

# OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, February 23, 2001

## OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

### Kill dead week

Dead week has supposed to have been dead for years. It still appears to be breathing and it's time to kill it for good. The Academic Senate's promise to keep dead week dead was tied closely to giving seniors final exams. If such commitment is being shown to giving exams, the same attitude must be taken towards the week preceding them.

Once seniors take final exams, dead week becomes the time when they, along with everyone else, have to get things in order before ending the term. For far too many students, dead week simply means the busiest week of the term—and not because they are “only” studying for finals.

Upon making dead week dead, a fast-acting grievance process needs to be enacted so if a professor has more than one assignment due during the final two weeks of a term, students have a recourse of action before having to take the tests. The student requests for a dead week have been ignored thus far; a policy of enforcement must be set in place to give dead week any true meaning. Unfortunately, we are not holding our breath.

### Crime on campus

The two Student Services building break-ins this weekend should serve as reminders to everyone to be careful while on campus, especially while alone at night. While we hope the perpetrators are not students doing this to their own school, it is even scarier to think of the criminals as armed robbers from outside Tech. Although propping open locked doors did not contribute to the thefts, that practice compromises the safety of everyone inside the “locked” building and should be stopped.

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

### Make meal plans flexible

I am responding to the article “FE contract will enforce mandatory year-long meal plan” that appeared in the February 2 Technique. In it, Dan Morrison is quoted as saying, “We feel that a mandatory [year long] meal plan should be required by all freshmen, so that they won't have to factor in how they are going to eat well or how to budget their food money.” The article also mentions the “community building” purpose of the meal plan. I am writing to point out that there is another way to do these things than a year-long mandatory Freshman Experience meal plan.

As a Greek at Tech, I have participated in Tech's meal plan and in my own chapter's. To begin with, many Greek meal plans offer more budgeting flexibility for students. Enrollment is done on a semester basis, which matches how we and our parents budget for college. If a student or his parents wants to make sure ahead of time that meals are provided for, then they certainly pay the whole amount in advance and many do so. However, many students work their way through school so we allow payment in installments. If a person needs to modify his meal plan because his school or work plans have changed, there is no penalty.

Dining services should offer such flexibility to all students, including new ones. Instead, freshmen will be locked into the yearlong FE meal plan months before arriving on campus and getting the information they need to make an informed decision. If they aren't happy with what they find in the dining halls or want to be part of another community, they should be able to go elsewhere. At least, they should get a trial period.

Requiring students to remain on the meal plan even if they leave the Freshman Experience doesn't help build communities. It just hurts students. Even if, as David Stopp suggests, the Meal Plan allowed a drop to the 75 block plan for all students, not just the Greeks, that mandatory commitment would represent a large switching cost for which the student would likely receive no benefit and create no community.

The Tech Meal Plan should be more flexible for all students, not just the Greeks. The plan exists as a service for Tech students. They should keep our business through service, not through yearlong contracts. They should give us more options, not fewer.

