

OUR VIEW

Fear cannot protect us during trying times

It's been one year and one day. A year and a day since we read the news stories and whispered to our friends about the tragedy that was unfolding before our eyes. It's been one year and one day since Seung-Hui Cho stole the lives of 32 people at Virginia Tech. And as the magnitude of the horror dawned upon us, our shock swiftly turned to fear.

This fear has changed us. Just as Columbine taught us our high schools were not the havens we thought they were, so too Virginia Tech seared our generation with the flames of fear at our universities. No wonder, then, that we who have awakened to unimaginable tragedies now demand greater security at our universities.

Truman thankfully has responded to those demands. Although terrible events have transpired here — thievery and sexual crimes come to mind — we are safer now than we were one year ago.

The University has implemented an emergency text message system. We know that the system does not prevent violence, but it certainly will aid us if tragedy strikes home. We're also proud of Truman students for their efforts to join the system. Participation in the system approaches 70 percent at Truman, while at other universities the system barely reaches an average of a third of students.

Truman also has made progress in preparation for a shooting such as the one that occurred at Virginia Tech. The Department of Public Safety released the Active Shooter Response Guide, which provides a framework for operations in the event of a shooting at Truman. Students, staff and faculty are encouraged to view the guide and familiarize themselves with its recommendations, and it can be accessed at dps.truman.edu.

Yet the safety measures are not merely reactionary. This summer, the University will install automatic locking doors on the interior doors of most residence halls. This step was long overdue, but it certainly is better late than never. The next measure must be to pursue a card-access system for the

exterior doors of residence halls, and it needs to be addressed posthaste.

Recent events also have slapped us out of our focus on danger to our bodies and made us realize that still more wrongdoers walk among us.

They might not seek to harm our persons, but they watch our belongings, waiting for the moment when we let down our guard. When that time comes, they violate our property and make off with our possessions.

But though we must not stop in our quest for better security, we should not be paralyzed in fear — sticking our heads in the sand and hoping we won't be targeted will not save us. Fear is gut-wrenchingly impotent against campus threats. Action must be our clarion call, and self-preservation should be our goal. That means no matter what measures are taken, the ultimate responsibility for security falls upon students. This means simple things like locking our doors and calling DPS for an escort home to campus buildings instead of walking home alone (the number to call for this service is 660-785-4176). This isn't giving in to fear — it's common sense.

But in another way, it also means we need to practice an age-old concept: love. We as students at a liberal arts school show a love of learning daily in our classes and activities. But we must extend this love of learning to a love of our fellow learners. By this, we mean that we must look out for one another.

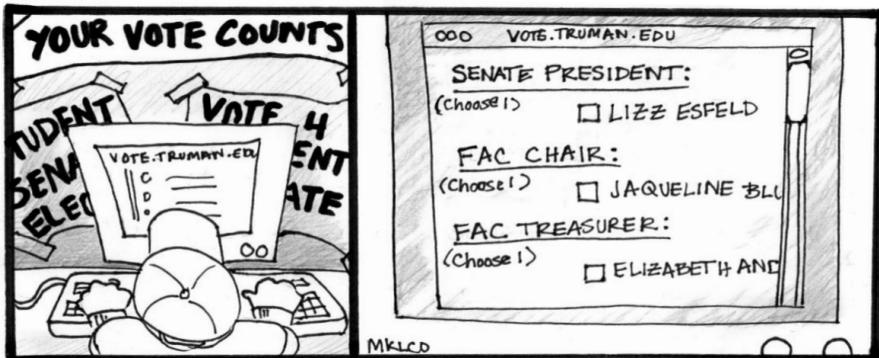
When we see a suspicious character in our midst, we must not look the other way. When a door is unlocked that ought not be, we must not pass it without care or question. We can longer accept behaviors that endanger us all — propping exterior doors must stop. We cannot let a tragedy arise out of indifference.

That is our final barrier to deter thieves, rapists and murderers. Although we cannot stop the most determined of those who seek to hurt us, we can see to it that it is far more difficult to commit crimes against our community. For when one among us is threatened, when one among us is harmed, we all suffer the consequences of the crime.

CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail index@truman.edu, call us at 660-785-4449, or send a letter to Index, 1200 Barnett Hall, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo. 63501.

