

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, November 10, 2000

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

No smoking, please

The Department of Housing is taking a giant step in the right direction by exploring non-smoking options for its residents. Obviously, students who smoke have the potential to aggravate their roommates. However, ventilation problems in some buildings can cause smokers to annoy other students, even several rooms down a hall. Furthermore, smoking while indoors constitutes a fire hazard. The institute does not need a careless smoker to burn down a building, causing loss of property, injuries, or worse. If candles are not allowed in dorms, why is smoking?

It is time for residence halls to become completely non-smoking. Smokers can find a covered area outside.

Check class times

Some PST and Public Policy classes—and possibly classes in other schools—have changed meeting times without notifying those enrolled in the classes. Students should double-check their class schedules to make sure there are not any conflicts that go unnoticed. In the future, schools should not change class meeting times once registration has begun unless there is an unusual case such as corequisites occurring at the same time. In the event that such a change is necessary, every effort should be made to notify those students registered for the class.

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

Running qualifies as sport

I am writing to in response to what people are calling sports. It seems in almost all articles the Technique writes on what is a sport that everyone believes running should not be a sport. Fine, call it what you want, but it only shows your own short-comings. It seems you people want to make this into a battle for toughness and that is not what sports is about. Any activity that is easy, everyone would do. Sure anyone can get out a jog, but not everyone can get out run and be good. I am not talking about genetics; I am talking about the most fundamental concepts. Mentally few can take it. To run those PR's and to become good you have to want it and be patient. You have to train hard, which means training when you don't want to and don't feel like it. Running requires more guts, dedication and time than most people truly appreciate.

Ask yourself: how many miles

do you run in a week? How fast were those miles? How many workouts did you do? Did you include two-a-days? I am not going to rant on about how much training running requires, because any runner or athlete already knows. I don't understand why people can't appreciate other sports. Golf, Ultimate Frisbee, and Gymnastics too name a few are all sports. Just because you don't enjoy something or are not good at it please refrain from insulting it. I doubt anyone writing these articles can play scratch golf, do anything in gymnastics, run a sub-five minute mile (pretty slow too), make a touch-down with pro-football player trying to tackle you, slam a basketball, or score on an expert soccer player. I would talk more about how to sub-classify sports but due to limited words I can't.

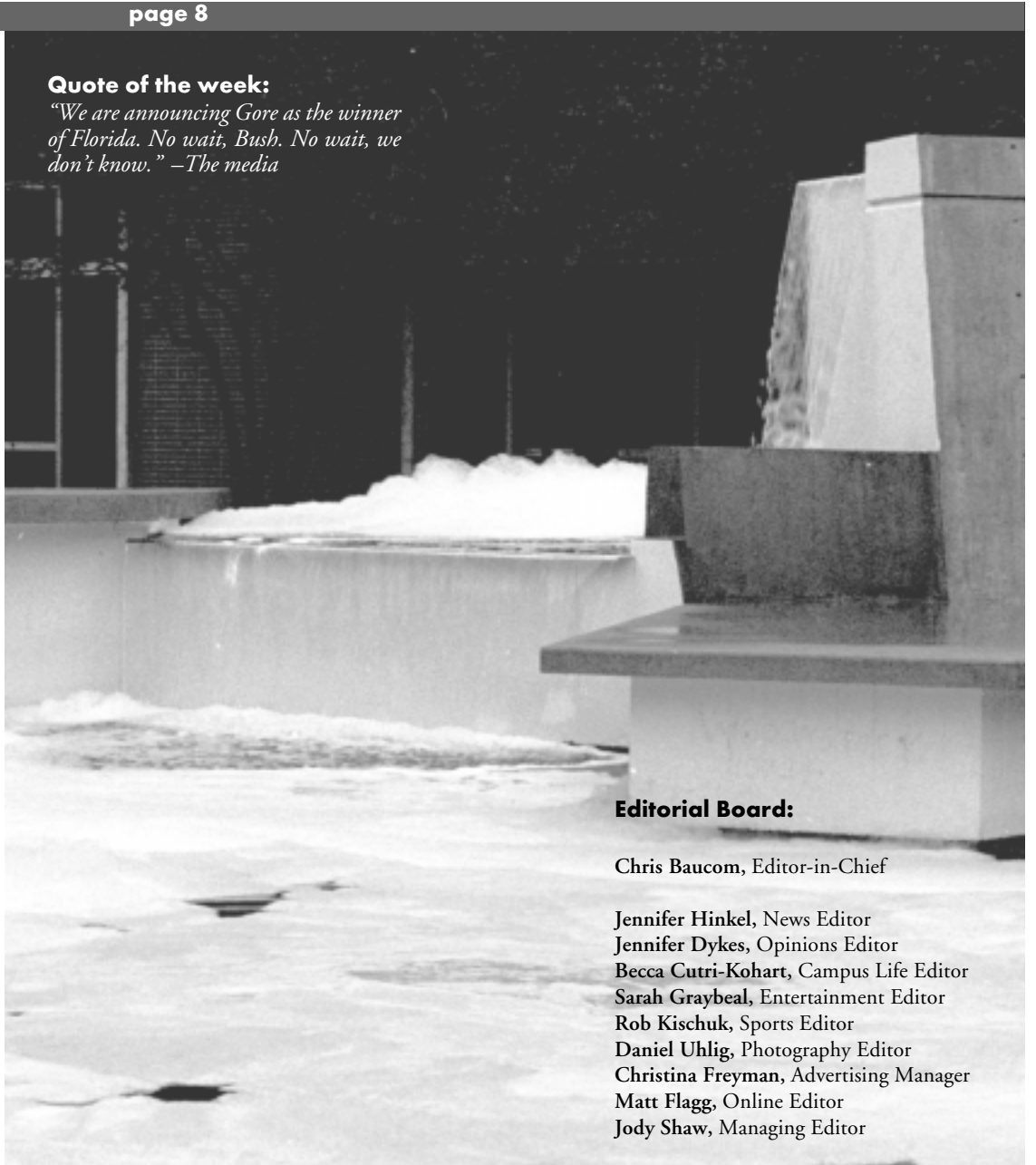
Ashton Manley
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To Hell with Georgia!

