been mentioned for the secretary of state's position and his for U.S. attorney general. But McMaster, who lost the GOP

FROM PAGE 3A

## BUZZ

mittee of women over 60 who are "grandmothers, quilters, seamstresses or creative fabric artists." The group would ponder two "21st century flag" designs that S.C. residents could vote on, she said.

"This 'grandmother council' (an idea derived from the Iroquois culture) approach to making the world safer for and kinder to our grandchildren and their descendants is an appropriate choice at several levels," she wrote. "Who would criticize such a gathering, for one thing? And who could criticize the voters having the final say?"

**Runner up:** The revered

primary for governor to Haley in 2010, maintained he was content staying in South Carolina. Ultimately, Trump nominated Haley to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, clearing McMaster's path to the governor's mansion.

**Runner-up:** Gov. **Haley's** targeting – albeit failed – of state senators in the June GOP primaries.

Haley targeted three state Senate leaders in their GOP primaries as a political group

with ties to the governor spent more than \$500,000 trying to reshape the Legislature's upper chamber. Haley successfully ousted longtime state Sen. **Wes Hayes**, R-York, who was beaten by **Wes Climer**, a Rock Hill financial adviser and former York County GOP chairman. But two of Haley's other tar-

gets – Senate President Pro Tempore **Hugh Leatherman**, R-Florence, and now-Senate Judiciary Committee chairman **Luke Rankin**, R-Horry – successfully fended off challengers.

### BEST EMAIL TO GOV. HALEY DURING THE CONFEDERATE FLAG DEBATE

In July, Haley released emails she received a year earlier from those calling for the Confederate flag to be removed from the State House grounds and those who wanted to leave it up.

There were thousands of emails but The Buzz picked two favorites.

**Winner:** The grandmother council's offer.

Elizabeth from Waco, Texas, suggested Haley appoint a com-

SEE BUZZ, 10A

flagpole.

Mike, from Lexington, simply wanted the flagpole.

"I would like to request that when the flag is removed from the State House grounds, I would like to obtain the flagpole," he wrote to the governor.

"This is not a joke," he added. "I do not know what the plans are for it, but I feel as though it should be treated with reverence. I'll remove it to my home in Lexington where the American flag would then fly from it."

### MOST RIDICULOUS BILLS ... THAT WENT NOWHERE

**Winner:** State Rep. **Mike Pitts'** journalist registry.

Pitts proposed establishing a "responsible journalism registry" to make, he said, a point about gun control efforts that he viewed as restricting the Second Amendment.

Pitts' bill would have established requirements for journalists and included registration fees, and setting fines and criminal penalties for violations.

A person seeking to register with the state as a journalist would have to submit a criminal record background check and "an affidavit from the media outlet attesting to the applicant's journalistic competence."

Bill Rogers, executive director of the S.C. Press Association, responded the proposed registry was "ridiculous and totally unconstitutional." (For the record, The State newspaper is a member of the Press Association.)

**First runner-up:** State Rep. **Mia McLeod's** Viagra bill.

McLeod introduced a proposal to make it more difficult for men to get prescriptions for erectile dysfunction medication. The proposal was intended as a critique of efforts by the Legislature's GOP majority to restrict women's access to abortion.

The legislation's require-

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ments included a sworn affidavit from a sexual partner detailing an incident of erectile dysfunction in the previous 90 days, and a cardiac stress test and report indicating the patient's heart could handle sex. Men also would have to wait 24 hours after getting a prescription to get the drugs, just as women seeking an abortion must receive information and wait 24 hours to have the procedure.

"This bill really isn't about erectile dysfunction, but it is about gender equity," McLeod said. "Government has no place making decisions for women or men when it comes to abortion or erectile dysfunction."

McLeod subsequently was elected to the state Senate.

**Second runner-up:** Bathroom bills flushed.

After North Carolina passed its controversial House Bill 2, state Sen. **Lee**

**Bright**, R-Spartanburg, introduced a similar proposal to ban transgender people from using the bathrooms of their choice in the Palmetto State. The bill faced opposition from activists for LGBT rights and Gov. Haley, who called it unneeded, and, ultimately, died. A local bathroom proposal also emerged in Berkeley County, the new home of Volvo. Commerce Secretary **Bobby Hitt** and

state schools Superintendent **Molly Spearman** urged the issue be decided at the local level. Ultimately, it was defeated, too.

