

OUR VIEW

Book ban provides deeper application to University

National Banned Book Week is celebrated annually during the last week of September — this year, it falls Sept. 24 to Oct. 1. Windfall, the campus literary magazine, recognized Banned Book Week by reading banned books at a table Wednesday in the Student Union (see story, Page 1).

It is a little-known fact that every year, thousands of parents, school boards, libraries and colleges

choose to challenge or ban certain books from library and classroom shelves. The American Library Association received reports of more than 547 challenges in 2004, according

to the ALA Web site. The most frequently challenged book, according to the Web site, is *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, because of its sexual content, offensive language and religious viewpoints among other reasons. Many books that are now considered classics, including *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, once were widely censored and continue to be censored by school boards today.

In honor of this week and these great literary works, we commend Windfall and other student organizations for bringing this issue to light. As a liberal-arts institution, our University should continue to be a forum for acceptance and discussion of many viewpoints. Students, and all Americans, deserve to entertain all beliefs and ideologies in a fair framework. If divergent ideas indeed are counterproductive — such as those accusing the Eisenhower administration of being aligned with communism in the 1950s

— the American public will filter them out. But if these viewpoints — such as those that supported women's right to vote and that spurred on the civil-rights movement in the 1950s and 60s — are worthwhile and deserving of further consideration, Americans will adopt them as mainstream. History has shown that Americans will root out and reject extremism of all forms.

First as Americans, and secondarily as students at the region's premier liberal-arts university, members of the University community have an obligation to lend an ear to alternative views. A liberal-arts education means far more than simply learning facts from

various areas of academia. The education students receive also should contain salient information about divergent ideas that challenge any status quo within academia.

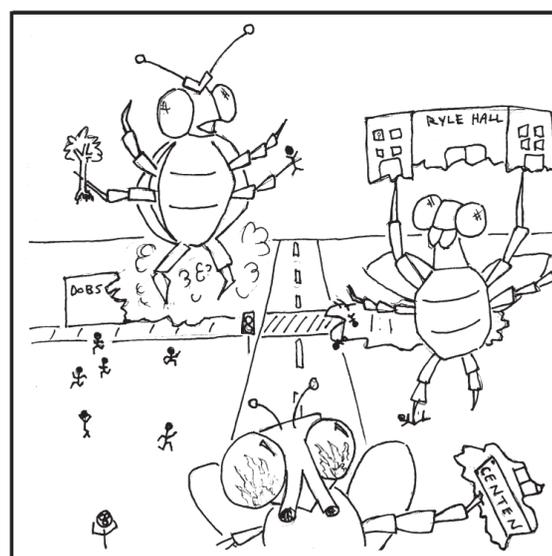
This application of the unfortunate saga of banned books is twofold. First, students of the University, when encountering differing views and opinions, are not compelled to adopt these as their own. Because they are in the midst of an elite liberal-arts education, however, students encountering opposing values should receive these viewpoints with the utmost respect for those stating them.

Second, professors have an obligation to tolerate diverging opinions inside the classroom. There is a danger of political and social viewpoints becoming uniform within the confines of university walls, and professors have a duty to students to respect differing opinions both from their colleagues and, most especially, from those students brave enough to challenge them in the classroom.

“Our University, as a liberal-arts institution, should continue to be a forum for acceptance and discussion of many viewpoints.”

Truville

Perrin Carrell/cartoonist



Perrin Carrell

Letters to the Editor

Senate vote shows lack of fiscal restraint by elected representatives

I am deeply troubled by Student Senate's decision to vote against Resolution 056.004, which sought to force Student Senate to keep all of its retreats on campus. Student Senate typically spends an extra \$1,000 or so per year (out of a \$22,450 budget in 2005-06) by taking an off-campus retreat instead of staying on campus.

As the student senator who brought this resolution, I am appalled by the lack of fiscal responsibility by your student government. I do recognize that some people strongly believe in the value of off-campus retreats, but any responsible organization could do much of the same on campus at a small fraction of the cost. For other reasons, we had an on-campus retreat this year. It certainly didn't harm us as a governing body.

As Student Senate decided to vote against my resolution, one senator called me "a shining beacon of fiscal responsibility" for my stands against unnecessary spending. I see that the heart is there, but the action is not. Remember that we are your student government, and watch over us accordingly. Accountability is a wonderful thing.

Robert Kelchen
Senior

While I myself don't support the war, it doesn't change the fact that it's happening as we speak. I would prefer it if our armed forces were well-prepared. The greater fault is the institution of war and a government that makes requests for supplies that are perhaps, by their nature, scientifically unsound. This country has put outlandish funding into developing a missile shield in the past half a century, cranking out "Star Wars" systems that don't work on even the basest of levels and according to impartial academics and experts will never feasibly offer anything but a false sense of security. It is evidence of how this nation's preoccupation with infinitely expensive military technology is merely to satiate voters' demands for an aloof promise of protection and armed superiority the world over, whether these demands are prudent or not.

