

**Basketball season gears up**

Coach Paul Hewitt welcomes four top 100 recruits and a seven-footer from Down Under to the team this season. Check out their high school stats in Sports. Page 27

**Treat yourself to the Fox**

Seriously in need of some culture? Tired of the movies and the Masquerade? The Atlanta Opera's 2001-2002 season opens with Giuseppe Verdi's classic *Falstaff* at the Fox Theatre. Page 19



## Sarcastically witty, 'The Onion' visits Tech

Joe Garden, the "Naked Guy" from The Onion speaks candidly to students about the art of satire

By Gray Gunter  
Assistant Focus Editor

 *The Onion*, the finest source of printed and electronic satire (and blatant lies) ever to come out of Madison, Wisconsin, visited Georgia Tech Tuesday night. Sponsored by Student Center Ideas and Issues Committee, the event featured full-time staff writer and part-time nude model Joe Garden.

It was his first public speech, and his performance was quite entertaining. A couple hundred students attended, and Garden was a quick witted and in-your-face speaker, holding back little from the fascinated crowd and sometime shocked crowd.

He discussed the history of the newspaper, its rebirth through the internet and why he is the designated "naked guy" in so many photos. Garden also discussed his life as a punk fan and comedy writer, the lessons he learned along the way and the paper's handling of the WTC attack.

The 31-year-old Garden began life with one simple goal: to move to Madison.

"The first lesson I would like to impart on you is, if you set yourself up for an easily attainable goal, you will be fucked because nothing in the rest of your life will come that easily," Garden said.

The same year he arrived in Madison two college students from the University of Wisconsin began publishing a free, fake newspaper entitled *The Onion*. Garden joined early on as a part-time contributing writer, earning a mere \$10 a story.

Up until the mid-1990s, the paper remained a print-only newspaper available in just three cities. After a few years of success, a majority of the staff relocated and moved their base operations from Madison to New York City.

Soon after, Garden was given the opportunity to come to New York for the paper as a full-time comedy writer. He reflected on

this move in his discussion.

"Life lesson number two: sometimes you fall ass-backward into a good situation and you have to be a total fucking idiot to screw it up," said Garden.

Unlike most print media *The Onion* didn't set out to forge a presence on the web. Garden described the paper's apprehension: "The internet has lots of uses like launching missile codes and sending pornography."

But the paper was unsure of the influence the internet would have on entertainment media until a story about a U.S. plan to send vowels into Yugoslavia to make the names more pronounceable began to circulate via email.

In the now familiar viral pattern of Internet distribution, the story spread rampantly until it was actually read aloud on National Public Radio's *Car Talk*. However, the email failed to give *The Onion* credit for the story.

This led directly to the creation of [theonion.com](http://theonion.com); this was accompanied by a tremendous surge in readership, advertising, content and quality in the newspaper. Though it continues as a print newspaper in select cities, *The Onion* is consistently cited as an Internet-original, proof that mainstream media can be outdone by the web.

Garden promised that the upcoming issue would focus on the September 11th attacks in the best way possible. He noted that the staff was affected both as New Yorkers and as Americans, but as satirists it was their duty to mock the silliness surrounding the event while trying not to be disrespectful of those involved.

Articles include interviews with the hijackers who are stunned to find themselves burning in hell, pleas from the President for stars not to make another charity record and infographics illustrating the dramatic increase in hugging.

Perhaps *Wired* magazine put it best when it said, "The Onion may be vulgar, insensitive, sexist, racist, ageist, antipapist or even, on occasion, offensive, but unlike its Web rivals, it's bankably funny."



By June Zhang / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students engage in a rousing game of late-night UNO. Many of the relationships developed in while in Freshmen Experience would remain with students throughout their college career.

## FE dorms utilize technology to foster a living community

By Holly Chapman and Sara Kauffman  
Contributing Writers

Remember your freshmen year at Tech? The overwhelming fear combined with the unsurpassable excitement of finally escaping your parents? Do you remember the first friend you ever made at Tech?

The Georgia Tech Housing Department has prided itself on making the college transition easier through its unique freshmen programming. By working closely with Residence Hall Association (RHA), GT Housing has developed a dynamic schedule of events to integrate incoming students into the Tech community. Through both socialization and technology savvy events, Housing has created one of the most successful student programs on campus: Freshmen Experience.

