OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, September 27, 2002

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Changes at Under the Couch

The changes underway at Under the Couch seem to address problems that don't actually exist. The current system allows both on-campus and off-campus groups to use the space. The proposed changes would allow only groups with an on-campus connection to use Under the Couch, which will will result in the space being under-utilized. Campus groups have access to the facilities whenever they need them; without the off-campus groups using the venue, Under the Couch would probably be empty much more often.

Another new rule would allow only Tech students to attend events at Under the Couch. Off-campus guests would be limited to one per student. This policy is flagrantly unfair. Tech events should be open to any off-campus person who is willing to pay the whatever fee is required to attend. Tech officials would never consider applying the same policy to events at the Ferst Center; why should a different policy apply to venues other than the Ferst Center?

Administrators say that the changes stem from problems with the younger crowd that Under the Couch attracts. The obvious solution is to hire additional security for the area on the night of shows. The cost of these new guards could come from higher ticket prices, which would either have the effect of limiting the destructive power of those attending the events or of decreasing the number of off-campus people who attend the events. By limiting the groups that can use the venue and those who can attend its events, Tech is harming one of the few parts of campus that is alive on weekend evenings.

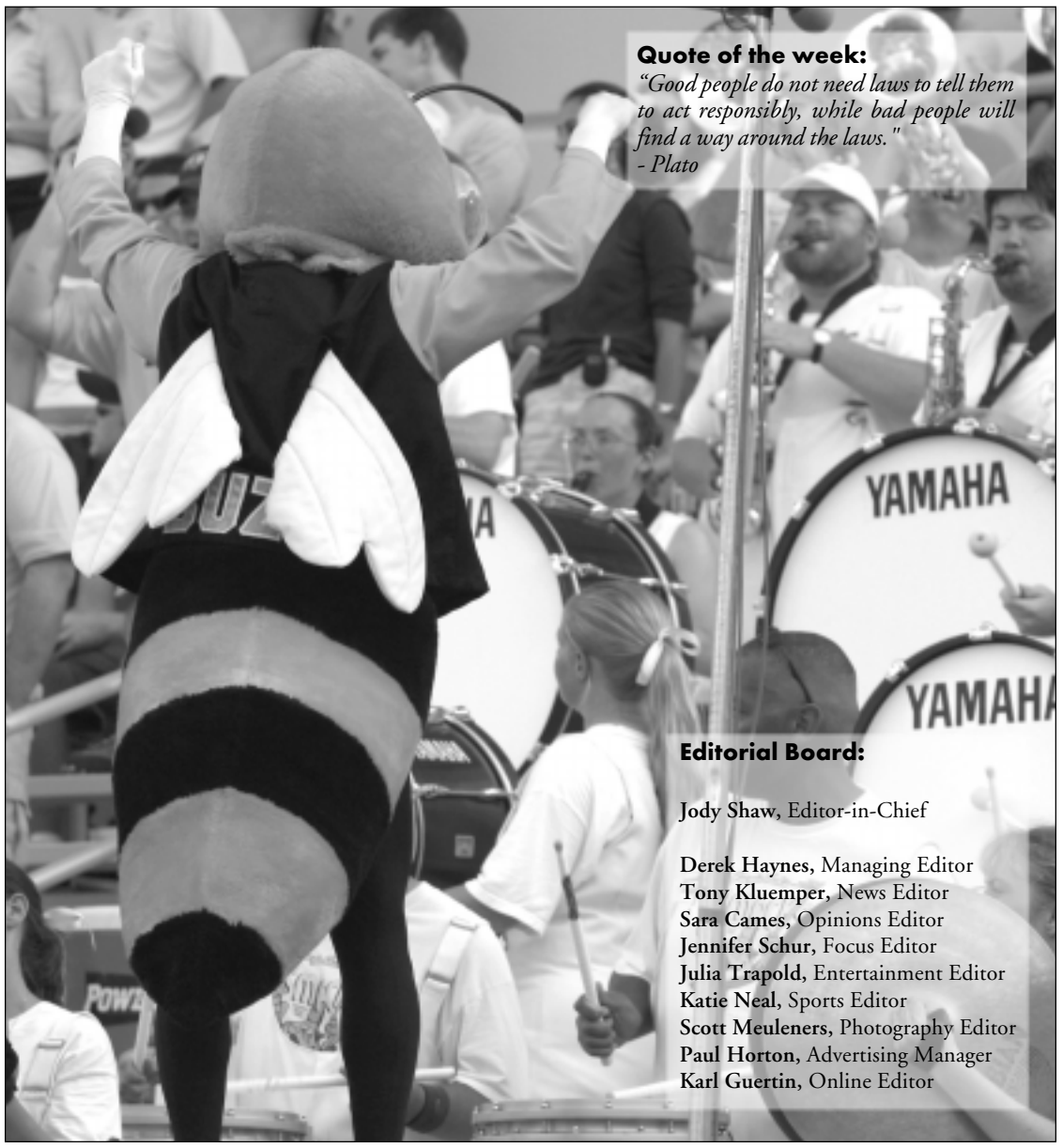
JFC policy changes

The recent changes in Joint Finance Committee policy for funding Tier Three organizations is a prime example of poorly-implemented ill-thought out administrative procedure that fails to serve the interests of the groups it affects. The first problem with the changes is that they are approved by neither the Undergraduate House nor the graduate Senate, as the JFC is techniqually only a "recommending body." This means that no elected official has any control over these regulations.

Additionally, notice of these changes was not well promulgated through elected officials or the groups whose budgets will be effected. Although the policy seems to have been made in response to complaints about sports clubs using too much money, more feedback from students involved in these groups is needed to determine how students will be effected, either positively or negatively, by these changes. Sports clubs serve more than the purpose of exercise for their members; many of them provide Tech students with entertainment, especially ones that regularly attract fans, such as the hockey team.

The timing on these changes is particularly bad for the continued existence of some sports clubs. With the economy in a downturn, it may be difficult for these groups to find additional outside funding options, especially since many of them already fundraise heavily. This situation could spell disaster for those clubs with no other options. No one is contesting the fact that cuts must be made in student organizations' budgets; while student activity fees have not increased in six years, staff salaries, many of which are paid by the fee, have increased by two percent every year per State of Georgia. However, the negative effects of these reductions in budget should be shouldered equally by all student groups, not laid entirely at the door of one type of activity.

