



# HONORS

## PROGRAM

January/February 2008

## THE VIEW FROM HERE

BY DR. MONICA HALKA

Tired of the same old same old? January can make anyone feel a bit resigned, if not utterly miserable, disheartened and bored. It's cold. It's gray. It's nowhere near spring break. That's why we look to our HP course pros to take teaching and learning outside the box. And they certainly are. In "Engaging English Avenue," a course co-taught by our director, Greg Nobles (HTS), and director of Institute Partnerships, Andrea Ashmore, an hour and a half in class recently meant a bus trip to view the condition of the English Avenue neighborhood. Dr. Joe Hughes (ECE), as part of his course on "Failures and Disasters," took his class to January's First Center concert of Irvin Mayfield and his New Orleans Jazz Orchestra. The students were able to talk to musicians about their experiences during hurricane Katrina at a special HP reception following the performance. Paul Verhaeghen (PSYC), who is teaching a wildly popular HP special topic course on "The Psychology of Creativity and the Arts" also has assigned students to attend a performance – this one with a twist: it has to be something you think you don't like or normally wouldn't consider attending. These arts-related assignments are made possible by a close collaboration between the First Center for the Arts and the Honors Program. We have agreed that a great way for Tech students to experience the arts is in the context of coursework – relating the art to the subject they are learning, whether it's technological disasters or psychology or communication or history or engineering. Having a world-class arts center on campus is a fabulous opportunity to take learning outside the box. We hope the idea will spread to courses all around campus.



The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra

## Finding English Avenue

BY MADDIE STODDART

English Avenue is falling apart. The asphalt on the roads is deteriorating. The weeds, already overgrown between the houses, have started to emerge from the crosswalks and the potholes. The grass grows uninhibitedly around garbage and rusting diamond chainlink fences. The place is both impressive and depressing. There are such incredible examples of its history, of the power the community once held on the citizens of English Avenue, and yet that history of this once-vibrant community is merely a shadow over the neighborhood.

*See English pg. 2*

## MLK Monday On

BY CAROLA CONCES

"Make Martin Luther King, Jr. Day a day on, not a day off," I was encouraged by Billiee Pendleton-Parker, who serves as advisor to several of Tech's community service clubs. Motivated by her words, I volunteered for the MLK Service Summit on Monday. A group of Tech students joined with People TV, Atlanta's public access television station, to film several members of the Atlanta community as they shared their memories of the Civil Rights Era. The footage will be used to make a television special that will share and preserve

*See MLK pg. 2*

### *English (cont.)*

It is this transition that the students of Dr. Gregory Nobles (HTS professor and one of the Honors Program's fearless leaders) and Andrea Ashmore (Director of Institute Partnerships and Special Assistant to President Clough) are attempting to understand and, hopefully, begin to reverse. The class examines the history of Atlanta's development as well as the consistent marginalization of the English Avenue community and its members, and then will continue on a path of service-learning. The goal of the class is to ultimately produce significant opportunities for Georgia Tech students to become more involved with our neighbors in English Avenue.

The class introduction to English Avenue began on a bus tour of the neighborhood. Traveling through the interior the twenty-odd passengers sat in awe of the incredible number of abandoned and burned out houses and lack of city services, among other things. Students compared the neighborhood to post-Katrina New Orleans, Ecuador, and Libya, and most were overrun with empathy for the citizens of the neighborhood. But more than anything else, students were faced with questions. Why? Where was the city, the countless multinational corporations of Atlanta, the service organizations that dedicate themselves to the betterment of Atlanta's communities?

How can Georgia Tech students create a positive impact? It is the great hope of this class that these questions will be answered.



English Avenue Elementary School, which was central to the community before it's closure in the early 1990s

### *MLK (cont.)*

their fascinating accounts of our city during a key time in United States history.

When we arrived on location, we saw huge crowds and many service personnel. The service at Ebenezer Baptist Church, where Dr. King used to preach, drew two thousand people, including such big names as Bill Clinton, Mike Huckabee, and Mayor Shirley Franklin. We were a block away, out of the crowds, talking with people whose names should be much better known. All played active roles in reforming our society and fighting for equality. One man tried to buy nine-cent Crystal hamburgers for himself and several young friends and was refused, prompting him to start a series of restaurant sit-ins. He added, however, that he did not take Dr. King's stand on nonviolence and threw bricks through the restaurant's windows. He was once arrested, jailed, and bailed out eleven times in a single day.

