

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, April 12, 2002

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

What makes a domestic partner?

This week the Graduate Student Senate passed a resolution that promoted providing benefits, such as use of SAC and the Student Health Center, to the domestic partners of Tech students. However, this same resolution was failed by the Undergraduate House of Representatives two weeks ago.

The resolution did not include a clear-cut definition of what determines a domestic partner, which was part of the reason why many reps did not vote to pass it.

While it might have helped its passage if the resolution had included a definition of a domestic partner, such as two people that are financially interdependent. It could have also caused greater conflict and confusion in the minds of the reps and the student body at large, depending on what that definition might be.

This resolution and further discussion on this issue could be a positive addition to the SGA agenda. There are many graduate students who are not legally married but do have domestic partners. Since it is often hard for graduate students to get health insurance, allowing domestic partners to have access to such places as the health center could be very beneficial and helpful to them as they work to earn their advanced degrees.

If such a policy is ever implemented, it will be imperative for the Institute in coordination with SGA and other interested parties to come up with a definite way of confirming that claimed domestic partners are true domestic partners. This would ensure that benefits such as this are not abused.

Currently, the Board of Regents does not support implementing a policy for students or for faculty members.

Even if such a policy is never implemented for students, the Board of Regents should allow benefits such as these to be extended to domestic partners of faculty members so that their professions do not hinder them from securing health and other benefits for domestic partners.

Keep the noise down

Some high-profile construction projects taking place around campus are behind schedule. As a result of this, workers at Caldwell dorm, the football stadium, SAC II and the EAS building are planning on working straight through finals week.

Typically, all construction taking place on campus is halted during finals week so that students are not disturbed during their hectic study schedules.

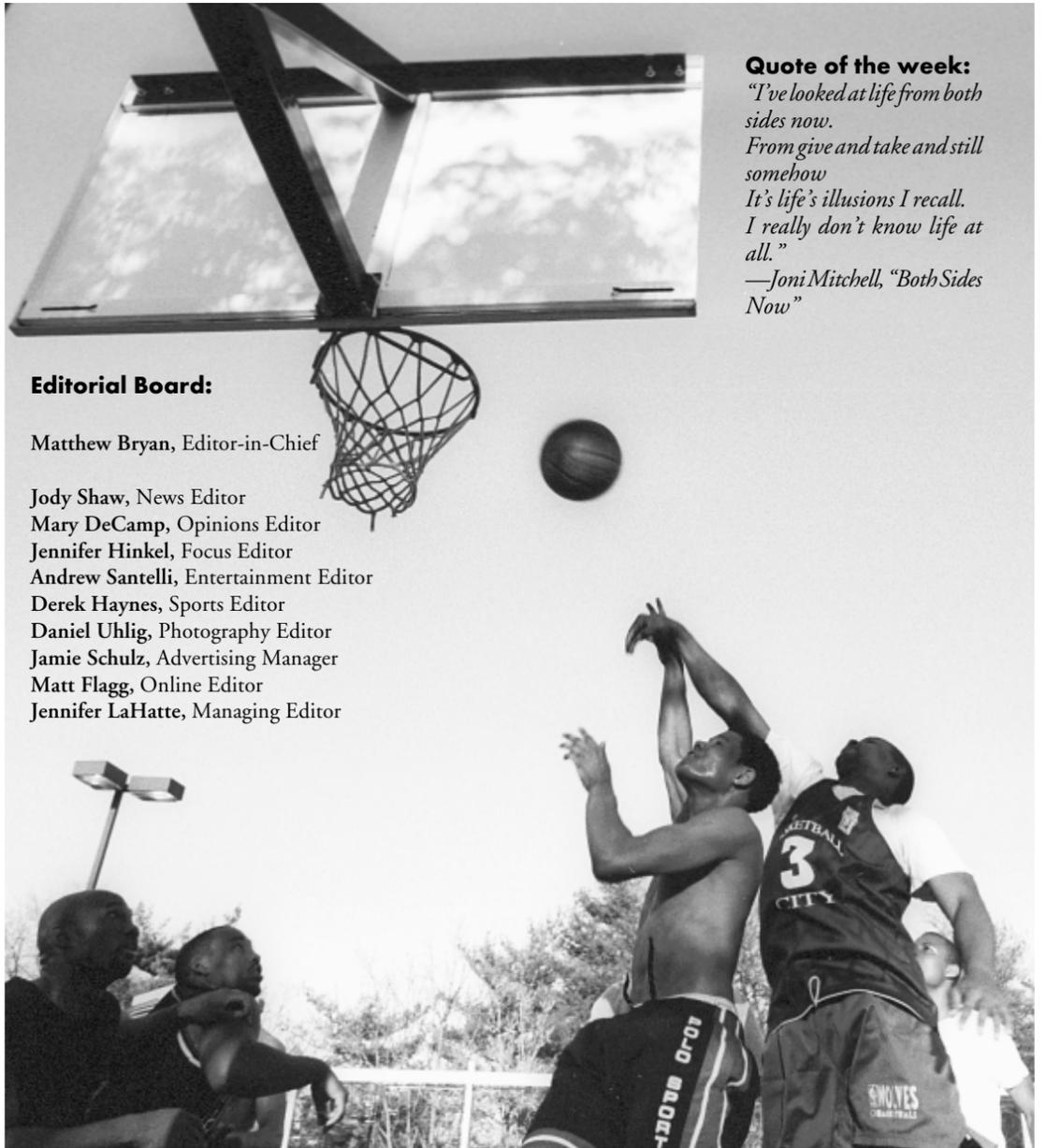
It is understandable that the construction workers would want to work as much as possible in order to get back on schedule. However, finals week is a stressful time for most students, and the extra noise will most likely serve only to distress them even more.