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



Quote of the week:
"Good people do not need laws to tell them to act responsibly, while bad people will find a way around the laws."
- Plato

PETER JENSEN

JFC policy hurts students in club sports

There are magical things happening in SGA. The Joint Finance Committee (JFC) is making budget policy appear from thin air. A major policy has been added without input from the rest of SGA and in effect the student body. This policy limits all clubs to five funded events. The group most affected by this policy is sport clubs and if enforced will be crippling to their teams.

The rule means that a sport club can only apply for money for registration fees and travel for five events. The fuzzy logic behind this cap of funding is to limit the teams to one national, one regional and three league games/competitions. Anyone (apparently the JFC) that hasn't played on a sport team might not see a problem with this but everyone else knows otherwise. Most of the teams play in leagues that require at least five away games. Other clubs such as crew compete in more than five tournaments, meets or regattas during the year. The fees for these can be as much as $500.

Clubs already raise a large amount of their money through dues, fundraising and sponsorship. SGA has constantly given the sport clubs money for travel and registration because this is a required aspect of competing. Without reason, this principle was changed and the sport clubs may be left without the money for some events.

The Water Polo team is ranked 7th nationally. The founder of the Canoe and Kayak Club, Ty Haglar is now ranked internationally and training for the Olympics. These are athletes that don't get scholarships and all the other perks of varsity athletics. They swim, cycle, row and so on because they love the sport and to get some release from school pressure. Why should these athletes be limited not by their skills but their funding?

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By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Alternate CS course will not help Tech students

"Should there not be one course that all Tech students must take regardless of major? I believe the answer is yes."

Jody Shaw
Editor-in-Chief

Students have been spreading the rumors about an alternative to the introductory computer science course since I arrived at Tech. Any observant listener could hear the whispers through the halls of D.M. Smith and the IC.

"My advisor told me not to take the course because they are going to change the requirement soon."

Although I knew the rumors well, I had put little stock in the rumors until the Academic Senate approved the new alternative to CS 1321 last Tuesday. And as an international affairs major, I also knew that if the rumors were true, and an alternative course were created, my major school, as well as others in the Ivan Allen College and the Dupree College of Management, would most likely adopt the new class as an acceptable one to fulfill its computing requirement, but I took the introductory computing course anyway. Though difficult, I found it to be one of the more beneficial courses I have taken in my Tech career. The decision by members of the Academic Senate to loosen the computer literacy requirement and allow alternatives to the introductory course to fulfill this requirement troubles me, and I hope that the faculty and administrators in my major school, as well as others, will resist the temptation to make it an available option for their curriculum.

