**OUR VIEWS**

**Consensus Opinion**

**SGA elections**

Early this week, signs appeared all over campus criticizing SGA and the elections process. These signs were later removed before most students saw them. While the boards that are put up every year around elections time may be for official use only, there is no notice about this restriction on the boards, making it difficult for the average student to know that these boards may not be used for non-candidate advertising.

If SGA does not want these boards to be used for any purpose besides campaigning, they should not only post notices to this effect, but they must also be more vigilant in removing all offending materials from the boards, not just those that criticize SGA. Additionally, the presence of such flyers demonstrates a major campus sentiment that SGA is not being as proactive and useful as it could. Candidates for both executive and legislative positions should take these feelings into account and attempt to address them. Some already are.

Despite the contention of these signs, SGA positions are important to the campus. Voters should attempt to be informed by visiting the candidates’ websites, reading their platforms and bios in this week’s issue of the Technique and attending the scheduled debates. By making an informed, intelligent decision about the candidates, perhaps some of the concerns of the critical signs will be answered.

Besides the major offices, students should also give strong consideration to the representatives for both their majors and their classes. People in these positions have an opportunity to make a difference in students’ perceptions about SGA. By making informed decisions about for whom to vote, constituents can be assured of getting an effective representative.

**Stadium construction**

While it may be redundant to point out the irony of a tech school that cannot seem to build a well-constructed structure, the last few construction projects on campus have made it impossible not to do so. From the North Deck to the Student Center Parking Deck, cracks in campus structures have become a part of everyday life.

Following in this ignoble tradition is now the new stadium construction. While such problems may be acceptable in construction from time to time, the continual recurrence of these problems in all campus construction projects does not lend confidence to all of the building that will occur in the future. And hopefully, these cracks won’t extend to our team’s offensive line.

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

**EDITORIAL BOARD**

Jody Shaw, Editor-in-Chief

Derek Haynes, Managing Editor

Tony Kluemper, News Editor

Jennifer Schae, Focus Editor

Julia Trupled, Entertainment Editor

Sara Cames, Opinion Editor

**Copyright Notice**

Copyright © 2003, Jody Shaw, Editor-in-Chief, and by the Board of Student Publications. The Technique is an official publication of the Georgia Tech Board of Student Publications. No part of this paper may be reproduced in any manner without written permission from the Editor or from the Board of Student Publications. The ideas expressed herein are those of the Editor or the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Student Publications, the students, staff or faculty of the Georgia Institute of Technology or the University System of Georgia.

---

**TECHNIQUE**

“The South’s Liveliest College Newspaper”

Serving Georgia Tech Since 1911

---

**Political opinions must be informed**

After seeing celebrities who seem to know everything spout their mouths off about what they think about the situation in Iraq, and reading my colleague’s editorial on the war last week, I thought that this is a good time for me to comment. My colleague suggested that people ought to share their opinions, specifically referring to the criticism of the Iraq war, but I assume she is also speaking about issues at Tech and everywhere else in between.

More people should stand up for what they believe in, but at the same time, they should make sure they do it responsibly, with an informed opinion. One should think before he/she speaks and make sure they know what they are talking about to insure that they do not make a fool out of themselves. I know I have been guilty of this from time to time, but we should all strive to represent an informed opinion when at all possible.

Over this past weekend, Dixie Chick member Natalie Maines made the comment, “Just so you know, we’re ashamed the President of the United States is from Texas.” Saying this was fine. It is a constitutional right of hers to express her opinion in the way she wants, but it looked like she was just saying it because the people in the audience wanted to hear about it.

The comment she made at her concert is not what made me mad; it was what she did next. Maines made a statement the next day stating that she wished to apologize for her statements the day before. The reason this made me mad is that it only happened after her ratings began to tank, and she heard massive outcry from her fans. If she felt the way she said did, she should not have apologized. Instead, she should have stood up for what she believed in.

I do think she could have made her comments a little more tasteful—though, with the state of the Iraq situation. It seems like these days celebrities stand out in the spotlight thinking the world of Iraq and all it is going on in the world while I say you are going to express your opinion like that, especially in front of so many people, you should know what you are talking about and not feel afraid to stand behind what you said.