If the construction work cannot be completely halted for the duration of finals week, perhaps a compromise could be made.

One such solution could be for the work to only take place during hours when students will most likely be awake and alert.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that if this compromise is implemented that the earliest that construction could start would be about 10:00 in the morning. This will fit best with student sleep schedules.

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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Quote of the week:

*"I've looked at life from both sides now.
From give and take and still somehow
It's life's illusions I recall.
I really don't know life at all."
—Joni Mitchell, "Both Sides Now"*

Philip Morris a reputable company to work for

Mr. Buhi's and Ms. Tovrog's article three weeks ago about Philip Morris was, in our opinion, a collection of stupidity.

First of all, Philip Morris is a multinational corporation that produces hundreds of products from cheese to Jell-O, and yes, also cigarettes.

Philip Morris attains only a small amount of revenue from its cigarette sales, and of the hundreds of thousands of employees in this country and all over the rest of the world, only a small percentage produce cigarettes.

Secondly, Mr. Buhi and Ms. Tovrog cited many interesting facts

about cigarettes, including that they kill.

What they left out is that with all these facts and studies, the U.S. Government has done very little to prevent the sale of cigarettes. That means that it is perfectly legal to produce and sell cigarettes in this country.

Therefore, what Mr. Buhi and Ms. Tovrog are complaining about is that Philip Morris is in a completely legal field and is selling a product that is approved by the U.S. Government.

Philip Morris is a company that has been a part of this country for over 150 years; they have always

provided many jobs and products to this and other countries. To say that we don't want them on our campus offering jobs is ludicrous and naïve.

We invite companies that engineer and produce machines of mass destruction for the military, but you don't want a company that produces hundreds of products, one of which is cigarettes.

Mr. Buhi and Ms. Tovrog may not have realized this, but recently the job market in this country has been at an all-time low. Personally, we are happy to see any company

See *Morris*, page 10



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Editorials an influential and important responsibility

I have a test in two hours so I will make this quick. This is the final editorial in my three years worth of mediocre opinions as Online Editor.

A general lack of strong opinions is hardly conducive to cranking out quality editorials. So, in the spirit of the traditional swan song editorial, I will discuss what I have learned about writing editorials in my four grueling years here at Tech.

More specifically, I will reveal my strategies for writing an editorial when you honestly feel void of an opinion worth expressing in an award-winning college newspaper that is distributed to over 10,000 students.

Being slightly informed of current events and other news that interest you help tremendously. You can form an opinion on almost any topic. No matter how busy you may be minding the Tech shaft workload, it's impossible to avoid the distraction of *cnn.com* or those newspaper boxes sitting outside of the Student Center. I think it's fair to claim that most Tech students are moderately aware of current events.

The key is to know enough to express an opinion worth 800 words. By taking the time to read articles that cover multiple views on a specific topic of interest, it becomes easy to pick out the points that truly seem to stand out.