The current introductory computer science course teaches students a way of thinking that transcends the homework, tests and even the computing language itself. It teaches students how to traverse problems in an orderly fashion using simple steps that repeat themselves. It teaches students how to manipulate data in efficient and interesting ways. It teaches students to use parts of their mind they may never have used before.

Some students feel, however, there is a reason they have never used those particular skills; they don't want or need to. My fellow international affairs majors, as well as other students of liberal arts and social sciences, may say that they will never use the skills they are forced to obtain in CS 1321. I argue that the usefulness of the course and its material cannot serve as the factor by which a university determines whether or not it should be a curriculum requirement. The overall benefit to the student, and how it augments his or her ability to think, should be the factor—especially for administrators who set Ivan Allen College curricula.

As Sports Editor Katie Neal said in an editorial just two weeks ago, "the liberal arts teach you to think." Students with liberal arts and social science degrees from Tech's Ivan Allen College should be able to do just that—think. But they should be able to think in a variety of ways using a variety of techniques. They should also be able to understand and evaluate the way others think.

How, then, can the type of thinking promoted in CS 1321 be left out of a school's required curriculum? If the goal is to teach students to think, how can one eliminate a course based on the usefulness or applicability of its material? After all, I doubt that being able to evaluate the causes of the Second World War based on the balance of power theory will be useful on a daily basis in my future. However, my great power relations class, where I discussed this issue, forced me to think about problems in a unique way and in a particular paradigm. And yet no one calls for its elimination.

The introductory computer science course does the same; it promotes thinking in an abstract way. Why change it? It seems to be that the type of thinking it promotes is not popular or useful enough for certain students or members of the Tech administration—probably for those who seek to raise the retention rate. Perhaps it is just too hard. CS 1321 is challenging, and challenging thinking is not always fun. It is, however, beneficial.

Liberal arts and social science majors everywhere should all be able to think in the manner taught in introductory computer science—especially students of liberal arts and social science majors at Tech. Without this ability, these programs become no different than those offered at the University of Georgia and other such institutions; they lose the Tech distinction. The Ivan Allen programs are different, and they need to maintain this unique facet to continue to differentiate themselves from others in the academic community in order to grow and recruit and retain top students.

Even if the new alternative to CS 1321 maintains the same characteristics—the unique way of the thinking and the academic rigor—that make its current form a great asset to all Tech students, which seems doubtful, I believe that deviating from a standardized class remains a poor idea. Tech needs certain core requirements to maintain high academic standards. I believe this change threatens those standards.

Every student at Georgia Tech earns a Bachelor of Science degree. My degree, besides the major, will be the same as those of my friends who are electrical engineers and biology majors; it will be a Bachelor of Science from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Should there not be one course that all Tech students must take regardless of major? I believe the answer is yes; the computer literacy requirement equated all of Tech's majors, at least in regards to core requirements. Now what will exist? A greater schism between engineers and scientists and non-engineers and a group of Tech liberal arts students without the ability to completely think.

I urge faculty and administrators in the Ivan Allen College, Dupree College of Management and any other colleges with schools that may consider adopting this course as an option for computer literacy to weigh the decision carefully. You are the same individuals who often argue that the Tech degree should be better rounded. Cutting off one of its sides does not make a circle.

Campus transportation needs improvement

"These are the two main problems with the Stinger bus service: coverage and reliability."

Scott Meuleners
Photography Editor

I was walking to class the other day, and I noticed a ton of people piling on to a stinger bus and I thought to myself, "why would anyone want to ride the bus on campus?" I have not taken a Stinger bus since I was a freshman because it simply is not convenient. It is always either late or going the opposite way that you want to go. When I first came to Tech, I would ride the bus once in a while because I lived on west campus and it took a while to walk from west campus to my classes.

After a couple of months of being at Tech I realized that it is simply easier and quicker to walk to class than to ride the bus because I can get to anywhere on campus in 10 to 15 minutes on foot. In a city like Atlanta and all of its transportation issues, it is not a surprise that we have issues here, but there is no excuse not to do anything about it.

We can take steps to make the Stinger more reliable and more useful for getting to class, including making a schedule and keeping to it and increasing the Stinger's coverage.

