

# Dixon should embrace chances to open up

When I found out a few weeks ago that Dixon would be answering questions from students via a one-hour Index interview, I jumped at the chance to add my own inappropriate inquiries. Unfortunately questions concerning Truman's budget, her vision of the future, and Truman's role in the Kirksville community pre-empted my question of whether President Dixon liked me or not. I even was going to include boxes marked "yes" or "no."



Joel Andersen

My question was in jest, though sometimes I wonder how connected Dixon really is with Truman's students. When I came to Truman almost four years ago, I was greeted warmly by the then-President Jack Magruder. It was his last year as president, but he still approached it as energetically as if it was his first. One could see him riding his bike around campus, warmly greeting students by name.

He had a sense of humor and humility about his position, and he worked hard to foster good relations with his students. Not to belabor the point, but we did name the new science building "Magruder Hall."

But this column isn't about Captain Jack and his exploits. It's about our current president, Barbara Dixon. She is not Jack Magruder, nor should she try to be, nor should we expect her to be. However, if she's going to enlist the support of students, faculty and staff, she'll need to develop a better rapport with the Truman community.

This past week, students were given a chance to ask Dixon questions via the Index interview. Although an unabridged version is available online, the version most people will see is the slightly shortened version in the TruLife section. I encourage anyone

who wants to get to know Dixon a little better to check out the interview in its entirety.

The interview starts out fairly rough, with her rather pointed declaration that she does not enjoy being called "Babs." I've called her that several times in my columns, and it's all in fun. In a professional setting, calling her President Dixon is most appropriate, but elsewhere I think it might do her well to warm up to the nickname just a bit.

During the interview, she tends to stay away from sound bites, with the one exception being when she discusses the possible restructuring of professor duties. That exchange sounds defensive and canned.

My second major critique of the interview is her response to the question about media services being moved to Barnett. Her response that it took her "25 minutes to walk to one of [her] classes" reminds me of the "walking 15 miles through the snow, uphill, both ways" reply.

The interview is not without its high points, though. She presents a very real person when talking about her personal life, her relationship with Jack Magruder and her role as a

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female president. Perhaps her most human moment comes when she talks about associate professor of history Marc Becker being placed on David Horowitz's list of the 101 most dangerous professors. It's a rare reminder that she does have a sense of humor and that she supports her faculty in their intellectual endeavors.

Babs needs more humanizing moments like that if she's going to succeed as our University president. Last fall when she volunteered to sit in a dunk tank to raise money for Hurricane Katrina victims was one, and her Index interview helped as well.

It was not my point to disparage our current president but rather to encourage her and the rest of the Truman community to build some type of positive relationship. I'll go ahead and start first by asking her one of the questions that didn't make it to the formal interview:

Do you like me? \_\_ yes \_\_ no  
I'll be awaiting eagerly on the Quad during recess for a response.

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

# Around the Quad

This week's question:  
“Where are you living next year, and why?”



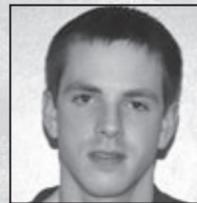
Sarah Stoll  
freshman

“Karlton Apartments. I was put on the waiting list, and I was No. 300 or something like that.”



Tracey Hurt  
freshman

“I'm living off campus. It's cheaper.”



Brian Caldwell  
freshman

“Ryle. I like the dorm, and that's where my roommate and suitemate are staying now.”



Amanda Turner  
senior

“Fair Apartments because I have a scholarship.”

# Cultural adjustment equals lack of creature comforts

I know why French women don't shave their legs.

First, there really is no motivation. Thirty million women live in France, and every single one refuses to grocery shop without nylons. I have yet to see a bare French leg. Every female, from age four to 94, dresses like she might accidentally get whisked away to a photo shoot for Elle magazine without the opportunity to change.

The other reason French women don't shave their legs is that it's impossible. It's a definite challenge to wash one's hair in the bathing receptacles that traditional French families provide, and there certainly is not enough room to double oneself over to reach a calf. The showerhead seems to be a recent invention – so new, in fact, that no one has yet figured out how to affix it to the wall. Lying in the basin of the bathtub, it spits weakly at one's ankles or dangles helplessly from a hose halfway down the tile.

The French have a lot going for them, but technological inclination is not one of these things. The pitiable showerhead is just a drop in the bucket of outdated equipment. I visited the doctor's office today. I tried to pay, but the receptionist looked incredulously at my credit card as if it were a very flat, legless bug. So I excused myself and hurried across the street to an ATM, which liked my credit card just fine. I burst back in the office breathlessly, waving a 50€ bill for my 30€ charge. This the receptionist was reluctant to accept. She asked why I didn't have exact change. I explained



Jessie Gasch

patiently that ATMs do not offer 10€ bills. She sighed, disdainfully held out her hand and began asking doctors and nurses if they personally would have 20€ to give me in exchange. X-ray machines, digital blood pressure readers, and white medical apparatuses were shining in every corner, but no credit card device and no cash register.

So now we've had two strikes. No showers, no credit cards, and this quickly is becoming an ordeal of a day. I'd like to watch a little television, but I remember that this too will be a challenge – I have to hold the three-foot antenna the entire time. It seems to work best if I angle it a little toward the southern end of the house, but even in its finest moments, there are three channels, and the characters are rainbow-striped. The television likes to turn itself off at key moments as well, which makes following the simplest sitcoms a fun game.

Television is out, so I guess I could do a little homework. But not at night. The French are not particularly fond of fluores-

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cent overhead lighting, and my own very nice room came equipped with a full-size book lamp. When I squint at my textbooks after dusk, I find it necessary to move the light from my book to my dictionary and back again. It's like Edison has just let France in on a secret, and they're afraid their neighbors might see.

