Opinions

OUR VIEWS

Consensus Opinion

Vandals mishandled

That the Georgia Tech Police Department decided not to take any official action against the students recently caught in the act of vandalizing a Buzz Around Town statue is a disappointing to the campus community.

Interviews with Tech police show that officers on scene had the legal authority to file charges against these students, but simply chose not to. The reasons given for this decision are weak and suggest a lack of forethought. Not knowing who the owners of the statues were, or what their exact worth was should not have been enough reason to let the students go despite being caught flagrantly committing a crime.

For one, as important members of the campus community, Tech police should have been aware of what has for some time now been a highly visible project—as well as a highly visible problem of vandalism. But even if they were not well informed on the details surrounding the sculptures, Tech police should have acted decisively, gathering the necessary information, filing the appropriate charges and even taking the students caught to jail.

Their failure to do so now implies that vandalism is acceptable and that no real consequences for this crime should be expected. In essence, their failure to so do the message that vandalism is not a serious offense and is suggestive of an indifferent police force that failed to act on a crime that has plagued campus for some time.

The Buzz Around Town vandalism is an important crime with serious consequences. This ongoing destruction of property had a financial cost to the organizations that raised $500 each to build and design the statues, which were then to be auctioned to raise additional funds. Furthermore, the vandalized Buzzes hurt school pride and Tech’s image, with each mutilated Buzz suggesting to visitors that Tech students are not capable of respecting a visually appealing display celebrating Tech and 100 years of the Alumni Association.

While the weak response given by Tech police was disappointing, the real disappointment lies with the students who felt it was “cool” to vandalize. Their acts are not comparable to cherished traditions like taking the T’s around campus, or even to clever (but harmless) pranks made famous at other universities. Instead, their foolish actions demonstrate a brazen irresponsibility that does not belong at Tech.

Now that these students are being investigated by the Office of Student Integrity, all disciplinary measures available in Tech’s Code of Conduct should be applied. Someone needs to send a strong message that sabotaging our school is completely unacceptable.

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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Let's talk education, inequality

After finishing a lecture on U.S. competitiveness, this week my professor turned my attention to the question of America’s future to the class. “What do you guys think is the most important issue for the new president?” he asked.

Perhaps surprisingly, the class’s responses quickly focused on K-12 education and racial inequality. Years of neglect have left our K-12 system in shambles, worsening the inequality in opportunities and outcomes between whites and minorities.

As I listened to my peers, I couldn’t help but think of a recent landmark in American history: the election of our first black president. Hours after the election, TV pundits asserted that it could mean the end of affirmative action. If Barack Obama could break the ultimate glass ceiling, then anyone could do it, right?

Wrong.

Without a doubt, Obama’s win spoke volumes about the progress our nation (or at least most of it) has made, mobilized and empowered youth and minorities like never before, and should serve to inspire a new generation of bright minds of any race or ethnicity. But to think that it is enough to undo decades of inequality is naïve.

Obama is an exceptional individual with an exceptional background, spending the most formative years of his life in Indonesia and later in Hawaii, where he was raised by his white grandparents. His experience hardly seems representative of that of many minority children today.

Rather than just pat ourselves on the back because we elected a half black president, we should engage in a collective conversation on what needs to done to ensure that every American child has equal opportunity to be anything he or she would like to be. Aside from constituting a grave injustice, this issue also threatens our nation’s long-term competitiveness in a globalized economy.

So where to begin? It’s been almost 50 years since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, so institutionalized discrimination is no longer the issue. Rather than blame “the Man,” I suggest we take a two-pronged approach in this discussion: K-12 education and culture.

During the years my mother taught at Atlanta Public Schools, a majority black inner-city school system, she shared many sad and shocking stories with me. Sometimes I couldn’t believe how different my high school in Cobb County was from hers.

For weeks, enrollment in her class was so high that some students sat on the floor. She would often spend her own money to buy basic supplies. Arrests during the school day were not unheard of. During one of my visits, I watched a teacher talking on her cell phone in the hallway, periodically yelling at her rowdy class to “shut up.”

School systems like APS suffer from a host of problems with no easy fix. An obvious start is to increase funding to ensure that students can learn in smaller classes, with adequate supplies and well-trained teachers who care. Critics may note that the U.S.’s K-12 education expenditure per student is among the highest in the world at the same time that our performance ranks among the lowest, or that compared to other metro Atlanta school systems, teacher salaries at APS are the highest.

Still, money is an issue. Under the current system places a large burden on professionals with specialized, non-education degrees to become certified. These barriers to entry can be lowered without risking teacher quality; on the contrary, this would increase it. Teachers also need to feel like they have adequate access to supplies and technology, and that their job security does not rest upon a standardized test.

Further, the current system places a large burden on professionals with specialized, non-education degrees to become certified. These barriers to entry can be lowered without risking teacher quality; on the contrary, this would increase it. Teachers also need to feel like they have adequate access to supplies and technology, and that their job security does not rest upon a standardized test.

The list of reforms that the K-12 system is in dire need of could go on, but another anecdote from my mother’s years at APS gives me pause. When asked seriously what they wanted to do after graduation, a majority of her students chose careers in sports and entertainment.

