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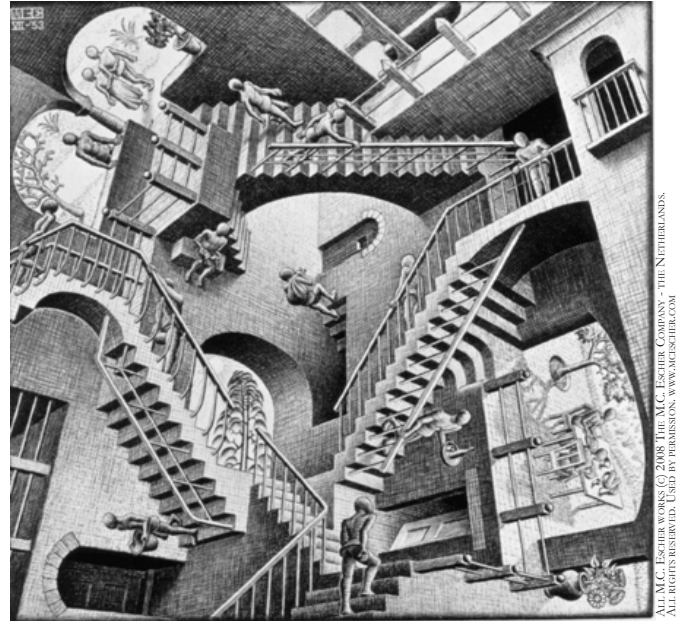
PROGRAM

March/April 2008

THE VIEW FROM HERE

BY DR. MONICA HALKA

From where I sit, it's easy to see what the Honors Program is. But it's not so easy to explain. We use certain buzzwords, like "engagement," "inquiry," "passion." What do these mean in the context of an academic setting? This is a question that we must answer not only when we talk to prospective students and their parents, but also to the larger academic community of Georgia Tech. Believe it or not, there are still many faculty and advisors who don't know what we're about, what we do, what it means to be a member of the Honors Program. (Some even think we are the same thing as President's Scholars.) So we're reaching out. We want to show what we have become in the first two years, how we got here, how our directions have changed and how we fit at Tech – how we affect the campus and how the campus affects us. On April 24, we will be hosting the first annual Honors Program Student Expo – your chance to shine. HP students are encouraged to give poster sessions, Pecha Kucha style slide shows, multimedia, whatever! If it's created by you, let's show it to the campus! Students are the agents of formation and change in our system. Don't miss this opportunity to show how you are helping to mold higher education.



Reflections on Einstein's Dreams

BY CAROLA CONCES

The Honors Program, with help from the College of Science, recently hosted Dr. Alan Lightman, author of *Einstein's Dreams*, for a lecture, book signing and discussion. In preparation for his visit, many of our students and faculty read and discussed his short novel, in which each chapter presents a possible theory of time. Since Lightman is a professor of physics at MIT, I expected to read a historical and technical account of Einstein's life and research. I was pleasantly surprised, then, by his lyrical, somnambular prose. His scientific background is evident, but in no way subtracts from the literary merit of his work. It was refreshing to see science and the arts united; in fact, the title of

See Einstein pg. 4

Help show Tech what the Honors Program is...

Present **YOUR** work at the

HONORS PROGRAM EXPO!

April 24th, 4:30 – 7:00 pm

Pick up/turn in proposal forms at the HP Office

Proposals due Friday, April 4th by noon

Making Games

BY HOLDEN LINK

The Game Developer's Conference is the world's largest gathering of gaming industry professionals. In February, over 20,000 programmers, artists, designers and writers traveled to San Francisco to teach and learn from each other. Thanks to the GT Honors Program Student Challenge Fund, we three students were able to attend. To aspiring game developers Cory Johnson, Ian Guthridge, and myself, the conference presented the best networking opportunity we could imagine. Aside from meeting the masterminds behind hit titles like Halo, Team Fortress 2, Mass Effect, and Rock Band, we heard lectures on how to improve our skills, led by industry idols like Paul Steed (Quake) and Kim Swift (Portal). We also got the chance to attend the Game Developers Choice Awards and the Independent Games Festival – two annual ceremonies that honor the industry's best creative talent. The Independent Games Festival was particularly inspiring because all the titles showcased were created by small groups of people who didn't have significant funding. It's amazing what creative minds can produce even when they don't have money to back them up.



Being a young student at the conference was simultaneously exhilarating and aggravating. Many employers were impressed with our dedication in coming to a conference like this during our freshman year. We even ran into a few recruiters we previously met at Georgia Tech. Unfortunately, however, we couldn't attend all the lectures we wanted because of our lower-level conference passes.

We took the advice of the professionals we met to heart. We're now working as a team to produce games for a fitness company that uses motion-sensing technology in its gyms. We hope this new source of experience and income will enable us not only to attend the Game Developer's Conference each year we're at Georgia Tech, but to do so with the higher-level pass. Our first game was shown at a major fitness conference in San Diego and also in a televised newscast, and the Florida Times Union mentioned us in connection with a franchised store in Jacksonville, FL. We plan to continue working throughout the summer not only on our freelance work, but also on a project of our own.