#### **MOST UNREALISTIC CAMPAIGN PROMISE**

**Winner:** U.S. Rep. **Mark Sanford**'s unsuccessful Democratic challenger **Dimitri Cherny** said it was time "we started colonizing other planets."

Cherny said humankind needs a backup plan should scientists one day discover an object barreling toward Earth, bringing annihilation with it.

The former long-haul truck driver and die-hard Bernie Sanders fan listed

"Finding Planet 'B' " on his campaign website among eight pieces of legislation that he would push if elected in the coastal 1st District.

Sanford easily was re-elected.

**Runner-up:** President-elect Trump's great big beautiful Mexico-U.S. wall, to be paid for by Mexico, and unsuccessful Democratic candidate's **Hillary Clinton**'s call for free college.

Since Trump won, we'll see if the wall ever is built and, if so, how it is financed.

(Maybe it will just be a fence?)

*Cassie Cope: 803-771-8657, @cassielcope*



Title: 16 events we were talking about in 2016

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# 16 events we were talking about in 2016

It's been a busy year, with much to talk about.

A presidential election. A new University of South Carolina football coach. A hurricane. And more.

Here, we've rounded up 16 of the most talked about stories of the year – some serious, some offbeat.

## PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS

**The event:** South Carolina's first-in-the-South presidential primaries have long been viewed as a crucial benchmark for nominees of both major parties. The GOP primary has a near-sterling record of picking the eventual GOP nominee, in part because of its broad and diverse Republican electorate.

**The result:** The Palmetto State reclaimed its role this year as a Republican kingmaker, giving wild-card candidate Donald Trump a crucial primary victory in February, along with eventual Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. South Carolinians then stuck with Trump through his myriad of political stumbles, all the way to November. Trump handily defeated Clinton to claim South Carolina's nine electoral votes.

## HALEY NOMINATED AS U.N. AMBASSADOR

**The event:** S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley was no fan of Donald Trump during presidential primary season, giving her endorsement to Republican candidate Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. Her early criticisms of Trump prompted him to fire back. But it was all water under the bridge after the election, as rumors flew that Haley was a contender for Secretary of State. The president-elect even-

tually announced her as his nominee for United Nations ambassador.

**The result:** Haley will have to go through the confirmation process with the U.S. Senate. If she is confirmed, S.C. Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster will rise to the governor's spot. That has left confusion about whether President Pro Tempore Hugh Leatherman will rise to lieutenant governor or if he will resign and let another senator take his place. Some also argue that McMaster can appoint who he wants, and a state senator has asked the Supreme Court to clarify.

## HURRICANE MATTHEW HITS S.C.

**The event:** Hurricane Matthew sent coastal residents fleeing as it approached South Carolina, leaving many areas of the coast shut down when it blasted the state in early October.

**The result:** Matthew wrecked pool decks, knocked down a few houses, broke at least 25 dams and eroded beaches, overwhelming nearly 60 percent of the sand dunes in South Carolina. Flooding from rain-swollen rivers swamped communities well inland, such as Nichols. State lawmakers now are looking for ways to pay for all or parts of the \$64 million tab the state incurred preparing for and responding to the storm.

## MUSCHAMP NAMED USC FOOTBALL COACH

**The event:** When Steve Spurrier resigned after 10½ seasons as the Gamecocks' football coach, Will Muschamp was not one of the first names folks thought of as a replacement. However, during a marathon interview session with South Carolina Athletics Director Ray Tanner, Muschamp won over Tanner and was named the University of South Carolina's 34th head football coach.

**The result:** Muschamp won over a skeptical fan base with an energetic and optimistic approach during the off-season, but his first season started slowly. South Carolina was 2-4 at the midpoint of the season but won four of its final six games to earn bowl eligi-

bility. The Gamecocks won twice as many games in the regular season (six) than they had won during Spurrier's final season (three). The Gamecocks will meet Southern Florida in the Birmingham Bowl Thursday.

## JAKE BENTLEY EMERGES AS USC QUARTERBACK

**The event:** Four-star freshman quarterback Brandon McIlwain was supposed to be the season's savior, but after McIlwain and senior Perry Orth each started three of the first six games of the season with limited effectiveness, South Carolina turned to another four-star freshman. Jake Bentley, the son of running backs coach Bobby Bentley, skipped his senior year of high school to enroll at USC during the summer but was expected to redshirt this season until he was inserted as the starter against UMass.

