

# Student aids in Late Show trick

BY JESSICA RAPP  
Features Editor

Sophomore Duncan Stephens' phone rang early one week in January. Looking down, Stephens saw that the caller was his friend from high school, Marquette University sophomore Kyle Campbell. He answered.

"[Kyle asked,] 'What are you doing next Wednesday through Friday?'" Stephens said. "'How do you maybe feel like going up to New York to do the bag trick on the Letterman show?' And I was like, 'What? No way.' I didn't believe him at first."

Campbell was referring to his special talent, discovered at an early age and relished during his high school years. His contortionist-like flexibility allows him to snugly fit inside a gym-sized duffel bag.

"This is going to sound really weird, but it's just like 'Ocean's Eleven' — that little Asian guy — I can do some of that, but it's weird because I'm taller, not a little tiny guy," Campbell said. "Over Christmas break my grandma was visiting my house for a few days and she kept saying how funny I was ... so she kept annoying me to send it to Letterman. She kept saying Jay Letterman — I don't think she watches TV that much. ... It was just one of those things where I wanted to appease her. ... I was sitting around bored and instead of [getting on] Facebook ... I e-mailed Letterman, and I guess they were

looking for something goofy."

Stephens said the bag they originally had used belonged to his father, which was why Campbell called Stephens to be on the show.

Stephens said he needed to receive permission from his swim coach before he could pack up and leave. Head swim coach Mark Gole said Stephens came into his office and told him about his friend asking for accompaniment on the Letterman show.

"At first, I'm thinking that's going to be the coolest thing ever," Gole said. "... [But] I didn't really want him missing practice."

Gole said Stephens assured him that he checked with the hotel they would be staying at and that they would have access to a swimming pool in the athletic facilities. Stephens also practiced at 5 a.m. the morning before leaving for New York, Gole said.

"I was all for the Truman swimming shirt [Stephens wore on the show]," Gole said. "It was just kind of free publicity for the University as well as the swim team."

On a Wednesday morning, Stephens left Kirksville and met Campbell in Kansas City where they got on a flight to New York. There they were greeted by a limo service that brought them to their hotel and, later, to the first auditions, Stephens said.

During the dress rehearsal, the crew of the Letterman show was going to pick three acts out of five Stupid Human Tricks performers who had also been flown to

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**Duncan Stephens**  
Sophomore

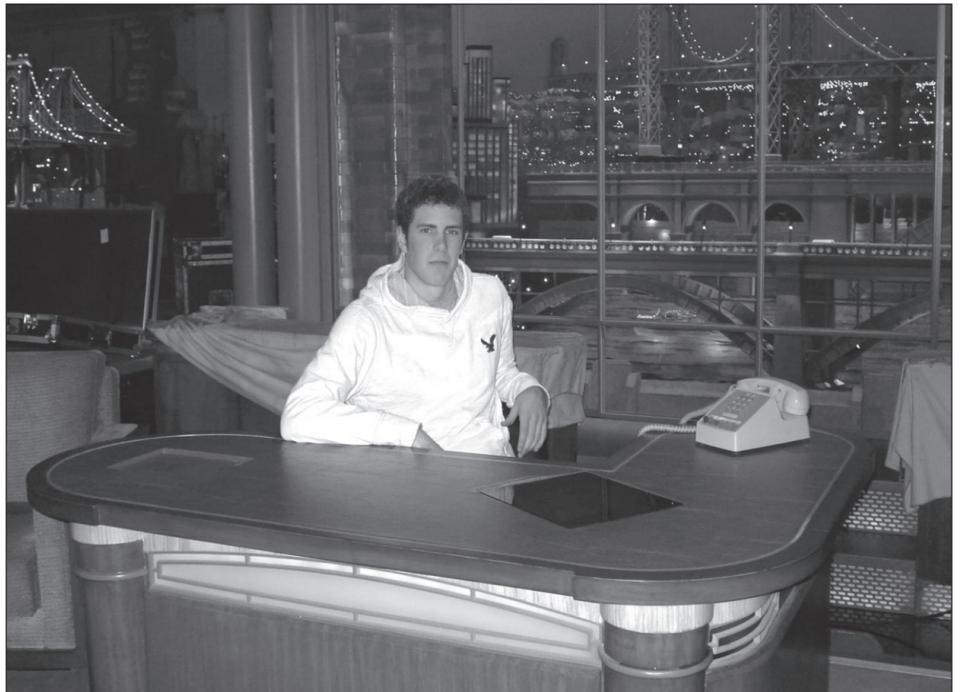


Photo Submitted

Sophomore Duncan Stephens sits in David Letterman's desk after being invited to accompany his friend, Marquette University Sophomore Kyle Campbell, on the show. Campbell performed a Stupid Human Trick by fitting himself inside a duffel bag.

New York, Stephens said.

"Kyle and I were pretty sure we were going to get picked because there was nothing like ours, and we got the most reaction out of the film crew," he said. "... We found out we got picked and that we were going to be going last behind the guy who sucks his lip up into his nose."

The next day, they showed up at the set for the taping of the show. They watched the show on a monitor backstage until they heard Letterman introduce them by name.

"I just remember really briefly thinking, 'Man, most kids my age right now are doing homework or worrying about some test they have tomorrow, and I'm walking on stage on the David Letterman show for free in New York City, about to zip Kyle up

in this stupid duffel bag," Stephens said.

The clip, now posted on the show's Web site, shows Letterman asking about Stephens' shirt and then asking him to do the trick, which Letterman had never seen before, Stephens said.

"I think he was pretty genuinely surprised that Kyle could fit into that bag," he said.

Inside the bag, Campbell waited for cues from Letterman and Stephens to let them know he was OK, as his six-foot-three frame was curled inside.

