

Milestone talks should be devoid of advertising

College graduation. The event is at once a celebration and a sigh of relief, a congratulatory pat and a pang of regret, a leap into the unknown and a step away from the familiar.

Graduation carries the supreme ranking of "milestone," along with such other significant events as weddings, funerals, births and sweet sixteens. It is an occasion to laud scholars for their hard work and achievement through their college career. It is a tribute to the all-nighters, the massive investment in caffeine products, the hours spent trudging through rain and snow to sit through tedious lectures and the dedicated faculty and staff who helped along the way. I have had the privilege of attending only one complete college graduation, which took place this summer here at Truman.

It seemed flawless from the beginning. The setting was gorgeous, outside on the Quad on a nearly perfect day, the stage and seating area both shielded from the sun by the shade of the nearby trees. Because it was summer, there were fewer graduates than usual, and it seemed the event would escape the usual tragedy that befalls all graduations — running much too long and exceeding the audience's boredom threshold. The commencement began, and an alumnus speaker recounted the tale of his college experience, emphasizing the value his Truman education afforded him.

Then, I suddenly found myself in the



Kelly Reed

midst of confusion. The speaker had somehow veered off memory lane, turning the focus of his speech away from the celebration and accomplishments of the graduate to the financial obligations owed by the graduate to the University. Now, a subtle reference to keep the University in mind come tax-refund day (wink, wink, nudge, nudge) might have fallen quite nicely into the spectrum of the responsibilities section of his speech and might even have been the source of a little lighthearted humor. But a five-minute sales pitch for the alumni foundation seemed to be borderline tacky and nowhere in the neighborhood of subtle.

When it was later revealed to me that this happens at every commencement ceremony, I was appalled. Imagine if the same behavior had occurred at any other important celebratory event. Take a wedding for example. Picture the bride's father standing up to give a toast to the bride and

“... a five-minute sales pitch for the alumni foundation seemed to be borderline tacky and nowhere in the neighborhood of subtle.”

groom, but after a while venturing off into a five-minute soliloquy on the importance of spending enough on a wedding present, urging the guiltier guests toward the back of the room where prepaid gift cards were available for purchase. Is it safe to say that this sort of thing might be in bad taste?

While I understand the efficacy of reminding graduates of the crucial role private donations play in facilitating the growth and continued livelihood of the University, I believe the shock-and-awe approach of delivering lengthy lectures to a captive and unsuspecting audience ought to be re-evaluated. Let us keep this occasion sacred, leaving Tel-Alumni to do the rest.

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

Censoring films for profit shows hypocrisy of the right

Many of you, like me, are avid music and movie file-sharers and should be particularly interested in two court rulings this past summer involving copyright infringement.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled file-sharing software manufacturers (i.e. Grokster Ltd.) are liable for the copyright infringement committed by users. Now, Big Entertainment can siphon reparations from both the common man and manufacturers of file-sharing programs despite serious First Amendment implications.

It is important to remember file-sharing programs are a legal means of disseminating information. With most people using the programs for illegal purposes, the companies that produce this software soon will be bankrupt from lawsuits or too threatened by the imminence of lawsuits to maintain their software and servers. This eliminates a potential fountainhead of communication on the Internet, the last bastion of free speech.

While the Supreme Court has over-expansively prevented copyright infringement, Congress inadvertently has endorsed it. Last April, the Family Movie Act (FMA) became law. Essentially, the FMA allows home viewers to edit the content of movies, particularly DVDs. The conservative legislature was convinced to allow viewers to edit their movies under the pretext of parental control of violence, language, sex, nudity and liberal political statements.

Congress expressly is attempting to save the moral fabric of our allegedly declining society. Apparently rating systems, established parental controls and an "off" switch are not enough tools to restitch American society back to the good old days of explicit racism, sexism, religious intolerance and many other desired social standards. Maybe if the moralists make huge profits, we all finally will be saved.

You read correctly: huge profits. So far,



Chris Matthews

moral companies have used two separate methods of providing the public with the ability to watch "clean" versions of popular movies.