**The result:** Bentley led the Gamecocks to four wins in the final six games and finished the regular season as the team's leading passer. He passed for 1,030 yards, six touchdowns and two interceptions and looked like one of the best first-year quarterbacks in the country in limited action. Bentley now looks like a fixture at the position for the next two or three seasons.

## PUBLIC CORRUPTION

**The event:** Corruption tainted some

ranks of county and state leadership. In Richland County, then-Councilman Kelvin Washington admitted to not filing federal income tax returns for 2012, 2013 and 2014 for a total

\$426,000 in alleged unreported income. A month after he pleaded guilty, S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley removed Washington from County Council for being convicted of "a crime involving moral turpitude." Meanwhile, the Richland

County Recreation Commission came under a storm of complaints and lawsuits alleging its director, James Brown

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III, had sexually harassed employees, hired relatives and created a threatening work environment. He decided to retire from his \$151,800-per-year job in October, just as the board that hired him was being scrutinized for poor supervision of Brown and the commission.

Meanwhile, State Attorney General Alan Wilson had tried to stop special prosecutor David Pascoe from investi-

gating Wilson's fellow Republicans in the S.C. Legislature on public corruption charges. After Wilson failed to stop Pascoe, the special prosecutor and SLED kept on investigating.

**The result:** In Richland County, Washington's mother-in-law, Bernice Scott, ran again for the council seat she had held for 20 years before Washington but was defeated. Following Brown's

resignation from the Recreation Commission, Richland County state legislators and the Haley went after the commission's board members for neglecting their duties. Five of them resigned, two were fired by Haley, and only one board member remains. The Richland

SEE EVENTS, 8C

FROM PAGE 1C

## EVENTS

delegation will recommend new members for appointment. The full board will eventually be responsible for hiring Brown's replacement.

And, at the state level, Pascoe earlier this month indicted a top S.C. House Republican on misconduct in office charges. More lawmakers may be indicted.

### DYLANN ROOF TRIAL

**The event:** In December, federal jurors in Charleston found Dylann Roof guilty of federal hate crimes resulting in death in the 2015 killings of nine African-Americans in a Bible study at Charleston's historic Emanuel AME Church.

**The result:** The same jurors on Jan. 3 will begin to hear evidence about whether to give the death penalty or life without parole to the 22-year-old self-avowed white supremacist from Columbia. Roof could go on trial on state charges in the crimes as soon as next year.

### DONNIE MYERS

**The event:** Veteran Lexington County prosecutor Donnie Myers was arrested in February for his third alcohol-related

traffic offense in nearly 11 years, leading even close allies to suggest it was time for him to step down and get help.

**The result:** Myers didn't seek re-election after a state record 40 years in office, attributing retirement to his age of 71 without mentioning the furor over his arrest. That led to a ballot showdown among Republicans to become his successor, with protege Rick Hubbard set to take charge in January. A magistrate court jury found Myers guilty of DUI, leading to a \$1,017 fine.

### NORTH MAIN REVIVAL

**The event:** When Columbia restaurateur Kristian Niemi announced in September a new restaurant at 2510 N. Main St., he joined a growing movement to revitalize the area known as North Main that lies between Elmwood Avenue and the railroad trestle at Earlewood Park. In fact, Niemi is naming his restaurant Revival.

**The result:** Niemi - who also has opened popular restaurants including Gervais & Vine, Solstice Kitchen, Rosso Trattoria and Bourbon - plans a multiuse complex that

will include a restaurant, beer garden, bocce courts and concert hall. It will join other businesses announced or recently opened in the North Main area. The War Mouth restaurant opened last year in one of several empty 1950s and 1960s industrial buildings clustered on Franklin Street in Cottontown, just off North Main. And the Cotton Town Brew Lab - two planned craft beer breweries and a super-sized tasting room - is being built in a former garage complex just down the street. Those two businesses joined vegan restaurant Lamb's Bread, the wine and craft beer retailer Vino Garage, North Main Bakery and others.

### COSTCO OPENS

**The event:** The clamor for a Costco store in Columbia stretches back for years but seemed to grow stronger in recent years as card-holding members increasingly expressed frustration with the drive to nearby Augusta, Georgia to reap the privileges of membership. After some bumps in the roads on its plans in 2015, the store was finally built.

