OPINIONS

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"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"
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Quote of the week:
"It's hard to be religious when certain people are never incinerated by bolts of lightning."
—Bill Watterson

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Webmail 2.0

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) will be replacing the current SPECTRUM webmail service with a new system powered by Zimbra. Students can look forward to the rollout of the new system next spring.

The system, with its similarity to more advanced clients like the new Yahoo! Mail and Gmail, will launch Tech web services into the Web 2.0 revolution, and it is encouraging to see the Institute move to modernize its systems. SPECTRUM has clearly begun to show its age, and while its simplicity has a certain charm it is noticeably behind in functionality.

The choice of Zimbra has left a number of people scratching their heads, however, as there was little awareness beforehand of OIT's plans to replace the webmail system. While a number of students were indeed surveyed, it is strange that the system was selected without more involvement from the student body.

Nevertheless, the features included in the software promise to bring a little excitement back to webmail at Tech and make it hard to truly question the selection. With useful tools like integrated calendar functionality and improved contact management, the system should make everyone's webmail experience more pleasant. The calendaring functionality should prove particularly useful for student organizations, which will be able to easily share a calendar among all members and use it to schedule meetings and events. It is also encouraging to see Tech continue to support open source software.

As OIT moves closer to campus-wide rollout, however, there are a few concerns. The recent rollout of T-Square, based on the highly-lauded open source package Sakai, has hit a number of rough spots. While the WebCT replacement is certainly important, it pales in comparison to the critical nature of an email service. Students will not tolerate hijinks in their webmail client, and Zimbra must prove to be consistent and dependable.

At the same time, it is crucial to provide students an easy transition path from SPECTRUM to the new system. Users who currently make use of the address book and extensive mail filtering should not have to reconfigure all of their settings once the switchover happens, nor should any messages or folders be lost in the process..

Finally, it is important to continue providing users with multiple email options. OIT has announced that SPECTRUM will continue to operate through the end of the spring semester, but some would like to see the old system online indefinitely alongside the new application. The simpler SPECTRUM features better cross-browser capability and will run on older PCs that may struggle with the desktop-like Zimbra interface.

Consensus editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique*, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.*

By Blake Israel / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Time wasters plague student life

"Wasted time goes hand in hand with...loss of memory and Tech ranks No. 1 in lack of proper time management."

Hilary Orillion
Copy Editor

Earlier this week, while pulling a late night and struggling to get my homework finished before the next morning, I realized that I needed my Calculus book to finish my homework. Too bad I sold my Calculus book two and a half years ago after completing the Calc III course here at Tech.

This need for the Calc book got me thinking. Why am I taking a senior level class that requires me to fish out someone else's old math book to find integral tables (easily located on the book's end sheets) that I haven't actually seen or thought about in years?

Wouldn't it be just as easy, if not easier, to add these same items to the book that I have to have for this class? They could even be located in the same place as they are in the massive Calculus book. This would not add that much more cost to the printing of the book or to the purchasing price of the book. Or, the professor could provide a sheet with, say, the table of integrals needed to complete this homework and the subsequent mounds of work that I'm sure are on the way.

Honestly, what purpose is there in teaching students something and then expecting them to be able to remember precisely how to do it when the material hasn't been used for two and a half years? This loss of memory and standard of teaching is in no way good for any of those involved.

Memory loss is something that I've been encountering regularly lately. I've found that the more knowledge we're forced to absorb during our stint here at Tech, the more information gets pushed to the back of our brains in the hopes that we'll be able to save it for later when we actually need it. The problem with this is that the longer we hold on to this knowledge, the less of it we have left floating around in our brains.

For example, after I finished Calc I, I had a pretty good grasp on integrals; I could even do most of the nasty ones given to me without looking at the end sheets of the book. After Calc II, these nasty integrals didn't show up very often or if they did, they were extremely simplified. This means that this knowledge got pushed to the back of my head in hopes that if I ever saw something similar to an integral, I'd be able to recognize the problem and solve it.

Fast forward to Tuesday night. Because I couldn't remember how to solve the complicated integrals required to complete my homework, I wasted at least an hour finding tables of integrals and trying to relearn how to use them, integrals that should have accompanied the text for the course. I could have used a time machine to go back and get them but alas, the construction of that probably required the use of those oh-so-difficult to find integrals.

