



### OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

## Painful lessons

The Institute confirmed this week that the emergency notice distributed to members of the Tech community last Thursday afternoon was a result of the actions of an individual who had the capability to activate the alert systems but not the authority to do so. Unfortunately, this is just one of the several implementation failures exposed by the system's inadvertent trial run, and administrators must take steps to address the issues identified as a result of the mishap.

The system has yet to undergo a formal test, and Thursday's incident did reveal a number of good things along with the bad. The system actually worked, alerting the vast majority of those who signed up within minutes of the alarm being triggered. Also, most students paid attention to the notifications, rather than ignoring them like they might a fire alarm. Furthermore, the incident increased awareness of the system's existence, and an additional six percent of the student body signed up to be notified in case of emergency as a result.

The flaws, however, far outnumbered the positives. The fact that the message went out in the first place reveals a major issue. Only five people are authorized to set off the notification system, and anyone who is not among this group should not be able to trigger alerts. The incident also revealed a significant and disturbing lack of education about how students and faculty should respond in an emergency. The reactions Thursday afternoon can at best be called haphazard; some professors immediately cancelled class and told students to leave, others contacted administrators and yet others simply ignored the alerts.

Worst of all, the emergency notification failed to provide sufficient instructions for how to best deal with the emergency. The instruction to evacuate campus immediately and watch local media is unrealistic—truly evacuating a campus of Tech's size would be a monumental undertaking. Indeed, it's hard to imagine a scenario that would require a full campus exodus. The notification should give specific instructions instead, such as which parts of campus to avoid.

Due to this mishap, the Institute now faces the challenge of rebuilding confidence in the system. When it was first rolled out, we noted that just one false alarm would undermine its objectives. We are sad our prediction turned out to be prophetic.

To ensure the failures are not repeated, administrators must now educate the entire campus on proper procedures for dealing with emergency alerts. The Institute could also do a better job of communicating updates to a situation on the fly by, for instance, setting up a dedicated website where students can view the latest updates on an in-progress emergency.

*Consensus editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.*

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By Blake Israel / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

## Prayer won't solve water shortage

Thanks to Georgia governor Sonny Perdue, we no longer just have to worry about whether our routine water consumption habits are conscientious enough to prevent our state from going dry in a few months. Now we also have to deal with the entire world laughing at us in the process after the governor held a vigil on the capitol steps to literally pray for rain.

To illustrate just how ridiculous this is, I have a thought experiment for you to try. Suppose you do zero studying for your final exams next month. In fact, suppose you stop showing up to all your lectures from now on and throw away all the notes you've taken in the previous classes. Simply forget about school until finals. But then, to make it all better, suppose you say a prayer for yourself before each test, asking for divine guidance in choosing which circles to fill in on the ScanTron sheet and concocting short-answer responses that fall just outside the grader's B.S.-detection radar.

How do you think you'd do? Would you make the Dean's list or would the Institute drop-kick you back to your parents' basement forever?

The answer is pretty clear and nobody would be tempted to carry that experiment out in reality. Prayer simply doesn't work that way. Whether you are religious or not, a minimal amount of common sense and a couple years of experience as a resident of planet Earth should be enough to show that you cannot call upon the universe's direct, telepathic help-line for something you need and have it simply willed into being. All things happen for a reason, and when you want things to happen your way you need to act intelligently and responsibly and with a purpose. If you want to pray for guidance in doing that, I think you'll find yourself enjoying a bit more success than simply requesting



**"The severity of this drought demands that we proceed... with a reality-based strategy, not organized prayers."**

**Craig Tabita**  
 News Editor

a cosmic fast-forward to the results you seek.

For instance, if you are the governor of a certain southeastern American state, and data shows that you are in the midst of an historic drought, you probably should start looking for some workable plans that can prevent your state's residents from suffering a devastating water shortage. Perhaps if you are so inclined you'd like to pray for wisdom as you gather the facts you need to enact prudent water conservation policies, and the courage to see to it that the policies are enacted early enough to make a difference.

