

# OPINIONS

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## OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

### 'T' punishment

Stealing the "T" off Tech Tower has been a tradition at Tech for over thirty years. Since 1996, issues concerning student welfare, Institute liability and rising financial costs, have caused administration to tighten disciplinary action on would be "T" stealers and discourage the infamous tradition.

In deciding on an appropriate disciplinary action, motive is of prime importance. Stealing the "T" is neither a malicious nor vindictive crime, and is instead prompted by a love for Tech and Tech tradition. By turning the offenders over to the Dean of Students versus prosecution under criminal law, Tech has recognized the uniqueness of the crime.

To expel a student for committing a crime that has long been heralded as one of the greatest feats at Tech is not only hypocritical, but overly harsh.

Punishment, such as suspension for one semester, should be salient enough to prevent theft of the "T," but not so destructive as to ruin a student's academic career. The case before the Dean's Office should be utilized to emphasize their commitment to punishing "T" thieves by developing and implementing a standardized disciplinary action plan for all offenders. These regulations should be applied equitably to prevent discrimination and double standards.

## Diner change

During the bookstore relocation polls, students requested a dinner space that would provide alternatives to typical dining hall or Student Center foods. With discussions underway for altering West Side Diner into a coffee shop, it is appropriate that Auxiliary Services take these student requests into consideration. A restaurant on East Campus would provide entering freshmen, who usually do not have transportation, an additional place to eat. The restaurant should be open during

## Increase in tuition unfair

I was quite shocked when I picked up the *Technique* the other day and found out about the tuition increase. I, being an out-of-state student, took this news very personally. President Clough said in the article that "our financial recourses have not increased commensurately, placing stress on the quality of our educational programs."

I found that statement to be ironic being that the Campaign for Georgia Tech has raised over 0.7 billion dollars, well over the average amount required. In addition, Tech has continued to soar up the college ranks, while remaining in the top ten of just about all the engineering disciplines.

So where is the stress on our quality? How does increasing out-of-state tuition significantly help the institution? If anything, I feel that this increase in tuition hurts the individual student more than it helps our school. \$500 added per semester may not seem much to administration, but for me, it makes a difference in the amount of hours I have to work during the school year, taking away from my studies.

Based on the figures I've seen by the Campaign, I am convinced that we are well off in our funds. Funding for the vast majority of the programs at Tech has exceeded the revised goal. I was a bit dismayed to

see that the overwhelming leader in receiving funds from the Campaign was the Athletic department. How are we striving for increased quality of education if most of our money is going towards sports? Don't get me wrong—I am a big fan of sports—but I never put sports before school and neither should Georgia Tech. Correct me if I'm wrong, but aren't ticket sales, TV-network deals, and sponsors enough to run the Athletic department alone?

I don't disagree with our school trying to get more resources; however, I don't believe it should be at the expense of out-of-state students. It is almost as if the out-of-state students are being penalized. Raising the tuition at such a high rate solely for out-of-state students hurts people like me who just barely have enough money to get by. I know that I'm already getting a good bargain, but let's strive to keep Georgia Tech unique. It's simply unfair to raise tuition for unnecessary reasons.

If absolutely nothing can be done to avoid this increase, I want a guarantee that these funds will noticeably go towards student organizations, programs, and scholarships.

Vonel Lamour  
gte135t@prism.gatech.edu

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### Quote of the week:

"Alone! I'm alone! I'm a lonely, insignificant speck on a has-been planet orbited by a cold, indifferent sun!" -Homer Simpson



normal dining hours, and possibly even 24 hours to accommodate the haphazard schedules of students. West Campus, which has more eating alternatives for resident students, would benefit more from a coffee shop or student hangout. These alternatives would not be in direct competition with Dining Services as entering students in the Freshmen Experience program have already purchased their mandatory meal tickets upon enrolling at Tech and would instead better meet student needs for variety.