Weighing arguments against their counters is an important step in order to inject your own opinion on-the-fly. By covering every pos-

"[Your editorial is] your chance to persuade others and rally support for your cause. Damn, I'm proud to be an American."

Matt Flagg
Online Editor



sible angle of attack on your editorial topic and sneaking in your vote on the "right" point of view, you not only manage to cover the full breadth of the issue at hand for the sake of completeness and education, but you also fill a decent amount of space.

Does this strategy sound shallow and apathetic about the issue at the core? Sure, but it doesn't really break any rules and it usually ends up being a decent journalistic approach to editorial writing.

For someone like me, who rarely has a strong lean on the chosen topic, this shotgun strategy is the easy and safe way out. It's for the public opinion wallflower who strives to receive as little feedback as possible while managing to produce an acceptable and even intelligible and well-researched editorial.

But that strategy is only a viable option during those weeks that don't feel like the worst one in your academic career. Yesterday, I had an insight about the inverse relationship of the quality of my editorials to the length of time I have served as Online Editor.

It seems to me that my most

honest editorials were published in the beginning of my term and, as the years went by, my drive to write meaningful editorials decreased while my workload and enthusiasm about the work increased.

As you enter your third and final years at Tech, your increased flexibility in choosing classes will naturally lead you take classes that you really care about and are not just forced to endure to meet requirements. Not only will you care more about your classes, but the workload will mutate to become more open-ended and research-based instead of the cut-and-dry recipe types of assignments.

Come editorial time in your final semester when you're taking classes like digital video and special effects, your priorities and passions may sway you to neglect the research part of writing an editorial described beforehand.

You will run with nonsensical topics such as the motivational factors of Tech students, virtues of exploring the campus late at night or, in this case, strategies for writing editorials when you don't have the spark of a strong opinion to drive

you. To hell with structuring your arguments and covering multiple sides; just run with your nonsense!

In the rare case that you genuinely care about your chosen topic, the process of writing an editorial is a joy to experience. Not only is it a personal challenge to collect your thoughts and express them intelligently to satiate your need to unleash that ball of opinionated fire, it will generally turn out to be a good editorial.

You'll know that you've written an editorial that truly matters to you when you check your email on the date of its publishing with the hopes of receiving raging disapprovals or praising agreements.

I can't honestly say that I've had this feeling, but I'm trying to write this editorial using a hybrid of strategies one and two; I'm writing on a completely unresearched and nonsensical topic while attempting to present other sides despite a lack of pertinence to my true argument.

I should be arguing for the apathetic Technique editor, but I've managed to sneak in some care in this paragraph. Oh, and I also managed to fill some good space—see how this strategy works?

Don't ever forget that writing editorials is a wonderful privilege. Having the opportunity to voice an opinion to thousands of educated readers in a top-notch university is a freedom that shouldn't be taken for granted; it's your chance to persuade others and rally support for your cause. Damn, I'm proud to be an American.

Israel not completely innocent in battle with Palestine

A former national security adviser for President Jimmy Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, said "The Israelis are becoming increasingly like the white supremacist South Africans, viewing the Palestinians as a lower form of life, not hesitating to kill a great many of them and justifying this on the grounds that they are being the objects of terrorism, which is true. But their reactions are all out of proportion..." (from PBS NewsHour with Jim Lehrer.)

I agree, and I wonder why more of America does not feel the way I do. Israeli's Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, most recent aggression just furthers my belief that he has no respect for human rights. The aggression continues with US funding, so I feel I bear some responsibility and must speak out.

As a tax paying, voting American citizen I am disgusted that the US government continues to prop up this repressive theocracy. America has a responsibility to the affected people to end aggression and to try to establish a meaningful peace. The US stands as the only super power, and, without pressure from Bush and company, Sharon will continue his goal of exterminating an entire nation.

Bush has tried to pressure Ariel Sharon into withdrawing and even tried to drive home the point with "I meant what I said." However, does he?

Sharon is slowly responding by pulling soldiers out of two towns, but he is keeping the towns completely locked down. Colin Powell is killing time by traveling to other middle eastern countries before he goes to Israel to diffuse the situation.

Sharon is trying to make good

"Without pressure from Bush and company, Sharon will continue his goal of exterminating an entire nation."