Tech has done some things in recent years to deal with the Stinger problems. They have added routes going both ways to alleviate the trouble of having to ride all the way around campus to get to your destination. This seems like a good idea and could work, but not if more busses aren't added. Otherwise, this plan takes away from other routes, making the bus stops less frequent than they already are for people waiting.

They have also supposedly tried to implement a schedule for the Stinger service, but I have not seen it posted at any Stinger stop and the Stinger doesn't seem to come by at a regular rate. These are the two main problems with the Stinger bus service: coverage and reliability.

Currently all of the Stinger routes run around the perimeter of campus, avoiding entering the center of campus, where all of the academic buildings are. A good example of this is Atlantic street. Many of Tech's academic buildings are along this street, and the Stinger bus does not go by them in a regular loop. In order to provide services that most students want, the Stinger should make getting them to class a first priority and having the main loop pass by academic buildings is a good way to do this.

Another problem area with the main bus loops is that they bypass "the Hill" and go around the stadium, where not many students need to go. I know that Bobby Dodd and Cherry streets are both "pedestrian only" streets, but they still are just that, "streets." Walking up the Hill and on Cherry street you wouldn't think it was a pedestrian only street with all of the cars and delivery vehicles that are along it all of the time.

I have seen in Europe and many American cities where busses are allowed to run along "pedestrian streets" it seems to work well and get the "pedestrians" into town. Allowing the Stinger bus to climb "the Hill" would be worthwhile for the bus. It would take less time to get around campus and at the same time get students to where they need to be: in class, not on the back side of the stadium.

When planning for the future, I would suggest that Tech think about adding routes off-campus to some of the new developing areas that are springing up around the downtown area, including Atlantic station, Virginia highlands and many other areas.

This would allow students to get out more and have a good time on the weekends. With news of a movie theatre, a Wal-Mart and other things that students need, Tech can't go wrong adding a route to Atlantic Station. Having routes to other off-campus locations like clubbing areas and local eateries could also work if done well.

One thing I've found, from being in Europe all summer long is that public transportation can work, and it can work well. They set schedules and stick to them, if the bus says it is going to be there at 7:03 AM, then you'd better be there at 7:03 AM, or you are gonna miss your bus.

If we could set up a schedule and have our drivers stick to it, we'd have something that is actually usable for those of us who like to get to class on time and not have to arrive really early. A schedule designed with class start times in mind would allow students to leave their dorms or cars at a regular time and get to class on time. The way it is now, it is impossible to have a regular schedule before getting to class. Times in between busses can range from one minute to 20-30 minutes, which is not reliable enough to count on.

Tech has done a good job in listening to the students and attempting to remedy the Stinger problems, but they have invested too little and not put enough into implementation. With a good schedule and a more routes near classroom buildings, the Stinger can be something that students will want to use instead of something they use if it happens to be there when walking out of their building.

