

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, November 1, 2002

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Housing Break-ins

The recent burglaries in housing highlight the need for constant vigilance against crime. Tech's location in middle of a major city makes such a point even more urgent. The steps that Housing is taking will make dorms safer and more secure. Installing locks on every floor of dorms will hopefully alleviate some of the problems.

Most of the danger of burglaries and violence in housing comes from residents letting people into the buildings. Students must be more cautious and aware of the dangers of letting unidentified people into buildings. While it may seem rude not to let someone into a dorm, it is better to protect the other residents in the building than to slight a stranger. If a resident lets someone into a building, he or she helps one person; if the resident protects the safety of his or her residence hall by not letting someone in, he or she helps an entire building.

School Colors

Navy is an excellent choice as a third school color for many reasons. Navy has a history with Tech, being mentioned in some documents as one of the original colors. The alternative color being considered, black, would not be a good choice because there is already a team in the ACC whose colors are black and gold, Wake Forest. Because we would never want to be confused with that school, navy is an ideal choice. Having a third color is beneficial both for accenting white and old gold, both light colors, and for sports such as swimming and track that need darker uniforms. Finally, because many pieces of Tech merchandise already use navy, the change in official policy will be good for branding and identification of Tech sports teams. Because many people across the country know Tech by its athletics, consistent colors will help with identification of Georgia Tech.

Child Care Facility

The Home Park Learning Center will be beneficial both for Tech and the surrounding community. The presence of child-care close to campus will do much to attract both faculty and grad students. While the price is not cheaper than other child care, the Center's proximity to campus makes it a draw for those people related to Tech who have children.

Beyond these obvious benefits, the Center will also serve the purpose of increasing the links between Georgia Tech and Home Park. While the neighborhood and the Institute seem intimately connected, relations between the two have not always been rosy. Anything which can serve to increase harmony between the two is welcome.

Vote on Nov. 5

This Tuesday, November 5, remember to vote in the mid-term elections! Recent studies have shown that the percentage of people aged 18-25 who vote has been steadily decreasing for the past decade. We students must be sure to protect our unique interests by participating in the political process and voting. For information on the Georgia races and the issues in this election, visit the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's Election Guide at www.accessatlanta.com/ajc/metro/election2002/index.html.