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



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS



# Stealing the 'T': Tradition or Trespassing?

I bet most Tech students have thought about stealing the 'T.' I do not believe that every Tech student has concocted a 'T'-snatching plan during the wee hours of the morning in his or her dorm room, but I do feel that many Tech students have at least considered what they would do if an opportunity to validate the infamous tradition ever presented itself.

As a student, the idea of stealing the 'T' appeals to me, even though I know the risks involved, because it is tradition. Why do I feel this way? The act is ingrained in the Tech culture and experience, and despite objections by administrators and authorities, students still view stealing the 'T' as a challenge and fail to consider the inherent personal safety and Institute liability risks that accompany the act. The most recent 'T'-napping attempt brings to light several issues—most importantly the mixed message that students receive about the tradition of stealing the 'T' and the administration's failure to support its position on the issue.

In Fall of 1999, President Clough penned a message to the Georgia Tech community in the form of an open letter to the *Technique*. In the document, Clough stated, "Anyone involved in attempting to steal the 'T' will also be subject to Institute penalties up to and including expulsion." This letter came shortly after a young woman died after a fall from atop Alexander Memorial Coliseum, and Clough cited that incident as the catalyst for his concern about students scaling Tech Tower while attempting to steal the 'T.' While it contains a powerful

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**Jody Shaw**  
News Editor



warning, so far this letter has been merely words—a few words that pale in comparison to the amount of positive words students hear about the 'T.'

The majority of information students receive about stealing the 'T' is not necessarily as stern and discouraging as the President's letter. While I recall Karen Boyd, Senior Associate Dean of Students, discouraging 'T'-napping during her presentation on student conduct during my FASET orientation, I also recall numerous sources—particularly those run by Tech students—that sent more positive messages about 'T'-stealing. *T-book*, the online survival guide for freshmen, includes a passage about the tradition. Rambling Wreck Club discusses stealing the 'T' in the history packet it distributes to all freshmen and at its traditions night during RATS week. The *Technique* includes the act as one of its "99 Things to Do Before You Graduate." Many students also hear about the tradition on campus tours before they arrive at Tech. All of these student sources fail to emphasize the possible punishment and potential dangers of stealing the 'T.' It seems as though the administration and students are on totally separate pages.

Why does such a discrepancy exist between the student body and the administration? The student body does not take the administrative threats of expulsion seriously, and I do not blame them. The administration has not proactively enforced the possible punishment enough to counteract the campus culture that still glorifies stealing the 'T' as tradition. If the administration wants students to eliminate the tradition, it would apply more active pressure on student services and organizations to discuss the possibility of expulsion for stealing the 'T' when they discuss the glory and tradition of the theft. Since administrators have not taken a proactive role, students feel no immediate threat.

The administration could counteract this trend with this test case. By expelling the three offenders, the administration could force students to consider the repercussions that can come from committing the illegal and potentially deadly act. I do not think they will. The three students—and any other cohorts that may come out of the woodwork—will not be expelled for their actions. They may be suspended for a semester, which is a severe punishment, but it is not expulsion, which is what Clough explic-

itly mentioned in his letter to the community.

I appreciate tradition, and while the tradition of stealing the 'T' only dates to 1969, it has been readily accepted as one of Tech's most intriguing traditions, and it has earned its position in Tech history. I can also appreciate, however, the administration's concern for its students. I believe that the motives of Clough, Boyd, and others that seek to protect students are pure and justified; they seem genuinely concerned with student safety. They seek to protect students—not squash traditions. That being said, I believe that members of the administration can do a better job of protecting students, if that is their intent. They need to change the campus culture that surrounds the stealing of the 'T,' which can only be accomplished by raising awareness and punishing offenders. Right now they do neither, and I fear that trend will continue, which is what contributes to the discrepancy between students and authorities.

