

Open letter distorts truth about Wal-Mart

This column started with a simple theft. A disgruntled Index reader posted several copies of an open letter on walls around campus last week, condemning the newspaper for its portrayal of Wal-Mart in a past issue.

I still skim my stolen copy whenever I need inspiration during the day because it contains several points in defense of Wal-Mart. Who knew there were “tens of thousands of success stories” coming out of a corporation which has so admirably “followed all applicable state and federal law”?

Wait a second, isn't that the least it can do? Shouldn't we expect such an enormous and booming company to boast more than a few success stories? Are we really supposed to applaud it for following laws just like everyone else is supposed to?

We all knew there were good things about the superstore. The Index issue in question included a story covering Wal-Mart's charitable contributions, and it doesn't take a newspaper to point out the store provides low prices and pretty much everything else the pickiest shopper could ever want. But facts are facts.

The Index didn't make up the sexual discrimination suit. It also didn't make up the wage litigation, the Department of Labor review or the civil immigration case. Those are all very real issues, and publishing them does not constitute “sadistic treatment” on part of the paper. If women think they aren't being given an equal shot at success in business, it's a story worth covering.

But I really don't have the space to thoroughly address the author's arguments on sexual discrimination. The letter speaks for itself, anyway.



Andrew Gant

“Possibly fewer women desire the role of corporate management due to all its headaches.”

Right, because we all know women can't handle any type of aching.

“Possibly women recognize the importance of quality time with family.”

Of course, because we all know men don't. And for women, the only way to guarantee quality time with the family is to go out and get rejected for promotion in the workplace.

Whatever. I don't have a huge personal problem with this particular person's defense of Wal-Mart because the arguments are older than some of the store's greeters.

But what the author calls “character assassination” by the Index is actually just honest reporting. I've read the spread several times, and I still haven't found any sadistic phrases. In fact, the type of language used in this “open letter” makes me wonder: Is the author truly irked by the newspaper's decision to print the truth or just offended because (s)he works for the company in question?

Employees were offended, sure. They

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yelled at the Index distribution guy when he arrived to fill the newsracks. But the Index is one of only two newspapers in Kirksville. It deserves to be distributed at the busiest shopping location in town.

Will those employees try to ban me next? I know many employees are required to start the day with a pro-company cheer and stretch, but are customers next?

I shop there all the time because it's convenient. I don't think that makes me a hypocrite. Hopefully writing a column makes a bigger difference than boycotting Wal-Mart's awesome selection of pudding cups.

It is a little hypocritical, however, to accuse a newspaper of distorting the truth in a letter that distorts the beliefs of an entire workforce of women. You can't deny an entire slew of facts just because they reflect negatively on your employer.

No, that kind of thinking doesn't fly anywhere.

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

Registration through TruView has yet to remedy problems

You know what really grinds my gears? Registration.

Long gone are the days of lining McClain Hall's corridors, waiting in agony just to be told that half the classes we need are full, forced to pointlessly return again and again.

Enter TruView, technology's answer to the antiquated process of physically waiting in line to register.

However, what we were promised a year ago as a new and improved online registration system only has heightened frustration among students.

Every system has its kinks, but why after this much time are there still so many maddening problems with online registration? Albeit this is coming from a quintessential nerd's perspective, but registering for classes is supposed to be an exciting time in our lives. It is a time to forget the daily grind and giddily peek into the future. Planning classes for the next semester can elicit feelings akin to sneaking an early morning glance at presents Santa left under the Christmas tree.

Finalizing course schedules can make it easier to get through the academic hell weeks of the semester in progress by reminding us how much closer we are to receiving that coveted degree and legitimate exit ticket out of Kirksville.

With proper planning, registration should be a painless and productive experience for all. Unfortunately, this is not the case. In addition to making some few hundred students a day navigate an online traffic jam to register for classes, the online registration process forces every student who uses TruView to check



Kelly Reed

e-mail, events and group message boards to put their pursuits on hold as well. Logic would dictate that with hundreds of people registering per day, each large group would be broken down into smaller groups with different registration appointments throughout the day. What actually occurs is every single person receives an appointment time of 5 p.m. which, by the way, is already a popular time for people to be checking TruView.

If you have to be nonsensical enough to force everyone to register at the same exact time, why not make it 5 a.m.? This is almost guaranteed to break down the bottleneck effect because it is not a heavy traffic time for regular TruView users, and let's face it: A lot of people would rather sleep in than wake up at 5 a.m. to register for classes.

Another logical step would be to take into consideration whether or not students who are graduating need to take certain classes to fulfill degree requirements. For example, if you have applied to graduate in May and need to take a particular major course to do so, there is no reason why a

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non-major who is not planning on graduating in May should be able to take your seat in class simply because they have logged more credit hours than you.

Granted, there are ways to circumvent the system such as having an older friend hold a seat for you in a class by registering for it themselves and later dropping it while you simultaneously register. You also can get an override slip or a permit to enroll, but getting through all the yellow tape needed to do it is tedious.

With Barbara Dixon's new organizational vision, change undoubtedly will come. Previously sparse course offerings will become even sparser, and in future years classes will fill up even faster than they do already.

It is my hope that Truman acknowledges how hard we all work to be here in the coming semester by fixing the minor annoyances that prevent online registration from being an otherwise fun time for all.

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

Staying in Missouri limits potential for graduates' pursuit of excellence

Registration serves as a reminder that we often have to settle for second best.

As college students, we continuously think about the future. We have summer jobs, internships and summer classes lined up to adorn our résumés and propel us into opportunity. We seek out high-paying jobs and have the ability to attend some of the top graduate schools in Missouri. Yet something appears to be lacking.