Heard in HP

“It's like a good avalanche.”

Arts & Leisure

Ponder by Allison Gooch



Allison Gooch is a first year Computational Media major. She became interested in digital graphics and animation in high school. She currently does some freelance web design. Once she graduates from Tech she plans on getting a job animating for Disney-Pixar.

Her piece, *Ponder*, was made in Adobe Illustrator. The main shape represents the musical instrument lyre, as well as something that distances the person from Earth. He lies pondering under the tree while observing the world around him from a different perspective. This shows how he wants to be alone but also how he feels trapped. The rose beside him represents love while the music notes inside the lyre show both peace and the act of pondering.

Tech Square Triad by Joseph Vizurraga



Joseph Vizurraga is a second year architecture student and has been drawing all his life.

His piece of artwork is a three-part drawing of the Barnes & Noble building and its surroundings on the corner of 5th Street and Spring Street in Tech Square. The first is a basic perspective line drawing. The second is its color counterpart. The third is how ordinary people passed through the space over time.

Einstein (cont.)

Lightman's presentation was "The Crossroads of Science and the Arts."

At schools like Georgia Tech and MIT, scientific knowledge is often regarded as the sacrosanct be-all-end-all of academia, and scientific inquiry its inviolable method of collection. The arts, on the other hand, are just those shows at the Ferst Center that Dr. Halka always emails us about. Historically, this wasn't the case. The greatest ancient scientists and mathematicians were also the greatest philosophers. The great men (sadly, few women thinkers are recorded in history) were, in short, great thinkers. Lightman suggests that we begin as scientists and later try literature or other arts since science, he says, is a young man's game.

I hope, however, that I don't have to wait to be an artist, in some sense of the word. I'd like to bring an artistic perspective to any work that I do in mathematics or economics. When it comes to subjects like time, space, numbers, nature, and dreams, it is futile to separate technical explanations from personal and social interpretations—or, loosely speaking, science from art. Science is how we pursue knowledge, but art is how we decide which knowledge to pursue and what to do with it. The two are inseparable.



Dr. Lightman meets students while signing his books

Happy Earth Day

BY CAROLA CONCES

I planned to go skiing this Spring Break, but Mother Nature had other plans. Two tornados and a hail storm in Atlanta, and flash flooding elsewhere, kept me stranded at Tech until Wednesday. I finally made it home to Dallas, but didn't get to ski. I promise I'm not bitter (anymore). After all, it was a learning experience.

I kept the TV turned on a lot while I was alone in my apartment. The first thing I learned was the really cool adjective tornadic, as in, "Stay tuned for special footage of tornadic activity in the downtown area." I also learned some sports trivia. Apparently baseball-sized hail is larger than tennis ball-sized hail. Who knew? Third, I learned that people are universally fascinated by natural disaster. The environment, it seems, is the ultimate reality show: an irresistible guilty pleasure, the louder, flashier, and more destructive the better. And some of the most rapt viewers are right here in the Honors Program.

From special topics courses to student organizations, the program has developed a strong preoccupation with the environment. Courses have focused on natural disasters, alternative energy, and global warming. HP students Will Boyd and Sydney Shaffer, among others, chartered TrailBlazers to do service work on trails. Liam Rattray's efforts with Students for Sustainability have brought local farm produce to campus. Efforts to begin a vegetable garden near Howell are under way.

An environmental theme was never explicitly planned for the Honors Program, but it quickly emerged. Why? Probably because it is about as interdisciplinary as you can get. Environmental problems are some of the biggest, and their solutions are sure to require creativity and multi-faceted thinking. We are not content to simply watch the weather on TV; we want to explore it from the perspectives of scientists, engineers, economists, sociologists, and policy makers. The diversity of ideas represented in our program makes an ideal breeding ground for environmental innovation. So have a happy Earth Day (April 22)—and thanks for helping ensure that we'll have many more.

The Sophomore Slump

BY MADDIE STODDART

It's happened again. I'm still disoriented from waking up in a plastic chair desk combo with the fluorescent lights of the IC burning into my eyes, and my classmates are putting away their notebooks, computers, and own glazed expressions as they ready themselves to leave. I've fallen asleep again, and as I get my own things together, I don't know if I am really awake, either. I feel like I am sleepwalking in the mid-March sunshine, or maybe I am sleepwalking through this whole sophomore year. When I asked someone about this feeling, this anxiety and uncertainty mixed with apathy and extreme desire to do something drastic – they said it wasn't uncommon, simply the dreaded “sophomore slump.” The realization that you have laid to rest the bright-eyed freshman persona, but have yet to assume the serious senior with their eyes on the prize – you are at some in-between limbo, torn between serious decisions, defining yourself, and, of course, the Paper Chase (a metaphor describing the constant struggle to get hold of SAT scores, a high school diploma, an acceptance letter, a college degree, a masters, a PhD – all milestones attached to a simple piece of paper). And in the post-spring break atmosphere, it's hitting harder than ever, no longer limited to sophomores. You baby freshman are feeling it, too.