The annual To Hell with Georgia (THWUGA) issue of the *Technique* is rapidly approaching. If you have any letters to the editor concerning the matter, please e-mail them to opinions@technique.gatech.edu. Letters need not be based in fact. How 'bout them dawgs? Piss on them!

Quote of the week:

"We are announcing Gore as the winner of Florida. No wait, Bush. No wait, we don't know." —The media



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YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

'Christian' not originally derogatory term

In the opinions sections of the Technique's homecoming issue, a reader wrote that the word Christian "was actually a derogatory term given ...by Jewish ... leaders." This, of course, is nonsense.

The word Christ is a Greek word meaning anointed from the Greek. Jewish leaders would not have labeled Christians with a Greek word, they would have used Hebrew or Aramaic. Second, Jewish leaders would not have labeled the followers of Paul as Christians nor Jesus as

Christ, since people who use the word Christ believe that Jesus was the savior, or Moshiah in Hebrew. Apparently, the author doesn't realize that Jews don't believe that Jesus was the Moshiah.

Finally, even if the previous two reasons were not valid, how is calling the follower of "Christ" a "Christian" derogatory? Why have Christians used that term the last 2000 years?

At first glance, one might assume that the author has made a

simple innocent mistake. But then, why did he bring it up at all. What does his letter have to do with the etymology of the word Christian or with Jews and Jewish leaders. It is disconcerting that a statement like this is so nonchalantly added as if it's quite obviously true. It is simply a gratuitous jab at the Jewish people.

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Cartoon Corner Editorial Art



By Jamie Schulz / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Lack of public transportation makes traffic worse

The original topic of this tirade was to either extol the virtues of some of George W. Bush's more maligned proposals or to rip apart the absurdity of some of Gore's proposals. You know, big government bad, entitlements bad, free choice good, all that sort of thing, all depending on who won the election. With things too tight to call even post-election night, that topic's out the door. I would like to give a shout out to Ralph Nader for all the votes he inadvertently cast for Bush.



"The solution... should not be to make driving less attractive... but rather to make public transportation [more] attractive."

Rob Kischuk
Sports Editor

Another possibility was the Electoral College, that archaic fixture in American politics that gives us a rather strange way of selecting the President. It's too easy, though. Too easy just to say that it doesn't function the way it was intended to be, we need a change, blah, blah, blah. Consider that dead horse sufficiently beaten.