Daniel Uhlig
Photography Editor



on his campaign pledge of security for the Israeli people through repressing the Palestinian people. He has cracked down by segregating and humiliating the Palestinians. They are treated as second class sub-humans in their own homeland. The only way to make the similarities to South African apartheid more obvious is to increase the contrast of skin color.

As the repression increases, the desperation of the Palestinians increases as well. The best first step to take to recruit a suicide bomber starts in early childhood. If one witnesses the brutal assault and murder of their friends and family by a hostile army, radical groups are much more appealing. These individuals will most likely be willing to join in fighting against the people attacking their homes.

Yes, the suicide bombings are morally wrong. However, each of these individuals is a fighter, trying to fight back for freedom against repression the only way they know how. The bombers have as little moral ground as the Israeli soldiers shooting at ambulances.

The bombers' wrongdoings are well publicized. The crimes propagated by the Israeli army is not as widely seen.

After invading the Palestinian towns, Sharon's tanks and armored

personnel carriers set up a 24-hour curfews, shot at reporters trying to cover the killings, and shot at ambulances.

Unable to leave their homes, the Palestinians hide and try to survive on the food and water that is in their homes. The wounded bled to death in living rooms unable to get medical attention, and then the bodies start to decay. At least after a suicide bombing the victims are given medical attention and proper burials.

Attempts by the US to restrain the attacks by both sides have not worked. During the 'peaceful' phases the Israeli settlements continued to be built on Palestinian land. The Palestinians can chose to give up and be forced into refugee camps and further demoralized as the cycle of violence continues. The other choice is to fight back and show the world the situation.

I believe that before true steps can be made the Palestinians need to be treated with respect. The Palestinians must be given more rights and the ability to exist with equality. To be able to negotiate, the Palestinians and Israelis must see each other as equals.

America struggles to help both sides, and it still supplies significant aid to the Israelis as well as high tech weaponry. Moving even more fire-

power into the region kills people and further destabilizes the situation.

Until Americans are willing to stand up and stop looking the other way, Sharon will continue to disseminate the Palestinian people and thus keep this cycle of death going on.

Every minute America allows Sharon's policy to continue two things happen. Palestinians are further oppressed into the role of second class citizens without any rights. They join the ranks peoples such as blacks in South Africa, slaves and, ironically, the Jews in Nazi Germany.

Secondly, America's Arabic allies are pulling further away. Egypt has recently pulled back most of its diplomatic ties with Israel. After September 11, the importance of keeping friendly ties with Arabic countries is obvious. Even in Europe the opinion has started to shift, and the United States risks alienating itself from many of its allies.

Without outside help and involvement, the situation will end as a childhood poem:

There were two cats of Kilkenny
Each thought there was one to many
They fought and they fit,
And they scratch and they bit
Till excepting their nails and the tips of their tails instead of two cats
There weren't any.

Until two equals come to the negotiation table the struggle will continue until there is only one side left to the conflict, and I fear that that side will be the superiorly armed Israelis.

Ethnic cleansing is no longer an acceptable practice, and it needs to be constrained in all of its forms.

TECHNIQUE

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Morris

from page 8

that will come to recruit for jobs, especially one that is as stable as Philip Morris.

If Mr. Buhi and Ms. Tovrog have a problem with smokers, I suggest that he look at the real solutions like governmental restrictions (similar to those on marijuana), and stop blaming companies like Philip Morris.

Perhaps Mr. Buhi and Ms.

"Philip Morris is able to make money on cigarette sales because people are stupid enough to smoke them,"

Tovrog have forgotten about the whole concept of supply and demand. Philip Morris is able to make money on cigarette sales because people are stupid enough to smoke them. That is why we live in a democratic country.

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If you would like to submit a letter with your thoughts and views to the editor, please feel free to email opinions@technique.gatech.edu or editor@technique.gatech.edu.

Techs and the City: The campus vs. the city on partner rights?

By Jennifer Hinkel
Focus Editor

The Undergraduate House of Representatives voted two weeks ago to not pass a resolution that would encourage campus facilities such as SAC and the Student Health Center to extend benefits of use to "domestic partners" of students. Although the reasons of individual representatives for voting against the bill may be valid, the fact remains that the issue of domestic partner benefits creates a very sticky situation for the SGA voters.

Should a student governing body actively sign on to and support something opposed by the Board of Regents? More importantly, how can students be sure that in such controversial issues, Tech is moving forward rather than holding itself back?