First, companies such as ClearPlay and Family Shield Technologies manufacture and sell devices which alter your DVD player or VCR. These devices operate like a parental control: Settings can be established, and the filter can be turned on and off. Second, companies like CleanFlicks and Family Flix sell or rent movies they have edited in advance.

On Aug. 17, a federal judge in Denver ruled that devices manufactured by ClearPlay and Family Shield Technologies are legal under the FMA, settling an ongoing lawsuit between those companies and several motion picture companies and artists. This ruling did not dictate the legality of companies like CleanFlicks and Family Flix, however, which operate in a similar fashion to the popular online rental business Netflix.

I understand how ClearPlay is protected by the law. Unlike me downloading the latest Staind record via Grokster, these home viewers have paid their dues to the copyright holders by either buying or renting the work. They simply are choosing how they view a movie they have legally obtained, and ClearPlay is providing them

“Conservatives apparently believe there is no better way to advocate moral responsibility than through profiting from copyright infringement.”

with the tools they need to edit content they do not want to view.

It is hard for me to imagine how CleanFlicks possibly could be protected, however, especially given the implications of the Supreme Court ruling in the Grokster case against copying and distributing copyrighted works. CleanFlicks purchases the copyrighted movie, edits the movie to their liking, burns a copy of the edited movie and sells it under the title of the original, all without the consent of the copyright holder.

This is an obvious abuse of copyright law. If this action were legal, I should be able to buy the latest Staind record, load it onto my computer, make any changes I see fit, burn a copy and sell it as a "Staind" record on the Internet for a hefty profit without placing one call to the record label. This is the definition of copyright infringement and is ethically reprehensible.

Conservatives apparently believe there is no better way to advocate moral responsibility than through profiting from copyright infringement. Once again, what is ethical and what is perceived to be moral by conservatives are entirely contradictory.

Chris Matthews is a senior communication major from St. Joseph, Mo.

Cardinals' performance can help fans forget about baseball's flaws

About this time last year, despite that I was having thrilling moments of joy and panic attacks about the Cardinals' wins and losses, I wrote a column about my love of football. Although I am ready for football to begin, I find myself enthralled with the boys of summer.

I am from St. Louis, a proud member of Cardinal Nation and passionate about the game of baseball. There is something about the slow and easy cadence of baseball that is a sweet lullaby on a summer's night. This summer when the Cards were on a trip to the West Coast, I would crawl into my bed at night, put my headphones on and listen to the play-by-play of Cardinals games on the team's flagship station, KMOX.

Baseball and radio are perfect for each other. The vivid descriptions and slower pace of the game allows a listener to follow the action no matter the location.

Baseball has changed, and there are many areas in which to find fault in America's favorite pastime. Rampant steroid use at the professional level has caused great outrage. As one great name is felled after another, it would be easy to lose faith in both the simplicity and integrity of the game. Everything from the aborted plan to put Spiderman advertisements on the top of bases last year to the mess involving Kenny Rogers, the Texas pitcher who attacked a cameraman on the field and then pitched in the All-Star Game, shows that baseball leadership often is leading this



Katie Stuart

historic and meaningful sport down the wrong path.

Then I think of the 2005 St. Louis Cardinals. At many times, the Cardinals could have rolled over to the competition. After putting together one of the best lineups in baseball, a solid defense and a tremendous pitching staff, the Cardinals have been hit by injuries repeatedly. They have witnessed a season-ending injury to their all-star Gold Glove third basemen, Scott Rolen. Right before the All-Star Game they lost both their catcher, Yadier Molina, and a valuable outfielder, Reggie Sanders. Molina has returned only recently, and Sanders is expected to return soon.

The Cardinals have answered their big league opponents through the use of a significant number of players from their AAA affiliate and strategically choosing to play small ball. Manager Tony La Russa is putting together a patchwork quilt of

“Among the steroids and commercialization of baseball, there is still this beautiful and simple game left among the junk.”

players, devising ways to make the team win. He calls for the suicide squeeze or the double-steal. He is a madman, putting in double switches and using every last weapon he can think of to get a win. Putting a catcher in the cleanup spot? La Russa did it. Calling for a double-steal with a runner on base that has not stolen a base in his two-year major league career? Why not?

