

## OUR VIEW

### Fun comes second to academics at Truman

When we think of Ivy League universities, a few words often come to mind. For us, those words include: academically challenging. Prestigious. Staid, even.

But there's one word we rarely think of, and we doubt you do either: Fun.

In the aftermath of the Art & Science study that reported — to hardly anyone's surprise — that Kirksville and the University don't rank very high on the fun-o-meter, the University has been bending over backward to find ways to correct this perceived flaw.

What the study failed to point out was that students don't come to Truman, the self-styled "Harvard of the Midwest," to have fun. They come here to learn, which is why University officials should stop trying to create a new image for Truman and start improving the one we already have.

Let's face it — students who want a party school don't come here. Students who come to Kirksville don't come for awesome nightlife or culture, they come to get a high-quality education for a good price. Short of relocating the University to St. Louis or Chicago, there's no way to make Truman a more interesting (and fun) place.

Adding a "Starbucks on the Square with student apartments upstairs and a music store downstairs," as an Art & Science Group representative suggested, will not magically transform Kirksville into St. Louis — or even Columbia. Plus, we already have a coffee shop, and it's called the Washington Street Java Co. What's so wrong with that?

Sure, increasing the number of Student Activity Board-sponsored events or introducing an alternative semester that replaces class with extra service or organizational involvement might improve the University's attractiveness to prospective students.

However, we need not devote excessive time and money to developing these bells and whistles when the University has a shortage of high-quality professors, and it doesn't pay the ones it has enough. The draw of Truman is the academic rigor, not the Final Blowout.

Spending money on the fun factor is akin to giving a water slide to an Olympic — or Div. II champion — swim team. We hope we aren't putting words in their mouths, but we think they'd prefer better dry-land equipment. The same thing applies to academics at Truman — chuck the slide and give us more books.

**University officials should stop trying to create a new image for Truman and start improving the one we already have.**

University officials need to stop worrying about how to entertain students and start devoting themselves to improve their education. Rather than devoting resources to the Art & Science report findings or the Campus Life, Spirit and Fun group, renovating academic buildings, funding research and recruiting more tenure-track professors should be top priorities.

After all, it's awfully hard for students to learn when the ceiling over their heads is leaking or when they're in a discussion-based class with almost 40 other students.

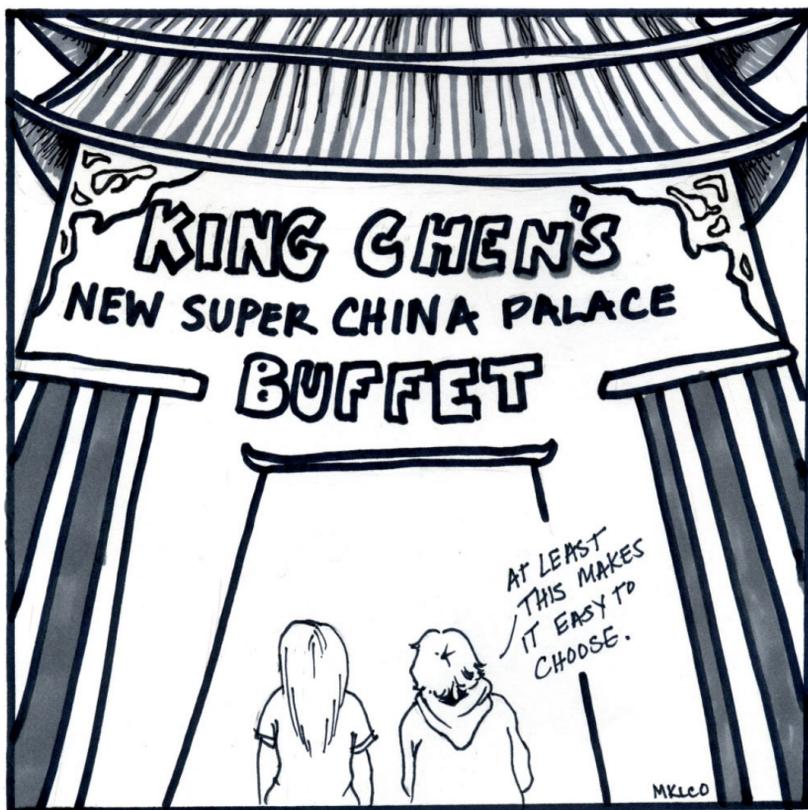
The University should focus on maintaining its reputation as an academically challenging institution, a status that has been proven to draw students to Kirksville regardless of a Starbucks on the Square.

We don't need to reinvent Truman as a hip or exciting place because excitement isn't what's important. Universities are called institutes of higher education for a reason: Their purpose is to teach to a higher standard, not to entertain. Students will make their own fun, as we always have, but it is up to the University to provide us with the academic foundation we need to succeed in life after Truman.

## CORRECTIONS

To submit corrections or to contact the editor, please e-mail [index@truman.edu](mailto: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 photograph caption on page 11 of the April 17 issue of the Index was incorrect. The people in the photograph were senior Jennifer Cole, junior Chelsea Kasefang and junior Patricia Siemann.
- An article on page 6 of the April 17 issue of the Index titled "Innovative housing development to hit Kirksville" was incorrect. A business project cannot begin without a business license in Kirksville.
- A jumpline on page 21 of the April 17 issue of the Index was incorrect. At the time of print, the men's tennis team's record was 13-4, not 11-4.
- A recipe on page 12 of the April 17 issue of the Index was incorrect. The recipe instructions for the curry rice were from a previous recipe. For the correct recipe for curry rice, see page 12 of this week's Index.



