The last players left in the competition pause to check their cards and study each other’s moves in a tense final tournament round.

By Aileen Li
Staff Writer

According to Mark Twain, poker is one of the few things that are so undeniably neglected in our country. However, Twain’s time has long since passed and poker is a different game now, rising in popularity. Hundreds of internet sites offer game rooms for poker players. ESPN has covered numerous poker tournaments across the country, and Celebrity Poker Showdown has become almost a staple stop for Hollywood’s gambling best as well as a television show phenomenon.

Last Thursday, poker lovers on campus showed off their skills at the semi-annual poker tournament hosted by the Resident Hearing Association (RHA) in the newly furnished and freshly shellacked Student Center Ballroom.

Players squared off against each other beginning at 6 p.m., several of them settling in for a long and challenging night of card playing against fellow students.

“Poker playing in the past few years has just exploded. We just capitalized on its popularity and have had a very successful series of events over the past several years because of it,” said Tim Gallagher, president of RHA.

Some Tech students say they play poker because they need to have fun, some say they play for money, but the majority claims to enjoy poker because there is some kind of “thrill” in the game.

“I like poker because it is the most fun card game and fuses luck, skill and trickery together,” said Andrew Miller, a first-year Electrical Engineering major.

“A semifinalist in the semi-annual poker tournament draws students

The last players left in the competition pause to check their cards and study each other’s moves in a tense final tournament round.
Films from page 11

Although the topics for filming were open-ended this year, the TCM Classic Short Film Award required a consideration of theme. Teams were challenged to pick a scene from a classic movie and recreate it with a modern twist. The winning film was a Japanese-themed reinvention of the 1968 epic spaghetti western Once Upon a Time in the West, appropriately titled Once Upon a Time in the East.

Lecture Crashers II (LC II) was a Tech-specific movie that was very well received, winning the TBS Very Funny Film Award. The themed as Wedding Crashers meets Barat, LC II tells the story of two students who crash lectures at Tech and perform riotous acts on each occasion, all the while filming their hijinks.

One scene, in which a character walks into a chemistry lecture in a bathtub and brushes his teeth using the sink near the front of the hall, had both audiences—the original audience in the lecture hall and the audience for CMF—rolling on the floor.

Evan Wimpey, a third-year Management major and one of the principal characters in LC II, said that he was inspired by the Hollywood hit Wedding Crashers and decided to spoof the concept of gate-crashing in a context that was relevant to the Tech experience.

“We were always bored in class. So we thought to ourselves, let’s mix it up by yelling at people, getting naked, playing guitars, fighting, singing, dancing—things that you wouldn’t normally find in lecture,” Wimpey said.

“We thought it would be funny if they actually found [the unexpected] there,” Wimpey said.

The team will move on to the Atlanta Grand Finale, where they will get the chance to compete to be featured on TBS programming.

Finally, the Best Picture award went to the favorite, Fanya Kaplan, by 1.618 Films.

The film was done entirely in Russian with subtitles and told the story of a disgruntled Bolshevik heroine who attempted to assassinate Lenin.

Michael Gluzman, a third-year Industrial Design major, and Brad Hermann, a third-year Mechanical Engineering major, were part of the brain trust behind the movie.

Gluzman cited Wikipedia as his inspiration for making a movie about the otherwise little known Russian revolutionary figure.

“The writer...and I were...looking for ideas to make a movie. We hopped online, typed in ‘Russian assassinations’ and the first thing that came up was a Wikipedia page on Fanya Kaplan, which is now the most popular Russian actress in Russia. It was a very impressive production. With extraordinary sets, great costumes and awesome acting, Fanya Kaplan truly stood out above the rest.

Hermann said that it took a great number of contributors to achieve the professionalism that was evident in Fanya Kaplan.

“It took us about 20 people to make this one big scene, a crowd scene, where we had a lot of extras. The main crew is about 10 to 15 people. They really put in a ton of work and stayed up all night. It was just a lot of hard work from a dedicated group of people,” Hermann said.

The team members were awarded 30 GB Apple iPods, as well as the chance to win more prizes at the next round of competition.

