

# TRU *Life*



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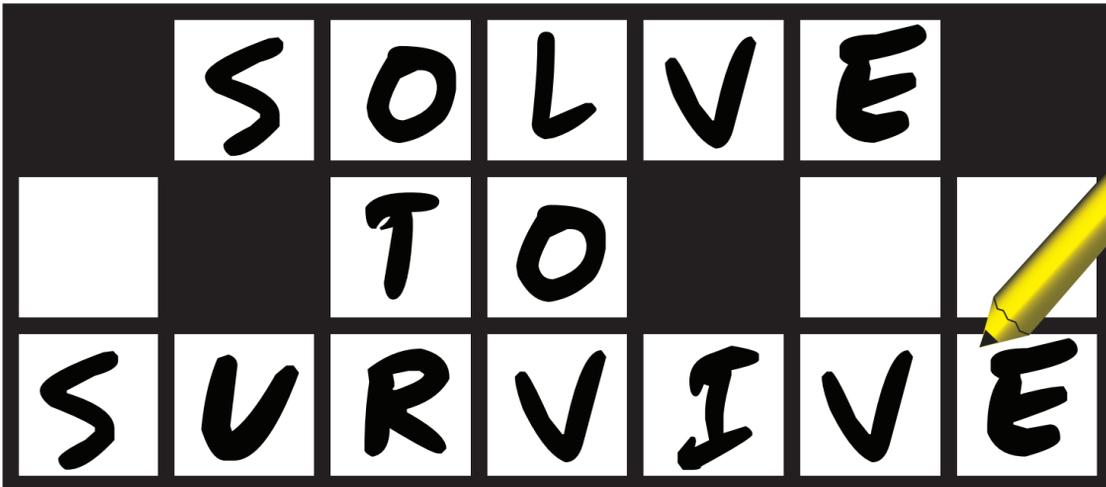
Anniversary album finds new, substandard sound

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## New Thinking Person's Assassins game spells fun for problem solvers

BY LAURA PRATHER  
Staff Reporter

Starting this week, members of the Truman community will put their brains to the ultimate test.

Junior Cody Sumter and others will participate in Thinking Person's Assassins, a new game on campus with the goal of cracking various puzzles and ultimately being the last one standing.

Marty Eisenberg, dean of the Residential College Program and associate provost for academic affairs, introduced the concept to Sumter and senior Max Eisenbraun at a Dinner with Marty earlier this semester. Dinner with Marty is a Tuesday event at Ryle Hall cafeteria and allows students to discuss a range of topics.

The idea stemmed from an article about knitters who play their own version of Assassins called Sock Wars, which Eisenberg read while traveling in Arizona. Eisenberg said he was amazed at this variation of Assassins, a common game that allows him to revisit his college years.

