

# Graduating senior writes his farewell advice



Chris Waller

I never thought I would say this, but I'm going to miss this place.

Not the town, though I certainly wouldn't say I hate it. And I definitely won't miss the school. Anyone who has read my column before or talked to me for five minutes knows how I feel about Truman.

No, what I'm going to miss is this community. When I came to Kirksville on that hot August day in 2003, I watched my parents drive off, and I realized that I knew two people in this whole place, and they were my roommates. I was virtually alone, which was a new concept to me, considering I came from a fairly large family and group of friends.

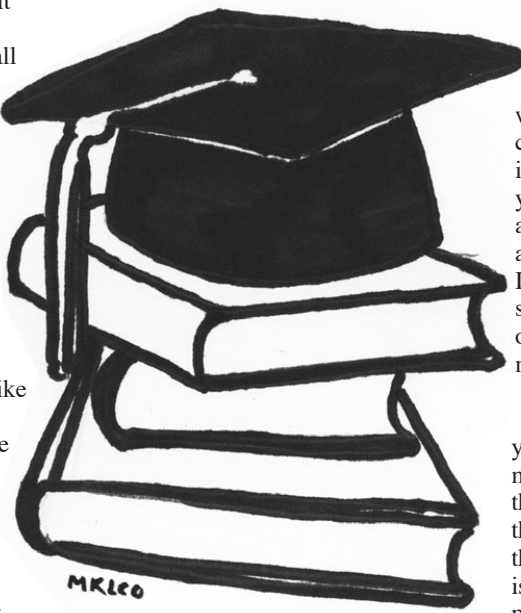
But, as time went on, I began to form new friendships. The peculiar thing about my new friends, though, is how different they were from me and how different we all were from each other. People at the University come from a variety of backgrounds, and for the first time ever I was offered a

perspective outside of the tight-knit community in which I grew up. I became friends with people from all over America (not limited to Iowa, Kansas and Illinois, either).

I was even fortunate enough to be roommates with a student from Monaco, who taught me that even people from opposite sides of the planet can share the same perspective about the world.

And now, four-and-a-half years later, I feel like these people I never should have known are people I can't live without. I feel like graduating from college is much like coming home from war: I have been injured a few times, there are things that I have done that will haunt my dreams forever, and more importantly, I'll never forget the people who gave their blood, sweat and tears to the cause. There is a community here at the University unlike any other, and it is definitely one that I will always feel a part of.

One integral part of that community is this newspaper, which I've worked for every semester of my college career. The Index is not only the news source for Truman, but it is our voice, and I am honored to be a part of that voice. Whether you agreed with what I said in these columns or not, whether you are my biggest fan or my worst



enemy, you read what I wrote — and better yet responded — and for that I can't thank you enough.

So it is with a heavy heart that I write these words that will be my last contribution to this paper and to this community. I wish I could continue this work forever, but the real world beckons.

Before I go, however, I want you to promise that you will continue to do three things for me to preserve our miniature society after I'm gone.

## 1. Don't let "The Man" keep you down

In case you forgot what I've been telling you all these years, the person who changes the most about this country, this University and this town is you. You elected our leaders, and you pay the salary of every teacher and administrator on our campus. If people aren't doing their jobs, let them know. If something isn't working the way it should, change it. The minute you roll over and give up your freedom is the minute you deserve to lose it.

## 2. Be yourself.

As your college career grows and you begin to draw attention to yourself, many people will try to get you to be their friends, to join their causes and to think like they think. Just remember, the only person who really knows what is best for you is you. Listen to what people have to say, but take everything you hear with a grain of salt. Do what you want to do, when you want to do it.

## 3. Have fun.

This one is pretty much self-explanatory. This is a time in your life when you should focus on the future and making something out of yourself, but don't forget to relax every once in awhile. Education isn't all about reading books and taking tests. Sometimes you need to put down your work and go out and experience what life has to offer.

You might think you'll have time to do these things next week, next semester or whenever, but trust me, before long you'll be putting on your graduation cap and gown and thinking back to all the times you've had here at the University.

You won't remember the statistics test you took during your sophomore year, nor when you took it again during your fifth year. You also probably won't remember the last 200 pages of that British novel by that one guy (the name escapes you even now, as you prepare for a final exam about it).

What you will remember is the time you and your best friends drove through the Rocky Mountains for spring break or the trip you took to New Orleans for Mardi Gras based on a Chinese fortune cookie's advice.

You'll remember the hours of work you and your friends put into a newspaper and having that work pay off at an awards ceremony in New York. You'll remember the good times and the bad, but at the very least, you'll have something besides a hazy memory of the German word for bathroom.

Thanks for reading, and remember to take care of one another.

*Chris Waller is a senior communication and English major from St. Joseph, Mo.*

## AROUND THE QUAD

What's the worst place your cell phone has gone off?