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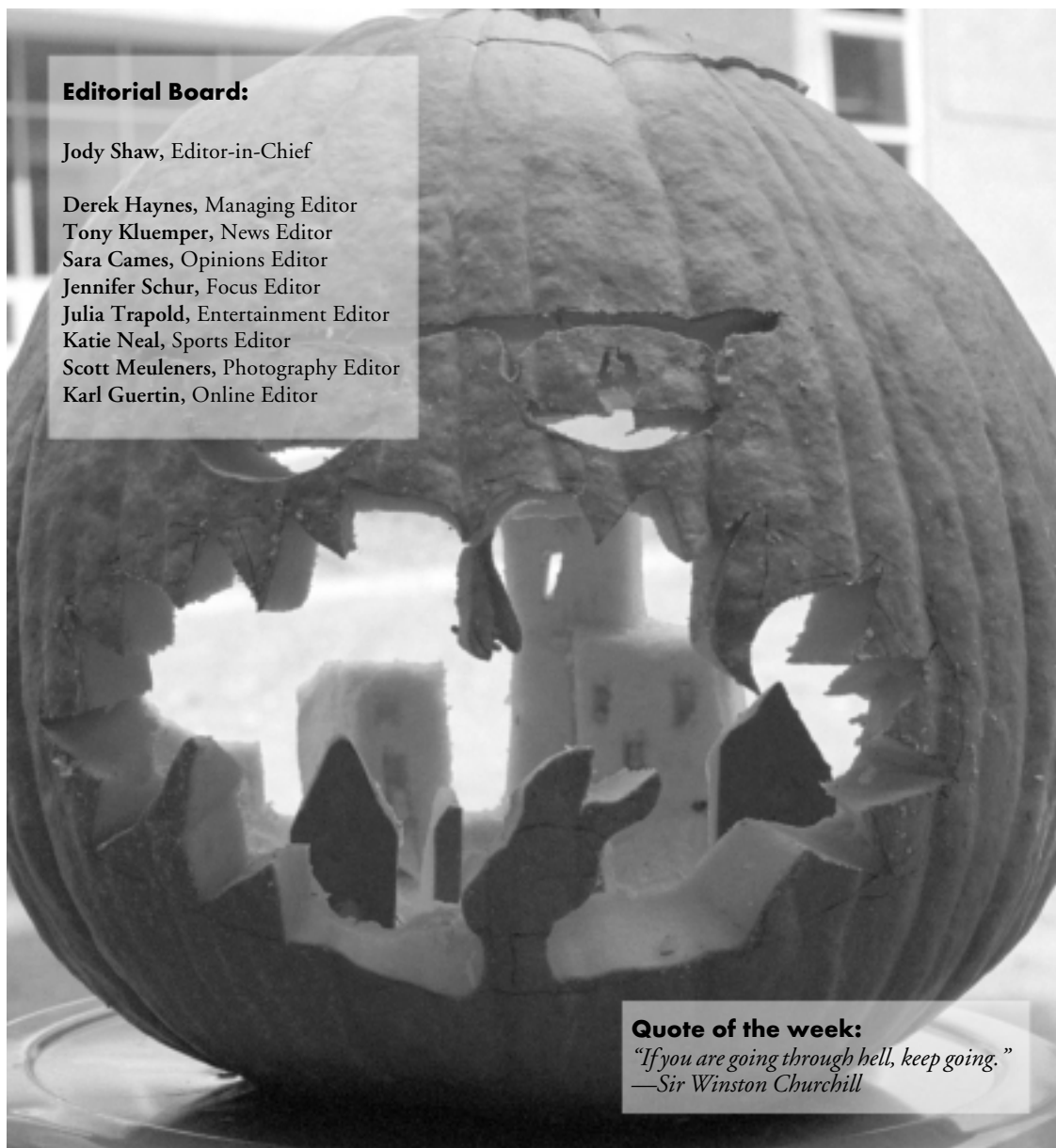
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Quote of the week:

"If you are going through hell, keep going."
—Sir Winston Churchill

TIM CAILLOUX

Homecoming not welcoming to alumni

A group of Lambda Chi Alpha alumni from across the country attended the judging of the Homecoming display competition. As responsible alumni, they indulged in a beer after a long trip during the judging of Lambda Chi's Homecoming entries. After a round of applause from the judges and the other bystanders, the judges headed off to the next house. A long week of construction, pumping and mechanical rigging was finally over.

Once the judges left the property, Buck Cooke informed the brothers that they had been disqualified because of alcohol. No active brothers

were drinking, and no alcohol was present among them. Being totally forthcoming and honest, the brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha informed the Homecoming Chairman that the "brothers" in question were alumni. They had not participated in any aspect of the week and were present to watch the display. After a lengthy discussion about the disqualification with Cooke, Lambda Chi was given the opportunity to protest the decision.

On Sunday evening, after all the alumni had gone home from an otherwise great Homecoming, the protest meeting was held. During

that meeting, the decision stood. What a message to send to our alumni. Are they to understand that we don't want them here during Homecoming? Buck Cooke and the members of the Homecoming Executive Committee should re-evaluate what Homecoming stands for, why we have it in the first place, and begin to reason like adults. I for one am disappointed in the ethics these people demonstrated to our alumni and to the brothers of Lambda Chi Alpha.

William Leslie
gte440i@prism.gatech.edu



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Under the Couch changes detrimental to campus

Earlier this semester, Under the Couch cancelled all of its shows. No, they didn't decide to just up and quit providing entertainment for Tech students—the administration pushed them to do so.