If Tech administrators want students to take a policy seriously, they need to choose a mechanism of prevention and enforcement. This case will be a test—a test to see just how seriously the administration takes this act of trespassing and vandalism. If administrators feel that stealing the 'T' is as much of a danger to student life as they have preached, they should put their money where their mouths are and expel the offenders. If they wish to continue sending the convoluted messages of the past, however, suspension or another form of punishment will suffice.

# Bush right to avoid changes to free markets

*Caps on the wholesale price of energy in California would create inefficiency in the system*

On Saturday I started reading *The Grapes of Wrath* and quickly found ironic the Joad's dreams of California. The Joad family, struck with bad farming conditions and a depression, looks to the Golden State as the answer to their resource woes. Today we look to California as a resource nightmare.

With energy in short supply the state of California has experienced high energy prices and rolling blackouts. Experts speculate that the deregulation of the power industry in California, which resulted in lower prices from increased competition, created a demand increase that coupled with emerging high-tech, high-consumption growth has left the state short on electricity. I guess it's all too appropriate that Steinbeck's characters find a land short in supply met with a great demand.

As a solution to the problem, California Governor Gray Davis suggests President Bush place caps on wholesale power prices. Price caps would move the price burden from the consumer to the ratepayers. These intermediate companies buy power in large quantities from power generating companies and then sell this power back to the consumer passing along the savings from their quantity purchases. This process, a result of deregulation, would collapse under the Davis caps and hand high prices back to the customer.

Davis's demand for government intervention is just another exam-

"Disturbing the free market system of supply and demand will only shift the problem from one party to another."

**Matthew Bryan**  
Editor-in-Chief



ple of meddling with free markets. Disturbing the free market system of supply and demand will only shift the problem from one party to another, and ultimately lead to inefficiency in the system, not to mention slow-moving, government policy trying to control a fast-paced market.

Leaving the system alone, as Bush proposes, will keep prices high, a condition of scarcity, and lead consumers toward conservation and a search for alternative energy sources. Few of us would remember that this is exactly what happened with gasoline during the late 70s and 80s where gas prices reached an inflation adjusted \$2.70 per gallon.

Bush's proposal is not inhumane, after all it's exactly what Al Gore suggests in his book *Earth in the Balance*. Gore theorizes that an increase in gas and oil prices would lead consumers to conserve their use of energy.

However, it seems that Gore and the Democrats cannot trust the idea and leave markets untouched as ev-

idenced by Davis's caps and Gore's release of oil reserves during last year's election. Rather than leave oil prices high and encourage innovation and conservation in the system as he stated in his book, Gore persuaded Clinton to release 30 million barrels of crude from the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve—an election-year ploy that cast a shadow on Gore's green side.

Simply decreasing demand through conservation and alternative energy is not the only solution to California's energy crisis. The two form an acceptable long term plan but in such a large system change simply cannot be made overnight. In order to effect the problem in the short term, supply must be increased to meet the high demand.

President Bush has already taken steps to correctly manage the short term. Building new power plants and working toward the development of a nationwide grid are necessary to ease the burden on consumers and allow continued growth in our high-tech society.

New power plants would immediately increase supply and lower prices. These new plants coupled with a nationwide grid could help expand the energy market the same way international trade has led to growth in different economic sectors all over the world. A larger system would help eliminate inefficiencies and lower prices for consumers.

But these are short term solutions; fossil fuels will not last forever. Because of their limited supply and impact on the environment the use of fossil fuels has to be diminished in coming years. But the economic impact of such a change would be horrendous. Therefore, long term plans should be made to balance the growth and exploitation of existing fossil fuel technology while developing newer, cleaner energy sources.

This is where the government plays a role; funding research and investing in science and technology instead of interfering in free markets. This is a big step, and I'm not advocating an overnight switch, I'm demanding that the problem be thought of in economic terms. Investing small amounts in research today could have big returns in the future. In contrast, depending solely on fossil fuels could grow more and more costly as exploration and drilling become more and more difficult.

I guess the Joads should have discovered cold fusion instead of moving to California.

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[editor@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu)  
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