Our Views  Consensus Opinion

Library Renovation

The library has begun the process of renovating the second floor group study areas. Following the successful remodeling of the first floor commons they have decided to include extensive student feedback in the design process. Students have been invited to participate in small focus groups already, and the library will host a larger forum next week during which all of campus is invited to aid in the design process.

After the renovation plans for Tech Rec were released last fall to widespread criticism, it is admirable to see campus planners include student input from the inception of a redesign project, rather than seeking it at a later time in the process.

The library is one of the most consistently used areas of campus, and the studying that happens there is central to a student’s time at Tech. Allowing students input in the environment where they learn is an exceptional idea that will hopefully create positive results both in the design and in the study habits of students who use the space.

Worthwhile Keynote

Editor and Senior Vice President of USA Today and usatoday.com Ken Paulson visited campus on Wednesday as a part of the Finding Common Ground speaker series. Students from both Student Publications and Student Government Association were given the opportunity to meet Mr. Paulson during smaller sessions.

The motivational speech delivered by Mr. Paulson, one of the leaders in both journalism and first amendment advocacy for freedom of speech, focused on the relevance of the media in modern culture, politics and opinion. As information media evolves from print to the internet, a medium in which everyone’s opinion is heard, yet very few are listened to, Mr. Paulson’s message of free speech and civil discourse is becoming increasingly relevant. In an age where entertainment and shock appeal have replaced accuracy and content in many people’s definition of “news”, the indispensable nature of an uncensored yet professional press corps cannot be lost.

Visits from industry leaders such as Mr. Paulson are an invaluable addition to campus discourse and contemporary cultural education, as the relationship between students and the working world is extensive and growing. Mr. Paulson’s student-oriented visit was a credit to the Finding Common Ground series. Mr. Paulson could relate to students, due to both his subject matter and his obvious research. We can only hope the series will continue to bring such passionate and informative speakers to campus.

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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Wednesday evening

“Man, those campus alerts Don’t miss a thing these days.”

By Blake Israel | STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Quote of the week:

“The books that the world calls immoral are the books that show the world its own shame.”

—Oscar Wilde

Actions have Unequal Reactions

About two years ago, I had to read a paper called “The Tragedy of the Commons.” The subject of the paper was the distribution of all the earth’s resources amongst the earth’s population. In medieval Europe and colonial America, every town or village used to have a commons, or a large green space at the center of the town. The commons was open for anyone to use; frequently, shepherds would bring their sheep or cattle to graze there. The commons was open for anyone to use it to the grazing of a few sheep or cattle.

Eventually, however, someone would realize that if they brought one more sheep than all of their neighbors, they could make extra money off of that one extra sheep at the expense of everyone else that used the commons. Being a good businessman, this person would bring his extra sheep. Then other shepherds would see what he was doing and start bringing extra sheep of their own, so they wouldn’t get cut out of business.

Eventually, there would be too many sheep for the commons to support, so all of the sheep would starve and all of the people would be left bickering with one another when they had nothing left. And that’s the tragedy of the commons.

In many ways, we can see this tragedy playing out here and now. The problem with the commons is that the miniscule amount of land taken by a single extra sheep seems very small in comparison with the rest of the commons. A few extra tons of pollution dumped into the water don’t seem like they will hurt anybody; only after all of it accumulates over time do we see the problem.

The chemicals that we produce to make stuff cheaper are really harming ourselves. These chemicals are elevating cancer rates and health-care costs well beyond what they should be if all of the “safe” products that we release into the environment were actually benign.

Still, the physical losses we suffer as a result of the greed that makes people dump pollutants or graze extra sheep at the commons pale in comparison to the social losses that result. Whether or not the shepherd sees the results of his actions, his profiting from a minor loss to everyone else destroys the community that was in the system before.

As soon as everyone else realizes what is going on, they begin to look after their own self-interest and protect what they already have. Home-security systems go up, children aren’t allowed to play outside anymore, and people become much less willing to talk to each other. In short, we lose all of the intangible relationships that bring value to our everyday existence. Admittedly, the solution to this problem is probably very complex, but it seems like a few simple changes would greatly help the situation.

When Jesus was walking around, He taught people to care more about each other than about what they owned. Jesus said, “If anyone wants to say you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.” His point was that loving the person that was using you was more important than the stuff that you had, even if it essentially meant letting him rob you. He also said, “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.”