Why weren’t they aspiring to something different? An open discussion on culture needs to take place alongside that on education, and this is where I hope Obama’s historic campaign and victory will have the greatest effect.

Let’s start talking.

“We should engage in a collective conversation...to ensure that every American child has equal opportunity...”

Naihobe Gonzalez

Opinions Editor
Holiday movie season disappoints fans

Though the leaves have begun to turn, the most vibrant and beautiful oranges and reds, and the temperature outside is not nearly as chilly as it was just a month ago, I can’t help but feel somewhat depressed and adrift as where this season is inevitably heading.

Could it be my lack of motivation in almost all of my classes that is bringing me down? No, I’ve accepted (somewhat reluctantly) that I am powerless over the holidays approach, movies that are all over the place, and the expectation that only the cinema can provide—and discover the anticipation that only the cinema can provide and the horror of realizing that there is absolutely nothing on about the moviegoers were ahead for a slew of big Oscar contenders…

But I promised not to see Will Be Brilliant. Is there anything that could have made it even more obvious that I am powerless over the holidays approach, movies that are all over the place, and the expectation that only the cinema can provide…

The movie season might not currently be as exciting as I thought it would be (with as many homoromus as we may have hoped, but maybe the movies still have some of the the uncovering of some surprises. Until then, try to enjoy the young, brooding vampire and more of Jason Statham’s ridiculous action sequences.

OPINIONS

HOT or NOT

Diversity days

With a theme this year of “a latitude adjustment,” Diversity Week brought lectures on a number of hot-button topics like sexism and religion and culture to campus, as well as performances by the GT Dance Teams and a training session for the LGBTQ community. Celebrating diversity is always fun, especially if it unites the Tech community and gets people talking.

Football failure

Tech football continues to take fans on a roller coaster of emotions. Following the historic SU victory, which placed the team as a top contender for the ACC title, Tech suffered a sobering 28-7 loss to the Tar Heels. With Miami and Georgia left on the schedule, here’s hoping that the Yellow Jackets’ roller coaster season ends on a high—unfortunately, an unlikely scenario.

YOUR VIEWS

Letters to the Editor

Gay marriage bans wrong

In recent years, gay marriage has become surrounded by controversy. Last week all four propositions concerning gay marriage succeeded in curtailing LGBT civil liberties, despite their unconstitutionality.

Through my studies I’ve examined a variety of societies, concluding that our most significant strength lies within our ability to agree to disagree, a strength that diminishes me to see compromised. Yet I have faith that America will prove its commitment to equality.

In fact this past Sunday, in a first compromise along the blurred lines separating church and state, due to confusion that the sanctity of marriage is threatened by governmental recognition of LGBT unions. However, the word “sanctity,” derived from sacred, or of God, is rooted in religion. Since its context places the doctrine of one belief above another, government regulation is illegitimate for such conviction, reinforced by the 1st Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of a religion…”

However, should people wish to take governmental action, it indicates its illegality. The equal protection clause in the 14th Amendment states that “No State shall… deny to any [citizen] the equal protection of the laws.” Any initiatives enforcing different laws based upon predetermined dispositions are unconstitutional.

Additionally, in 1954 the Supreme Court ruled through Brown vs. The Board of Education.

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Daniel Spiller
Entertainment Editor

“It’s that time of year when we should be full steam ahead for a slew of big Oscar contenders…”

Atita Shirwaikar
Grad ECE

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Vikram Krishna
Grad ECE

“There are a lot of old courses that were on WebCT—those courses were not shifted to T-Square.”

Chima Umeakanne
First-year BME

“I would improve its reliability, because every now and then it stops working, which is inefficient.”

Adaee Ejogo
First-year BME

“I don’t like T-Square—I would get rid of it. I know it’s not green, but I handout so I can write on something.”

HOT or NOT

HOT or NOT

Gears of War 2

Our Views

“Lack of moviegoers means less Oscar contenders”

Daniel Spiller
Entertainment Editor

“We could have expected and appreciated the moviegoers who spent $500 to $600 to see a movie. Instead, they didn’t go to see the movies. The movies are still made, but the moviegoers are not there to see them. The movies are not as good as the previous ones. The Oscar contenders are not as good as the previous ones.”

Atita Shirwaikar
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Love drives student choices in products, organizations

Recently I’ve been reading a rather beautiful book called Lovemarks, written in 2004 by Kevin Roberts, the worldwide CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi.

Roberts describes what happens when an individual forms a relationship with a brand beyond one of “I buy it because it is adequate and cheap.” Throughout the book he discusses a way for companies to create that invaluable tie: one of loyalty beyond reason.

A Lovemark, according to Roberts, is a few levels above trade-marks and brands: where a brand conveys information, a Lovemark creates a relationship. A brand is generic, while a Lovemark is personal. And while a brand might make a statement, a Lovemark tells a story.