The massive team, consisting of over 30 people, will move on to the Atlanta Grand Finale for the chance to be shown at the International Grand Finale.

The Atlanta finale will be held Feb. 28 at the Atlanta Symphony Hall, where Tech will compete with other area schools for student film-making awards.

“asking the value question in science and technology”

The C. William Landiss Jr. Lecture Series

Monday, March 7, 2007 – 7:30 PM
LeCraw Auditorium
Georgia Tech College of Management

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Harvey Cox
Author of “When Jesus Came to Harvard”

In the early 1980’s, the faculty of Harvard College asked Dr. Harvey Cox, of Harvard’s Divinity School, to teach a course called “Jesus and the Moral Life” to its undergraduate students. The faculty decided that it needed to address the embarrassing reality of insider trading, sleazy legal practices, doctors more interested in profit than patients, and scientists fudging data—with many of these offenses being committed by graduates of Harvard University. Why were so many well-educated people doing bad things? Was something missing from the education Harvard was offering its students? During the fifteen years that Dr. Cox taught “Jesus and the Moral Life,” the course grew so popular that the lectures had to be taught in a theatre usually reserved for rock concerts. The overwhelming response was a clear signal of the hunger for guidance in today’s confusing world.

A book signing, hosted by Barnes & Noble at Georgia Tech, will follow the lecture.

The C. William Landiss Jr. Lecture Series is sponsored by the Wesley Foundation at Georgia Tech.

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Poker from page 11

...ing and vice versa," Miller said. "The tournament attracted about 130 people.

"We were very pleased with the turnout," Gallagher said. Participants came from various backgrounds and levels of poker playing, from experts who have battled in many tournaments to beginners who were just there to hone their skills.

"I took part in the tournament to see where my poker skills were. Considering how I lost, I still have some work to do before I challenge the big-wigs in the casinos, but at least I know that instead of going in blindly," Wilson said.

Poker is played in a multitude of variations, but most follow the same basic pattern of play. A house dealer handles the cards, and for each hand, one or more players is required to make forced bets to create an initial stake for which the players will compete.

Between rounds, the players' hands develop in some way, often by being dealt additional cards or replacing cards previously dealt. At the end of each round, all bets are gathered into the central pot. The player with the best hand according to the poker variant being played wins the pot.

Among students, what seems to be the most popular poker variant is Texas Hold 'Em, which is a kind of community poker that can theoretically be played with 21 people.

The basic rules are simple enough: each player gets two cards and the rest of the cards are left in the middle as community cards that anybody can use to make the best five cards. The player with the best hand wins.

Many players can win with good hands, but stellar hands, especially the coveted and highly valued royal flush, are usually hard to come by. Hsin-Chih Wang, a third-year Economics major, spoke about the lucky royal flush he drew once as a novice poker player.

"I had a royal flush way back when I’d been playing poker for only about 2 months, but I was such a poker newbie back then that I didn’t even realize it," Wang said.

"The guy I was playing laid down a flush, and I laid my cards down too. Everyone at the table sat there silently for a few moments to put two and two together. Then the whole table erupted, 'No wait, that’s a royal flush!'" Wang said.

Today, Wang is a much improved poker player, with several years of experience and skill behind him. His playing merited him first place in Thursday’s tournament.

The competition ended promptly at 11 p.m., with prizes going to the top 10 players. The grand prize, a Game Boy Advance, went home with Wang, and second prize, an MP3 player, went to Miller.

The names of the winners of the semi-annual tournament are engraved on a plaque and put in the RHA office.

"It doesn’t feel that special to be a champion because I just went and played poker the same way I always do, I guess the cards were just on my side," Miller said.

Whether it was luck or skill, Miller found himself with a seat in the championship round of the poker tournament.

"I went into the final table as the dominating chip leader, so I laid low for the remaining time and then Hsin-Chih doubled up on the last hand to beat me," Miller said.

Because of high demands from students, aside from the semi-annual tournaments, RHA typically hosts two or three other tournaments every year.

"We will have our traditional tournaments next year. We are also teaming up with the Women’s Resource Center and Women’s Awareness Month to host a women’s poker night in the first week of March. Our executive board worked very hard to make events happen, I think we are all quite pleased with the turnout," Gallagher said.

