

OPINIONS

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Quote of the week:
"Education...has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading."
—G.M. Trevelyan

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Delaying bylaws

The Undergraduate House of Representatives (UHR) has once again postponed the vote on amending the UHR bylaws. With all the discussion surrounding the proposed changes, it is obvious that some sort of amendment is necessary, and UHR needs to move forward with the process. If UHR expects the bill to be failed, they should go ahead and fail it instead of continually postponing the vote. This way, they would be able to introduce a new version and restart the process.

Unfortunately, postponing the vote is not the only way in which UHR has been wasting time with the bill to amend the bylaws. They have also made several amendments to the bill throughout the process; if UHR will ultimately fail the bill, the amendments are a waste of time.

Considering that part of the reason the vote has been postponed is to ensure that enough representatives in favor of the bill will be present to vote, it is evident that some representatives should be taking their jobs more seriously. As obvious as it may seem, the student body elects its representatives to represent them in UHR sessions. Representatives need to attend meetings for this to happen.

Not only that, but the younger members should find their voices and stop allowing a smaller number of upperclassmen to dominate UHR. It seems that just a few seniors are standing in the way of amending the bylaws; they should not be able to use their seniority to sway younger representatives, who should instead make their own decisions so that the student body as a whole is better represented.

As students continue to watch UHR deliberating over the amendments, they should keep the upcoming Student Government Association (SGA) application deadline, March 16, in mind. SGA can always use new members with fresh ideas and dedication to the process. Every semester, there are majors with representative seats still open and others for which the same representative runs uncontested term after term.

Getting involved with SGA is a great way for any student to get involved on campus and make a positive impact. While voting to pass the bill to amend the UHR bylaws may not seem like a huge change for the Institute, but these changes will affect things like the mandatory Student Activity Fee allocation policies. Tech needs those changes to ensure fairness for all organizations requesting money from SGA.

Not only that, SGA also sponsors events such as GT Night at Six Flags, Finding Common Ground, and One Night Stand. Through funding decisions and programs, SGA affects every student.

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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By David Chen / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Abstain from abstinence-only sex ed

Do your parents know what you do on weekends? For a fairly large proportion of the student body, the answer to this question is "No, and thank God they don't!"

As college students, we've honed our skills at avoiding certain lines of questioning, thereby hiding the myriad activities our parents would not approve of.

Still, one would think that most students' parents aren't utterly clueless enough to not be able to figure out there's something they've not been told when their son or daughter shows up at home at 5 a.m. and staggers to bed every week. How is it, then, that students are able to continue their deception for years, even though in many cases they don't hide it well at all?

In my experience, students have an unexpected ally in keeping parents uninformed about the poor decisions they may be making: the parents themselves. Parental naiveté has become a bulwark of life both for American college students and, increasingly, younger people as well.

The parental insistence on ignoring the pot smoking, binge drinking, Free Love bacchanalia of their little angels has led to a variety of repercussions. Luckily, most of these do not have wider societal implications; rather, these include parents being comically surprised by unwanted pregnancies or by having to pick their son or daughter up from the hospital after an emergency medical intervention.

One particular result of this parental naiveté has had wide-ranging effects on almost all aspects of an American child's upbringing, however: abstinence-only sex education.

Abstinence-only sex education is essentially the teaching of refraining from sex as the only method for avoiding pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), while



"[P]arents continue to... believe their own children remain daisy-fresh while their neighbors raise...trollops."

Arcadiy Kantor
Senior Editor

explicitly not instructing students on safe sex and the use of contraceptives. It's a major issue because a vast proportion of federal education funding is tied to the teaching of this castrated version of sex ed.

The most fascinating aspect of the tie of money for education to abstinence programs is that these programs have been repeatedly shown to fail at their stated goals. The government explicitly funds programs that advocate saving sex for marriage, and despite their increasing prevalence the average age at which Americans first have sex has held steady at 17.

The average age for marriage, on the other hand, remains at 25 years old for women and 27 years old for men, according to information from the Guttmacher Institute. Indeed, according to a 2003 study presented at the American Psychological Society (APS)'s annual meeting, over 60 percent of students who had pledged virginity in middle or high school failed to keep their vow to remain sex-free until marriage.

