

Viewpoints never should trump exchange of ideas

All one has to do is sit through one class at Truman to realize everybody here has an opinion. And rightly so: This institution has some of the best and brightest scholars the Midwest has to offer.

We have soaked up and retained random information in volumes through the years, and it has served us well thus far, so it is logical that we sometimes feel it necessary to share our perspectives with others.

But where along the way did we get the idea that as reasonably smart human beings we can argue successfully our own opinions over the opinions of others? Opinions aren't facts, after all, and they are impossible to judge as right or wrong because they are housed in the realm of perspective.

Blame it on the feel-good, self-esteem, flower-power programs of elementary and middle school or whatever else, but we all are guilty of attempting to argue opinion regardless of the fact it can't be done logically, and we do it more than we think.

I took three courses last semester where the students practically taught themselves, and not necessarily for a lack of the teachers' trying.

Professor Whoever would toss out a subject, and the students (myself included) would consume the rest of the lecture period with our commentary as if we were voracious wolves after injured prey. No matter what the topic, we all think we possess expertise in some



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aspect of it, and to be fair, some people actually do.

However, this often leads to the false dichotomy that we alone are right and those who profess views to the contrary are wrong. Incensed, we take pains to prove our points or to undercut opposing opinions when our views have been challenged.

There are many matters of opinion that can set people aflame. Take, for instance, any "I believe that [insert bad musician's name here] is the greatest rock star who ever lived." Just try it around a group of people, and you will encounter a multitude of responses from light chuckles to outcries of dissent.

Sometimes I feel like I am in the midst of a community of teachers, not learners. Aren't we all here in pursuit of higher education? Don't get me wrong – I think that people should be outspoken about their views (I write an opinions column, thank you). But let us not forget that as attendees of a liberal arts

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and sciences university, we should be learners, first and foremost. By listening deferentially to facts and opinions – no matter their source – and then submitting them to reason, we optimally will build our own intellectual rapport.

This is not a knock on class discussion or the sharing of opinions, which I think facilitate some of the most energized learning. Rather, this should serve as a cautionary glance at the way we conduct ourselves in a classroom environment as well as in everyday banter.

Opinions should be valued as fodder for discussion, not as fuel for arguments. It is important to keep in mind that no matter how highly you value your own opinions, you will never betray your own personal beliefs by showing respect for the opinions of others.

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

Lack of quality options leads to plight of the lactose-intolerant

When I enter the dining hall every morning, I carry few expectations with me. All I ask is that they have food, water and cold soy milk.

I am lactose intolerant, which, according to the campus food services, means I am a second-class citizen. Although, to be fair, options are available for those of us unable to consume regular dairy products, these choices are a weak attempt at pacifying the underrepresented.

Option one is the medium-size pitcher located next to the ketchup and mustard. Filled with vanilla-flavored soy milk, this pitcher is never where it should be. If I want to have soy milk with my cereal, I am going to have to hunt down a cafeteria worker.

The employee takes one look at the poor calcium-deprived student before him or her and escapes to the backroom where it takes about 15 minutes to locate the pitcher. Perturbed and frustrated, I grab the pitcher, pour the milk over my cereal and prepare to indulge in a simple, everyday meal.

However, this is hardly the end of the soy milk fiasco, for as soon as I take my first bite, it is apparent that this milk has been sitting out for quite some time. It is warm, it is vanilla-flavored and, frankly, it is disgusting. Fortunately, this is not my only lactose-free option.

Option two is the vegan entree, such as the vegetable pizza without cheese or the tomato soup without milk. These are helpful choices but



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overlook one important point: Not all lactose-intolerant students are vegetarians. Many of us enjoy things like pepperoni, chicken and the classic hamburger.

Regardless of how many other people would eat such a pizza, I think that it is time the food service looked into offering a meat option without cheese.

It just might surprise you how many would consume it if given the choice.

I glance around the cafeteria in despair looking for another alternative. It is all to no avail. There is no option three because this is where the food service generally gives up. There will never be a soy ice cream option when I pass by the freezer, and I have accepted that fact. My soy milk will always be vanilla-flavored and carry with it the warm taste of powdered water. This, however, I cannot accept.

It is time that the food service takes a greater interest in the lactose-

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intolerant population. We deserve options just like any other member of the Truman community. I want cold milk without lactose, and I want my plight considered in the entree choices that the company makes every day.

Is it not enough that I pay 50 cents more than the normal coffee drinker does because my intolerance of dairy forces me to request soy milk in my beverage? I am appalled at the lack of options, but more importantly, I am outraged at the quality of those choices.

Until the food service acquires an interest in deprived students, you can find me angrily downing my dry cereal while my vegetarian pizza sits untouched on the tray.

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

Candid statements would add new atmosphere to sports

It isn't easy being an athlete and a writer.

There is the grueling workout sessions, the exhausting sprints up and down the stadium bleachers and the furious agility exercises that set your feet on fire.

When you add those to the strict dietary procedure and all the extra time in the weight room, when do you find time to write?

I wouldn't know. But you could ask Barry Bonds.

This season, the self-anointed future home-run king has split time between recovering from major knee surgery and publishing his thoughts via an online journal at www.mlb.com.

The results have been astonishing. Not only can the guy hit towering home runs and get walked at an alarming rate, but he also can write with the best of them.

Still unimpressed? Well, one might assume Bonds' written expertise would be limited to baseball clichés and workout tips.

Wrong! In his prose, the slugger offers everything from product endorsements to an entire section of personal shout-outs. I'd certainly never have mistaken Bonds for a movie aficionado either, but much to my surprise, he's quite the movie critic at heart.