Under the Couch is run by the Musician's Network, an organization of students that facilitates live shows and also provides practice and storage space for students. Until this year, the venue had hosted many successful concerts, both Georgia Tech events and non-Georgia Tech events, and attracted people from the Atlanta area in addition to Tech students.

The changes were brought about after a committee, formed three years ago by Dean Boyd, investigated the organization and found some areas of concern. While the concerns raised were valid, I don't believe they warranted a complete shutdown of Under the Couch.

One issue was the noise level that the concerts produce. Since Under the Couch is in close proximity to several campus dorms, many students complained of the late-night noise. With all the new construction and relocation on campus, this problem should be easy to deal with. One solution would be to use the old bookstore space as a concert venue. The bookstore space, with a few modifications, would be an ideal place for musical performances. Also, it is located in the middle of campus, far away from any residence halls.

The fact that Under the Couch hosts many events not related to Georgia Tech was also an issue. While groups such as the men's and wom-



"Tech students need culture and diversity in their lives to get away from school. We just lost one of our creative outlets."

Julia Trapold
Entertainment Editor

en's a cappella groups performed at Under the Couch, the venue also welcomed various local and national artists. The administration felt that the Musician's Network should focus on Georgia Tech students and providing them with a place to perform. But unless the venue was booked every night by a Georgia Tech event, I do not see the problem with allowing outside acts to perform at Under the Couch.

The administration was also concerned about the number of non-Georgia Tech students attending the performances. Unless major security issues occurred due to non-students coming to campus, this really shouldn't be a problem. If Under the Couch attracts people to campus, Georgia Tech should be happy. In many cases, high school students attended the shows, bringing prospective students to campus to see what Tech offers besides academics.

Under the Couch provided much needed entertainment for students, especially those without a car who could not get to off-campus venues very easily. It was extremely convenient to just walk across campus to see some live music. My freshman year I went to several concerts at

Under the Couch and had a great time. I got to see people from my classes that I hadn't ever had a chance to talk to outside of Calculus, and I also got to see some good bands without the hassle of leaving campus.

People always say Tech students need culture and diversity in their lives, that we need to get away from all the math and science. Well, we just lost one of our creative outlets. Sure, the Ferst Center puts on good performances, but they are generally more formal and restrictive. Under the Couch provided an informal, laid-back atmosphere in which to enjoy new and different music styles. Every night there was a different kind of music being performed, so almost everyone could find something they liked.

Under the Couch was an asset that not many schools have. How many schools actually have their own concert venue where groups other than the school's orchestra perform? Some comments I found on the Under the Couch website were:

- One of the few good things about Tech was the possibility to get hooked into the music scene. Now that UTC has been taken away, it will be harder to hear new bands and experi-

ence different types of music. This is just one more example of the shafting that goes on at Tech. They claim to support diversity, but they will not allow a little louder music or crazier people.

- Please bring UTC back. I've been to countless shows there, and I was always impressed. It's one of the few venues I go to that is near me. It was awesome! Hopefully this really will be a temporary policy. I want UTC back!

- Under the Couch has greatly improved my college experience. I am sad to see the new policy but continue to support you guys. Rock on!

The Tech administration should take these students' words to heart and continue working with the Musician's Network to figure out a compromise. Here's my proposal, although it's a little biased towards the Musician's Network's side: move Under the Couch to a different location (preferably the bookstore) and keep things going like they were. Allow as many non-Georgia Tech events as possible, and allow non-Georgia Tech students. Performances by groups outside Tech are (no offense) generally more enjoyable, or at least different. If performances are restricted to Tech groups, we wouldn't get much variety. Also, how is Under the Couch supposed to break even monetarily if they can't host as many shows as possible and allow in as many people as possible? It's basic economics, and Under the Couch is a venture that does require some funding. Hopefully the extreme measure of canceling all non-Georgia Tech shows is only temporary.