Furthermore, there are increasing concerns that abstinence-only sex education programs leave teenagers more, not less, vulnerable to STDs. Because they do not teach about the use of condoms or other methods for having safe sex, and because the teenagers are having sex anyway, they can find themselves more at risk.

The issue is complicated even further by the fact that the American insistence on abstinence has created

a massive false dichotomy between vaginal penetration and other sexual acts like oral or anal sex. A survey conducted by *Seventeen* magazine in 2003 found that more than half of 15- to 17-year-olds believed that having oral sex did not mean breaking a vow of abstinence, and the APS study reported that students who pledged abstinence were no more likely to refrain from types of sex other than vaginal.

And these programs have resulted in disturbing statistics, such as 62 percent of males having sex before they were ever shown how to put on a condom, according to a 2002 study.

The body of evidence supporting the superiority of comprehensive sex education that includes a thorough explanation of contraceptives and their effectiveness is extensive. So why is it that the president, a fair proportion of the Senate, and vast numbers of parents support the less effective programs?

The only explanation I can come up with is that despite all the evidence to the contrary, parents continue to blindly believe their own children remain daisy-fresh while their neighbors raise a brood of trollops. Well, dear parents of America, it's time to accept it—your children are having sex, and they're doing it at much earlier ages than you seem to believe.

Now, if children are going to be

See Sex, page 10

Well-informed students make best voters

As any typical student does, I tend to cruise through Facebook from time to time when I should really be doing my homework. The other day as I was doing my usual rounds, I noticed a group that is political in nature. I won't say which side it supported, but either way the group was extreme in its views.

The creation of the group is not what disturbed me. Rather, I was disturbed by how wrong they had gotten the facts. It was not even close. So I began to think of all the misleading that goes on, not just on Facebook, but on the internet and in our daily lives. It's all around us, and more and more of this information is being forced into our lives.

The scariest part of it all is that most of this misinformation is geared toward the college crowd. We are young and impressionable with a new right to vote. Each side sees this as an opportunity to make us commit to their side, so that they can garner votes for the next few elections. All parties know that the college campus is sometimes the battlefield in elections. Plus, they feel if you sway one, then maybe their friends will follow suit and their popularity will grow exponentially.

So as intelligent twenty-somethings, we need to know that sometimes everything we read and everything we hear is not



"Life is all about shades of gray, not black and white, and politics is no different."

Matthew Winkler
Managing Editor

for our own benefit but rather for the benefit of a particular party.

I believe the right to vote is one of the most significant ways the common man can contribute to his government. Everyone has something at stake when it comes to picking his or her government, and every vote counts, as the 2000 election showed.

This year is not an election year, but many candidates are already jockeying for position in the upcoming presidential race. So prepare yourself for a plethora of information and misinformation that is about to flood your consciousness. Each side will praise one while condemning the other and the young voter will have to decide "Who is the best choice for me?"

And if your principles swing toward one party more than the other, it is perfectly acceptable.

Just be informed as much as possible and don't go blindly into the voting booth. The worst-case scenario is supporting a candidate and their platform just because he or she has an R or a D beside the name, not because you agree with his or her ideals.

The best way to ensure you're voting for who you want is to educate yourself. Research the candidates and check out their voting records. Watch C-SPAN if you can manage to stay awake. Watch multiple news affiliates. Listen to both sides, not just one lambasting the other. If your most reliable source is Michael Moore or Rush Limbaugh, then you probably need to investigate why. It's dangerous to listen to one argument while not presenting yourself with a counter argument.

The greatest trick any politician ever pulled was convincing anyone that not agreeing with him or her made you a bad person

who was uneducated. No issue is that simple, and supporting one over the other doesn't make you a bad person. Life is all about shades of gray, not black and white, and politics is no different. It's all about picking the shade of gray that best suits your needs.

So when listening to politically-driven speeches and platforms, don't believe it just because it came from someone who looks trustworthy. Examine the topics for yourself and let you be the one who decides rather than someone else telling you how to decide.

Buddha once said, "Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense." This advice can be used when thinking of which candidate or even which party you decide to support.

All our lives we have heard about the next generation deciding how the world is shaped. Now we are that generation. We decide how this world is shaped. So it is up to us to individually examine what party and what platform we support.

