

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, March 14, 2003

TECHNIQUE

"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"
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Quote of the week:
"No one can earn a million dollars honestly."
—William Jennings Bryan

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

SGA elections

Once again, it is time for Student Government Association elections. While the Elections Committee has surely done an excellent job educating the candidates about the proper way to campaign, some conflict seems to arise in every election. All of the candidates, both for major offices and for representative positions, should do their best to keep the campaigns clean and fair.

This year's elections continue a pattern of low turnout in the races for undergraduate representatives; a trend that is disturbing because of the importance of self-governance among students. Without strong, competitive races with high voter turnout, students cannot feel connected to the decision-making processes of the Undergraduate House. This lack of connection to the House contributes to the low turnout in races for representative positions.

The problem of few applicants for House positions is clearly a complex problem without an easy solution. Beyond the lack of knowledge among most of the student body about what SGA does, general campus apathy, a tough academic environment and a myriad of other activities to pursue make recruitment of representatives difficult. Perhaps the representatives next year could make a concerted effort to reach out to their constituencies both to keep students more connected and to encourage higher candidate yields in next year's elections.

Auxiliary Services

This week's announcement that smoking will no longer be allowed in any on-campus housing is a clear demonstration of the Auxiliary Services' use of student opinion in deciding policies on issues that directly affect students. Lately, there have been several good examples of incorporating student opinion into policy, among them the renovation of the post office and recent changes to parking policy.

These legitimate and significant uses of student opinion can easily be contrasted with other decisions that the Tech administration has made recently, most notably the increase in housing fees. Even if price increases are necessary and unavoidable, students should play a proactive role in determining those price increases from the beginning, not just serving as a rubber stamp at the end of the process.

Student input in administrative and sometimes even academic decisions is essential to helping the Institute maintain its focus on its education mission. Without this input, Tech could easily lose sight of what is best for the students.

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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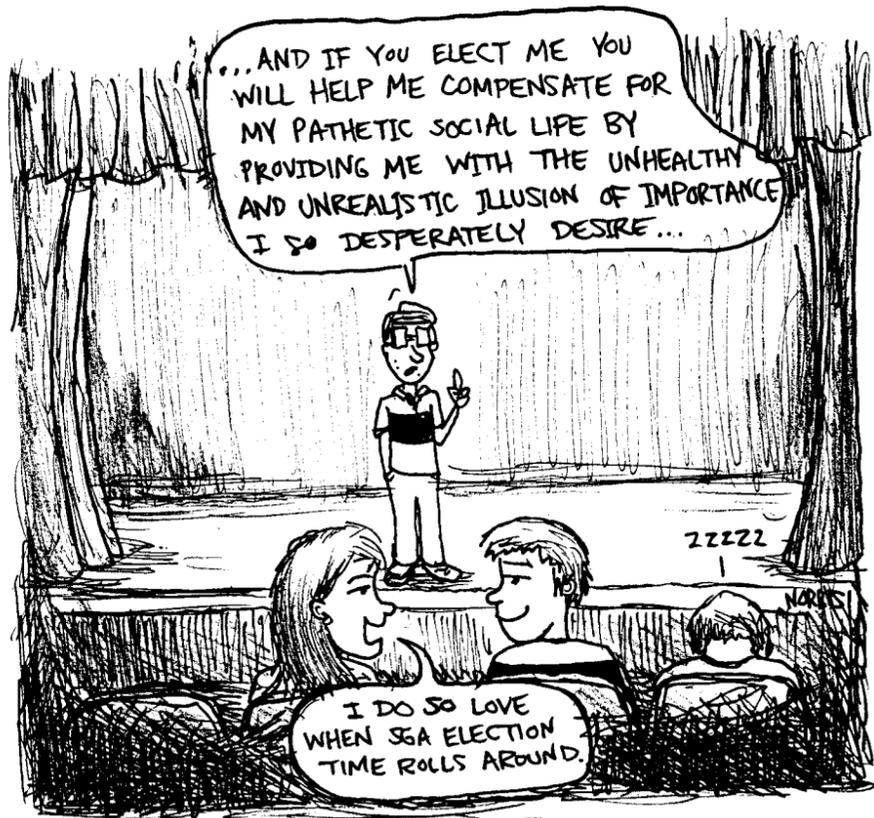
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By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Everyone should have opinion on war

For the most part, I think I am an upright, law-abiding citizen of the US. I have no felony charges against me and no outstanding warrants for my arrest. I pay the taxes that I currently have to fork over to Uncle Sam. I try not to get too many speeding tickets and (usually) pay what I should to the Georgia Tech parking department.