Freshmen Experience (FE) aims to develop a healthy community for its students by providing numerous services, including mandatory meal plans, section activities, and Res-Net support.

The program encompasses both East and

West campus dorms, composing 85 percent of Tech's freshmen housing. An academic and social community is built in the Freshmen Experience program through various avenues.

Peer Leaders request funding and are required to arrange at least one activity for their residents per month. Mandatory meal plans also provide an opportunity for freshmen to interact and bond over common experiences. Another key element that develops dormitory community and enhances the FE experience is the utilization of the electronic network.

"Several things promote community in the dorm. One thing is becoming adjusted to the rigors of college academic life. Another thing would be the activities that the Peer Leaders do with their section. These activities encourage bonds to form between residents and helps [them] learn more about the environment that they live in," Tim Alman, a fifth year CS major and Peer Advisor, said. "While living in the same hall, many resi-

See LAN, page 17

## The dynamic nature of geology

Dr. Lizarralde of EAS studies marine geology, concentrating specifically on the formations in the sand of the ocean floor and how they move and evolve.

The Earth is old, like more than four billion years old. A lot's happened over that time: oceans have formed and dried up; continents have shifted around; and mountains and volcanoes have arisen. These phenomena are the sort of thing studied by geologists.

I'm sure you already knew that. But do you know how they figured out all these things? The Earth is too big to study in a lab, and it's not like we can reproduce the original situations. One of the spiffiest tools used by modern geologists is a lot like sonar. (It's actually a lot more like sticks of dynamite, but whatever.)

See, different kinds of rocks like granite, basalt and limestone carry acoustic (sound) waves at different speeds. So when there is a transition between these different rock types, the waves are reflected. (This situation is analogous to index of refraction changes in optical systems.) You probably spent like a day way back in sophomore physics talking about

this. Well, it's really useful and can be quite precise for our geological applications. After a whole lot of numerical analysis, we can determine the depth of different strata and consequently determine the sites of geological activity.

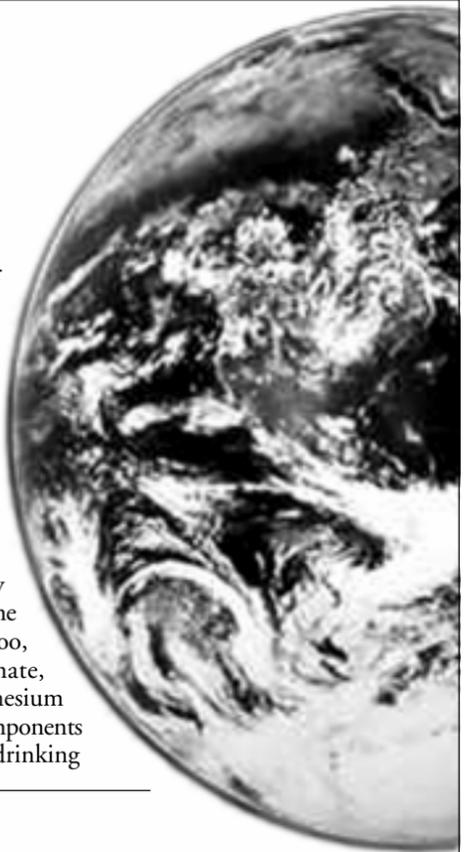
So now we have a way to figure out the composition the Earth's crust. That leads to cool discoveries like why California is drifting off into the Pacific, or how Pangea separated. There are lots of interesting problems. Many of them are even pertinent to present-day global ecology.

Dr. Lizarralde of the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences studies some particularly interesting issues in the area of marine geology. After all, most of the Earth's crust is under water—that's where all the action is.

