OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, November 22, 2002

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Ramblin' Nights

This year saw the start of an innovative new program at Tech: Ramblin' Nights. These events, which took place before home football games, provided an entertaining outlet for over 5,000 total Tech students. While it is doubtful that many upperclassmen attended, the number of underclassmen who attended seems to be substantial. These sorts of events make Tech more like other campus that have many on-campus events for students to attend. The variety of the activities available at the various Ramblin' Nights was impressive; from comedy acts to an oxygen bar, each of the evenings was unique and well conceived.

The success of this year's Ramblin' Nights provides strong support for continuing the event next year. Having these occur on a regular, yearly basis will draw even more students, including more upperclassmen, and will help Ramblin' Nights to be established as a Tech tradition. While they were a success during the Fall, they should not be expanded to the Spring semester. It would be impossible to coordinate a Ramblin' Night for many of the home basketball games, causing the program to lose its focus around Tech sporting events. The novelty of attending an on-campus event would also be lost, and it is doubtful that the variety of entertainment that this semester's Ramblin' Nights saw could be sustained. The administration should continue its work to secure funding for next year so that this new, impactful event can reach its full potential.

Alexander-Tharpe Fund

The Alexander-Tharpe Fund will begin asking students for money next year to fund athletic scholarships. While the goals of this program and others like it are good, soliciting student donations is quickly becoming an overcrowded market, as both the AT Fund and the Student Capital Campaign have recently announced their intentions to solicit money from students. Organizers of these initiatives should remember that most students have very little extra money and should cautious about expecting too large a response from students.

While the amount that will be collected will likely do very little to substantively alter Tech's athletic program, one of the key goals of the plan is to encourage giving among students in the hopes that it will induce them to give after they have graduated. This goal mirrors that of other groups, like Student Foundation. These programs hope that letting students see the effects of their donations while they are at Tech will give the students a greater connection to the Institute and encourage further giving later on in life.

Ultimately, if alumni are to donate money to the Institute, current students must be made to feel a stronger bond to the Institute than they currently do. The AT Fund should model itself after Clemson's "I Pay $10 a Year" program, which gives students benefits ranging from discounts at local merchants to exclusive time with athletic teams and coaches. Student Foundation should give its contributors more contact with alumni and offer other benefits like free attendance to its popular Investment Seminar. These sorts of benefits encourage giving while providing students with a stronger connection to Georgia Tech. It is through innovations like these that student-giving schemes will begin to increase alumni giving.

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

SCOTT MEULENERS

Tech must recruit more minority profs

In my four years at Tech, the focus on recruiting minority students has overshadowed the focus on recruiting minority faculty, especially African-American faculty. The FOCUS program attracts potential minority graduate students and potential professors to join the Tech community. Though FOCUS is held every year, more African-American professors are not being added to the ranks of existing professors in engineering departments. I think that it is imperative that African-American students be more vocal about getting more African-American professors in Chemical Engineering and other engineering and science departments.

The impact, both academically and socially, on a minority student when he or she sees a professor of like background and ethnicity is significant. This is true throughout one's entire undergraduate and graduate career. People need that source of support-someone that you can identify with.

In the Chemical Engineering department, there is one African-American professor, Dr. Arnold Stancell. However, Dr. Stancell is on leave many months throughout the academic year. Therefore, he is not available to students. Dr. Stancell is a great teacher and he brings great acclaim to Georgia Tech and the Chemical Engineering department through his expertise, leadership and teaching abilities. However, I be-