On the other hand, I have a serious distaste towards what seems to be petty authority. For example, last weekend I went with some friends to see the movie *Shanghai Knights* at Regal Cinemas in Chamblee.

I had grabbed a caramel macchiato drink at Starbucks on the way to the theater (call me a yuppie, I don't care, but the drink is really good) and had taken the beverage with me to the movies.

When I tried to enter the theater, I was informed by the ticket taker that food and beverages purchased off theater premises were not allowed in the movie theater. Stingy of me, I know, but I wasn't about to throw out a perfectly good cup of coffee (especially not the three-and-a-half dollar Starbucks kind).

I then asked the ticket man (very politely) if I could just buy a Coke or grab a cup from the snack vendor's counter in order to put the drink in a different container. Nope, he still stood firm, saying that it was the theater's policy not to let me. He got the manager and another usher to come repeat the policy to me and told me to throw the coffee away.

By this time, I was tired of the hassle, so I told them I would throw it away, and went back to the lobby area to do so. Instead of actually throwing the cup away, however, I shoved it down inside my purse, and slid it under my arm, which was partially hidden by the folds of my jacket.

I then proceeded to return to the doorman and was granted permis-



"What inflames me most is that the impending warfare seems to be without prevalent public support or public opposition."

Katie Neal
Sports Editor

sion to enter the theater area once the manager and usher saw I didn't have the cup in my hands. Once the movie was over, I left the empty Starbucks cup on the ticket taker's uninhabited stand as I was walking out. *Extremely* mature of me, I know.

I am not a rebellious person by nature; I think I will justify the incident by saying that it must have been the American in me coming out. As a citizen born and raised in the United States, I have been brought up to believe that we are a country of rebels and freedom fighters. The most important part of being an American includes expressing your opinions on current issues.

Like most everyone who calls the US their home, I am all for individual liberty and freedom, a legitimate and fair government, and the ability to react against petty control and dictatorship. As every US history class will tell you, this country was founded on citizens' abilities to stand up for what they believe in.

So this leads me to ask the question: What exactly do we currently believe? President Bush has recently announced his decision on the Iraq issues. Despite the tiresome diplomatic dance that has been transpiring of late, there seem to be only a few acceptable solutions to the problem, and only one that our country is actively pursuing, which is going to war.

The issue of war does gravely concern me, but what inflames me the most is that the impending war-

fare seems to be without prevalent public support or public opposition.

As a rather religious viewer of CNN, as well as other Atlanta and national stations, I have yet to see any coverage of the general public's political perspectives. This leads me to believe that either the news stations aren't covering the accounts (very doubtful, because it would obviously make fairly large headlines) or there just aren't any accounts to be covered, which seems to be the case.

What happened to our ability to protest or condone political stances and decisions? Are we just that apathetic towards the situation? Have we forgotten what happened in New York just over a year ago? Do we really need a reminder?

I understand that many people have mixed feelings about the war. But the most obvious groups that would have something to say, such as the College Republicans and the College Democrats here on campus at Tech, haven't posted or displayed much concerning the situation, at least not that I have seen.

We, as college students, are typically the citizens that are the first to jump up for what we believe. Do we not care or are we just that uninformed about the situation that no one wants to take a stance? Not that I am justifying a mass riot by any means, but I would be thrilled to see somebody in this country wave a big flag saying yes or no to the war.

Status quo best option on spring break

On Tuesday, SGA paved the way for a (non-binding) student vote on the timing of spring break. Students will have three options: move spring break back one week, two weeks, or leave it where it is.