It may not seem like it now, but making a clear, conscious decision in the polls weighs just as heavily as anything we will ever do.

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT- or -NOT



X marks the spot

Several brothers from Theta Xi scored themselves some major cash in the Dr. Pepper Hunt for More Sweepstakes. Their treasure-hunting abilities would make Jack Sparrow, Long John Silver and the rest proud. Even Mother Teresa would be impressed with the brothers' plan to donate a fraction of the \$50,000 to charity. As for the rest of us, we can't help feeling a bit envious.



Breached

It was just like something you would hear in one of those amusing commercials warning of how easy it would be to have your identity stolen without the right company's protection. We never imagined something as huge as having 3000 accounts hacked into from off campus could happen at a school as technologically advanced as ours. At least we have the right company working for us now—thanks, FBI.



Asian awareness

It seems there's nothing Tech students enjoy more than getting together and celebrating our differences. Asian Awareness Week has been added to Tech's yearly calendar, coinciding with other awareness celebrations. Asian cultures are not all fortune cookies and rice, and we look forward to learning more about them.



Piss on 'em

While we feel any of the No. 6 women's tennis team's losses as a blow, a loss to Georgia is especially painful. Despite noble efforts by Kristi Miller and Natalie Frazier, the Jackets couldn't quite sting the No. 12 Bulldogs. Perhaps the No. 13 Clemson Tigers will provide less difficult competition tomorrow.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Media misrepresents Afghans

I want to thank the *Technique* for publishing an article on the subject of Afghan women in the post-Taliban era. I applaud Ms. Shoiab for her interest in Afghanistan and her desire to underline the difference between the religion of Islam and the inhumane rules that the Taliban forced on the Afghan people in the name of Islam. The article, however, inaccurately lists the "Pathans" as "Afghan natives." "Pathan" is the Indian/Pakistani name for a member of the Pashtun ethnic group, which is just one of many native ethnic groups in Afghanistan.

With the media emphasis on any topic except for the war in Afghanistan, there is consequently very little discussion on the plight of the Afghan people. This critical lack of focus bothers me, as an Afghan-American, because I believe that resolving the conflicts within Afghanistan is to the advantage of everyone,

not only the Afghan people.

The terrorist activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, much of which are planned and organized within neighboring Pakistan, disrupt the daily lives of both Afghan women and men as they struggle to build a society from scratch.

Though religious intolerance, racism and sexism did not start with the Taliban, they institutionalized it as a way of life and government after the model of the regime in Saudi Arabia. The challenges that an Afghan woman encounters in her everyday life have a direct connection to the political decisions that are made without her.

Because both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are allies of the U.S. government, we have a direct stake in how our government interacts with these regimes. If we had more frequent and

See Afghan, page 10

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 Amanda Dugan, 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 7 p.m. Tuesday 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.

Advertising Information

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 First Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0290. Questions regarding advertising billing should be directed to Nancy Romero 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, email editor@technique.gatech.edu.

BUZZ Around the Campus

What did you give up for Lent?



Sophia Fisher
Second-year BIO

"Skipping class to try to be more responsible with the time I've been given."



Nic Ngoo
Third-year ME

"Watching anime to save my time."



Suzannah Yates
First-year ISYE

"String cheese because it's my guilty pleasure."



Carlos Cuadrado
First-year BME

"I'm not giving up anything. I am going to pray and study more."

Photos by Gilbert Cha

Options abound for filling dropped class time this spring

Drop day is today. If you want to drop any classes, then you should stop reading this column and get rid of any classes you no longer want immediately. Please come back and finish it though.

Now that most of you have a few extra hours of free time every week since you got rid of half of your schedule on a whim, it's time to look around Tech and find out how else you can spend your time.

If you want to run for student body president, now is your time. If you want to be in Student Government at all, the time to fill out your application is now, or at least some time between now and the deadline of March 16.

This past weekend, I was in Tallahassee at Florida A&M University for a mock trial invitational (Tech won) and realized just how crazy student government elections can be. Candidates for class representative positions had advertisements on major radio stations.

People had their friends holding up signs on every corner. Billboards of the candidates stood on the side of the road. One candidate had



"Tuesday night, the SGA tabled a bill about tables. If you laughed at that, you really should run for office."

