

# THE SCIENCE GUYS

Radio show presents techno talk with a comic slant



**BILL HUNT**

By Gary Goettling

**P**ete Ludovice, an associate professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at Georgia Tech who also performs as a stand-up comic, is the originator of a radio program that strives to “demystify science and technology.”

Co-hosting the show “Inside the Black Box” with Ludovice is William “Bill” Hunt, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Tech. The hourlong program airs Saturdays at 10 a.m. on Radio Sandy Springs, 1620 AM, and is also streamed over the Internet at [radiosandysprings.com](http://radiosandysprings.com).



GARY MEER

**PETE LUDOVICE**

Sandwiched between a classic car program and a gardening show, “Inside the Black Box” aims to explain everyday applications of science and technology while at the same time educating the public about the scientific method itself. In fact, the program premiere on April 1 was devoted primarily to answering the question: What is science?

“In the preface to his book, ‘The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Darkness,’ Carl Sagan put out a call for the great minds of the 21st century to try to educate people about science because he claimed that the average American couldn’t tell the difference between science and pseudoscience,” said Ludovice, noting the continued acceptance by some people of astrology and fortune telling.

Rather than relying on the “great minds” to begin the dialogue, Ludovice continued, “I think we need schleps like myself who know something about science who can maybe put it in a somewhat more useful and maybe even humorous perspective.”

A light approach to science comes naturally to Ludovice and Hunt, both of whom perform comedy routines in their spare time. Ludovice has honed his “nerd comedy” persona at clubs throughout the Southeast and for corporate and professional organizations. He is also a regular at the monthly comedy show at the Academy Theater in Avondale Estates, Ga., and at The Funny Farm Comedy Club in Roswell, Ga. Ludovice is a familiar fixture on Georgia Tech stages as well, performing at campus events such as FASET.

“I’ve got a face for radio,” said Hunt, who is building his stand-up skills by performing at open-mike nights. He said comedy is probably the most difficult of the performing arts because “the things that make us cry are universal, but what makes us laugh is very different from person to person. It’s a challenge to figure out what will connect with the broadest number of people.

“We’re going to inject levity where appropriate,” he added. “Otherwise it might get pretty dull and some topics might be impossible to deal with otherwise.”

Topics for future shows include grocery store chemistry, polymers and microelectronics. Listeners are encouraged to call the studio during the show with questions and comments. The professors plan to invite special guests such as Loren Williams of the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, who joined Ludovice and Hunt behind the mike for the inaugural broadcast.

“He has some interesting thoughts about science education,” Ludovice said, “and he’s a bit of a crusader against pseudoscience, so we plan to have him back.”

One hot topic that’s sure to make the cut is the issue of evolution versus intelligent design. Ludovice is amazed by efforts to present creationism as a scientific alternative to evolution theory.

“I’ve got a difference of opinion from Pete, which is good,” Hunt said. “You don’t want to have two guys totally agreeing with each other all the time.”

According to station owner David Moxley, “Pete was on one of our comedy shows, and afterward he approached me with the idea of doing a science show with a comic touch. I thought it was a neat concept, so we’ve gone ahead with it.”

One-year-old Radio Sandy Springs is a low-power station with a broadcast area limited to the municipality. “This is old-fashioned community radio,” Moxley added. “Stations today are so big that they can’t serve one community. We’re so little that we can.”

For Ludovice and Hunt, “Inside the Black Box” is something of an experiment. “We have no expectation to turn this into a TV show in six months,” Hunt laughed. “We’re going to have some fun and see what happens.”

from the Summer  
2006 Issue of  
**Tech Topics**  
published by the  
Georgia Tech  
Alumni Association