"People always think I'm going to die in the bag," Campbell said. "I mean, maybe if I sat in there for 20 minutes, but not for a minute. So [Letterman] asked me if I was OK, and I didn't want to be like, 'Yeah,

I'm fine, but my left ankle hurts,' so I just tried to keep it sweet and simple, so I'm not wasting breath or energy. ... It's not pleasant ... [but] I figured if they'd flown me out, and paid for my hotel and were going to get me on national TV that I could suck it up for a minute."

With a rush of adrenaline, Stephens waddled off stage carrying Kyle inside the duffel bag while the audience applauded.

"I got behind stage, and I unzipped him and this 6-foot-3 guy crawls out of this duffel bag," Stephens said. "And we're just like, 'Man, that was unbelievable. I can't believe where we are right now, what we just did, all because Kyle can fit into a bag.'"

# Public transportation quietly serves community

BY JESSICA RAPP  
Features Editor

At 4:39 p.m. Kirk Tran's OATS bus pulls over in front of the bus stop on the corner of Franklin and Randolph streets. Driver Richard Bass holds open the door for passengers to board his van.

He unzips the bag that rests near his feet and collects the \$2 fee that will grant a passenger a round trip through Kirksville, or until he or she gets off at a stop. Passengers take their seats, and he pulls away, continuing on schedule toward the next bus stop.

Kirk Tran bus stop signs are placed strategically throughout Kirksville at shopping areas, apartment complexes and nursing homes. Bass said most of his passengers are older residents, but his rounds sometimes include students.

"For a while, I had about four young men from Nepal," he said. "They had an apartment over here, and they'd always run with me to Wal-Mart."

Freshman Seth Hampel said he did not know Kirksville provided such transportation.

"I had no idea," he said. "I've never even heard of it. I don't have a car here, so [I'd use it] as long as it's cheap."

Kirksville provides several forms of transportation to those in need of it, and the varying services have benefits that depend on the passengers' needs. Kirk Tran keeps track of the number of passengers who board at each stop in order to evaluate which areas are most in need of a bus stop.

The Adair County Cab



Alex Boles/Index

Kirk Tran driver Richard Bass makes his rounds around Kirksville Friday afternoon. He said the best part about his job is talking and listening to his passengers.

Company is one of the two additional taxi services offered in Kirksville. Douglas Rummerfield said he drives his own taxi cab and takes calls from morning to midnight from people needing transportation.

"I'll pick you up where you're at and take you where you want to go, whereas Kirk Tran has certain stops they make," he said.

Both services stress that much of their business comes from residents who are older and need a ride to and from the grocery store or the doctor's office. Bass said Kirk Tran also will take people to and from Columbia, Mo., for the shop-

ping center, appealing to residents in counties throughout Northeast Missouri.

Bass said many of his passengers are regulars, allowing him to be more than a driver. His two years of experience driving the OATS bus as a retiree have brought him a handful of interesting experiences.

"I enjoy being with people, you know, talking to them, listening to their stories, problems," Bass said. "They tell us to talk to people, but don't pry."

He said some of his more memorable conversations have been with people who have faced obstacles like drugs and

alcohol or have been charged with crime.

"I had one gentleman out here one day, who was seated right behind me," Bass said. "He said he had just gotten out of the mental institution. ... He said, 'I was in there for a couple of years,' and I said, 'Why?' And he said, 'I stabbed my father in the back with a butcher knife.'"

"Now he sits over there," Bass said. He gestured to a seat in front, not directly behind him.

Bass said he has younger riders as well, including young kids and a high-school-age student who always requests a

## bus pass

### Kirk Tran Hourly Schedule

Full schedule on [www.kirksvillecity.com](http://www.kirksvillecity.com)

Kirksville Garden Apartments:	7:00	Aldi's:	7:24
Adair County Health Dept.:	7:02	Jaycee Park:	7:27
Hy-Vee:	7:08	St. Andrew's Apartments:	7:36
Wal-Mart:	7:21	Franklin/Randolph:	7:39
		Ponderosa:	7:50

\* Kirk Tran runs this schedule each hour, not only 7 o'clock.

certain radio station.

He said that although student passengers are rare, they also are memorable.

He said he remembers the particular instance when he took four Nepali students to Wal-Mart because of how much they bought.

"Basically, all we're supposed to do on this city route is [let the passengers] bring on whatever [they] can carry [themselves]," he said.

"You're not supposed to help them unload or try to get it into the house for them — we just don't have the time when we're running routes. I went back to pick the [students] up the first time I dropped them off at Wal-Mart, and they had two carts stacked clear to the top. ... We had to do a unique thing. ... We loaded up and hauled them off. ... I gave them several rides after that, and they'd always go out and buy a bunch of groceries."

Every year, Bass and the other Kirk Tran drivers receive training so they can deal with medical emergencies, he said.

The bus is equipped with a first aid kit and soon will have a defibrillator, he said.

The back of the bus has space and a lift for two wheel chairs in order to carry multiple passengers to and from doctor appointments.

"We do run into problems sometimes because we do run a lot of people to the dialysis clinic," he said. "... We get some people that come out of there in pretty bad shape. ... I've been fortunate to have not [dealt with that] — we have had some people that have."

Bass said that although he hasn't experienced any accidents or serious medical emergencies, he has had his fair share of disappointing moments.

"I guess the saddest part is, occasionally you'll lose a rider, you know, they'll pass away," he said. "Some of the people you're riding with are 85, 90 years old."

Traveling more than 100 miles a day, Bass said he lets his wife do all the driving at home. He said most of the enjoyment he gets from the job is not from the driving but from the people he meets.

"That's the worse day you can have, is if you have a slow day where you don't have any people," he said.

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