A serious breach of security discovered earlier this month has compromised the personal data for thousands of patrons at the Robert Ferst Center for the Arts. Hackers downloaded information stored on a server as part of the Ferst Center’s ticket ordering process. The information includes names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and credit card numbers.

According to Herbert Baines, director of information security for the Office of Information Technology (OIT), “The individual responsible for the hack gained access from a system (located in another country). We have contacted the Internet Service Provider associated with the hacking system. In most cases, the attacking system is also compromised and just used to cover the digital trail of the real hacker. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation, FBI and Secret Service are all working to find the source.”

The Ferst Center has also sent out letters to every patron going back to 1998, alerting them to the compromise and recommending additional measures for protecting against fraud.

In the letter, Director Jay Constantz said, “Our foremost concern is for the integrity of any personal information that may have been accessed. We have no indication that any of that information has been used. But there are a number of actions that you may wish to take to prevent or mitigate any problems.

“I also encourage you to visit a Web site that we have assembled to provide you with information and updates about this at www.gatech.edu/patron-services. Here you will find information and links to other sites that may be helpful. We will continue to update this site as new information becomes available.”

‘Have you used your throat lately?’

Though embedded in one of her poems, Patricia Smith’s question could have been the central theme of her performance, addressed to the audience at the 14th Street Playhouse last week.

A musical trio known as Bop Thunderous lent additional emotion to Smith’s poetry, punctuating her words with the kind of smoky blues reminiscent of her beloved Cantab Lounge, a seedy bar in Cambridge, Mass., where she regularly “slams,” or offshoot of traditional poetry forms that thrives on energy, enthusiasm and competition.

Despite her gentle demeanor, Smith tackled tough topics, drawing upon her training as a journalist to write freeform poetry based on stories culled from history, mythology, newspapers and tabloids. Merging these two passions gave Smith’s work an accessibility and immediacy in portraying a wide range of characters both horrifying and sublime.

Questions (and answers) about upcoming parking registration

April 15 is a date most people remember as the last day for mailing tax forms to the government, but it’s also noteworthy as the first day for parking permit registration. The Whistle asked Peter Lange, assistant director for Parking and Transportation, to update faculty and staff on parking related issues for the upcoming year.

What will be the dates for permit registration this year? Faculty and staff may register for parking permits from April 15 – June 30 at www.applyparking.gatech.edu.

Are there any modifications to the registration system? Due to the recent implementation of the gtIDF system, users will not enter their social security number to log into the system. The gtIDF and birth date will be used instead. Links will be provided to help customers look up their ID information.

Some permit lots are being renumbered. Why? The new wayfinding plan is driving the change; all the lots will be renumbered in August. The new numbering system is intended to follow the east-west logic.
Joint degrees with international component grow in popularity among students and corporations

Rebecca Roop<br>Georgia Tech

Reflecting the growing globalization of society and business, the Board of Regents has approved a new joint degree – the Bachelor of Science in Global Economics and Modern Languages. The degree is designed to serve the needs of industry and government agencies with graduates capable of understanding the global, economically interdependent, multilingual and multicultural environment and who have in-depth knowledge and ability to function effectively in a second culture.

The School of Modern Languages and the School of Economics are offering the new degree with four separate language concentrations in French, German, Japanese and Spanish. The first graduates in Global Economics and Modern Languages are anticipated in 2005.

"This new degree is driven by the impact of globalization and the need for organizations to have employees who understand the culture and the language of another country," said Phil McKnight, professor and chair of the School of Modern Languages. "When I talk to contacts at international companies like Siemens, UPS and BMW, they tell me they want people that they can put into a leadership track, beyond their technical skills – who are well versed in other languages and who are familiar with workplace cultures in other countries."

Students in Modern Languages degree programs are already being encouraged to pursue a study abroad experience, supporting one of the goals of Tech’s Strategic Plan of offering a student-focused education by increasing the number of students who work or study abroad.

"Students need a sense of balance, and business is conducted in a large number of languages besides English," said Willie Belton, associate professor and undergraduate director, School of Economics. "It’s not enough to know just economics anymore. We feel the new Global Economics and Modern Languages option helps to complete the degree. It’s always good to give students more useful options."

This degree’s curriculum, like the Joint International Affairs and Modern Languages degree (JAML) that the Regents approved three years ago, is designed to be flexible. Students must complete 24 credit hours of language electives in a single language above the intermediate level, as well as six electives. For the JAML program, International Affairs and Modern Languages faculty have developed interdisciplinary courses that are co-taught, such as “Japanese Society, Politics and Economics.”

McKnight anticipates this new degree program will do the same by its third year.

JAML has proven very successful – growing from six majors to the current 115 majors. Student interest in Modern Languages overall has grown rapidly, with enrollment increasing 44 percent over the last three years. Each semester nearly 400 students are turned away, a striking number considering Tech does not even have a foreign language requirement for graduation.
The intrusion represents the second major compromise of sensitive data in a year. In March 2002, hackers circumvented Georgia Tech server security and gained illegal access to a server in the business office. The potential impact this time around is greater, because it effects a larger number of individuals, many of whom are outside the Georgia Tech community.

OIT, which monitors Internet traffic at the campus border — the points where information enters and exits campus routers — follows a specific protocol once it learns of a potential problem.

“We isolate the compromised system from the Tech network to prevent further misuse and notify the affected unit,” Baines said. “Next we conduct a remote forensic investigation and take appropriate actions to restore service. We will also make any modifications to prevent future incidents.”

Baines added that other departments can learn from this experience.

“It’s important to identify all systems that contain sensitive information, especially if it holds personal or financial data. We are asking departments to conduct a process and system review in conjunction with OIT Information Security,” he said. Other advice includes monitoring for unusual activity and conducting periodic reviews so systems remain in compliance with recommended safeguards.

