

# OPINIONS

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## Quote of the week:

"The best way to have a good idea is to have a lot of ideas."  
 —Linus Pauling

## OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

# Merit your honor

Under the lead of professors Randy Engle and Greg Nobles, the College of Architecture, the College of Sciences and Ivan Allen College have continued along the winding path of planning the Honors Program.

Three ad-hoc committees involving faculty and students have been formed to work out the details for the program to be implemented in the three colleges by Fall 2006.

While it is understandable that advocates of the plan wish to open the program to students as soon as possible, it is imperative that it be something that actually does benefit, or at least do no disservice to the Tech community as a whole.

Engle and Nobles have both indicated that the Honors courses would not necessarily be harder than standard Tech classes, but rather that they would be "different."

If the Honors classes aren't any harder, then what makes Honors program graduates deserving of a more prestigious degree? Graduates of such an Honors program would have a leg up in applying for jobs and graduate schools simply by having an honors degree. And if admission into the Honors program is based solely on high school preformance, does that mean these students will have an advantage all through college and beyond simply for having done well in high school?

This, of course, leads to the question of what sort of admissions criteria would make one student more eligible for an Honors program than the other; we await a (hopefully) satisfactory answer.

Creating an Honors degree can be a great attribute, but if it isn't worthy of its lofty status, it would only unnessecarily devalue the degree of every other Tech student.

# Insure your health

Tech, UGA, Georgia State and Medical College of Georgia have come together to form a task force to provide their graduate students with quality and affordable health insurance, by making insurance mandatory for a larger percentage of graduates.

While it may seem strange and potentially undesirable to force a financial obligation onto students, a mandatory insurance policy helps make insurance more accessible for all.

At a time when yearly insurance premiums increase by up to 30 percent for some students, placing a greater number of students under a mandatory policy will allow these students to negotiate a better bargain for their money.

A better insurance policy will improve retention of current students and make Tech more attractive to graduate students.

*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 Patrick Odneal / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

# Fuel crisis calls for alternatives

I'm sure the gradual increase in gas prices over the past few years, as well as the sudden spike in gas prices over the past few months, needs no introduction.

Almost everyone I know complains about the price of gas these days, and I can't say I blame them.

I used to brush off the issue of increased gas prices. My car gets between 31 and 35 miles per gallon and I figured, "Well, I'm not as bad off as most people," but after paying \$37 at my last fill up (\$3.11 per gallon times 12 gallons), even I am starting to feel the pressure.

I am not terribly optimistic on the outlook either. I believe at this point gas prices are a lot like school fees—once they go up, they don't come back down. This means that we clearly can't keep going on like we have in the past.

The main problems here are twofold:

The first, and easiest, problem is that of perception and status. Whether most will admit it, this plays a very significant roll for most in the purchase of an automobile.

People want something stylish that will make them look better in the eyes of others. They want a status symbol.

Its for this reason that my dad just bought a V8 Toyota Tundra (which gets 18 mpg) when the 4 cylinder Toyota Tacoma that he got rid of (which got almost 30 mpg) more than suited his needs.

Its also for this reason that many of the rednecks in my hometown would rather chew off their left arm than be caught in anything less than a jacked up, V8 4x4 pickup with 36-inch mud tires.

Don't laugh too hard just yet. The obsession with impractical vehicles is just as rampant in the big city.

Where else can you find someone who pays more per month for his supercharged V8 Mercedes than he



"A larger and larger percentage of consumers are going to demand more fuel efficient cars. The norm is going to shift...."

**Jamie Howell**  
 Photography Editor

does his two-bedroom apartment? Face it, our status symbols mean a lot to us.

How much are these status symbols costing us? Currently if you drive 250 miles a week and you get 18 mpg, you are paying \$72 a month more per month than someone who is getting 36 mpg.

If gas ever gets up to \$4.50 a gallon, that difference will increase to \$108 a month.

Is \$108 a month worth it? For the average soccer mom and dad trying to keep up with the Joneses next door, probably. For anyone else, who knows? Your mileage may vary—pun intended.

The second main problem—one that I believe will be much harder to solve—is one of Americans simply driving too much.

As America becomes more spread out, we have no choice but to travel more. We travel (often long distances) to work, to shop and to play.

Carpooling makes sense, but it is not very practical. How often do you run across a situation where between two and five people want to go to the same place at the same time? Aside from the occasional Kroger run or away football game, I can't think of too many.

