

OUR VIEW

Alleged assaults show need for further action

In the past week, two groups of students were allegedly attacked by a group of shirtless, high-school age assailants not far from campus property. (See story, Page 1)

As of press time, the assailants had not been caught. Until they are, the Index encourages everyone on campus and throughout the community to be cautious while walking at night.

The University prides itself on providing a safe environment for students.

However, even a rural city the size of Kirksville is not immune to violence. Although relations between University students and the Kirksville community occasionally have been strained in the past, the actions of these alleged assailants should not impede the progress both students and residents have made in developing a positive relationship. The community must work together with the University to put an end to any violence that occurs.

Students must be aware of the dangers of walking through campus at night alone or even with one other partner. Females especially can be easy targets.

The Department of Public Safety provides a little-known complementary escort service that can be used simply by calling the Public Safety office and requesting such protection. Using this free service on behalf of Public Safety — a police force fully commissioned by the state of Missouri

— would be wise for those who find themselves without a partner to walk with as a way to ensure one's safety.

As in the incidences of this past weekend, such alleged assaults are equally likely outside of the campus borders. Taking advantage of organizational sober-driving services and walking in large groups can minimize the risk of being accosted.

This past weekend, a group of six students was accosted, however, so students should be aware of their surroundings.

Public Safety officers patrol campus in their squad cars during the evening and conduct on-foot walk-throughs of campus, but we urge them to conduct more on-foot walk-throughs of campus as well. Although it is important to ensure that students and residents driving through campus operate their vehicles responsibly, it is equally vital to guarantee a law-enforcement presence within campus parameters.

In the best interest of the University and Kirksville communities, the assailants must be identified. We urge all victims to report. Identifying suspicious persons within the campus borders to Public Safety is key in keeping our campus safe as well.

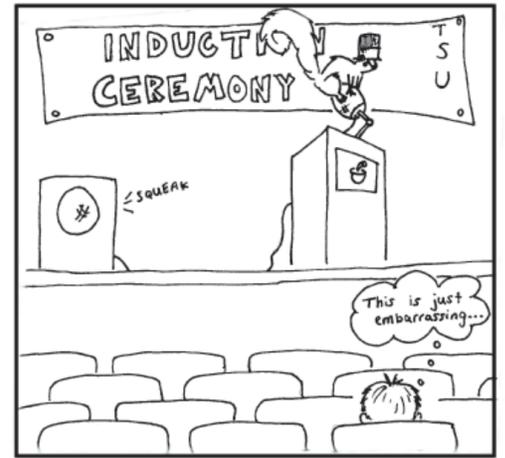
Students have a right to enjoy their University experience and the Kirksville community with some degree of safety and security.

The type of behavior exhibited by the alleged assailants should not be tolerated.

Students have a right to enjoy their University experience with some degree of safety and security.

Truville

Perrin Carrell/cartoonist



Perrin Carrell

Letters to the Editor

Griggs' comments ignore the real problems that plagued relief effort

It's ironic that Shaine Griggs would choose to end his letter (Sept. 15 issue of the Index) with a Langston Hughes poem. In this time of mourning for the lives of those lost in the wake of the Katrina disaster, rather than try to rally behind the relief effort, he chose instead to indict the American way in the death and displacement of thousands.

The supreme irony here is that both Griggs and Hughes advocate a greatly expanded government. As we know, it was government (at all levels) which failed to protect its citizens; whether it be looting police officers in New Orleans, a mayor who failed to make use of a fleet of school buses to transport his less fortunate citizens to safety, a panicked governor who failed to allow federal troops to aid her state, corrupt state and local legislature that (in recent years) diverted funds away from levee projects, or a FEMA director who failed to recognize the hurricane's deadly force, or the president who appointed the FEMA director.

No, it is beyond irony that Shaine would close with Langston Hughes. Hughes, like Griggs, was a leftist. In fact, Langston Hughes was a supporter of a potpourri of socialist and communist groups, Soviet Russia, and the purgings conducted by Josef Stalin. Of course America was never "America" to Langston Hughes. How unfortunate for him he was born in America, rather than the Soviet Union.