**"In public speaking class right after a speech on cell phone etiquette."**

Allie Phillips, Junior



**"A Board of Governors meeting."**

Zac Burden, Missouri Hall Director



**"Twice in the middle of a test, but my ringer is the Law & Order theme and it was a justice systems class."**

Amethyst Kemp, Senior



**"Last Friday during a public English senior seminar presentation."**

Emily Walker, Sophomore

# Bad etiquette at concerts, recitals can be avoided with common sense



Kelsey Landhuis

Few things raise my spirits faster than hearing live music, and few things bring them down again faster than fellow concertgoers who display rude and inappropriate behavior.

Every time I attend a concert, recital, lecture or other cultural event at Truman or anywhere else, I am surprised by the number of people, and students in particular, who exhibit a lack of knowledge of and respect for the rules of audience-member etiquette.

Case in point: I was being serenaded by the sweet sound of the True Men concert Saturday afternoon when a couple of women walked into Baldwin Auditorium more than 10 minutes late. Granted, they did wait until the end of a song to enter, but from then on they proceeded to break nearly every rule in the book of concert

etiquette. First, there was the cell phone ringing in the middle of a song — distracting and mildly annoying but forgivable.

Next, I watched with disbelief as the first offender's partner in crime took out her own phone and actually proceeded to make a call in the middle of the concert. Nice, right? Finally, after watching 15 minutes of the concert at most, they left.

After that, I was able to enjoy the concert without distractions — except, of course, for the running commentary of a group sitting near me, the continual flow of latecomers and early-goers and the fact that throughout the second half of the performance I really needed to use the restroom. I refrained from leaving, however, knowing that my departure and re-entry might disturb not only other audience members, but also the performers themselves (you can thank me later, True Men).

Small interruptions like these might not seem significant, and in other situations they wouldn't be a big deal. However, going to hear a musical ensemble or a speaker is not the same as going

to a sporting event or a rock concert. Many students fail to realize this, and as a result, their concert behavior, which might be appropriate in other settings, comes across as ignorant and disrespectful.

Fortunately, proper audience etiquette is easy to practice if you know the nature of the event you are attending and have a little common sense. For example, standing up in the middle of the OK Go concert tomorrow night and shouting "Woowooo! You guys ROCK!" might be condoned and even encouraged. However, an outburst like that at a University Orchestra concert most likely would elicit dirty looks.

When you are attending more formal events such as a concert, a recital or a theatrical production, timeliness is essential. Being on time does not mean walking into the auditorium as the event is starting. It means arriving five minutes beforehand. In addition to being disruptive, walking in late also gives the impression that you do not care about the event, which is an insult to the performers who have invested massive amounts of time and

energy into preparing for it. If the event is important enough to attend, it is important enough to be on time for. If a late entrance is unavoidable, wait until you hear applause and enter between songs. Early exits are similarly frowned upon, but if you know you have to leave early, sit in the back.

Other rules for audience behavior essentially consist of common courtesies. Don't talk to your neighbor during the performance. Don't fall asleep. Don't play games on your cell phone. Don't clap between movements. When in doubt, wait until everyone else starts applauding.

And please, please turn off your cell phone — nothing is more disruptive than a polyphonic "Kiss Kiss" suddenly drowning out the True Men singing O Holy Night.

Keeping these guidelines in mind as you attend future cultural events will create a less frustrating and more enjoyable concert experience for everyone.

*Kelsey Landhuis is a sophomore English and French major from Cedar Rapids, Iowa.*

# Goal of columns isn't good feelings



Brenna McDermott

The Nov. 29 issue of the Index published a letter that was very critical of the opinions section. The letter claimed columnists "criticize [the University] blindly," accused us of "perpetuating an us/them mentality against the University" and, worst of all, accused columnists of not being "true journalists."

Personally, I enjoyed reading this letter and was thrilled it was published. After all, the point of an opinions section is to voice opinions. But this fact often gets lost among the pages of news and informative journalism in the Index.

Editorials and columns are not news. We are not required to remain unbiased and level-headed. We are required to be extremely opinionated. My job, as I understand it, is to express my views, and not worry too much if I piss people off.

So here goes nothing. My opinions are just that: my opinions. I write what I think. Therefore, when I read a letter like this, which claims that "these columns continually send the message that the editors have little confidence in the administration of this school," I feel it is necessary to distinguish those of us who write columns from everyone else at the Index.

The opinions of a columnist do not reflect the opinions of other columnists, editors or the Index itself. If you look to page four of the weekly newspaper, you will notice that not one

columnist's name appears in the staff box (with the exception of those who hold other, non-writing positions with the newspaper). Index editors have nothing to do with the opinion a columnist solicits to the students of the University. So when such a heavy accusation against all the editors of the Index is made, I feel it is necessary to clarify that whether I express my love or loathing for Truman in my columns, the editors have absolutely nothing to do with it.

