

OPINIONS

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Quote of the week:
"To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a computer."
 —Farmers Almanac, 1978

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION SGA outreach

This week was Student Government Week, an SGA initiative to try to reach out to students and reconnect with the constituents that they represent. This worthwhile effort on the part of SGA draws much-deserved attention to SGA's increased transparency and efficiency this year, while highlighting the areas that need continued improvement.

This year began with marked improvements in the realms of transparency. The addition of personal response systems and a new online bill system created a means of viewing the fee allocation process in real time at www.gtsga.com. Unfortunately, this valuable asset hasn't been used consistently this year. The comment portion of the website is filled with seemingly unmonitored spam; there is no way to view the individual voting records of representatives, despite the easy transfer of data from the personal response systems to a website; and the bills are uploaded infrequently at best.

SGA also demonstrates the significant disconnect between representatives and their individual constituencies. Far too many students don't know who their representatives are, or what responsibilities their representatives have.

The Undergraduate House of Representatives had over \$950,000 to allocate to student organizations and events at the start of the year, and the lack of communication between students and representatives leaves that money effectively at the discretion of a very small group of students. While SGA has been historically responsible and cautious in their allocations, it is crucial that students become more involved in the process so that the needs of every student are addressed, not just the needs of the vocal few who understand how to use the bill submission process.

Representatives, especially those for the freshman class, should be encouraged to email, speak with and get to know their constituents. Events should be planned so that those freshmen who had their representatives elected for them can meet their representatives and learn about the many facets of SGA. Events such as this could serve the dual purposes of increasing communications between representatives and constituents while also encouraging freshmen to become involved.

SGA needs to continue to make communication and outreach to the student body their top priority, not just for one week of the year, but throughout the semester. Future administrations should continue the improvements begun this year. However, the effort cannot be one-sided. Students must also become interested in the affairs of SGA. They should make an effort to express what they need and want to their representatives as well as their expectations for SGA as a whole.

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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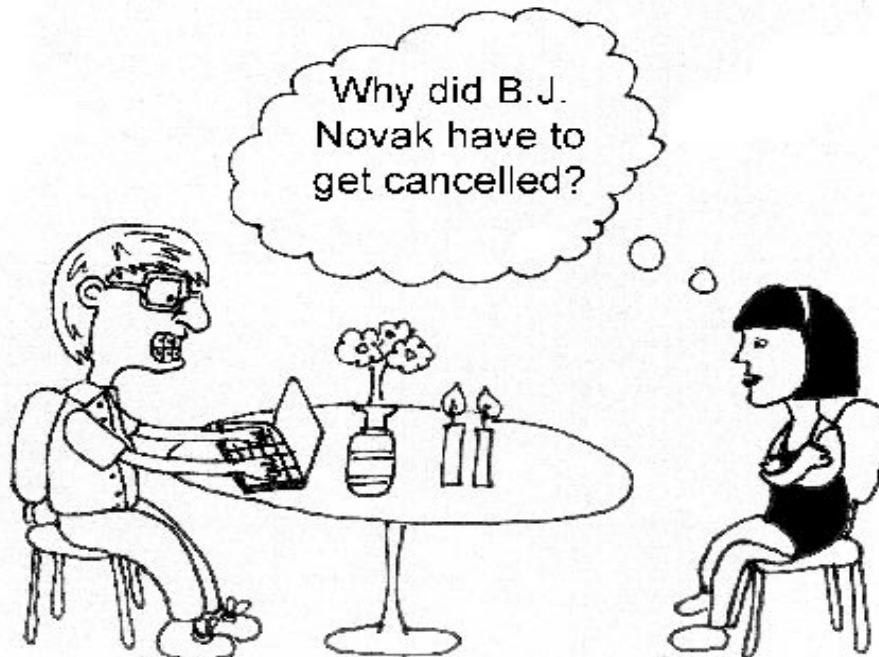
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By Abhishek Jain / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Urban renovation projects stalled

Where am I going today? To the store, of course, to take advantage of the insanely cheap day-old Valentine's Day merchandise. I mean, teddy bears holding gaudy lace hearts and gobs of candy wrapped in shiny red foil! All at ridiculous, rock-bottom prices! I'm so there... well; I would be, if only it took less time to get there. The closest store to me on my way home from my co-op commute would be the Publix in Midtown. Well shucks, the closure of Techwood Drive makes it much more difficult to access Midtown from the ever-bustling Connector, not to mention the dense traffic that was already clogging up the city's roads even before the closures.

Atlanta is experiencing an urban renaissance of sorts. New developments all over the city (i.e. Atlantic Station, Lindbergh Center, etc.) have revitalized areas that people once deemed as useless land. High-rise condominiums are shooting up quicker than zits on a pubescent teenager's face. People are starting to live and play in the city again, which is a refreshing change of pace.

