

# OPINIONS

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**Quote of the week:**  
"Even if you're on the right track,  
you'll get run over if you just sit there."  
—Will Rogers

## OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

### Hoop dreams

A year ago at this time, the only men's basketball game that required waiting hours in line was the sold-out Jan. 31, 2004 game against Duke. Students camped out to get armbands that would make them eligible for a coveted seat.

Now with the team's successes on the court, attendance is up, and student seating in Alexander Memorial Coliseum has become a pressing issue for the Athletic Association (AA) and student body. Long gone are the days of Paul Hewitt personally hosting competitions to lure students to the games. With only 1,700 student seats in the 9,191 seat-capacity coliseum, it is clear that there are not enough seats to meet student demand. There also exists the problems of how to best distribute student tickets and how best to handle unused general-admission seats at games.

Recently, the AA offered up to 1,000 students vouchers guaranteeing a ticket to a men's basketball game if those students' attend the preceding women's basketball game. Instead of spending two hours waiting for a seat, you can spend two hours cheering on the women's basketball team. This is a creative solution to build a fan base for the women's team, who deserve as much support as our men's team, while satisfying students. However, not every student can participate in this type of promotion because of heavy workloads and time commitments. In addition, signing an attendance sheet before and after the game to prove attendance is cumbersome and inefficient. There should be a faster way, such as swiping your BuzzCard before and after the game.

The obvious solution to the problem is to increase the number of student seats. Since every student pays for tickets to athletic events with our athletic fee, a larger proportion of the seats should be allocated to students. This would, of course, be difficult to implement this year since season tickets are sold out already.

In the meantime, the AA could help the situation by giving unused general admission seats to students. It is an embarrassment to Tech to have courtside seats sit empty during nationally-televised games. After a sufficient amount of time into each game, students should be able to occupy unused seats. If students truly want more seats, they will have to demonstrate to the AA their commitment to the men's team by being more than fair weather fans, by bringing an unforgettably energetic atmosphere to every home game, whether it be against Lafayette or Wake Forest.

Advance tickets should be available to students before game day. This is the only way to solve the problem students face when they stand in line only to be turned away.

*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 Brian Lewis / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

## Outreach: an engineering must

Two weekends ago, I woke up at 7:30 a.m. and then spent my entire Saturday at the CRC. No, I wasn't on some crazy workout plan—I was volunteering at the FIRST Lego League, a statewide robotics competition where junior high students build Lego robots to complete obstacle course-like challenges.

This year's theme was "No Limits," and teams had to build robots that, for example, could bring "food" (Lego blocks) to a table, open gates, and other tasks that simulated (on a smaller, Lego-sized scale) real-life challenges facing disabled people. All robots were based on a programmable body, but the rest of the design—arms, wheels, sensors and everything else—was totally up to the students.

Jeff Davis, an assistant professor in the School of ECE, organizes the Lego League tournaments. Three years ago, I was in one of Dr. Davis's classes, and he offered extra credit for volunteering.

Since then, the tournament has grown from 16 teams competing in the back of SciTrek to 48 teams crowded into almost the entire fourth floor of the CRC. Since then, I've also stopped getting extra credit—but I come back every year, anyway, mostly because I think it's fun to be the "big kid" around all the excited young ones.

I think the real reason I help out with the tournament, though, is because I can appreciate the whole idea behind Lego League: engineering outreach. Granted, Tech's academic departments and administration probably spearhead plenty of K-12 outreach initiatives. What I like about Lego League, though, is that it's the right type of outreach.

In high school, I was part of Math Team, Academic Bowl, Beta Club, etc. The problem with many of these clubs, however, is that even though they look great on your resume, they often don't translate into an



"Being able to answer questions by buzzing in isn't really a useful skill in the work world..."

**Jennifer Lee**  
Focus Editor

engineering career—being able to answer questions quickly by buzzing in isn't really a useful skill in the work world, unless you're planning on being the next Ken Jennings.

But something like designing a robot translates almost directly. Kids learn about programming in order to use the software that controls the robot's processor.

They learn about mechanics: what works and what doesn't in terms of design. They learn about teamwork.

They learn about failure: I watched many teams leave the competition table in tears after their robot didn't perform the way it was supposed to. They learn about development, and the process of building, testing, and refining their robots. Teams also have to give technical and research presentations to a panel of professors and professionals and in doing so learn communication skills.