If you've ever been to the beach anywhere between the Chesapeake and Miami, you've probably noticed that the tap water doesn't normally taste that good. And sometime, you must've asked your-

self, "Why does beach water taste like it's been used for cooking pasta?" Dr. Lizarralde studies why; it's a geological issue actually. It turns out that the ocean floor in this part of the Atlantic is extremely sandy. Consequently, rivers of freshwater seep out from the land, guided by the contours of the sand; the saline ocean water also seeps back inland. So any freshwater in the ground has some ocean water components in it too, like calcite (calcium carbonate,  $\text{CaCO}_3$ ) and magnesite (magnesium carbonate,  $\text{MgCO}_3$ ). These components and dissolved sand make the drinking

See Research, page 16



# Is student cell phone usage completely out of control?

By Gray Gunter  
Assistant Focus Editor

Once, long ago in the distant and forgotten past of the early 1990s, when public smokers and dot matrix printers still roamed the earth, mobile phones were a bulky and expensive status symbols of wealthy and important people.

In those days, the thought of someone owning and using a mobile phone conjured up images of executives and stock traders, federal agents and ever-popular drug dealers. To the average worker, and certainly the average student, cellular phones were a novel and potentially useful toy they could never afford.

Now, roughly a dozen years later, cellular phones have evolved from an isolated luxury of the rich to the new necessity of the masses. For most of the current generation, the cell phone lost its awe-inspiring appeal when mom or dad started using one for work. Over the past seven years cell phone usage has exploded and aggressively integrated itself into our culture. Of course Tech

campus was no exception.

Like the computer and the beeper before it, the cell phone has trickled down through the hierarchy of the professional world from doctors and executives to the everyday office drone and finally to the youth and students of America.

It is impossible to be part of everyday life at Georgia Tech without witnessing the evidence of this astounding integration.

While walking to class you can always find someone attempting to dial his

or her friend's number. Afternoons around the campanile attract not only the lunch crowd but also the midday callers tired of coordinating walking and talking. With one ring, real, face-to-face conversations get obliterated.

Then of course there's every student's favorite brush with cellular technology. At some point during a lecture that you were actually trying to pay attention to, a few notes of Beethoven awkwardly chime out from someone's cell phone and all discussion and pretense of focus stops.

Professors have begun to include mobile phone etiquette not only in their syllabus but also in their first-day orientation. Many student agendas now include a paragraph asking all phones and pagers be turned off or be set to silent before entering lecture. Recently, the College of Computing has authorized a more dramatic policing. CS courses have begun including sanctions against students who forget to silence their phones, issuing zeros to offenders.

Still, the interruptions and faculty frustrations continue. When asked about her run-ins with the "technology-that-finds-you-anywhere" LCC professor Shannon Dobranski said, "This happens a lot in my class, and I only mind when the student answers. Normally students are very apologetic, but once in a speech class a student answered the phone in the middle of her classmate's presentation and carried on a brief conversation."

In the next few years high schools and colleges are projected to undergo a further saturation of mobile phones. A study released by Cahner's In-Stat Group at the end of 2000 showed that there were 11 million cell phone users ages 10 to 24, broadly characterized as the youth market. This demographic is expected to grow to 43 million users by the year 2004, a figure cell phone manufacturers and wireless service providers are counting on to bring in future profits.

The wireless world isn't simply waiting for student customers to come to them. Rather the already 19 billion dollar a year industry is putting serious money behind research to discover how many students already own a cellular, which students want them and what attracts them to one particular service versus another.

Cellular One recently conducted such market research on college students with the help of the Arizona State University College of Business. Of the 635 college students surveyed a little over half already owned a mobile phone.

These users cited style and convenience as the primary draws of a cell phone. Over half the nonusers polled said the initial cost of the phone as well as monthly service charges were the primary reason keeping them from purchasing a mobile phone.

Surprisingly, a significant majority of students don't consider the cost of the service plan a crucial factor in the choice of phone or service. According to ASU and Cellular One's research the top three factors are size of the phone, the caller ID capability of the phone and the operating range of the wireless service.

This study, as well as other examinations of wireless phone use among America's youth, has shown that roughly a quarter of all college students with cell phones pay their

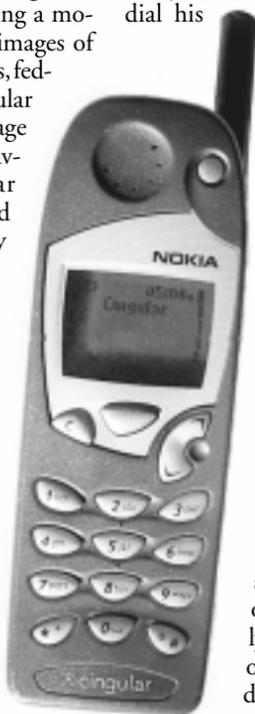
own service bill. This fact speaks both to the sharp decrease in service fees as well as the preponderance of a reasonable income among students.