Instead, there's a fresh angle to be taken on a big local issue. Atlanta is a mess of transportation. Try fitting into the mold of getting a job downtown and getting your nice house with your 2.5 kids in the suburbs, and you'll find yourselves in traffic for 2+ hours a day as well. While there's the usual two-sided debate between environmentalists and capitalists over how to handle the expansion, I believe there is also a middle ground.

The environmental side of the issue is that Atlanta's pollution is out of hand. Cars and companies are spewing chemicals into the air, making the city unsafe for humans

and nature alike. Their solution? Make it as painful as possible for people to use the polluting machines of society, and life will get better, right? The Midtown Atlanta Steel project recently came under criticism. Why? Parking was too plentiful, and the streets approaching the development were too wide, had too high of speed limits, and the turns were not tight enough to discourage people from driving there. What's more likely - that people will suddenly turn to public transportation, or that downtown will get more gridlock?

Similarly, Atlanta hasn't expanded its highways lately, despite obscene gridlock and the fact that Atlanta highways have some of the highest throughput of cars per day of any U.S. city. One of the prime reasons is that due to Clean Air regulations, Atlanta's failing air quality disqualifies us for federal funding. Of course, more cars are on the same size roads every day, so delays and gridlock increase. How exactly does this help? All this accomplishes is increasing the time each car is on the road, which would seem to

me to increase the amount of pollution by each car. Great solution.

The root of the problem here is the liberal tendency to provide complex solutions to problems that don't need solving, and creating new problems for people and providing only overly simplistic and ideal solutions. They suggest we should all turn to public transportation, but if I live in Marietta, there is no way I'm riding CCT to catch a MARTA bus to transfer to the rail line. It is feasible to commute this way, but it is not reasonable to ask this of anyone - it takes even longer than driving, and is much less comfortable. The solution to problems such as this should not be to make driving less attractive, as seems to be the trend, but rather to make public transportation so attractive that people would rather not drive.

One hurdle to overcome is the protective tendencies of Atlanta's counties. I believe enough time has been spent trying to sweet talk them into getting on board. The fact of the matter is, bus systems are not the wave of the future. The only public transportation systems ac-

cepted by a large proportion of the population are large-scale subway systems. As of right now, MARTA's rail system is a joke, having the ability to get me to less than 10% of my destinations. The state of Georgia needs to step in and tell all these whiny counties (yes you, Cobb) that, like it or not, they are getting rail lines in their area.

The coverage of the MARTA rail line is feeble compared to the size of our city, and does little to serve the needs of more than just a few people. This city needs a large-scale commitment to making subway transportation a viable solution for the outlying areas. The model of a city where public transportation does work is New York City, where public transportation is widely accepted, and driving is an anomaly. While it is not without its problems, New York's rail system has over 700 stations accessible with a \$63 pass. Compare this with \$45 for the same pass in Atlanta, which gives access to a meager 33 stations, and it's apparent why we're lagging a bit here.

Granted, New York's much higher population density makes it easier for every location to be accessible, but that doesn't seal the deal, it just means the system is scaled accordingly. The key to initially making the system work is reaching out to the suburbs with single lines, anchored by large park-and-ride lots. While it's not a perfect answer, plac-

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Time to eliminate Electoral College and its problems

I didn't vote.

Since that confession is now out of the way, I'd like you to think about the ridiculous and antiquated of the methods our so-called "democracy" uses to conduct its elections. Yes, it's the Electoral College that needs to be eliminated.



"The huge source of many problems in the current election process is the Electoral College."

Becca Cutri-Kohart
Campus Life Editor

First, you probably want to hear why I didn't vote. After voting in every election since I've turned 18, including a variety of primaries, local elections, and referendums, you think its odd that I didn't vote in my first-ever Presidential election? So do I. Unfortunately my absentee ballot didn't arrive until today (that's Wednesday, in Technique time). It wasn't in my mailbox yesterday; it was in it today.

Here's the even more funny part. My home district is in Palm Beach County, Florida. That's right, the one with the 3,000 people who accidentally voted for Buchanan instead of Gore. Everyone knows Palm Beach is where old New Yorker minorities go to die, so it is impossible that they'd vote for such a backward conservative like the B-man. So, if the Florida election is decided by one vote, you now know whom to blame, not me, the idiots who voted for Buchanan.

A move to electronic options for absentee ballots and polling locations that use a computer instead of a punch card would be a dramatic improvement from the current system. We have the technology to improve, so I'm endorsing that improvement.

