

# Students should show more respect to town

Go ahead and laugh. Buildings seem to go up in flames quicker than the fire department can put them out. The City Council shrinks down to an anemic triumvirate with mandatory attendance. A city cop pulls you over on Baltimore Street but still provides his trading card if you ask for it.

Really, go ahead. It's funny. Kirksville is a humorous, isolated speck on the Missouri tundra, unheard of by so many students who choose Mizzou or Illinois or some other school with bars that don't often burn down. In a way, poking fun at the town is a defense mechanism: "I might live here, but I'm not, like, a townie or anything."

Yeah, you'd better make that distinction. Because otherwise someone is going to associate you with all things Kirksville. Then before you know it, you're just another local resident living in a wannabe college town, looking for that last officer card to complete your unique collection.

As if there's something wrong with that. It's true, many of the things happening here on a regular basis would have an outsider chuckling or scoffing under his breath. "Wait, you work where? How do you stand it? That's just so funny to me!"

But just because Kirksville is funny doesn't mean it's a big joke.

No, a town with more fenceposts than stoplights isn't automatically low class, and neither are the people who live in it. I come from a town like that. Smaller than Kirksville, it only can aspire to have more than one lonely stoplight. And I've spent enough time there to learn something.

Just because I got into college, went to class, learned a few things and wrote a



Andrew Gant

handful of papers doesn't mean I'm any better or smarter than someone who didn't. I've been home to work for the City of Montgomery two summers in a row now, and I can tell anyone with a bachelor's degree one thing for sure: You still don't know much.

What, the "townie" walking down the sidewalk hasn't written a paper on Buddhism and you have? Is that supposed to mean something? Even if you get that degree in whatever-it-is-you're-studying, does that qualify you for royalty? Are you that smart, oh educated one?

Even if you do possess certain knowledge that qualifies you to do something that is extremely difficult (I concede college can provide that), there is going to come a time in your life when the alternator quits, and you don't know where to look under the hood. Hey, maybe it's written on your diploma. If not, you'll probably be visiting a mechanic.

But just in case it sounds like non-college-goers only can fix cars and walk on sidewalks and that's it, please be aware that a myriad of small business owners, musicians, writers and war heroes have become successful without ever taking a single

“It's one thing to laugh with your fellow human being and make light of your surroundings. ... It's another thing entirely, though, to demean an entire group of people ...”

college course. It's been said time and time again, but no one seems to remember: College does not make you a superior being.

So it reeks of disrespect and self-absorption when a witty – but disgustingly egotistical – college kid mocks the Kirksville resident who leads an insufficiently glamorous life, who acts as if anyone who lives in Kirksville must be a failure and an imbecile. I've seen you having fundraisers off campus, Mr. Hollywood. How can you ask for money from locals when you won't even pay them the respect of a friendly nod in Wal-Mart?

It's one thing to laugh with your fellow human being and make light of your surroundings. I have, on several occasions, found humor people-watching at various locations. It's another thing entirely, though, to demean an entire group of people just because they took a different route in life.

Especially when they belong to a community that supports you so much.

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

# Around the Quad

This week's question: "What campus issue would you like the Board of Governors to examine?"



Mary Beth Wims senior

"I think continuing to look at how students can retain scholarship funds is an important issue."



Nicole Hibbeler junior

"What bothers me is parking. With the improvements being made to the dorms and new students each year increasing in numbers, I think they need to look into creating more parking if there's more students."



Josh Blackman freshman

"I think it would be good to see more of the campus connected wirelessly, and then I'd like to see a rock-climbing wall in the Rec Center."



Amy Bridges junior

"I would say the tuition prices. I want them to stop going up every year. I'm not sure if that falls to them, but that's something I wouldn't mind seeing changed."

# Actress' problems directly stem from pursuit of unachievable

Kate Moss is a cocaine addict. Many designers immediately dropped her from various advertisements and runway shows while others pledged to remain with her despite her apparent disregard for her role-model status.

The very same companies demanding she maintain a perfect image removed her for participating in an activity that ensured she remained the skinny waif we all desired her to be. Society demands beauty. Our celebrity role models must be gorgeous, must conform to our ideals of perfection and must never display the slightest weakness.