Computers are the key to the future of engineering

What of the future of engineering? What will your field look like in twenty years? Are you factoring computers into your equation? You upper level students have probably been forced to use a program for your classes; it performs a specific function to allow you to accomplish a routine task. Twenty years ago, you would have had to do the task by hand.

Depending on the problem, this type of math could be anywhere from difficult to impossible for the student of yesteryear. Think about that for a second. Twenty years isn't that long; you'll still be in the middle of your career twenty years from now. In twenty years, it's not much of a stretch to extrapolate and say that the computer could perform every task that you're currently learning in your engineering and math classes. An "Engineer in a Box" if you will.

Assuming this to be the case, why bother doing well at Tech? Why attend class? Why bang your head on the desk at 2 a.m. because you don't/can't remember minority carrier diffusion equations for your test tomorrow? People who don't understand the discipline nearly as well as you will be able to do most of your job using a program and a bit of hand waving.

This is the same dilemma that auto workers faced in the eighties: the replacement of human labor by machines. In this case, jobs in the field were placed in jeopardy, but other higher paying and more skilled jobs replaced those lost opportunities. The robots that replaced factory workers created jobs designing



"As long as there are problems to be solved, there will be a need for engineers to solve them."

Karl Guertin
Online Editor

the robots and maintaining them.

I anticipate that a similar condition will occur in engineering. The number crunching currently involved in developing a solution will be hidden behind a terribly designed user interface in a powerful engineering program. You and I will be left with reducing the requirements to a valid design, back-of-the-envelope type calculations, and dealing with management and customers.

Essentially we'll all have to be chief engineers, the man with the plan, the person who needs to come up with the ideas rather than the one who has to run the numbers. This will be a good thing, as it will allow us to only do the interesting bits rather than being forced to wade through mathematic tedium to complete our design.

So what will engineering be like in twenty years? Not much different from today, and with a lot less math and a lot more computers. This means that regardless of what you think about computers, you're going to wind up using them in the future or being replaced by somebody who can. The CS classes you're taking are more important than you might think; being able to add your specific problem to the program you

work with could make your job much easier.

Work on your interpersonal skills, as the fact that you can solve a derivative faster than everyone else won't matter because everybody else will just type it into a computer and get the same result. However, being able to politely tell a customer that it's too late in the product cycle for a new feature to be added is a useful skill.

Learn the principles behind everything but don't get too caught up in the particulars. Figure out how to estimate answers so that you'll notice when a bug in the program you're using rears its ugly head. As far as skills, either make yourself useful in enough areas that you're worth keeping on a team or specialize to the point that it's not worth writing a computer program to do your job.

Computers are a tool like any other. They make life easier. I haven't heard any complaints that CAD programs should be done away with because they reduce the amount of artistic ability an engineer has to have; why should common engineering tasks be any different? I don't share the opinion of some that this will lead to engineers becoming stu-

pider or lazier.

The role filled by the engineer is that of problem solver; as long as there are problems to be solved, there will be a need for engineers to solve them. If those engineers can do more per capita than today's engineers and the job market shrinks, we'll be left with only the people who really want to do it. Engineers are rather clever people in general, I'm quite confident that in every field of engineering there will be certain niche roles that a computer program cannot fill, and engineers will seek out those roles. The practice of the discipline may change, but the discipline itself endures.

One final note based on personal experience: if you buy into my argument, beware that your professors probably have not. Since you and I (sadly) don't write the grading criteria your academic standing will most certainly suffer when you don't bother learning the "unimportant" formulas for the test. Learning math is still important, at least as far as our professors are concerned. So, learn the formulas while you are here, but be aware that the working world will expect you to adapt as technology changes.

There is a lesson to be learned from this that is applicable to all majors. Most people of our generation will hold several jobs over their lifetimes. None of us, regardless of whether our fields are considered technical or not, will have the stability that previous generations have had. Tech must teach us not only about specific characteristics of our fields, but about the adaptability that is expected in the real world.