I can respect both sides of any issue, even if I do not agree. I think people have the right to express their opinions, even if they believe in them. If these requirements aren’t met, any debate will be unproductive and may, in fact, even be counterproductive. Without honest, informed discussion, debate does nothing for either party. No exchange of ideas can be possible under these conditions.

A lot of problems in debating opinions come from the fact that usually people are surrounded by only one viewpoint for most of their lives, either by their parents or their friends. Because of this phenomenon, we can’t see another viewpoint and thus, see their own as the only truth. Too many people, even people smart enough to be here at Tech do not have informed opinions about much of anything. I would like to see more people get involved on campus, so they can hear more opinions from other people. This sharing of opinions is one of the major benefits of being involved on campus.

More people should be informed about what is going on in the world. Being knowledgeable is the only way that you can truly form your own opinion and have that opinion be valid. If your reason for having that opinion is, “because my parents said so,” then you should not have an opinion. You should have actual reason to back up your opinions. Unfortunately, there are a lot of people like this out there.

So, to you celebrities out there, next time you feel compelled to spout something out of your mouth, make sure you’ve thought about what you are saying and that it is really what you believe. Saying things because you think it is what people want to hear can get you into trouble, especially if what you are saying is so non-objective, as in the case of Natalie Maines.

For the rest of us, I would suggest getting in touch with what is going on in the world and trying to make our own, informed opinions. I have been guilty of spouting off my mouth before without thinking, or commenting about something I know nothing about, and I can’t remember a single time when this did me any good.

In fact, there are even times when this got me in trouble in discussion. So be informed and stand behind your opinions.

**Quote of the week:**

“University politics are vicious precisely because the stakes are so small.” —Henry Kissinger

"Being knowledgeable is the only way that you can truly form your own opinion and have that opinion be valid."

Scott Meuleners

Photo Editor

—Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS
Oscar for Best Picture sure to go to Chicago

“I know I should probably write about the impending war and its impact on Georgia Tech, but the truth is, I’m not very knowledgeable about politics or war. As an engineering major, I don’t get exposed to the public policy and international affairs courses. I could watch the news or read about it myself, but thinking of war and the possible destruction it makes me nauseous. Honestly, I’d rather not think about it and just go on with my daily life (as long as that’s possible).

So this week, I decided to focus on something happy (at least to me)—one of my favorite events at Georgia Tech: the Oscars. Plus, as Entertainment Editor, the topic suits me. I enjoy guessing who the winners will be. I really wish my friends would have a pool with me, but for some reason, they think the NCAA bracket pool is more exciting. So to prove them wrong, I’m going to tell all of you my predictions.

WINS: I’ve only seen every movie nominated, so these predictions may be slightly (or highly) biased. Deal with it. This year, there’s a tough one—so tough, I’m not even sure there’s a clear favorite. The addition of jungle- gym like scaffolding around the building has ruined the classic (or at least tolerable) look of the structure, meaning that the Health Center will look as bad as the Van Leer Building in a few years. Unless, of course, the gymnastics team will be able to use it for practice.

Again, I’ve only seen one of these movies (I promise this won’t be the case every time). But it was my favorite movie of the year. Unfortunately, Одиссей, or “The Two Towers,” and The Passion of the Christ are nominated. Unfortunately, I have not seen The Hours or The Pianist, so I cannot give you a fully informed opinion. I surprisingly loved Chicago. I saw the musical in London last year and was blown away. I did not expect the film version to compare with the Broadway production, but it was just as good, if not better. They incorporated the plot with glitzy musical numbers flawlessly. All the actors were great singers, and their performances brought the essence of Broadway to the silver screen. In contrast, I did not enjoy Gangs of New York. But in general, I do not enjoy fighting movies. There was a little too much knife fighting and bloodshed for my liking. And the plot wasn’t so much.”