So – how to avoid it? You can't. You will, at one point or another, question your major, your classes, your professor, your very existence as a Georgia Tech student – that is, if you haven't already. It is not a bad thing to question yourself at times, in fact I don't know if the average student asks enough of themselves. There is such a mentality at Georgia Tech of needing to graduate in four years, needing to overload yourself with classes and research and extracurriculars so that sleeplessness and stress become as second nature to Georgia Tech students as the automatic hostility against all things UGA. But sometimes we need to ask ourselves – is this taking me closer to the things that I want? Am I working towards achieving my goals? Am I any nearer to the person I imagined I would be upon graduating? Will I be happier for accomplishing this?

There are things that you can do, however, to re-energize yourself, or maybe discover something greater, do something bigger, and leave your slump to soar to new heights. Take this chance to get involved with something completely foreign to your daily routine – salsa dancing, yoga, painting. Start spending your time on getting ready to take on a new challenge – maybe studying abroad for a semester, spending a summer working in another country, or starting an initiative to see the changes you want on campus. Take a class outside of your major, or an Honors Program special topics course that introduces you to a new way of approaching your other classes. Talk to other students or professors, their stories might inspire you to take on a new challenge in your on life. And always, question yourself, challenge yourself, and attempt to grow beyond the limitations of the Tech bubble. Those are the only answers to end the sleepwalking sophomore slump and a reminder that you are chasing more than paper.

HP Special Topics for Fall

BY CAROLA CONCES

It's almost time to register for a new semester, and we all know what that means...free lunch from the Honors Program! Oh, and new special topics classes, of course. Some of the highlights for Fall 2008 include our first ever HP special topics course in math, a return of the popular Duality class, another course taught by our very own Dr. Nobles, and an LCC course taught by THE award-winning Dr. Crawford.

- **The Sleeping Giant Awakes: Dissecting the Rise of China**, *Dr. Fei-Ling Wang*
- **Selective Scholarships Seminar**, *Dr. Greg Nobles & Dr. Paul Hurst*
- **Mathematical Modeling of Election Issues**, *Dr. Joel Sokol*
- **Disabilities & Society**, *Dr. Hugh Crawford*
- **Comedy & Innovation**, *Dr. Pete Ludovice*
- **Intro to Microelectronics & the Nanotechnology Revolution**, *Dr. John Cressler*
- **Duality: An Interdisciplinary Exploration**, *Dr. Craig Tovey*
- **Combinatorial Game Theory**, *Dr. Tom Morley*
- **The Pursuit of Happiness**, *Dr. Doug Flamming*

Another Crawford

BY DR. GREG NOBLES



A couple of weeks ago I asked an Honors Program student what courses he'd be taking next year, and he said, "Well, I know I want to make time for another Crawford." Another Crawford: I knew exactly what he meant – and why.

A "Crawford" is not a formal academic category you'll find in the Georgia Tech curriculum, not at all like calculus or physics or mechanical engineering or anything like that. Rather, it's an academic experience that defies disciplinary definition, an innovative, boundary-breaking course taught by a faculty member who himself defies disciplinary definition: Hugh Crawford of LCC.

What do students do in a Crawford? They might start out in what looks a lot like a regular section of English 1102, thinking that by doing the requisite number of five-paragraph essays they'll be considered competent in composition. And sure, they'll work on their writing. But they'll also work on something else, and usually no one, not even Hugh Crawford, knows what that'll be at the beginning of the semester. Last year it was a student-produced video about the new East Commons space in the library. This year it was a history of the Mad Housers, a group of late-'80s architecture students who built hidden-away huts for homeless folks. In true Crawford-class fashion, his

Honors Program students didn't just research and write the history; they also built a Mad Houser hut in the Skiles courtyard and used it as a way to educate the campus about homelessness. Next year it'll be a course about people with disabilities, an area of Hugh's passion and personal commitment. I have no idea what he and his students will do in that course, but I know it won't be anything done just by the book. In his own sly, Tom Sawyer-like way, Hugh Crawford lays a taste of imaginative engagement before his students, and they go on to do fascinating things.

As Bob Dylan said, "To live outside the law you must be honest," and that, I think, helps put Hugh Crawford in the right light. He's a genial renegade in a sometimes rigid academic world, a respected professor who doesn't worry much about respectability, a regular guy with a raucous sense of humor, and, maybe most importantly, a committed citizen with strong sense of social justice.

I'm now happy to report that Hugh Crawford is this year's recipient of the Don Bratcher Award for Human Relations, Georgia Tech's formal recognition of someone who makes a meaningful contribution to human decency, both on the campus and in the larger community. I'm also happy to count Hugh Crawford as a friend and fellow professor in the Honors Program.

If you ever get a chance to take a Crawford, you should do it. And if you get a chance to thank Hugh Crawford, you should do that, too.

GT
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