Hotel Rwanda manager Paul Rusesabagina speaks about living through genocide

Paul Rusesabagina, survivor of the brutal Rwandan genocide, came to Tech Oct. 5, to tell students about the atrocities he faced in 1994.

By Supriya Ghoparde Contributing Writer

Paul Rusesabagina, survivor of the brutal Rwandan genocide, came to Tech Oct. 5 to tell students about the atrocities he faced in 1994. A full house of students, alumni and faculty packed the Student Center Ballroom to see Rusesabagina, former interim manager of the Hôtel des Mille Collines during the Rwandan genocide.

Rusesabagina is revered all over the world as a civil rights leader because he protected thousands of individuals from the Hutu-led Interahamwe army. His trials are also documented in the Oscar-nominated film Hotel Rwanda, directed by Terry George and starring Don Cheadle.

Rusesabagina spent the lecture explaining what it was like to live in Rwanda during the massacres of the Hutus and the Tutsis. His story began with how he discovered that the Interahamwe militia was coming to kill all Tutsis in the area.

He made me realize that there are countries that have no control over the violence and the well-being of their people. More powerful countries need to step in to help them, said Drew Glaser, a fifth-year Mechanical Engineering major.

Later, Rusesabagina revealed that he had to house almost 30 people in his house to hide them from the Interahamwe forces. I never made that decision; that decision was made by God, said Rusesabagina.

No security was sent to their local, and only 2,500 United Nations peacekeeping soldiers were stationed for protection, so Rusesabagina had to take it upon himself. He said that he felt trapped in his own country because the United Nations had only observed and recorded the atrocities rather than sending in more peacekeepers.

Rusesabagina hoped more would come, but the British pulled out a usable chunk of peacekeepers within a few days. He ended up protecting the hotel himself.

In the future, Rusesabagina urged more action to be taken by the United Nations through extended peacekeeping operations. Anything can be possible. Where there is a will, there is a way, Rusesabagina said.

During the speech, Rusesabagina also advocated for an increase in education about genocide.

Rusesabagina’s upbringing may reveal why he is so compassionate about protecting all racial sects in Rwanda from the Interahamwe forces. He was born into a mixed family in which his mother was a Hutu and his father a Tutsi.

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Rwanda from page 9

esabagina said.
The horrendous acts against his own people gave him more strength to hold off the Interahamwe army.

While combating Rwanda’s internal violence, Rusesabagina also described the experience of trying to live in an abandoned hotel for over two months.

He said that most phone lines were dead and he had to live without food, water and electricity.

Rusesabagina had no idea how long he would reside in the hotel and had to constantly find ways to obtain water for the hotel residents.

“Life became so difficult and in the meantime the hotel was attacked many times,” Rusesabagina said.

Rusesabagina eventually fled the country; he now lives in Belgium.

“I would reside in the hotel and had no idea how long I would be there. We were dead and most phone lines were dead and we never see being from the hotel for over two months,” Rusesabagina said.

In closing, Rusesabagina said that everyone needs to realize that this generation will be tomorrow’s leaders.

“Take Hotel Rwanda and An Ordinary Man as an example. Please be my messenger!”

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Students were stunned up until the last minute of the presentation.

“It was very interesting and made you more aware of what was going on in the world,” said John Zullo, a first-year Mechanical Engineering major.


The genocide took place during a 100-day period from early April through mid-July of 1994.

During that time, two extremist Hutu militia groups, the Interahamwe and the Impuzamugambi, massacred Tutsis.

The Human Rights Watch estimates the death toll at a minimum of 500,000 Tutsis, which is three-quarters of the total Tutsi population.

The genocide ended when the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a Tutsi rebel movement led by Paul Kagame, overthrew the Hutu government.

Crisis in Rwanda, land of conflict

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GT Ride and Drive hosts second annual drive through north Georgia’s mountains

By Aileen Li
Contributing Writer

Picture this for a moment: it is early in the morning and the smell of leaves lingers in the early autumn air. All of the sudden, the sound of an engine breaks the dawn, and there you are, in the driver’s seat of a sleek blue Corvette, slashing through the fresh mountain roads of northern Georgia.

Every fall, students who participate in the Georgia Tech Ride and Drive (GTRD) have an experience just like this—well, minus the Corvette.

GTRD is sponsored by the Tech Auto Show, which has a planning committee that is comprised of students, alumni, staff, faculty and other car lovers from the Tech community.

The event is simple. People with cars who want to drive through the mountains meet in a parking lot and drive along a pre-determined route, stopping on the way to swap passengers (and sometimes cars), eat good food, take pictures and get to know one another.

This year’s event will be held Saturday, Oct. 14.

“I came up with this idea after having success planning the Tech Auto Show,” said Sterling Skinner, founder of GTRD and director of instructional laboratories in the School of Mechanical Engineering.

“I decided to create events that would appeal to those that love technology and design in a form that everyone can relate to: transportation. The common thread [of the event] is a love for technology and design as expressed in automobiles and motorcycles,” Skinner said.

Not only does the event celebrate passion for automobiles, it brings people with the same interests and outlooks together to share each other’s inspirations.