Of course, it's a middle school competition, and not perfect. Watching team members interact with each other, I wondered how many team members were actually involved in the robot design. Many of the girls on the teams seemed more interested in doing cheers (as the teams do get points for spirit) than the robot performance. There is also a disparity in teams' resources: some schools are willing to create Lego League classes, while others simply do it as an extracurricular activity.

But if you look at the big picture, I'm pretty sure the kids have fun and learn a lot by competing in

Lego League. And middle school teachers learn a lot by being coaches, because they have to guide their students by asking, "Okay, this design doesn't work. What's the problem, and how do we fix it?" while still letting the students come up with the answers.

Professors like Dr. Davis should be commended for looking outside the realm of research and being involved with something like Lego League. I'm sure there are similar programs being done by various Tech departments: the high school math tournament sponsored by the Math department is one example. Unfortunately, with so much importance placed on garnering research funding, outreach is not always a priority for individual professors.

Perhaps most importantly, activities like Lego League give students a taste of real engineering. There is a common misconception among high school counselors and teachers that a student who is good at math and science should automatically consider engineering. That's why I, and probably many others, ended up coming to Tech. But once you get to college, you realize that engineering and the sciences are not really the same at all.

Now that it's my last semester, I almost wish I had had something like Lego League in high school—something that would have given me practical experience and made me think more carefully about what exactly I'm getting myself into when I graduate.



# National sports holiday long overdue

In just a few days, more than 100 million Americans will unite with millions of people from around the world for one single event—the Super Bowl.

People of all ethnicities, of all socio-economic standings, of all religions will be taking part in the same event. How amazing! No other thing in American life can unite people more than sports.

Sports play such an important part in American life that I think it calls for a celebration. Specifically, a new national holiday should be created to celebrate.

Currently there are 10 federal holidays every year, fewer than most modern countries. This means that Americans end up working more days per year than, say, our European counterparts. So I think we're due for another day off.

That's where National Sports Day comes in. At first I thought National Sports Day should fall on the first Monday in February. That way the NFL could schedule the Super Bowl to be the Sunday before. Thus you could party all night long for the Super Bowl and not have to worry about getting up for school or work the next day.

But there are already three national holidays in the first two months of the year—New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day and President's Day. We probably



"Sports play such an important role in American life that I think it calls for a celebration."

**Patrick Odneal**  
Assistant Sports Editor

don't need another holiday so close to the others.

So I checked out where the biggest hole in the calendar is. Turns out that neither March nor April have a federal holiday, creating a huge gap in our schedule of days off. This year, for example, February 17 through May 30 has no federal holiday. That's just too long.

The best day I came up with to place National Sports Day is the first Monday in April. It's halfway between President's Day and Memorial Day, and it could conveniently coincide with opening day of Major League Baseball.

Now all we have to do is sell our idea to Congress and the President. From a political standpoint, sports are huge. Who can forget Nixon's ping-pong diplomacy or the Miracle on Ice? In South and Central America, we unite over soccer and baseball to help break down national barriers. Golf has the President's Cup and the Ryder Cup, which

connect American athletes with athletes from all over the world. All these sporting events seem inconsequential on the surface, but in reality they are great for American foreign relations.

Now let's look at how sports influence the individual. Sports teach discipline, teamwork and respect. They teach how to deal with pressure and how to react under stress. They teach how to control one's temper and how to rise up after failure. All these and more are essential life skills, and so many people learn them from taking part in sports.

A new book by Brian Kilmeade titled *The Games Do Count* chronicles how some of the most successful people in this country have been influenced by sports. Writers, politicians, movie stars, authors, business people and Presidents all recount how sports have positively changed their lives. And here's the thing: these people were considered only "average" athletes when they played. They attribute their

success off the field partly to the lessons they learned just from playing sports, not from excelling at them.

On National Sports Day, we should also commemorate those athletes who have changed the world outside of sports. Think of athletes like Jesse Owens. He not only helped bring an age of racial equality, but by succeeding in the 1936 Olympics, hosted by Nazi Germany, he gave a serious moral blow to Hitler's radical ideas.

Jackie Robinson also paved the way for racial equality, not only in the sports arena, but in this country in general.

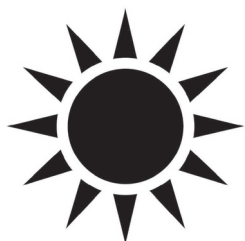
Muhammad Ali is a champion in and out of the ring. He now fights to find a cure for Parkinson's disease in addition to his political activism.