**The result:** Customers turned out in droves when Costco opened its doors in the summer at 507 Piney Grove Road, jamming the spacious, 148,000-square-foot warehouse store first in a members-only preview party days before the grand opening. When the store - known for its bulk merchandise packaging, attentive customer service and discounted prices to members - initially opened its doors more than 350 members streamed in and more than 7,000 new memberships were presold, store officials said. Local developers have speculated that Costco could open another store in bustling Northeast Richland.

### CLEMSON HEADS BACK TO THE PLAYOFFS

**The event:** Clemson won back-to-back ACC titles for the first time in 28 years on its way to its second consecutive appearance in the College Football Playoff. Quarterback Deshaun Watson led the way for the Tigers with 4,443 total yards and 43 total touchdowns and was named a Heisman finalist for the second consecutive season.



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**The result:** The Tigers will face Ohio State Dec. 31 in Phoenix; a win would send Clemson back to the national title game for the second year in a row. If Clemson beats the Buckeyes it will face the winner of Alabama and Washington on Jan. 9 in Tampa. Clemson is trying to win its first national championship since 1981.

### FIREFLIES PLAY BALL

**The event:** The Columbia Fireflies minor league baseball team made its long-awaited debut in the sparkling new Spirit Communications Park, the anchor of the future BullStreet Commons district.

**The result:** Hundreds of thousands of fans watched the Fireflies play, setting a record for professional baseball in the Capital City with more than 181,000 in attendance throughout the inaugural season. The ballpark was named the nation's best by "Baseball Digest" and was chosen to host the 2017 South Atlantic All-Star game. And something else to look forward to in 2017: Recent Mets signee Tim Lincecum likely could see some playing time in Columbia.

### NO NCAA BID FOR USC MEN

**The event:** South Carolina had one of the best regular seasons in its history in 2015-16, soaring

to a 15-0 start and the first Top 25 ranking in a dozen years, and the first NCAA tournament berth since 2004 seemed imminent. But Selection Sunday came and went without the Gamecocks being summoned, a 24-8 record deemed not good enough. Critics pointed to USC's soft nonconference schedule as the reason, but USC had a better RPI than Syracuse, Michigan and Vanderbilt, which each got in. The Gamecocks tied Vanderbilt with an 11-7 SEC finish, but won the head-to-head matchup.

**The result:** Coach Frank Martin loaded his schedule with "name" schools this year, including Michigan and Syracuse. The Gamecocks stormed to an 8-0 start and again leaped into the Top 25, with an RPI and strength of schedule among the country's best. The return of suspended star Sindarius Thornwell for SEC play could give USC what it barely missed last season.

### SEA LION LANDING OPENS AT RIVERBANKS

**The event:** Riverbanks Zoo's flippered tenants made a splash on their Memorial Day weekend debut. The four sea lions and one harbor seal inhabit a 250,000-gallon saltwater habitat called Sea Lion Landing, which is modeled to look like Pier 39 in San Francisco. The attraction marked

the final phase of Destination Riverbanks - the zoo's \$36-million expansion and development project.

**The result:** Since the opening, Baja, Maverick, P.J. and Gambit have become some of the most popular animals at the zoo. Riverbanks had its highest attendance on record for the 2015-16 fiscal year, with more than 1.2 million visitors.

### POKEMON GO CRAZE

**The event:** In July, developer Niantic released its augmented reality game Pokemon GO, allowing users to search for and catch the animated critters on their mobile phone's camera feature.

**The result:** Streets were quickly filled with players walking with their eyes firmly glued to the Pokedex and Jigglypuffs on their phones. For a while, Pokemon GO passed Twitter in the number of individual daily users, and pokestops appeared around the Columbia area. Niantic was later pressured to remove some locations like the U.S. Holocaust Museum from the game, but when several popular pokestops in late July disappeared from the S.C. State House at the height of the craze, it sparked outrage from legions of dedicated players, and disrupted at least one planned promotional event on the State House grounds. The pokestops returned to the State

House a month later.

### USC STUDENTS BEHAVING BADLY

**The event:** 2016 was not a banner year for student behavior at the University of South Carolina.

Fraternities set records for misconduct violations despite pointed warnings from USC officials. Compared with last year, twice as many students were hospitalized this fall for drinking too much.

