

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Tardy transportation

As Tech continues to expand each fall semester, Parking and Transportation has proven unable to effectively adapt to the Institute's growing needs and changing circumstances.

More than ever before, this semester students have been disappointed by the unreliability and ineffectiveness of the Stinger, Tech Trolley and Stingerette services. Currently, students tell frustrated stories of late and overcrowded Stingers, trolleys that do not stop—even when there is room, unanswered pickup requests and estimated wait times that seem to be wild guesses more than sound calculations.

Unlike other transportation systems, including many at other universities, Tech's Stingers and trolleys do not operate on a timetable. For students, the absence of a strict time schedule turns what should be an expected routine into guesswork. For drivers, it makes adhering to route times a more flexible option. In the end, a lack of emphasis on punctuality hurts the system. While expensive GPS systems were installed to provide estimates of the wait times between Stinger and trolley stops, they have failed to adhere to a predictable schedule on which students can effectively rely.

This is of particular concern when the vast majority of students require campus transportation between the 55 and five of the hour, when they are rushing to get from class to class or trying to return home. There should be an emphasis on routes during these times—for example, by reducing the Stinger route cycle from the established “six or seven” minutes to exactly every three minutes—which could then be adjusted during times of lower usage.

Clearly, Parking and Transportation has had to deal with problems of construction and traffic around the Tech area, but these are entirely predictable factors that can be taken into account in advance in order to optimize the system and ensure its promptness and reliability. Further, with increased enrollment and extended Stingerette hours, the rapid rise in demand should come as no surprise. Adequate prior preparation would have prevented the current shortcomings.

When Stingers are only on time about 70 percent of the time, new ideas and solutions should be explored. Other universities, for instance, hire students as drivers. Doing so creates much-needed student employment opportunities, and a more flexible market devoid of unions allows stricter standards to be enforced.

At an institution renowned for innovation and excellence in engineering, there is no reason why the transportation system that thousands of students rely on should be so frustratingly ineffective.

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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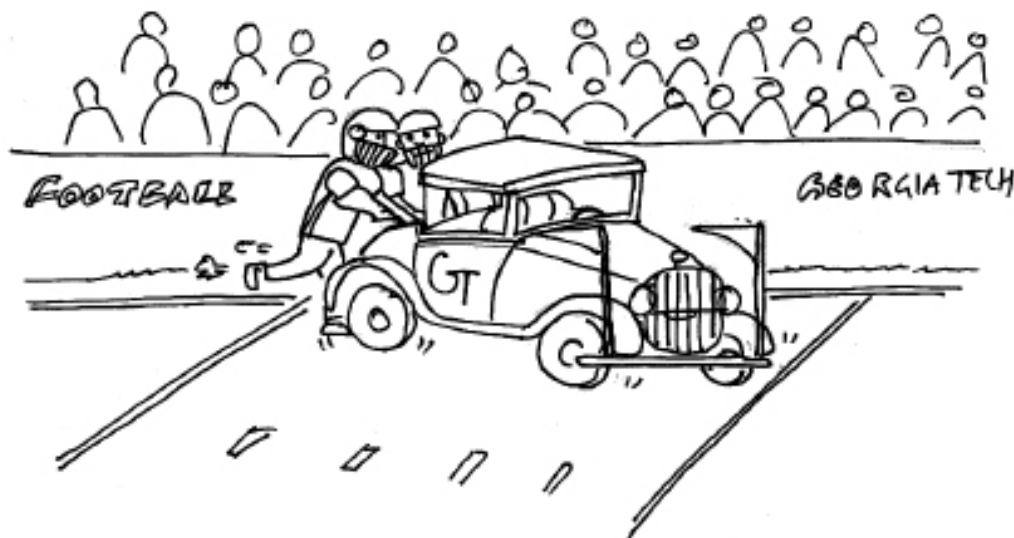
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Another consequence of the gasoline shortage...



