Political maneuvers

The HOPE Scholarship is once again being used as political pawn in the Georgia state legislature. Governor Sonny Perdue (Rep.) and Lt. Governor Mark Taylor (Dem.) have both proposed amendments to the highly popular scholarship program. Perdue’s “HOPE Chest amendment” aims to limit the spending of lottery funds exclusively to HOPE and the state’s pre-kindergarten programs, while Taylor’s proposal calls for voter approval before any cuts are made to the program.

Though these bills are likely to contain political motivations, the politicians’ proposals are rooted in issues that are very pertinent to the scholarship.

According to the AJC, lawmakers have spent $1.8 billion since the inception of the lottery on non-HOPE and non-pre-kindergarten, compared to $2.7 billion spent on the scholarship itself.

During this same time span, a supposed funding crisis has caused the state legislators to cap the amount the scholarship pays for mandatory school fees, enforce a credit limit and instate an extra GPA checkpoint that has made it even more difficult for students to keep HOPE. Last year, lawmakers even threatened to cut the book stipend.

While it’s great that the $1.8 billion siphoned out of the lottery revenues went to pay for school technology programs, it seems illogical that such a large percentage of the overall money pool was pork-barreled away from HOPE when many of those same lawmakers were making noise about a looming funding crisis. Also, many of these so-called school technology programs could have found funding in local budgets.

But a bill to cut off funding isn’t necessary the answer to this problem. If an excess in funds exists from the lottery revenues, there is no reason why funds should not be allowed to go elsewhere to benefit educational programs. Lawmakers should work to ensure that HOPE and pre-kindergarten programs be given priority access to lottery funding—all available resources should be put into the program in order to avoid irksome caps and cuts to the scholarship.

Georgia’s HOPE scholarship is a model program for many states throughout the country. Our lawmakers have the responsibility to set a good example in how they choose to affect policy relating to the program, instead of using it as a political card when election time comes around.

The HOPE scholarship has done much for retention of well-qualified in-state students. It is crucial that the program be kept attractive for future classes of college students.

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Torino games exude Olympic spirit

I love the Olympic Games. I prefer them to the summer games, despite having attended several during the 1996 Olympics and not a single winter event.

There’s just something so much more graceful in the sports, something more magical in the snow. The ski jumpers soaring through the air, speed skaters gliding along, the artistic movement of the figure skaters, the fascinating mystery that is the luge—I love every bit of it.

Last week’s opening ceremonies gave me a lot to think about. To begin with, American television made a good decision regarding the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino. The fact that they’re calling them the Torino games, for one. On most maps in the English-speaking world, Torino is labeled as “Turin.” The Canadian Broadcasting Company has decided to retain the use of Turin, while the BBC will just refer to the Torino games as “the Winter Olympics,” according to nationalgeographic.com.

NBC, who has the American broadcasting rights to the games, thought that Torino sounded more exotic than Turin. While and the motives for using Torino’s Italian name may not have been the best, I do approve of the outcome. Perhaps the next Rome Olympics will use “Roma,” and the countries in the parade of nations during the opening ceremonies will all be announced in their own languages, rather than English, French and the language of the host country. I’ll keep my fingers crossed.

I love the parade of nations. The athletes walking through the stadium with their companions and athletes from around the world is a moving sight. They seem so happy to be there to represent their countries by doing what they love. Best of all, they are ordered by no means more supplementary than the alphabet. The last host country leads; all those in between follow the alphabet, the most populous and powerful nations mixed in with the smallest, for once forsaking the lead.

I was thinking about the wonder of this display of worldwide unity when the parade reached the list and the miracle quickly vanished for me.

It amazes me how athletic events, and the Olympics in particular, can bring the world together. The physical gathering of the nations of the world is something I cannot begin to fathom. It seems like a logistic impossibility to me; the International Olympic Committee does an amazing job of organizing such an enormous event. Bringing the world together in the sense of cooperation and unity also seems improbable to me, and yet it seems to happen on its own. How do sports do that?