But with the renewal of the city comes serious issues that need to be addressed, especially in regards to the ability of the city to sustain its residents. As the city evolves, the transportation infrastructure must evolve with it. I think that it is a given fact that the intense traffic can be attributed to the population distribution in the city and the lack of an extensive public transportation system to support it.

That's why I am such a fan of the proposed Beltline, a transportation route developed nearly a decade ago in a Master's thesis by one of Tech's own. The proposal utilizes existing train tracks in a loop around the core areas of downtown, providing a very much-needed link between the neighborhoods on the fringe of the city. Additionally, the Beltline would provide more green space and parks



"People are starting to live and play in the city again, which is a refreshing change of pace."

Jonathan Saethang
 Focus Editor

to be used by the residents.

I applaud the City of Atlanta for realizing the need for such a system, and hats off to them for taking this proposal into serious consideration. Current Atlanta mayor Shirley Franklin is one of the biggest supporters of the Beltline. The proposed transit lines could help alleviate the worsening traffic situation in Atlanta.

However, the progress of the project was recently stifled by Georgia Supreme Court ruling stating that tax allocation district (TAD) funds could not be used to fund the Beltline. TADs, implemented in 1985, are used to provide public aid to many redevelopment projects, the most notable recent one being the Atlantic Station community.

The controversy arose because the ruling disallowed school taxes, which comprise a good bit of TAD revenues, from being used for projects not directly related to schools. This means that several redevelopment projects will be halted and possibly even cancelled due to the sudden withdrawal of public funding.

I personally find that notion, much like the clearance V-Day merchandise, a bit ridiculous. Atlanta has struggled for many years to become a world-class city with rich culture, a booming economy and solid infrastructure to back it all up. Why are projects so vital to the city's growth being tangled in a web of bureaucracy?

Don't get me wrong, I love public

education and would not want to detract from the quality of education in any way. But I do think that city lawmakers need to reconsider the restrictions that they have placed on the revenue from the TADs.

It does not make sense to cut so much public funding from projects that are largely responsible for spurring the city's ailing economy. TADs have been around for many years not only in Atlanta, but also all over the nation. The funds are directly responsible for acting as catalysts to areas and regional economies that people once thought were hopeless. Additionally, the projects have widespread community support; the residents should ultimately decide how their tax dollars are spent.

Instead of cutting the school component of TAD funding all together, the city should reallocate the funds where most needed. Obviously schools were not using any of the money that went to city redevelopment projects, so any type of reallocation would be an improvement on the current education financial situation.

It is silly to give the school systems an exorbitant amount of money while choking the progress of infrastructural improvements in the city. Lawmakers need to think about what is best for the city as a whole instead of getting hung up on things that will keep Atlanta from progressing into a destination for business, tourism and an all-around high quality of living.

Student registration still a necessity

Last week, as many Tech students, myself included, cast their votes in the Super Tuesday primary, I heard several other students remark how they wished they could vote but couldn't get to their home precincts. In talking to some friends of mine who attend other schools around the state, I found that they had either heard the same thing or felt that they had the same problem.

As it turns out, very few of them realized that they could have voted absentee or even could have registered to vote using their school addresses. I told the few people that I overheard or talked to, and given that I now actually have the ability and opportunity to share this information with the entire Tech community, I felt that I was obligated to do so.

There is a lot of misinformation out there about what college students are allowed to do with regard to their voting rights. For example, I was surprised to conveniently learn, just in time to register for the midterm congressional elections, that college students are allowed to register to vote using their school addresses.

This is particularly convenient for Tech students as there is a polling place in the Student Center, which is the designated precinct for all campus residents who are registered with their



"Most college students are in the unique position to have a choice in where they register to vote."

Hillary Lipko
Development Editor

campus address.

Students who wish to do this should use the address of their on-campus residence as their home address and fill out the mailing address portion of the registration form using their campus box address.

Misinformation regarding this particular aspect of student voting rights recently emerged somewhat prominently in Georgia when students at Georgia Southern University experienced intimidation when trying to vote at the school's precinct last November.

Following a very successful voter registration drive at GSU, during which about 1,000 students registered to vote in Bulloch County, candidates for local offices took a number of legally questionable measures with the apparent intent to prevent these students from voting in local elections.

According to the National

Campaign for Fair Elections, one incumbent council member attempted to take out an advertisement in *Connect Statesboro*, a local newspaper, stating that students who had changed their voter registration away from their parents' addresses risked losing their financial aid and could no longer be claimed as dependents on their parents' taxes.

Both claims are categorically false. In addition to being subject to a misinformation campaign, students who appeared to vote reported being harassed and intimidated by uniformed police officers with regard to their voter registration and residency status. Fortunately, students at Tech have not been subjected to such tactics. Should something like this ever occur, though, it is important that students know their rights.