TECHNIQUE

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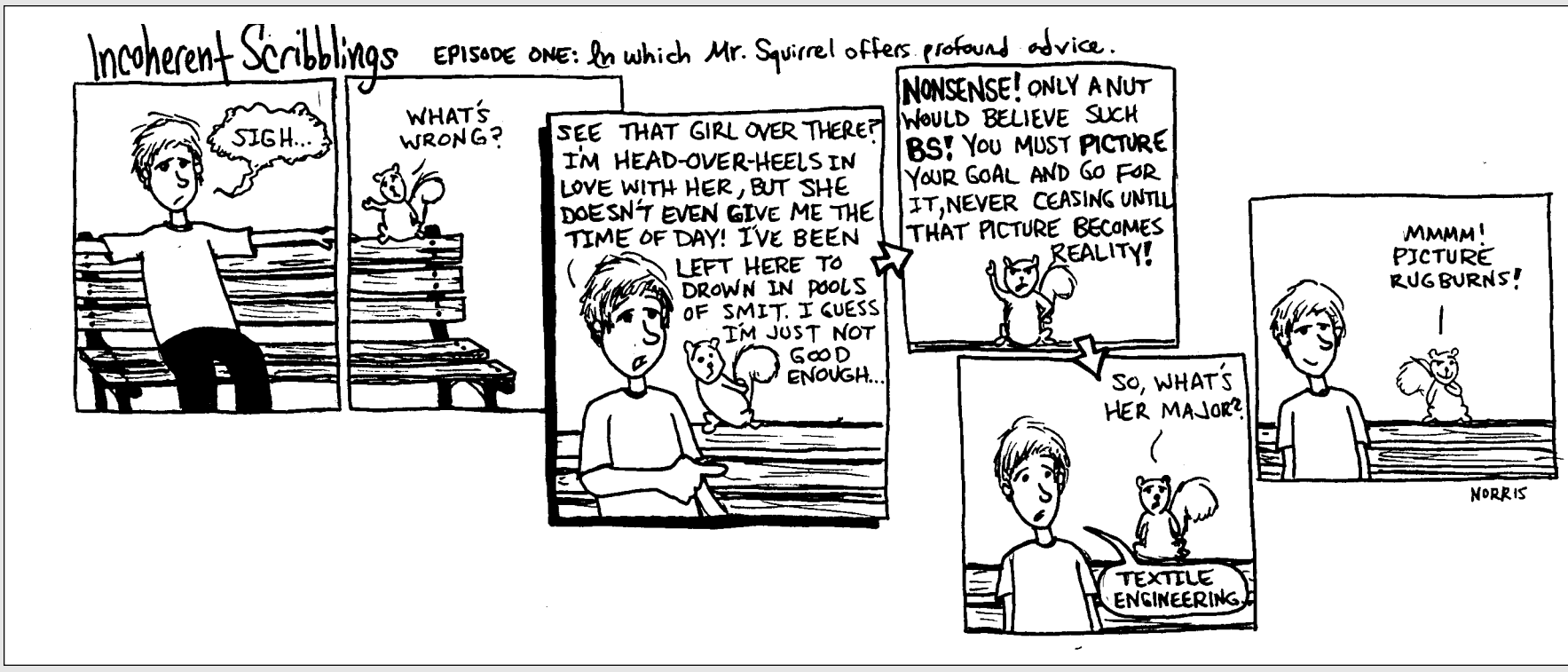

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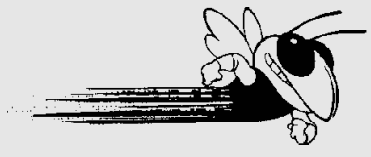

Question of the week

"What do you think the CS 1321 alternative?"

Feature and Photos by Andrew Saulters

Austin Nally
AE Freshman
"It's good that they're gearing it toward non-engineering curriculum."

Erin Gatlin
INTA/ML Sophomore
"I'm thrilled to death because I'm a liberal arts major!"

James Deen
CS Freshman
"CS majors should be able to take it because Scheme sucks."

Sarah Gausman
BIOL Freshman
"I think it's a wonderful idea because I don't see myself using it later in life."

Mary Holder
PSYC Junior
"It's about time they made a concession to the non-engineering students."

Erin Schwartz
PubP Grad
"I think it is helpful to present it in another way."

Tommy Newton
ME Sophomore
"There shouldn't be non-science, non-engineering majors at Tech."

Jessica Smith
STaC Sophomore
"They should have started it a year and a half ago. Is there an alternate 1322?"

Madame d' Amour Advice on Love and Life

Madame returns from a two-year hiatus

The smelly cheese finally got to me; I had to return to the States and the George Bushes. While my two-years in the French Riveria were memorable and taught me many things, I realized the flocks of floundering students I had left behind me in my exodus to my homeland, notorious for love, needed me back. Tech students need me to sort out their problems and I am here to help.

First, let me fill you in on what the Madame has been up to: mostly obsessing over and stalking a boy with huge wire-rimmed glasses that lead his tiny frame. That story will have to wait for another column, though. On to the questions!

The biggest difficulty of my life has been finding men to date. My friend and I formed a pact that any guy we met that we were interested in, we would go after unless they were gay, dating someone else, or inbred (don't ask). My problem is that I only meet men who fall into one of those three categories. What am I doing wrong? Why am I only attracted to men who are in some way unavailable?—Frustrated in Fitten

What a predicament you have gotten yourself into, missy. First of all, you should know that you never, ever set ground rules for yourself—that's the surefire way to guarantee that you will be forever single. Instead, you have to remember that an occasional hook-up is good for the soul, even if the person you are getting busy with is already seeing someone else. Consider yourself doing them a service—how will your lip-locking lover know they're with the right person unless they have someone (read: YOU) to compare with? Exactly. So you need to ignore your gut instincts; they're sure to lead you away from getting some booty. This same argument can be made for the case of the gay paramour.