At the Firest Center, Constantz said significant changes in its computer network have been put in place to mitigate future risk.

“The compromised server and software have been replaced,” he said. “New firewalls have been installed, as well as the most up-to-date intrusion software. In addition, the new server has been moved to a highly secure location with constant monitoring. The chances of a breach of this type in the future are inconceivable. Any unusual activity will be detected immediately.”

As a result, Constantz said the breach will not alter how tickets are purchased.

“We want to protect our patrons with convenience of purchasing tickets in all of the ways that they have become accustomed to, including purchasing tickets in person at the box office, by phone and on the Internet.”

“The Robert Firest Center and Georgia Tech are doing everything possible to minimize any negative impact and ensure that this will not happen again.”

Planning, con’t from page 1

“Because there’s a lot of growth and a lot of planning going on in Atlanta,” he said, “it gives the faculty and the students interesting problems to deal with.”

The program has its origins in the post-World War II America of 1950, when Harold Bush-Brown, then director of Georgia Tech’s College of Architecture, met with John Gaus, director of the city planning program at Harvard University; Frederick Adams, director of the city planning program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and Howard Meshinski, director of regional planning for the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The nation was poised for explosive population growth and a revitalized industrial economy that would lead to tremendous urban development. In response, Bush-Brown mapped out the needs and the scope of a new city planning program for Georgia and the Southeast. His new program earned a $251,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1951, which gave it a jump start, and 10 students signed up for Tech’s City Planning Program’s inaugural class in fall 1952.

Between 1965 and 1978, Program Director Malcolm Little developed a curriculum that focused on planning for small communities.

“And that was the perfect thing to do at the time, when Georgia was filled with such small communities,” Contant said. “Today, we’re realizing that some of the biggest planning issues are regional in their scope, hence our recent name change to the City and Regional Planning Program. It’s imperative that we always reconcile to the times and be ahead of the curve.”

Today, the program is rooted in the ability to think through new and difficult problems.

“Getting out of the ivory tower and working with people who are doing this on a day-to-day basis is a key component of our curriculum,” Contant said.

“Other programs in the country are more abstract and theoretical in nature. Our goal is not to just give our students skills, but the ability to think through new and difficult problems.”

An additional strength of the faculty is its involvement outside Georgia Tech.

“The faculty are working on projects off-campus at an unbelievable rate, mostly on various planning projects,” Contant said. “Of all that gets brought back into the classroom, that’s the beauty of a program such as ours.”

Parking, con’t from page 1

of the wayfinding plan. For example, lot A05 will become W02 and lot A09 will become E43.

Parking deck openings, the number for its parking deck was being incorporated into signage and other printed materials. Campus parking lots were scheduled for new signs in the next year or two, and in order to avoid changing the lot designations down the line, we decided to go ahead and do them all this year.

I think the motto should be, “We are not moving your lot, just changing the number.” New lot assignment numbers will be printed on permits.

When will employees be able to register for the new parking deck in Technology Square?

During the same April 15 - June 30 registration period the lot number is B81, and it will be open by August 1.

Will campus construction cause any changes that permit holders should prepare for?

The lots in structures, such as 10th Street, will be removed for construction of new housing.

Temporary, a small (25-space) section of A11 is scheduled for construction. If all goes well with the A11 project, we will have the spaces back in the fall.

The parking deck at Tech Square, with its 1,500 spaces — 600 for permit holders, 900 for the hotel and visitors — is the only new area scheduled to open next year.

What will be the lot fees for 2003?

For B lots, the cost is $490. All A, R and F lots will cost $430. Next year, all lots will be $500.

What else?

The Tech Trolley — six buses at approximately five-minute intervals running during the day between Tech Square and the Campus Recreation Center (formerly SAC). The trolley is projected to make two stops at Tech Square, three more stops along Fenth Drive, and the turnaround stop at the current DuFree College of Management. In all, the route makes six stops.

We are also planning to activate all Tech park-permit holders’ Buzz Cards to access the Tech Square parking deck after 5 p.m. and on weekends — excluding football games, of course.

www.whistle.gatech.edu

IN BRIEF:

Carter Award recognizes outstanding campus-community projects

The College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia State University has begun accepting applications for the fourth annual Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award for Community Collaboration. The award recognizes campus and community groups that work together to produce improvements in people’s lives and enhance learning in the process.

To be eligible for the Carter Partnership Award, programs must involve collaboration between a university and a community group.

Applications for the 2003 Carter Partnership Award can be downloaded online at www.gsu.edu/carteraward. The deadline to apply is June 9.

New certificate program

A new certificate program for nanoscience and nanotechnology (NaST Certificate Program) has been initiated on campus. Any graduate student may apply for the certificate after satisfying the requirements. Additional details can be found by clicking on “Certificate Program on Nanoscience & Technology” located at www.chemistry.gatech.edu.

A research fellowship program has been established on campus for graduate students doing collaborative research in broad nanoscience and nanotechnology areas. Detailed information can also be found at the NaST Certificate Program Web site. The fellowship for 2003-2004 will start on May 1. The deadline for application is April 15.

CPR Training

The Office of Organizational Development will be offering a course in CPR Training. The course provides vital information needed to recognize and care for breathing and cardiac emergencies in adults, children and infants, as well as how to identify and care for life-threatening bleeding, sudden illness and injuries. Learn how to treat victims in need of rescue breathing and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Certification card and textbook are included.

There is no cost for this class, to be held on campus May 1 from 8:30 a.m. to noon. However, it is limited to 12 students; registration is required. For more information, visit www.trainsweb.gatech.edu.