Among the steroids and commercialization of baseball, there is still this beautiful and simple game left among the junk. It is about making pitches or putting a bat to the ball. The 2005 Cardinals are doing the game proud, persevering over injury, staying clean, playing the game the right way and winning all at the same time.

Katie Stuart is a senior business administration major from Maryland Heights, Mo.

Around the Quad

This week's question: "How safe do you think your identity and personal information are on campus?"



Audrey Perkins
freshman

"I've never considered it before. I'd consider it more of a threat at a bigger university. I probably should think about it more, but being a freshman here, that's the last thing on my mind."



Chris Scott
senior

"Not safe at all, but I kind of prefer it that way because I'm a really open person."



Alana Webster
freshman

"I think it's pretty safe because they take a lot of precautions to make sure we're not victims of identity theft."



Andrew Lewellen
freshman

"I never really thought about it much, but I did hear Truman is paying very good money to have technical professionals here, so I'd hope they're good at protecting personal information."

Fun can be found while in Kirksville

When I returned to Kirksville a few weeks ago, not much had changed. A McDonald's is being renovated, and a few new businesses cropped up, but otherwise it's still the charming little hamlet I left.

I've certainly missed the city in a weird Stockholm syndrome sort of way, and I'm sure if you look into your heart of hearts, you'll realize that you missed it too. If you haven't missed it, well, this column's for you.

People complain there's nothing to do in Kirksville, so like refugees fleeing the latest war on terror, many students high-tail it out of here on the weekends and head for the civilization known as Columbia.

I implore you to stay, however. If you don't think there's anything to do in Kirksville, then you're either a very boring, unimaginative person, or the effects of Truman's brainwashing recruitment rhetoric are starting to wear off. Regardless, Kirksville can be a fun little town if you know where to look and what to do.

The first step to having fun in the 'Ville is finding friends. If you don't have any friends, I suggest you make some. Hopefully by now you've gained the socialization skills needed to make people tolerate you for extended periods of time.

If, however, you can't make actual friends, then I suggest imaginary ones. Sure, everyone is going to think you're crazy, but at least you'll be loved by the figments you create. I for one have numerous imaginary friends who are currently making fun of and beating up your imaginary friends as you read this.

The next step is finding someplace to go. It doesn't matter where the locale is. It could be the Quad, Pancake City, Thousand Hills or even Wal-Mart. As my friend Paul (not imaginary) likes to say, "Wal-Mart, a place where dreams come true."

The third and final ingredient to having fun is to cause a little mischief. I'm not suggesting you loot and pillage, but gently flex and bend the rules to your liking. Sometimes you have to push the limits of acceptability to have a good time, but don't get carried away. That's how made-for-TV movies and "Rescue 911" stories are created.

Now, bring the three elements together. Friends plus location plus mischief equals fun. I've put it into a mathematical equation, so science shows it's unquestionably true. If I learned anything from the GRE, it's



Joel Andersen

“One should keep in mind that none of this advice is going to work if you're too cool to look silly and have a little fun.”

that you can't argue with science, even the made-up kind. Otherwise, people will think you're an ignoramus.

As an example of how to have fun in Kirksville, let's pretend it's Friday night and you have nothing to do. (Ask your imaginary friends for help if you're having trouble visualizing this situation.) You've already received two MIP's, so going out and imbibing fermented drinks is completely out of the question. Instead of moping around your room, causing everyone's eardrums to rupture and bleed with your constant lament of being bored and useless, head to Wal-Mart with a few friends.

Once there, shopping is completely optional, and here's where the mischief part comes in. Instead of actually shopping, play hide-and-go-seek. If you're feeling especially adventurous, play sardines. Nothing says fun like hiding in a clothing rack with a few of your friends. Unfortunately, nothing says cardiac arrest like jumping out of said clothing rack and scaring the elderly.

One should keep in mind that none of this advice is going to work if you're too cool to look silly to have a little fun. So unpop that collar, and forget about what people might say about you the next day in class.

Kirksville might not be the most exciting town to live in. However, college is what you make of it, and it won't kill you to have a little fun in the town where you actually go to school.

Trust me, your imaginary friends are sick of making the drive to Columbia.

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