Julia Trapold
Entertainment Editor

“Dear Tech Union. On a serious note, I have decided to focus on something happy (at least to me)—one of my favorite events at Georgia Tech: the Oscars. My friends, however, think the NCAA bracket pool is better. Deal with it. This year, there’s a tough one—so tough, I’m not even sure there’s a clear favorite. However, I have not seen The Passion of the Christ. Fortunately, I have seen all the other nominated films. I have enjoyed them very much, although slightly depressing. I política are thinking that Title IX reserves the right to improve teaching and learning. What one thing would you most want to see changed to improve the education of future students? Reasonable responses from Tech students might include: “Who wants to know?” “Is number one a trick question?” To which my reply would be, “I do,” “yes,” and “no.” When I talked to my own class about this, the candidates were very good, and any movie where a is worth the stars and the million-dollar jewelry. But the Oscars will provide a welcome, light-hearted distraction to the serious situation happening outside of Hollywood. For all you movie buffs, here are my predication is right (they probably won’t be, since I don’t have ESP). Due to the military situation at hand, the glitzy red carpet extravaganzas that usually occurs has been cancelled, so you won’t be able to see the stars in their million-dollar jewelry. But the Oscars will provide a welcome, light-hearted distraction to the serious situation happening outside of Hollywood. For all you movie buffs, here are my predication is right (they probably won’t be, since I don’t have ESP). Due to the military situation at hand, the glitzy red carpet extravaganzas that usually occurs has been cancelled, so you won’t be able to see the stars in their million-dollar jewelry. But the Oscars will provide a welcome, light-hearted distraction to the serious situation happening outside of Hollywood. For all you movie buffs, here are my predication is right (they probably won’t be, since I don’t have ESP). Due to the military situation at hand, the glitzy red carpet extravaganzas that usually occurs has been cancelled, so you won’t be able to see the stars in their million-dollar jewelry. But the Oscars will provide a welcome, light-hearted distraction to the serious situation happening outside of Hollywood. For all you movie buffs, here are my pre...
Monologues help empower women, serve campus need

I was distressed on reading Dr. Mimi Philobos’s letter on the subject of the recent production of Eve Ensler’s “Vagina Monologues.” Dr. Philobos asks for examples of how this play helps to prevent violence against women. It is a bit short sighted to suppose that rapists and domestic abusers would flock to the performance and leave enlightened and repentant to sin no more. But, as Dr. Philobos has done, let’s overlook the thousands of dollars raised on Tech’s campus alone for two institutions whose sole purpose is aiding women who have been raped or abused and helping to prevent further violence.

How did this production help or change anything? How did it add to the university’s prestige?

In our society, there is a dictate of circumstances. The dictates of society make them unable to express themselves, even in the most desperate of circumstances.

It is the women who cannot speak, even in a normal or casual context, about vaginas or sex that do not want to “make a fuss” when they are beaten or raped. These women are far more likely to stay silent about sexual abuse (thus encouraging further abuse), and if brought to the hospital or counseling center they will refuse to pursue cases any further. It is a tragic culture of silence.

But what normal or casual context is there that might help ease these women, the ones uncomfortable with their bodies or their sexuality, what can bring them a little closer to being able to articulate their feelings, to speak up when they are abused or threatened or just have a health problem that requires that they explain the intimate details of their vaginas?

I saw this play several years ago, and I said to myself, “This is it! This is wonderful!” Here was a play created from many voices, many perspectives, bringing together joy and pain and a plethora of the things in between and creating a context for them, an objective context where discussion can be entertained without becoming personal.

The play addresses a need, in the words of the introduction: “We need a context, a culture of vaginas.”

The Vagina Monologues” was designed, among other things, to get people talking. From reading Dr. Philobos’s letter, I see that it has certainly served its purpose—it has inspired dialogue, it has inspired women to say loudly and clearly how they feel, and I hope that it will continue to do so.

Elise F. White
College of Architecture staff
elise.white@arch.gatech.edu

Second language necessary for well-rounded Tech education

I recently read that one of the most quickly expanding academic areas in the United States is international studies. American college students can’t seem to get enough of the rest of the world, as an ever increasing number are majoring in International Business, International Relations and the like. As an International Affairs major, I find this trend both exciting (we can’t all be studying the wrong thing) and a bit intimidating (but how will we all find jobs?).

While I’ve been very glad to see my engineering friends randomly appear in some of the INTA classes I’ve taken, I’ve been equally as sad to hear them tell stories about how hard it is to get into a foreign language class. No international education is complete without some level of proficiency in a foreign language.

“No international education is complete without some level of proficiency in a foreign language.”
Jennifer Hinkel
Technique Columnist

Bob McMath
Professor of History and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs
robert.mcmath@carnegie.gatech.edu

See Column, page 20