

# OPINIONS

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**Quote of the week:**  
"You can't live a perfect day without doing something for someone who will never be able to repay you."  
—John Wooden

## OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

### A Hazy Line

The Office of Greek Affairs' decision to suspend Tau Kappa Epsilon (TKE) for hazing violations related to "suggestive dancing" is an unfortunate event but certainly comes at the end of a fair process. The suspension was the conclusion of a five-month investigation in which the fraternity was certainly given a fair trial. Because the issue of hazing is well, hazy to say the least, the Office of Greek Affairs goes to great lengths to keep students safe during Greek events, not punish students for minor infractions and constantly nag the community.

While some traditions may not prove immediately harmful to those involved, the Office of Greek Affairs' goal is to prevent potentially dangerous situations from happening. The punishments TKE received, no summer rush and fall social probation, seem suitable considering the violation.

While not being so harsh as to damage the chapter's future, the actions taken against TKE will deter similar events from occurring in the Greek community that could prove to be emotionally or physically damaging hazing incidences. However, the fact that Tech has always been a safe place to foster friendship, sisterhood, and brotherhood and continues to be so, should not be lost in this event. Tech students have rarely crossed the line when it comes to hazing, and an event like this simply ensures that more dangerous activities do not come about.

### Missing McMath

After 33 years of service spent enriching the Tech community, Robert McMath is leaving Tech to serve as Dean of the Honors College at the University of Arkansas. He leaves behind colleagues and students alike who will miss his presence around campus. During his time at Tech, McMath served as a history professor, an associate dean of the Ivan Allen College, Chair of the School of History, Technology and Society and, most recently, vice provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs.

McMath is an important part of Tech's history, not only as serving as an influential leader, but also by co-authoring *Engineering the New South: Georgia Tech, 1885-1985*, to celebrate Tech's centennial anniversary (one of seven books he has authored or co-authored). His decision is especially disheartening at a time when Tech is considering starting an honors program of its own.

While McMath will be sorely missed here, we wish him well in his new home at the University of Arkansas. There is no doubt that he will continue to be an inspiration to all of those who surround him.

*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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## Spellers teach lessons in D-E-D-I-C-A-T-I-O-N

Six years ago from this week, I was standing on center stage in front of the entire country on national television. Well, actually I was next in line, and ESPN cut to commercial, but that counts, right?

I happened to be participating in the event that ESPN features every Memorial Day week that seems just a bit out of place when put next to Major League Baseball and the NBA Playoffs. That's right, I was a contestant in the National Spelling Bee.

It seems like it was just yesterday I was making my second and final appearance at the Bee; I happened to finish in the same place both times, 22nd out of the over 240 competitors.

So, why am I sharing this? Well, other than the fact I want everyone to know that I supposedly made an appearance in the movie *Spellbound* (which I still need to see), it turns out that as college students we can learn many things from these kids on stage spelling words from usually unread lines of the dictionary this week.

Dedication is the first and most important virtue of any top speller you may run across on television over the next few weeks as the spelling bee makes it loop through every imaginable ESPN station. I was probably on the lower end of the spectrum of study time when compared to my peers at the Bee, and I easily studied a dozen hours each week for several months in preparation.

As a college student, I often find it difficult to commit myself to study a dozen hours in a week that I have a crucial exam, and I certainly don't see myself doing it when the actual test or event I'm studying for is months away. But then I flip on the television this week and see an eleven-year old who has the patience and attention span to learn how to spell words for hours upon hours as a purely enjoyable extracurricular activity that makes me wish I could be a bit better at dedicating more time and effort toward important things in my life.

The lights make it warm on stage and the pressure almost makes it unbearably hotter. Every person except for the occasional child or grandparent that has drifted off for the afternoon has his eyes fixed on



"I also can't explain why it's of any worth that I can spell septentrional, oxylophyte, claviger and doublure."

**Kyle Thomason**  
Editor-in-Chief

the contestant spelling. A single wrong letter leads to the dreaded bell of elimination and the judges and pronouncer that seemed to be friendly just hours ago have turned evil, giving out the most difficult word of the round to you.

But calmly, letter after letter, a correct spelling emerges, and you finally breathe. Sometimes as students, it's tough to remember that professors are not really against students, and presenting in public is not quite as horrifying as it seems.

It's nice to take a lesson from the ever-so-smooth-and-composed middle school students spelling words they may have never seen in front of such a large audience. They show that it's okay to have a little personality mixed in with the presentation, and in the end, speaking in public is not all that bad.