The Olympics bring the world together in a competition that is not about land or money or religion or power. When one country goes home with a gold medal, the silver medalist’s country isn’t going to hold a grudge against the winner’s country; their loss may be disappointing, but they won’t go to war about it. And if the winner is a fellow countryman, they celebrate their nation’s victory together. The Olympics are about national pride and displaying that pride to the world.

There are 84 countries represented in the 2006 Games, including some I have never heard of. There are the usual suspects, such as the U.S., Canada and the Scandinavian countries, but there are also competitors from San Marino and Uzbekistan. There is a skier representing Ethiopia and a luger competitor from the Virgin Islands. They range in age from 14–
Students lack personal responsibility

While it’s true that I enjoy most aspects of this community, there is one practice that I simply abhor: the tradition of stealing Ts.

Now before angry alumni start sending me hate mail, give me a moment to defend my position. T-theft, by definition, is vandalism, and it’s a defacement of university property.

Tech went to great expense and effort to decorate this campus with these beautiful building markers to aid navigation and improve our professional image. But packs of students have gone around scraping the Ts off, so many of these brand-new signs now look ugly and unkempt.

As a result, it detracts from the overall cleanliness and respectability that is supposed to create a positive impression on our visitors.

And consider the costs to the Institute. Sure, the stick-on letters are much cheaper to purchase, and much easier to replace than the older letters that were drilled into the buildings’ outer walls. However, they’re also easier to steal, and with enough Ts missing, the costs add up. Money is taken from other necessary campus improvements because students just don’t demonstrate a little respect.

Which brings me to the crux of my editorial: I will never understand students who intentionally do stupid things.

I consider myself to be someone who tries relentlessly to understand another person’s point of view before I express my own opinion. I try to put myself in the minds of my fellow classmates and students to understand their motivations, strengths and attitudes toward the world.

With most students, I can achieve this with some degree of success, but I utterly fail when it comes to students who act stupid and purposefully destructive: they’re completely beyond my comprehension.

They steal Ts. They break off the wooden gates of the parking garages. They smash pots and shutter doors. They carve engravings into desks.

They tear down the bulletin board strips mounted in the hallways. They toss cigarette butts on the grounds. They stick chewing gum under tables. Students are even worse when they’re extremely drunk.

Last year, I walked in on my roommate and three of his friends who had drunken themselves into a frenzy in some sort of perverted St. Patrick’s Day celebration, and they were emptying beer bottles out of the halway living room window.

Needless to say, one of them bounced off the furniture and collided with the window, which shattered all over the floor.

Yes, it was an accident, but it never would have happened if they hadn’t been acting recklessly in the first place. Even if the window hadn’t broken, someone in the courtyard below could have been seriously injured by a flying bottle.

And when they’re not smashing other furniture, they’re insulting others.

I have personally witnessed students in an alcoholic stupor making caustic remarks that are overtly sexist, racist or homophobic, and they are not the slightest bit amusing.

I find these conversations bigoted and demeaning, demonstrating a lack of intelligence, maturity and self-control.

Why do you allow your own inhibitions to be so low that you find yourself destroying property and disrespecting your classmates? What motivates you to be so callous and cruel?

I have nothing against alcohol, but all things in moderation, man. Where is your sense of dignity and self-respect?

I’m rarely one to file a complaint without proposing a solution, but in this case, I’m at a loss. This is a strictly personal issue. I cannot influence whether or not students have self-control and a sense of gratitude toward others.

I cannot raise maturity levels. I cannot sit next to every sign 24 hours a day fending off every lunatic with a paint scraper.

What I can do is encourage people to stop and consider the consequences of their actions. I can persuade them not to take any aspect of their college experience for granted and to strive for excellence.

Joshua Cuneo
Online Editor

Kindergarteners went wild

Cole Dowden
The Shorthorn

(U-WIRE) UT Arlington—We all remember being six years old, right? We played the “cootie game” and chased each other around on the playground. Our biggest worries were getting picked last for a kickball game and eating too much paste.