I admit, at first glance, the idea of a later spring break is appealing. After all, if MTV has taught me anything, it's that spring break is about warm sun, tropical beaches, and scantily-clad women doing unnatural things with whipped cream.

But pushing spring break back one, or even two weeks will not turn this fantasy into a reality. The arguments for change just don't hold water. Below are three reasons to leave well enough alone.

It's cold in mid-March, too.

A major argument for change is that it's just too cold in early March to enjoy common spring break festivities. But will two weeks really make any difference? If your preferred vacation spot is too cold for skinny-dipping March 1, it's probably too cold for skinny-dipping March 15. Conversely, if your destination is warm March 15, it was probably warm back on March 1.

Don't believe me? For those that demand empirical evidence, here are some statistics, courtesy of www.weather.com. Take, for example, Panama City. At this popular spring break vacation locale, the average temperature for the first week in March is a



"Vote to leave spring break alone. It may not be perfect, but it's better than the alternatives."

Daniel Amick
Assistant News Editor

frigid 68.3 degrees. Just two short weeks later, average temps soar to a balmy...70.9 degrees. Net change: 2.6 degrees.

My investigation found the same story for Cancun, Myrtle Beach, Orlando, New Orleans, Savannah and Hilton Head. Temperatures hardly budge over the time period we're talking about. Tell me, honestly, does that extra 2.6 degrees make you any more willing to run headlong into the surf? I think not.

UGA doesn't matter.

Other students want to schedule our spring break so that it coincides with the breaks of other schools. The argument here is that they want to enjoy break with their non-Tech friends.

This sounds reasonable. It is true that some schools, like Emory, break one week later than Tech. Others, like the oft-cited UGA, break two weeks later. A change would undoubtedly allow some people to spend spring break with high school buddies

or that seldom-seen girlfriend. The stars would align, the heavens would open, and all would be right with the world.

But consider this. Contrary to popular belief, Georgia Tech's early spring break is not unique. It's not as if, during this one week, we are the only group of college students out there, condemned to roam a barren wasteland, doomed never to encounter any but our own miserable breed.

At least ten other Georgia schools break at the same time as Tech, including Georgia State University. What of students with friends at these schools? A shift of two weeks might satisfy students with friends at UGA, but not those with friends at Emory.

My point is that it's a zero-sum game. A change might please some people, but it would probably make an equal number of people unhappy.

Give me a break!

The only vacation time we get during Spring Semester is

Martin Luther King Day (in January) and spring break. Between these two holidays lies a vast stretch of about five uninterrupted weeks of school. By the time spring break finally arrives, like the white light at the end of a long, torturous tunnel, I'm exhausted. All I want to do is sleep, relax and sleep some more.

If we push spring break back, students would be faced with the disheartening prospect of six or seven solid weeks of school. Before you vote for a change, take a hard look in the mirror and ask yourself, "Can I really last that long? Do I have what it takes to pull through, or will I end up like Ozzy Osborne, shuffling around campus, muttering incoherently about fajitas?"

Consider also that, right now, spring break falls at the midpoint of the semester. Professors unleash their wrath with midterms, and then we're free. If we push spring break back, there's a good chance we will face midterms plus yet another round of testing before we depart.

Don't be tempted by the allure of a later spring break. It won't improve the weather. Don't split the difference and vote for a one-week change. That wouldn't accomplish anything, either.

Vote to leave spring break alone. It may not be perfect, but it's better than the alternatives.

BUZZ

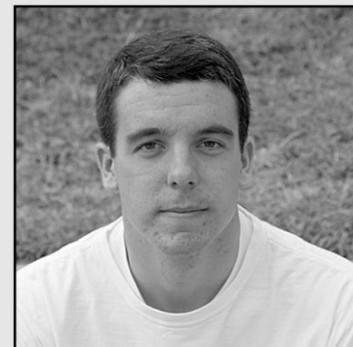
Around the Campus

What's the most exciting thing you did on Spring Break?