- A brief on page 2 of the April 10 issue of the Index incorrectly identified Alanna Preussner as an associate professor of English. Preussner is a professor of English.
- An article on page 16 of the April 10 issue of the Index titled "Professor offers Hollywood Experience" incorrectly identified Ron Rybkowski as a professor of history. Rybkowski is a professor of theatre.
- An article on page 1 of the April 10 issue of the Index titled "University increases energy efficiency" incorrectly stated that lighting is the biggest consumer of energy on campus. Lighting consumes as much as 30 percent of the total energy used on campus, while heating, cooling and ventilation use between 40 and 50 percent of the total amount. Also, the article's reference to a project that was submitted to the state but is unlikely to happen due to costs was vague. "The project" refers to a project to install an energy-efficient boiler, not the Dobson renovation project.
- A photograph on page 15 of the April 10 issue of the Index was incorrectly identified as taking place at a rehearsal. The photo was taken at an informal practice, five Truman dancers were present, and the Missouri Contemporary Ballet was not present.
- An article on page 15 of the April 10 issue of the Index incorrectly stated that the Missouri Contemporary Ballet Company taught both en pointe and non-pointe forms to members of The Society of Dance Arts. MCB only taught non-pointe to TSODA members.



Letters to the Editor

Students should stay in Missouri after graduation

Daniel Glossenger's April 10 opinion piece has a fine valedictory spirit, and I can sympathize with that as a senior who's a month away from the curtain call at Stokes Stadium. What I take issue with, however, is his calling St. Louis and Kansas City "muddling cities" in a middling state. My perspective is just different, I guess. Unlike many Americans, my family is not nomadic. We settled in St. Louis sometime in the 1800s, and we've never left. When I pack up and head home May 10, I'll return to the same house and the same neighborhood that I lived in when I was a few days old, at least until I can afford my own place. My family has a loyalty and pride for our neighborhood, our city and our state that so many people simply don't have anymore. That pride and loyalty sometimes can devolve into narrow-mindedness, of course, but in healthy doses I think it's something we all need to overcome the insidious historical forgetfulness that plagues so many in this country.

Additionally, if I stay in-state for the rest of my life, I am beyond a doubt fulfilling Truman's mission. The state would have no reason to finance the University if its goal was to send Missouri's best and brightest to Chicago, New York and L.A. Although one goal of our liberal arts curriculum certainly is "expanding the breadth of one's knowledge and celebrating and understanding other cultures and people," the goal underlying the curriculum is to keep intelligent professionals in Missouri. I, for one, am proud of my "muddling city" and my "muddling state." By staying in St. Louis to teach high school, I'll bring respectability to my city, my state and my University. But if the big city suits some better, so be it. I'll wave at their planes as they hurry over our irrelevant state en route to the coasts.

Robert Becker
Senior

Businesses need local patronage to succeed

When I read the Our View in the April 10 issue of the Index, I was very disappointed that the Editorial Board chose to insult the intelligence of Kirksville voters and residents. They wrote that, "The decision not only demonstrates laziness, but also shortsightedness and simple ignorance of business acumen." But a Highway 63 bypass not only is intended to reduce congestion for time's sake, but to reduce accidents on the stretch from Route 6 North to Route 6 South, where more than 200 access driveways and congestion lead to a higher-than-average accident rate.

If the Editorial Board had done its research, it might have realized that historically, only 20 to 30 percent of registered voters turn out for such votes, and the tax in question passed by the narrow margin of 53 percent to 47 percent. Rather than berating those who did vote, perhaps the Editorial Board should be stressing the importance of voting, if this tax is so ill-advised. I'm certain that the more than 70 percent of registered voters who didn't vote on the tax issue includes numerous Truman students.

"The bypass will cost millions of dollars in taxes, monies which are better spent on fixing the roads we have — have you driven through the crater zones of Normal Avenue or Patterson Street lately?" Again, if the members of the Editorial Board would just pick

up local papers, they might recognize that the city is working toward improving downtown at the same time that they are improving travel times on Baltimore. Work will begin on reconstructing Jefferson Street this June, and more street work is in store for future summers.

What will help local businesses the most is not keeping congestion on Baltimore, but the patronage of local residents and students. Lack of patronage, among other issues, has led to the closure of numerous downtown businesses in just the last four years (Crumbles & Cream, for example). While new businesses pop up, there still are several vacant storefronts to be filled, and the narrow views of the Editorial Board lose sight of the real issues at hand in this past week's election. Rather than insulting the intelligence of residents and students alike on the basis of a single tax vote, the Index should continue to provide positive coverage of local businesses.