All interviewees were quick to warn us that the country still faces civil rights problems. In fact, they claimed that civil rights have taken a downturn lately, and advised us to resist complacency. Like many students, I typically devote several hours a week to causes that I believe in, such as community service. But civil rights activists gave more than just part of their time and energy. They committed their entire lives to their cause. Talking to such passionate and inspirational people taught me more than I could ever learn from a history book. A day off of class definitely made for a memorable day on of learning.

## *Heard in HP*

**“Water is evil.”**

- Professor Kim Cobb,  
EAS2803 HP

# Arts & Leisure

## I'm Not Getting Paid Enough to Write This

by Sarah Gilbreath

Since November 5, 2007, the Writers Guild of America has been on strike. That means, of course, no new television pilots and no new movie scripts, but it has some larger repercussions: namely, several televised political debates have been cancelled, but even worse, the award season is in peril! Anticipated far more than football and baseball season combined (or so Hollywood would have us believe), canceling the major awards shows such as the Oscars means huge losses of revenue for the fashion industry, not to mention the media slated to cover them.

So what caused this huge upheaval? Why are the writers on strike? Well, the long and short of it is that their contract, The Writers Guild of America Minimum Basic Agreement, expired on October 31, 2007, and they can't get a fair deal to replace it. The deal on the table is to pay writers absolutely nothing for shows they write that viewers can watch for free on company websites, and only 1/3 of a cent for every dollar the company makes for "electronic sell-through" (purchased downloads). Additionally, many companies are significantly reducing the benefits of their employees, putting their health benefits and retirement plans at risk (or nearly erasing them). This has led to several rather creative strikes, such as that of the writers at MTV and VH1.

Naturally, there's a comical upshot. People have now started writing blogs about what they "aren't" writing. See, for example, [millerandgreen2.glogspot.com](http://millerandgreen2.glogspot.com), where you can find little summaries about shows that are absolutely NOT being written during the strike, and they're hilarious (my favorite: "Think Tank," about a goldfish in a fishbowl who "comically foils a terrorist plot").

And how is all of this affecting the other big news story of the year, the election? Well, since the questions would have been written by WGA writers, many debates have already been cancelled (including one scheduled to be hosted by Katie Couric). Additionally, most of the candidates have agreed not to cross picket lines. And what about those Oscars? It doesn't look good...the WGA has already said that certain movie clips may not be used and is expected to deny that their writers work on the show. The future isn't all bleak, however. On Wednesday, January 23, the WGA and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers were slated to "begin informal discussions to determine if there is a basis for both parties to return to formal negotiations." Sounds like a long shot – but keep your fingers crossed.

### A Writer Not on Strike:

Don't miss DR. ALAN LIGHTMAN,  
astrophysicist and novelist, speaking  
on *The Crossroads of Science and the Arts*

**March 5 at 7pm in MGT 100**

*A presentation of the Karlovitz Lecture Series and the Honors Program*



# Arts & Leisure

## Campus Moviefest

by Nicole Leonard

On January 8, Campus Moviefest, the world's largest student film festival, arrived on Georgia Tech's campus offering students the chance to make their own short (approximately 5 minutes) movie. For one week hundreds of GT students set out with an Apple laptop, a digital video camera and a dream -- a dream of creating a masterpiece. Several teams formed within the GT Honors Program vying for the chance to not only win Apple and AT&T themed prizes, but to single-handedly put an end to the Writer's Guild strike by winning the ultimate prize of a trip to L.A. to meet with top talent agents and studio executives.

Bon Chance!!!!

Here's a list of HP student participants and their entries:

### Team Name: A2P Films

**Title:** "The Price of HOPE"

**Film Synopsis:** The Price of Hope is an action film documenting the story of a young suicidal student, Jason, who loses his HOPE scholarship to Georgia Tech, and hence must quit his CMF team. The team leader, Danny, convinces Jason that the team can pull off a heist of their team's CMF gear, including the laptop, camcorder and videophones, to pay for his tuition. After destroying the pursuing CMF SWAT vehicle, the team reunites over the victory.

**HP Team Members:** Will Boyd, Ashby Foltz, Sonia Golemme, Cesar Harari, Zac Hecker, David Lowry, Sydney Shaffer, Melanie Stam. We are very pleased that they were joined by GT students Dan Moore, Jason Murray and Sam Rickles.

### Team Name: Unrequited

**Title:** "I AM TECH"

**Film Synopsis:** In I AM TECH one woman finds herself the last woman on the campus of a technical institute. A parody of the blockbuster hit I am Legend.

**HP Team Member** Ginger Tsai worked with GT students Matthew Lee, Jonathan Shaw and Daniel Wang.

### Team Name: Svelte Productions

**Title:** "Culture Warrior: A Tale of Two Roommates"

**Film Synopsis:** Culture Warrior: A Tale of Two Roommates is the documentary style farce of dorm life, as seen through the eyes of two roommates whose personalities and cultures collide which culminates in an amazing surprise ending.

