Delivering bylaws

Abstain from abstinence-only sex ed

Do your parents know what you do on weekends? For a fairly large proportion of the student body, the answer to this question is “No, and thank God they don’t.”

As college students, we’ve honed our skills at avoiding certain lines of questioning, thereby hiding the myriad activities our parents would not approve of.

Still, one would think that most students’ parents aren’t utterly clueless enough to not be able to figure out there’s something they’ve not been told when their son or daughter shows up at home at 5 a.m. and staggers to bed every week. How is it, then, that students are able to continue their deception for years, even though in many cases they don’t hide it well at all?

In my experience, students have an unexpected ally in keeping parents uninformed about the poor decisions they may be making: the parents themselves. Parental naiveté has become a bulwark of life both for American college students and, increasingly, younger people as well.

The parental insistence on ignoring the pot smoking, binge drinking, free love bacchanalia of their little angels has led to a variety of repercussions. Luckily, most of these do not have wider societal implications; rather, these include parents being comically surprised by unwanted pregnancies or by having to pick up their son or daughter up from the hospital after an emergency medical intervention.

One particular result of this parental naiveté has had wide-ranging effects on almost all aspects of an American child’s upbringing: explicitly not instructing students on safe sex and the use of contraceptives. It is a major issue because a vast proportion of federal education funding is tied to the teaching of this castrated version of sex ed.

The most fascinating aspect of the tie of money for education to abstinence programs is that these programs have been repeatedly shown to fail at their stated goals. The government explicitly funds programs that advocate saving sex for marriage, and despite their increasing prevalence the average age at which Americans first have sex has held steady at 17.

The average age for marriage, on the other hand, remains as 25 years old for women and 27 years old for men, according to information from the Guttmacher Institute. Indeed, according to a 2003 study presented at the American Psychological Society (APS)’s annual meeting, over 60 percent of students who had pledged abstinence were no more likely to refrain from types of sex other than vaginal.

And these programs have resulted in disturbing statistics, such as 62 percent of males having sex before they were ever shown how to put on a condom, according to a 2002 study. The body of evidence supporting the unrepresentative sex education that includes a thorough explanation of contraceptives and their effectiveness is extensive. So why is it that the president, a fair proportion of the Senate, and vast numbers of parents support the less effective programs?

The only explanation I can come up with is that despite all the evidence to the contrary, parents continue to blindly believe their own children remain daisy-fresh while their neighbors raise...trollops.

“[P]arents continue to believe their own children remain daisy-fresh while their neighbors raise...trollops.”

Arcadiy Kantor
Senior Editor
As any typical student does, I tend to cruise through Facebook from time to time when I should really be doing my homework. The other day as I was doing my usual rounds, I noticed a group that is political in nature. I won’t say which side it supported, but either way the group was extreme in views.

The creation of the group is not what disturbed me. Rather, I was struck by how wrong they had gotten the facts. It was not even close. So I began to think of all the misinformation that gets out there—out on, not just on Facebook, but on the internet and in our daily lives. It’s all over us, and more and more of this information is being forced into our lives.

The scariest part of all is that most of this misinformation is geared toward the college crowd. We are young and impressionable with a new right to vote. Each side sees this as an opportunity to make us commit to their side. They feel if you sway one, then maybe their friend will follow suit and their popularity will grow exponentially.

So as intelligent twenty-somethings, we need to know that sometimes everything we read and everything we hear is not for our own benefit but rather for the benefit of a particular party.

I believe the right to vote is one of the most significant ways the common man can contribute to his government. Everyone has something to say at a time when it comes to picking his or her government, and not even a vote, as the 2000 election showed.

This year is not an election year, but many candidacies are already jockeying for position in the upcoming presidential race. So prepare yourself for a plethora of information and misinformation that is about to flood your consciousness. Each side will pursue one while condemning the other and the young voter will have to decide “Who is the best choice for me?”

And if your principles swing toward one party more than the other, it is perfectly acceptable.

Just be informed as much as possible and don’t go blindly into the voting booth. The worst-case scenario is supporting a candidate and their platform just because he or she has an R or a D beside the name, not because you agree with his or her ideals.