The real problem is that we have a lot of people who need to get a lot of different places on a frequent basis. Carpooling could help in some circumstances but is clearly

not the answer.

In the car-buying market I believe there are three basic groups of consumers—those who care about nothing but looks and status, those who care about nothing but economy and the vast percentage of consumers somewhere in the middle that base their purchases on both style and economy.

Just for the record, I think both extremes of this market will always exist. There will always be the rich who could care less about fuel prices and there will always be the poor college student who just wants to get from point A to point B as cheaply as possible.

Where the changes are going to occur, though, is with the mainstream.

A larger and larger percentage of consumers are going to demand more fuel efficient cars. The norm is going to shift from cars like the Honda Accord to cars such as a Honda Accord-H (hybrid, hydrogen or maybe both). Give it five years, it will happen.

The gears of change are already turning. Ultra fuel efficient vehicles used to be confined to the low end economy market but are now creeping up into midsize and luxury segments.

This is ultimately the most important step to winning the hearts of mainstream America. Because in the eyes of the Joneses, driving a 2000 pound econobox just isn't cool.



# Online information often misleads viewer

With the widespread use of the Facebook and Google, much of a college student's personal data is readily available online.

Both technologies are great to learn more about current friends or to find out new information about recent acquaintances but should be used sparingly when trying to get to know someone new.

My concern is that people rely too much on the Facebook and Google to make judgments about strangers and that often-times people evaluate each other based solely on what they read online.

Take for example a freshman student who is applying to be a member of a student organization. Whether it's a fraternity or sorority, one of the handful of freshman leadership organizations or any other group where a large number of applicants fill a limited number of openings, chances are that the members of the organization have looked up the biographies of all the new applicants through Facebook and Google.

First impressions are hard to erase, and when a first impression of a person comes from a Facebook page, it can be misleading.

Does a list of one's favorite music show how hard a worker he is? Do the books a person reads reflect how smart she is?



**"Call me Mr. Obvious, but a good rule of thumb is to only post stuff that you would want your mom or your future employer to see."**

**Patrick Odneal**  
Sports Editor

Is someone with 200 Facebook friends twice as social as someone with 100 friends?

Perhaps most detrimental is when people log on to Facebook to see how good looking someone is. If a picture says a thousand words, it can also tell a thousand lies—meaning that, for better or worse, people in real life don't always look like their snapshot on a website.

Popular search engines like Google also don't divulge the inner intricacies of a person. Search engines are only as good as the information available on websites, and so much about a person isn't typed up on the internet.

Search engines are geared toward the most recently updated information. That's why a search for my name returns my *Technique* articles first.

A search result is also geared toward sites that have more of a

"web presence." Sites that generate more volume of visitors generally get ranked higher on a search results page than those sites that have a limited fan base.

Ten years ago, no one could have predicted the effect that Google has on our lives today. Google is so common that it is becoming part of the vernacular. Have a question? "Just google it," we say.

The same is true for the Facebook, and perhaps the Facebook is spreading even faster than Google did.

Take as an example the latest book by Tom Wolfe, called *I Am Charlotte Simmons*, which takes place at the fictional Dupont University. Even though the book was published in November 2004, it was already out of date when it hit bookstores less than a year ago because it was written just before the Facebook craze started.

The book tries to chronicle the ways of college life—from life in the classroom and dorms to parties and college sports—but what's left out in Wolfe's book is a student's constant consultation of other people's online profile.

(On a side note, Wolfe's book has gotten only mixed reviews, and it fails in many ways other than missing the Facebook boat. If you haven't read it yet, don't bother. You have better things to do with your time.)

My advice to students is to always be cautious about what information they post on the internet. From your profile on the Facebook to your personal websites and blogs, remember that you never know who will be looking up your personal information online. Your residence on the internet is like a glass house—it's there for everyone to see.

Call me Mr. Obvious, but a good rule of thumb is to only post stuff that you would want your mom or your future employer to see. Stay away from pictures where you are participating in illegal activities, like drug use or under-aged drinking, vandalism or burglary. Also, make sure you are properly clothed in your pictures.

So congratulations, you have read my entire editorial. Now you may go back to your Facebook.