By Abhishek Jain / Student Publications

U.S. overspending to blame for crisis

Normally, finance bores me. But when the *AJC*, *USA Today* and the *New York Times* all started screaming “Dow plummets 777 points!” this Tuesday, even I felt like I had to care. I picked up a paper and before I knew it, I was sucked into a world of credit-default swaps, collateralized debt obligations and all kinds of things I never wanted to know about.

The crisis turned me into a financial news junkie overnight. I started checking news feeds in class and devoured any article and commentary I could find, slowly reading myself into a coma. I won't dwell on the mind-numbing details, but I did come to three conclusions: 1) My head hurts. 2) We're screwed. 3) Did I mention my head hurts?

Apart from the splitting headache, I would say the spectacle on Capitol Hill this week was almost entertaining, if the fact that people are losing their jobs, homes and entire life's savings because of it wasn't so completely unfunny. For those who missed it, here's a quick recap of events:

1) The House cobbles together a \$700 billion bailout plan that everyone hates but most agree to vote for.

2) Angry emails crash the House website while equally angry phone calls jam the switchboards—everyone threatens their Congressmen with political death if they vote for the bailout.

3) McCain dramatically puts his campaign on hold and flies in to D.C., promising to deliver his party's votes.

3) Congressmen are afraid to lose re-election, despite McCain's badgering (two-thirds of Republicans voted against the bill), and the bill fails 228-205 (the Obama camp secretly rejoices at McCain's failure but doesn't propose any meaningful solutions).

4) Wall Street suffers a



“People in this country have been living beyond their means for years, and this time it has caught up to them...”

Jenny Morgan
Managing Editor

777-point drop and the finger-pointing begins.

5) People watch their 401(k) accounts go down the toilet and start screaming bloody murder at their Congressmen again, but this time for not voting for the bill.

6) The Dow recovers 485 points on Wednesday in hopes that the bailout will still pass.

7) The Senate revises the bill to make it more popular, throwing in \$100 billion in tax breaks and upping the limit for insured bank deposits to \$250,000—and as of Wednesday night, the country was waiting in breathless anticipation for a Senate vote.

The main problem in this bailout fiasco, as far as I can tell, is lack of communication. Nobody bothered to explain to the public what the bailout bill was about or why it would help them. It seems like everyone heard the word “bailout” and took it to mean a bailout of the evil Wall Street executives, investors and banks that got the country into this mess in the first place.

“No free ride for Wall Street! Bail out people, not the banks!” ran the protest posters outside the New York Stock Exchange on Tuesday. All this happened while stocks crashed, debt grew, credit tightened and the economy got worse for ordinary people. Congress stood up to Wall Street, alright, but the House's decision only created more panic—panic that the Senate is trying to coun-

teract by resuscitating the bailout.

Of course, there are no easy answers for the crisis, and while the necessity of the \$770 billion bailout is questionable, it is definitely time for some tough decisions. As much as we all hate Wall Street big shots who raked in millions playing with other people's money, Wall Street didn't do this by itself. Americans are in debt—mountains of credit card debt, student loan debt, car debt, mortgage debt, etc. The country is in debt—over \$10 trillion, by the way.

The truth is, we're all over-leveraged, and we've all borrowed too much money. People in this country have been living beyond their means for years, and this time it has caught up to them in the form of defaulting mortgages, which triggered the investment bank crisis. All of a sudden, no one could pay and every stockholder wanted out: the banks crumpled.

Yes, people need a bailout, but they should start by bailing themselves out. Don't eat out every night, stop overcharging credit cards and actually pay the full amount of debt every month. And oh yeah, about that gas crisis—we have enough gas, but people keep panicking and topping off every spare minute they have—so stop topping off your gas too.

Otherwise, in everyone's scramble to get more than they need, we all might just end up with nothing at all.