Eric Smith  
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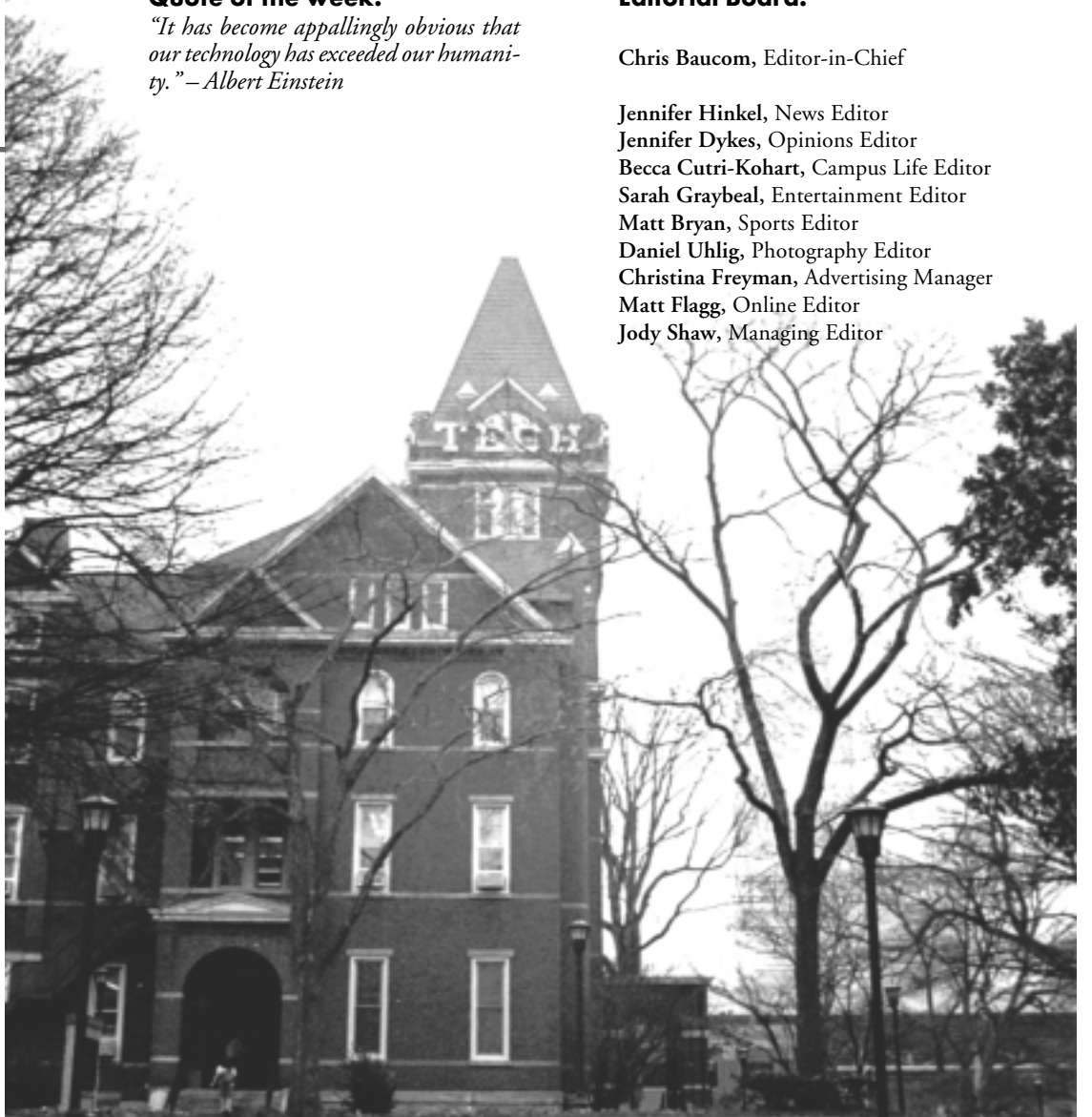
#### Quote of the week:

*“It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.”—Albert Einstein*

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## YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

### Female provost would add to Clough's cabinet

As the Provost search committee continues its selection process, I hope that they will consider the progress they could make in improving diversity by hiring their only female candidate, Elisabeth Paté-Cornell.

Currently, President Clough's cabinet consists of nine men and no women. While I have the utmost respect for the job that the current cabinet members do, I believe that as a governing body they are seriously lacking in diversity. How can we attempt to reach our goals for diversity if the upper-most level of

the Institute's administration is not diverse? The student body of this school consists of 33% women, and they deserve to be represented.

The President, the new Provost, and the cabinet will be responsible for making decisions that will affect the Institute's future. I think that one of the most important benefits of having diversity is that a variety of backgrounds and perspectives are considered. In order to make decisions that will benefit the Tech community, the perspectives of students and faculty need to be adequately represented. Hiring a woman as Pro-

vost would be a step in the right direction.

Primarily, I think a female Provost would provide female professors and students support they need in the upper levels of the administration. Also, having a female Provost would help us attract more female faculty members. All women who are a part of this community should know the administration fully supports them.

In President Clough's most recent State of the Institute Address

See Provost, page 10



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

# Lack of student-friendly events hinders Ferst Center

In passing through the Student Center lately, you may have noticed quite a few signs advertising various events at the Robert Ferst Center for the Arts. While it gives this entertainment editor hope to see the improvement in marketing, I remain frustrated with both the selection of shows and their pricing. Instead of serving as a valuable cultural resource for the Georgia Tech community, the Center sits quietly as students look elsewhere to be stimulated and entertained.