Susan Kennedy
Architecture

"I got a job interview."



Kyle Butler
Civil Engineering

"Went back to my high school after three years."



Jessie Kollmeyer
Biology

"Saw the eagles' nest at Kennedy Space Center."



Kevin Gorham
Computer Science

"Getting drunk at a bar."

Photos by Scott Meuleners

OUR VIEWS Hot or Not

HOT-or-NOT



Take a 'Ferst' drive

Roll down the top of your cars, boys and girls, and yell out 'money ain't a thang.' It's time to start cruising around again, as happy drivers can now make a complete circle around the campus without being forced to travel on congested North Avenue or Tenth Street. That's right, folks, Ferst Drive is open from Atlantic Drive to Fowler Street. Try it again, for the "Ferst" time.



Dawg days of March

It's cold in Athens. Very cold. All of the sudden, the chances of the Yellow Jacket basketball team playing in the NCAA tournament are significantly higher—as in actually possible—than those of the University of Georgia Bulldogs. With President Michael Adams cancelling the season on coach Jim Harrick and his players, the Pups will be spend this March at home.



Eat like Popeye

It's back, just like the \$1 filet of fish at McDonalds! Denizens of the night, rejoice for Spinach Alfredo Pizza is again for sale at your State Street Papa Johns for your studying convenience. We at the *Technique* have waited many a Wednesday night longing for you to come back. Maybe the dining halls will take this as their cue to begin offering some of our old favorites like meatloaf and reheated leftovers.



Fishin' for trees

Ah, Spring. Birds, bees and trees... that smell like fish. When one considers all the other horticultural options available to Georgia Tech, the Bradford Pear trees that perfume the whole of campus every spring become an even most mystifying decision. Maybe we should get new trees instead of replanting those pansies. At least avoid the temptation to the tree's pretty blossoms and place them in your home.

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

'Monologues' fail to achieve education goal

Education is at the core of our mission here at Georgia Tech. Copying other universities, which might have their own reasons to produce "The Vagina Monologues," is not. Among all options which address violence against women and rape, I fail to see how this play topped the list of best educational vehicles on the subject.

Top universities earn their status by contributing to the development of new knowledge and discovery. They may perhaps be characterized as having a diverse, even controversial, set of cultural opportunities. However, having this play or any controversial opportunity with questionable cultural and educational value would not by any means earn a university top status. I don't believe UGA's stature, to cite one example, got any higher among

universities as a result of doing this play no matter how many times they deemed it necessary to repeat the show.

The failure of this production to meet its claimed goal of fighting violence against women and rape is blatant. For starters, the play does not attract the targeted audience. Georgia Tech's audience confirmed the national statistic of predominantly women spectators. If effective at all, we would have to believe now that the great many women rapists, the root of the problem, have been rehabilitated.

Secondly, the monologues devoted to the issue of rape and violence within the play are minuscule, at best. I am still waiting to see one piece of statistical data showing a drop in the num-

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Letter Submission Policy

The *Technique* welcomes all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, emailed to editor@technique.gatech.edu or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Jody Shaw, Editor-in-Chief.

All letters must be signed and must include a campus box number or other valid mailing address for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 400 words and should be submitted by 8 a.m. Wednesday 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. Editors reserves the right to edit for style, content, and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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Coverage Requests

Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the editor-in-chief or to individual section editors. For more information, visit <http://nique.net/stuorguide.pdf>.

Vagina

from page 7

ber of rape and violence cases on those hundreds of campuses that joined the bandwagon in producing "The Vagina Monologues." Why should any reasonable person expect it? The play's main focus is not rape and violence against women. Or is it?

The *Technique's* overrated, cast-focused, one-page account eloquently proves this point. Did I miss the section of the article featuring testimony indicating how the play changed any member of the audience's mind regarding rape and violence against women?

The budget for the performance was about \$5000, funded by the GT Student Foundation (\$2500), Drama Tech (\$1500) and SGA (\$1000). Is this the best use of our resources? I am quite surprised to learn that students' fees were used to support a fundraiser benefiting two organizations outside the Tech community, the Grady Rape Crisis Center and Men Stopping Violence.