Not that the rediscovery of integrals was the only waste of my time this week. Wasted time goes hand in hand with this loss of memory and Tech ranks No.1 in lack of proper time management. For instance, if a professor is going to read straight out of the text for the class, why should I go to class? I may have lost my ability to do math but I know I can still read. That's at least three, maybe even four, hours of life each week that could be better managed.

Another thing that wastes time is pointless meetings. True, sometimes it is hard to focus at group meetings and the like. (Case in point, I met with a friend one day last week and we did anything but focus on completing the aforementioned homework—probably because we were thrown off by the lack of integral knowledge).

But gathering at 5:45 a.m. to gain accountability or, in other words, "make sure everyone in the group is still alive" seems a little extraneous. Those of you who were there know what I'm talking about. Or how about having required meeting on Thursdays at which you sit around for an hour and a half because someone thought it was a brilliant idea to have extra people hanging around? Somehow this seems pointless, especially when there are other pressing issues in life, like relearning math from two and a half years ago.

Another time waster is the new bus route. Instead of being able to get outside 10 minutes before your next class and still make it there on time, you now have to get out there between 15 and 20 minutes early just to make sure that you don't arrive to class late and that you get a seat on the bus. Of course, you have to make it to class on time in case you have to turn in homework that required multiple trigonometric identities.

And then there's the classic waste of time we all go through: listening to friends who don't attend Tech

See **Time**, page 12

Atheism definition merits revision

"The activities that an atheist organization conducts can...be said to be religious in nature."

Jenny Zhang
Layout Editor

I'm going to go out on a limb here, and most likely fall spectacularly, because I wish to address an issue concerning something that is not only controversial, but that is almost a dirty word in and of itself: religion.

Here's the issue: last week, the 'Nique reported that SGA passed its joint finance bill, which specifies how student government should allocate the Student Activity Fee, or more simply, who gets money and how much. While I usually gloss over the intricacies of monetary policy—I know nothing about it, I've never even balanced a checkbook, or owned one, come to think of it—one part jumped out at me.

For those as financially illiterate as me, I'll skip the fancy legal jargon and give my layman's interpretation of the clause: because of the separation of church and state, SGA can't fund religious group activities that "support religious worship and proselytizing." However, atheist groups can receive funding because Georgia law prohibits the inclusion of atheist groups in the definition of "church" as it is used in its separation of church and state clauses.

Here's where I take my leap of faith and pray for the best, because I realize that anything having to do with religion is a touchy subject. When I heard about that part of the new policy, it seemed somewhat unfair to me. I understand the separation of church and state, and I won't dispute that; I can also see why an atheist organization would not be classified under "church." But the whole thing still strikes me as funny.

Someone can get state funding to tell people not to believe in God, but can't get funding to tell them to believe in God. On the one hand, there's the promotion of disbelief in God and on the other hand, the promotion of belief in God. It's like looking at two sides of the same coin; aren't they both systems of beliefs?

I suppose it depends on how you define atheism and religion. Atheism is not classified as a religion, but it is religious in nature, and the activities that an atheist organization conducts can also be said to be religious in nature: members hand out tracts explaining what they are, actively try to recruit or convert others to their beliefs (which, by the way, is Webster's definition of proselytize), hold meetings where they discuss their beliefs (or rather, disbeliefs), invite leading proponents of their beliefs to speak at lectures on topics that support their claims, etc.

True, atheism is the very opposite of religion; it is its absence. But consider a color analogy: black is the absence of color, so does that mean it's not a color?

Consider Webster's definition of religion: a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith; could that definition not be applied to atheism as well?

Atheists may not have faith in the traditional sense, but it may be safe to say that they have faith in what they believe, i.e., that there is no God. Don't forget, atheism is considered the official state religion of China, even if we don't classify it as a religion here.

I know this issue goes beyond anything at Tech, because it speaks to the very principle of separation of church and state that this country was founded upon. The first amendment of the Constitution, that most prized guarantor of civil liberties, starts with "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The very first right listed is not freedom of speech, or freedom of the press, or the right to assembly, but the right to expect a separation of church and state and freedom of religion. To many people, that right is sacred: there should not be a state religion and people should be free to worship as they please.