As the *Technique* reported last September, the Ferst Center has had its share of problems this year, and its management chose to scratch 18 shows after losing \$1.3 million over the course of the 1999-2000 season. This unfortunate decision resulted in the cancellation of acts by popular performers such as the Vienna Choir Boys and the Girl's Choir of Harlem, and left in its wake a schedule almost entirely devoid of student-friendly shows. Though Associate Vice President of Auxiliary Services Rosalind Meyers preferred to think of it as a "re-evaluation of our schedule," as she said last fall, I found the cancellations both embarrassing to the Center's reputation and damaging to Tech's supposed commitment to the arts.

The Center is caught in quite a cycle. Its financial problems have resulted in high ticket prices, fewer performance dates, and less appealing performers. Less appealing shows and expensive tickets inevitably lead to reduced audiences, reduced at-

"Can the Ferst Center rightfully bemoan a lack of student interest when the majority of the events they host seem anything but student-friendly?"

**Sarah Graybeal**  
Entertainment Editor



tendance means reduced revenue, and the cycle starts again. It's not hard to see how the Center has fallen to its current depths.

I understand that one of the Ferst Center's goals is to broaden the arts experience of Georgia Tech students, encourage us to leave the standard entertainment confines of places like Philips Area and the Tabernacle, and give us an escape from the decidedly technical mindset that we bury ourselves in each day. They do this through their classical, dance, jazz, and opera series, and some people do indeed pay attention. I spoke to one student just days ago who experienced the opera for the first time when *Carmen* came to campus a month ago. He enjoyed it immensely, and was disappointed that he won't be able to make it to *Aida* next week. I will be the first to admit that for the sophisticated student, the Ferst Center can sometimes be a valuable resource.

In addition, I must give credit to the Center's renewed marketing efforts. Advertising for upcoming

events has never been better, and the powers that be are making a visible effort to avoid denting our wallets too deeply. The Student Rush Ticket program (which allows students to purchase tickets for only \$15 two weeks prior to show) is a great opportunity for those who do choose to take advantage of it. This week this deal is even sweeter, as you can buy a rush ticket to *Aida* and attend an "Opera 101" workshop free of charge! Programs like this may indeed be an excellent way to improve attendance woes.

Yet if the Ferst Center truly desires to become a resource for all students, its program is in desperate need of revamping. Opera and dance will continue to attract the conscientious student, but these types of events—those that draw true patrons of the arts but tend to intimidate a member of the average public—won't sustain an entire campus's entertainment needs. So what kinds of shows would be better? One look at the Ferst Center's past would point the current adminis-

tration in the right direction.

I've been at Tech long enough now to remember a time when Penn and Teller sold out the entire theater, and Shawn Colvin stopped by for an unplugged performance. A quick poll of students who have been here as long (or longer) than me brought memories of musician Arturo Sandoval and comedians Jeff Foxworthy and Paula Poundstone. Student performances such as DramaTech's *Tommy*, the India Club's annual *Holi* show, and the Music Department's holiday concert also tend to attract a sizable crowd. The addition of two or three more "mainstream" acts to the Ferst Center's schedule could do wonders.

Put simply, the Ferst Center is yet another instance of a campus entity in need of a new solution—one that could make both students and administration happy. My personal wish for the Ferst Center is the formation of an endowment fund that could be used year after year to alleviate the financial burden of keeping a respectable arts venue operating and drawing an audience, and help cover the increased cost associated with bringing bigger-name acts to campus. The Capital Campaign just finished raising over \$711.9 million, and its website even touts that "unrestricted endowments help Georgia Tech respond to pressing university needs and capture new opportunities." The Ferst Center may not conduct ground-breaking

See *Ferst*, page 10

# Make campus a happier place with a little politeness

Sometimes, I just want to go back to the "good old days," before instant technology, e-mail, cell phones, and the proliferation of rudeness that makes up our impolite society.

For some reason, I thought that people in the South were supposed to be hospitable, sweet, and generally well-mannered. Apparently, that rule applies neither to Atlanta nor to the sub-culture of Tech.

I love the cell phone I got for Christmas. I have exactly 70 numbers pre-programmed, and the voice activation feature will "call Mommy"—I just have to tell it to.

Convenience has its place, but cell phones should have no place in the classroom, lab, conference room, library, theater, restaurant, or any other quiet, public area. Even worse are those phones which, instead of emitting a tiny beep or ring, must play ten measures of a Bach invention.