## BUZZ Around the Campus Should creationism or evolution be taught in schools?



**Jacob Tucker**  
Fifth-year INTA

**"Both should be taught as theories, as neither can be proven."**



**Hattie Ni**  
Third-year STAC

**"No."**



**Rolan Duvvury**  
First-year ARCH

**"We should teach evolution because it happens to be right."**



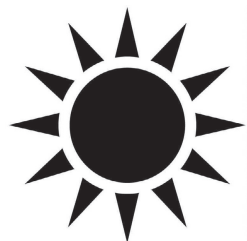
**Sharon Pamperin**  
First-year BME

**"Creationism."**

Ben Keyserling

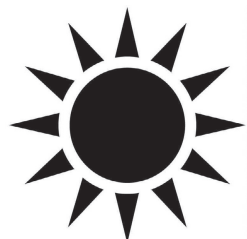
### OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

## HOT- or -NOT



### One world

Tech students and social activism came together in a rare meeting this past Tuesday during the MOVE and SGA sponsored rally for the ONE Campaign. ONE, the "Campaign to Make Poverty History," is a movement to fight AIDS and poverty in Africa that is spreading quickly throughout the country with the help of endorsement by the likes of Bono, Brad Pitt and other big-name celebrities.



### Cash money records

While we did not reach our goal of raising \$50,000 for Katrina relief, \$45,000 is pretty darn close. The Tech community has consistently set very high goals where charity is concerned. We put our money where our hearts are, and so falling short of a \$50,000 goal by \$5,000 is still quite admirable.



### It's not 'T' time

To the person who stole the 'T' from the Office of Community Service and Greek Affairs: the point of stealing the 'T' from Tech Tower is the challenge of doing so (but don't try). Sauntering out of an office with the 'T' doesn't mean jack. Tech tradition is one thing; taking a \$5,500 'T' replica from an office is another. Thank you, though, for returning the 'T' safe and sound, along with a nice note of apology.



### Belligerent drunks

Last Friday night, five to six drunken males damaged approximately thirty student-made models at the architecture building. The perpetrators were driven out and police are investigating the incident. However, the real question is why a bunch of drunks would go to the architecture building on a Friday night?

## Trojan horse infiltrates science

Staff Editorial  
*Tufts Daily*

(U-WIRE) Tufts U.—With the opening last week of *Kitz-miller et al. v. Dover Area School District* in a Pennsylvania federal court, the age-old battle between science and religion returned to national prominence. The latest installment in this historically innate conflict addresses the validity of the "theory" of intelligent design. Specifically, should intelligent design be mentioned in Dover School District biology textbooks as a legitimate alternative to the theory of evolution?

One basic point is key to understanding the intelligent design controversy: in the battle over official government policy and the public school curriculum, religion has, in general, been defeated by science. In the 80 years since the Scopes trial, legislators, educators and judges alike have found that in the interest of constitutional principles and in pursuit of the best possible

education for American children, religion must be kept separate from science.

The quandary, then, for opponents of science and rational thought, is how to infiltrate a system from which they have been ejected. The answer appears straight out of Homer's *Odyssey*. While creationism is far too overtly religious to be widely accepted in the public school system, creationism without any mention of God and propagated by institutions and individuals pretending to be members of the scientific community would serve as a sort of Trojan horse for fundamentalist religious activists. A faux "theory" of the origins of life which holds onto the major principles of creationism while still sounding scientific may be able to infiltrate high school biology textbooks and undermine evolution.

This is the role of intelligent design. Because it doesn't men-

See Science, page 8

### 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.

### Advertising Information

Information and rate cards can be found online at [www.nique.net](http://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 Grant Schissler at (404) 894-9187, or Rose Mary 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, email [editor@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu).



## Science from page 7

tion God, or even god, and because it is promoted by right-wing "scientific" organizations like the Discovery Institute, it is considered by some, most publicly the Dover Area School Board, to be an acceptable way to acknowledge and sate religious hostility and discomfort with the theory of evolution.

The problem with intelligent design, of course, is that it quite clearly has nothing whatsoever to do with science. A scientific theory is based on observable evidence, and hence is testable. Intelligent design is based only on blind faith, and is therefore not testable.

Observing phenomena, such as the rich biological diversity and complexity on earth and seeking to explain it through the creation of some unseen force or entity is a completely valid way of understanding the world. However, that type of reasoning is religious or philosophical rather than scientific in nature. What advocates of intelligent design do not understand is that the consequences of confusing religion and science can be catastrophic.