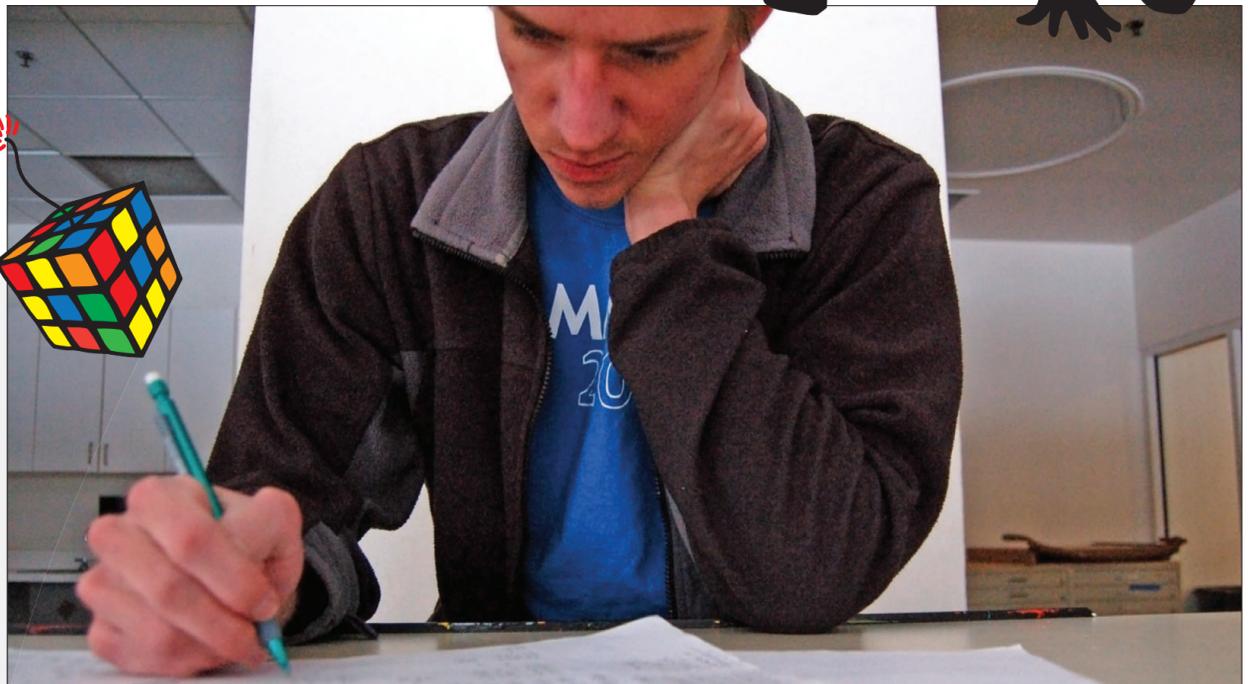
"The knitters played this where the person organizing sent everyone who was participating a pattern for a pair of socks," he said. "And if you received your knitted pair of socks before you sent your target's pair of socks, you were assassinated."

As the trio discussed this unique game during dinner, they came up with another alternative to the game: puzzles. They all enjoy puzzles and thought it would be a unique twist that people at Truman could get excited about, Eisenberg said.

"[We wanted] to use the word assassins so people recognize it, and that's why it became the Thinking Person's Assassins because it probably takes a little bit different skill than one of the variety of methods of assassinating people when it's played on campus," he said.

After deciding on the idea, the group developed rules for the game. Eisenberg said this was the hardest part because he had never created a game from scratch before and because he wanted detailed rules to make sure play was fair.

"We decided there could be a wide variety of puzzles, but the criteria was that it had to be solved by deductive reasoning," he said. "We also decided that you should have a puzzle that you had to be able to show somebody how you could solve it from the in-



Erin Lee Givartz/Index  
Junior Cody Sumter spends some time on the Traveling Salesman's puzzle to get ready for Residential College Program's first game of The Thinking Person's Assassins, where students aim to assassinate their competitors by solving puzzles they supply.

formation given."

Eisenberg said this keeps students from submitting impossible puzzles. Another requirement for puzzle submission is that it must be transmittable via e-mail and be less than one megabyte. This is because the process of submitting and receiving puzzles is done through e-mail to keep players' and targets' identities secret.

Once players solve their targets' puzzles, they resubmit them to the same e-mail, puzzles@truman.edu, to see if their solutions are correct, Eisenberg said.

"You would get back an e-mail that would say, ... 'Nice try,' which means you didn't get the solution right or, 'You successfully assassinated your target,' and then you would get your target's puzzle," he said.

With every puzzle a player solves, he or she continues to receive the puzzles of targets that have been assassinated, Eisenberg said.

Eisenberg said his goal for the game this semester is to attract enough people to split players up into groups for the first round of the game based on the type of puzzle they submitted.

"We thought that people would probably enjoy it a little bit more if you knew going in that the early rounds of the game you'd get to do puzzles that might be more your kind of puzzles," he said.

Sumter said he isn't sure what the turnout will be but that he hopes enough people will play to keep the game interesting.

"I don't necessarily think that it's so much the Assassins game as it is fun," he said. "And it just so happens that that sort of concept tends to do a pretty good job of involving people

and getting them to enjoy themselves."

Even though it might not seem as social as other variations of Assassins because Thinking Person's Assassins involves solving puzzles, players are urged to consult whomever and whatever they want, Sumter said. Hopefully this will motivate people to branch out and converse with students or professors who they might not normally talk to, he said.

Players also can profit from the game by engaging in critical thinking and developing their ability to be good problem solvers, Sumter said.