Yet when one attempts to define beauty, the result is a plethora of varying answers with inevitably different reasoning. Individually, we purport to have a very different conception of beauty. We have not bought into the cultural demands to look and act a certain way. However, if reality differs so greatly from the majority, then how did the dominant ideology come about?

The truth is that we are obsessed with society's pressures. The rise of plastic surgery in increasingly younger age groups demonstrates our desire to conform. Conformity to such a degree that we erase any unique facet of our being to live up to the expectations is placed upon us.

Eating disorders are on the rise within groups of people previously unaffected. Women in their 30s and 40s are forgoing the dinner table in an effort to share the thin, dramatic lifestyle



Shannan Anderson

portrayed in media programs such as "Desperate Housewives." We undergo drastic changes, inside and out, in a race toward an impossible goal.

Cultural definitions of beauty are not attainable without a personal trainer and a dietitian following you around and monitoring everything you eat. We must accept who we are and embrace those characteristics that make us unique. However, it is a little more complicated than that.

We have all heard this argument before. True beauty lies within. Yet deep down we all know the falsity of that argument. Beauty is at face value. We take what we get, and regardless of our individual belief, deep examination will yield similar facts. The personality of a person is irrelevant if he or she does not meet our ideal conception of beauty.

We all claim to believe in the true worth of people as more than just their physical appearance. Closer examination will yield different results. Just think about it. The people you know

“Kate Moss might be a cocaine addict, but it was her drive for unachievable perfection that brought her there.”

and hang out with – they are great people, fantastic even. Their personalities and character traits astound you, but you would never have gotten to know them if they did not somehow conform to your innate conception of beauty. We do not seek out friendship from "ugly" people. We choose what fits with our belief systems.

And that's OK. We all do it. This is not a plea to change or a call for action against a culture obsessed with an unattainable perfection. It is merely an observation.

Kate Moss might be a cocaine addict, but it was her drive for unachievable perfection that brought her there. We could learn from this mistake and discard our ideals, but I know it will not happen. I can only consider what my downfall will be in my own battle towards flawlessness.

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

# Costumes add to Halloween intrigue

I had a brush with nostalgia the other day when I went through a scrapbook from the very first Halloween my parents let me trick or treat alone. It's dark, so I'm hard to spot in the pictures, but if you look closely enough, you can see drivers swerving off the road, terrified no doubt of the infamous black-sheeted ghost.

After a while, I grew tired of trick-or-treating, and even though my parents insisted that I keep going – oddly enough on many nights that weren't Halloween – I tricked my last treat when I was 13 years old. Since then, I've spent many Halloweens watching other trick-or-treaters come and go, although no one has duplicated my parents' clever costume.

For reasons unbeknownst to me, college brought about a great resurgence in Halloween spirit. Students once again were dressing up and celebrating the devil's workshop. As a child, Halloween was an excuse to go into a sugar-induced coma, but as a college student, Halloween is an excuse to go into an alcohol-induced coma. It is amazing how much we grow and mature in our ability to appreciate and celebrate the holidays.

Now, I would be lying if I were to say that fermented treats were the sole reason for the season. Another very highly anticipated yet overly abused privilege is dressing up in a scary and/or sexy costume. For women, this tends to fall under the latter category.

As long as a woman owns undergarments of some type, her costume-making enterprise is fairly simple. Lingerie plus mouse ears equals a sexy mouse. Lingerie plus witch hat equals a sexy witch. Lingerie plus chainsaw plus blood (real or fake) plus hockey mask equals highly disturbing. If the thought of that costume was at all sexy, then you really need to talk with a close friend, minister or therapist who cares, but certainly not me. Stay far, far away from me.

Now, I'm not trying to say that the only option available to women during Halloween is a sexy outfit. By all means, dressing up in a scary costume is always an option, though rarely exercised. Most scary costumes worn by college women are unintentionally frightening. Originally these costumes were intended to be sexy, but something went horribly wrong during the design process, either the woman's or God's. Men, on the other hand, are usually encouraged to avoid sexy and revealing outfits. Of course, if Halloween is as cold as it was last year, a revealing costume might not be in a man's best interest if he's dressing to impress.