Worldwide travels create yearning for more

I'm one of those kids who lived in the same house all his life before college. My parents settled down in South Atlanta shortly before I was born, perhaps because they loved the sound of planes landing and taking off from the world's busiest airport, or maybe it was the dysfunctional Clayton County school system.

I make it sound a lot worse than it really was. I had a great, happy childhood and was perfectly content living there, but as I started applying to colleges, my view of the universe began to expand. I realized the great possibilities beyond the familiar bubble I called home.

College has given me the opportunity to experience more in the past three years than I could have ever imagined. Of course there's the typical "going to college" stuff: I met a bunch of awesome friends, learned how to live on my own, figured out a way to balance partying with studying (still working on that, actually) and got involved in really cool things that I'm genuinely passionate about.

But for me, the "x-factor" of my college experience has been international travel through study abroad programs. I went on my first study abroad the summer after my freshman year, hopping on a plane to



"I live for those chaotic, packed streets where I can feel the city living and breathing all around me."

Jonathan Saethang
Development Editor

Asia literally a day after my last final. Throughout the summer, I studied the political economy of East Asia, traveling through multiple countries with classes in unconventional places like a plastics factory, a bus or a boat.

While I gained valuable information in class, my best memories are of wandering through different locales sampling the local cuisine, bargaining for a trinket or two and soaking in different cultures that are so strikingly dissimilar to American culture.

I live for those chaotic, packed streets where I can feel the city living and breathing all around me. I also live for the quiet serenity of ancient temples and breathtaking scenery that makes me marvel at how diverse our world truly is.

When I got home after almost two and a half months, I couldn't help but think to myself, "I've got to do this again."

And so I did.

This past summer I decided to blow all my co-op money on a three-month study abroad program based in France, and much like my Asia experience, it was worth every penny. Over the course of the summer I visited 15 different countries, pretty adequately covering most of Western Europe and a chunk of Central and Eastern Europe.

The experience was completely different—in fact, I can't even compare the two because it's like comparing a croissant to a pineapple. They share few commonalities except that they are both tasty. The architecture pretty much everywhere in Europe caused me to utter more than my fair share of "oohs" and "ahs" as I hopped from country to country.

After getting back from my three-month adventure in Europe, it did indeed feel great to

be home; however, I felt like I was having a reverse culture shock where all things familiar suddenly felt very strange.

I think I've come down with a case of wanderlust, which the American Heritage Dictionary defines as "a very strong or irresistible impulse to travel." Suddenly my view of the universe exploded yet again. I have this strong desire to keep moving and never stop seeing, doing and learning.

I definitely view that as a positive quality. I feel that international experience lends not only a broader perspective to the traveler while on the road, but also a heightened sense of the nuances of everyday life that might have been taken for granted before.

Hopefully, a summer or two from now I plan to study abroad once more before I leave Tech. I've realized that I'm incredibly lucky to attend such a well-connected university with campuses and partnership programs around the world.

I can't do my experiences justice on paper. It's just one of those things that you have to go see, eat and do for yourself.

It's not a small world, after all. There's more to see than you can ever imagine. Studying abroad is a great way to start an adventure, one that I hope will never end.

BUZZ Around the Campus

How safe do you feel on campus?



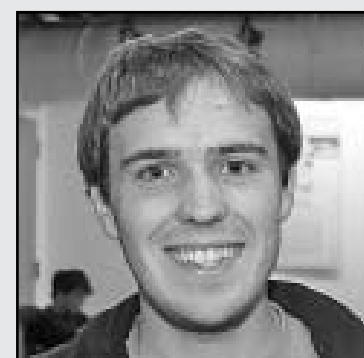
Dianna Earles
Third-year BIOL

"Very safe...because I'm a ninja."



Adam Weiss
Fourth-year AE and INTA

"I feel safer inside North Avenue than the rest of campus."



Ben Johnson
Third-year AE

"I feel very safe, but I'm male."



Grace Liang
Fifth-year IE

"I do [feel safe]—in certain areas."