“The best part about the event is that the participants often meet others that they want to keep in touch with. [For instance], when students meet alumni, they get inspired to continue to work hard on their degree. Last year, Paul Allen, who at the time worked for General Motors, brought a very newly released Pontiac Solstice to the drive. He was able to talk to the students about his career in the auto industry at the various stops during the drive,” Skinner said.

This event is a great way to connect with people who feel the same way you do about cars as well as to have the chance to take your car and drive on fun, uncongested roads,” said Kris Porter, a Polymer, Textile and Fiber Engineering major and one of the organizers of the event.

“Tech has a phenomenal car culture but it is very loosely connected. This event helps to connect those people who might never know of each other’s interests,” Porter said.

“Cars people have links with their machines at a very emotional level and that deep level of care creates unusually strong friendships between fellow car enthusiasts,”

Porter said.

The first GTRD was held Oct. 25 of last year.

“[Last year’s event] would have been perfect, but a planning glitch routed us onto a very dusty dirt road which upset many who were driving convertibles, although everybody still had fun,” Skinner said.

“This year we are simplifying the entire route and keeping the turns to a minimum to help keep people together. We are also starting at an easy to find location to help get things off smoothly,” Skinner said.

In addition to making improvements to ensure an exhilarating experience for Tech’s car fanatics, Skinner plans to add more car events in the future.

“[In the next few years], I would like to plan a spring Ride and Drive event. Early in the fall, I would like to host a Tech hospitality area at the Petit Le Mans sports car race held at Road Atlanta. The fourth event would be the Fall Ride and Drive in the middle of October,” Skinner said.

Many students and participants have expressed great anticipation for this year’s event.

“I feel ecstatic and am gleefully waiting for the 14th [of October] to come because this event is that much fun. It is very hard to describe what it feels like to be in a convoy of cars dancing through mountains unless you have been there. Let’s face it; once the car bug bites you, it never lets go,” Porter said.

Students take part in the first GT Ride and Drive (GTRD), which was held last year. The second annual GTRD event will occur Oct. 14.
IMS Research Competition*
Technology Demonstration Event
October 23rd
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Form teams.
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Food and beverages

Learn and share ideas with industry, faculty, and students.

*IMS Research Competition for Georgia Tech Students with $100,000 in cash awards. Competition to take place from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007.
**Technology Square Research Building (TSRB) at 85 Fifth Street N.W., Atlanta

For more details visit: www.forgedbyims-research-competition.com
Poetry: from page 9

A good poem about going to Blood Mountain....I want to go to Blood Mountain now," Delgado said.

Tania Rochelle works as a poetry editor for the Chattahoochee Review and has published her works in several different journals and reviews.

"Tania Rochelle was my favorite. A lot of her poems were really playful, she was from Marietta, and I am from Marietta and I could relate to a lot of what she was saying. She could take other people's stories and own them," Delgado said.

At the event, each poet displayed a different style and spent about 30 minutes reading their works.

"They write about everything. The laughter and the tears of life," Lux said. Some poets were livelier than others.

"Readings are oral, spoken often with a great deal of animation. Often they are funny; they are very serious, very musical. Often the poet offers some kind of comment about the poems. It is very direct human speech," Lux said.

The poets' styles ranged from "free verse forms to highly traditional forms; [they were] both traditional and more experimental," Lux said.

Over 70 authors have come to Tech for its poetry program in the last four years, testifying to its stability and open to students.

"If poetry at Tech draws a large community from not only Tech but from the Atlanta literary community as well." Stuart Dischell McEver Chair of Poetry

Festival: from page 9

A first-year Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering major.

TASA President Emery Chang shared similar thoughts.

"The festival is a reminder of home," Chang said.

According to CSA president Daranh Hun, the festival is an annual event on campus. It is CSA's first cultural event of the year, and he hopes future events will result in similarly large turnouts.

"We aim for about 100 people at every event," Hun said.

"The Mid-Autumn Festival is said to have originated from the ancient ceremony of sacrificing to the moon goddess," Liu said.

According to Liu, the tradition of eating moon cake was fused with this ceremony, which led to what the festival is today.

Moon cakes are a large part of the Mid-Autumn Festival and eaten because they symbolize the moon. The cake is made of sweet bread and has egg yolk stuffed in the middle. The two biggest moon cake flavors at Tech's festival this year were lotus and red bean.

"Since the Mid-Autumn Festival coincides with the fall harvest, the occasion is also celebrated in Taiwan by making offerings to the earth god Tu-ti Gong in hopes that he will make the next year's harvest even more bountiful," Liu said.

Liu also said that the festival is typically celebrated at parks or in scenic areas in order to better see and value the moon and the harvest.

Over the years, the festival has become more of a custom than a harvest celebration. According to third-year Biology major James Lee, the festival is just a tradition.

Chang and Yang said that the Mid-Autumn Festival is the second largest celebration of the year for the Asian community.

According to Yang, it is eclipsed only by the Lunar New Year. The next Lunar New Year will be celebrated Feb. 18, 2007.
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