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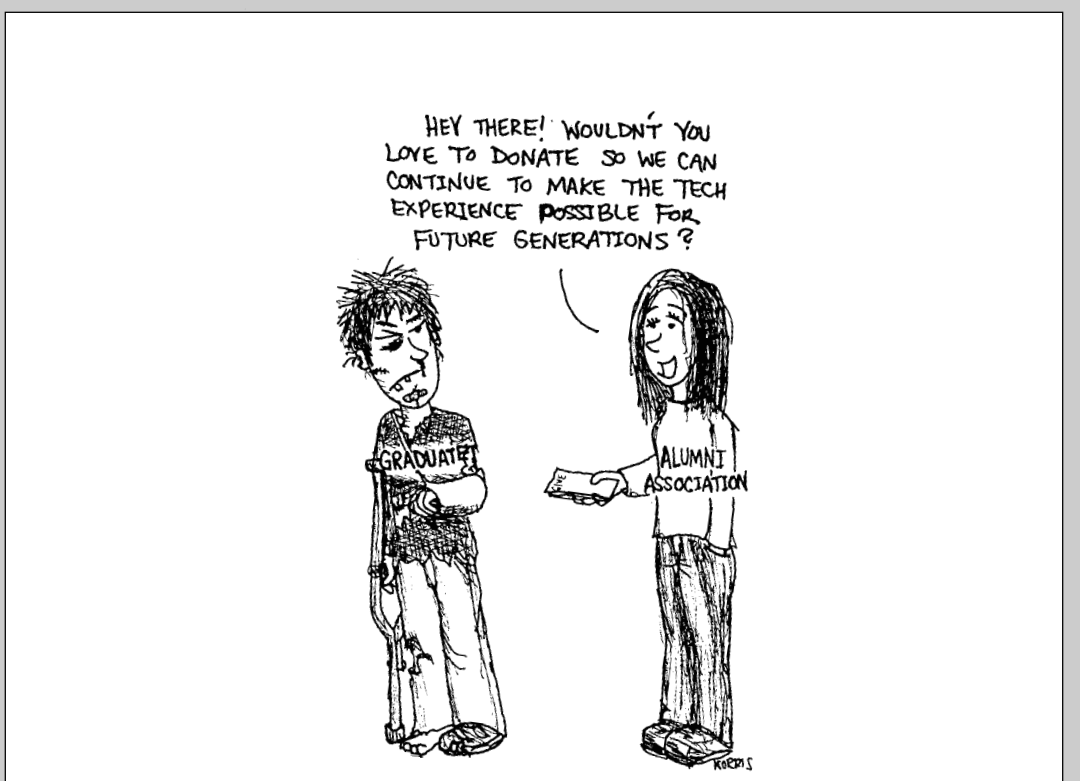

By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Four years of photos lends insights, memories

"When my kids ask to see my pictures from college, they will hardly see me, but instead see four years in the history of Tech."

Daniel Uhlig
Associate Editor

After a drunk guy on Hemphill, Brian, and my CA recognized me as "that photo guy," I realized how much time I have spent in front of people taking pictures. Yes, I have been an Aerospace Engineer as well, as there is no photography major, but I realize now how much taking photos as defined my Tech experience.

I have spent four years taking pictures since I walked into the *Technique* office. I knew I wanted to take pictures for the paper since the FASET organizations fair. My first job was to shoot a test roll. After finding assorted subjects for my 24 frames around campus, I turned it in to the *Technique*.

That Friday I was elated as I flipped through the *Technique* and found an image of my friend across the hall, Rex, working at his computer in the paper. It is an exciting feeling to have your work there for everyone to see.

That was roll number one. Now I have number 424 in my camera, but since my number methods are hardly accurate it is probably closer 450-500. Add assorted digital shots, and my collection easily tops 15,000 frames.

I have shot just about everything, from the freshman cake race to golf. My favorite event was probably the Mini 500. It is one of my favorite events of the whole year, particularly when it circles Peter's Parking Deck. The atmosphere is exciting, energetic and, yes, even a little destructive.

It starts with the mayhem of collisions as the riders struggle through too much traffic. One shot of a girl on the ground protecting her head as the other riders try to go around and over her crashed trike jumps out at me. People are all pumped up and excited over nothing, and in the end after smoke bombs and smashed tricycles, everyone leaves happy. At Tech, open happiness and excitement is a rarity, and I'm glad I was there fives times with my camera.