Despite being allowed to register to vote in Fulton County, some Tech students may still pre-

fer to remain registered in their home districts. This is fine. Most college students are in a unique position to have a choice in where they register to vote.

This does create a few problems though. The most common problem that students who remain registered in their home districts face is being able to get back to their designated polling place to vote. Requesting an absentee ballot solves this problem, but you have to remember to request it before Election Day.

Request forms can typically be found on the website of the Secretary of State for whatever state you're registered to vote in. Georgia voters may also participate in advance voting, which occurs the Monday through Friday before Election Day at designated advance voting locations. The application to vote in advance is included on the Georgia absentee ballot application, which can be obtained at www.sos.ga.gov/Elections.

Where you register to vote is up to you. Perhaps you have a vested interest in the politics of your hometown, or you live in a "swing state" and prefer to vote there in national elections for that reason. Perhaps you prefer the convenience of being able to vote in the Student Center,

See Vote, page 10

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT-or-NOT



Dance all night

Dance Marathon last weekend raised over \$34,000 for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The 200 people dancing for charity were part of the fifth annual marathon, which raised \$15,000 more than last year's event. The event was attended by both students and kids from children's hospitals around Atlanta, providing an opportunity for Tech students to give not only their money, but also their time.



No B.J. for V-day

A holy day of television was declared this Wednesday when the writer's strike ended. Unfortunately, this victory was inconveniently timed for the Tech population, as comic B.J. Novak, one of the writers for the hit NBC show "The Office", was forced to cancel his on-campus show to attend a meeting, leaving hundreds of campus couples and singles without plans for Valentine's Day.



Court champions

Women's tennis won the indoor national championship this past week, defeating Northwestern and cementing their reputation as one of the strongest programs in the nation. This impressive victory marked the second year in a row that Tech has won the national championship.



CoC theft

Combine a Gameboy, digital cameras and a few laptops and you have not only every Tech student's dream birthday present, but also the items stolen during the recent theft at the College of Computing. The items were worth well over \$10,000, and illustrate the lax security at most campus facilities.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tech was never "fair"

The apparent controversy over the cost of a Coca-Cola is easily resolved. Get a lightweight, soft sided lunch box or cooler and stash a couple of cold ones in there with a cold pack when you leave the dorm. A 12-pack of cans is still \$5.00 or less at the grocery store, which brings the cost right down to around 40 to 45 cents.

Fairness to students has always been a touchy subject at Georgia Tech. When I started in 1969, it was the Math department's job to weed 4,000 of us down to 1,300 within two years. A friend I met later in life was an instructor in the Math department starting around 1975, and he told me the Institute made no bones about the fact that trimming down the freshman class was part of their job.

I made my first ever F in a calculus class at Georgia Tech. It was my first ever grade less than a C in my whole life. The

thing is, the world didn't end. I took it over, passed, and despite a struggle for a few quarters while getting the first two years behind me, I graduated and became an Ensign in the Navy, with orders to Pensacola for flight training.

I can readily state that my degree from Georgia Tech (Bachelor of Engineering Economic Systems from the School of ISyE) got me three nice civilian jobs during my career as an Engineer/Operations Research Analyst, along with admission to earn a Master of Science in OR/SA from the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School. I'm still here because I learned how to overcome adversity, persevere, THINK, and not worry about what was fair.

The value of a Georgia Tech education is in learning how to get things done when it's not easy, and it's not fair. If \$1.50

See Fair, 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 Matthew Winkler, 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.

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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.

BUZZ Around the Campus

Who did you vote for last Tuesday?



David Smith
Second-year EE

"Mike Huckabee."



Srujal Patel
Graduate AE

"I couldn't vote because I am an international student, but I like Obama."



Heidi Zachman
Graduate BC

"John McCain."



Diana Lucey
Fifth-year AE

"I voted for Obama in New Hampshire."

Photos by Colin Ake

Vote

from page 9

even if you completely forgot that it is Election Day. The really important thing is that you vote if you're eligible. Last Tuesday's primary had one of the highest, if not the highest, turnouts of college-aged voters in a primary, ever.

Overall, Georgia's primary had the highest turnout for a presidential primary since 1980, despite this being the first election in which

Georgia's requirement for a photo ID to vote has been in effect. Voters are realizing that their vote matters in this election, perhaps more than ever.

If you're not currently registered to vote, you can register by mail using the National Mail Voter Registration Form. The form can be obtained on the Election Assistance Commission's website at www.eac.gov/voter/RegisterToVote. The form provides instructions on registering for every state and the address you need to send the registration

form to.