Somewhere along the way Perdue decided to veer from the path of sensibility, with the departure culminating on Tuesday when he led a vigil where he and hundreds of others made a desperate plea to divine authority asking simply for rain to pour down on the region. Never mind the fact that even a week of rain will not be enough to put a dent in the drought we're in. Perdue and the others apparently believed that the divine can be bargained with, has been purposely withholding liquid sustenance from the southeast, and will only give it back when asked nicely.

It is understandable to feel like all other possibilities have been explored and that we need to start pursuing last resorts, no matter how remote their chances for success, but surrendering is actually the worst thing we can do right now. Yet, such despair was the

attitude that seemed to pervade the prayer vigil.

The attendants did not go there to pray for wisdom or for guidance as they attempt to settle this mess themselves. They apologized to the sky and expected their woes to be washed away by the oncoming torrent of rain provided by their merciful master who was only waiting for a simple, well-publicized request.

That is what makes this not just a silly show of grandstanding by Perdue, who is rumored to have ambitions for a higher office, and moves it into the realm of truly obnoxious behavior. The saddest part is that by using religious language he was able to color this act of surrender as something that many of his constituents will perceive as honorable and commendable.

Forgive me if I consider this whole situation an embarrassment to twenty-first century mankind. Just a few miles from the capitol, engineers, scientists and scholars at Tech are actively studying all kinds of problems facing our world and researching viable solutions. Their efforts yield tremendous benefits; organized prayers like Perdue's are just a distraction and give people a false sense of accomplishment. How many of those people who showed up and prayed, and others following along at home, now feel like they no longer need to use water responsibly because their prayers will solve the

See Prayer, page 10

# Familiarity drives musical preferences

Does the media brainwash our ears? Let's face it, listening to a commercial radio station for an hour is like a mix-CD played repeatedly. Songs are not popular because of an interesting structure or an astonishing vocalist; instead, only those with a chorus shoved into your face at least five times in two and a half minutes seem to garner mass attention. Why? Because it's impossible to forget a line you hear five times in a song that's played 10 times a day!

I find myself humming "Fergalicious" days after the party I attended played the song, simply because Fergie sings it so often. It's rather frustrating when my feet try to dance while my brain goes crazy at the attempts in spelling "delicious."

For those exclaiming, "I love Fergalicious," I challenge you to think about why. What about a song that includes the lyrics "I'll be laced with lacey" warrants your love? Is it the beat? Fergie dancing in the video?

Yes, it's a fun song that wiggles your bum, and it's great at parties because everyone knows it. Yet everyone knows it because it's ridiculously overplayed on commercial radio, not because it has any merit that catches genuine attention.

MTV only worsens the issue with top-40 countdowns. Why



**"I'm...suggesting we decide music is great based on quality, not because we recognize it."**

**Katie Taylor**  
Copy Editor

highlight songs that everyone already knows? Where's the joy in discovery or watching a favorite band climb to the top?

Interestingly enough, when a friend says she listens to "everything," she probably only knows what's on the top-40 countdown. I tend to smile sadly when I hear that answer and inquire, "Does that include opera, flamenco guitar, heavy metal, blues and avant-garde jazz?"

There is more music than what's on Star 94!

My point: A catchy hook does not automatically make a good song. Even the a-b-c song for learning the alphabet gets stuck in my head, but I don't hear anyone requesting it over and over again. People get so excited when a song they know comes on the radio or over speakers at a party, as if it hasn't been played millions of times before. I'm wishing for others to realize that this isn't a good reason to get excited.

There are hundreds of bands exploring new avenues of sounds never before combined, and they are not that hidden! Nightwish, a band from Finland, is playing at the Masquerade to a nearly sold out crowd on Saturday. They combine epic symphonies, opera, and heavy metal. Yes, you read that right. Symphonies and guitars.

But I'm not here to tell you what bands are awesome and which genres suck. I'm merely suggesting we decide music is great based on quality, not because we recognize it.

All hope isn't lost, thankfully. Here on campus, for example, WREK promotes a different listening experience—they even ensure you don't hear the same song 10 times a day! Maybe that's why the average Tech student doesn't listen to it. They don't recognize the music, so the automatic assumption is that it's crap. What a horrible,

horrible shame.

I know I'm acting like an elitist snob. I am well aware that, overall, people don't care as much about music. It's background noise, funny lyrics, and a beat for dancing.

