Bands plan for centennial celebrations
Marking 100 years in 2008
Matt Page
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Celebrating 100 years of musical tradition, Georgia Tech's band will march in the 2008 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Band members will be raising money to support their trip throughout the coming year.

"The Macy's Parade will be the most fitting way for the band to celebrate our centennial anniversary in front of 50 million viewers, as well as an opportunity for the students to shine as ambassadors for the Institute," said Associate Director of Bands Chris Moore.

"Anyone who has been a part of the band or who has experienced the energy, entertainment and enthusiasm the band brings to the Tech community and the city of Atlanta understands what a treasure we have," said Assistant Director Donny Allen.

The full marching band, concert band and symphonic band will all participate in the New York trip. "We

Honors Program celebrates first anniversary
Characterized as an Institute-wide incubator for intellectual inquiry and engagement, the newly formed Georgia Tech Honors Program is designed to promote cross-divisional interaction between faculty and students, while offering some unique resources and opportunities for its participants. The Whistle recently sat down with Gregory Nobles, director of the Honors Program, to reflect on its inaugural year.

What are some of the key accomplishments from the first year of the Honors Program?
I think we have had some very, very good students who came in and took ownership of the program and ownership of the dorm, Howell Hall. They developed a very good relationship with each other, the staff and the faculty to the extent that they achieved one of the goals of this program: to create a kind of community of students and faculty together.

I think another accomplishment of the program was the academic side. We offered a series of honors courses and special topics classes. Both types of classes turned out remarkably well. The feedback from the students was very good. I had one faculty colleague who teaches calculus tell me this was the most fun he has had teaching in 30 years at Georgia Tech. I think the social and community component was very good and the academic component was terrific.

What do you want to accomplish in the second year?
The real goal, in terms of accomplishments, is to try to continue to create opportunities for students and faculty to get together in a less structured, less hierarchical fashion than the typical classroom. The Honors Program classes have not been that hierarchical — students and faculty engage in a lot of conversations and discussion. Last year we began having some formal social activities. I want to make those activities social and intellectual so we can create more opportunities for students and faculty to get together to discuss some common event.

One of the goals of the program is to create intellectual and social relationships between students and faculty; we’ve made some steps in that direction. I want to make a lot more of this year.

Tech stresses emergency preparedness plans
As part of a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools, Andy Altizer, Georgia Tech's director of Emergency Preparedness, is working this month to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action. Altizer said his office wanted to use National Preparedness Month to stress the importance of and seek campus-wide assistance on some of the newer programs designed to improve overall safety.

As an example, he pointed to the new Georgia Tech Emergency Notification System (GTENS), which allows the Georgia Tech administration to contact the campus community via e-mail, voice and text messaging, alerting the campus to important, emergency continued, page 2

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WWW.WHISTLE.GATECH.EDU
New method for testing radium in water supply cuts testing time

Technique helps ensure safe drinking water

Abby Vogel
Research News

A simpler technique for testing public drinking water samples for the presence of the radioactive element radium can dramatically reduce the amount of time required to conduct the sampling required by federal regulations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved use of the new testing method.

The technique — developed by Bernd Kuhn, director of the Georgia Tech Research Institute’s (GTRI) Environmental Radiation Center, and senior research scientist Robert Rosson — became advantageous when the EPA established new radionuclide drinking water standards in 2000.

While radium is found at low concentrations in soil, water, plants and food, the greatest potential for human exposure to radium is through drinking water. Since radium is chemically similar to calcium, it has the potential to cause harm by replacing calcium in bones.

A new technique has reduced the time required for testing drinking water samples for the presence of radium. Here, Georgia Tech Research Institute senior research scientist Robert Rosson prepares a sample for testing.

As a result, drinking water systems are now required to sample and report on the amounts of two isotopes that are sometimes found in drinking water supplies.

Regardless of the resources and programs on campus, everyone must take some personal responsibility for their safety. During September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security offers simple steps to be better prepared for emergencies:

• Get a Kit: A kit of supplies should allow you and your family to survive for at least three days in the event of an emergency. Visit www.ready.gov for a complete list.


• Be Informed: Learn more about the different threats and appropriate responses. Go to www.ready.gov for more about emergency plans that have been established.

• Get Involved: Get trained in first aid and emergency response. Citizen Corps (www.citizencorps.gov) provides residents with opportunities to prepare, train and support local emergency responders.

and staff can subscribe to SmartRad and receive e-mail notification of potentially hazardous weather.