But at this point if you haven't detected my tongue planted firmly inside my cheek, then, well, you're



Andrew Gant

probably one of those people who really enjoys his journal.

Maybe I'm just biased because I don't even enjoy him as a ballplayer. Sure, sometimes he sounds like a moron (so do I), but it's not like there are many pro athletes out there who have compelling things to say when they get a chance.

In most cases, if an athlete offers something other than the "110 percent" speech, it ends up being "something that doesn't make very much sense" instead.

But there's a happy medium for athletes between recycled material and nonsensical word vomit. I don't know if it'll ever show up in every interview in every locker room around the world, but I do think it can work in at least a few.

Part of it is the reporter's job, of course, to ask the question that earns an interesting answer and to print it. But sometimes they rely on stats too much.

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Sometimes instead of reading a straightforward recap of a game's numbers, I want to know who made fun of Jim Edmonds for striking out three times or who locked David Eckstein in his locker for the third time in two weeks.

The other part is up to the athlete, though, and fortunately, it's the most fun. Talk trash, make jokes, say the kinds of things you say when you're on the field and the only thing fans really can do is read your lips.

If your opponent is going to hear it anyway, and as long as it stays reasonably civil, why not clue in everybody else? It makes for a more interesting read in the paper and a more competitive atmosphere on the field or court.

Just steer clear of those weblogs.

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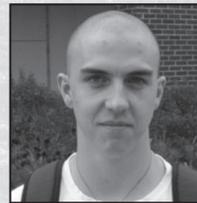
Around the Quad

This week's question:
“How are you helping the victims of Hurricane Katrina in the relief effort?”



Patrick Jones
sophomore

“Donating money, whatever I can. I'm part of the Student Public Health Association, and we're setting up a table in the SUB, and I'm volunteering my time to sit at the table and collect money.”



Chris White
senior

“There's a student from Tulane in one of my classes, but that's about it. That was kind of a wake-up call when the professor said we had a new student from Tulane, and then it hit me that Tulane is under water.”



Melvin Omodon
junior

“I care about them, and I wish something could be done to help them. But I haven't done anything to help, and I'm sorry about that.”



Casey Heath
sophomore

“We have a girl in our sorority whose mom is a nurse, so we're buying things to send back to her in St. Louis to help the victims that have been relocated to St. Louis.”

For fun, all should contribute to effort

When it comes to professors and Truman staff, we have some of the best in the Midwest. They're amiable, intelligent and in some cases slightly touched. Why else would some of them agree to be dunked in a tank of water tomorrow?

All week long, the Truman community has been raising money to aid the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and if you haven't been able to contribute to the relief effort yet, tomorrow is your chance to come through in spades.

From 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., there's a special fundraiser on the Quad meant to bring faculty and students together in an event that can only be described as cathartic. For the low, low price of \$2, you have three chances to drop your “favorite” professor into a tank of water.

As an added bonus, University President Babs Dixon graciously has agreed to be the first one dunked in the tank at 11 a.m. The first throw will be auctioned off to the highest bidder, so bring your checkbooks because this could get hectic. A financial aid representative also will be present in case anyone is feeling especially generous and wants to take out another student loan to continue bidding.

Several student leaders from various campus organizations also will sit in the tank, including Rachel See and Phil Campbell, presidents of Cardinal Key and Blue Key, respectively. I've known Rachel for a number of years now, and getting her to consent to this was no easy task. Luckily, the irresistible charmer that I am was able to get her to agree to this endeavor in just four short hours. Really I'm just that smooth, or perhaps Rachel is just that nice. And if you know Rachel, and if you know me, you'll know which one of those statements is actually true. (Why, both of course.)

Now, I know nobody wants to see anyone, let alone that professor who assigned that 30-page paper last semester, dropped into a tank of cold water. However, we have to keep in mind that this is for charity. Personally, I don't know if I have the heart for it. I might just donate the money and rescind my opportunity to throw. Then again, I might also change my name to Lola and become a Vegas showgirl. Really, anything is possible in the realm of sarcasm.

I'll admit my athletic prowess leaves much to be desired. If we were still operating out of the hunter/gatherer mode of our ancestors, I would have been consumed by any variety of creatures by now. At its most flat-



Joel Andersen

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tering, my throws have been compared to that of a 4-year-old girl, but that's just my dad, always encouraging.

Traumatizing Little League experiences aside, I think even I could manage to hit the target, and we will find out tomorrow if that's actually true. Even though the campus is getting dorkier each year as the average ACT score and GPA of the incoming freshman classes rise, I'm confident that most Truman students also possess this very difficult throwing skill. Practice tonight if you're unsure. Start throwing anything you can find: rocks, coins or even a stray underclassman.

Until now, I've made light of this situation because dunking a professor or friend in a tank of cold water is, frankly, quite funny. However, the reason behind the fundraiser is not. Hurricane Katrina caught most of the country by surprise, and the devastating effects will be felt for years to come.

Tomorrow's fundraiser is all in good fun, and we can't thank the participating professors and students enough for donating their time and humility to this project. Some of them have even gone so far as to match the money raised during their time in the tank.

We're a small campus, but that shouldn't stop us from giving big contributions. The faculty and student leaders have stepped up to the challenge, and all that's left is for the rest of us to match their enthusiasm. So warm up those throwing arms and whip out those checkbooks because if you miss tomorrow's opportunity to aid the hurricane victims, you're going to be the one who's all wet.

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