David Failing
Senior

Illegal immigrants deserve compassion, understanding

Illegal immigration is a huge problem. There's a problem when some of the border crossers are drug traffickers, human traffickers and other criminals. There's a problem when a whole industry of human beings exploiting other human beings grows up around the crossing.

There's also a problem when so many people live in such terrible conditions in their home countries that they separate themselves from everything they have or know, risking injury, abuse, robbery, rape or death to cross the border to a place where they will live in fear on the margins of society.

Whatever the solution is, it's not the government constructing a hideous fence through irreplaceable ecosystems that people have worked for decades to protect. It's not elderly Anglos sitting in lawn chairs overlooking the border with binoculars in one hand and a phone with the Border Patrol on speed dial in the other. It's not denying people education or basic medical attention once they're here. It's not terrifying raids that round up human beings as though they were animals and truck them away.

People of faith, people of conscience and people with a bare minimum of critical thinking skills are noticing that these remedies are both ineffective and inhumane. Others might maintain that those who cross the border without papers are breaking the law and deserve exactly what they get. They might be right, of course. They might not be heartsick, as I am, about the recent raid on El Vaquero in our town.

I just can't help believing there has to be another way — not an easy way, once again, but something other than what we have. Of course those people were breaking the law. However, they also were contributing greatly to the community. They built their business through the years, invested in the northward growth of the town and brought us — besides the food — a little cultural diversity and an example of hard work and resourcefulness. Couldn't there be another way?

What if, instead of militarizing the border or swooping down on immigrants and ripping them out of their lives and families, the United States were to have a genuine dialogue with Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala? What if we were to invest in our neighbors, whose fate, after all, is inseparable from our own? All I know

for certain is that what we are doing right now to these human beings is unspeakable.

Carol Marshall
Associate Professor of Spanish

Hayden's column shows distorted view of Senate

Alex Hayden's column in the April 10 issue of the Index criticized the political party system within Student Senate. As an active member of the Bulldog Party, I find Hayden's comments to be very misinformed. In the two years that I have been a member of Senate, I never have seen Hayden present during a Senate meeting. Despite this fact, his article discusses the inner workings of Senate and makes unjustified claims about how political parties are detrimental to these functions. The column asserts that the presence of political parties stifles discussion and the marketplace of ideas within Senate because members of the party are prevented from seconding motions.

Although I can't speak for the other political parties that have existed on the University's campus, I know that the Bulldog Party has never ostracized its members for seconding a motion. In fact, in the last year, I can think of only one situation where a motion died because of lack of a second. During this meeting, each member of the party judged the motion on his or her own and independently decided not to second it. All of the other members of Senate, the majority of whom were not members of any organized political party, also chose not to second the motion. This shows that the motion died without a second because the Senate as a whole did not wish to discuss it, not because political parties stifled discussion as Hayden claims. Unless every member of Senate is a member of the same political party (which I don't see happening any time soon), there always will be members of opposing political parties or independent candidates who have the opportunity to second motions. Open discussion and the marketplace of ideas will not be challenged because of the presence of political parties in Senate.

Hayden also writes that without political parties, students can run on their own platforms instead of the parties' platforms. What he fails to understand is that the parties' platforms are created through the type of open discussion that he promotes throughout his column.

Furthermore, although I endorse the party's platform, I am free to campaign on other ideas besides the party's platform. Rather than serve as a detriment to Senate, I have found that being a member of a political party has made me a more informed senator. Weekly meetings of the party provide an opportunity for us to discuss and debate the topics with which Senate is dealing. Older members of the party serve as mentors and help navigate younger senators through the complexities of Senate. Although we might not always agree with one another on specific issues, we support one another because we are ultimately working for the same goal: to empower students. Senate has many exceptional student senators who choose not to affiliate with a political party. In my experience, however, my fellow party members and I are better student senators because we have encouragement and support from our party.

Nadia Mozaffar
Senior
Bulldog Party

INDEX

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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 500 words except at the discretion of the Editorial Board. All letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced, signed by at least one individual and include a phone number for verification. The Index does not publish anonymous letters to the editor. 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.

Editorial Policy

The Index is published Thursdays during the school year by students at Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 63501. The first copy is free, and additional copies cost 50 cents each. The production offices are located in Barnett Hall. We can be reached by phone at 660-785-4449. The Index is a designated public forum, and 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 Editorial Board through a majority vote. The Editorial Board consists of the editor in chief, managing editor, news editor, copy chief 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.

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