But the huge source of many problems in the current election process is the Electoral College. That's the institution that was created by

our country's founders because they felt that the power to elect our leaders should not fall directly into the hands of the people. That's why, even though we might know who will win the presidency in the next week, the President won't actually be selected until the members of the Electoral College meet in December.

The Electoral College also has the potential to create a huge conundrum: that is, a candidate may get the most popular votes, but they might not get the electoral votes they need to become President. Chances are this historical anomaly might happen this year. That means that though our country has definitely picked Gore by popular vote, Bush looks to be on track to win the election. So much for the great democratic ideal of self-rule.

In fact, we don't have a real democracy. Instead we have a system where we elect state leaders who appoint representatives who actually make the decisions in electing the national leaders who create the laws. We've created a republican hierarchy under the assumption that the average American isn't capable of self-government, so there needs to be layers of buracracy between the people and the power. But look who our governmental representatives are: they are drug addicts, adul-

terers, thieves, parents, clergy, businessmen, academics, workers, and more. In other words, they have all the virtues and vices of the best and worst of Americans. In no way are they better qualified than the citizenship to make laws or elect leaders. Yet, we continue to put them on a pedestal because of outdated traditions.

At one time the Electoral College did have a purpose. It was an imperfect system, but dictated by the time in which it was created. Without telephones, the Internet, facsimile machines and other modern communications techniques, there was a need to decentralize the elections and imbue authority to the states. That's why a limited few were called upon to travel from their home to represent their state's vote in the Electoral College.

Additionally because of the lack of communication, states had to be much more independent from each other. Truly, citizens of Virginia were extremely different than citizens of Florida one hundred years ago.

But now we traverse the country in hours on airplanes, our voices are carried across the country almost instantaneously on the telephone, and our words are carried uncensored over the Internet. Though there are still some cultural differences

between states, overall, the American public is much more unified under their national government than it used to be. We don't need to be represented by arbitrary boundaries on the map. I once lived in Holland, Pennsylvania. After a 10-minute drive and crossing a bridge, I was in New Jersey. What made the difference between my counterpart across the river and me? Maybe a few toxic waste dumps, but otherwise, our lives, goals, ideology and needs really didn't vary too much. A founding principle of our country is individualism. Why shouldn't the individual be the most deciding factor in picking our next leaders, rather than the states? Now our technology has finally given us the power to speak as an individual rather than through the state, why don't we take advantage of this?

The media can carry the results of popular votes across the country in nanoseconds. Why should we have to wait a month for the Electoral College to meet?

It is the time to upgrade, to move closer to a perfect democracy. I'm not advocating something entirely ridiculous, like people being able to cast their ballots from home via the Web or the telephone. The potential for fraud in such an election is too great. Just look to how Tech students rig Sports Illustrated online polls to make it seem like GT has the best sports teams in the country (not that I'm saying we don't have the best sports teams, mind you, just that many of the other Sports Illustrated readers are ignorant of our true athletic prowess).

However, there is nothing wrong

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TECHNIQUE

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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 e-mailed to editor@technique.gatech.edu. Letters should be addressed to Chris Baucom, Editor. All letters must be signed and must include a campus box number or other valid mailing address for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 350 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.

OPINIONS

share some

opinions@technique.gatech.edu

yeah, yeah, so the election is still up in the air as of tonight, wednesday night. can you believe this? gore does have the popular vote, we are a democracy not a republic. so the popular vote should matter more than the electoral college. all i have to say is that the republicans that i watched the returns with aren't very nice.

MEETINGS: 7:00PM TUESDAYS
PLACE: STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING, ROOM 137
PIZZA: FREE FREE FREE

Get Some

(Pizza)

Traffic

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ing these lots in locations that would be accessible with little to no traffic time, and it suddenly becomes more attractive than driving for the downtown commuters. Amazingly, people begin to see the advantages of this and the areas around these rail stations become more densely populated, curbing sprawl as well. In addition to these satellite lines, coverage within the perimeter needs to be far more comprehensive than the current plus sign.

Most parties can agree that Atlanta has huge traffic problems. Still, the notion that worsening these problems by constricting traffic flow is inane. It is a far superior solution to get people to accept a system willingly rather than begrudgingly. While initial construction of the system would upset some, the resurgence of Midtown should serve as partial proof that rail access is not equivalent to urban decay, as some areas fear. Let's not put the cart before the horse. Lay the groundwork for public transportation to be viable for the citizens of metro Atlanta, and you won't have to punish them into using it - it will be an improvement to their quality of life.