So please drop the claim that the play is fighting rape and violence against women, and let's turn to the elusive and critically needed celebration of sexuality. If it takes the overwhelming majority of women on this campus such a play and its expressive portrayal of their vagina, from title to pubic hair to the chilling account of a child discovering sex with an older woman and enjoying it, to feel "empowered," then we have a serious case of deprivation.

The truth of the matter is that "The Vagina Monologues" did not

fill this need in an overwhelming majority of women, nor is the subject matter a critical need on campus. If the production of this play has done anything, it added to the litany of failures experienced by other college campuses that produced it.

I and many other women simply don't care for disturbing in-your-face testimonies of female sexuality. Forty-six women auditioning for the play out of 2000 female students on

"Claiming that such a production fosters inclusiveness and support for women on campus is laughable at best."

Dr. Mimi Philobos
Director, Women in Engineering Program

campus is hardly an "overwhelming majority," and the 1100 attendees, some of whom were enticed through subsidized tickets, echo the attraction and curiosity, not the endorsement or subscription, of X-rated shows.

We failed miserably in continuing our tradition to lead, to "make the mold" rather than "fit it." This mold doesn't fit me, and I am proud it doesn't fit a great many others on this campus. Answering questions like the Student Center's display of "what would your vagina wear" with a list of suggested options such as

"black see-through underwear" is simply in bad taste in a subject dragged down to a new low by this play.

Subjecting visitors and patrons of all ages to such a display begs for a "viewer discretion" warning and would understandably constitute indecent exposure and sexual harassment. Claiming that such a production fosters inclusiveness and support for women on campus is laughable at best. This production did certainly provide some good laughs, but at whose expense?

Rather than follow in others' tracks, we could have initiated a production based on Alice Seebold's *Lucky* in coordination with its author, who provides a vivid account of overcoming her own rape as a college freshman. While the title is shock-value free, the content is genuine, moving and ultimately healing. Leading with such a welcome alternative would echo our strides to make unique contributions and would have many followers.

To the many students who shared their disagreement of this production and were ridiculed, marginalized or intimidated for expressing their opinions, I wish to say unequivocally: you are part of an awesome crowd, you belong to Georgia Tech, you are not isolated and you don't need such monologues to be empowered. You are empowered, and your stand proves it!

Dr. Mimi Philobos
Professor of Civil Engineering
Director, Women in Engineering Program
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Lawsuit editorial reveals ignorance of legal process

It is obvious to me that Tony Kluemper, author of the editorial "Movie lawsuit frivolous, ridiculous" in last week's issue of the *Technique*, has no real concept of law, commerce or art. As such, perhaps we should have been spared the embarrassment of his foolishly written article.

The argument put forth in the lawsuit is that if a patron is personally subsidizing the showing of a film by buying a tick-

et, that patron has the right to expect the film to begin at the printed and scheduled time. To say a film begins at 2:00 when it doesn't begin until 2:20 is called a false business practice.

To then use the audience as a source of commercial revenue for those 20 minutes is manipulative and unethical. The theater is then taking, from a packed theater, 6000 minutes of time. This is the argument put forth by the lawsuit.

It is valid and reasonable, un-

like Mr. Kluemper's absurd comparison to a late teacher. Imagine if that teacher was not late but instead spent the first ten minutes of class time trying to sell his students Amway products before class started. That

would be unethical. That would be a theft of time in the same manner of a movie theater showing commercials.

Finally, in response to the movie-ticket prices argu-

ment, ticket prices have gone up 30% in the last several years, generating more than enough revenue to keep the theaters afloat. Commercial revenue is simply icing on the cake to these complexes. Next time he writes, Mr. Kluemper should probably either do some research, some serious thinking, or at least write something about which he's qualified to write.

Matthias Shapiro
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"Imagine if a teacher spent the first ten minutes of class time trying to sell his students Amway products."

Matthias Shapiro
Tech Student