The French seem to take a perverse pride in their backwardness mainly because life seems to work out just fine in its stead. The average life expectancy for French women reached an astonishing 83.8 years in 2005 (Expatica) although it's probably because it takes them that much longer to shower, go to the doctor and watch TV. Maybe this is the real reason French women don't shave their legs. They're just too damn tired.

Jessie Gasch is a junior French and linguistics major studying abroad in France.

# Two more desirable candidates could carry Democrat flag in '08

Recently I have been getting some feedback suggesting that I am a naysayer, especially after my column on Mrs. Bill Clinton. Although I agree that column was largely devoid of substance, I still feel it needed to be said, and I still believe she is a shrew.

However, this week, I am trying out the “glass is half-full” school of thought, and I am putting forth two candidates who I believe would make excellent nominees for the Democrats in 2008. So, to the citizens of Iowa and New Hampshire, I present to you Sen. Joe Biden of Delaware and Gov. Tim Kaine of Virginia.



Rachael Spavone

Biden has been around politics and government a freaking long time. He has been a senator since 1972, and although he is a young 63-year-old, he still is one of the most experienced members of the Senate. Some people take “experience” and turn it into “a Washington insider,” but after eight years of the OK Corral, I think we all are ready for someone who knows how to get things done in Washington. Republicans and Democrats respect Biden for his knowledge on foreign affairs, and because he wrote the resolution authorizing Bush to use force on Afghanistan, it will be hard to pin him with a “dove” label (but they did it to a decorated Vietnam vet, so you can never tell with these people).

Although he has worked closely with the Bush administration on some matters, proving he can reach across the aisle, he has

refused to become a sycophant and doesn't hesitate to question Bush's motives. In Biden, we have a youngish candidate with 30 years of experience in the Senate and a specialty in foreign affairs who has helped the president on good things (AIDS, terrorism) and criticized him for bad things (the economy, etc). Problems? Liberal senator from a New England state. Now where have I heard that before?

If Biden doesn't quite do it for you, there always is Gov. Tim Kaine of Virginia. For Democrats, a centrist governor from a conservative state is the best thing since sliced bread. In the Democrats' 2006 State of the Union response titled “A Better Way” (which itself sounds like a campaign theme), Kaine spoke about his success in balancing the budget in Virginia by working with both parties and how this protected services like healthcare. Hmmm, if Bush can't do it nationally, maybe we should go

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with someone who has some proven successes on a smaller level. This is an articulate, good-looking guy who is younger than 50 and has an uncanny knack for laying out programs and seeing them through to completion. That kind of gusto in the White House would be a breath of fresh air.

The only problems with these guys are that their initials are not H.C., and they don't already have tens of millions of dollars in the bank. It is going to cost an unprecedented amount of money in 2008 to go up against the Hillary juggernaut, and whoever runs against her obviously will not have the benefit of campaigning with the non-evil half of that couple, Bill. If either of these credentialed politicians wants a shot, they had better start now.

Rachael Spavone is a senior political science major from Springfield, Ill.

# State abortion bill must be shot down

For the first time in my life, I am ashamed to admit I am from South Dakota.

Gov. Mike Rounds of South Dakota challenged Roe v. Wade with his signature on a law that would ban nearly all state abortions.

And other states are not far behind.

Bush's successful nominations of Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito have caused many states to reconsider their abortion laws. Rounds signed the law fully aware that it will be battled in court, but he hopes that eventually the Supreme Court will have to decide the official outcome, overturning its previous decision.

Rounds declared that the law allows abortions only in cases in which it is necessary to save a woman's life – excluding incest and rape from that category.

Rounds also declared that his decision protects the helpless and the vulnerable members of society, according to the Argus Leader, South Dakota's leading newspaper. He further said he believes the Supreme Court is capable of overturning Roe v. Wade, citing segregation cases as an example.

Yet I fail to see the correlation between creating a world of equality and removing choice from a woman's palette of decision-making.

In a time of decreasing freedoms, it should come as no surprise that the freedom of choice lies next on the chopping block.

Rounds' law removes any voice a woman previously had about her reproductive health, relegating her back to a position in which she is silent, helpless and incapable. Not only does the law force a woman to possess a child she might not want, but it also increases the likelihood that in the case of a rape, the rapist could claim parental rights.

As many as 10 states have moved to add similar provisions to their abortion laws, adding weight to an already-tense issue. Criminal bans on abortion represent a monumental setback to women's rights and threaten not only the lives of the women but also of children.

Unwanted parentage because of unwanted pregnancy will mean the loss of a significant life for a child born out of such a situation. Rape victims will battle against not only victimization but also the rights of a child they probably never really wanted. Previously able to erase past pain, victims now must confront



Shannan Anderson

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their victimization for a period of nine months before they finally can be rid of the memory. Abortion might have alleviated such pain.

Personally, I hope I never have to make the decision whether to have an abortion, and, with this law, I hope my friends never do either.

But ultimately, this is not about whether abortion is right or wrong. This decision represents a larger battle being waged in the United States, a battle for our freedoms.

A woman, her doctor and her family should possess the freedom to make personal health choices without government interference. Planned Parenthood agrees and plans to fight the law in court and at the ballot boxes.

But will this be enough?

We are on the verge of disaster as more and more government intrusion goes seemingly unnoticed by the majority of American citizens. We are all too content to sit idly by while our president, our governors and our lawmakers enact change for us rather than enabling the people to enact change themselves.

As Rounds gears up for re-election, I hope South Dakota residents will look back and remember that he does not fight for freedom but for a personal religious agenda.

Citizens who cherish values of personal responsibility and freedom must act to quell the deluge of actions against such fundamental beliefs. If we do not, your state could be next.

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