Demand for mobile phone access has grown so quickly among young people that British researchers are suggesting cell phones may be challenging cigarettes as the object of style and rebellion among teens. In an issue of the *British Medical Journal* a group of scientists posted their findings, which suggest a correlation between the number of teens in the UK who use cellular phones and those who smoke.

From 1996 to 1993 the number of British 15-year-olds who smoke dropped from 30 to 23 percent. Over the same period in the same group cell phone use rose sharply to 70 percent. This led the researchers to infer teens were choosing wireless service over cigarettes.

This link is perhaps limited to Britain where "pay-as-you-go" services that require no credit checks and no parental approval are far more popular and widely used by teens.

There is no foreseeable downturn in cell phone use among the young or any other group. The wireless phone is the newest modern necessity, like the car and the computer that came before it. As so many marvels of this age have before, the mobile phone will subject the world to its own innovative conveniences and nuisances.



## Mobile Matters

### Safety

Approximately 118,000 wireless 911 calls are made per day.

### Payment Plans

Prepaid plans, where users have a certain number of minutes per month without additional charges, are expected to account for 20 percent of cellular market share within the next two years.

### Number of Users

There are currently over 110 million cell phone users in the U.S. There are 40,000 new subscribers every day. That rate of increase exceeds the birth rate. Some experts predict worldwide subscribership will reach 1.2 billion people by 2005.

### Shift Away from Land Lines

Approximately five percent of Americans only have a cellular phone.

### Status Symbols

It is estimated that 22 percent of cellular customers do not use their phone or use it infrequently.

### Usage While Driving

Over 85 percent of cell phone owners use their phones at least occasionally while driving. More than 27 percent use their phones during half or more of their trips. About three percent of Americans behind the wheel at any moment are also talking on handheld cell phones.

# The eccentricities of the engineer

By Craig J. Davis  
Contributing Writer

In another world, engineers would have a dog and no wife. The boss would make orders that are completely irrational and office supplies would not only be hoarded but also the most interesting topic of conversation around the water cooler. Wait, that is real life.

Welcome to the engineer's favorite cartoon: *Dilbert*. Interestingly, Dilbert has no mouth, or at least not an obvious one, so it is amazing that he is even able to talk, let alone espouse upon the eccentricities surrounding the high-tech industry.

Always politically correct, women are included in the cartoon as well. Characters such as Alice and Liz demonstrate the debilitating neuroses that technology related fields can invoke.

*Dilbert* is perhaps one of the most popular cartoons around these days, possibly climbing over the ranks of *Garfield* and *Peanuts*. *Dilbert*, illustrated by Scott Adams and first published in 1989, reaches millions of people through 2,000 newspapers in 61 countries.

Ironically, Adams does not even have a degree in engineering. He received much of his experience through his work in Crocker National Bank in San Francisco from 1979 to 1986.

After that, he worked at Pacific Bell until 1995 where he

worked side by side with engineers. His interest in perfection, like many engineers, probably comes from his high ambition; he was valedictorian of his high school class at Windham Ashland Jewett Central School in the Catskill Mountains of New York.

Adams got his debut in cartooning when Jack Cassady wrote to him with encouraging responses. However, Adams was not instantly successful. He was rejected by several magazines and newspapers, even *Playboy* and *The New Yorker*. But he did not give up.

Adams himself was not even close to being an accomplished cartoon artist until much later in life. Early on, at age 11, he took the Famous Artists Course for Talented Young People.

He failed. Interestingly, most items on the test were multiple choice, but somehow he still didn't manage to pass. Instead of offering him admission to the course, the school ultimately denied him entrance because of his young age.

Some people would characterize Dilbert as a nerd. His obsession with technology is almost second to none; he loves technology more than people. What he lacks in social skills, he makes up for in surfing the internet. His style leaves something to be desired as well.