If you are registering and voting in Georgia, you must register by the fifth Monday before a scheduled election in order to be eligible to vote in that election. Georgia also now requires that voters show an approved form of photo identification when they vote.

Here again, Tech students are lucky, because since Tech is a state school, your Buzzcard counts as a form of photo identification issued by a state entity, so you can use that if you don't have anything else.

So given that it's so easy for students to register to vote locally, there's a polling place in the Student Center, there's hardly any excuse for students who are eligible to vote to not do so. Absentee voting is nearly just as easy, and the difficulties surrounding obtaining an absentee ballot (like forgetting about it or finding the form) can be easily overcome. It would be easy for a student organization to set up an absentee ballot application drive, since all states' applications are available online. All that's required

is a table in the Student Center a few weeks before an election, a laptop and a printer.

For many Tech students, this presidential election is the first one they are eligible to vote in. The first one I was eligible for was the 2004 election, and it was really pretty exciting to vote for president for the first time.

For that matter, it's pretty exciting the second time, too. I'd hate for anyone to miss out on that excitement because they aren't aware of their rights and options.

Fair

from page 9

for a Coke is deemed unfair, then figuring out how to bring one from home for 1/3 the price is the thing a Tech student should do.

Leave the whining to the Bulldogs. Bring your own cold coke to enjoy after class. Heck, bring two and share one with a girl, and give thanks that it's not 1969. That was the first year women were admitted on an equal basis with men, and there were only 25 coeds in the freshman class. Cokes were cheap, though. Twenty-five cents. So at least we had that going for us.

Howard Tillison
Graduate, 1974

Atlanta universities need intellectual diversity

The editorial board and Bjorn Cole represent the "Intellectual Diversity in Higher Education

Act" (Georgia HB 154) and leftist dominance of academia so incompletely that I hope you will accept an intellectually diverse argument to broaden this discussion about it. It is because I support free speech and intellectual diversity at Institutes of higher learning that I support this act. To illustrate this I only need a few examples, one of which is in our own backyard-literally.

Last October David Horowitz appeared at Emory University to discuss Islamofascism and the tactics of al-Qaeda. I won't elaborate here on the taunts, catcalls, mockery and verbal intimidation that Horowitz received before he opted to leave the stage; you can view it for yourself on Youtube.

Last year during some overnight hour here at Tech, a group of thieves sought to disrupt a week-long silent campus memorial to the victims of abortion by stealing over 30 crosses from the lawn next to Skiles.

Finally, in 2006, the faculty of the nation's most well-known university (despite the wishes of most alumni,

students and trustees) collectively determined to remove Harvard President Lawrence Summers (a former Clinton cabinet member) because they detested what he said—specifically, that perhaps men and women excelled at unequal rates in math and science because of some innate or physical differences.

Intellectual diversity or free speech is a convenient prop when you agree, but that is not the challenge for Americans. We are challenged to allow speech we don't like. Bjorn Cole laments resurrecting "the losers in the market of ideas", the *Technique* about the forced discussion of minority opinions. (Sounds just like "political correctness" to me.)

Each argument tries hard but does not succeed. Since when was the popularity of ideas a criterion for speaking on campus? Far more people in this country believe al-Qaeda is a threat, than believe that George Bush orchestrated 9/11. While Emory greets Cynthia McKinney warmly, David Horowitz gets mooned.

Soon after the Emory event, an embarrassed President Chace issued a new policy: the university could check ID's to restrict attendance, and cat-callers will be removed.

We ought to promote intellectual diversity sure, but intimidation, theft and heavy-handed orthodoxy compromise the "free exchange of ideas." The public paying for these educational ventures has a right to know whether the purveyors of intellectual enlightenment are living up to their own ideals.

Shawn Buckley
4th-year CE

GTENS lacks crucial swift response

This morning (Feb. 6) we all got a "Campus Advisory" regarding a weather alert. Great, it's nice that we get this. However, the passage that got my attention was this:

"Faculty, staff and students can (and should) sign up for Weather

Alerts. To subscribe, send an e-mail to sympa@lists.gatech.edu with a subject of subscribe gtpd-weatheralerts-public. This is a separate system than the Georgia Tech Emergency Notification System (GTENS); it is unlikely that we would have time to send out a GTENS alert during a sudden and threatening weather situation like a tornado."

GTENS was implemented after the Virginia Tech shooting. It was created to inform the whole campus quickly about an (ongoing) crisis on campus. So how come this system is not able to keep up with a weather alert? Okay, tornados can be fast, but hey, they also are trackable and maybe even predictable.

Maybe I should also sign up with the Homepark neighborhood watch email list, in case a psycho starts shooting over there and then crosses 10th Street...GTENS might not be fast enough for that.

Claus Christmann
Grad AE

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Urinetown

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