That’s hard. Especially downtown, that can be really hard. Venturing out into the city practically invites being asked for money, yet in reality, no matter who asks you for money and no matter what they end up doing with it, 99 times out of 100 it is in fact better to just go ahead and give it.

I know there are any number of potentially horrible things that people could do with money in their hands, but having compassion on someone is more important than withholding it, especially when our own motives don’t understand why it is simply that we don’t want to. It is not worth holding back from everyone just because a few, or even because a majority, are trying to deceive you. Loving one another is worth more than that.

It is only by trusting people that the commons can ever be rebuilt. Even if the person who is robbing your blind doesn’t understand why you are giving what you have freely to them, they may understand the second time. And even if they never understand, someone else may understand and cut back on the number of extra sheep they send out to the commons so that everyone else can raise their sheep. I don’t know how much being nice to people will help, but it seems like a good way to start. And the sheep will thank you, too.
Celebrity gossip and an unworthy addiction

"It is not easy to separate yourself from the barrage of celebrity information... but be strong."

Mallory Velten Assistant Entertainment Editor

"Every time I walk in line at the grocery store I find myself surrounded by tabloids. Supposedly these so-called "magazines" (if they can be so-called) are located there so that people will decide to buy them while the cashier is ringing up their groceries. I always try not to look, but I feel drawn to the garish covers the way people find themselves drawn to car crashes and train wrecks. "Britney Spears hospitalized for mental breakdown." "Lindsay Lohan gets arrested right out of rehab." "Angelina Jolie separates from Brad and adopts five kids."

And every time I catch myself staring at these rags I wonder the same thing: who cares? People today know more about celebrities than politics, the economy or world events—a lot more. Doesn't this accuse everyone else as a bad thing?

We live in a world where magazines, newspapers and websites are willing to pay pa- per parasites large amounts of money to follow famous people around all the time and take pictures of them going about their daily lives. Why does this? I have absolutely no interest in seeing pictures of Cameron Diaz at the airport or George Clooney walking his dog. Why does anyone want to see such things? I don’t even know Cameron Diaz or Orlando Bloom. And how does it affect me if Angelina Jolie changes brands of toothpaste?

But obviously there are people who do care. The writers from Brad and adoptive five kids. But there is absolutely no idea to care more about Heath Ledger’s death than the war in Iraq or the situations in Kenya or Sudan.

Let's not forget the kind of examples these people are setting for us. Nowadays it's completely common for single actresses or singers to have babies. Maybe the single-motherhood thing isn't so difficult when you can afford a few full time nannies and you don't have to go to work all day.

new television programs. I don’t see anything wrong with having a mild interest in celebrity affairs. I mean, I guess it could be interesting to see how people who make more money in a year than I will in my life spend their fortunes—interesting or depressing. But I just don’t understand how or why celebrity stalking has become such a huge part of our culture.

All this celebrity overdosing can't be good for us. For one thing, it is not only not a good idea to care more about Heath Ledger's death than the war in Iraq or the situations in Kenya or Sudan.

"By setting up dead-week rules so my professors can ignore them."

Nathan Klein Third-year Comp

"I’m going to have to think long and hard about that."

Andrea Finnegan Third-year Mgt

"They represent the student body as a whole."

Rob Poppell Third-year CM

"I’m grateful for the funds SGA provided the Veritas forum."

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BUZZ Around the Campus

How has SGA helped you?

Shana Fraser First-year CE

Flashing or a siren on and both campus police. His injury was so severe that an ambulance was definitely needed to transport him to the hospital.

About five minutes after a call had been placed, a GTPD officer arrived, and walked at a speed that did not seem rushed to the far side of the gym where the player was. A half-hour after the officer arrived, an ambulance arrived preceded by another GTPD suv, neither with lights flashing or a siren on and both minding the speed limit. It took the EMS a while to stabilize the injured player, and forty-five minutes to an hour after the injury occurred, he was being wheeled off the court on a stretcher.

The amount of time that it took for the ambulance to arrive was a concern to many there. When we asked an officer on the scene about their response policy he said: when 911 or the Georgia Tech police are contacted, both an ambulance and a Georgia Tech police officer are dispatched.

When the initial officer arrives they assess the situation and determine whether an ambulance is really needed. They then contact the ambulance in route and let them know whether to continue coming or not. When the ambulance arrives to campus, an officer must meet them outside the building and escort them onto campus to the scene.

