



### OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

## Renovation requests

This week the Undergraduate House of Representatives of Student Government Association was given a rare preview of a bill that will be up for consideration in a few weeks. A presentation was made explaining a request for \$225,000 of Student Activity Fees to fund renovations and updates on the Tech Rec bowling lanes, specifically the pin setters that keep the lanes functional.

This request is a large one, and all representatives should be aware of the fact that if passed, it will spend approximately two-thirds of the existing capital outlay budget, leaving SGA with just over \$100,000 remaining in the budget for the rest of the year. That sort of budget depreciation on a single bill, no matter what the purpose, is not something that should be taken lightly.

The planned upgrades to the pin setters are expected to last for nearly 30 years, working out to a price of roughly \$7,500 per year of use. This is an investment that will have far-reaching effects not just on current students, but for students in years to come.

While the expenses that have been requested by Tech Rec are for legitimate needs, as the bowling lanes are barely operational at this point and are in dire need of repair, Tech Rec should not be written a blank check for the renovations. Representatives need to poll their constituencies, to find out exactly how much value the student body places on bowling. If students think that having cheap bowling on campus is worth almost a quarter of a million dollars, then the bill should be passed.

The new equipment for the bowling lanes would most likely be a beneficial purchase for the soon-to-be renovated Tech Rec, increasing the productivity of one of the most popular past times that the Rec offers. However, other, less expensive options for the space could also be looked into, such as expanding the pool tables or adding in more arcade-style games.

While new equipment for the lanes does appear to be an entertaining and worthwhile expense to many, it should be up to the students to decide if they want to continue providing this service. The student body should not be forced to fund such an exorbitant bill without being given every opportunity to express their opinion.

This bill was introduced conveniently after SGA awareness week, and campus should still be sensitive to what their elected representatives are doing. SGA should use this bill as an opportunity to receive student feedback, to develop new and better methods for polling the student body and to determine whether or not students understand that they pay for many of the amenities on campus by choice, not out of necessity.

*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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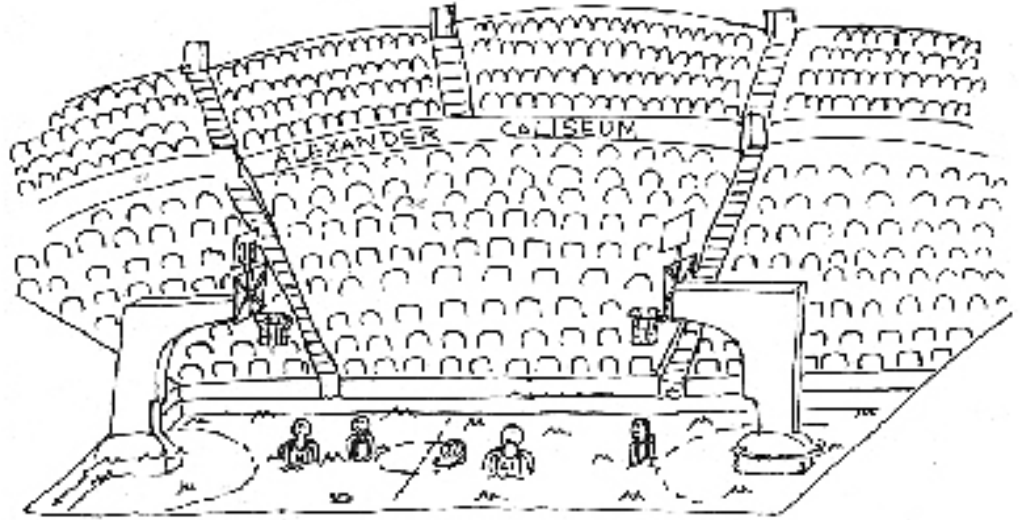
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## Swimming and Diving move to new venue



By Abishek Jain/ STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

## Wasteful spending runs rampant

On Tuesday evening this week, I was walking back from having dinner at Ribs'n'Blues in Tech Square to my humble apartment on Peachtree when I noticed an awkward situation unfolding in front of the College of Management building. A guy was dropping his friend off and had pulled into one of the metered spaces and one of Georgia Tech's lovely parking attendants (aka meter maids) was standing outside of the student's car, waving his hands and yelling, trying to get the young man's attention.

The parking attendant then vigorously pointed at the "NO PARKING" sign that has been printed in blue ink on a dainty yellow background and affixed with zip-ties to the light post. I suppose the kid made some acknowledgment to the Parking Employee, because he then proceeded to return to his little parking truck across the street (via jay-walking might I add).

Now, there might at first seem like there's nothing wrong with GT Parking & Transportation doing what seems to be their "job," but I assure you there are many a thing that are awry with what's going on here.