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BMG teams up with Napster in legitimizing Internet

By John Drake
The Lariat

(U-WIRE) Baylor University — It's about time a member of the recording industry stopped trying to fight technology and started working to keep up with it.

Bertelsmann media company announced last week its intention to team up with Napster and start charging users for the right to swap music files online.

In doing so, the company, which owns BMG and sells records by Whitney Houston, Kenny G and Britney Spears, showed how the Internet will become a legitimate medium.

In joining with Napster, Bertelsmann broke ranks with most

of the recording industry which had rejected Napster.com with its bootleg recordings as a threat to artists' rights.

These artists and industry executives were fighting a losing battle against the dawning of the Digital Age. The music industry simply saw Napster as an illegitimate parasite that robbed artists of the royalties that were due to them. They saw Napster as a competitor.

Many universities, including Baylor, followed the music industry's lead. The plans to ban access to Napster from university computers arose in part out of fears of legal action against Napster and the sites that allowed access to it by the recording industry.

Rational thinkers realized that

even if Napster were forever banned from cyberspace, the technology would not cease to exist. Copycat Web sites could and already have begun to create online communities similar to Napster. Napster made it popular, but the Internet made it possible.

The challenge was to find a way to seize the technology and use it to the benefit of the industry. BMG did that.

With this new plan to charge users about a \$5 fee to trade music files every month, the companies have added accountability to the technology's possibilities. There's no such thing as a free lunch, and there shouldn't be any such thing as free music.

With the new deal, artists will

get the royalties to which they are certainly entitled, and Internet users will retain the benefit of this Internet-borne technology.

The next important step is for universities like Baylor to give Napster back to their students. You can't claim to be a well-wired campus if students aren't allowed to benefit from the Internet's full range of possibilities.

Once BMG and Napster work out the details of their agreement, Baylor needs to respond by allowing access to the new site. Bandwidth concerns notwithstanding, Napster represents an important benefit of the digital age and now, the union of old and new media. The students have a right to benefit.

Elect

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with computer-based voting. Claims of the "digital divide" say that such voting would be inaccessible to elderly and poverty-stricken Americans who don't have access to computers. But, by setting up "election computers," that simply have a video monitor and buttons to select your candidate, it can't be any easier. It would certainly be easier than deciphering which holes to punch in my Palm Beach County ballot.

Not to mention, counting the votes would be MUCH easier. With one network of computers, the votes could be counted, and recounted in a very brief period of time, instead of several days. It would make absentee voting much easier too. A

person out of town for a holiday (or at school) could just go to their local polling place to cast a vote in their home district by simply identifying themselves to the computer.

All we are letting technology do now is hurt the election process. The divide between the close of the east coast polls and the west coast polls have been influencing the vote unfairly. With live media, the west coast gets to see who has been pulling ahead in the election. This foreknowledge motivates some people to vote differently and also motivates people who weren't planning on voting to go to the polls. This imbalance can be easily rectified by simply extending the hours that polls are open, so they close at the same time across the country. So why don't we do it?

The United States just isn't the same as it was 200 years ago. With our new faster-paced, communications-intensive culture, we need to move our political system forward to keep up with it. The old way of doing things isn't necessarily the best way. I challenge the engineers and the managers and the creative thinkers at our university to think about ways to optimize the election process. The politicians could use some of our engineering abilities now more than ever.

Despite overwhelming apathy toward politics, something has finally caught our attention - this year's election. Something in us enjoys the uncertainty and the close race between the two candidates. It was so exciting that almost everyone I knew stayed up to the wee-

hours of the night watching the votes come in. Just be reminded the election isn't just a form of entertainment (although it has been fun), it's something that effects our future.

Unlike ACC football, we, as citizens, have the power to change the rules. We are players, referees, the athletic associations and spectators all at once. In this year's election excitement, we should stop to reflect on if we are conducting our elections in the most fair and efficient way.

As the ad campaign says: we are doing something only half the world dreams of, voting. Why not set an example for the world by pushing our elections to the next level, and letting the will of the people have a more direct influence on government.

Send me letters so I don't have to run U-Wire. opinions@technique.gatech.edu