Rather than question the proper role for the federal government, Griggs seeks merely a purging of the current government. If only (so goes the thinking) we had had John Kerry or a Democrat-controlled Congress, everything would be better. Unfortunately, an extra billion dollars spent by the federal government wouldn't have helped. An expanded presence of the main-line Army wouldn't have saved more lives, and a more sensible FEMA director would not have coordinated damage control even better. The real problem here was a powerful natural disaster, a hulking federal government and a corrupt city and state that failed to take seriously the threats that recent hurricanes had made frighteningly obvious.

What is needed is not a hyperactive federal savior (for the federal government is, regardless of administration or ruling party, completely incompetent), but a conscientious local citizenry.

Jonathon Burns
Senior

taught by Dr. Matt Beaky, from the physics department; he is primarily responsible for design of the sundial, and we have worked together on the project since its inception.

The article also suggests that my students and I were responsible for building the garden. In fact, the considerable amount of concrete work necessary during construction was completed by employees of Truman's Physical Plant.

I think the best interpretation of how the Gaber Solar Clock Garden came into existence is that it is a collaborative effort involving students, faculty, staff and Kirksville residents who have contributed creative energy, time, labor, materials and funding to make it a reality. The result is a truly unique clock garden — one that already has begun attracting interest from gardeners and sundial enthusiasts from around the world.

Steve Carroll
Associate Professor of Biology

Columnist's suggestions offer advice that often is unapplicable

Kelly Reed's op-ed column "Viewpoints never should trump exchange of ideas" [Sept. 15 issue of the Index] illustrates the mainstream American inability to engage in meaningful political conversations. Although our world is rife with political controversies, I'm afraid that Ms. Reed has failed to make the connection between university education and "real-world" politics. Rightly she warns us to avoid "the false dichotomy that we alone are right and those who profess views to the contrary are wrong." I agree that we, the Truman State community, should become self-examined individuals. We ought to be capable of anticipating and acknowledging objections to our arguments. And yet, Ms. Reed's neat separation between "facts" and "opinions" is a rhetorical convention that unfortunately offers no advice in many real-world situations.

For example, what really matters to me and many others isn't establishing the fact that Lake Ponchartrain flooded New Orleans after the city's levees broke. It is far more significant to determine how and why this happened, whether it was preventable, who is responsible, and what course of action should be taken in the future. If we should stick to just the facts and admit that opinions usually engender futile arguments, then Ms. Reed's own opinion indicates that we should probably not energetically pursue the inquiry about the politics of the Katrina disaster. Why? Heaven forbid we might disagree and/or lose sight of the facts! Although she cites "the feel-good, self-esteem, flower-power programs of elementary and middle school" as a primary cause for our false belief that we can "logically" argue our opinions, this seems misguided. If anything, such programs also would have us neuter our viewpoints for the sake of pretending that everything is beautiful.

Because I desire peace, justice, community and true democracy, I think that we cannot responsibly ignore the political, social, cultural and economic conflicts that exist in our world. Inspirational figures such as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were notoriously outspoken.

Ms. Reed, I empathize with your frustration. It annoys me as well when I judge that others are not carefully expressing their views. But your embrace of the "fact/opinion" dichotomy threatens to obscure that facts and opinions and values are interwoven in the real world outside of the laboratory.

Shaine Griggs
Junior

March 10 column gives Masten a fair trial in court of public opinion

I want to thank you for Prajwal Sharma's excellent article ["Gossip about mayor unfairly charges her"] in the March 10 issue of the Index. As a lifelong citizen of Adair County, I'm ashamed of the behavior of our "leaders" who have resorted to a witch-hunt by spreading malicious gossip, resorting to threatening phone calls before and after the fire and have literally caused the further split between the "town and gown." It seems to have become a personal vendetta orchestrated by the very people who opposed her when she ran for office. The very citizens who voted for Debbie Masten wanted economic development, and now all this has been negated by a clean-water issue.

We asked the mayor to run for public office, taking time from her family and private business to address the city deficit, unemployment, and the overall concern that not everyone in this community was being represented. She managed to ruffle a few feathers of those who once controlled city government, and now it has cost her personally.

The very water in question is a rural water source, and if they were really concerned about clean water, they would be addressing the actual water the city drinks from, Forest Lake, not Hazel Creek. There are over-the-hill sewage and septic tanks that run off into the city's water, but the Concerned Citizen's Committee wants to target the supposedly threatened water at Hazel Creek. This was not a "hurried sale." The City Council addressed the sale the previous summer with all of the council members present. Searching documents will reveal this.