After beating UGA in 1999, the goal posts came down. The students rushed the field and struggled to take down the posts as cops tried to slow the destruction. I stood where the band used to be and took pictures as the masses enjoyed the overtime win with a little destructive fun.

At that game I took one of my most famous pictures, a UGA fan cheering on the dogs with a sign held upside down. He did it a number of times, before he glanced at it questioningly and concluded nothing was wrong. Only after a second, longer glance did he realize his mistake—one that has made him the butt of many jokes and a popular feature in THWUGA.

I shot the Black History month keynote speaker two different years. The first time is was C.T. Vivian, who had worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I remember the talk being lovely. The attendance was about 10 people, including two photographers.

The next year, the keynote speaker had big name draw—Al Sharpton. He spoke with energy and fervor but was not nearly as moving or lovely as the previous year's speaker. The group was huge, even including the three Tech protesters. I was disappointed that people seemed so drawn by the big controversial name when an even better speaker was here and ignored the year before.

The Stinger crash was the closest to blood and gore I ever shot. I have shots of the EMT hauling the person out. I am still disgusted that Tech students aboard the bus got off the bus and left the injured people on board. The students that were unhurt left the scene and disappeared to class. I guess the physics lecture was more important.

However, the wreck does not jump out as being that hard to shoot. Shooting the delivery of food to homeless people makes one think. I followed around the homelessness awareness bus as its riders passed out food and clothing and discussed ideas at different homeless shelters.

The cold Tech people helped cold homeless people. Watching the kindness humanized the problems I see everyday as a result of living in Atlanta. The whole time we were there, the homeless people were quite intelligent, talkative and friendly with the Tech students. I tried my best to capture the feelings and humanize the problems for others through my pictures.

The September 11th Remembrance Ceremony was probably the hardest thing I took pictures of during my time at Tech. It felt like I was shooting a funeral, even more so than shooting When the Whistle Blows. During the moments of silence and reflection I glanced around looking for a shot, for a bit of emotion showing itself in the faces of the crowd.

I watched a young man spend most of the time with his head buried in a New York Mets cap. I wonder what he felt on the other side of 13 pieces of glass, but I shot and moved on and to find another view, another image.

I wonder what will happen to my four notebooks of negatives. Will I catalog them in the future? How will I look at the thousands of frames of dances, speakers and random students at Tech? When my kids ask to see my pictures from college, they will hardly see me, but instead see four years in the history of Tech. Four years of history I watched, observed and clicked through.

Students should communicate with administration

"Creating anonymous websites saturated with sarcasm will not help improve the aspects of Tech we all love to hate."

Justin Partlo
Advertising Manager

"I hate this place!" I yelled at a friend across the table in Brittain Dining Hall one evening. Sometimes it's difficult being an almost-vegetarian at Tech. I looked at my starch-covered plate with disgust. It was the second time in as many weeks that I found myself eating white rice, pasta, mashed potatoes and French fries—all in one meal.

With the recent publicity of the infamous GTSux website, I've begun to realize that I'm not alone when it comes to having reservations about life here at Georgia's "finest" public institute of higher learning. However, grumbling amongst ourselves and creating anonymous websites saturated with sarcasm will not help improve the aspects of Tech we all love to hate. While those activities may gain us some short-term sympathy from our families and peers, they do not help correct the problems at hand.

As students, it is our right and our duty to communicate our dissatisfaction, but it needs to be done in a constructive manner—a manner which Tech officials can act upon.

Our complaints need to be directed to the appropriate individuals and departments in order to facilitate the changes we desire. Contrary to popular opinion, the administration does not try to make life here as miserable as possible. In fact, all evidence suggests the exact opposite.