"Why do we need to know this?" is a question that generally surfaces in classes throughout the semester. I admit that every once in a while it goes through my head as well. I cannot particularly explain the value of every equation I learned in Calculus, nor am I sure of the importance of some of the computer programming skills I attained over the previous semester. I also can't explain why it's of any worth that I can spell and define septentrional, oxylophyte, claviger and doublure. In fact, the program I'm using to type these words does not recognize a single one of these words as being a part of the English language, but I have spelled each one of them at some point in my life. Well, the last one I actually misspelled while ESPN was on that commercial break.

But the point is that I do not believe I have ever seen a single one of these words in print, nor have I had the chance to use them except in this editorial, but I still learned how to spell them. All of the contestants on stage this weekend can probably

spell even more ridiculous and useless words, but the point is that they have learned them for the sake of knowledge and that it is important to learn things, even if they may not be applicable in every day life. As a student, it's easy to blow off the class that seems to have no relation at all to one's chosen career path, but it's important to realize that the process of learning, regardless of the purpose, is invaluable.

So, if you have a chance to watch the Bee as it repeats over the next few days, take a second to watch the kids on the big stage. And remember, that it's okay to be young, a bit naïve, and in search of knowledge. After recognizing all of the individual skills each of these young men and women have acquired, it's easy to forget to watch and see how they act as a group. If you get the chance, take a little deeper look at how much the kids seem to empathize for each other and support their new friends from all over the country (as well as a few island nations and even Canada) who were often perfect strangers at the beginning of the week.

It's the realization that it's okay to want others to succeed and support them that really makes the experience worthwhile. Looking back, it's tough to imagine what it would have been like if I had spent the entire time trying to prove that I was better than everyone around me. I certainly would not have this editorial topic, which was suggested to me by a fellow speller who is currently in D.C. for this year's bee, nor would I have enjoyed having a chance to stay with one of my best friends on a trip to Chicago last week. Looking back and watching this year's contestants, I guess the old and often forgotten paradigm is true. The best part of life is not necessarily the outcome that is emphasized so strongly, but the journey and the lessons learned along the way.

## RIAA gives unfair punishments

**Staff Editorial**  
*Daily Bruin (UCLA)*

(U-WIRE) The Recording Industry Association of America knows if you've been bad or good — and it wants you running scared.

On May 26, an additional 91 college students were sued for illegal file sharing.

The RIAA says sharing music is a crime similar to other forms of stealing — i.e., downloading or sharing a song is the equivalent of stealing a candy bar from a store. On some levels the

RIAA might be correct — sharing music without consent is illegal, and record companies have the right to seek reasonable punishments. But the RIAA uses its power to sue individuals as a weapon meant to strike fear in people via the threat of tremendous — and unreasonable — penalties.

In fact, the recording industry shares much of the blame for the current state of affairs. It is unfortunate (one could almost say criminal) that it has resorted to targeting colleges for lawsuits. Students from 51 colleges have been the recipients of RIAA lawsuits since April.

The studios of the RIAA ripped customers off for years with expensive CDs and ignored the constructive potential of the Internet. The industry essentially waited for the release of Apple's iTunes Music Store in April 2003 before it had a serious answer to illegally sharing music online. More generally, the RIAA's response to file sharing hasn't been to make music more affordable or accessible. Instead, the RIAA spent its energy and money lobbying for extreme punishments for those who share their files. Let's look at the comparison of stealing

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# Housing complaints keep building

Well, it's now summer time. If you are living on campus this summer, odds are you had to move a few weeks ago. Those who have experienced it firsthand can testify to what torture it is to haul all of your belongings across campus into a new room. It has recently dawned on me that no one in the housing office realizes just how unpleasant this experience is.

By the beginning of the fall semester I will have been at this school for exactly four years and had to move seven times. This seems a bit excessive to me. I'm not sure exactly what set of priorities housing entertains whenever they formulate the logistics for housing all of us, but keeping someone in the same room for an extended period of time is not very high on the list. Can we get a couple IE grad students on this? I am not sure what they would come up with, but they would have a hard time making the situation any worse than it is currently.

However, moving isn't the only thing that has me a little irritated at housing. No, the experience that took the cake happened last fall at Center Street apartments. I was woken up by some grungy contractor telling me that he was "here to change the carpet."

"I beg your pardon? No, I'm



"...I will have been at this school for exactly four years and had to move seven times."

**Jamie Howell**  
Photography Editor

sorry that's not right. We haven't been told anything about having our carpet changed."