The best way to ensure you’re voting for the party you want to vote for is to educate yourself. Research the candidates and check out their voting records. Watch C-SPAN if you can manage to stay awake. Watch multiple news affiliates. Listen to both sides, not just one lambasting the other. If your most reliable source is Michael Moore or Rush Limbaugh, then you probably need to investigate why. It’s dangerous to listen to one argument while not presenting yourself with a counter argument.

The greatest trick any politician ever pulled was convincing anyone that not agreeing with him or her made you a bad person.

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Life is all about shades of gray, not black and white, and politics is no different.

Matthew Winkler
Managing Editor

I want to thank the Technique for publishing an article on the subject of Afghan women in the post-Taliban era. I applaud Ms. Shojab for her interest in Afghanistan and her desire to underline the difference between the religion of Islam and the inhumane rules that the Taliban forced on the Afghan people in the name of Islam. The article, however, inaccurately lists the “Pathans” as “Afghan natives.” “Pathan” is the Indian/Pakistan name for a member of the Pushtun ethnic group, which is just one of many native ethnic groups.

With the media’s influence on any topic except for the war in Afghanistan, there is consequently very little discussion on the plight of the Afghan people. This critical lack of focus bothers me, as an Afghan-American, because I believe that resolving the conflicts within Afghanistan is to the advantage of everyone, not only the Afghan people.

The terroristic activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, much of which are planned and organized within neighboring Pakistan, disrupt the daily lives of both Afghan women and men as they struggle to build a society from scratch.

Though religious intolerance, racism and sexism did not start with the Taliban, they institutionalized it as a way of life and government after the regime of the mullahs in Saudi Arabia. This challenges that an Afghan woman encounter in her everyday life has a direct connection in the political decisions that are made without her.

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Options abound for filling dropped class time this spring

Drop day is today. If you want to drop any classes, then you should stop reading this column and get rid of any classes you no longer want immediately. Please come back and finish it though.

Now that most of you have a few extra hours of free time every week since you got rid of half of your schedule on a whim, it’s time to look around Tech and find out how else you can spend your time.

If you want to run for student body president, now is your time. If you want to be in Student Government at all, the time to fill out your application is now, or at least some time between now and the deadline of March 16.

This past weekend, I was in Tallahassee at Florida A&M University for a mock trial invitational (Tech won) and realized just how crazy student government elections can be. Candidates for class representative positions had advertisements on major radio stations. People had their friends holding up signs on every corner. Billboards of the candidates stood on the side of the road. One candidate had even acquired a massive, flashing sign generally reserved for DOT work to spread the word about his candidacy.

I’m not going to lie: I’m pretty jealous about that last one. I mean, who knew that you could actually do that?

Anyway, at Tech, there are all sorts of rules with elections that you do not have to spend a billion dollars to win, like they do at FAMU.

Of course, they could have a spending limit as well, and if this is the case, I need to start going to buy everything I want to win in Tallahassee at ridiculously low prices. But I digress.

SGA is a great way to know what is going on, and it can always benefit from students who simply care about the school and care about how all of the money in student activity fees is spent. Of course, you can also enjoy ironical things, as well; for example, this Tuesday night, the SGA tabled a bill about tables. If you laughed at that, you really should run for office.

One of the topics SGA has been debating—the student athletic fee—helps provide another great way to stay away from homeworking when it’s just too nice out to be anywhere else. In fact, Tech has four spring sports teams ranked in the Top 25 in the country.

If you mentally went through

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Kyle Thomason
Columnist

Afghan

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accurate discussion of the political situation in Afghanistan, it could make the difference in halting the ongoing war there or preventing another 9/11.

A poem by the Pakistani poet Iqbal sums up the situation: “If Asia

is going on, and it can always benefit from students who simply care about the school and care about how all of the money in student activity fees is spent. Of course, you can also enjoy ironical things, as well; for example, this Tuesday night, the SGA tabled a bill about tables. If you laughed at that, you really should run for office.

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