**Students debate health care options, policy**

**By Chris Russell  Staff Writer**

Ask any student what the hot-button political issue of the day is, and if “healthcare” isn’t the first thing out of their mouth, it should be pretty close to it. With marches in Washington, town hall meetings devolving into yelling matches and supporters of both sides of the issue viciously attacking the other, it’s safe to say that the state of America’s health system is on many minds at the moment.

On Thursday, Sept. 17, the Tech chapter of the Roosevelt Institute held an open forum, what they called a “fireside chat,” on the topic of healthcare. The Roosevelt Institute is a national student think-tank that encourages its members to debate issues facing the nation today and attempt to find solutions to them.

Shikha Choudhury, fourth-year ME and president of Tech’s chapter of the Roosevelt Institute, said, “(The Roosevelt Institute’s) goal is to research, debate and put forward ideas that are fostering in the student body due to our academic pressures. We want students to know they are more than just what is on their graduate certificate.”

The point of the debate wasn’t just so students could discuss the problem with each other.

Kristofer Carta fourth-year HTS and VP of Operations for the Tech chapter of the Roosevelt Institute said, “The real goal is to, at the end of this, to come up with...a policy we think would help the healthcare dilemma in America.”

Each chapter of the Roosevelt Institute gathers information and suggestions from its members before sending it up the chain of command to the national level, where the best ideas are forwarded on to several US senators.

The discussion itself consisted of nine students. Most students present supported health reform and some form of a public option for healthcare.

Choudhury said, “We can’t accept healthcare, as conservatives see it, as just another resource to purchase.” This support was only encouraged by information distributed at the meeting, with two facts standing out from the rest. First, that the US spends more than any other nation on healthcare, and, second, that the quality of healthcare provided ranks 37th in the world, far below countries that spend far less.
Rosh Hashanah marks new year for Jewish students

By Sarah Malis
Contributing Writer

L’hana tovah! Sundown on Sept. 18, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, will begin and end at nightfall on Sept. 20.

While Tech doesn’t have a historically large population of Jewish students, many still recognize and celebrate the first of the High Holidays, also known as the “Days of Awe.”

In other words, the period of ten days including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are recognized as the Days of Repentance, which are the first ten days of the month of Tishrei.

These days of repentance are a time to examine one’s ways and try to improve one’s behaviors and actions in the anticipation of Yom Kippur.

This repentance can take form of morning prayers, fasting, charity or self-reflection. Rosh Hashanah is observed as a day of rest and action. Rosh Hashanah is a day of rest, so you are not bos, is a day of rest, and is blown at four particular occasions in the prayers on Rosh Hashanah.

The sound of the shofar marks the end of the fast on Yom Kippur, and is blown at four particular occasions in the prayers on Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Kippur consists of a day of fasting, and intensive prayer in and out of synagogue. However, the High Holidays begin with the more joyous of the two holidays.

Rosh Hashanah, like any good holiday, is a time of delicious traditional food, family and prayer. The holiday is essentially creating a “clean slate” and a new start for the New Year.

The “new, fresh start” of Rosh Hashanah can be relatable to the American New Year. People create their resolutions, just as millions of Jews around the world begin a lifetime pact of hopeful begin-nings.

Many Jewish families have similar traditions.

“My family” has apples and honey, pomegranates, cooked tongue of a cow, black-eye beans, fish, and egg. We have a gathering two nights - the first night of Rosh Hashanah and the second night of Rosh Hashanah. During the day, we go to synagogue. We also blow the shofar,” said Sepura Doserat, a first-year BME.

Rosh Hashanah marks a fresh start for all, and most important of all, getting your ‘report card’ to see how you can be a better person, be nicer to people, and do better things. The bottom line is fixing your mistakes for the next year. It doesn’t matter how religious you are, it’s about how you treat others and how you’re growing as a person,” said Jaffe.

Rosh Hashanah is a holiday for celebration, happiness and family togetherness. Services are for signifying the New Year and recognizing that it’s time to wipe the slate clean and restart the New Year with good intentions and a sense of purity.

Soon enough, it will be Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, a far more somber holiday. But for now, get ready to chop some apples, bring out the honey, congregate with friends and family to bring in the year 5770.

Apples and honey are traditionally eaten on Rosh Hashanah to symbolize the hope for a sweet new year, and pomegranates are eaten as the “new fruit” which has not yet been eaten this season.
Apollo 16 astronaut inspires

By Reem Mansura
Development Editor

Twelve men have walked the moon. Only nine are still alive. This past Tuesday, Tech students had the opportunity to listen to the experiences of the youngest astronaut to ever walk the moon, Charlie Duke.

Duke was on campus to award a $10,000 scholarship to John Young in Tech's Astronaut Scholarship Foundation.

Duke attended the U.S. Naval Academy and graduated with a degree in Naval Sciences in 1957. In 1965, Duke graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and received his Master's degree in Aeronautics in 1964.