Billie Jean King was much more than a tennis star. She spoke out on the inequalities of pay that women receive both in sports and in ordinary jobs. She was one of many who fought for gender equality.

All these great people should be celebrated on National Sports Day, but it would be so much more than a commemoration. National Sports Day would celebrate the role that sports plays in all our lives. It also would be a nice opportunity to catch a Monday afternoon baseball game on a work-free holiday.

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

### HOT- or -NOT



#### A new courtship

Guaranteed vouchers to men's b-ball games aren't the only things luring fans to women's basketball games. All-ACC volleyball star Lauren Sauer has joined the team in the center position. The 6'4" Sauer was feared in the ACC due to her high number of kills per game. We hope she will bring the same intensity to her new sport and that the "Point Tech" fanbase follows her to AMC.



#### Ribs n Blues' fire

Techies' favorite barbecue joint has been temporarily shut down due to a fire in the grease exhaust system. Luckily no one was harmed in the fire. While nothing is known about how long it will take to repair the damage, students should hold a special place in their heart for the restaurant and remember where to get their ribs and trivia fix when the restaurant reopens later.



#### Survey says

Tired of only voicing complaints about parking behind their backs to your friends? Or have you been dying to give parking a little love? Well with the new Parking survey that's available at [sga.gatech.edu](http://sga.gatech.edu), you can finally let the Parking office know exactly what you think about them.



#### Faulty pipes

To the displeasure of showered Undergraduate Living Center residents and their roommates, ULC's water was shut off most of Tuesday to repair an unexpected water pipe leak. Residents had time to find nose plugs due to Housing staff, some of whom went door-to-door to inform residents.

## Tsunami bloggers unite

By Erin McNamee  
*Massachusetts Daily Collegian*

(U-WIRE) U. Massachusetts-Amherst—There is so much to say about the recent tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia. I could write about President Bush's slow response to the situation in terms of aid and leadership, the outpouring of donations by the American public or the need for us, as Americans, to see this experience as a wake-up call in terms of being more aware of the rest of the world, but I know you've probably heard about that stuff to death by now.

Instead, I'd like to discuss a relatively remarkable phenomenon I stumbled upon while searching the Web for a suitable charity to donate some pennies and pocket lint to: The role of "blogs" in creating awareness of the tsunami disaster.

In case you live under a rock, blogs (short for "Web logs") are usually written and maintained by people wanting to publicize

their opinions in hopes that total strangers will randomly stumble upon their Web space and become avid, loyal readers.

While there are countless blogs ranging in subject from political musings to mundane personal details, some blogs are actually quite good and have a substantial readership, a feat that can often garner the author a shout-out in a major newspaper or a link off another prominent blog.

Many blogs pertaining to the tsunami disaster have popped up in the last few weeks and though some aren't worth your time, others provide a valuable, undiluted look at the aftermath of the tsunami and serve as both a place to offer and seek help for those in need.

The most comprehensive blog I've found is called "The South-East Asia Earthquake and Tsunami Blog," ([www.tsunamihelp.blogspot.com](http://www.tsunamihelp.blogspot.com)).

See Blogs, 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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu) or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Daniel Amick, 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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### 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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu).

## BUZZ

*Around the Campus*  
What was the last good movie you saw, and why did you like it?



**Adam Fitzgerald**  
CS Freshman

"The Village—it raises interesting questions about society."



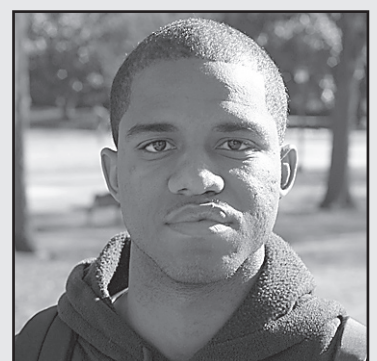
**Jennifer Weizenecker**  
CE Freshman

"Meet the Fockers—it was ridiculously funny."



**Pryadarshini Bandaru**  
EE Junior

"Spiderman 2—it was pretty cool, directed well and it had great effects."



**Keon Copeland**  
CompE Senior

"Coach Carter—I like Samuel L. Jackson. He played the part well."

Photos by Jon Drews

## Blogs

from page 9

Dubbed the “SEA-EAT Blog” for short, its highlights include personal accounts of the tsunami, a list of missing persons, photographs, opportunities to donate money to the relief efforts and a place to seek out missing loved ones.

My favorite section of this blog is the “Help Offered” page where people from around the world can post their desire to go where help is needed.