So here's the bottom line: remind yourself that you're beautiful, you're smart and you're a rare breed in a jungle of testosterone—go out there and sick 'em tiger!

After recently breaking up with my boyfriend, I am having difficulties finding a date to my sorority's semi-formal. I am going to be drunk out of my mind and sleeping in the same bed with whoever I take. How should I go about finding a date for this event?—Dateless on Greek Row.

Dateless, we need to sit you down in a safe setting and remind you about the dangers of drinking...alone that is. Of course you need a date! Here's my simple plan for getting a guy: ever since JFC changed its policy on funding for organizational sports teams, players have been downtrodden and depressed; they're sure to be an easy catch.

You should first look into the Tech hockey team. What with their buns of steel and excellent skills at maneuvering, any hockey player would be ideal to show off to your sisters. You'd be the envy of all.

Furthermore, if he's from a sports team, you know the boy will be able to hold his alcohol. You won't have to worry about some pesky lightweight puking all over you in the bed you'd be sharing. Don't worry about the situation being awkward, either, since as you said, you'll both be drunk and neither of you will remember what happened in the morning.

Good luck, Dateless!

Back to me, and the boy with the scrawny bod and huge glasses.

I met him in physics class one day. He was incessantly staring at me, and even though he was not physically attractive, I became intrigued. I started to stare back.

Under close observation, I quickly noticed his tendency to talk to himself. Walking down the hall, through streets, during class even! It was as though there was someone next to him to carrying on a conversation with. The scary part was, I couldn't see this person. Neither could anyone else. So I began to stalk him.

The object of my obsession loved to ride his bike everywhere he went. He usually fell over in transit, the rickety metal bike ejecting his gently perched frame to the ground. He would always get up, turn to his side and started complaining to his friend, who no one else could see. It became very difficult for me to keep up with this biking speed demon, even when I ran frantically.

The situation made me distraught; what was happening to my life if I couldn't even use my powers of advice to help myself? I needed to return to my roots at Tech.

So now I'm back where I belong, answering your questions with a little humor and even less compasion.

Do you have a question for Madame d' Amour? Email it to ***opinions@technique.gatech.edu.***

Library policy shafts students

Recently, I returned a recalled book to the main library. I owed fines, which disqualified me from any further library services. Attempting to explain my honest mistake, I was made aware that I was given every opportunity to act as a responsible adult but had chosen to be twenty-five-dollars-devious.

The library's new policy is to loan a book out for an entire semester, asking for its immediate return if someone else should request a recall. While the library normally charges fifty cents a day for late material, recalled books demand a $2.50 per day late fee. Really, who is so incapable of renewing a book that they need it for an entire semester? Okay, UGA fans, perhaps.

Regardless, $2.50 per day is exorbitant and immoral, seeing as the $0.50 per day charge is already five times the amount charged by Fulton County Public Libraries. I believe the library charges these fees because they know that students do not have the time to protest, and if push comes to shove, they can charge it to your student account.

In my experience, the best way to avoid the shaft is to be forewarned. So, here it is: All you students out there, who, like me, maniacally conspire to destroy all that is wholesome through the systematic collection of overdue books: they know who you are and they're coming to get you. Oh, and if you have a copy of "Dynamics of Structures", which I recalled at the beginning of the semester, its yours.

Matthew Schutz
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Fans' behavior disgraceful

Even though I attended BYU, being from Georgia, I have always loved Georgia Tech. I was at the Georgia Tech/BYU game earlier today and had a good time even though my Cougars choked. We sat in section 130, by one of the student sections.

I am by no means a saint, and I know that emotions run high at sporting events, but I just had to write and tell you how offended I was at the behavior of many of the Georgia Tech students.

I realize that teasing and jawing at opposing fans is part of the game, but gross, vulgar and degrading language and behavior is another. While some students were good-natured, a good majority were way over the line. It is just a game, after all. I have to admit that I was pretty disappointed in the students and the school as a whole.

I hope what I saw was an aberration and is not encouraged. I'm glad my wife decided not to come; I would have been embarrassed for her to see those gross gestures. A gesture or two is expected at a game like toady's, but the same crude gestures over and over again for the entire game was a little much.

I guess what I'm saying is that the student body didn't represent what I thought Georgia Tech stood for. Like I said before, I'm not perfect, but today my eyes were opened to an embarrassing side of Georgia Tech. I was not expecting to see such immature and rude behavior from Tech students.

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