I'm all for having a phone that plays "Ramblin' Wreck," when it rings, but I don't want to hear it when I'm trying to take a Chemistry test or watch Brad Pitt walk across the movie screen shirtless.

Tech students, set a good example for those around you. If we think we're smarter than the average population, let's prove it through being more civilized. Turn off your phone in class. We all know you have voice mail, anyway.

Secondly, let's not overestimate the benefits of e-mail. As a true geek, I love having instant communication, but imagine my sadness when week after week my snail mailbox remains empty. When did writing notes become out of vogue?

Not everyone has to pen letters on personalized, engraved Crane &

"Convenience has its place, but cell phones should have no place in the classroom...or any other quiet, public area."

**Jennifer Hinkel**  
News Editor



Co. stationery, but something handwritten stands out from those boring, colorless e-mails. With free post cards in the Post Office and stamps that cost about the same as a piece of gum, I see no excuse.

Writing a note or a letter might be old-fashioned, but nothing makes a better impression in this day of e-mail, ICQ, and Instant Messenger. Even if you don't write notes to buddies, your relatives, professors, and acquaintances will appreciate your social adeptness and style.

As far as writing letters, e-mail may be better than nothing, except in one case: the thank-you note. Nothing separates the girls from the women, the boys from the men, and the socially lost from the socially suave than the ability to send a neat, concise, and prompt note of thanks.

If you do nothing else this weekend, sit down and write a quick thank-you note to that person who bought you lunch, gave you a ride, thought to invite you over, or offered a place to stay on the weekend.

(For those of you still hung up on the dating issue, thank-you notes win big points with boy- or girlfriends-to-be, not to mention the expression his or her parents will exhibit when they realize how in-

credibly well brought up, polite, and thoughtful you are.)

Although we are a technological campus that embraces new forms of communication and convenience, let's remember that newer and faster isn't always, in the long run, better. Why should social graces and basic consideration for those around you fall to the wayside when confronted with an onslaught of new technology?

Although no technology has been invented to prevent people from opening and holding doors for one another, it would seem as if Tech students think that doors open and hold themselves. Every day I walk through the Student Center six times, I get the door dropped on me at least once.

On rare occasions, when my hands are full and I stand by the door for five minutes in the rain, someone may hold it open just long enough for me to sneak inside. This behavior is not acceptable in a civilized country.

Of course, I am strong enough and smart enough to open a door by myself, but on the occasion that I am following someone through a door, I do not appreciate getting a faceful of glass and metal. I'm sure that other Tech students and faculty feel the same way.

Politeness has always had a place; we just need to adapt it for use in a fast-paced, high-tech world. Still, no matter how futuristic life becomes, simple social graces and etiquette protocols should never be ignored in favor of convenience. I'm a firm believer that a young man should relinquish a bus seat to a woman and open her car door before his own, even if he has remote keyless entry. Maybe that kind of thinking is backwards, but it would be refreshing to experience the more simple niceties of a polite existence around campus.

Treat one another with respect, and see how much you get in return. Hold a door to a public building, turn off your cell phone when you go to class, and encourage others to do the same. Think twice before shoving someone in the line for Junior's chicken tenders; he or she is in a hurry, too.

Taking a little bit of time each day to be considerate of each other is one thing we can do to make Tech a better place. However small or insignificant your actions may seem, the "ripple effect" might come back to make your day brighter. I'm envisioning a politeness *Pay it Forward*.

Especially at this time of midterms and pre-Spring-Break stress levels, the politeness with which you treat your fellow student could make or break someone's stressful day. Don't send your professor over the edge with a ringing cell phone in the middle of his lecture or body slam other students as you hurry on to your next class.

If you're running that fast, you're probably late anyway, but then, you could always send the professor a handwritten note of apology.

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## 'Big E' Dale Earnhardt will be missed

It is not often that a sport sees a competitor so loved and hated that he defines the playing field all on his own. Last Sunday, Dale Earnhardt, Sr. suffered fatal head and neck injuries when his Chevrolet Monte Carlo race car impacted the retaining wall at Daytona International Speedway on the final lap of the Daytona 500, NASCAR's most important event.