I desperately wished this was some sort of mistake, but it wasn't. It was final exam week and Tech housing wanted to change the carpet in our apartment while we were living there. This couldn't be right. Barring some malicious joke, there was really no way anyone from housing maintenance could have been cruel enough to seriously suggest such a thing. After several emails with officials pleading for mercy, the best we could do was get the changing of the carpet pushed back until after final exams. For all the urgency to get our carpet changed, you would figure there was some biological hazard incurred by keeping the carpet we had. No, there was nothing even wrong with our carpet. There were very few stains, no tears, no unusual smells and no toxic mold growing in the

corner. The answer we got from housing on why it needed to be changed was "It was supposed to be changed two years ago." If it was supposed to be changed two years ago, why is it being changed now instead of when it was supposed to be two years ago? At any rate, the day finally came. For 24 straight hours we cooperated with housing in a colossal shuffling of furniture within our apartment so they could change our carpet. Afterward, despite the horrible glue fumes, we were offered no other place to stay. We had no choice but to open up all the windows and just wait until the smell cleared. Oh well, at least I would have clean carpet until I graduated—or not. It turns out that starting this summer, Center Street was closing for the first time in practically forever and we would have to move. The news of Center Street closing for the summer made the timing of the carpet change that

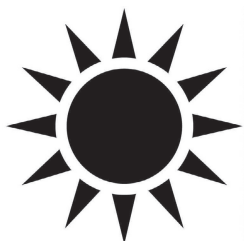
much more infuriating. Why put people through the colossal inconvenience of changing their carpet while they are living there if the whole apartment complex is going to be closed for maintenance in another 4 months? What sorts of clowns are running this circus? Does anyone think about these things in advance?

Two things are very obvious—the planning was haphazard at best and there was little to no regard for the people residing in these apartments. The overall lack of competence in handling that whole situation is just inexcusable. A few months later it's time for me to sign up for fall housing. I'll be on campus for the summer and the fall, so I would prefer to have the same room for both terms. By some folly (most likely my own), I chose a room for the fall that isn't going to be open this summer. By the time I catch my mistake, fall housing deadline has already closed and I was stuck.

After much begging and pleading in person and through an email I was basically told "tough luck." So after moving three weeks ago, I'll be moving again in less than three months. I honestly think I'd rather have a root canal without anesthesia. Doctor, where is my chair?

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

### HOT- or -NOT



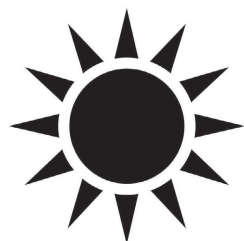
#### Wet n' Wild

In anticipation of the sweltering Georgia heat to come, students are celebrating the return of water to the Campanile. It's a tempting site that offers entertainment to those frustrated with classes, celebrating, or just looking for a good time (though we're technically not supposed to play in the fountains). It also offers a soothing spot to bask in the sun and listen to the relaxing tunes of the Campanile.



#### Growing pains

The construction taking place on 5th street is an inconvenience to many students going anywhere between Tech Square and west campus. The Trolley and Stinger routes have been redirected to side streets. After weeks of construction, students are left to assume that it's road widening related to the bridge expansion to add a park over the interstate, but it is unsure when the blockade will come down.



#### ACC wins

Students can be proud of Tech athletes who have recently clinched ACC regular season titles in women's tennis, softball and baseball. All three also won a second ACC crown by taking home tournament titles as well. Baseball's win helped them to a No. 2 seed in the nation.



#### Barbell eviction

While an alternative solution may not have been available, the eviction of the Barbell Club might have been handled a bit better.

It's always rough when a group on campus has to be served an actual eviction notice to leave their space.

## RIAA

from page 5

a candy bar and the punishment it carries. Stealing anything worth less than \$400 is considered petty theft and is punishable by no more than six months in jail, a fine of \$1,000, or both.

But in reality, few petty thieves receive the maximum penalty, especially for first offenses.

In some cases, California law permits the victims of minor crimes to completely forgive the perpetrator. Even a more serious crime, like driving under the influence, is counted as a misdemeanor for the first offense, with a punishment of 96 hours to six months in jail.

But sharing 10 or more "phonorecords" with a total value of \$2,500 or more can result in up to five years in prison and hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines and civil penalties.

### 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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu) or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Kyle Thomason, 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 reserve the right to edit for style, content, and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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# BUZZ

*Around the Campus*  
**What artist/band would you like to see at Music Midtown?**



**James Turnbull**  
BME Second-year

*"Jimmy Eat World"*



**Leesha Francis**  
MGT Fourth-year

*"Anthony Hamilton"*



**Jason Tongco**  
CS Second-year

*"Red Letter Agent"*



**Karsten Bartling**  
ChemE Fourth-year

*"U2"*

Photos by John Drews