For instance, one person wrote, “I am a manager with a broadcast/IT/telecoms engineering firm. I and other engineers would like to volunteer to go to South-East Asia region to assist in the restoration of telecoms etc. We would also like to help get local radio stations up and running/back on air so people can share important information. I know health care and food is critical right now, but we just want to help. I’m making inquiries but if anyone can suggest who I should contact so our effort has maximum effect please, please email me.”

Similar offers range from a woman offering her childcare expertise to a South Africa-based medical rescue and evacuation company seeking deployment where needed.

What struck me most while browsing this and other similar blogs is the sense of community created amongst their readers. Instead of passively watching CNN with a snack and a glass of wine at your fingertips, reading a blog forces you to become a somewhat active participant in a dire situation.

While it is unrealistic to expect

the majority of people to be able to offer physical assistance and it is impossible for others to provide financial aid, reading and posting in a blog provides a more honest and pure outlook of the situation while giving you a direct connection to the people affected by and involved in the tragedy.

The material you see is unedited and unadulterated by network censors or drama-seeking television producers. Best of all, you’re allowed to interpret the information for yourself before it’s filtered through the mainstream media.

I’m not saying not to donate money if you’re able. As a “poor college student,” I managed to scrape together a small sum for the American Red Cross, in effect sacrificing perhaps a few trips to the movies and a couple burritos at Bueno Y Sano. To me, this is a small price to pay. I can easily do without these “creature” comforts when so many people are without any comforts at all.

So while donating money and/or time is obviously extremely important in this and other critical situations around the world, it is equally important to remain connected and keep a constant, unwavering gaze on the tragedies that are occurring everyday around the globe. So while it isn’t my intent to preach or tell you what to do, I urge you to take a look at the SEA-EAT blog and any other blogs you find of interest.

Even if you post a simple “thinking of you”-type message, rest assured that it will be read by people all over the world and, I guarantee, will touch at least one person, somewhere, somehow.

## BLINDED BY SCIENCE

# Summers deserves second chance

By now, I’m sure that many of you have heard about the controversial remarks made by Harvard president Lawrence Summers in regards to the success of women in science and engineering fields. Summers discussed the possibility that there are innate differences between men and women in terms of their ability to achieve success in these fields. This issue is certainly relevant to Tech students, especially with our legendary ratio, and its merits require further study.

Now, as a female in a scientific field, I firmly believe that women can and do succeed in fields that have long been dominated by men.

Significant leaps have already been made to encourage women to pursue careers in science and engineering.

For example, when my dad attended Tech in the late ‘60s, there was only a handful of women in his graduating class (the whole class, not just in his major). Now, women account for over 30 percent of the school’s population. I know that’s not a huge percentage, but it’s an improvement.

I think a lot of the cultural influence directing women towards more traditionally female careers has been erased—not all, but a lot. I know I grew up under the impression that women can choose whatever career they want to.

Summers made a valid point when he said that there are certain innate differences between men and women



“It’s the “Mooomm! He’s looking at me, make him stop!” response that a child has and it’s silly.”

**Andrea Thompson**  
Columnist

and that these differences may predispose more men to choose careers in science and engineering.

This statement by no means says that women are stupid or that they cannot succeed in these fields, nor does it imply that women are lesser academics for choosing careers in the liberal arts.

Summers has said as much in the numerous apologies he has made. He could have chosen his words more carefully, but I don’t think they were intended to be offensive. He was simply pointing out that this is an interesting area of research that could produce valuable results in terms of promoting female interest in scientific fields.

Summers has proven his contrition over his remarks through his apologies. He has instituted a new initiative to recruit more women to Harvard. And yet he is still harped upon.

Now I certainly wasn’t present at the speech, but he seems to be making every effort to clarify his remarks and make amends. So, enough already.

Situations like this serve to highlight how feminism has come to represent a hypersensitive response to any statement that could even remotely be construed as derogatory to women. It’s the “Mooomm! He’s looking at me! Make him stop!” response that a child has, and it’s silly.

If someone says, “women are stupid and shouldn’t be allowed to have careers,” then they could probably do with a little bit of enlightenment on the subject; but I don’t think that’s even close to being the case here.

Feminism is wonderful in that it discourages discrimination and promotes equal treatment between the sexes. It is by this definition that I consider myself a feminist. But feminism cannot dictate what women choose to do or how they live their life.

If a woman decides to become an electrical engineer, that should be okay.

If a woman decides to become a nurse or wants to be a stay-at-home mom, then that should be okay, too.