



OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Sophomore advantage

In recent memory rising sophomores have always been guaranteed housing on campus, but with the latest updates to the housing selection process, second-year students will have an even better choice of rooms and roommates.

Until now, block housing was only applicable to Woodruff Hall; with the changes, this option will be available for sophomores wanting to live in traditional-style dorms like those in Area II. Blocks can now include six to 24 people, meaning groups of freshman-hall friends can choose to continue their semester-long sleepover for another year. This alteration in policy offers an improvement for sophomores, giving them the chance to have more influence on the specifics of their living conditions.

Block housing will also offer more social organizations the chance to have members live together, similar to what Greek organizations without houses have done in the past, and a close semblance to the "themed" parts of Fourth Street apartments.

Furthermore, allowing second years to apply for apartment-style dorms this year (an option that has not recently been available) will be beneficial to that group of students, if only because it will squash the perception that waiting until the very end of housing registration to sign up gives a student who is assured a spot a better chance of getting placed in an apartment.

Overall, the policy additions are positive as long as the priority juniors and seniors have for apartments is not compromised, the number of upperclassmen who are accommodated does not drastically decrease as block housing gains popularity and the changes do not further complicate the housing selection process.

Ailing classrooms

Questions abound in the latest case of subpar classrooms—the Old CE building is experiencing growing pains with the addition of the Modern Languages department due to air quality issues. For example, why are EAS labs still being conducted in the building while the Modern Language professors who have their offices in and teach in the building complained that they needed to be moved?

In the end, this case brings up a broader issue of the quality of instructional facilities at the Institute. There is nothing worse than a dark, damp and small classroom except an even worse professor.

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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THE FUTURE - it only gets worse...



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Take the Opportunity to talk worldly

Recently I was at the BP gas station across from The Varsity, and I was standing in line with a friend when a curious thing happened. The clerk said to me, "What do you think about the Mars Rover?" Before I could respond, he went on to talk about how cool he thought the whole project was and the possibility that people could one day land on Mars.

At first, I was caught off guard because I was just expecting to hear how I much owed for my 20 oz. Diet Coke. I proceeded to talk to the man about the project and my friend joined in, too. It was an interesting conversation that happened at an unexpected time.

While BP may be one of the most popular destinations for Tech students, it's not exactly known as a hotbed of scientific thought, exploration or debate on current events. However, Georgia Tech should be a place where students openly debate and talk about important issues going on in the world, and lately it does not appear to have lived up to that expectation.

In the past month, Spirit and Opportunity, the two Mars rovers, have both begun their missions and had their various successes and problems, but I haven't heard anyone on campus talking about it. The possibility that the NASA mission could unlock geological secrets billions of years old and provide more clues about the mysterious Red Planet is something that people should be paying attention to outside of class.

Or how about debates on Election 2004? Besides Wesley Clark's appearance on campus or the one Kucinich table that's appeared in the Student Center, I have not seen any sign of political debate or related events thus far. Granted, it is still early in the campaigns, but surely students have opinions about the issue.

Although I understand Tech is a more demanding school than most,



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Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

students should take time out of their busy schedules to read and learn more about what's going on in the world around them. If you need to, set www.cnn.com as your homepage and spend five to ten minutes every day reading the top stories.

Lately all I've heard on campus is people talking to their friends about the various tests and projects they have scheduled before Drop Day. Granted, Tech professors generally assign a ridiculous amount of work before Drop Day, however a heavy workload is not an excuse for not keeping up with current events.

Though there are exceptions to every rule, as a whole, Tech students appear to be more apathetic towards current events than most. Try to think of the last time a friend brought up a world topic before talking about a particular class. Besides a few flukes, I'm as guilty as anyone else at this school. Even on the rare occasions that an important non-Tech related issue has come up in passing, the conversations always seem to turn back to Tech.

Classes have an uncanny ability to drain the life out of the liveliest people; therefore, it is understandable how people forget that there is a world outside of Tech and Atlanta. Occasionally, professors have the same problem of realizing that there is a life outside of their classrooms and research. Most of my professors never deviate from their lecture to talk about hot topics. Although a fifty minute class is brief, it would not hurt anyone for a professor to

engage the class in a discussion about a world topic every now and then.