Can you imagine worrying about sexual harassment at the age of six? Chalk it up to another sign of the apocalypse, maybe.

In Brockton, Mass., a six-year-old boy was suspended from school for sexual harassment. He probably can’t even spell sexual harassment and he was suspended for it.

What could this kid have done?

An Associated Press story reported in Friday’s issue of the Star-Telegram stated that he put two fingers inside a classmate’s waistband. That’s it. That’s all.

The boy’s mother said she can’t explain the suspension to her son because, “she can’t even tell her son what he did wrong because he’s too young to understand.”

The boy said he touched the girl because the teacher had told him to. Man, where is instant replay when you really need it?

Here’s why this is absurd — if you haven’t got a pulse — he’s six years old and in kindergarten.

The politically correct bulldogs’ invasion into our lives is appalling. Not even childhood is safe from excessive incriminations of the politically correct.

This kid will live with the stigma of sexual predatorship. School officials have had to apologize to the boy’s family saying “they learned a lesson” and will change things, but his classmates won’t forget that he was suspended for touching a classmate’s waistband.

His mother won’t forget either. Chances are, he’ll be the proud owner of an intimate problem well into his 30s.

And political correctness—yet another status issue. I cannot influence whether or not students will have self-control and a sense of dignity and self-respect.

I utterly fail…to [understand] students who act stupid and purposefully destructive.

Our Views

HOT OR NOT

HOT

Road to the Top

The Shorthorn

We hope that you’ll keep coming to The Shorthorn’s website to see more of our Top 10 list, which is based on our final class grades throughout the semester. Here’s the top five:

1. Jonny McPherson
2. Amanda Dille
3. Sara Martinez
4. Alex Rodriguez
5. Rachel Johnson

Nancy Chang, Editor

NOT

Baseball rocks

Baseball season and hopefully the World Series too are not that far away. As the 3-0 record of Wednesday’s game against Kennesaw attests, we are a team.

The baseball team plays a three-game series at home this weekend against Kennesaw. Admission is free with a BuzzCard.

Letter Submission Policy

The Shorthorn welcomes letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to the Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, email at Technology-Gatech.edu, hand-delivered to room 375 of the student services building, Lomax building, traditional or U-Wire (UT Arlington) Tech report.

Any letters not meeting these criteria should not be submitted. Letters should not exceed 400 words and include a campus box number or other valid billing information, or else be returned. To request advertising space, call (404) 894-2830.

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Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the Editor-in-Chief at technotes@technique.gatech.edu or editor@technique.gatech.edu.

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Students from page 9

express thanks by leaving campus property intact. I can even suggest to facilities drill clear plastic coverings over each marker or to the GTPD that we need more nighttime drive-bys. But so long as students continue to disregard themselves, others and their institution, these actions will only be so effective.

Now, despite all that I’ve said, I do believe in the inherent kindness of the students here. Most of them are intelligent, wonderful people who would never hurt a fly. They represent a huge cultural and philosophical diversity that I brag about to my friends and family all over the country. I really do enjoy being a member of this community and wouldn’t trade it for anything.

Unfortunately, there are a few rotten eggs that give the entire Institute a bad image. I hope that the majority of us that do respect ourselves and our environment will not be disheartened by the actions of a few vandals, and I hope that we will be willing to reach out to our friends if we ever see them start to go down that road.

Olympics from page 8

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I was proud when Texan Chad Hedrick won the 5000-meter speed skating gold in his first-ever Olympics. And when Frode Estil of Norway fell at the start of the men’s cross country 30 km pursuit, yet miraculously took a silver medal after starting the race in last place, far behind the others, I could barely contain my excitement.

I feel the same about China’s pair skaters Dan Zhang and Hao Zhang. When Dan took a hard fall following a throw, she skated off the ice in obvious pain; their music stopped. But after her trainers looked at her, they finished their program from where she had fallen; like Estil, they won the silver medal for their event.