To the Christian right, society's ills are caused by the general failure of people to accept Jesus as their savior. This reasoning may be valid to a person who can look back fondly on the filth, feudalism, and state of perpetual war that was Christian medieval Europe, but to those Americans who are not members of the Republican Party, science and rational thought are all that stand between 21st century America and a new Inquisition.

# Proving innocence in face of FBI phone taps

The FBI has announced that sometimes it accidentally listens to the wrong conversations over tapped telephone lines under the Patriot Act. While information gathered cannot be used against you per se, it is possible information you give over the phone may be used for further investigations of you.

For this reason, to prove I'm an honest citizen, I have written below transcripts of the past five telephone conversations I have had. The boring parts have been taken out. The rest remains intact:

Retail store, 10/2/05, 2:13p.m.

Me: Hello?

Clerk: Hi?

Me: What's your return policy?

Clerk: What?

Me: Your return policy?

Clerk: What's a—?

Me: I bought this jacket last week, but it's too big. Can I return it if I have the receipt?

Clerk: Yeah?

Me: Thanks.

Clerk: [click]

Pharmacy, 10/2/05, 4:15p.m.

Recording: Thank you for calling the pharmacy. If you wish to refill a prescription, please press 1. If you are a doctor, please press 9. If you would like a prescription filled, please press 3.

Me: [press 1]

Recording: Please enter the six digit code located on the left corner of your prescription, then press the pound key.

Me: [skilled button pushing]



"If I'm guilty of anything, it's preferring to talk to actual people. I also occasionally curse at recorded voices."

**Alexandra Pajak**  
Columnist

Recording: If you would like to pick up your prescription today, press 1. Tomorrow, press 2.

Then, my favorite part:

Recording: Enter the time you would like to pick up your prescription. For example, if you would like to pick up your prescription at 4 o'clock, press four, zero, zero, then press the pound key.

The high point of the conversation is when I press "1" for "a.m." and "2" for "p.m." which is even cooler.

Younger sibling, 10/3/05, 1:11a.m.

Me: Hello?

Sibling: Hey, Alexandra.

Me: It's past 1a.m.! Are you ok?

Sibling: You said you wanted to talk.

Me: I said I'd be up around midnight.

Sibling: Well, college is going well. I got an "A" on my English paper. I have a math test tomorrow. I finished all my problem sets except one, and I'm hoping for a "B," but we'll see. I just finished a psych paper. It's about schizophrenia. It turns out that within

schizophrenia are actually two subgroups of people, one of whom are obsessive-compulsive—

Me: [incoherent muffled noise]

Sibling: What?

Me: Sorry...I'm really tired.

Sibling: Oh, ok. Let's talk tomorrow. How's that?

Me: Ok.

I don't remember actually hanging up the phone. I think I fell asleep somewhere between the last 'ok' and heading back into bed.

Extended Family, 10/1/05

Me: Oh, hi mom. How was Cousin Lenny's wedding?

Mom: It was great. The reception was very nice. We went on a Frank Lloyd Wright Tour.

Me: That sounds neat. I didn't know there were Frank Lloyd Wright houses in Buffalo.

Mom: Me neither. It was very nice. Would you like to talk to your Aunt Maggie?

Me: Ok.

Aunt Maggie: Hi!

Me: Hi Aunt Maggie.

Aunt Maggie: How are you?

Me: I'm fine.

Aunt Maggie: I've never used a cell phone before, so I'm giving it back to your mother.

Me: Ok.

Aunt Maggie: Bye!

Me: Bye, Aunt Maggie.

Mom: Would you like to talk to your Uncle Frank?

Me: Ok.

Uncle Frank: Hello!

Me: Hi, Uncle Frank.

Uncle Frank: How's it going?

Me: Pretty good. How are you?

Uncle Frank: Pretty good. Well, take it easy!

Me: Ok.

Uncle Frank: Bye.

Me: Bye.

Telemarketer, Everyday, Dinnertime

Me: Hello?

Telemarketer: Hello, is this Alexandria... Pojack?

Me: [click]

If I'm guilty of anything, it's preferring to talk to actual people. I also occasionally curse at recorded voices. I sometimes mistake a recorded voice for an actual one. Kafka, you were right all along. And you, too, Jerry Seinfeld.

So there's my proof I'm a good citizen. And if any FBI agents are reading this and are still interested in tapping my calls, could you please send David Duchovny to investigate? I know that is SO 1990s and only one step down from a total Trekkie. But if I'm going to have my wires tapped, it's worth trying to have some fun with it.

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