He dresses in short-sleeved white shirts with a tie that turns up at the end. He tops off his outfit with "high-water" black pants, white socks and conservative black shoes. Not exactly Ricky Martin, eh?

Dilbert also owns a dog, Dogbert, who offers horrible and incriminating advice while mocking Dilbert and his lifestyle.

Although his intentions are insincere, he has a soft spot for Dilbert (although he would never admit it). Dogbert is against everyone, treating them with disregard and disdain.

Dogbert spends his time plot-

ting and devising plans to reach his ultimate goal: complete and utter world domination.

In an imaginary world like that of *Dilbert* every engineer works most productively in cramped cubicles, tiny workspaces composed of a desk, a chair and a few makeshift, carpet-covered walls.

Since Dilbert is undoubtedly the most popular cartoon engineer, his cubicle gets special treatment. Unique devices abound in his workspace including undercover devices such as a boss monitor that track The Boss's moods, activities and visitors.

He also lays claim to a talking trash can, sun lights to simulate the effects of daylight and a drink temperature control device.

*Dilbert* is not just confined to newsprint every day. Cartoon books, business books and calendars all cater to every *Dilbert* lover.

Over 40 titles exist, including *It's Obvious You Won't Survive by Your Wits to Slapped Together: The Dilbert Business Anthology*. Some *Dilbert* books are just meant to amuse readers; while others inform business people in a lighthearted way. *The Dilbert Principle: A Cubicle's-Eye View of Bosses, Meetings, Management Fads and Other Workplace Afflictions* offers readers unique insights to the corporate world in a humorous manner.

Although, the world of Dilbert offers a humorous if not distorted view of the engineering world, its applications are practical.



## Word to the Wise

### Character Analysis

#### Dilbert

Technology savvy and proud of it. Although he struggles socially and doesn't always hit it off with the ladies, Dilbert always gives it the ol' college try. He's not exactly Banana Republic cool, but his "At-Attention" tie has some major stud appeal—oh, and don't forget those "high-water" pants—too cool.

#### Dogbert

Although he may be a dog, Dogbert is certainly no man's best friend. He is contemptible, malicious, and cruel and he has his sights set on world domination. Dilbert uses him as a constant source of advice and sequentially loses self confidence points for his effort. Deep down, however, Dogbert has a soft spot for the nerdy engineer and succinctly sums up corporate America with his blasphemous observations and outbursts.

#### Wally

Perhaps the most unproductive coworker to ever exist, Wally excels at being inefficient and prides himself on his complete and utter lack of value. With no life outside of the office, Wally is perpetually bitter at the world and seeks to take this anger out on anyone—directly or residually.

#### Alice

Alice, the lone female engineer in the comic, suffers from chronic overwork and stress, gross underappreciation and a poisonous level of caffeine streaming through her system. A quick temper and a cynical attitude make her single along with the other losers in the office.

#### The Boss

The oblivious manager archetype, he's every employee's worst nightmare. Perhaps the most frustratingly stupid character in the comic, The Boss doesn't even manage to be witty or quick. Technically challenged and smug about it, his top priority is the bottom line and doesn't mind sacrificing his employees for it. His title, Director of Project Enhancements (DOPE), nicely sums up his position in the company. Did we mention he majored in Art History.

#### Ratbert

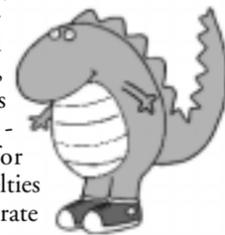
A simpleminded optimist, Ratbert cannot even obtain full employment. He pines for affection, love, peace and a little bit of respect. Unfortunately, he is merely a temporary employee with a cardboard box for an office.

#### Catbert

Evil Director of Human Resources, Catbert exalts in downsizing his employees and subsequently blaming them for their demise. He is pure evil and relishes the fact that he now has power.

#### Asok

Asok was introduced to satisfy the abused and beragled interns in the world. Although incredibly intelligent and talented, Asok is unprepared for the cruelties of corporate America.



## Research from page 13

water taste kinda funny.