The CEM recommends drinking lots of fluids, eating chicken soup and taking some aspirin.

If anyone reading this is a celebrant of the formerly dubbed “Valentine’s Day,” please be considerate of those around you. Groups of people participate in various holidays involving their emotional and psychological well-being. Please respect those around you who may be single.

The CEM has issued the following suggestions for those daring, married or recently attached to another in any way. Wear lots of black clothing to both fool and calm SAD celebrants. Black lipstick for both men and women may prove helpful. Keep physical expressions of intimacy to an extreme low. Ideally, such displays ought to be kept in the proper location: the kitchen or the bedroom.

Finally, the CEM has asked SAD renegades to limit their use of Valentine’s Day paraphernalia including anything soft, fuzzy, furry, shiny, mushy or otherwise dopy.

The CEM thanks everyone for their participation in this important public health concern.

Olympics, those who do, even those in those 84 countries watches the astounding.

I guess the Olympics just make me proud of the world. I feel that everyone should try to watch at least an event or two—spend some time with your national, or international, pride!

This February brings the most recently invented holiday: Single Awareness Day (SAD). SAD will now occur every February 14. The Centers for Emotional Management (CEM) recently began this day as a public health measure to decrease rates of depression, stomach aches and vengeful thoughts associated with what was formerly called “Valentine’s Day.”

Not all people are aware of this new day of awareness. Items worn or exchanged such as red shirts, flowers and tiny puppies are definite suggestions of a person’s unawareness of SAD. Unfortunately, such displays also occasionally indicate a rebellious attitude toward SAD.

Such rebels, officially called “SAD Renegades” also exhibit behaviors of prejudice against those persons who are single. Such behaviors include kissing, hand-holding, late-night dining rituals and other forms of physical expression not noticeable in a single person’s company.

The CEM has issued the following advice to persons who wish to celebrate SAD in peace:

In the case of items such as red lipstick, cute pets, etc., run as far away as possible.

If a single person encounters the anti-SAD behaviors of physical intimacy on February 14, it is recommended that they spit in the people’s general direction, then drop to the ground and roll furiously. This will allow the fumes of anger and jealousy to safely be extinguished.

For SAD celebrants, the CEM also issues the following recommendations as types of self-therapy:

1. Avoidance, confrontation and self-therapy; the following severe effects may occur: fever, nausea, blistering of the skin around the upper-left chest area, back pains, headaches, pelvic cramps and/or anal leakage.

2. Hallucinations involving a former lover in a bed full of scorpions being set on fire by the dumpee have been known to occur in extreme cases. If hallucinations occur, the CEM recommends drinking lots of fluids, eating chicken soup and taking some aspirin.

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Alexandra Pajak
Columnist

Hoffman is also recommended. Both films have therapeutic effects due to their emphasis on the dysfunctional aspects of romantic relationships.

Stay clear of any film involving John Cusak, Meg Ryan or Julia Roberts.

If someone celebrating SAD does not follow the tri-fold methods of avoidance, confrontation and self-therapy; the following severe effects may occur: fever, nausea, blistering of the skin around the upper-left chest area, back pains, headaches, pelvic cramps and/or anal leakage.

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Olympics from page 8

year-old Chinese snowboarder Sun Zhiqfing to 54-year-old American curler Scott Baird. The diversity is astounding.

And while not every person in those 84 countries watches the Olympics, those who do, even those who just happen to catch an event they hadn’t planned to watch cannot help cheering for their country’s athletes and feeling a shared pride if they take a medal.

I was proud when Texan Chad Hedrick won the 5000-meter speed skating gold in his first-ever Olympic event. And when Frode Estil of Norway fell at the start of the men’s cross country 30 km pursuit, yet miraculously took a silver medal after starting the race in last place, far behind the others, I could barely contain my excitement.

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PROOF

BY DAVID AUBURN

DIRECTED BY PEG SHELTON

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