I, however, think it's art. I think it can perfectly express the depth of human emotion and deserves to be elevated to the same levels as literature and studio art.

When one listens to an exquisitely composed song—one that's actually written by the band members—the person establishes a connection with the band. The listener is sucked into an alternate world, one that sometimes eerily parallels his own. There is a sense of catharsis in hearing another build his experiences into a momentum that explodes in the finale of a great song.

How many couples have a song that showcases their relationship? Who doesn't have an album they turn to in times of need? Who can't identify with another person through music?

Perhaps people have lost sight of that in favor of familiarity with a catchy tune.

I don't expect masses of people to suddenly rediscover what makes music great. I only hope to point out that there is more

See Music, page 10

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

# HOT or NOT



### Now with fewer trays

Tech dining halls have temporarily stopped providing trays to students in response to the ongoing drought that has struck Georgia. According to Dining, washing the trays used up an estimate of a whopping 3,000 gallons of water a day. In light of the strained water conditions, the minor inconvenience caused by the need to carry food from the line to the table one plate at a time is surely worthwhile.

### Rec wreck

Despite the fact that the feedback gathered from students this week regarding the plan for Tech Rec renovation has been largely negative, the Student Center is pressing along with the effort. The current outcry lends credence to the fears we expressed last week, that failing to seek student representation in the earliest stages of a process could lead to a gulf between students and administrators.



### Roads reopened

The construction that blocked off Ferst Drive near the Klaus Advanced Computing Building for most of last week and rerouted the Stinger buses and Tech Trolleys finally ended Wednesday, reopening the critical campus artery to vehicle traffic. The road closing backed up traffic and caused pedestrian headaches.

### Low lighting

Campus street lights don't seem to have kept up with the change from Daylight Savings Time, as walkways remain dark for several hours after sunset. The lack of lighting is particularly bad in light of the crimes that hit campus just a few months ago. Students should be careful during the brief periods of darkness.

## YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# System emergency

Am I ever thankful for the implementation of the new campus-wide emergency notification system. If it hadn't been for the three different urgent evacuation notices, three recalls, and one notice only for the Ford building 30 minutes after the event, there may have been panic.

While I honestly am very thankful that this incident resulted in minimal injury, the fact that it could have been so much worse and that Tech handled it so poorly is troublesome to say the least. Obviously, the messages can be altered per the situation—would it have been too much trouble to give the campus more information than "Evacuate campus immediately and tune to local media for additional information"? Maybe something about what happened? Where we should go? Where we shouldn't go?

I don't know what actions are being taken to improve this

system following this incident, but some changes should be made and someone held accountable. To mess up an emergency situation like this is inexcusable and could have been very costly.

Nathan Jackson  
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Third-year NRE

### Public transportation needs greater reach

In regards to last week's editorial about public transportation, I think we all agree that public transportation is an effective way to deal with traffic and pollution. Cities like New York and London have great transportation systems that are used by millions of people. In Atlanta, we have a bus and rail system, MARTA, which serves DeKalb, Fulton, and the city of

See MARTA, page 10

### Letter Submission Policy

The *Technique* welcomes all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, emailed to [editor@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu) or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Matthew Winkler, Editor-in-Chief.

All letters must be signed and must include a campus box number or other valid mailing address for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 400 words and should be submitted by 7 p.m. Tuesday in order to be printed in the following Friday's issue. Any letters not meeting these criteria or not considered by the Editorial Board of the *Technique* to be of valid intent will not be printed. Editors reserve the right to edit for style, content and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

### Advertising Information

Information and rate cards can be found online at [www.nique.net](http://www.nique.net). The deadline for reserving ad space and submitting ad copy is noon on Friday, one week prior to publication. For rate information, call our offices at (404) 894-2830, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Advertising space cannot be reserved over the phone.

The *Technique* office is located in room 137 of the Student Services Building, 353 Ferst Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0290. Questions regarding advertising billings should be directed to D. McCall "Mac" Pittsat (404) 894-2830.

### Coverage Requests

Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the Editor-in-Chief or to individual section editors. For more information, email [editor@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu).