TECHNIQUE

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Original Comic Incoherent Scribblings



Buzz Around the Campus



Shonta Smith
MGT 2nd Yr
"All the fraternity displays."



Janeen Anthony
IE 4th Yr
"I like the T-Shirts."



Tiffanie Golden
IE 4th Yr
"The Wrek parade programs were beautiful."



Thomas Holst
ME 4th Yr
"Beating the Cavaliers."



Question of the week

"What was your favorite Homecoming event?"

Feature and Photos by
Scott Meuleners and Charles Frey



Adam Johnson
MGT 4th Yr
"The alumni band rocked!"



Erin Looney
CEE 1st Yr
"Celebrating my friend's winning of the Freshman Cake Race."



Chris Clarke
ME 1st Yr
"Bombing Fiji with water balloons."



Bonnie Vaughan
BC 5th Yr
"Actually knowing people in the Mr. & Ms. GT contest."

Madame d' Amour Advice on Love and Life

The Madame advises on life and love

The Madame had a burst of inspiration recently, after hearing a true story to top all true stories. Apparently, one of my admiring advice-seekers was making out with her boyfriend on his lofted bed. They got hot and heavy and soon enough she rolled right off their platform of pleasure. She crashed, back first, on his fish tank, splashing water and goldfish everywhere! With a naked trip to the hospital to complete the couple's adventure, the Madame feels needed and wanted—people have so many problems! Now I will solve these poor students' troubles.

I am a freshman male, and I think I may be bi. I find myself attracted to both men and women, but I don't want to live the gay lifestyle. What should I do to make myself attracted to only females?

—Unwanted questioning

Oh, boy. The Madame feels befuddled; give me a moment while I mop my brow. What you need to do first, honey, is get yourself to Athens. If you feel the need to be attracted only to fly chickadees, then the streets of downtown Athens are your godsend—the hot women come in droves, their Clairol number 5 blonde hair sexily swooshing, clinging to the moist corners of your mouth because of drool. However, if you still do not find yourself attracted to the womens, then I think you may have to do some long, hard thinking about what you really want, both out of a relationship and out of life. You have to realize that if you continue doing what you think societal murrays dictate, then you will never be truly happy, mentally or in the sack (if you know what I mean).

Here's some more advice for your trek to Athens: make sure to wear a dirty cap (with a very large round in the bill) and a plaid, button-down shirt. Also, spray copious amounts of cologne on your shirt (and a little down your pants, too) so that when

you drunkenly spill Natty Light all over yourself, it won't turn off the ladies. You might also be able to run an experiment on yourself to determine the way your river runs (them): get really, really drunk and see who you wake up naked next to in the morning—their gender will determine your future, so drink well! (Note: the Madame is NOT promoting underage, overzealous drinking—only enough to get naked)

My ex-boyfriend and I recently broke up after a two-year relationship. I didn't see it coming at all and have been very upset by the whole thing. Then, about two weeks after we broke up, he began dating one of my best friends. They spent lots of time together while we were dating, and I never thought anything of it. Now, I'm wondering if I was blind to the fact that he was cheating on me the whole time we were dating. What should I do to make sure this doesn't happen again?

—Blind and stupid

Have you ever been introduced to the sensitive area on a man, Blind? Let me tell you about it. It's smaller than a breadbox but bigger than...well, actually, it's pretty little. What you need to do, dear, is kindly threaten the idiot's tender nether regions. Once he is scared into honesty, ask him up-front about his deal; was he cheating on you or did he just fall out of love? Is your friend just a rebound relationship because he is emotionally torn and fragile right now, or is he in it for the booty? Second, you need to talk to your supposed "best friend." I wouldn't call any ex-lover-stealer a best friend.