But is separation of church and state truly being upheld here? By funding atheist organizations and refusing to fund religious organizations that conduct many of the same activities that atheists do (they hand out tracts, recruit members, hold meetings, invite religious leaders to speak on campus; just substitute "God" or "Allah" or "Krishna" for "lack of deity"), is the state, implying, however implicitly, that it supports atheist organizations and

See **Atheism**, page 12

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT– or –NOT

Band on Parade

Tech's band was selected this week as one of only two college bands to participate in the 2008 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. The parade performance marks a fitting celebration of the band's 100-year anniversary, though the accompanying bill of approximately $500,000 that the band must now raise funds to cover is enough to dampen some of the excitement.

www.CareerFair.com

Students who attended the career fair this week found themselves questioning why they had bothered dressing up, as a significant number of the companies present simply told them to submit their resumes online. Apparently the fair is no longer about getting hired; rather, it is about dressing up really nicely and walking around to panhandle for increasingly ridiculous freebies.

Ramblin' Back

The Ramblin' Wreck led the Jackets onto the field against Samford last weekend, just as it has at every home game since 1961. Congratulations to the Ramblin' Reck Club for their prompt renovation after the historic car's tragic accident this summer—The Wreck looked better than ever.

Volley Fall

Tech's volleyball team got off to a great start on Friday but could not keep up the momentum, losing games to Arizona and Kentucky on Saturday and failing to defend the Georgia Tech Classic title. On the plus side, the Jackets put an end to Georgia's 25-game winning streak to open the season.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Flags abused at event

The U.S. Flag Code is the official guide for handling and display of the flag of the United States. It is defined as United States Code, Title 4. Subsection b of the code under Chapter 1, the Flag, Section 8, respect for the Flag reads: "(b) The flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water, or merchandise."

In the display of American flags just off of Skiles walkway on campus for a September 11 memorial, there were multiple flags that were flown in a manner so that they touched the ground or were completely lying on the ground. These are disrespectful acts towards the flag as defined by U.S. law. The Stars and Stripes is the flag our nation has agreed to represent us all. Men and women have fought for it, died defending it, and have shown utmost respect for it. It has flown from our national landmarks, covered the caskets of our heroes, and been with us through the toughest of times.

It is a sad sight when Old Glory is not treated with the honor it deserves. Instead of using flags of appropriate mast heights, or providing stable ground to ensure they flew upright and above the ground, these flags were treated as if they were a dime a dozen. By not honoring the flag, the result is showing disrespect to all Americans, past and present, who have called the flag their own. The message of supporting and honoring fallen Americans is lost when at the same time the symbol of our nation is cheapened and degraded. I urge the organization in charge of the memorial to properly and respectfully retire all affected flags.

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See **Letters**, page 12

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 reserves 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**. 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 D. McCall "Mac" Pitts 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**.

BUZZ
Around the Campus

How has the Honors Program affected you?

Rishabh Singhania
Third-year IE

"Honors program...which is what?"

Alicia Seal
First-year Undecided

"It changed my life. Actually, I'm not in it."

Katherine Rosenkranz
First-year IE

"It made my friend miss the football game."

Robert Gillan
Third-year ME

"Um..."

Photos by Jon Haeffele

Bill of Rights continues slow deterioration

By Crystal Stefani
The Chronicle

(U-WIRE) Duke Univ.—A while back I bought a teacup from the "unemployed philosophers' guild." It lists our Bill of Rights in small print, and when filled with hot water, those we've recently lost become invisible.

I've enjoyed showing the cup around the office and watching the vanished rights gradually return with temperature equilibrium. Will our right to Habeus Corpus, government information and personal privacy be restored so easily anytime soon? Or are these fresh wounds to the constitution permanent casualties of the war against "terra"?

In his new book *The Assault on Reason*, Al Gore presents a potent analysis of these constitutional rights. The book comprehensively examines the crown jewels of American democracy (reason, access and balance) and the perversion of each with their opposites (fear, secrecy and money). And it begins with a comparison of fear and reason. As we saw in the 2004 election, when some Americans were too afraid of what they didn't know to actually change course, fear can paralyze the human ability to reason in the face of the most obvious facts.

That is, in a contest between fear and reason, fear is most likely to win. And, although many of our Founding Fathers warned against it, today fear is a major campaign strategy.

Gore sees the voice of the citizenry silenced by television, which appears to give access to power while actually providing only some carefully edited information.

Until We the People create or receive a new forum for public debate, our constitutional rights may continue to gradually disappear, just like those on my teacup. Gore's book, in short, is a passionate call for us to take responsibility for creating that change.