If professors and staff could take the time to engage students briefly about the news or topics that interest them personally, classes would be more interesting to attend. Instead of describing the physics lecture to a friend over lunch, students could enjoy debates and use their professors' arguments as a reference point.

We can take life here too seriously sometimes and forget the world around us. By focusing solely on classes and internal pressures, we only have ourselves to blame for Tech students' usual top ten ranking in the Princeton Review's list of most unhappy students.

This is not to mention the game that goes on between friends, distracting even more time from intellectual discussions. The game consists of one friend talking about all the work that's due and then the other friend counteracts the story with an even heavier schedule and workload. We've all played the game at one time or another, whether purposefully or not. To some people it is comforting to know that other people out there have it worse than them, to others it's a huge annoyance.

Maybe the next time you find yourself playing the aforementioned game or having an entire conversation based on a physics or circuits lecture, try changing the topic. Your friends and the occasional eavesdropper will appreciate it.

New Coke machines a bigger bust than New Coke

These new Coke machines are amazing. Do you realize that we are the first place on the entire planet granted the privilege to use them? We should be grateful that Coke would entrust us with its wunderkinds of the vending world. Auxiliary Services should be commended for fostering its relationship with the soft-drink maker.

By now you probably have the perception that I am a massive tool. Perhaps, but I guarantee it's not because I like the next-generation Coke machines.

It was just two weeks ago when our illustrious Opinions editor came bursting into the *Nique* office exclaiming, "Hey guys, I just ran into one of those new Coke machines!"

Our initial thought was, "Are you OK?" because she actually does run into things all the time. The machine talked to her and knew she was there, much to her giggling surprise.

To get everyone up to speed, Coke has installed a handful of new machines on campus. These machines are behemoth vendors adding a touch-screen flat panel, camera and computer link to the normal functionality of your standard Coke machine.

With its new forces, combined Coke can now offer customers the chance to watch music videos, win coupons, download music, play games and have their



"Where does Coke's free speech end and our right to a campus that induces learning begin?"

Art Seavey
Entertainment Editor

fortune told.

However, their benefit has yet to be seen as the dry choices of entertainment are quite disappointing. How many times can we suffer through an outdated Fifty Cent song? It was good at the time, but unlike Coke it has not gone Classic.

Quite possibly the most amusement I have received from the machine was in fact from the Coke "engineers" standing around their baby. Prodding and poking, and uploading with their laptops, these pioneers of corn-syrup delivery would every so often pause their ballet of tweaking.

It is too bad I wasn't able to be in the boardroom the day these new machines were paired with executives at their debutante. Tears must have flowed. Marketers love it, and it will definitely make their job easier. The whole concept of synergy and melding markets is not new, but now Coke has a vehicle to readi-

ly expose the public to those advertising methods daily.

Anyone who has stood by the machine for more than a minute knows the pain an Enrique Iglesias video can cause when it is looped indefinitely. I might just die if I don't see the ending. Every time it gets close and I feel that enlightenment may be bestowed, some person comes along and actually uses the machine.

Right now there are only a handful of the uber-vendors around campus. But think if each and every one were replaced. We are stepping into a potential problem area here, the relatively untouched societal issue of noise pollution.

As technological innovation decreases manufacturing costs, more and more seemingly simple devices will turn into these interactive multimedia monstrosities. Technology and its benefits are at the forefront of my passion to learn, so before accusations of Luddite-loving are sent

my way, take a minute to examine this specific creation. How entertaining or beneficial is it to us to more efficiently be bombarded with repetitive commercial images?

The Coke machine in the Student Center can project its audio all the way to the couches by the food court. Imagine if every single machine on campus had that coverage. There would be relatively few Coke-free zones.

Although Coke has the right to free speech, who determines what an appropriate placement or volume for these machines is? Where does Coke's free speech end and our right to a campus that induces learning begin?

In speaking with students on the topic, it seems that some are already quite annoyed with the machines. So what's your opinion? Already ticked off? Or maybe you see the benefit that has escaped my perspicacious grasp. Either way I am sure Coke wants to know your opinion.