First let's go back a few months to October of 2007. Quite suddenly, on the 22nd of that month the Courtyard/Trolley Stop of the Management building was ripped up. We later found out in the Nov. 2 issue of the *Technique* that the College of Management had received a hefty payment for the selling out of the GT name.

All matters of selling out aside, this created a wee bit of a problem for the Tech Trolley service. So to provide a stop for the Trolley, Parking put some red plastic bags over a few parking meters, and zipped a makeshift sign to the light.

Now let me not beat around the bush much longer. Ever since they closed off the courtyard, the Geor-



"It is our job as students of this Institute to make sure our hard-earned money is spent wisely."

**Blake Israel**  
 Online Editor

gia Tech Department of Parking and Transportation has stationed a Parking employee to stand watch over their newly crafted Trolley stop from around 8:00 a.m. until nearly Midnight every weekday. It is this employee's job to make sure no-one pulls up into the three cordoned off space, as I've witnessed on more than a few occasions.

"What's the problem with this?" you might ask. Well, stop to think about it. This guy isn't doing this for free. He doesn't watch three parking spaces all day because it's fun. He's being told by his supervisor to do this, and getting paid for it.

So while people are parking on the sidewalk around campus, motorists drive 20 over the limit through campus, the Stingers and Trolleys run without a schedule and the drivers are unionizing because of low pay and crappy work conditions and Georgia Tech has decided that our money is best spent paying someone to harass people who are just dropping off their friends for class.

Last time I took the Trolley home, the driver didn't even bother to pull into the area they have taken so much time and money to protect. Also, why doesn't this guy go around to every trolley stop in Tech Square and yell at people in those spots? I'm pretty sure the Trolley drivers don't care that much. As the fact that their unionizing suggests, I think the drivers are more interested in better pay and working conditions and being treated like humans from

their bosses.

I won't try to fool you into thinking that these parking attendants get paid a king's ransom or anything. Your average maintenance worker at Tech gets paid about \$19,000 a year, and the head of parking enforcement (according to [parking.gatech.edu](http://parking.gatech.edu) and [www.audits.state.ga.us](http://www.audits.state.ga.us)) gets \$55,000 a year. So as a midpoint, I'd guess these parking enforcement guys make \$35,000 a year (there is no category for a parking employee on the state audit site). That's still \$16/hr. That's \$256 a day, \$1280 a week, \$5120 a month, and a running total of \$21,760 that's being spent on salary to watch three parking spaces. That doesn't even account for the gas these guys waste as they run their engines all day.

According to the Canadian environmental ministry (I'll send you the site if you email me), an idling engine releases twice as many exhaust fumes as a vehicle in motion. So not only are they wasting fuel idling all day, but they're polluting the environment twice as much, and we're supposed to be an environmentally friendly school. Ignorant wasting of both money and resources such as this is negating all that hard work getting two buildings on campus LEED certified took.

This is yet another example of unquestioned wasteful government spending. It only took \$40,000 in wasteful employee spending on a

See *Spending*, page 8

# Language skills limit awkward silences

One of the few regrets that I still have from my childhood is that I never learned Chinese, and when I had a chance to learn, I never really took the opportunity very seriously. Being ethnically Chinese, it would seem pretty obvious why I felt so bad about not learning the language. It's simply because I'm neglecting my background and distancing myself from my cultural roots. That's stupid. It's asinine to think that I would need to validate my Chineseness to myself or anyone else.

No, learning a language is in itself a rewarding opportunity. Even if high school makes learning a language compulsory or teachers say it is needed to get into college, learning another language is one of the best ways to breakdown barriers between other people and explore entire new worlds of thought.

Last summer, I was studying Chinese in Shanghai, trying to learn a little more of the language that I had foolishly ignored in the past. Once classes finished, I packed up a small bag, dumped the rest of my luggage on some very gracious friends and set out on my own.

I wanted to see the country and take advantage of those opportunities that parents always complain about never having when they were kids. I was headed



**"The language barrier was the difference from a lively conversation and... 16 hours of silence."**

**Corbin Pon**  
Assistant News Editor

to the ancient capital of Xi'an. Traveling from Shanghai to Xi'an is about a 16 hour ride by train, and I'll say from my experience, most foreign tourists aren't choosing the overnight train to go from one place to other. However, my train car wasn't empty, as it was full of Chinese tourists wearing a multitude of different colored hats. Each color represented a different tour group. So here I am, stuck on this train for 16 hours with a whole bunch of people trying their best to emulate the group mentality of Japanese tourists. The train car is setup like a military barracks. One narrow strip of walking real estate runs down one side of the car, and taking up the other 90 percent of the available room, a row of bunk beds, three beds high, runs down the other side of the car.