Although players can submit any type of puzzle as long as it meets the criteria, sophomore Price Tipping said he hopes to see some originally created puzzles.

"That's part of why I find it interesting is just because other people think way differently from me, and so it's cool to see how other people

think and what kinds of things they come up with," he said.

Tipping, who initially heard about Thinking Person's Assassins from Sumter, has submitted his own puzzle that is designed to be a cipher.

"The ready-made puzzles, they're nice to work on if you're sitting waiting for class or something, and you just try and solve this puzzle," he said. "The other things people have come up with I find more interesting just because one, it shows you how they think, and two, you have to figure out how to solve the puzzle, and then you have to solve it. And I think figuring out how to solve it is half the fun."

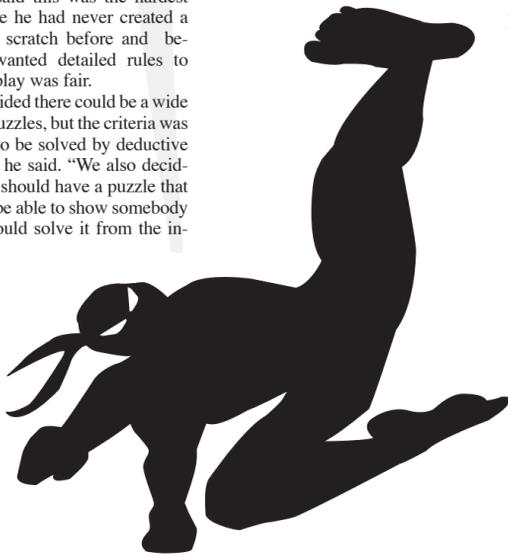
Tipping, who said he plans on asking his older brother for help if he needs it, also said he is looking forward to having something to keep him busy on an academic level and to form new relationships with people and strengthen existing relationships.

"I think I'll be using people more than computers [for help] just because I prefer to figure things out with other people than to just sit there and figure them out by myself," he said. "Figuring something out with someone is like a bonding activity."

Because the game is new, Eisenberg said he is going to see how it goes this semester and possibly revise the rules of the game if necessary. He said he hopes students, faculty and staff become interested in the game so it can continue in future semesters. More than anything, Eisenberg said he wants players to have fun, relax, interact with others and learn something.

Although no prizes are involved with the game, the last person standing will be known for having the best puzzle because it will remain unsolved.

"If we have enough entries so that we can have categories, we can also declare someone that for the spring semester, you're the Word Puzzle Master of Truman," Eisenberg said. "I think there's some pride in that."



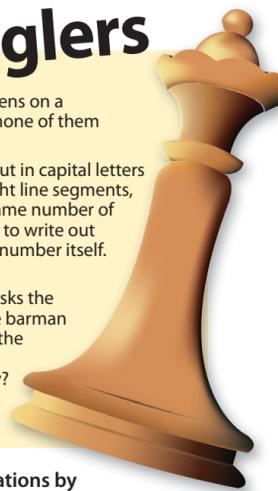
## Brain bogglers

How could you place eight queens on a chessboard in such a way that none of them could attack each other?

Many numbers, when spelled out in capital letters in English, consist of only straight line segments, but only one of them has the same number of straight line segments required to write out the number as the value of the number itself. What number is this?

A beggar walks into a bar and asks the barman for a glass of water. The barman pulls out a gun and points it at the beggar's head. The beggar says 'Thank you' and walks out. Why?

For the answers, please see [www.trumanindex.com](http://www.trumanindex.com)



Design by Nick Wilsey, illustrations by Andrea Bailey and Antionette Bedessie/Index

## Around The Ville

### Jazz Festival

The music department hosts an all-day jazz event.



8 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Saturday  
Baldwin Hall Auditorium  
Free

### Thumbs Up

The theatre department sponsors the student-written, student-produced performance. Seating is on a first-come, first-serve basis.

7 p.m. to 8 p.m.  
Thursday and Friday  
SUB Down Under  
Free



### HIV Screening

The Nursing Student Association offers free confidential HIV testing.

1 p.m. to 6 p.m.  
Thursday  
Student Union Building  
Free