Heidi Struss
Senior

Columnist's remarks about duties of professors are inaccurate

I'm squeezing in a letter between my pedicure and bonbon feast to respond to one bit of Prajwal Sharma's column in the Sept. 22 issue. As part of his rant about how lazy some of us professors are, he asks: "A few office hours a week, some students to advise and papers to grade — isn't that mostly what professors' workload is all about?"

I read this column after logging a week that exceeded 40 hours by Wednesday, a week that not only didn't include bonbons or a pedicure, but that left me wondering if I even had time to write my weekly letter to my mother, never mind the Index, so Mr. Sharma's stray comment left me a little irritated. That's because it's not the first time I've heard students, characters in movies, even members of my own family say things that clearly indicate they have no concept of how being a professor is work.

On the small chance that I might be able to clear up this misperception, hear this. We are not just working when you see us working. We spend countless hours planning classes, meeting with students (outside of office hours), directing independent study/research, attending events on campus to support students and yes, sometimes traveling to professional conferences, largely to stay current in our fields so we can be better at our jobs — for you.

Most of us became professors because we love our chosen fields and because it's amazing to share knowledge with students who care (even when they think they won't). We know our job isn't harder than lots of other jobs, but it is work. Please remember that I am not lounging in my pjs while you write that paper for my class. I'm working, too.

And yes, this will be on the test.

Priscilla Riggle
Associate Professor of English

Riders' laziness led to decision to move racks to edges of campus

When visiting students walk around our Quad this fall, they see lots of tall, gorgeous old trees — with bikes locked to them. I am writing in regards to the article in the Sept. 22 issue of the Index, "Relocated racks frustrate some student cyclists." I am frustrated also. I am frustrated that our campus looks cluttered and tacky because Truman students are so damn lazy. For a school like ours with so many intelligent students, people sure are acting stupid. Bike racks were relocated this summer with the hopes that students who choose to commute

from off campus to class would park on the peripherals of the campus and then walk to class. However, students apparently are too lazy to park a bicycle behind either Baldwin or McClain halls and walk in the back door.

Our campus is only 140 acres in size. A student can walk from one side to another in ten minutes or less. And most students do. Walk, that is. This was the driving cause behind the decision by the administration to move the bicycle racks. The sidewalks on our campus aren't built for pedestrians and cyclists to share. At peak traffic times during the day, like between classes, I can't imagine why any student would want to be on a bike. There simply is no room and you end up creeping behind students (or clipping them) and causing more problems than if you had simply rode your bike around a few buildings and parked. I will not even entertain the issue of a student wishing to ride their bike from, say, Ryle Hall to Baldwin. Give me a break.

To prove my point that the underlying cause here is laziness, I will offer an example. One late afternoon last week, I walked out of Pershing Building and saw between ten and 15 bikes all locked to fences. I'll admit, the closest bike rack was rather full. However, about 50 yards away was another bike rack that was only half-full. Apparently our student-athletes also cannot be inconvenienced to walk a block to park.

I applaud the environmental advisory committee and Tom Johnson, the director of Public Safety. I agree that students should be willing to understand the rules regarding bikes and comply voluntarily. And if they refuse, I would be more than happy to pin on a badge and start issuing tickets for laziness.

Meghan Doherty
Senior

Instead of ban, University should provide incentives for safe bicycling

As a regular commuter to campus via bicycle and as an advocate for bicycling in general, I have very mixed feelings about the recent decisions Truman has made concerning bicycling on campus. I agree that bicyclists speeding to class at the last minute pose a hazard to pedestrians and themselves and that Truman should take steps to discourage this practice. Reckless bicycling such as this is an impediment to the goal of bicycling awareness and acceptance. However, moving the bike racks does little toward this goal. It only encourages people to lock their bikes to whatever is available, damaging property, negatively affecting campus aesthetics and creating ill will toward bicyclists.

If Truman is truly dedicated to promoting a healthy alternative to driving to campus, it should provide greater incentives for safe bicycling, including more conveniently placed racks (and more of them) and even sheltered racks near the dorms. Furthermore it should allow bicycling on campus during nonpeak hours. It still can actively discourage riding on campus during class changes and illegal parking with warnings and fines. But in the end, I believe that bicycling is an essential element of the university environment; after all, one of the most famous pictures is of Einstein on a bicycle. It suggests a level of comfort, community and openness we seem to want to encourage here at Truman. For this to happen, Truman needs to embrace and encourage safe bicycling on campus.

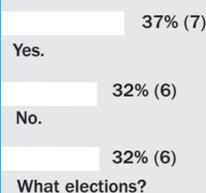
Alex Tetlak
Instructor in Classics

INDEX Web poll

Did you vote in the Student Senate elections this past week?

Sept. 27 Results

as of midnight Tuesday



THIS WEEK'S QUESTION:

Have you had any bug infestation problems in your place of residence?

vote online at
www.trumanindex.com

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Editorial policy

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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.

Index corrections

- Junior Adam Clatterbuck was misidentified as Andrew Clatterbuck and misidentified as a freshman on Page 16 of the Sept. 22 issue of the Index.

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.