My neighbors seem pretty typical and were actually a little

younger than the rest of the tourists, checking in around their late 20's or early 30's by my estimation.

Dinner time rolls around, and we all start breaking out the freeze-dried noodles, tupperware filled with food or whatever else we had packed away for dinner. It was at this moment someone from the neighboring group said something to me. At the time, I had been sitting on a chair that folded out into the already cramped aisle. I looked up to make sure they had been talking to me, and when I realized they were, I tried my best to figure out what was being said.

Sadly, I failed miserably and couldn't make heads or tails of what they were saying. It might have been their dialect and more likely the rapidity at which they spoke, but I was quickly losing the translation battle. I asked in Chinese if any of them spoke any English, in hopes that I could

understand what they were saying if augmented with a little English. Unfortunately, none of them did. After asking the question, they all started talking at once, with some of the conversation directed at myself and with some of them talking among themselves. This was the point that I felt a tad overwhelmed and retreated to the safety of my freshly steeped bowl of ramen.

That was the extent of any substantial conversations I had for the rest of the train trip. It was a little disappointing, since I had felt I was starting to become more comfortable with the language after studying in Shanghai. However, if this was supposed to be an instance of learning by hitting the ground running, then I basically started a mile too high and face planted into the asphalt.

I didn't make that mistake for the rest of my time in China. I learned not to give up as easily as I had done on the train. Looking back at that moment, it was a shame that the language barrier was the difference between a lively conversation to perhaps learn something new and 16 hours of silence. It is a barrier that's slowly coming down, but the incident would never have happened if I hadn't been short-

See Language, page 8

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

# HOT- or -NOT



### Black history month

For the past four weeks Tech has welcomed a series of speakers and events to campus in celebration of Black History Month. The privilege of a speech by Atlanta mayor Shirley Franklin on the universal nature of the civil rights movement helped to culminate the month, as Franklin reminded Tech students that not only the solutions to technological problems, but also social ones, can be found through innovation.

### B.J. blows off Tech

Comedian B.J. Novak, who had previously postponed his on-campus act, announced this week that the show had been permanently canceled. Most students only found out through Facebook. The only positive side to this depressing news is that Novak canceled because he is too busy writing *The Office*. So, in exchange for one hour of Novak, we get a season of Pam and Jim.



### Baseball beats foes

The baseball team started the spring season with an impressive five game winning streak, winning Wednesday's game in the bottom of the tenth inning. This win continues their sixteen-game streak of victories at home that extends through last season. This weekend the Jackets face Rutgers at home.

### Coliseum rain check

Ironically, the first rain to hit campus in weeks caused the rare cancellation of an indoor athletic event due to the weather. A leak in the ceiling at Alexander Coliseum dripped onto the court floor, which officials deemed hazardous to the players, resulting in a postponement of the match-up against Virginia.

## YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Electoral college

In your February 22 issue, you printed an editorial from the University of Connecticut titled "Electoral College an outdated institution."

The article claims that "in a time where there were not even light bulbs," our candidates for President "crisscrossed the country" to campaign in elections. This is inaccurate; the modern tradition of cross-country campaigning is a 20th century invention. Earlier candidates stayed home and talked to newspaper reporters; party officials and surrogates in each city led local campaign rallies.

But the premise of the article is that, since we have TV, YouTube, and the Internet, that we should do away with the Electoral College as a mechanism that has "outlived its purpose." Nothing could be further from the truth. Precisely because we have 24/7 campaign coverage is why the Electoral College is more valu-

able than ever. If we scrapped the Electoral College, a successful candidate could focus just on densely-populated media-saturated areas and collect enough votes to become President. Do we really think such a candidate would reflect the needs of Montana? Or, closer to home, rural Georgia?

For those who claim that it's "unfair" that a candidate (like Al Gore) can "win the popular vote" and still lose in the Electoral College... Al Gore knew the rules on the day he entered the race in 2000. And precisely that situation happened three times before in American history (1824, 1876, and 1888); the Republic did not fall. You have to win by the rules; complaining about the rules later is just sour grapes.

Imagine a best-of-three play-off series in baseball. Team One wins the first game 2-1, loses the

See Electoral, 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 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](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 First 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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu).

# BUZZ

## Around the Campus

**What would you change in the library second floor?**



**Ron Hassanzadeh**  
Third-year BioChem

*"Replace the large tables with tables for smaller groups."*



**Charles Mokuolu**  
Third-year CE

*"Make the study atmosphere less depressing."*



**Katy Keilhauer**  
First-year CE

*"Make it a more relaxed environment."*



**Tyler Jones**  
Fourth-year ME

*"They should put a slide from the second floor down to the first."*

Photos by Colin Ake

# Tech college career inspires above-average mediocrity

What do you do in a typical day of your life? If you are anything like me, you might wake up (inevitably late), shower and run off to class. Later, you might do homework, go to another class, participate in an extracurricular activity or hang out with friends. Later still, perhaps you go to a party or on a date.