As close as Georgia Tech is to Grady and Crawford Long, I find it hard to separate yourself from the barrage of celebrity information... but be strong."

Mallory Velten Assistant Entertainment Editor

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Let's not forget the kind of examples these people are setting for us. Nowadays it's completely common for single actresses or singers to have babies. Maybe the single-motherhood thing isn't so difficult when you can afford a few full time nannies and you don't have to go to work all day.
There are some problems people have with this type of voting method. The first is tradition and the fact that the Founding Fathers instituted a system that has withstood the test of time. Tradition is no excuse to keep a broken system. The elimination of a state-by-state electoral process also violates what some believe to be the United States’ federalist principles. In a sense, an election by popular vote impinges on states’ rights to institute their own election procedures. The United States was founded on a principle of federalism, a nation of loosely aligned states in national government, as a way to prevent the consolidation of power into a central government. However, federalist principles do not ensure fair and just election procedure, especially for those of the minority party in a single state.

In a national elections, states will still have the rights to elect senators and representatives to serve their interests. The United States is also not solely a federalist nation. There are government agencies which have jurisdiction over all states. These include the FDA, CIA, FBI, DEA and even the IRS. The federal government taxes people in all states. Even the education system has been federally regulated. The No Child Left Behind Act, though controversial, is a piece of legislation that governs all states and ensures guidelines as to how to implement certain requirements in the public education system. The most anti-federalist organizations are the armed forces. Most states do not have a militia for times of unrest to protect themselves against a central government. Instead the country rallies behind a national army. Why is it then not appropri- ate for the citizens to rally behind a nationally-elected president?

One of the most convincing arguments to keep the Electoral College in place is that it requires that a candidate gain a broad range of popular support throughout the country. According to uselectionatlas.org, “it is principally because of the Electoral College that presidential nominees are inclined to select vice presidential running mates from a region other than their own.” As things stand now, no one region contains the absolute majority (270) of electoral votes required to elect a president. Thus, there is an incentive for presidential candidates to pull together coalitions of States and regions rather than to exacerbate regional differences.

Such a unifying mechanism seems especially prudent in view of the severe regional problems that have typically plagued geographically large nations. This view contributes to the notion that the president, because of a broad support base, is the citizens’ choice even if they lost the popular vote because the person who won the popular vote could have garnered their votes only from a certain portion of the country.

However, just because a region is more populous does not mean its say should be diminished by limiting the number of electoral votes. A vote in a more populated region, such as the northeast, can still be offset by the many votes garnered thorough out a more sparsely populated but larger region such as the Midwest. Second, when instituted, the Electoral College did not account for the vast changes in technology that has occurred in the present day.

The Electoral College ensured that candidates, in a time where there were not even light bulbs, crisscrossed the country and delivered their message to a wider audience than those in just the most populated area. However, with the advent of TV, the internet, YouTube and 24-hour media coverage, campaigning is already done on a national scale. Even the poorest people in this country usually have access to a TV. Candidates are constantly under spotlight and scrutiny and are always campaigning to a national audience.

Whether a candidate visits a certain state may be an issue for some voters, but in the end it is the issues that should matter. A change in the election process would end some disenfranchisement, minus the absurd ballot access laws in some states that prevent third parties from joining the tickets. More people would feel like their votes counted and in turn voter turnout would increase substantially resulting in a truly na- tionally elected president.

Celebrity from page 8

it hard to believe that the ambulance took as long as it did if the left when the initial call was made.

If an ambulance is dispatched and then called and told to turn around, money is lost. My thought is that the ambulance never left until the officer arrived and told them to come, in which case, he did not seem to be moving quickly enough to the scene as he strolled across the courts.

The CRC personnel did an excellent job tending to the injured player. They acted professionally and were obviously trained well. The response time was not near fast enough. I believe that the policy involving the dispatch of an ambulance to campus needs to be reviewed. If this was a matter of life or death, I could only hope things would happen at a faster pace to ensure the best outcome.

Sarah Eubanks
Fourth-Year Management

Response from page 7

OPINIONS

Celebiry from page 8

of being a celebrity.

I know it isn’t easy just to separate yourself from the barrage of celebrity information that has become such an integral part of our culture these days. Still, maybe we should try to learn a little harder to care more about the things that really matter. So the next time you’re tempted to pick up that tabloid with Hannah Montana on the cover—be strong, put it down and pick up The New York Times instead.

Fourth-Year Management