Photos by Blake Israel

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT or NOT



Free flu shots

There is no excuse for students not to get a flu shot this fall. Health Services is offering the vaccine at various locations around campus, including the North Avenue Apartments and the Student Center. Best of all, the flu shots are free and convenient. They are paid for by the student health fee, and same-day appointments can be made through the new online appointment system.



Printing restrictions

Students have complained about the changes made to GT Print, which were made without consulting SGA or the student body. Rollover is no longer allowed, and students who had gotten used to accumulating 100 pages after two weeks miss the extra benefit. Being required to log in and swipe BuzzCards has also added an additional hassle to students printing on the go.



Top ranking

Hispanic Business ranked Tech the top engineering school for 2008 citing its top academics and active Hispanic student organizations, among other features. Being the number one choice for Hispanics puts Tech on the national map and cements its reputation as a premier institution.



Vandalized Buzzes

Continued vandalism of the Buzz Around Town statues has proven frustrating. Some of the 25 statues celebrating Tech have had their antennas and ties ripped off, which were going to be auctioned to benefit a Tech organization. This shows a lack of respect for public property and school spirit.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Out-of-state tuition not fair

With the coming budget deficit this year, everyone is preparing for increased tuition and complaining about higher costs.

After reading the *Technique's* reported tuition for in-state and out-of-state (\$4,496 and \$22,220 respectively), it has become apparent that the majority of students are unaffected by tuition raises.

According to the College Board, the averages of in-state and out-of-state tuitions are \$6,185 and \$16,640, a ratio of about 2.7 to 1. Tech sports a staggering 4.9 to 1 ratio of tuition. That translates to about 40% of the students paying 75% of the tuition.

The simple solution would be to just "go somewhere else." Unfortunately for me, the only top-ranked engineering school located in my state (Pennsylvania) is Carnegie-Mellon, a private school with no in-state tuition discounts.

Since I am an ME [major], I am not eligible for academic common market. So why is the only solution for me to get a quality engineering education to pay out the nose for it?

I do not argue that in-state students should pay less, since it is their tax dollars and their parents' tax dollars funding the Georgia education system. But why such a wide disparity? Other Georgia schools like UGA (ratio of 3.7:1) and Georgia State (4:1) don't require nonresident students to foot as much of the bill.

To make matters worse, soon I will have had an off-campus permanent residence in Georgia for a year. I will have paid Georgia state taxes for more than a year and could even have my car registered in Georgia, and yet I will not be eligible for in-state tuition [while] a person who lived

See Letters, page 8

Letter Submission Policy

The *Technique* welcomes all letters to the editor in response to *Technique* content as well as general topics relevant to campus. We will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Send your letter to letters@nique.net and please use your official Georgia Tech account if possible. Make sure to include your full name, year (1st, 2nd, etc.), and major.

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. We reserve the right to edit for style and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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Coverage Requests

Requests for coverage may be made to the Editor-in-Chief or to individual section editors. For more information, email editor@nique.net

Finding what makes you 'exceptional' key to success

Those of you as addicted to National Public Radio as I am have doubtless heard the News from Lake Wobegon, a segment of long-running radio series *A Prairie Home Companion*. The segment describes life in a fictional town (Lake Wobegon, pronounced woe-be-gone), where "all the women are strong, all the men are good-looking and all the children are above average."

Thanks to this famous quote, this fictional Minnesota town has loaned its name to a well-studied psychological occurrence: the better-than-average (Lake Wobegon) effect. In essence, it claims that a significant majority of people say they are above average in a wide variety of categories like driving skills, writing skills and leadership. That, of course, is a mathematical impossibility.

This failure to accurately appraise ourselves is a common trait of American society, which almost universally teaches children to feel like they are "above average" from a young age. This is particularly prevalent in athletics, where even the most ill-suited children are en-

couraged to keep participating in a sport just to avoid hurting their feelings.