# BUZZ

## Around the Campus

### What would you add to Tech Rec?



**Hasaan Butt**  
Graduate ECE

*"Comfy leather couches and hookah."*



**Camile Hart**  
Second-year BIOL

*"A mini amusement park."*



**Bailey Wright**  
Second-year ENVE

*"What is Tech Rec?"*



**Liam Rattray**  
Second-year PUBP

*"A host of beers on tap to support responsible drinking and social lubrication."*

Photos by Jon Haefele

**MARTA** from page 9

Atlanta. The question posed was, "Why aren't more [people in Atlanta] using public transportation?" As a daily commuter on the MARTA rail system, I find myself with some authority on the subject.

The major reason that people do not use MARTA is not that they don't care or the \$1.75 trip is too expensive (need I mention gas prices?), but that MARTA doesn't travel where they need to go. MARTA's rail lines basically consist of two lines. The North-South line goes from the airport to the city of Sandy Springs with a branch that terminates in Doraville and the East-West line starts in Avondale Estates and ends west along I-20 inside the perimeter. So basically unless you are starting and ending your trip somewhere along this 48-mile stretch, the rail lines are useless to you.

The next question is, why don't people use the bus system? It is inconvenient. First you have to figure out which bus or buses you need to take. Then you have to get to the bus

stop, which will probably involve some walking, mostly likely in blistering heat, waiting for the bus, and probably getting stuck in that very same traffic congestion that you were hoping to avoid. When you get to your destination, you will either be too early or too late, since the bus doesn't stop where you need it to at exactly the right time that you need it to. And frankly, it is not cool to ride the bus—no offense to those who do.

Yeah, we all want to help the environment and save ourselves from a traffic headache, but until Atlanta gets a subway system that is on par with those in New York and London we can't expect everybody to use it. The solution? I propose we start an "it's cool to ride the bus" campaign and more seriously start making some noise that we want a public transportation system that will really fix our traffic problems, not just more bike lanes, as one recent proposal suggests.

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Fifth-year ME

**Music** from page 9

to music than spelling "delicious" and "banana" in a song. There's love, pain, happiness, confusion, anger, strength and the fullness of humanity expressed in a guitar lead, a bass breakdown, a soaring vocalist, acoustic strumming and a rolling drumbeat.

For once, be a rebel. Take initia-

tive and seek out music by bands you haven't heard before. Music fans are experiencing a renaissance with the advent of technology and the internet. More bands can afford to create music, and more fans have discovered ways to share it.

Take advantage of local sources, like WREK Radio and Under the Couch. Talk to your friends and find out what sounds make them tick. Find music that gives you chills.

**Prayer** from page 8

problem?

The severity of this drought demands that we proceed intelligently with a reality-based strategy, not organized prayers that accomplish nothing.

We don't need to ask for divine intervention to solve problems like this water shortage; those who think we do need to quit playing make-believe and get a grip with reality before Lake Lanier turns into Lanier Crater and riots break out at Publix over the last remaining stock of bottled water.

**YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Tech Rec plans upset regulars**

Every day for the past four years TechRec has been like a second home to me and many others who agree that changes are necessary. However, the proposed changes have been made with little input from the students who spend their evenings there and really know and care about TechRec.

Many of the proposed changes, which would reduce or take away activities that define TechRec, lack that input while alienating the regulars.

In interviews and presentations, Mr. Steele has said that no area of TechRec will be eliminated. However, behind this guarantee lies the reality that under the changes, areas for games like air hockey and foosball will disappear. When this was raised at this week's SGA presentation, Mr. Steele said that they could be accommodated in "a storage closet."

One of the proposed goals is to increase TechRec's appeal as a lounging area for everyone. In trying to create more lounging space, however, some ill-conceived ideas have been proposed, including restricting gaming to one small section of the back wall, which would eliminate stations including the popular Dance Dance Revolution.

Another proposal would install stadium-style benches facing new TVs above the bowling lanes, which would not be comfortable or functional given the noise level.

There are over 17,000 students at Tech, a large number of whom are looking for an inviting place to hang out and have fun. I agree that changes should be made to draw these students in. However, the proposed multipurpose room would hurt the friendly lounging atmosphere that TechRec has developed over the years and which should be built upon.