To prevent this sort of thing from happening in the future, keep your eyes and ears open, and be suspecting. Tap your next boy's phone line and bug his clothes. It's the only sure way to keep what's yours pure. Let me tell you from

my personal experience in France this past summer (you might remember my stories of the boy with the overly large glasses and rickety bike) that stalking is the way to get what you want. Demand respect, girl, because it's what you deserve. Just make sure you keep a good distance when following your par-amour, and don't trip!

This weekend, my new boyfriend and I are going to his fraternity's semiformal. We have not had sex yet, and he has been dropping several not-too-subtle hints that he wants to have sex this weekend. I'm not ready yet, but I'm not sure how to tell him that. What should I do?

—Scared of Sexin'

Um, could you explain to me why you would go to semiformal without expecting to do the dirty deed? Look, Scared, I'm going to tell it to you straight. No boy is going to pay gabs of money for the shirt (and if it's long-sleeved, you know it costs even more money), the dinner, the booze, the condoms, not to mention the actual event itself, and not expect to get something out of the evening. If you aren't into a post-dancing foray, perhaps you have chosen the wrong boy to take a swirl around the dance floor with. If you're comfortable enough to know that you don't want to squeaky his bedsprings, then you need to tell him this, straight out (and be ready to shell out some cash for those shirts). The more honest you are, the more likely your boy is to understand your point of view. If he really likes you for more than your physical attributes (this will work best when he is sober), then he'll understand. Better yet, just drink a glass of cool water. Not before or after, but instead of.

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

Media to blame for voter apathy, low turnout

By Michelle Singer
Daily Bruin

(U-WIRE) U. California-Los Angeles—The voters blame the politicians. The politicians blame the voters. Nobody takes responsibility for the uninformed, uninterested population.

And nobody blames what may be the largest source of voter ignorance yet: the media.

A joint study completed this fall by USC and the University of Washington analyzed 2,454 local news broadcasts to find out how much election coverage they provided. The astonishing results were that in an election year, with both the House and the Senate up for grabs, over half of the broadcasts carried no election news.

During the broadcasts that did cover campaigns, the average story was 80.5 seconds long. Less than 20 percent of those stories contained any sound bites, and the average sound bite was only 9.5 seconds long. That's about long enough for someone to say: "I support (insert issue here) because it is important to the (insert interest group here) and to Americans that (said issue) is passed on a bipartisan basis." What can a citizen learn from that?

No wonder politicians run more and more campaign ads; it's the only way they can get their message across. They have learned how to use—and abuse—the media through advertisements.

They pour precious money into running thousands of campaign commercials, which are then repeated to instill the message in the viewer's mind.

It doesn't matter whether or not they're factual or truth-stretching, whether they're attack ads or issue-oriented. To the voter, it's all the same. And to the politician, it is

propaganda at its best: "if people see something enough times, they'll believe it." It's not that voters don't want to discuss the issues, it's that they aren't able to find a forum.

Campaign finance gurus Sens. John McCain and Russell Feingold have teamed up with Sen. Richard Durbin to begin the next phase of their uphill struggle to reform the political process in America. Their new bill, known as the Political Campaign Broadcast Activity Improvements Act, would require television and radio stations to air at least two hours a week of candidate- or issue-centered programming in the time period before an election.

This programming would have to be in the form of debates, interviews or something similar. In other words, something substantial that would give viewers (and hopefully voters) a real chance to learn about the candidates.

Some people would of course take issue with the fact that this bill attempts to regulate the media's ability to choose its own programming—limiting the cherished First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of the press. But this bill would not inhibit that freedom; it would help the media exercise it in ways that would also facilitate another freedom—the right to vote. Instead of arguing over the lack of separation between politics and the media, the focus should be put on why politicians are reduced to running their mindless ads in the first place.

McCain said it best: "Free air time can better inform the public about candidates and invite viewers to become more engaged in their government by learning more about the individuals seeking to represent them." Too bad McCain's argument won't show up on any news broadcasts—it's too long for them to bother.