## Letters to the Editor

### TruLife photos of drag show were printed in poor taste

In regards to the front cover of your TruLife section on April 17, what were you thinking? Who did you have in mind when you were printing that page? Definitely not the majority of this campus! I know the Index probably is one of the most liberal papers on a college campus but let's get serious. I don't care how liberal you people are, I don't want to see that crap shoved in my face every single time you print a freakin' paper! GET A CLUE, and realize most people in this world can't stand crap!

*Jonathan Schultz  
Junior*

### America should tighten immigration, close border

Far be it from the Index to actually publish my words faithfully, as it has repeatedly butchered and taken them out of context, but I cannot help but respond to Carol Marshall's letter to the editor in the April 17 issue of the Index. I won't even bother discussing her claim of the "precious ecosystem" of the border region. It's hilarious that she put that in there, though — I seriously laughed.

Marshall's points come down to that we should care about immigrants, apparently more than our neighbors, and that we shouldn't deny services to them, even when we're in a recession. She never admits a single cost (financial or otherwise) to immigration and never says that perhaps there are any trade-offs. The fence stops traffic both ways — it prevents illegals from coming here, and it also prevents illegals and outlaws from escaping to Mexico. Marshall calls for a dialogue, and yet will she entertain the actual human cost of immigration? Immigrants are net consumers of social services, do not contribute to the tax base, bankrupt hospital systems, and reduce the quality of government education by overwhelming our social services.

They are not the nice, happy, peaceful community that she wants to construct in our minds and codify with Cinco de Mayo celebrations, but rather the community of MS-13, the

gang wars in Los Angeles, and the Balkanization of most major cities, which is a major unreported story.

And we Americans bear this burden because of a plaque at the foot of the Statue of Liberty? We accept this southern invasion because we like Tex-Mex? We have no debt to these people to repay, and if they want to reconquer the Southwest, perhaps they should have a stable government in Latin America first before they start expanding Aztlan.

We ought to tighten immigration, close the border, reduce social services and reassert our American culture, American identity and the American economy before it becomes impossible.

*Jonathon Burns  
Alumnus*

### Sports editor's columns too often aren't about Truman

As a varsity athlete, I read the sports page to check up on my teammates, friends and fellow athletes. With 21 sports traveling all over the Midwest, I cannot possibly attend every match, game, meet or race. Therefore, the Index represents my best source of news. Sure, I can read the box scores and blurbs on the athletic Web site, but I enjoy reading a story highlighting a senior's contributions to her team, a great athlete's career coming to a close or the struggles and triumphs of an international student athlete.

Of the 12 issues this semester, I read five commentaries by Joe Barker completely unrelated to Truman athletics. Three other commentaries did relate to Truman athletics (men's and women's basketball teams and the athletic department), but they took the place of a story about women's tennis continuing their undefeated streak, softball stealing base after base and women's swimming defeating top-ranked South Dakota University. In the remaining two issues, I noticed Barker authored a front-page story.

I understand that as the sports editor, one might feel entitled to putting one's own story on the front page, and I do not completely disagree with such a sentiment. It might also seem relevant to highlight commentary in addition to regular sports coverage, but when a column does not relate to

the topics on page one, why not move it to an inner page rather than taking valuable space from stories which might attract readers?

I would like to read about a former Truman basketball player playing with the Washington Generals or the track runners setting records and qualifying for nationals. I even want to read about losing streaks and injuries because they affect my University and me.

Perhaps when athletes find articles about their sports on the front page instead of hidden inside to make room for commentaries about the NBA, the Super Bowl and a writer's jinx, inability to play basketball and desire to achieve greatness, they will more readily contribute their time and give interviews. I, too, love that athletes can do things I can only dream of.

Put them and their stories on the front of the sports section.

*Natalie Soltys  
Sophomore  
Softball player*

### Albanian sex trafficking is also a worldwide problem

I was delighted to read the article in the April 17 issue of the Index about, appropriately enough, women campaigning against human trafficking neo-slavery. But again, you did not highlight the fact that it was Truman State University's Amnesty International that began the campaign.

Human trafficking is a global evil and often arises out of futile wars, some of which the U.S. and the United Kingdom started in righteous over-moralism.

For instance, my native Europe faces an enormous human trafficking problem with Albanian prostitution rings. This is because former President Bill Clinton and former Prime Minister Tony Blair bombed into power the Kosovo Liberation Front in Kosovo.

Like the old I.R.A., the KLF lives off not just these nefarious practices but exploited, threatened young Albanian and even Russian women, whose passports are missing and confiscated.

For the Index to ignore this situation is disturbing in itself.

*Larry Iles  
Kirksville resident*

## INDEX

Serving the University community since 1909

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### 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 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](mailto:index@truman.edu) or on our Web site at [www.trumanindex.com](http://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.

### Advertising Policy

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## What was going on in the INDEX?

**5 years ago ... April 17, 2003**

**The Educator of the Year program was canceled due to a shortage of nominations and a lack of funds for the banquet. Only six nominations were received, compared to 32 for the previous year, and not all six nominees submitted their essays by the deadline even after an extension.**

**20 years ago ... April 21, 1988**

**The Index Editorial Board argued that the Mr. and Ms. University contest was too focused on appearance and not enough about academics because of a bikini contest in Baldwin Hall.**