Kyle Thomason
Columnist

even acquired a massive, flashing sign generally reserved for DOT work to spread the word about his candidacy.

I'm not going to lie; I'm pretty jealous about that last one. I mean, who knew that you could actually do that?

Anyway, at Tech, there are all sorts of rules with elections that you do not have to spend a billion dollars to win, like they do at FAMU.

Of course, they could have a spending limit as well, and if this is the case, I need to start going to buy everything I want to own in Tallahassee at ridiculously low prices. But I digress.

SGA is a great way to know what

is going on, and it can always benefit from students who simply care about the school and care about how all of the money in student activity fees is spent. Of course, you can also enjoy ironical things, as well; for example, this Tuesday night, the SGA tabled a bill about tables. If you laughed at that, you really should run for office.

One of the topics SGA has been debating—the student athletic fee—helps provide another great way to stay away from homeworking when it's just too nice out to be anywhere else. In fact, Tech has four spring sports teams ranked in the Top 25 in the country.

If you mentally went through

women's tennis, baseball, softball and golf when trying to figure that list out, good job. Now, you should go put your athletic fees to good use and watch them play.

While everyone seems to be fairly aware of the basketball team's uneven play this year, and most of the world seems to be in tune with the football team (which does practice a few weeks in the spring if you just can't get enough), it's impressive how strong of an overall athletic program that Tech is building.

However, the times I have dropped by a tennis match or a softball game, there never seem to be nearly enough fans present for the top-flight teams we field.

The softball team has made it to the NCAA Tournament for five consecutive years, yet I know few students that could tell me where to go for a game—it's over at the intersection of 14th and Mecalán, in case you were curious.

Women's tennis is currently ranked No. 6 in the entire country, and they have been ranked No. 1 this year. To win the National Indoor Championship, the team

defeated Stanford, a team that had won 89 matches in a row prior to Tech's big win.

These are exceptionally good teams that provide great entertainment. Go watch a game or two.

Even the golf team, who often plays in faraway locales, will be in Alpharetta for the United States Collegiate Championship in April and the NCAA East Regional in May.

The other three ranked teams that don Yellow Jacket gear—baseball, softball and tennis—are right on or next to campus, and if you schedule it right, you can even catch all three in one day; I actually did this last year, and it was an incredibly good time.

Give it a try on March 31; there's a women's tennis match against North Carolina at noon, the second game of a softball doubleheader against UNC at 3 p.m. and after dinner, there's a baseball game against Maryland at 7.

So remember, check to make sure you aren't registered for any classes you have never actually attended, and then enjoy the opportunities the spring brings.

Afghan from page 9

accurate discussion of the political situation in Afghanistan, it could make the difference in halting the ongoing war there or preventing another 9/11.

A poem by the Pakistani poet Iqbal sums up the situation: "If Asia

was a body of water and clay, / The Afghan nation would be the heart in that body, / Its prosperity brings the prosperity of Asia, / Its decay brings the decay of Asia."

Donna Sammender
CM student
donaa@gatech.edu

Sex from page 8

having sex regardless, aren't they better off if schools educate them on all of the possible ways they can protect themselves, rather than making sex ed the religious or morality section of health class? I think if parents could get over the initial mental block of

believing, they would agree that they want their children to know about all the different ways to keep themselves safe.

So what can be done to convince parents that they are wearing blinders? Well, as long as it's left up to us college students, nothing at all will be done, because we happen to like

our parents assuming we're exemplar little humans. Perhaps, however, we should be altruistic and, for the benefit of future generations, have that belated conversation about the birds and the bees.

After all, it seems that our parents are really the ones in need of "sex education."

Applications for Editor-in-Chief

are now available for Georgia Tech's five student publications.

Qualified candidates may either pick up an application in Room 137 of the Student Services building or download an application at www.nique.net. E-mail Nancy Romero at nancy.romero@vpss.gatech.edu with questions.

Positions available include Editor-in-Chief of the following publications:

- Blueprint, the yearbook
- Erato, the literary magazine
- North Avenue Review, the open forum magazine
- T-Book, the online survival guide
- Technique, the newspaper

Completed applications must be returned to the Student Publications office by Monday, March 12 at 5:00 p.m.