In a contest between fear and reason, fear is most likely to win. And, although many of our Founding Fathers warned against it, today fear is a major campaign strategy.

Several of our founders and statesmen accurately predicted that the love of money would corrupt and destroy our carefully designed system. Both Lincoln and Jefferson foresaw it.

While reading the draft from James Madison, Jefferson wrote that he would "insist" on attaching a Bill of Rights stating, "(1) Religion shall be free; (2) Printing presses free; (3) Trials by jury preserved in all cases; (4) No monopolies in commerce; (5) No standing army."

President Lincoln later made allowances to companies in order to manage the Civil War. With slavery the target and emancipation the goal, he loosened restrictions against monopoly for industries that transported soldiers, manufactured their uniforms, and supplied their munitions. "We may congratulate ourselves that this cruel war is nearing its end," Lincoln said. "But I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country."

According to Gore, by 1900 corporations were "crushing competition from smaller businesses, bleeding farmers with higher shipping costs, and buying politicians at every level of government."

If all are created equal in a democracy, I ask you, how can a corporation be equal with a person? TV advertising overode the importance of TV news in the late 1950s during Edward R. Murrow's legendary work and added yet another layer of separation between us and our elected representatives.

So where do we start? How can we fix this monumental problem?

Term limits for Congress? That would be a good place to start... especially considering we probably will not see any effective campaign finance reform until the executive branch teams up with one of the other two. I'm not holding my breath.

As Lockheed Martin and Halliburton thrive, will the prisoners in Guantanamo—along with those in undisclosed foreign prisons around the world and those who were in Abu Ghraib—receive reparations and apologies from our government one day?

Do the billions in sole-source, no-bid contracts awarded to Halliburton violate American free enterprise values?

Does Halliburton present any conflict of interest with the sitting vice president on the company's payroll up until 2005?

Of course not. As he so astutely pointed out, Dick Cheney is not a member of the Executive Branch! Certainly the first sitting vice president to be so uniquely set apart from his job.

The rot at the root of our Republic is the love of money. For today, only those who have it can influence legislation and policy or even run for office. Meanwhile, We the People sit and watch all this happening on television, or perhaps we read about it in books.

Last night, ready for another cup of chai, I opened the dishwasher to find that my Bill of Rights completely disappeared. Again, modern technology like the TV entertains in the short term but ultimately disappoints.

My Bill of Rights is down the drain.

Letters from page 11

Administrative runaround raises frustrations

Has anyone else had a really gut-wrenching time so far trying to navigate Tech? The administration of this place seems to have no idea what they are doing. You try to take care of something with your loans or residency status and it's all "go there" and "talk to them." Then you do get there (always way over on the other side of campus) and they can't help either.

Then it always goes back to going online and doing it all yourself—no big deal if they would have told you that in the first place. So I guess all of the university administration need to be replaced with computers, because having to figure out the people as well as the technology here is a little much when actually we will personally have to take care of whatever the problem is anyway—while still paying the school a ton of money.

Will Lance
City Planning grad student
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Time from page 10

complain about how hard their course load is. I guess they were given the magical table of integrals. Or those people on campus who aren't engineering majors who complain about their course load. That doesn't even seem logical.

Most people hate having their time wasted. Seeing as how we are all struggling to teach ourselves how to join the real world with what we have to know for our particular majors, we don't have the time to be wasted. No wonder graduating here is called "getting out." We're all waiting to get out into the real world where we don't mind wasting time, but that's a topic for a different day.

Atheism from page 11

therefore atheism?

If the First Amendment says that the government should not show favoritism to any system of beliefs, doesn't this law show favoritism to atheism?

The entire issue is complex, and honestly, I'm tired of discussing legalities and definitions, and I'm not sure that I'm qualified to figure it out.

There's a lot to consider, but I believe that it should be considered, if only to get people with and without faith talking. These days, it seems like people either tiptoe around anything having to do with religion or have shouting matches about it.

I know it's hard for people of different faiths to discuss their faiths without having it sound like a criticism of others or going on the defensive—and having random people come to campus, professing your faith, tell people they're going to hell and holding "God hates homosexuals" rallies probably doesn't help.

But truth be told, faith, religion, spirituality—whatever you call it—holds a vastly important place in many people's lives, and until we can talk about it without hostility and without being labeled "intolerant" for believing what we do, more sticky issues will go unresolved and unspoken.