So here's my service to the campus community. I've looked up their contact information publicly published on www.Coke.com for you. If they can plop machines down on our campus I think the least we can do is thank them for the service. So, here is Kelly Brooks', director of Marketing Communications, phone number: (404) 676-2121.

BUZZ Around the Campus

What is your favorite Tech tradition?



Katy Gustashaw
CEE Junior

"The Wreck Parade. It's really neat to see what the entries are."



Kinsey Wade
ISyE Junior

"The Freshman Cake Race."



Ketan Sardeshmukh
ISyE Junior

"The Budweiser song—that's the best tradition EVER!"



Danny Kenyon
MGT Sophomore

"Two words: Game Day."

Photos by Lauren Griffin

OUR VIEWS Hot or Not

HOT-or-NOT



Sweets for sweeties

Woodruff's great dessert gurus are putting their powers of sugary confectionary to good use; for the first time, GT's Dining Services is offering the campus the chance to order cakes and cookies decorated for Valentine's Day. This is a great idea, especially for students living in freshmen dorms. Maybe if this endeavor is successful, the idea can be expanded to include birthday cake orders.



Beating UM already

We may not beat them on the field next season, but we've already managed to steal one of the University of Miami's football recruits. To say that this year's recruiting effort has been a huge success would be premature, but all indications thus far show 2004's recruiting class to be coach Chan Gailey's best.



Run right! No, left!

The track in the Campus Recreation Center poses a new problem for the directionally uninclined: alternating running directions. An unobtrusive (read: not noticeable) sign orders runners to travel to the right or left, depending on the day. Instead, the running direction should be noticeable and in terms of clockwise or counterclockwise. Even better, people working out should adhere to the day's direction!



No more Shaft

Don't get excited—Tech's administration still exists—sadly, the latest tradition that has fallen by the wayside is Shaft News. The wildly popular satirical site poked fun at the Institute, the South's Liveliest and current events. One can only hope that some other funny students will bring back beloved Ed Muspot.

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

U.S. hypocritical on sex

By **Richard M. Berthold**
Daily Lobo

(U-WIRE) University of New Mexico—America has a continuing problem in dealing openly with sex and the human body, espousing, at least publicly and officially, a prudishness that baffles the rest of the non-Islamic world. Ironically, though awash in pornography, adolescent sex, illegitimate children and sexual abuse, many, if not most, Americans are reluctant to discuss sexual relations, especially in any public forum. And underlying all of this is a huge measure of the hypocrisy that is rapidly becoming the most salient feature of American society.

The issue of Janet Jackson during the Super Bowl halftime show encapsulates these attitudes, especially the hypocrisy. One of her breasts was partially bared—the nipple was covered—for

about two seconds, meaning of course that only those watching on tape or TiVo could possibly see anything. Yet America was "outraged," at least according to all the pompous figures who felt compelled to express their moral outrage and, of course, incidentally defend the public image of their various organizations.

Jackson was apparently solely responsible for the stunt; CBS's disclaimer that they never expected anything like this rings a bit hollow. After all, they hired MTV to produce the show, and it is hard to believe no one in the CBS leadership had ever watched MTV. FCC Commissioner Michael Powell of course had to weigh in immediately, lest Republican politicians lynch him on their way to get Congress and more than willing liberal Democrats to pass more legisla-

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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 Tony Kluemper, 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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Information and rate cards can be found online at www.nique.net. The deadline for reserving ad space and submitting ad copy is noon on Friday, one week prior to publication. For rate information, call our offices at (404) 894-2830, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Advertising space cannot be reserved over the phone. The *Technique* office is located in room 137 of the Student Services Building, 353 Ferst Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0290. Questions regarding advertising billing should be directed to Marcus Kwok at (404) 894-9187, or RoseMary Wells at (404) 894-2830.

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/stuorgguide.pdf>.

Through the looking glass

Tango-ing Techs' Two-Step parallels student test taking

I would expect that by this time in the semester each of you have been invited on one or more occasions to run your two left feet through the Techs' Two-Step; this derivative of the Texas Two-Step is more commonly known by the populace as an all-nighter and by professors as the common, garden-variety examination.

While hosting the first of four such engagements in my semesterly circuits course, I found myself bored completely to tears, through which I begin to sit back and watch the Techs' Two-Step unfold.

