

Students who complain should realize options

We are adults. This means we choose what classes to take, what alcoholic beverage to consume and what person possesses the capability to lead this nation. We have a lot of responsibility and many decisions ahead of us.

So why does it feel as if we had no choice when it came to what school we would attend? At least five times a day, I hear a fellow student proclaim hatred for Truman. All too often, this hatred is followed by a litany of reasons why Truman is worse than almost every other school currently accepting applicants. Sometimes I tend to agree, but for the most part, I find this hatred appalling. Truman is not a prison forcing people to stay, complaining their way through the next four or so years. You have options.

Your first option is to leave. There are other schools in the nation that will allow you to transfer to them. However, this suggestion usually results in a barrage of further excuses, my favorite being, "My parents wanted me to come here." Well, great. My parents wanted me to remain a 5-year-old child, forever young and innocent, but sometimes things just do not work out the way we want. Perhaps it is time to remove the leash and realize that you are four to six years away from the real world. We are a few courses and exams away from owning our own homes, managing our own businesses and creating our own families. It is time we



Shannan Anderson

start making our own choices.

The second option, and by far the most favorable, is to do something about it. Whining and complaining are not solutions but annoying ways to draw attention to your self-pity. Get out there, and make things happen. Do not consistently rely on student government to be the voice of the students – be your own voice. By now you have realized the administration is not going to be the catalyst for great change – we are.

By forming organizations dedicated to your needs and desires, you can create a community others want to be a part of. If you are not involved in bringing about change, then you better not use your mouth to criticize. Intelligent leadership is apparently what got you into this University, so intelligence and leadership should be used in making this University what you want it to be.

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No one likes hard classes or weekly pop quizzes. We all have that professor whose teaching methods are questionable at best, and we all have weeks where the stress exceeds recommended levels. Despite all the negative things that come with any college-level education, it is the people and community that matter. Neither of these things are lacking at Truman. It is your responsibility to find them and make them work for you. Things can be changed if only we commit.

The next time you feel your mouth opening up to whine, look around, and do something about it instead. Because I am sure I am not the only one tired of hearing you complain.

Shannan Anderson is a senior communication and English major from Sioux Falls, S.D.

Unless one stakes out organs, they likely will be up for grabs

Conventional wisdom says there's no such thing as bad publicity. Stealing organs from dead bodies is anything but conventional.

A New York news station reports Daniel George & Son, a family-owned and operated funeral home in Brooklyn, is under investigation for harvesting organs – allegedly removing the useful components of corpses without legal permission from any family members – and selling the crop to various outlets.

Sounds bad if you're planning your grandmother's funeral in Brooklyn.

Yes, New Yorkers who live and work in the area understandably are freaked out from hearing the news, which sounds like something pulled straight from "Bride of Frankenstein." At last count, as many as six funeral homes were being investigated in similar cases.

After a little scrutiny, it looks like those businesses aren't to blame.

In fact, it was the George & Son owner who reported the thefts to the Brooklyn District Attorney after discovering one of the corpses had a long plastic pipe instead of a right leg.

So the investigation shifts its focus to Michael Mastromarino, owner of a bio-medical tissue company in New Jersey, a guy with plenty of incentive to dismember stiff bodies and pawn off the remains. It seems pretty easy to write him off as a schmuck.

But what's so wrong about taking body parts from people who already have gotten their money's worth? That missing leg will do a lot more good in someone's laboratory than it would in a coffin.



Andrew Gant

The issue that has families upset is consent, however, because nothing feels more invasive than having a loved one sold for parts like a wrecked Camaro. Mastromarino said he thought consent was provided. The families said it wasn't.

And certainly we have to respect the wishes of those who make it abundantly clear to their families or lawyers that they don't want their organs donated. They have personal reasons for taking certain things to the grave, and that's all right. But for those who die without ever making a lucid declaration of what they want done with their organs, who either forget about becoming a donor or don't feel strongly one way or another, why not clean them out?

It's common enough to hear people advocating voluntary organ donation, too ordinary for this column. What I'm defending is the theft of the unused organs of dead people who have never objected to donation.

If someone leaves an old sofa on the curb for the Tuesday morning garbage truck, it's out there for anyone who

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can get it Monday night. If I don't call shotgun before a road trip in an uncomfortable Mustang, I'll spend the rest of the day crammed into the back seat. And as far as I'm concerned, if I don't stake a claim to the organs in my body before I die, they're up for grabs.

So I signed the back of my license this weekend in case anything happens. If that's not enough proof I want my organs distributed, someone can cut out this column and tie it to my toe.

For everyone else – those of you who are adamant about having your body donated to science, those of you who would rather keep your body parts intact and those of you who wouldn't mind either option – let someone with a good memory know what you're thinking.

Not only will you help doctors give patients better treatment, but you'll cut down on organ burglary, too.

Andrew Gant is a junior communication major from Montgomery County, Mo.

Desire for information proves potential to make a difference

What is on the minds of America's youth today? Without much of an attempt to disguise what they think of our generation, Vanity Fair staff asked readers to explain the apathy and obliviousness of today's youth toward the increasingly tumultuous world stage by posing this question as the topic for their 2005 essay contest.

Let's face it, our generation has an allergic reaction to making waves. We are placaters, and we are diplomats, but by no means are we mercenaries or rebel leaders. On my way to work the other day, I saw a bumper sticker that said, "We are the people our parents warned us about." So are we?