Likewise, the assumption that you are above average at picking a house to flip, being able to hold on to a job (and thereby keep paying your overinflated mortgage) or getting awesome profits on some newfangled financial instrument called a Collateralized Debt Obligation have all played a role in the current financial crisis.

The fascinating fact is that despite how bad most people are at figuring out what they are good at, being able to accurately identify those areas where you truly are above average is tremendously advantageous.

In countless aspects of life, success comes to the person who is only a little bit above average, in everything from grades, which are often distributed on a curve, to job interviews, to running your own business. At some point your success will be determined by the tiniest advantage you hold over your competition. Being outstanding, though, is far from easy: chances are that your competitors



"At some point your success will be determined by the tiniest advantage you hold over your competition."

Arcadiy Kantor
Outreach Editor

think they are better than you, too. At the same time, one can never be all things to all people.

So what is a person or company that can't afford to spend the time or money to be outstanding to do? There is a vastly lower barrier to entry for a different adjective: exceptional.

Authors like Seth Godin have picked up on the need to be exceptional over the course of the past decade, with Godin publishing the book *Purple Cow* on the topic. Godin explains this concept, explaining that "something remarkable is worth talking about. Worth noticing. Exceptional. New. Interesting."

In my mind, I define "excep-

tional" in a somewhat different way: an exceptional person, product, company or group is one that is at least a little bit above average in an interesting combination of ways. The word exceptional, after all, comes from the same root as exception, something that is, for whatever reason, omitted from a group. Would it not be preferable to exclude yourself from a group entirely and have people evaluate you on a unique scale, rather than finding yourself mired down in the morass of competition?

With it being well established that people are rather awful at evaluating themselves, however, the best way to identify and accentuate what you are exceptional

at remains an unsolved problem. I, unfortunately, have not solved it either (or I'd have a job by now), but I do have two thoughts on how to go about it.

First, you cannot be exceptional if you are not focusing on the things that truly matter to you. A person can easily become adequate at a subject they don't care about, and in some disciplines perhaps that will even get them a modicum of success. But people, clients and customers can tell when a person is—and is not—truly passionate about something, and it affects the ability to be exceptional in that field.

The second is that if you are trying to stand out, it might be best to pick an area that everyone else isn't trying to stand out in at the same time. One should try to be ahead of the curve, not following it—all of the people who decided they could be exceptional real estate agents a few years ago would vouch for that.

In the end, though, the most important thing you can do is to just keep the exceptional question in mind.

Letters from page 7

here for one year before coming to Tech will be eligible for it. Never mind that I have already paid almost five times what they have for three years now, I am simply ineligible for in-state tuition for no reason other than I am a full-time student.

Even budget-wise it doesn't make sense to keep the tuition gap so wide. If Tech were to increase

in-state tuition to the national average, an increase of \$1,689, it would result in more than \$13.3 million to the school. When faced with a minimum budget deficit of \$17 million, that's nothing to laugh at. Tech should re-examine its tuition rates and considering cutting the out-of-state students a little slack.

Chris Radomile
Fourth-year ME

Cigarette addiction

I am writing in response to the opinion piece on smokers [On-campus smokers prove frustrating," Sept. 26]. Although I am not a smoker myself, I know several smokers who struggle with quitting. Contrary to popular belief, most smokers are aware of the risks. Do not think that they don't see the facts. Looking attractive or cool has nothing to

do with it [and] after a while, it becomes a serious problem.

What people don't know about is the nicotine addiction itself; otherwise they would understand that it physically hurts when my friends don't get their fix. Most non-smokers live under the impression that it's simply mind over matter, but how does one reconcile this when your mind is the one with the problem?

Have some sympathy, you only

have to deal with the smell for a few scant seconds before the smell goes away and you can get back to your fresh air. Second-hand smoke won't kill you in those brief moments that you pass by them, holding your breath.

Maybe the author should have done more research before [writing] this misinformed editorial.

Patrick Bradshaw
Fourth-year IAML



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