Decisions such as the one the UHR made should remain focused on improving campus rather than adding Tech to a list of schools that allows or disallows something. Although Atlanta has a growing gay community, that does not mean that Tech's campus has grown to a point where the majority of students would be willing to support benefits for openly gay domestic partners.

In cases such as these, the campus and the city are not the same. Tech's location places it only blocks from the middle of Atlanta's gay community, and yet campus re-

"How can students be sure that in such controversial issues, Tech is moving forward rather than holding itself back?"

Jennifer Hinkel
Focus Editor



mains conservative and, in many cases, intolerant.

While I can see the possible advantages of extending benefits to domestic partners—especially when providing health insurance for graduate students has become a national issue—I think that many students, including myself, would fear supporting something that the Board of Regents opposes.

Despite Tech's innovative and cutting-edge appearance, campus opinion often remains staunchly conservative on touchy issues. Many, if not most of the UHR representatives felt they voted in the way their constituents would have in opposing the bill. Moreover, would supporting something that opposes the powers that be adversely affect Tech's funding, state support, or image among Georgia universities?

If such a resolution were to pass, influence great change across campus and become Institute policy, benefits may result. Georgia Tech could lure grad students, and even faculty, away from its competitors with fancier benefits

packages. Regardless of the moral implications some see in domestic partnerships of gay couples or unmarried straight couples, the fact is that these kinds of living arrangements are becoming more and more common. Combined with some domestic partner benefits, Tech could make the most of Atlanta's gay-friendly image in luring students and faculty to become Yellow Jackets rather than go work for MIT or Virginia Tech.

However, SAC and the Health Center are already far overbooked and overextended. Could these facilities handle the extra demands of granting access to non-students? And how would SGA, or the Institute, decide who qualifies for these benefits and who doesn't?

Could my roommate and I open a joint bank account so that I could get health care after aging out of my parents' policy? Would girlfriends and boyfriends be able to sign affidavits and get benefits as on some other campuses? Or would another criterion become the standard for deciding who qualifies and who does not?

In issues of gay-rights (or even unmarried couple rights, if such a thing exists), campus is not at the same level of acceptance as the city around us. Should it be pressured to change? I feel sympathy for students who see a more tolerant world on Tech's doorstep and want the same thing for campus, but I also understand that other students feel threatened by the possibility that Tech could become a more liberal place.

If the city of Atlanta began to widely recognize rights for domestic partners, Tech would not be out of line to consider enacting a policy that would breach the Board of Regents stance. After all, do the other schools in the University System of Georgia have one of the nation's largest gay communities at their doorstep? Judging from their locations, I would say not.

If domestic partner benefits become the norm for Atlanta, Tech may be forced to reconsider its policy; however, such benefits are only glimpses on the horizon in the city at large.

In some social issues, Tech has historically placed itself on the forefront, such as when the school became racially integrated. However, women were admitted to Tech only fifty years ago, which would place this school on the slow end of the learning curve. If we should have admitted women here earlier, will we say in the future that we should have instituted partner benefits when we did not?

Buzz Around the Campus



Question of the week

“Do you think that binge drinking at Tech has decreased over the past year?”

Feature and photos by
Steve Marek



Jinwoo Kang
ECE Grad

“I don’t think so.”



Kevin Lebel
MGT Senior

“By observing my roommate I guess not.”



Antwaun Hawkins
CompE Sophomore

“I doubt it. It’s probably increased with the economy and all.”



Liz Hollander
INTA Junior

“Let’s see...in some settings, yes—under-age.”



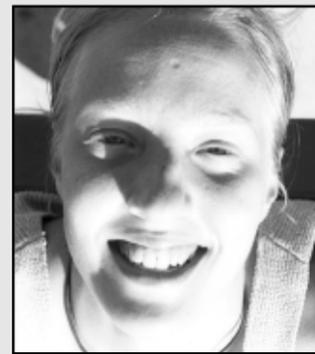
Ted Miles
EE Senior

“Yes I think it has. I have seen it less.”



Jason Moore
MGT Senior

“No, because all that we do is drink. We drank last night.”



Robin Van Auken
Phys Sophomore

“I have no idea. But I would doubt it.”



Christine Noelke
NRE Sophomore

“I don’t know. It’s hard to tell.”