Sound familiar? The description is basic and somewhat vague, but I would wager it encompasses the usual daily activities of a vast majority of college students: we are in college, so this is what we do.

A similar description can easily be constructed for most students' college careers. In the four to five years most people spend at Tech, the main experiences, like studying abroad or doing research, each person has tend to be rather similar, even if the specific details of them are not the same. It does not even matter whether the person is a Computer Science, Chemical Engineering or



**"It takes more effort and more creativity to truly go beyond the norm and make yourself stand out."**

**Arcadiy Kantor**  
Columnist

International Affairs major—in the end, their college life will consist of the same basic building blocks.

This predictability is not necessarily a bad thing. The relative uniformity of the Tech experience is part of what makes the Institute appealing to employers, who know they can trust the programs students participate in to provide real value. But this uniformity means that it takes more effort and more creativity to truly go beyond the norm and make yourself stand out.

We all know some people who

are maximizing their college experiences in these different ways. While reading the blogs of several of my friends and acquaintances, I realized how lucky I am to know quite a few amazing people, ones who are both inspiring enough to motivate me to aim higher and down to earth enough to be willing to share their experiences.

One of my acquaintances has spent the past seven months in Qatar, working on a team to start up the local chapter of an international student organization in the

country for the first time, and will be helping run the U.K. chapter, one of the largest in the world, next year. Another friend just went off to Kenya (yes, despite the conflicts) to run an entrepreneurship program to teach small business owners in the country key skills. Both of them have taken on vastly greater challenges than anything provided by the typical "go on a two-month long vacation to see Europe" study abroad experience, and will doubtless be better for it.

Unfortunately, we don't always see how it is possible for us to take the same challenges on ourselves. Most of us are too focused on completing our LEGO degrees, moving on to above-average jobs (in the Lake Wobegon, "where all the children are above average" sense), and proceeding to join the rat race of keeping up with the Joneses.

And yet the failure to take on these challenges speaks to a certain

hypocrisy within us: oftentimes we say we are internationally minded, or have a strong understanding of cross-cultural teams, etc., but then will shy away from the very experiences that allow us to prove it.

This hypocrisy has been a source of inner struggle for me: there are a lot of things and traits I identify with, but the extent to which I live those traits has, here to date, been somewhat lacking. As I went along, inspired by the people I knew who were living their dreams and facing their fears, I increasingly realized that I had to step up my own experience.

By the time you read this column, I will have put my money where my mouth is: I'll be off to Kazakhstan (yes, Kazakhstan like in Borat Kazakhstan) for a six-month internship at an advertising firm. I hope that you will take the opportunity to break out of the ordinary and get more than a LEGO degree as well.

## Electoral from page 7

second game 5-2, and wins the third and deciding game 2-1. Sure, the fans of Team Two can claim that their team "won the runs count" by outscoring Team One by 7 runs to 4. But any Team Two fans who claim that their team should be the champion looks selfish and small.

Kind of like the author of your guest editorial.

Stephen Fleming  
Staff

## Spending from page 6

P-Card to launch a full-scale investigation by the AJC. Why does the Tech administration continue to waste funding on this in the light of recent scandals where administrators have been caught wasting upwards of \$300,000?

These poor spending habits tend to come from lack of oversight. It is our job as students of this institution to ensure that our hard-earned money is spent wisely with the most

benefit to the student body. We must constantly challenge our administration to stay on track and do what is best for us.

But it is not our job alone. It should be the focus of every employee of the Institute to ensure they are providing the best services they are able to the student body. Wouldn't that \$20,000 be better spent making our Stinger drivers happier? Or maybe on creating an actual schedule for campus transportation so that students' can better plan their day? If MARTA can do it, so can Tech.

## Language from page 7

sighted as a kid.

So don't make my mistake, and you should jump on that opportunity to learn a language as soon as it presents. It only gets harder to learn as you get older, and it's good to see students at Tech are getting the message. For example, the Chinese program has seen the number of participating students nearly double in the last few years.

To the say the world is shrinking is

too cliché, but the world is definitely becoming more connected. Taking a language allows you to tap into another line of communication that was previously blocked. A whole new realm of thought is also open, allowing you to learn ways that other people approach a problem. Simply talking to people from other cultures to understand how and what they think about is a gift in itself. Also you never know, one day it might save you from having to ride a 16 hour train through the heart of China in relative silence.

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