I probably should say a few words about Halloween safety and not drinking too much, but that sounds a bit too responsible for my taste. Instead here are



Joel Andersen

“If someone's costume obfuscates his or her gender to the point where you aren't sure if you're hitting on a Jack or Jill, find someone with a less androgynous costume.”

some real life-saving tips:

1. If someone's costume obfuscates his or her gender to the point where you aren't sure if you're hitting on a Jack or Jill, find someone else wearing a less androgynous costume. I'm sure we've all seen the "Crying Game," and it wasn't pretty.
  2. Bobbing for apples in water is gross and unsanitary, but bobbing for apples in alcohol burns the eyes like the dickens.
  3. A bikini wax or duct tape to bare skin accomplish the same goals. Whether it's intentional or not is up to you.
  4. No matter how tempting it might be, rummy gummies should not be given to trick-or-treaters. Giving them to their parents is fair game, though.
  5. You've heard the phrase, "Location, location, location," but on this night of mischief remember this new mantra: "Identification, identification, identification."
  6. If you're a woman and a man offers you a pill that he says is candy, it's either ecstasy or a date-rape drug. Kick him in the pumpkin seeds.
  7. If you're a man, and a woman offers you a pill that she says is candy, it's probably poison, and you're annoying the heck out of her. Just go away.
- I have a feeling that this year's Halloween will be going gangbusters in all directions. (Thank you, Dr. Stewart, for that wonderful addition to my vocabulary.) If you're still without a costume, don't freak out yet. You still have a few days until the big night, and if worse comes to worst, I have a black sheet you can borrow.

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

# University's care for its students makes adjustment to college easier

Freshman year. It is your first birthday away from home, and Mom calls to tell you happy birthday, letting you know there should be a care package arriving shortly in the mail.

But you know in your heart the day just won't be the same without being able to walk downstairs to the aroma of fresh-baked cupcakes made especially by Mom for you to take to school and share with your friends. You leave your residence hall room pretty bummed out, finding yourself wishing for the good old days when you didn't have to sleep six feet in the air, eat Uncle Ben's rice bowls three times a day, or traipse up five flights of stairs before you can pop in bed after a long day. But when you arrive to class, lo and behold, your teacher has not only remembered your birthday, but also has brought cupcakes for everyone to celebrate the occasion. And your outlook on the inhumanity of college life suddenly has changed.

It's fairly certain that if you have attended Truman for even a short time, then you have been the focus of a little extra TLC that the caring faculty and staff here are gracious enough to provide. College years are spent in a state of limbo. No longer are you just a child completely dependent upon your parents, but also you are not yet a fully functioning and responsible adult. This transition can be a tough one, and many wayward youth leave college to return home because the independence and responsibility were



Kelly Reed

too much for them to handle. However, there are countless people here who offer guidance and who devote their lives to facilitating student growth mentally, emotionally, spiritually and even physically. It is not in their job description to care genuinely about our well-being, but they do. And it is sometimes easy for us to take for granted the kind deeds professors and administrators perform on our behalf because we don't realize what life would be like without them. Imagine for a moment what Truman would be like without the people who perform these caring acts on a daily basis.

Maybe you once had a pretty rough week and desperately needed an extension on a paper, which your professor granted because he knew you well enough to vouch for your character. Perhaps your work-study supervisor noticed that you had undergone a change in attitude of late, but instead of chastising you, he or she asked if you were doing

“The numerous luxuries afforded to us by the good people who run this school are luxuries that attendees of many other colleges and universities do not receive so often.”

all right and wanted to help make things better. You might even know that friendly Sodexo employee who always remembers your name and never fails to inquire about your day. Without these kind and forgiving gestures, all of us would feel more harsh side effects of the college transition.

The numerous luxuries afforded to us by the good people who run this school are luxuries that attendees of many other colleges and universities do not receive so often. At a school this size, all it takes is a smile, a kind word or an effortless inquiry to create a butterfly effect that will last far beyond its inception. It is important for us to appreciate these benevolences while they are still ample and to let those who bestow them upon us know how grateful we are that they care.

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