I don't doubt that the youth of today are just as impassioned and motivated as any other generation, but our focus is very different. The '80s oozed glitz and glam as a backlash to all that the '60s and '70s stood for except, of course, the fringe benefits – promiscuous sex and drug use that pervaded well into the '90s and today. Most of us were brought into the world during a decade defined by Madonna's Material Girl and the emergence of the yuppie and the WASP. I also should mention that the very magazine that derided us for our lack of concern about current events did not have a picture of Natalie Holloway on that month's cover. Instead, it had a darling picture of Jennifer Aniston in nothing but an oversized white Oxford surrounded with headlines of "Jennifer talks and talks and cries and talks ..." about Brad, of course, in what Vanity Fair apparently considered to be the most newsworthy story of the month.



Kelly Reed

The sordid truth is that I don't know what exactly is on the minds of America's youth today. I would hedge my bets that a randomly chosen 'tween, teen or college kid could tell me who Paris Hilton is or is not dating before recalling the secretary of state's name. But that does not mean our generation is populated with uninformed simpletons. We are expert in what we have been raised to believe is important to our success and survival: navigating the social waters through networking and mastering the vast forms of communication through technology. You might be thinking that those are just fancy terms for making friends and chatting on AIM – and you would be correct – but this is not such a small feat. Our generation is in touch and in tune with what is going on so much more on the small scale that, yes, we sometimes lose touch with what is going on with the outside world. But within the cocoon we have spun for ourselves, we are efficient and very much aware of what is going on. In case you doubt the importance of this, think of the support garnered for victims

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of Hurricane Katrina. Truman's campus might not be collectively busing students to New Orleans to pump water out of the city, but we have come together to put on numerous fundraising campaigns and even shelter hurricane victims right here in Kirksville.

So we are not our parents. But that is not such a bad thing. I for one will never lie down in front of a tank to make my voice heard, but that doesn't mean I don't have a voice or am unwilling to use it. The Generation X- and Y-ers are a powerful group, and our obsession with all things pop culture speaks volumes about our insatiable desire to be in the know. Every one of us has the potential and the resources to make a difference. Just think about what great things could be accomplished if everyone who called in to vote for their favorite American Idol contestant made the same small effort to call their state representative as well.

Kelly Reed is a senior psychology major from Kansas City, Mo.

Around the Quad

This week's question: "At what point did you decide your area of study?"



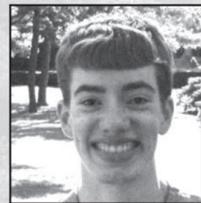
Nathan Flickinger junior

"I came in as a bio major, but I switched to math this semester. I'm pre-med, but I wanted to leave my options open, and I'm going to end up with a minor in chemistry."



Mike Merritt freshman

"I haven't decided on a major yet. I'm exploring physics, but I'm not close at all to a decision."



Chris Hassett freshman

"I'm doing math, but I don't know if that's what I'll stick with. That's just what I'm interested in."



Ed Kuntz sophomore

"The summer before I came here was pretty much the summer I decided I wanted to be a bio major."

Camping trip shows an affinity for pain

More often than not, I'll squander my weekends doing nonacademic activities, and come Sunday night, I'm too tired to do anything productive. This is why I'm petitioning God for an eighth day of creation. "And lo, on the eighth day, God decided to chill some more."

But until my retroactive request for an additional holy day goes through, which it undoubtedly will, I'm stuck with just two days of weekend and not enough time to do everything I need to get done. Such was the case for this past weekend. Instead of writing my column or getting a jump-start on my three research papers, I went camping at an ecovillage called Dancing Rabbit. While I had a very good time, I also came back with a core body temperature of negative 50 degrees Celsius, which in CSI terms means a corpse-sicle, but in terms of hyperbole, works out just fine indeed.

When the sun goes down on the prairie, it gets cold all too quickly and even though I was sharing a tent with three other guys, there was absolutely no huddling for warmth. Each and every sleeping bag was a self-contained city-state, equidistant from its neighbor, and God help the careless fool who dared cross that invisible line of demarcation and into his neighbor's territory.

Retribution would have been swift and certain – hands and eyes might have been forfeited – had there been a breach in conduct. Luckily we all knew the rules of sleeping bag conduct, first agreed upon by the early tribes of hunters and gatherers and later set into a written code of law by Hammurabi in Mesopotamia. Even back then, the ancients knew the dangers of camping, as one could contract weak-flabby-man disease if you accidentally bumped someone's elbow in the middle of the night.

Needless to say, we froze, but we awoke anew in the morning, frostbitten and hypothermic, yet safe from the dangers of having our masculinity impugned upon by breaking the sacred boundaries of personal space.

Meanwhile, in a tent 10 paces away, the girls went camping with had a cold night as well, but for a different reason altogether. Here's a hint: If the tent feels a bit drafty, make sure it's zipped on all four sides, including the bottom. I'm not saying that this was the



Joel Andersen

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sole cause for the arctic air in their tent, but it was probably a contributing factor, much like how smoking cigarettes is a contributing factor for lung cancer.

The only time during the night when we weren't freezing was when we were sitting around the campfire. Even though nine out of 10 fire marshals agree that I shouldn't be given such pyromaniacal power, I chose to build our fire.

At one dark point in my life, my parents enlisted me in the Boy Scouts, and although I never made it past the rank of tenderfoot or forgave them for such an awful transgression, I did learn some valuable survival skills, like how to weave a basket underwater using just my toes or how to set a small forest preserve ablaze using flint, tinder and 40 gallons of gasoline. As fate would have it, I managed to keep our fire controlled, only burning myself once in the process. I just wish I could say the same for the other campers who couldn't quite run fast enough.

Even though my camping experience was colder than my friend Sarah K's icy heart, I still had a good time being physically miserable. Call me a masochist, but there's something rewarding about working through challenges and coming through adversity in the end. Really, why else would I save all my homework until Sunday night each week?

Joel Andersen is a senior English major from Blue Springs, Mo.