For his peers on the track, colleagues in the garage, friends, and family, Earnhardt leaves behind a gap that will never be filled. In over twenty years on the Winston Cup tour, he was nothing less than a driver's most fierce rival. Even at forty-nine years old, he was considered a favorite to win the championship in 2001.

What is even more remark-

able, however, was the side of Earnhardt that so many people were not aware of. He was known to spend considerable time helping rookie drivers become better competitors, and with taking NASCAR into the community, encouraging drivers to take part in charity and fan events.

We knew him as "The Intimidator," but perhaps that was only what he wanted us to think of him. Earnhardt the man was a remarkable human being who, for all of his successes, remained rather selfless in the end. His fans will mourn the passing, but perhaps there is solace to be found in knowing that he died doing what he loved and did best.

The accident occurred in the final turn of the last lap of the most important race of the year.

Doctors report that the injuries were fatal upon impact; Earnhardt did not suffer in the end.

In the annals of motorsports history, Dale Earnhardt, Sr., will forever have his own chapter. His contributions and memory will always be a part of the sport. He is survived by his wife, Teresa, and four children, including Dale Jr., one of the circuit's newest stars. The family racing legacy, begun by father Ralph, will certainly continue on.

But for his millions of fans worldwide, NASCAR will never be the same. We have not only lost a hero, but a friend. Thanks for the memories, Big E; you will never be forgotten.

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## Provost from page 8

he said that one way to improve this campus "is by creating a campus where diversity is valued and welcomed for all of its potential benefits." The creation of campus groups such as the Diversity Forum and the Council on Diversity is a good start toward reaching our goals. However, I urge the President and the search committee to practice what they preach and show the rest of the campus that we truly value diversity on this campus.

Of course, there are many issues that must be considered in choosing our new Provost. A candidate should not be chosen based on diversity as a lone criterion. No matter what, I hope the search committee carefully examines how their choice for a new Provost will affect diversity on this campus.

Molly Palmer  
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## Ferst from page 9

research or bring national recognition, but after the recent troubles, I do think that the arts at Tech constitute a "pressing university need." Perhaps the Institute could divert some of its newly-obtained funds toward improving the arts.

Can the Ferst Center rightfully bemoan a lack of student interest when the majority of the events they host seem anything but student-friendly? Or when a ticket costs twice as much as admission to comparable (or better) shows at any of the numerous entertainment venues beckoning from beyond the borders of this campus?

The Ferst Center is under-used by students and under-appreciated by administration. Until a reasonable financial solution is found and a more exciting performance lineup scheduled, the Center is destined to stay mired in its potential for greatness.

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# Ruling far from being Napster's death Intramurals need fair refs

By Eric Dickens  
The Battalion

(U-WIRE) Texas A&M—Two days before Valentine's Day, the hearts of millions of Napster users sank. On Feb. 12, a three-member panel of judges from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dealt a huge blow to the music-swapping company by sustaining the injunction against it from a lower-court ruling in July.

While the panel did not immediately shut down the service, it agreed with District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel's previous decision that Napster Inc. contributed to copyright violations. However, the appeals court ruled that the initial injunction was "overbroad" and needed amendment. The case will return to the lower court, where a more specific injunction will be hammered out, forcing Napster to stop trading MP3 files that record companies told it to block. After the ruling was announced, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) celebrated its victory. Hilary Rosen, RIAA's chief executive, called the ruling "a clear victory."

"The court of appeals ... ruled in our favor on every legal issue presented," she said. Meanwhile, Napster supporters filled Internet message boards with cries of injustice and spoke with their hands by logging on to Napster servers and downloading MP3s like there was no tomorrow.

But before Napster users and the RIAA start sounding a requiem for the MP3-trading program, it should be noted that the appeals-court ruling provides some wiggle room for Napster and its users to continue downloading copyright material. Furthermore, even if Napster's method of operation is shut down, last week's ruling does not mean the end of illegal MP3 downloading.

Contrary to headlines declaring that the appeals-court ruling signaled Napster's death knell, using Napster to trade copyright MP3s may not end. The ruling ordered Napster to police its networks "within the limits of the system."

Napster previously argued that it cannot effectively monitor all transactions between its users. More than 275 servers connect users to one another, and the service itself sees about 10,000 file transfers per second. Because Napster is unable to effectively patrol and monitor its servers, music pirates may still be able to operate under the scrutinizing eyes of Napster and the RIAA.