Don't get me wrong. I think that the letters to the editor are one of the most important parts of the newspaper. After all, without readers there would be no point in a newspaper. When a letter is addressed to a specific topic and column, I think it is a great way to get feedback from the Truman community.

But when all editors and columnists are grouped into one big lump of people and are accused of not being "true journalists" without evidence or reason, I find a problem with it. Just like columns should have evidence and reason, letters should not be unfocused rants.

If you feel the need to respond to a certain column, especially mine, I encourage you to do so. But don't equate criticism with a lack of pride in the University. The right to criticize is an awesome power because it ensures we can think and write whatever we want in the future.

After all, there is so much room for improvement both at Truman and in the "real world" — would we really want to silence constructive criticism for the sake of a little sunshine?

*Brenna McDermott is a freshman undeclared major from St. Louis, Mo.*

## INDEX POLL

Do you agree with Kirksville's new \$10 water and sewer rate increase?

43% (9 votes)

Yes, it's going to be money well-spent.

57% (12 votes)

No, it hasn't been proved to be necessary.

Vote online at [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com)

Next Week's Question: How have you prepared for the upcoming presidential election?

# Facebook disclosures don't eliminate concerns about its eavesdropping



Phil Jarrett

I can stand the scrutiny of friends when I change my Facebook picture weekly and allow the networking site to show that I have been listening to "Lovefool" on repeat for almost two weeks. I am less comfortable with new acquaintances letting slip some bit of information I know I did not give them in person.

When I realize this information morsel had been tucked away on the Facebook wall of someone else or buried in photos and notes now months old, I know that I am not talking to just an acquaintance, but a digital stalker. At about this point in a conversation, I usually start feeling freaked out.

Part of me wants to acknowledge that I had it coming for putting that information in a public arena in the first place. Then I realize I would be equally disturbed by a confrontation with an eavesdropper. Perhaps this is the byproduct of a naive mentality, one that rarely wants to consider the consequences of speaking loudly, but rather expects those around me to go on as if they had not heard a thing.

Imagine for a moment that a hypothetical acquaintance were to bring up information about your recent online purchase of Dustin Hoffman memorabilia from Overstock.com. The package had yet to come in. You had not told a soul about your secret obsession with "The Graduate," and suddenly this individual, who is as good as a stranger, is bringing it up in conversation.

You are probably reaching for the mace on your keychain, right?

Your sentiment would mirror thousands of Facebook members' last week, who were shocked to discover online purchases on sites such as Amazon.com and Overstock.com were being posted to their Facebook profiles through a new advertising program named Beacon. Even worse, there was no way to turn this new feature off.

What made this particular incident so disturbing was that none of these purchases were made while being logged onto Facebook. No link had ever been established by the users between their accounts with these online vendors and their accounts with Facebook. It seemed the social network somehow knew who they were when they left the Web site.

Perhaps it is only filtering that the mechanism for stalkers had become a stalker itself.

Facebook does not make its money through pokes and wall posts. It is foremost a business

funded by advertising, which can increase when the advertisers know more about their target audience. What better place to learn about someone than a social networking site where everyone is providing personal information voluntarily?

This is the hidden cost of digital socializing, planted deep within the user agreement.

The decision by Facebook to disclose how much it knew about its members was a stupid business move, just like the slip of information from the digital stalker was probably a conversation killer. People are going to be off-put by the destruction of their illusion of a carefree and private Internet where one can say things that do not carry over to the real world.

Public outcry to Beacon has led Facebook to modify privacy settings so users can deny incoming information from online retailers being posted to their profiles. Although this provides some relief in terms of keeping friends from seeing what kind of strange things we have been buying online, the fact remains that data such as our favorite music, our sexual orientations and our religions is being sold so companies can, in turn, sell us stuff.

This could just be business as usual. It could be innovation: online vendors have the knowledge about us to showcase items we did not even know we wanted.

But let us humanize the situation again. It could be normal for

a stranger to want to get to know us better. It could be profound that they wanted to know everything about us in advance so they could make themselves more appealing in hopes of us loving them in return.

Then why does it feel so creepy?

Facebook is a great way for us to broadcast our interests and discover commonalities among our peers, but it is no substitute for personal experience and interaction. Friends who I watch movies with are more valuable to me than acquaintances who have memorized my list of favorite films. I will take a coffee shop worker who has learned how I like my macchiato over Blockbuster.com's knowledge of my Facebook movie favorites any day. In the end, I would rather that my friends, my significant others and my retailers knew what I like on account of personal experience with me.

Perhaps I am standing in the way of progress by suggesting that the Federal Trade Commission make available a Do-Not-Track list that prevents my information being unknowingly recorded and shared. Perhaps I am shunning a potential soulmate with each modification to my Facebook privacy.

My gut tells me otherwise.

*Phil Jarrett is a senior philosophy and religion and communication major from Chesterfield, Mo.*