**HP Team Members:** Kristopher Bahar, Andrew Fish, Brian Jones, Matthew Kieffer, Rohit Kohli, Sanjeev Nayak, Alex Os, Greg Updike, and Beatrice Wan.

"Human salvation lies in the hands  
of the creatively maladjusted."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



# Arts & Leisure

## Continued

### On Fiction Writing

by Paul Verhaeghen



The psychological state of fiction writers tends to not be so happy. If you are a novelist, and famous, you have about a 50/50 chance of going through a major depressive episode in your life. If you're a poet, it's worse. Non-fiction writers are

a much happier lot. It has to do with introspection, it turns out. People who think long and hard about life and their place in it, are at high risk for depression (ignorance is bliss, after all). And such folks are also at risk of becoming writers. So, we, the bleeding artists, go through this hell so you don't have to. You're welcome. And please read our books. We gotta eat too!

But, seriously, there is nothing as exhilarating as watching your work grow underneath your fingers, watching the words pile up on the screen – when it works. When you read a good book, there is this sense of anticipation – where is this going to go, what is going to happen, where will this take me, what strange-yet-familiar world will I get plunged into now? Imagine, then, the joy of seeing this happen for the first time, the joy of creating that, of being swept away, of being surprised by your own book, of going where you didn't know you would go, or didn't know you could go. It's magic, really, truly magic. Ungraspable, awe-some. Frustrating too (like when nobody actually seems to care; when reviewers don't get it; when it doesn't work, which is often; when you have to go through the friggin' text for the sixth time) – but that is minor. There is nothing like the surprise, the joy, the absorption of the process (and there's nothing like being mangled in the process).

For me, it's all about questions: what is this, who is this, how does this work, what happens when X happens to Y? *Omega Minor* is (among other things) a novel about the Holocaust and about Hiroshima, and I wrote it wrestling with the incomprehensibility of it all. I still

don't have answers, and I mistrust those with answers immensely, but asking the questions, and staring the questions in the face, and dealing with them as honestly as you can, so that when you open your hands to the reader and pour out the words, that is what it is ultimately about, I think. I think. It's our doubts that make us human, not our certainties. It's moving ahead, in spite of, or because of our doubts, our fears.

I have always written, as far back as I remember. Or I painted, or played music (badly). I have certainly always read. Reading is a door to a different world, which is also the world we live in, but viewed at a distance. At a distance that makes it bearable. The world is a pretty scary, chaotic, unforeseeable place. Within the confines of a novel, of a genre, we can glimpse some form of truth that would elude us if we took the full

dose of the world. I think there is a reason why so many avid readers and so many writers are introverted (or rather the other way around) – we recluses need this filter, this screen, to take on the world, perhaps. Reading is such a beautiful thing because it intensifies, in a sense, what happens in the world. It follows a subset of folks, in a staged life, nicely framed, with a beginning and an ending, and some measure of predictability (one of the reasons why my last novel was historical fiction – it is nice to set yourself up so that you weave your tapestry on a frame that already exists, and that can lull the reader into compliance, until you hit her with what you want to hit her with). Steven Pinker calls art “strawberry cheesecake for the mind” – an overdose of all that is good in life: the yummy fats, the tasty sugar, unctuousness on the tongue, blazing colors. So good it'll kill ya.

*Paul Verhaeghen is a new faculty member in psychology at Tech. He is currently teaching an Honors Program special topics course called “The Psychology of Creativity and the Arts.” His new novel is “Omega Minor.”*

# What Else Are Our Students Up To?

BY NICOLE LEONARD

On **Thursday, February 7th** a variety of first and second year HP students will offer an information fair from **5:30 – 7 pm in Britain Rec.** Come out and hear what your fellow HPsters are involved with both on and around campus. Food will be provided.