Truman students are among the brightest in the Midwest, holding leadership positions while garnering good grades and high marks. However, a simple conversation with anyone living outside of a 200-mile radius of the campus quickly will reveal that Truman's reputation does not extend far.

The “Princeton of the Prairie” exists as nothing more than a school dedicated to keeping its students locked inside Missouri and its bordering areas. Local businesses look to Truman to produce quality graduates who quickly assume the position of quality employees, but the goals of such superior scholars should be loftier.

While the public relations office attempts to distribute literature to high school students beyond the confines of the tri-state area, it remains the responsibility of Truman students to disseminate their broad liberal arts education to the cultural masses. Jobs exist outside of the St. Louis area, shacking though it might seem. Further education remains a possibility at various law schools, graduate schools and medical schools across the country.



Shannan Anderson

Despite those facts, we limit ourselves to familiarity and settle for mediocrity when our education allows for so much more. We deserve to venture into obscurity, leaving friends and family behind, paving an individualized path to personal success.

A Truman education merits a commitment to propagating its image throughout the United States rather than maintaining its status as a well-kept secret of the Midwest.

We all have dreams, jobs we wish we could have and titles we wish we could earn. Yet only some of us seek out positions that will propel us into the realization of our aspirations. While Truman's registration process minimizes student choice, the job market maximizes student opportunity. No longer do you have to settle for second best. What is stopping us from embracing that?

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the chance to get quick and easy employment. The job market will be competitive, but we have learned what it takes to get what we want. Distribute your résumé broadly and widely.

Years from now, Truman could earn its nickname of the “Harvard of the Midwest,” but it is the students' accomplishments that will get it there, not the efforts of any public relations propaganda. Truman's education enables all of us to do whatever we want. Do not neglect that opportunity.

Upon graduation, when 50 percent or more of the graduating class heads to jobs throughout Missouri and surrounding areas, you will find me catching a plane to New York City. For I have learned that four or more years in the tundra of northeast Missouri is quite enough, thank you. I demand better.

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

Around the Quad

This week's question: “How receptive do you think the University campus is to people from different backgrounds?”



Karl Guenther senior

“On the surface it seems like we may be doing a good job, but in action we don't come through with as much force as we could.”



Michael Huey sophomore

“I would say the campus is because I haven't encountered anything that would make me think otherwise. I've got a very good impression just being around campus.”



Anna Meyer sophomore

“I would say the campus is somewhat accepting because I see a lot of self-segregation among groups.”



Ashley Laura sophomore

“I would say it is accepting, but there's always more to be done to make it more accepting.”

Pasta theory should be taught in schools

Occasionally I feel compelled to write about a serious issue, and although I know this disappoints the three or four students who look to this column for a laugh, the rest of the Truman population can continue to cut out my picture and place it on their dashboards or straw effigies as habit dictates.

The issue burning in my soul is the under-representation of a very venerable and scientific theory in the classrooms known as FSM or Flying Spaghetti Monsterism.

For those not familiar with FSM, it is an alternate theory of intelligent design that believes the world was created and designed by an invisible, flying spaghetti monster. First revealed to the prophet Bobby Henderson, according to the Web site www.venganza.org, FSM has roughly 10 million followers who lead very secret lives and can't be bothered to reveal themselves publicly. I suppose I am an anomaly in this regard as I am publicly speaking out against the injustice of not teaching FSM in science classrooms.

It is of course imperative that the beliefs of FSM be taught in full pirate regalia. In short, the flying spaghetti monster becomes very angry if this is not done to his satisfaction. One might be interested in knowing that as the number of pirates has decreased during the last two centuries, global warming also has increased. This alone should give one pause and wonder how he or she has angered the great flying spaghetti monster by not dressing as a pirate.

I personally dress as a pirate whenever possible as I never know when I might be revealing the beliefs of FSM to a nonbeliever. As I type this, I keep knocking my drink off my desk because wearing an eye-patch tends to eliminate depth perception. However, a sticky floor is a much better alternative to the wrath of the flying spaghetti monster. Besides, I can sleep better knowing I didn't cause that recent strain of bird flu.

The beliefs of FSM are so simple and elegant that one can't help but wonder how this theory ever was absent from the scientific community. In the beginning, the flying spaghetti monster created a mountain, a tree and a midget. Although empirical evidence for this is lacking, we have numerous written accounts, said the great prophet Bobby Henderson.

Opponents to FSM argue there is no observable evidence to prove the existence of a flying spaghetti monster as the creator of the universe, and



Joel Andersen

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therefore it shouldn't be taught in the science classroom. Although this is hurtful and offensive to any true Pastafarian, we accept the fact that not everyone can be as scientifically enlightened as they should be. Hopefully someday they will be touched by his great noodly appendage and see the truth for what it is or at least consider the value of teaching this theory as an alternative to evolution.

Because I know the flying spaghetti monster is very busy as he continues to actively guide and shape our universe — such as choosing which species will go extinct, planting fake fossils in the ground and changing carbon dating results in labs across the country — I only can say no observable proof actually is needed to prove or disprove the value of FSM because observable proof is and always has been at the discretion of the flying spaghetti monster.

One might be led to believe I have a hidden agenda in regards to the teaching of the FSM version of intelligent design in the science classroom. It is true that as a devout Pastafarian, I want as many people as possible to hear about the great noodly master so they, too, can be rewarded in heaven with such delights as a stripper factory (male or female, tailored to your liking) and beer volcano, a beercano if you will, but my wish to see FSM taught in schools is truly scientific in nature. Although FSM can't be supported by conventional scientific means, that shouldn't exclude it from being taught in public schools.

It's called theology, I mean theory, for a reason after all.

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