Even though about a third of

TechRec's revenue comes from renting out space, the groups choosing to gather there come for the billiards and bowling.

There are many students on campus looking for a place to hang out at night while all other facilities on campus have long closed.

TechRec could easily fill this void by offering a lounge atmosphere where friends could share games, drinks, and food late into the night. Such an area could easily be placed where the multipurpose room currently sits in the design, and would be consistent with TechRec's mission.

As a TechRec regular for the past few years, I have a vested interest in its future. Improving TechRec is a great idea. I just wish someone had consulted with those who know it best and care for it most.

Daniel Hunnicutt  
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Fourth-year CS

**Renovation risks alienating core audience**

When I first heard about the proposed renovations to TechRec, I quickly asked myself what would possess the Student Center to think renovations even needed to be done.

Apparently, since TechRec doesn't cater to everyone at Tech, they feel the need to change. However, I wish to submit that TechRec does not need to cater to everyone at Tech, and that trying to make it do so will ultimately be bad for it.

A survey that was put out by Auxiliary Services said that about 54 percent of people have never visited TechRec. Why do you think that is?

Currently, TechRec serves as a social hub for students, primarily

revolving around gaming, billiards, and bowling.

My logic here is that those 54 percent of people who have never visited TechRec fall into that category because they don't care for any of those things. They would rather be doing other things, such as sports, dance or any other activity at Tech. For me, this is perfectly acceptable, and the means for them to do so already exist.

Being a huge gamer myself, I come to TechRec to play games and be with friends and people who also enjoy gaming. For us regulars who spend more time there than probably everyone else at Tech, TechRec is fine just the way it is.

Why, then, is the Student Center going out of their way to gut a significant portion of TechRec so that they can try and attract people who aren't big on games or pool? Not only will the proposed changes cut down TechRec's overall business, but too much of an increase of traffic into TechRec will drive some of the regular clientele away.

I also have to question how adding a meeting room will help TechRec attract a wider variety of students. Sure, they'll walk through that walkway into TechRec to get to that room for their dance class, but how many will actually stay and bowl a game or shoot a round of pool?

If you truly wanted to attract more people, add more activities or things to do; don't take space and resources away.

I agree with a previously stated opinion that the administration has become increasingly disconnected from the student body's opinions. This latest escapade only proves this idea further.

Andrew Chiang  
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Fifth-year CS



Student Center  
Programs Council  
www.fun.gatech.edu

Weekly Activities



Student Center  
Programs Council  
www.fun.gatech.edu

**Movies in November**

Student Center Theater  
Each movie is \$2 cash with your Buzzcard, \$3 cash without



Thursday, November 29  
"Children of Men"  
7pm & 9pm



Friday, November 30  
"Blades of Glory"  
7pm & 9pm

**Ramblin' Nights Comedy Cafe**

Friday, November 16  
10pm - 1am, Georgia Tech Student Center  
Make sure to stop by the SCPC's annual Ramblin' Nights event, the night before the UNC @ GT game! The event will feature comedians Johnny Walker and Marshall Chiles, hosted by Tech Professor Dr. Peter Ludovice.  
**Free - T-shirts, food, and much more!**

**Be Amazed Hypnotist: "Joshua Seth"**

Saturday, December 8  
6:00 p.m., Student Center Theater

Comedy hypnotist Joshua Seth tours the world, performing at colleges and corporate events. In 2005, he starred in his own 2-hour, primetime TV special in Japan. In 2006 he did it again, and 10 million people watched. An American version is currently in the works. Characters of the past decade.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ALL THESE EVENTS AND MORE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.homecoming.gatech.edu](http://www.homecoming.gatech.edu)

sliver

www.nique.net/sliver

At this point in the semester we all give up with everything from school to social abilities "Rawr rawr rawr!" -Firefox  
Ironic? Official parking truck parked on sidewalk on 5th Street...  
ahhh long live the days of dump truck  
UGG boots look retarded. period.  
that bagpiper guy needs to come back to west campus  
truche is the word of the day  
ok,..here to the confused creepy tech boys,..just because a girl is nice and talks to you, doesn't mean shes interested, and it doesn't help your case to follow her all the way home. Scary!!  
Looks like someone needs a visit from the tooth fairy!



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