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Students speak out about presidential race

By Gilles Santomauro
Contribution Writer

Nearly two years remain until the next presidential inauguration, yet popular media outlets have been heavily focused on the upcoming primaries and caucuses. Candidates themselves are gearing up early to hit the campaign trail, strategically mapping out their travel plans so they can visit states that will be key in securing their party’s presidential nomination.

With seasoned veterans like Hillary Clinton and John McCain and the inexperienced but powerfully appealing Barack Obama either considering or already contending for the highest office in the land, the political landscape is heating up in anticipation of the 2008 presidential race.

The upcoming election draws special appeal in that it is the first election since 1972 to have neither an incumbent president nor vice president in the running. Also, this race is expected to cost the two majority party candidates more than one billion dollars combined in campaign spending, according to the Washington Times. If this estimate holds true, it will more than double the combined spending of the 2000 election.

“As long as the Supreme Court continues to support its decision in Buckley v. Valeo that campaign contributions are a form of free speech, the best remedy for this problem is considerably shortening the lengths of campaigns,” said Richard Burke, an associate professor in the School of Public Policy.

Of course, in order to win a majority party nomination and run a campaign in the first place, candidates must navigate the tricky political waters of primaries and caucuses, the two ways that a state can nominate a party candidate for the presidency.

“The difference is that while primaries are a direct election of a state’s delegates to the National Convention held by each party to select a presidential candidate, caucuses determine those delegates in a county town hall setting. Modern town halls take the shape of huge, interactive conventions where members of a given party come together to hear speeches and ask questions.”

The original purpose in using caucuses was to reduce the number of candidates running, based on the assumption that the voters could better familiarize themselves with and differentiate between two candidates, than contend with many political faces and platforms.

However, the current system of caucuses and primaries has faced some opposition. Critics say that because caucuses and primaries are formed of smaller groups of state party voters that have more extreme ideals than average voters, political candidates are often forced to adopt more extreme positions on critical issues like abortion, health care and foreign policy to cater to these voters so they can win their party’s presidential nomination.

“Our process endorses polarization, discourages those who straddle party lines and ultimately forces a man like John Kerry to go duck hunting a month before an election,” said Andrew Rodrigues, a third-year Public Policy major.

Despite the criticisms, primaries and caucuses do not appear to be disappearing anytime soon, and the first ones of the presidential season—the Iowa caucus, scheduled for next Jan. 14, and the New Hampshire primary, scheduled for next Jan. 22—continue to attract heavy political campaigning and coverage.

Although college students are paying close attention to the primaries, Daniel Shorr, a third-year Psychology major, spoke about the importance of following these primaries and caucuses.

“Primaries obviously influence who could potentially be our president. Therefore, if you care about who our president is, you should care about the primaries.”

Shorr said that he would look for candidates who put education as a high priority in his or her platform.

“ ‘They should rotate which states have their primaries first so...hopefuls have to weigh in on local Georgia issues...Joey Kistler, Second-year CHBE

Shor said that he would look for candidates who put education as a high priority in his or her platform.

“We should rotate which states have their primaries first so that occasionally presidential hopefuls have to weigh in on local Georgia issues like keeping the HOPE scholarship, rather than always trying to win in Iowa and New Hampshire,” Kistler said.

There are two politicians from Georgia that are speculated to make a run for the White House in 2008. Former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich has expressed serious interest in running for the Republican Party nomination. Former House Representative Cynthia McKinney from Georgia’s fourth district has been rumored to be a candidate for the Green Party nomination.

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PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS

A few of the early stand out candidates who have officially filed with the Federal Election Commission as of Feb. 15.

Democrat

Republican

John Edwards, former senator of North Carolina
Rudy Giuliani, former New York City mayor

Barack Obama, Illinois freshman senator
Mitt Romney, former Massachusetts governor

Photo courtesy of John Edwards campaign
Photo courtesy of U.S. Congress

Photo courtesy of J.B. Poindexter

By Christopher Graddy | Student Photo Editor

Students register to vote in the last presidential election. With the start of the primary season, students will head to the polls again.