Besides monitoring user transactions, Napster may be forced to filter out certain files. The court ruled that Napster will be held accountable for copyright violation only if it "receives reasonable knowledge of specific infringing files ... or should know that such files are available on the Napster system."

Basically, this means that it is up to the RIAA to tell Napster which files to block. The organization has sent Napster a list of more than 12,000 songs to ban from its servers and is expected to send more. However, Napster users may be able to rename copyrighted songs to make them appear as if they are uncopyrighted versions, especially the live recordings.

Nonetheless, if Napster does drop the ball as the leader in MP3 piracy, a number of other programs will be anxious to pick it up.

Programs like Gnutella and Freenet are prime candidates to fill that vacuum. The best part is, under the law, including last week's ruling, these programs cannot be stopped. Napster's Achilles' heel is that, although users connect to one another's computer, the connection and transfer is managed by central

networks. Those networks can be monitored, filtered and shut down for trading illegal files.

Gnutella and Freenet, on the other hand, use what has been called "pure" peer-to-peer connectivity without a central server. These programs have no way within the limits of the system to police the transfer of files.

Even if Gnutella and Freenet are shut down Napster-style, illegal peer-to-peer trading will continue on a user-to-user basis. Before Napster came around, MP3 swapping was carried out by an underground community of music pirates offering access to their own collections of copyright songs in exchange for access to another's.

Using Internet relay chat and file transfer protocol programs, millions of copyright MP3s were available for download. These programs are the cockroaches of the MP3 world. They were there long before the dawn of Napster, and, should the RIAA start a nuclear war against copyright infringement, these companies will be there when the dust settles.

The only way the RIAA can effectively target music piracy online is to fight fire with fire, or in this case, technology with technology. The recording industry is working on developing anti-piracy file security. If the corporate world succeeds in finding a way to encrypt and protect MP3s from being illegally transferred, this would present a new challenge to the hacker community—and there is nothing hackers love more than a new challenge.

As long as there is interest in free music downloads and a lack of morals on the Internet, the trading of copyright MP3s is not going away. With its "victory" against Napster last week, the RIAA may have pulled out a huge weed, but it did not get the roots.

What is it about intramural sports? I don't know about you, but I do get involved in intramural sports. The one sport I do participate in is basketball. Like many students at Tech, I was a multi-sport athlete in high school. Once in college, I chose to participate in intramural sports because I was looking for that same competitiveness I found when playing ball in high school.

I've been playing intramural sports for two years now, my first and third years at Tech. This year, however, I have found that the skill of the referees is just lacking. The amount of missed calls or biased calls for one team over the other is just ridiculous.

Basketball is a competitive sport where each team plays with the intensity and aggressiveness to win as in all sports. Nevertheless, referees are added to the game to keep each

team under control, but when the referee doesn't do his/her job, then what's the point of the ref being there?

I, along with other basketball players, have found ourselves respectfully questioning the calls of the referee. Yet, when questioning a call, the ref looks at you like you're committing a crime, when the only thing you want is some understanding of why the call was made on one end of the floor and not the other.

One incident occurred when I asked a referee about a call and the response was "... I apologize, it was a bad call, I'll make up for it." In that case, what was the purpose of making the call? Justice needs to be served on the court—and fair justice at that!

Carmen Jackson  
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## Look outside expectations

According to the dictionary, happiness is defined as "a state of well-being and contentment." Are we humans living in search of anything else above this state of bliss? Parents rejoice at their children's commencement in expression of the pride in being the fathers and mothers of those walking down the aisle to receive their ticket to the real world. You feel elated after working in the soup kitchen where you realize that you can and do make very visible differences in people's lives. The true happiness built up from years of dedication to strive for your goals is far greater than the trifle pleasure of the now.

A friend once said, "Find a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." The budding artist, writer, or philosopher inside many of us constantly is subjected to the

pressures from our parents and expectations from our peers. We let our talents waste away because of what others value. We've grown up listening to the messages our parents and society send us. What follows from that? If we just follow what others tell us, we lose track of who we are!

So start from today, put down your backpack weighted down by the expectations from your parents, professors, and peers. Take a good look at the mirror and ask yourself what makes you the truly unique person you are and make a determination, a resolve, to be yourself because it's so easy to waste our lives doing what others tell us to do. Pursue what makes you uniquely you.

Kent Qian  
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