• Community Emergency Response Training: An interested group of students on campus will undergo the 16-hour CERT program, which educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, search and rescue, teamwork organization and disaster medical operations. Using the training learned in the classroom and during exercises, CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

Correction: An August 27 photo caption incorrectly credited Georgia Tech ROTC with initiating the tradition of Freshman R.A.T.S. caps. Rather, it was the Georgia Tech AFROTC Society, which started the practice in 1915.
imaginative, creative courses that they’ve proba-
ibly never taught before or wanted to teach but
have never had the time or the opportunity. We
have a course this fall in the political economy of
soccer, a course on wind energy, a course that
addresses questions of sustainability, a course on
globalization and a course on the modern enlight-
enment. These are courses that are not typically a
part of the Tech curriculum, but the program
offers both faculty and students an opportunity to
participate in a course where the professor does
not know all of the answers. The faculty members
are wonderful in the way that they bring their
imagination to the topics and also the way in
which they teach the classes.

Are there any plans to expand the program?
Right now, we have about 120 students a year.
That seems to be the right size in terms of our
ability as staff to work with the students, to get to
know them, and to do all their advising. We’ve
tried to select students based on some indication
of their intellectual or social level of engagement,
their intellectual curiosity and their commitment
to following things through.

How would you characterize the incoming
students?
I’ve only met a few so far, but we selected them
on the same criteria as the first-year students. I
think one of the great benefits for our new stu-
dents is that we have the sophomore students
who will be friends and mentors to the incoming
class. The second-year students, on their own
merit, established a mentorship program. I think
every college and university has a culture and this
program has its own culture, perhaps even a sub-
culture at Georgia Tech. I think the relationship
between the first cohort of students and the sec-
ond cohort will tend to reinforce that subculture.

What are some of your personal highlights?
Seeing the students take ownership of the pro-
gram, seeing the students respond to the oppor-
tunity to use their imagination academically but
also in other ways. We tell students “if you have
an idea, if there is something you want to do and
you need some financial support for it, write us a
proposal.” We have had some great proposals ...
we’ve sent students to Morocco, Costa Rica and,
in the near future, Nicaragua. I think, for me,
my greatest satisfaction was saying to the students —
freshmen in college — “here is an opportunity,
make the most of it,” and seeing how many of
them did.

What sort of feedback are you receiving?
We’ve had very positive feedback about the pro-
gram from students — some of it anecdotal; some
of it is from evaluations of professors. Several
parents have written to express their hap-
piness about how their child has been
incorporated in the Georgia Tech community. I

are planning a large-scale concert and gala for our
alumni, fans, locals and tourists in one of the
major concert halls in New York City,” said Andrea
Strauss, director of Bands. “We hope students get
a strong sense of pride in representing the
Institute and a feeling of satisfaction knowing they
reach so many people through their talents and
hard work.”

More than 1,100 Tech students sing, play or
study music each semester. They come from
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Bands, cont’d from page 1

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Band directors hope this is the first of many
high-profile opportunities to share their music
programs with the Tech community.

For more information
Music Department
www.music.gatech.edu


IN BRIEF:

Video assists response
to student stress

Working with the Georgia Tech Counseling
Center, Institute Communications and Public
Affairs has completed a video designed to be a
resource for faculty regarding how to respond to
student stress and distress. The video was a
joint venture between Student Affairs and the
senior vice provost for Academic Affairs.
The video can be accessed on the
Counseling Center Web site at the link under the
Counseling Spotlight, or directly at

McDermott named
deputy director of GTRI

Stephen Cross has announced that Tom
McDermott — current director of GTRI’s Electronic
Systems Laboratory — will become the next deputy
director of GTRI and director of
Research.
McDermott joined GTRI nearly five years ago follow-
ing an 18-year career at Lockheed-Martin
Aeronautical Systems. He earned both his
master’s degree in electrical engineering and bachelor’s degree in physics
from Georgia Tech.

Prestigious SPORE grant to
involve Tech researchers

The National Cancer Institute has awarded a
five-year, $12.5 million Specialized Program of
Research Excellence (SPORE) grant in head and
neck cancer to Emory University’s Winship
Cancer Institute. This is the first SPORE grant ever
received in the state of Georgia.
The Emory Winship SPORE program will con-
sist of four major translational research proj-
ects, one of which will involve Georgia Tech
researchers developing a new class of
biodegradable nanoparticles designed to carry a
chemotherapy drug for targeted therapy of head
and neck cancers.
According to recent National Cancer Institute
statistics, southeastern states rank among the
highest in the nation in head and neck cancer
incidence.

Train with ROTC cadets

Georgia Tech Army ROTC is inviting the campus
to participate in PT (physical training) with the
cadets on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
from 6 - 7 a.m. To attend, meet at the Campus
Recreation Center for instruction from Master
Sergeants Eddie Jackson and David Kelley.