Two freshman basketball players were kicked off the team after their arrests on charges related to a string of BB-gun related incidents. Female USC students woke up in various states of undress in neighborhoods around Five Points one weekend this fall.

**The result:** USC says the uptick in incidents indicates better reporting and the success of student accountability initiatives. Still, the university has put fraternities on a short leash and continued to work with neighbors to curb off-campus student behavioral problems. The school even gave Athletics Director Ray Tanner an additional role as a student mentor.

*Contributing staff writers: Roddie Burris, David Cloninger, Matt Connolly, Cassie Cope, Sarah Ellis, Tim Flach, Sammy Fretwell, Janet Jones Kendall, Josh Kendall, John Monk, Erin Shaw, Avery Wilks*

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Trump



Washington

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From top left: Fireflies play at Spirit Communications Park; Election Day; Gov. Nikki Haley; Clemson beats 3rd ranked Louisville and heads to National Championship; USC football Coach Will Muschamp; flooding in Nichols from Hurricane Matthew; rendering of Kristian Niemi's planned Revival on North Main; USC quarterback Jake Bentley; Sea Lion Landing at Riverbanks Zoo; Dyllann Roof goes on trial in Charleston; the Pokemon GO craze hits Columbia; retiring 11th Circuit Solicitor Donnie Myers testifies during his trial for driving under the influence; USC's Greek system comes under fire; USC's men's basketball team is snubbed by the NCAA Tournament; David Pascoe and Alan Wilson; and Costco opens.



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# DEMOCRATS LEFT BEHIND

## As Obama accomplished goals on policy, his party floundered

Associated Press

### WASHINGTON

In boasting about his tenure in the White House, President Barack Obama often cites numbers such as these: 15 million new jobs, a 4.9 percent unemployment rate and 74 months of consecutive job growth.

There's one number you will almost never hear: More than 1,030 seats.

That's the number of spots in state legislatures, governor's mansions and Congress lost by Democrats during Obama's presidency.

It's a statistic that reveals an unexpected twist of the Obama years: The leadership of the one-time community organizer and champion of ground-up politics was rough on the grassroots of his own party. When Obama exits the White House, he'll leave behind a Democratic Party that languished in his shadow for years and is searching for itself.

"What's happened on the ground is that voters have been punishing Democrats for eight solid years — it's been exhausting," said South Carolina state Sen. Vincent Sheheen, who lost two gubernatorial campaigns to Nikki Haley, President-elect Donald Trump's pick for ambassador to the U.N. "If I was talking about a local or state issue, voters would always lapse back into a national topic: Barack Obama."

When Obama won the presidency, his election was heralded as a moment of

Democratic dominance — the crashing of a conservative wave that had swept the country since the dawn of the Reagan era.

Democrats believed that the coalition of young, minority and female voters who swept Obama into the White House would usher in something new: an ascendant Democratic majority that would ensure party gains for decades to come.

The coalition, it turns out, was Obama's alone.

After this year's elections, Democrats hold the governor's office and both legislative chambers in just five coastal states: Oregon, California, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware. Republicans have the trifecta in 25, giving them control of a broad swath of the middle of the country.

The defeats have all but wiped out a generation of young Democrats, leaving the party with limited power in statehouses and a thin bench to challenge an ascendant GOP majority eager to undo many of the president's policies. To be sure, the president's party almost always loses seats in midterm elections. But, say experts, Obama's tenure has marked the greatest number of losses under any president in decades.

"Obama just figured his important actions on policies like immigration and health care would solidify support, but that hasn't really materialized," said Daniel Galvin, a political science professor at

Northwestern University and the author of a book on presidential party building. "He's done basically the minimal amount of party building, and it's been insufficient to help the party."

It's a political reality that Obama has only been willing to acknowledge publicly after his party's devastating November losses. He's admitted he failed to create "a sustaining organization" around the political force that twice elected him to office.

"That's something I would have liked to have done more of, but it's kind of hard to do when you're also dealing with a whole bunch of issues here in the White House," he said at his year-end press conference.

It is perhaps not surprising that Obama — a politician who promised a post-party era — turned out not to be a party stalwart.

Obama and his aides came into office neither beholden to his party's establishment, nor particularly interested in reinforcing his party's weak spots.

He electrified the 2004 Democratic National Convention with a speech seeking common cause over party differences. Four years later, he defeated Hillary Clinton, the pick of the party insiders, to win the Democratic presidential nomination.