Dr. Lizarralde's research concentrates more on the formations in the sand of the ocean floor and how they move and evolve, "how channel systems from the last glacial episode impact the freshwater budget of the barrier islands today." On the timescale of millions of years, the Earth's crust especially beneath the oceans is extremely active. And all the glaciers that used to be ubiquitous contributed greatly to the topology of the Earth.

In the regions just off shore, another peculiar thing happens. Methane (a gas up here) can be trapped in the sand beneath the ocean floor. Because the pressure under kilometers of water is so great, the methane actually exists as a crystalline solid (called "gas-hydrate," by the way) instead of as a gas. And there's a whole, whole lot of methane trapped

under the Earth's oceans. That's a good thing since it takes this greenhouse gas out of the atmosphere where it can't contribute to global warming. Lizarralde "[tries] to understand the dynamics of methane gas-hydrate reservoirs."

Tectonic plates or lithosphere—big chunks of crust and cold mantle that are the outer layer of the Earth, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) thick—actually move around over the deeper hot mantle. Dr. Lizarralde also studies the odd things that can happen in the turbulent regions where new crust is formed. We can, for example, see the composition of the crust evolving under water through a process known as hydrothermal circulation. The sites of this activity are where large masses of important life-supporting elements are exchanged between the inside of the Earth and the surface.

It's actually a big interest to geologists how elements recycle through the Earth (the so-called

"chemical balance")—how carbon is converted from methane on land to carbonates underwater as the carbon cycle, for example, or the nitrogen cycle. They also try to understand whether things like global warming that result from these cycles have periods of millions or tens of millions of years. The global ecosystem might actually be a lot more robust than we might suspect. (That still doesn't mean it's OK to start drilling apart Alaska.)

And in studying all of these nifty geological processes, the researchers get to travel the world. Dr. Lizarralde, for example, regularly takes geological cruises to the Caribbean, all along the Atlantic, to the Gulf of California, even the Red Sea or wherever else there might be geological activity. (All these places just happen to be tropical Elysia.)

So now geology seems a bit enticing as a field of study, eh? Well, if you really are interested, please contact [danl@eas.gatech.edu](mailto:danl@eas.gatech.edu).



By Ian Clark/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

**Dr. Daniel Lizarralde examines topographical charts of the Barrier Islands just off the coast of Georgia; he analyzes lithospheric structures.**

## Technique

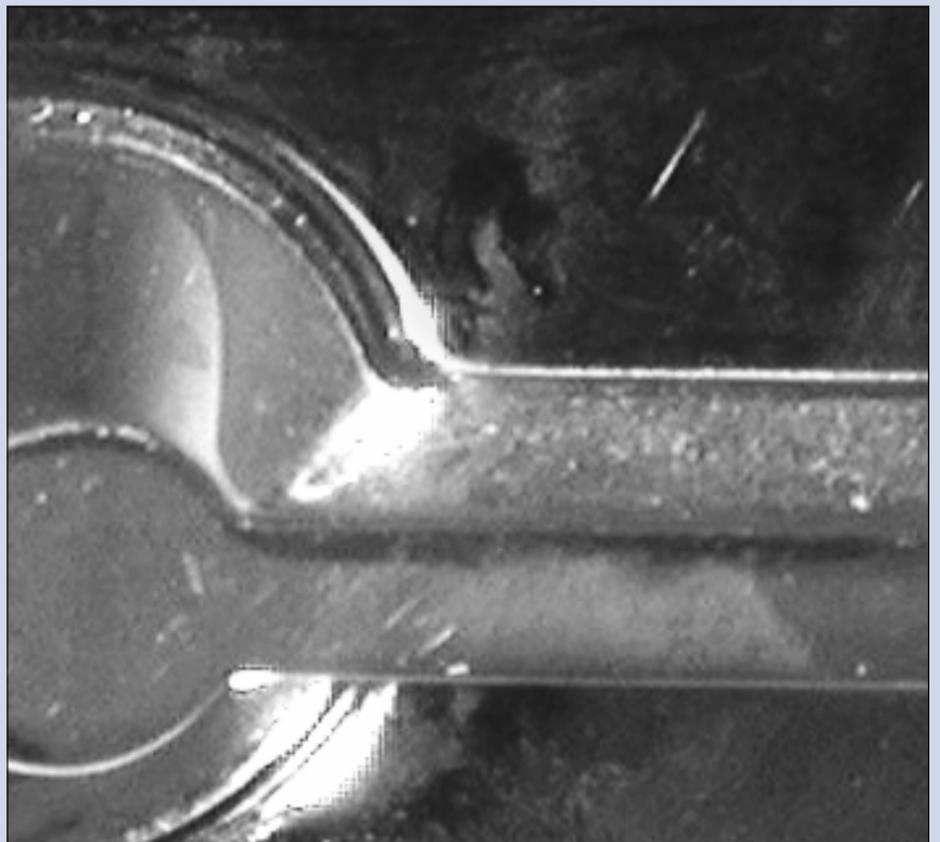
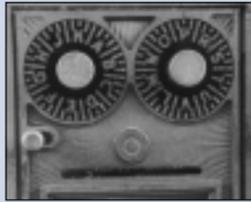
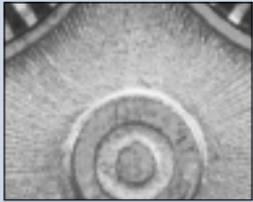
We're getting better at filling space.