The next time you step into one of the dining halls, take a look at the comments board. Many students have written complaints and suggestions on cards and have pinned them to these boards. The managers of the dining halls read each card, usually writing a thank-you and a response of their own. Many new foods have been introduced to the menus as a direct result of the students' suggestions. When the actual request cannot be fulfilled, a reasonable alternative is usually offered in its place.

Last year I filed a complaint with the Department of Housing regarding the dirty, mildewed shower curtains in my Freshman Experience dorm. At first, I just thought about how disgusting it was, but I soon realized that my disgust was not accomplishing anything. Within two days of contacting the department, brand new shower curtains were hanging in the bathrooms.

The GTSux website portrays Tech as the worst college in the nation. While most of the content on the site is meant to be hysterical, it has been exaggerated so much that it cannot be taken literally. It only pokes fun at Tech instead of offering suggestions to improve it. The author of the site could use its popularity to rally support for changes to improve our campus. Instead, he appears to have given up.

It is that same apathy, shared by a large portion of the student body, which explains why only a small number of people take advantage of the current venues of communication. One person cannot change an entire campus on his own, but if everyone felt that way, Tech really would be the worst college.

Recently, an email was sent to every student who lives in on-campus housing at Tech, asking us to take a quick survey about smoking in and around the dorms and other campus buildings. The Residence Hall Association and the Student Government Association are giving students the opportunity to voice their opinions before any procedures are changed. That survey is a step in the right direction. It allows the student body to influence the decisions that affect the entire campus without taking a lot of time.

Most departments at Tech already provide a way for students to give feedback and suggestions. Usually, the most efficient way of doing this is by going to the specific department's website and searching for a suggestions form. If that option fails, a simple phone call to the department will usually accomplish the same thing. However, I believe that is too much trouble for most students. We are too busy writing code and computing derivatives to spend time searching for a feedback form to get our shower curtains changed. There is no centralized way of making suggestions. Each department has its own unique way of conducting business, making it difficult and cumbersome for students to express their opinions.

Tech needs to develop an easily accessible online forum in which dissatisfied students can voice their concerns and give suggestions for improvement. The site should be well advertised so every student is made aware of its existence. It should have a blanket effect, in that it covers all aspects of students' college experience. The complaints and suggestions should then be forwarded to the appropriate departments.

Additionally, the site should contain an archive of all the suggestions and changes made due to the students' ideas. Students need to feel like their opinions matter and that when they do take the time to express their concerns, that they are not simply ignored.

If the administration would develop an improved, consistent feedback and suggestions program, I believe it would make a positive difference in the quality of life. Of course, students would have to cooperate as well by not abusing the program. While Tech officials are not likely to start assassinating members of the "Squirrel Mafia," they will certainly not ignore the opinions of the students.

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The *Technique* welcome all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters should be hand-delivered, mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, or emailed to **editor@technique.gatech.edu**. Letters should be addressed to Jody Shaw, 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 8 a.m. Wednesday 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.

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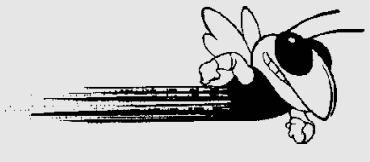

Question of the week

"What do you think about the Legacy Brick Project?"

Feature and Photos by Chris Raabe

Barry Clement
ID Senior
"Who the hell is gonna pay $75 for a brick?"

Fil Zyryanov
ID Senior
"It's better than tacking it onto tuition. At least it's voluntary."

David Carson
CE Freshman
"They should sell food."

Ashish Arya
MGT Freshman
"It's a good idea, but the price is too high for a student's budget."

Justin Stay
EE Senior
"Why aren't they hitting up the alumni? Isn't that what they're there for?"

Alicia Patrick
IE Senior
"I think it'll look nice, but I don't want to pay for it."

Christy Howard
ME Junior
"It'd be better if you could split bricks between several people."

Matt Powell
CHE Senior
"I think my $50 would be better spent not on a brick."