In the White House, Obama's failure





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to do the typical Washington schmoozing was a constant source of complaint among congressional Democrats, as was his reluctance to endorse down-ballot candidates and inability to parlay Organizing for Action, his grassroots organization, into a significant force.

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## *State's leaders continue to fail us on many fronts*

With all the hubbub surrounding the transition from one national administration to another, it's easy to lose sight of the ongoing lack of leadership in the South Carolina governor's office and the General Assembly in at least three areas of major concern.

The sad state of educational funding in South Carolina is the first of these. The General Assembly has significantly underfunded per-pupil contributions required by the Education Finance Act for years, and even with more money coming from statewide sales tax collections, the system's continuing reliance upon property taxes results in an inherent imbalance in the funding available to poor, mostly rural school districts.

The consequence is twofold: Teachers make less, and poorer school districts have huge problems attracting qualified teachers.

The state already has difficulty attracting enough teachers: It is training 500 teachers a year through its program of alternative certification for educators because our teacher-education programs fall that much short of supplying teachers for each year's vacancies.

The second area of concern is that

the state's employees are being required to pay an increasing share of their paychecks into the Retirement System *for the sixth consecutive year*. Employees' contributions will now range from 9.2 percent to 9.7 percent of their salaries, a two-thirds larger share than the national average.

Virtually no one in a position of leadership in state government on either side of the political aisle has addressed this issue in anything like a responsible way. Instead legislators and policymakers "study" the problem, while continuing to assume that state investments will return an unrealistic 7.5 percent.

Finally, South Carolinians should be concerned about the state's infrastructure. My wife and I recently drove to Denver and back on the roads of eight different states, and without exception we found the roads in every one of them superior to our own, with fewer potholes, less rough and uneven pavement and fewer traffic disruptions due to ongoing repairs.

The problems are clear. The status quo has remained "quo" for too long; leaders possessing a genuine vision for the state's future must emerge.

- Edwin C. Epps  
Spartanburg



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# Boots McMaster to join history of SC State House animals

BY BRISTOW MARCHANT  
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Even before the formal transition is under way, we know one prominent figure that will be following Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster into the S.C. governor's office – his bulldog Boots.

Famous from his appearance in the lieutenant governor's campaign ads, Boots will have space of his own at the governor's office in the State House once his owner replaces Gov. Nikki Haley early next year, McMaster said.

"He'll have more than a corner," McMaster said. "I bring him up here now. Not during the session, but when the traffic's not heavy."

Boots is already enough

of a celebrity that he's been recognized on his jaunts through the capitol building.

"Tour guides will stop for him," the lieutenant governor said. "Everybody wants to see Boots the bulldog."

Boots will become the latest in a line of famous animal visitors to the State House, including:

- Pork and Barrel, two squealing piglets carried into the State House lobby by then-Gov. Mark Sanford to protest the Legislature's spending priorities. The stunt is blamed for hurting Sanford's relationship with lawmakers, who were offended both by the piglets' symbolism and the

fact they defecated on the State House floor.

- Noel the pony, the name for an animal ridden up the north steps on Christmas Day 1990 and abandoned there. The unidentified rider reportedly said Noel was a Christmas present for

George H.W. Bush. Noel, who appeared malnourished, had to be taken out through the building's main elevator, and eventually found its way to a children's petting zoo.

- Psychedelic vermin. In an effort to eradicate the State House pigeon population. Officials spread poison pellets around the grounds, but

abandoned the effort after the pills, likened to LSD in a report in The State at the time, were found to have a "bizarre effect" on the State House squirrels. Also unsuccessful in getting rid of the birds: plastic snakes left on the window sills.

Even if Boots becomes a regular fixture at the governor's office, McMaster doesn't expect him to become a distraction.

"He has bursts of energy, then he'll sleep several times a day," McMaster said. "Often, people will hear him snoring."

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Provided photograph

Boots McMaster appeared in Henry McMaster's 2014 lieutenant governor campaign video.



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# Common Cause urges Haley to step aside as governor

BY BRISTOW MARCHANT  
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Government watchdog group Common Cause of South Carolina is asking Gov. Nikki Haley to step aside as governor, saying her pending nomination to become U.N. ambassador impedes her ability to do the job.