If we really want to "make a difference" in this community, we should work together — those who opposed the Hazel Creek sale and those who didn't — and rebuild a business that was nearly destroyed.

I'm embarrassed for our community and believe this has caused a negative portrayal of Kirksville. Thank you once again for your article and for saying what no one else in the community is willing to say.

Kathy Roberts
Kirksville Resident

Index corrections

- Matthew Beaky, associate professor of physics, designed the sundial portion of the Gaber Clock Garden and installed it with the assistance of the Physical Plant, and Steve Carroll, associate professor of biology, and his students designed and installed the garden portion. The designer of the sundial and garden portions were misidentified on Page 13 of the Sept. 15 issue of the Index.
- Victoria Weaver designed the graphic on Page 9 of the Sept. 15 issue of the Index. The designer was misidentified as Design Editor Roger Meissen.

Letters policy

The Index welcomes letters to the editor from the University community. Letters to the editor are due by noon the Monday before publication and become property of the Index. Submissions are subject to editing, must contain a well-developed theme and cannot exceed 300 words except at the discretion of the editorial board.

All letters to the editor **MUST** be typed, double-spaced, signed and include a phone number for verification.

Letters to the editor also may be submitted by e-mail at index@truman.edu or on our Web site at www.trumanindex.com. Include the words "letter to the editor" in the subject line of the e-mail. No individual may submit more than one letter a week.

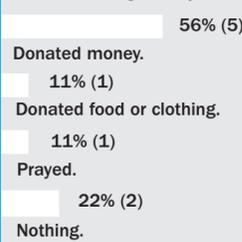
INDEX

Web poll

What, if anything, have you done to aid the relief effort for the victims of Hurricane Katrina?

Sept. 20 Results

as of midnight Tuesday



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION: Did you vote in the Student Senate elections this past week?

vote online at www.trumanindex.com

INDEX

STAFF

Editor in Chief Whitney McFerron	Business Manager Shaun Moynihan	Features Staff Reporters Alicia Collins Naomi Davis Maggie Wolcott
Managing Editor Kalen Ponche	Design Editor Roger Meissen	Sports Staff Reporters Joseph Barker Billy Drazen Tyler Madsen John Scognamiglio Josh Sisson John Weeks
Opinions Editor Justin Weinrich	Online Editor Chris Tharp	Photographers Nick Corich Adam Kabins Nicole Meltabarger Courtney Robbins Mike Snodderley Chris Tharp Kelsey Vaughn
News Editor Alison Bowen	Circulation Manager Cari Twaddle	Advertising Staff Megan Barry Lindsay McReynolds Prajwal Sharma Jason Simpson
Assistant News Editors Jessie Gasch Alan Reininger	Advertising Manager Christina Carter	Distribution Ed Esquivel Laura Johnson
Sports Editor Conor Nicholl	Convergence Manager Karen Schwartztrauber	Adviser Steve Stepanek
Assistant Sports Editor Ross Houston	Design Staff Mark Hylton Lindsay Koski Victoria Weaver	
Features Editor Erin Sadzewicz	Copy Editors Nathan Becker Alaina Brockhouse Amanda Knox Audrey Leihser Sadye Scott-Hainchek Andrew Seal Nick Wilsey	
Assistant Features Editor Sara DeGonia	News Staff Reporters Amanda Boyle Kyle Hill Amy Hoelting Grace Mattie Alan Venneman	
Photo Editor Chris Waller		
Assistant Photo Editor Lisette Metz Grulke		
Head Copy Editor Christine Albrecht		

Serving the University community since 1909

Editorial policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The production offices are located in the Student Union Building. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. Content of the Index is the responsibility of the Index staff.

The editor in chief consults with the staff and adviser but ultimately is responsible for all decisions. Opinions of Index columnists are not necessarily representative of the opinions of the staff or the newspaper. Our View editorials represent the view of the Index through a majority vote of the Editorial Board, consisting of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor and opinions editor. The Index reserves the right to edit submitted material because of space limitations, repetitive subject matter, libelous content or any other reason the editor in chief deems appropriate. Submitted material includes advertisements and letters to the editor.

First copies are free. Additional copies are 25 cents.