## A brief list of what some of our HP students are doing:

### First Years

Sarah Anderson	<i>Freshman Council</i>
Christina Donegia	<i>GT Women's Rugby Football Club</i>
Sean Dixon	<i>CRC instructor of three hip hop themed classes</i>
Ashby Foltz	<i>GLASSS (Gringos and Latinos Atlanta Spanish Service Society)</i>
Bridgett Gorta	<i>MOVE (Mobilizing Opportunity for Volunteer Experience): Homeless and Hunger initiatives</i>
Anthony Formica	<i>ALAA (American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics) Design, Build and Fly Competition team.</i>

### Second Years

Sandhya Anatharaman	<i>Infinite Harmony (a cappella group)</i>
Kaitlyn Fraiser	<i>SGA (Student Government Association).</i>
Liam Rattray	<i>Georgia Sustainable Food Project; Liam is currently featured on the Ivan Allen College weblink "News."</i>
Chris Simpson	<i>GT Fencing</i>
Alina Staskevicius	<i>Sophomore summit</i>
Ginger Tsai	<i>Night Market, an outdoor cultural experience</i>
Emily Weigel	<i>GT Women's Rugby</i>
K.C. Young	<i>MOVE (Mobilizing Opportunity for Volunteer Experience): ACCESS tutoring</i>



Sean Dixon







Ginger Tsai



Bridgett Gorta

# February 2008

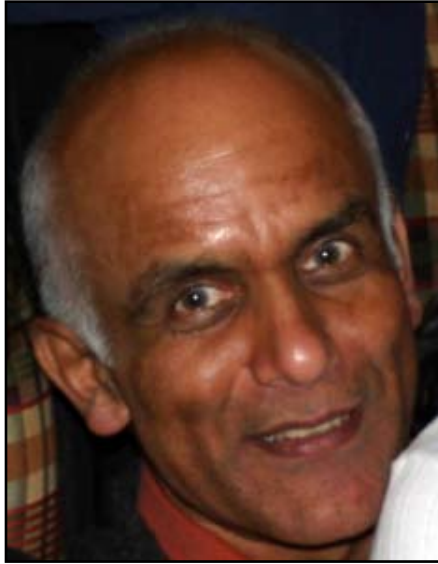


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 7:30-9 Sustainable Atl. Rndtbl - All Sits Epscl	2 GROUNDHOG DAY!
3	4	5 MARDI GRAS  10-4 Work Abroad Fair Stdtd Ctr Ballrm 7pm SciFi film-E.Commons	6 Bob Marley Day  3pm Physics Colloq. HoweyLeHall 5	7  4:30 Poetry@T-ClaryThtr 5:30 <b>HP reception</b> Brittain Rec	8	9 8pm African Chldrm's Choir Ferst Ctr.
10	11	12	13	14 	15	16 Do A Grouch a Favor Day
17 Random Acts of Kindness Day	18 President's Day	19 7pm SciFi film-E.Commons	20	21 4:30 Love Song Karaoke CRC	22 8pm McCoyTyner/Glover Ferst Ctr.	23 8pm CirqueWorks Ferst Ctr.
24 Nicole Leonard's Birthday 	25	26 7pm SciFi film-E.Commons	27	28 4pm Black Hstry Celebration Neely Rm, Library	29 LEAP DAY! 	30 3:15 Mayor S. Franklin "Black History Month" Stdtd Ctr, Ferst Rm

# Dedication to Dr. T. Govindaraj (affectionately known as “Govind”)

*On his Fall 2007 ISyE 4833HP Class: Engineering manufacturing and service systems for sustainability*

As societies become more affluent, the consumption of energy and materials grows inevitably, and such a trend is clearly unsustainable. Govind was passionate about increasing the awareness of our society's consumptive lifestyles, the anthropogenic causes of global warming, and how to deal with their consequences. He sought for us to design an idealized and nearly self-sustainable region by utilizing a systems engineering approach in which all significant entities and interactions could be considered and modeled accordingly.



Govind himself came to the Georgia Tech Honors Program with this seminar. In it, Govind was provided with an opportunity to create an interdisciplinary course on this special topic that he is especially passionate about. He revealed that to us that social and economic growth has caused a significant burden on the environment by a loss of biodiversity, contaminated air and groundwater, etc., and asked us to design and document a solution.

iCity is our solution. iCity was inspired and fostered by Govind.

Having grown up on a small farm in India, Govind was well aware of the rapidly accelerating depletion of natural resources and of the deteriorating environment. By affectionately recalling stories of his Toyota Camry, which he had proudly driven for the last twenty years, and recounting how he still purchased clothes from the same tailor in India, Govind taught us to recognize that all aspects of our lives affect the sustainability of our planet. The increased consumption of goods and resources accompanying an improved standard of living has increased the demand of energy and raw materials that has exacerbated global warming.

We dedicate our iCity work to Govind and hope to publicize it in his honor, with fond memories, heartfelt sorrow, and wishes inspired by this great man and carried forth by us, his students.

## Students:

Andrew Ash, Nellie Betzen, Richard Davies, Jeff Hull, RJ Ibarria, Jing Li, Stephanie Lu, Nicholas Marquez, Kaley McCluskey, Rex Tzen

**GT**  
**HyPed**

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