In a letter to the governor released Thursday, Common Cause director John Crangle

notes, "The process of vetting, security clearance, confirmation, briefing, and training for the position of U.N. ambassador will

require considerable time and effort on your part at a time when the new General Assem-

SEE HALEY, 5A

FROM PAGE 3A

## HALEY

bly will be convening in January 2017 and considering vital issues..."

In light of the timing of Haley's nomination, Crangle asks her if "it would be in the best interests of the people of both South Carolina and the United States if you would take a leave of absence from your position as governor."

"Gov. Haley has found no problems in doing her duties as governor while preparing for her Senate

confirmation process," Haley's spokeswoman, Chaney Adams, said Thursday.

Haley is expected to step down once her position as U.N. ambassador is approved, allowing Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster to take over as the state's chief executive.

It's unclear who would then take over as the state's lieutenant governor. Senate President Pro Tempore

Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, has said he will not rise to fill the post. He could resign and another senator could be elected as the Senate leader and then rise to lieutenant governor.

However, some argue that, because of changes to the S.C. Constitution, McMaster could appoint his replacement.

Marchant: 803-771-8405

“

**GOV. HALEY HAS FOUND NO PROBLEMS  
IN DOING HER DUTIES AS GOVERNOR  
WHILE PREPARING FOR HER SENATE  
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*Haley spokeswoman Chaney Adams*

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Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



Haley

Title: **Christmas parade helped with focus**

Author:

Size: 6.04 column inches

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## Christmas parade helped with focus

The Cayce-West Columbia Parade of Lights began and ended with fictional characters: Rep. Joe Wilson, and Santa Claus. I was wondering where the other fictional characters were (Frosty the Snowman, Lindsey Graham, Tim Scott and of course Nikki Haley) when, to my amazement, my attention was brought back to the real reasons for the season: The float from Kittiwake Baptist Church (the birth of the baby Jesus) and Joe Pinner (the joy and anticipation of the birth of Jesus) passed by.

Thanks to all who worked so hard to present a night of lights and fun.

- Tom Moore  
West Columbia

Title: **ALSO ...**

Author:

Size: 8.06 column inches

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**ALSO ...**

● Labon, a technical fiber and textile manufacturer, is expected to invest \$3.1 million and create 23 jobs in Orangeburg County, according to Gov. Nikki Haley's office. Based in Shanghai, Labon specializes in the research, development and manufacturing of technical fibers and textiles.

● Volkswagen reached a deal that will give at least some owners of the remaining 80,000 diesel vehicles caught in the company's emissions cheating scandal the option of a buyback and provide compensation to all of them on top of any repurchase or repairs, U.S. regulators and a federal judge said.

● U.S. safety regulators are reviewing eight complaints that the engines in tiny Smart Fortwo cars can catch fire. The investigation covers 43,000 of the two-seat cars from 2008 and 2009 model years.

*The Associated Press contributed.*



Title: **Housemembers request to be dropped from Supreme Court petition**  
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 Size: 17.67 column inches  
 Columbia, SC Circulation: 128564



## House members request to be dropped from Supreme Court petition

■ **Speaker Jay Lucas and Greg Delleney are arguing they play no role in replacing McMaster.**

BY CASSIE COPE  
[ccope@thestate.com](mailto:ccope@thestate.com)

Two S.C. Legislative Council members want no part of a state senator's request for the S.C. Supreme Court to clarify who will become the state's next lieutenant governor.

S.C. House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, and Rep. Greg Delleney, R-Chester, are requesting to be removed as respondents in a Supreme Court petition filed earlier this month by Sen. Tom Davis. The Beaufort County senator wants a ruling that the governor cannot appoint a lieutenant governor until after the 2018 election.

Lucas and Delleney argue they play no role in the replacement of Lt. Gov. Henry McMaster, who will rise to become the next governor if Gov.

Nikki Haley is confirmed ambassador to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, Legislative Council member and S.C. Secretary of State Mark Hammond formally responded he will abide by the Supreme Court's decision.

The ratification language that lawmakers approved after a 2014 statewide referendum — allowing the governor and lieutenant governor to be elected on the same ticket — omitted a 2018 starting date for the governor to appoint a new lieutenant governor if that post becomes vacant, Davis has said.

That means the president pro tempore of the Senate, now Sen. Hugh Leatherman, R-Florence, should rise to lieutenant governor if McMaster becomes governor, Davis says.

However, some have argued because the 2018 date was omitted, McMaster can appoint his replacement.