# Tech Up Close

Gimme!

email: [focus@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:focus@technique.gatech.edu)

Last week's Tech Up Close:  
post office box



By Benjamin Small / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Last week's winner: Jonathan Sullivan

## LAN

from page 13

dents turn to sharing MP3s and Instant Messaging. This sharing of information brings people of common likes or interest together."

The ability to share information within and between the dorms with the click of a mouse links students from across campus together, freshmen and upperclassmen alike.

Although it may not have been the original intent, networking computers has provided a new kind of campus culture. Because high-tech virtual environments are so accessible, they naturally tend to alter the traditional ways of forming a community. Residents use the Local Area Network (LAN) to share MP3s, DVDs and "Word." Director Miles Edson describes ResNet as a medi-

um "for both academic and recreational goals to exist side by side."

He pointed out that while a student may be studying and IMing several people at the same time, it is unusual to see a student successfully studying and talking on the phone. Instant messaging as well as email enables "casual communication where it may not have occurred before." The obvious question becomes: Does a community become stronger by using online communication or does it in fact hinder face-to-face socialization?

"The bonds that are formed through LAN parties are not the type of bonds on which true friendship can be built. The lack of personal contact, vocal and visual, gives no incentive to conduct oneself in a civil or understanding manner—both of which are indispensable in

building meaningful friendships and communities," Verges said.

While the fear of complete seclusion from the world makes many students wary of virtual interaction, some, such as Chris Verges, manage to merge the two worlds into a successful social experience.

Last year, both Verges and Meghan Byrne worked hard to throw a campus-wide "LAN party" for those who enjoy computer games. Although, they were initially met with some ridicule from fellow students, the overall response was positive.

As Verges noted, ironically, "it is 'uncool' to play on the computer—yet not a Sony Playstation." At LAN parties, residents physically move their computers to a common destination and set up a network between them in order to play an interactive game. In these simula-

tions, players experience both the virtual and the physical paradigms of technology. Winners were rewarded with a Tupperware prize.

In fact, "many times, they would actually request the server be brought down and they would talk while [Chris] changed the maps or game settings," Verges said. So while the evening may have begun as a meeting of the "silent masses," it developed into exactly what a party is—a bunch of people getting together, having fun and participating is an event that they all enjoy.

The Freshmen Activities Board (FAB), an FE program, has had similar success with these types of parties, drawing over 30 freshmen to its gaming event in Brittain Rec last year.

All of programming ideas utilized by Freshmen Experience Peer

Leaders stem from the basic principle that people will come to an activity that they enjoy. Through that activity, a support network will be formed that will help students through a notoriously difficult first year.

The activity, whether it is an ice cream social, a football game, or a LAN party, is simply a means to a successful close-knit campus community. In an environment filled with such diversity, the programs designed to reach out to the students of Georgia Tech must be equally diverse.

The Freshmen Experience program is one of the largest and most successful community and diversity oriented endeavors on campus and it continually strives to create an environment conducive to mental and academic growth.