There are some easily identifiable Lovemarks that many in our peer group have. Perhaps the most obvious example of loyalty beyond reason is that pinnacle of mpg player design, the iPod. For years the iPod cost more and had fewer features (as a student journalist, the lack of voice recording was always a deal breaker) than competing players, and while it had the lead in ease of use and design for a while, a number of other manufacturers have been producing very competitive products for some time now.

Still, if you board the Stinger and look around, you will see that 90 percent of the students have the tell-tale white headphones. Why? Apple has done a fantastic job of making the iPod the player to own. Its commercials are an instructive exercise in storytelling, from the unique visual style to the musical choices. Furthermore, Apple’s ability to deliver a complete experience, including an application component and music store, before its competition allowed it to form even stronger ties with its customers.

Better yet, Apple’s ubiquitous product provides the soundtrack to its owners’ lives: people who love music—a huge group—almost universally love their iPods. A friend of mine told me that she likes her iPod a whole lot because it “makes her happy.” A piece of electronics that makes you happy? That’s a Lovemark.

There are a number of other Lovemarks we as students surround ourselves with. Facebook, Skype, bands we like—all of these are Lovemarks for different groups of us. But one of the things that I’ve been wondering about while reading the book is whether these strong relationships also exist between students and some of the things associated with Tech, whether it be traditions, establishments or student organizations.

I truly care about the organizations that I have dedicated my time and effort to, and I know many students feel likewise. But for the reader base?

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A friend of mine told me that she likes her iPod a whole lot because it “makes her happy.”

That’s a Lovemark.”

Arcadiy Kantor
Outreach Editor

Technique, I wonder what it would take for an organization to build that relationship with the students. What could we do to make the Technique a Lovemark for our community and the students, faculty and staff who make up our reader base?

Roberts defines five core principles of brands that move to the next layout and become Lovemarks: they are passionate, involve customers, celebrate loyalty, find, tell and retell great stories, and accept responsibility.

Over the course of our existence we have done better at some of these things than at others. We have not involved others in our newspaper as much as we should, and we have not rewarded reader loyalty. Most notably, though, there isn’t a story associated with reading the Technique—except that of “I picked it up, read the Slivers and did the Sudoku.”

Ultimately, every organization should strive to build that loyalty. If they succeed, maybe we will have a campus of less apathetic, more engaged students.

sliver
www.nique.net

postmodernism is unrealistic... ha, ha, an Eng. joke...

yo mama’s big black booty band

love.me.linear.

...yuh, i haven’t slept in days

resolve

absolewwe broke the elevator.
bones!

Taylor Swift doesn’t get Romeo & Juliet at all.

swoon baby swoon

face

you need to grow thicker skin

t is all man-love

erm that came out wrong

test your enormous game

let’s bust out of this popsicle stand

I prefer my guitar and your company.
sorry, sketch girl, you don’t even say hi anymore.

you blind,
cold weather means people start dressing with dignity

holloween was the last chance to dress slut-nasty

Pelicans

I saw an owl catch a mouse, I didn’t know how to feel, so I just watched.

sliver run

Too much, too much.

Ambivalence breeds uncertainty.

egg, gross

spazs

I’ll admit, I used to listen to anti-Flag

I could use a date, it has been a while.

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Tech girls are still crazy!

All slivers go to heaven.

Why did the chicken cross the road?

Because your mother’s a whore!

Good god, will people stop throwing carrots at me?

Comments from page 9

catization that having separate insti-
tutions for education was inher-
ently unequal, with this situation being no different. These proposi-
tions are enacting separate terms to define identical rights between two communities.

Lastly, arguments that “democ-
RTEOY CROy RRA Ty eB ariod Cite nstntiut Oe. 100,000. Constitution were estab-
lished to protect individual rights from the ruling elite. Our founding fathers foresaw that pure unlimited rule by the masses was no different than a dictatorial mob, where groups use superior numbers to bully the few, if not the fewest who have a voice in the body politic.

Our country’s strength lies within our ability to disagree. Focused in our rights, every citizen is protected, majority or minor-
ity. I write to plead with the population to uphold this ability to work beyond differences.

Stop tearing rifts and cleavages into society by erecting barriers. Our country’s strength lies within our ability to work beyond differences.

Better yet, Apple’s ubiquitous product provides the soundtrack to its owners’ lives: people who love music—a huge group—almost universally love their iPods. A friend of mine told me that she likes her iPod a whole lot because it “makes her happy.” A piece of electronics that makes you happy? That’s a Lovemark.

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Letters

Campus laziness

I was surprised when I picked up this past edition to find Jennifer Aldoretta’s editorial on stu-
dent laziness [“Irational laziness plagues student body,” Nov. 7]. I completely agree with her critique of most students’ habits and have often found myself asking the same questions.

Why do students feel so com-
pelled to rush and use the Trol-
ley or Stinger shuttles when they could just as easily walk? Why do they insist on cramming in like an over-packed can of sardines, even though they can clearly see the tell-tale white headphones.

I was once again leading a very engaged student body, where students are members or not?

Our organization tries hard to get people to attend or participate in its projects and take an interest in its causes. Wouldn’t every one of them want to create a deep, lasting relationship with the people that are in their constituencies, whether they are members or not? As the Outreach Editor of the