The first five minutes belong to nervous paper rustling, frantic corrections to annoying typos, and the gradual catching of the beat by the participants.

Soon enough the more interesting sound effects begin: creaking chairs, a rumbling stomach, a random noise from a nether region and a chorus of coughs and sneezes pardoned by a kind soul's "Bless you."

Yawning comes from one who practiced all night, while excess energy goes into a lightly tapping pencil by another who received a little too much rest.

The average professor kicks into gear by alternating among tempo variations, praying to see that Johnny's steps are of his own creativity and not a mirror reflection of Suzie's, who is dancing nearby Johnny. He's also praying silently to himself lest he need to waste time with inadequate prosecution, and

snoring quite contently off in a cozy nook.

Other hosts work furiously to scribble in the last homework grades before returning them to their partners, and a final few show their readiness to retire by kicking up their heels and becoming absorbed in a C.S. Lewis novel.

This refrain continues for a good twenty minutes, punctuated only by the occasional challenge to the host of navigating a virtual gauntlet created by strewn rucksacks and caffeinated study aids.

The heart of the dance comes when they turn from number three, finally on the down slope and approaching the end; numbers four and five go as a relative blur, completing the marks before the judges come.

An unpredictably whirling jig named "extra credit" is finally attempted, but by only the bravest of heart.

Assuming the music has been chosen carefully, we find the Techs' Two-Step still in full swing when the most talented dancers eschew furious scribbling for contempla-

tive postures rivaling the Thinker. Others entrust their motions to divine intervention, and a select few reflect horror as if stuck in front of Rodin's western wall, the Gates of Hell.

Every few moments, the participants shift to a new pattern, but just as often efface it in favor of the original; the only consistent beat is the faster drum roll of Johnny's twiddling toes and Suzie's twisting of a l r e a d y curlylocks. "D u n t - D u h - D u h - D u h" bellows forth from an out-of-tune orchestra from somewhere in the rafters, reviving Beethoven from the grave; "Please return all cell phones to their upright and locked positions," and the previous beat returns anew, the pitch a little more hurried.

In no time at all, the call rings out: "five minutes to go," and is greeted by not-so-muffled groans, prompting a slightly more generous "Okay, guys, you may have until the second bell."

Surprisingly, most remain lost in thought in these final bonus minutes, failing to commit to anything

tangible.

The final call of, "That's all, folks" is received by an audible exhalation with subsequent forlorn, despondent expressions or (most likely silent) hoots and hollers of jubilation.

A virtual stampede of folks making for the exit reveals the one lone individual guarding their instrument like a pit bull over a T-bone, intent on finishing number 2 at all costs.

The final and much-anticipated score in the Techs' Two-Step occurs at the host's convenience, as many as three weeks later, but more oft the next meeting after a week-end, and is easily dubbed the post-mortem.

Pictures of bell curves and averages project the judge's decisions, telling me just how well I followed the notes: "M r . Michaels, here is your score."



ALAN MICHAELS
COLUMNIST



Janet

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tion restricting free speech.

Most hypocritical, however, was NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, who stated the incident was "offensive and embarrassing to the NFL and its fans." Huh? I am not sure I understand how the NFL, a collection of wealthy men who are constantly compelled to deal with problems of drug abuse, domestic and public violence and even murder on the part of their teams, could be offended or embarrassed by a two-second flash of Jackson's boob.

Keep in mind that every NFL team has a squad of female cheerleaders, whose main job is to wave their only slightly more covered breasts in the direction of male fans. And, I guess he must mean female fans, because it is hard to believe that guys who paint their bodies and get into fights over their teams are likely to be offended by this incident or be embarrassed by anything whatsoever. Teenage fans of course are regularly watching this sort of thing on MTV.

So, all the grinding and gyrating, all the explicit lyrics are fine, but let a woman show a breast and the sky is falling. We can see ads for penis enhancement, diagrams of panty liners, steamy soap operas and Dennis Franz' ass, but a woman's breast, the ultimate nurturing tool, is just too offensive. The halftime program reeked of sex, and not the acceptable and wholesome mom and dad kind, but it took a bare breast to cause a furor. Were it not so pervasive in our society, the hypocrisy might strike one as staggering.