Duke did not always know what he wanted to do while growing up. During his childhood, there were no space programs to inspire him to become an astronaut.

“I grew up in South Carolina, and there was no space program so I wasn’t like, ‘Mama I’m going to walk on the moon,’” Duke said. “I got interested in graduate school at MIT.”

In 1966, Duke graduated from the Aerospace Research Pilot School and in 1966 was selected one of 19 selected for NASA’s fifth group. In 1969, he served as capsule communicator for Apollo 11 and was picked for backup crew on Apollo 13.

“One week before the launch [of Apollo 13], I caught the measles and gave it to everyone else.”

Duke first set foot on the moon with Tech graduate John Young in April of 1972 on Apollo 16, making him the tenth person to walk on the moon.

During his time in the astronaut program, Duke logged over 2,000 hours the simulator and 500 hours in a space suit.

“We went through rigorous training effort, but we were really focused to get on the moon,” Duke said.

He worked on Apollo 16 as prime crew. Apollo 16 was the fifth manned lunar landing mission and the first scientific expedition to inspect, survey and sample materials on the moon.

Duke shared stories from his first flight to the moon to his most embarrassing moments.

“It was just a smooth ride for three days to the moon,” Duke said. “The moon was one of the most beautiful sites I’ve ever seen. Into my view on the right side floats the Earth 16,000 miles away. There were three colors in my memory; brown, white and the crystal blue of the ocean.”

While landing on the moon, several problems arose.

“We missed a 40 foot crater by about three yards,” Duke said.

Duke also showed video footage of him and the crew exploring the moon and conducting experiments. Duke’s most embarrassing moment occurred when he dropped several millions worth of experiments. Thankfully, nothing was damaged.

Duke retired from NASA in 1975.

“I only got one flight, but the one I got was fantastic and I was thankful,” Duke said.

Smith also has some advice for students that are currently working to graduate at Tech.

Smith said, “My first two semesters at Tech I was so homesick. I went home after a week of classes. So I really didn’t complete a class at Tech until Fall semester 2004. I had a lot of fun on my semesters off, often too much, and I recommend it to anyone who is able to take a break on occasion. Take advantage of the fun aspects of being in college and get out of the library. The real-world will be there waiting for you whenever you graduate. Don’t be in any rush. I obviously wasn’t, and I would not change a single thing about my college life.”

Smith just recently relocated to New York City and is spending her time there exploring the city. She plans to start looking for jobs there soon and has not been recognized in New York City yet because of her contributions to Playboy.

Smith misses some things about Atlanta including her friends, the familiarity of the city and her dog Lola.

“NYC is great. I really love all the new places to explore and the subway system. I’m nervous about the winters as I’ve never experienced really cold weather. I’m finding my way around easily using Google maps on my iPhone and everyday I find something new and cool to do,” said Smith.

In regards to future modeling work, Smith has been contacted by Playboy to a few more shoots but she does not plan to do any more modeling other than that.

Smith’s future plans include going to graduate school in a year to eventually pursue a PhD in a biomedical engineering field.

“With biomedical engineering I can actually design and create solutions for medical problems...there is nothing I enjoy more than being given an open-ended medical problem and spending time researching ways or designing devices to solve the problem,” said Smith.
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Understandably, many students present at the meeting were outraged by these statistics. Andrew Willis, fourth year AE, said, “What we’re putting into the system are sky-rocketing premiums and what we’re getting out is 37th best quality? That’s just insane behavior for the supposed world-wide leader in healthcare.”

In order to counter this, one of the largest concerns students believe needs to be addressed is how difficult it is for many individuals to receive healthcare, and receive it on a timely basis.

Carta said, “The reason we’re so far behind is accessibility and the fact that so many in our country don’t have access to healthcare.”

Many see broadening coverage, with particular attention paid to those who can’t afford insurance and those with pre-existing conditions, as an important component of this. In his address to Congress, President Obama mentioned that it makes better business-sense for insurance companies to cut their most expensive clients, and, as grim as it may be, some students see the logic behind this. Carta said, “[Insurance companies] have no incentive to care for their policy holders at the moment.”

That’s not to say that students aren’t concerned what more government involvement in healthcare could mean for efficiency. Even those students at the chat that were for more government involvement believed that in order for health care reform to work, particularly a public option, special consideration would have to be given to how the system was implemented.

Currently, plans are in the works in Congress, but have failed to garner much support from the GOP, mostly due to the high price tags associated with them. Senator Max Baucus (D. MT), recently presented one of the newer plans in the system, with a price tag around $750 billion, which is relatively conservative compared to some other plans.

In his Sept. 16 address to Congress, Obama laid out his hopes for healthcare reform. Chief among them are mandated insurance, restricting private companies from denying individuals insurance and pursuing a public option.

Students point to successful government-sponsored programs in other countries - like Denmark and Taiwan - as examples that prove reformed healthcare would work in the US.